



UNIVERSITY  
OF  
JOHANNESBURG

## **UNIVERSITY RELATIONS**

### **2021 Annual Report**

#### **OVERVIEW**

Interventions in 2021 strived to manage the challenges presented by the Covid-19 pandemic whilst continuing to showcase UJ's leading role in the 4IR and associated initiatives both across the institution, and amongst a broad groups of stakeholders. Developing and maintaining relationships with significant stakeholder groups is key for the University of Johannesburg to achieve its 2025 Strategic Plan.

Stakeholder engagement affects UJ's reputation both nationally and internationally. The stakeholder groups include staff, students and prospective students, parents and fee-payers, schools and learners, alumni, donors and prospective donors, bursars, local and international foundations/trusts, sponsoring companies, corporates, municipalities, government, peer institutions, local and international media, as well as communities around UJ's campuses.

This report will highlight how UJ successfully engaged stakeholders during 2021, highlighting non-academic stakeholder engagement, most of which is managed through the Division of University Relations, which deals directly or indirectly with a wide range of University stakeholders as part of its core business.

#### **University Relations**

The Division of University Relations rolls out a strategically focused programme annually to foster understanding of and support for the University of Johannesburg with its various stakeholder groupings. Programmes align with the University's Strategic Plan 2025, emphasising national and international reputation management and further elevating UJ's positioning as an institution of global excellence and stature.

The purpose and drive of the Division of University Relations and its multiple operating sections are to ensure active stakeholder engagement to advance the profile and

reputation of the University. This drive has a wide scope and is achieved through integrating the functions of the various operating sections of University Relations:

- Strategic Communications, which safeguards and advances UJ's reputation.
- Marketing and Brand Management, which builds and protects UJ's corporate brand.
- Government and Stakeholder Relations, which facilitates and sustains relations with government, agencies, and parastatals.
- UJFM, which drives strategic communication with current students.
- Community Engagement, which creates active interaction between UJ and its communities.

The Division of University Relations at the University of Johannesburg played a vital role during the year in review to promote public understanding and recognition of UJ as a global leader in higher education and its significant and growing objective to become a University of choice across the globe.

### **Strategic Communications**

With the announcement late in the year that the UJ Council has approved the COVID-19 Mandatory Vaccination Policy, the threat of protests and industrial action loomed large among sections of the University. Through an efficient communication strategy delivered with brevity, clarity and consistency of messages infused empathy, the Strategic Communications Unit ensured that this risk was well managed. This communications strategy – which was multipronged and targeted at specific audiences using executive communiques by MEC, circulars and the website – ensured that the UJ Community was well informed about important developments around the policy and its benefits. This did not only help in contributing to staff and students embracing the policy, but it also prevented fear-driven and potentially negative responses, and fostered trust in the institution's plans to return to on-campus teaching and learning.

Apart from helping foster a learning and working relationships based on positive and constructive engagement and trust, the communication strategy minimised the threat of negative publicity of UJ in the media. The University continued with its upward trajectory of dominating the media space and influencing public debate on matters of national and international interest. As many as 542 UJ experts in various fields were active in giving expert commentary in national media, while 222 appeared in global media, according to two independent media monitoring agencies, Professional Evaluation and Research (PEAR) and Meltwater.

In total, 10 101 media clippings were generated, including in areas such as research and thought leadership. No less than 296 opinion articles penned by UJ experts were published across all media platforms. Of these, 47 had a strong link to the fourth industrial revolution, while 24 had a COVID-19 link. More than 52 research and

innovation stories featured on national/global media platforms. The articles generated further conversations/interviews, with some of the authors on various radio and TV stations. This ensured that UJ dominated the media space and set the news agenda and influence public debate, while at the same time contributing to problems-solving in societal issues.

UJ also produced the most compelling content showcasing the University as an enriching place of learning and working. This included news articles and the production of over 150 videos about student and staff experiences across various University programmes, facilities, and activities. Monthly editions of the student newsletter, 'The Voice', highlighting student excellence, latest news and study/career opportunities have been distributed to over 40,000 students. The newsletter receives over 30,000 Total and Unique Views, monthly.

On 12 August 2021, the University Relations Unit hosted UJ's [2020 Stakeholder Report](#) launch, reflecting on the performance and challenges of the last academic year (2020). [Click here to read more about the event.](#)

## **Marketing and Brand Management**

Since 2018 the Marketing and Brand unit has aligned its efforts with the University's 4IR strategy by introducing an award-winning brand marketing campaign in order to position UJ as a 4IR thought-leader while simultaneously educating the various stakeholders and community at large about the meaning of 4IR and its implications for our futures. The campaign targets two major audience categories: mature market and youth market (potential undergraduate market)

A staple of 4IR content has been produced as part of this 4IR positioning campaign and lives on a bespoke [UJ 4IR website](#). To date this 4IR content has reached our target audience groups nationally, on the African continent and globally through a targeted multichannel media campaign using traditional and new media including radio, TV, print, social and digital. The campaign has reached over 518 million (1 million in 2021) people to date via the various channels and more than 6 billion (2.6 billion in 2021) through social media – UJ and paid-for.

