



THEME FOR 2019: “REIMAGINING CUT: LIVING OUR VALUES”

1. INTRODUCTION

Prior to 2016, we have focused on the Academic Project, in order to improve the relevance and impact, and enhance the quality of our learning, teaching, research and innovation practices. We have embraced the 2016 theme of “*The Year of Innovation and Entrepreneurship*” with many accolades and achievements. The theme for 2017 was “*The Year of the Human Project*”, focusing on staff, students and other stakeholders, and enhancing the human reconciliation drive. The theme for 2018 theme was “*Reimagining CUT: Embracing Servant Leadership*”.

2. 2018 THEME: “Reimagining CUT: Living our values”

2.1 Introduction

Core organisational values are a set of beliefs that specify universal expectations and preferred modes of behaviour in an institution. They point the way to purposeful action and approved behaviour (Kane, 2002:1). Malphurs (2002) defines core values as simply “why we do what we do”. Values are there to be lived!

2.2 CUT Values

2.2.1 Integrity

As a campus community, we expect all conduct to be rooted in integrity, mutual respect and civility. We value ethical behaviour in scholarly and other endeavours. Integrity in our context will include the creation of a diverse, collegial scholarly community in which individuals are valued and respected, academic freedom is exercised with intellectual rigour, and high ethical standards and an environment where critical inquiry is encouraged are upheld. As our conduct should be rooted in integrity, mutual respect and civility, one can argue that trust and stewardship are integrated in this value. At the same time, accreditation processes that establish integrity as central to educational and institutional quality will be embraced within the CUT. These will be benchmarked against trends in Higher Education in South Africa and Africa, as well as international. Therefore, we behave in an ethical and professional manner; we conduct our activities in an accountable and transparent manner; and we ensure the integrity of our information, systems and processes.

Important questions to be asked: *Do I practice what I preach? Am I ethical and professional? Do I always uphold conduct that is informed by respect, honesty and dignity?*

2.2.2 Diversity

Diversity has several dimensions and these dimensions fall into two primary categories: Social diversity and intellectual diversity. Social diversity means that the composition of our students, as well as our staff, must reflect broad societal characteristics that encompass race, class, multilingualism, ethnicity, national origin, religion, freedom of conscience, gender, sexual orientation, age and ability. Included in this perspective is the fact that the CUT must have no discriminatory practices that will prevent it from bringing together, into one CUT, all the mentioned varieties and differences of society. If the CUT thus coexists as a microcosm of the larger society in which we live, we will be able to classify ourselves as a diverse institution. Intellectual diversity refers to the broad range of academic programmes, the variety of delivery modes we utilise, a diversity of theoretical approaches, and a broad definition of community service. Central to this value is openness and the continuance of the technology-driven tradition of the CUT. Furthermore, fairness, honesty and objectivity will prevail as the CUT assesses its own policies, practices and behaviours to ensure that it makes credible the actions taken to enhance quality improvement in higher education.

Therefore, we reflect and serve diverse regional, national and global communities; we promote an open society where critical scholarship and the expression of a multiplicity of opinions and experiences are actively encouraged; we foster an environment in which diversity is appreciated, respected and celebrated; and we are committed to accessibility, inclusivity and social justice. Embracing diversity in all its forms and complexity, appreciating the richness and dynamism it brings to the academic project and the broader university life. We should ensure that the institutional culture is welcoming, supportive and inclusive, not alienating. Finally, we need to be conscious of the social injustices and unfairness of the past, as we commit to restore the dignity of every human being at CUT and beyond.

Important questions to be asked: *Do I have an understanding regarding the definition of diversity in my context? Have I created an environment to support diversity?*

2.2.3 Customer service

Key aspects related to customer service are selflessness, responsiveness and accountability. A work ethic that empowers colleagues to be professional in all dealings; to treat people with respect, to have a sense of urgency and agency, and to value their work and expertise required. Therefore, ready to learn new and innovate ways to improve the quality of work and building a culture of following through and remaining accountable to self and others. The CUT will nourish the commitment to provide excellent service by maintaining strong, supportive relationships that are flexible and responsive to the institutional and student needs and to the interests of the broader public/society at large. We will deliver what the customer needs in terms of value, quality and satisfaction. It further means we should deliver the best quality programmes and support to our students and colleagues in an endearing and an empowering manner. It also means we must help one another to grow intellectually and otherwise.

Important questions to be asked: *Would I have been satisfied with the service I have rendered? Do I always place the people I serve first?*

2.2.4 Innovation

We are committed to innovative approaches for achieving our vision and will create a campus environment that encourages and rewards creativity and innovation. The aim is to empower students and staff to trust their creativity and skills to change the world; to motivate them to build the courage and excitement to stretch beyond their limits in technology, finding new ways of practice and design, thereby contributing to social and technological innovation; and to approach each day with a mindset ready to achieve greater heights, change and improve, and contribute to advancements in technology and life.

Important questions to be asked: *Is this the best way/method/process/product? Have I thought about doing it differently? How creative am I? Do I always think of new ideas and approaches to doing things? Have I challenged the status quo?*

2.2.5 Excellence

The CUT aspires to an excellence that is approached through diligent effort, both individual and collective. Pursuing excellence means being satisfied with no less than the highest goals it is possible to envision. We value excellence and innovation inside the classroom and out. Thus, we strive to offer outstanding academic programmes; to foster intellectual inquiry, exploration, and discovery; to transcend traditional boundaries; to apply and perfect knowledge; to encourage creativity; to provide effective tools, technologies and facilities for learning; and to excel in research and scholarly activity, including the “scholarship of teaching and learning” – an area of research that explores how individuals teach and learn.

We recognise and accept the sacrifices, risks and responsibilities involved in pursuing excellence, and so we celebrate one another’s successes. We commit ourselves to this process in an ethical and moral manner. Therefore, we promote, recognise and reward excellence in our teaching, learning, research, engagement and support services; we promote, recognise and reward excellent service delivery to all our stakeholders; we provide a supportive and affirming environment that enables students and staff to reach their full potential; and we adopt innovative approaches to promote excellence in our institutional policies, structures, processes and systems.

Important questions to be asked: *Do I continuously strive to improve on previous efforts? Was this my best effort? Do I strive for excellence at all times and in all that I do?*

3. CONCLUSION

The aim is to be true to the CUT brand by living the values we stand for – “walking the talk” honestly and consistently, putting objectivity at the heart of operations, and functioning at all times guided by the highest ethical standards engrained in the culture of the university.

Let us, as the CUT family, embrace this theme in 2019 and live our values!

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