



Audiologist. Lecturer. Researcher.

Women's Month Profile: 15 minutes with...

Vera-Genevey Hlayisi

My name is Vera-Genevey Hlayisi. I am an audiologist, lecturer and researcher in the Department of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences at Faculty of Health Sciences, UCT.

Can you describe yourself in three words?

A doer. Open. Daring.

How do you think your colleagues would describe you in three words?

Passionate. Contributor. Sociable.

Describe your work in two sentences or less

I facilitate learning in my teaching role, inspire creative thinking within research and I am a zealous advocate for hearing health, disability inclusion and overall health literacy.

What do you find most fulfilling about your work?

Making a meaningful contribution to 1) the students I teach, 2) the patients I get to work with in rehabilitation and 3) audiology scholarship through my research.

What have been some of the highlights of your time at UCT?

Since joining UCT in 2017, there have been a few:

- 1) Being recognised as one of the top 200 leaders in the health sector in the country;
- 2) Being afforded opportunities to travel and represent the institution internationally at collaborative partnership workshops in Denmark and as a speaker at academic conferences in Botswana;
- 3) Officiating the first World Congress of Audiology on African soil in its 34-year existence.



What are the main challenges of your work?

I find the academic or higher education sector in and of itself to be challenging and that, coupled with the current transitioning state of the sector in our context and recent climate of decolonising what and how we function in academia and research, makes for a complex work environment.

What do you love or hate about UCT or FHS specifically?

Love: The environment and atmosphere has challenged me to excel.
Do not love so much: Parking. I say a prayer daily before I engage in the painstaking war of finding space and then parallel parking often on a hill.

What's the biggest risk you've ever taken?

I believed and still do, that I CAN.

How do you conquer your fears?

I have no other choice. I remind myself that fear is a proverbial gun and most times as a woman, a black woman, I find that I don't have the luxury not to conquer my anxieties and insecurities or they will conquer me.

What's your version of self-care?

Outdoor adventure. Living in Cape Town, I take most opportunities to hike, explore and be outdoors. It has a calming, often healing, effect that balances me.

If you could change something overnight at UCT, what would it be?

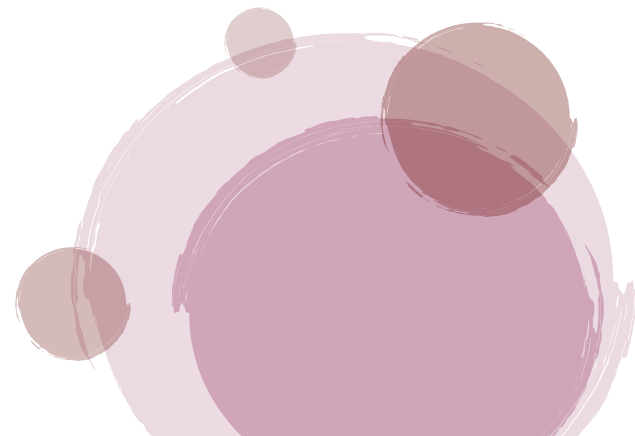
The suffocating atmosphere that exists sometimes in the workspace from the transformation-reluctant energy in the air.

If you had a choice between two superpowers; being invisible or flying, which would you choose?

I would choose being invisible because in our society I feel women would be further if they were judged on merit.

What was the last gift you gave someone?

My time





What is your advice to young people building a future in academia?

To facilitate learning and create new knowledge as is required in academia will ask of you to be a lifelong learner that is open and hungry for change. And, as with most sectors or generally in life, so too in academia, opportunity does not waste time on the unprepared.

If you could have dinner with any woman (or anyone), who would it be and why?

Tracey Ellis Ross. She personifies, for me, what self-awareness and actualisation means for a modern woman today.

What are your future plans at UCT? What would you like to achieve?

I would like to in the immediate future finish my doctoral degree and establish myself as a world class researcher. I would like to in the medium-to-long term contribute to the larger education sector specifically as it relates to health sciences education.