During 2021 an additional four Cloudebates took place, four editions of Beyond Imagining – 4IR e-zine – went live and six new 4IR in Action Stories were produced as part of this project. A 4IR Social Media Influencer and Ambassador campaign has also rolled out with 10 Ambassadors and 4 Influencers getting the UJ 4IR message out even wider.

The *Imagine THAT* undergraduate marketing campaign launched in July 2020. This campaign seeks to educate this market about the benefits of 4IR for their future, while positioning UJ as the place to study for this reimagined future. There will be

added focus on this element of the campaign as much effort has gone into the mature market and research is showing success. In addition, the Orange Carpet was also marketed and the Student Marketing team supported with a series of Facebook Live career sessions, to reach potential students while Student Marketers could not get into the schools.

In order to grow the UJ Online Brand Shop reach, vending machines were procured for each of the campuses where staff and students can purchase select UJ branded merchandise. This initiative has been well-received and will be further developed in 2022. The mobile brand shop will also be introduced during 2022. Sales through the Online Brand Shop totaled R1.6 million in 2021.

As always, social media was widely used to get all of the campaign and other UJ messages out to UJ audiences. A responsible use of social media campaign was again rolled out which created awareness, but also trained staff and students, on the risks and benefits associated with these media channels. A Covid-19 awareness campaign was again driven on the social media platforms to encourage responsible behavior and share relevant information.

On the social media front, UJ received a total of 222,086 mentions from 1 January to 31 December 2021, with a reach of 3,245,197,572. The overall AVE (Advertising Value Equivalent) generated during this period was R324,519,757. During this period, UJ was the leader in the Higher Education sector regarding mentions for the topic 4IR and AI for the year 2021. UJ had 5K mentions (48%), followed by Wits University with 2K mentions (17%) and UCT with 1K mentions (14%).

Growth was seen on all the UJ social media platforms:

	<b>End 2020</b>	<b>End 2021</b>	<b>Growth</b>
Facebook	520 439	576 775	+56 336
LinkedIn	266 081	301 274	+35 193
Twitter	64 461	70 907	+6446
Instagram	28 200	37 300	+9 100
YouTube	10 400	13 900	+3 500

The biennial brand research study has been completed and UJ is still topping the list as the most recognised HE institution with a score of 79%. Advertising recall has dropped from 78% in 2019 to 74% in 2021 mainly due to budget cuts and the Covid-19 impact on our traditional advertising media in the learner market. Student Experience has also dropped from 85% in 2019 to 82% in 2021 which can also be attributed to the Covid-19 effect on our students.

The adoption of ever changing new media and a strategic approach to UJ's brand marketing is ensuring that the world takes notice of UJ and its 4IR leadership position.

*'The future belongs to those who reimagine it'* mature market campaign won numerous awards during the year under review: Two gold, three silver and an outstanding research award at the Marketing, Advancement and Communication in Education (MACE) 2021 awards ceremony, as well as an IABC Africa Silver Quill Excellence award (International Association of Business Communicators Africa Chapter). The UJ Facebook page – with almost 580 000 fans - was placed amongst the top university Facebook pages in the world and UJ has maintained its second position in the higher education category in the Sunday Times Generation Next youth brand survey.

## **Government and Stakeholder Relations**

During the year under review, the unit for Government and Stakeholder Relations made progress towards attaining the University's ambitions for global excellence and stature through implementation of mutually beneficial and sustainable stakeholder relations collaboration and partnership with various levels of Government, including other key stakeholders through continually strengthening the University's reach with Government and related Stakeholders.

Collaboration, agreements, and partnerships were refined and delineated into the following focus areas: local government and agencies; provincial government and national government; and or parastatals (state owned enterprises).

Within UJ, Government and Stakeholder Relations coordinated and hosted a number of initiatives in the year under review.

Government and Stakeholder Relations administered the declaration of intent for the allocation of a province owned building to UJ Resolution Circle for skills development and Work Integrated Learning.

Government and Stakeholder Relations also hosted UJ Alumnus, Prof Susan Booysen's book launch on 01 October 2021 with Prof Chris Landsberg and Dr Somadoda Fikeni from the Public Service Commission.

Government and Stakeholder Relations co-hosted Government Career Day with Gauteng based municipalities & their entities, government agencies and Sector Education Training Authorities (SETA's).

### **Local Government**

In 2021, Government and Stakeholder Relations facilitated the introduction of a high-Level collaboration/between CoJ MMC (Infrastructure and Services) and the Faculty of the Built Environment (FEBE) where UJ researchers are advising and supporting the MMC portfolio. Workstreams are currently in place for energy, water, waste and skills development. Researchers on board include Prof Daniel Mashao, Prof Pat

Naidoo, Prof Babu Paul, Dr Jeffrey Mahachi from FEBE, Prof Joel Eita from CBE and Prof Suzie Graham from Humanities.

