

**The College of Health Science's Women in Leadership and  
Leverage Committee (WILL)**

invite you to attend the following workshop

Presented By

**Professor Elelwani Ramugondo**

Associate Professor in the Department of Health & Rehabilitation Sciences  
at UCT

**Title: Identity Politics & Activism in Academia:  
Pitfalls or Opportunity?**

**Date**

Thursday, 30 June 2016

**Time**

11:30 for 12:00

**Venue**

GSB Auditorium, GSB Building, Westville  
Campus, University of KwaZulu-Natal

**Convenor**

Dr Pragashnie Govender

**RSVP Essential by Friday 27 June 2016**

RSVP and Enquiries to be forwarded to  
[will.ukzn@gmail.com](mailto:will.ukzn@gmail.com)

Light refreshments will be available before the  
workshop



**PROFESSOR ELELWANI RAMUGONDO**

Elelwani Ramugondo is Associate Professor of Occupational Therapy in the Department of Health & Rehabilitation Sciences at UCT. She was formerly Head of Division for Occupational Therapy, and was appointed both the chairperson of the Dean's Transformation Advisory Committee in the Faculty of Health Sciences and **Special Advisor to the Vice Chancellor on Transformation** following the fall of the Cecil John Rhodes Statue at UCT in 2015.

Ramugondo's PhD introduced an intergenerational perspective in the study of children's play and framed play as a window of opportunity to discern the African condition. Her continuing academic work and research situates intergenerational play within everyday contexts, and recognises play as a powerful avenue for disrupting the status quo. Ramugondo currently mentors a number of PhD candidates using case study and embedded methodologies approached from both critical theory and poststructuralist perspectives. Her growing body of work focusses on theorizing about human occupation, building on new terminology (occupational consciousness) which she introduced into occupational science discourse. Ramugondo grounds her theorizing work regarding what people do every day (human occupation) on liberation philosophy – notably work by Biko, Fanon and Dussel.

**Workshop Synopsis**

Some of the common claims made in defence of failed or slow transformation in Higher Education in South Africa include the following; 'Top universities came to be leading institutions of higher learning through world-class research'\* and 'National and international reputation depends on no more than a dozen or so leading academics'\*. In such statements 'world class' and 'international' often refers only to Europe and North America, to the exclusion of the rest of the globalized world, including Africa. At the same time, many of the black academics in highly ranked universities which are based in South Africa, such as the University of Cape Town, have expressed a sense of being made invisible as academics and silenced as researchers. In this paper, I will argue that the role of the university is primarily to advance meaningful interpretation and to protect academic freedom. I will outline how academic freedom, freedom of expression and identity politics, once contextualized within a diverse and unequal society; intersect in ways that create opportunities for decolonising research and exposing both historical and current injustices. Rather than being seen only as one of the forces behind the erosion of free speech, identity politics call upon us to re-examine privilege and confront both epistemic and epistemological violence within the academy. In a context such as South Africa, where inequality, wounded-ness and racism still prevail, intersectionality can serve as proxy for difference in experience; offering different perspectives from which to shift from 'engaged scholarship' towards engaged scholarship while troubling the space between academia and activism.

**\*Jansen, J. (2016). Why I fear for the future of our universities. Rand Daily Mail.**