Government and Stakeholder Relations organised and hosted a venue experience in collaboration with STH where CoJ events planners were invited to experience STH facilities. This also gave STH the opportunity to establish industry relations and for future marketing.

### ***Provincial Government***

Government and Stakeholder Relations coordinated the participation of UJ experts in partnership with Productivity SA towards the Gauteng Workplace Challenge Workshop. Facilitated Local and Provincial government participation towards the construction and development planning sectors for the FEBE book launch on Skills Development for the construction industry.

In partnership with the Ahmed Kathrada Foundation, Government and Stakeholder Relations jointly hosted a civil society dialogue with the Gauteng Premier on the KZN unrest. An agreement was reached with Provincial Government to have a Civil Society Grouping established to partner with the province to respond effectively to this and other societal challenges when it erupts.

### ***National Government and Agencies of Government***

Government and Stakeholder Relations coordinated the participation of CBE speakers, Dr Renjini Joseph and Ms Neo Mamathuba for Productivity SA launch on 01 October 2021.

Government and Stakeholder Relations also co-hosted the Evidence in Africa Network webinar and has been an internal partner of the network since its inception, steering collaboration with key government stakeholders like the Department of Environmental Affairs as well as Department of Monitoring and Evaluation.

### ***Stakeholder relations focused on Internal and external Stakeholders:***

As part of internal and external stakeholder relations the following information was shared:

UJ Public Dialogues and Webinars	37
WIL, Learnerships Internships and Scholarships	109
Employment Opportunities	72

## **UJFM 2021**

UJFM made it to the finals in ten categories at the 2021 South African radio awards and received three radio awards with the *UJFM Drive* winning the best drive show for the first time in the history of UJFM.

During 2021, UJFM made a significant contribution towards communications and information dissemination in collaboration with internal and external stakeholders. 3185 UJ related News stories highlighting 4IR and institutional successes made headlines on UJFM. 80 Covid-19 Public Service Announcements were broadcasted in partnership with Government Communications Information System.

UJFM further partnered with UJ campus health to broadcast Covid-19 and vaccination related updates on a daily segment call UJ Campus Health Covid-19 update. 8 high profile interviews including Chair of the Council, Vice-Chancellor, various MEC and ELG members were broadcast.

In 2021, UJFM further generated R600 000 towards the university's third-stream income. This is 50% of its expected revenue target.

In line with the institution's strategy of ensuring collaborations with various stakeholders and taking UJ success stories and institutional successes to the market, a total of 15 faculties and support departments were afforded radio slots.

UJFM assisted in the recruitment of students – 300 were auditioned- 40 in Skills development and training.

UJFM further partnered with the Faculty of Engineering and Built Environment to present Engineering Week from 15 - 29 June 2021. The aim of these interviews is to provide insight into the respective discipline (i.e. qualifying criteria, career prospects in the FEBE Faculty).

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

It is often said that the true African university must be the one that draws inspiration from its community, and work towards social transformation through the transfer of knowledge and skills. Far from being an ivory tower detached from society, UJ understands that the pursuit of knowledge is only relevant if it is done for community upliftment, social transformation and for the public good. In the period under review, UJ recruited and trained 6 739 recruited Student Volunteer Champions (SVCs) across all campuses for the implementation of UJ values of promoting responsible citizenship and leadership development.

This was against the MEC target of 10 000, and the shortfall was because of the Covid-19 lockdowns which restricted the CE recruitment activations to online platforms. However, the 6 739 brought to 45 000 the number of SVCs recruited in the last four years alone. This places UJ among the leading universities with a high number of students participating in this programme, which forms part of the University's strategy to contribute to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of addressing social and economic inequalities in under-represented groups.

To improve the efficacy of student volunteerism as well as knowledge and skills development, CE designed and implemented the Performance Management System for Student Volunteer Champions taking part in projects. This makes it mandatory for internal and external stakeholders to evaluate the performance of UJ Volunteer Champions when undertaking the organised outreach projects.

Another exciting project was the broadcasting of 13 TV episodes/dialogues featuring UJ Student Volunteer Champions (SVCs), on HIV/Aids, education, health and socio-economic issues, thanks to the CE Unit's collaboration with Soweto TV and KMTV Media. Our students participated in this project about a topic that can easily be forgotten in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. The broadcast series was aired weekly since May 2021.

The CE Unit also introduced and rolled out mobile libraries and tutoring projects to improve literacy in communities and primary schools in and around the university. This is part of UJs' vision to infuse community engagement into teaching, learning and research to establish and foster strategic partnerships with its communities. UJ also successfully implemented the Food Security Programme, through garden projects, which is aimed at sustainable access of nutritious foods and poverty alleviation.

This outstanding work has not gone unnoticed. The University was recognised by the City of Joburg with four prestigious "Excellence Awards" for the city clean up, door-to-door campaign to educate vendors and residents on the importance of ridding the city of the scourge of littering and other health hazards.

Additionally, CE successfully organised and hosted important institutional events such as the UJ Nelson Mandela International Day, which focused on the SDGs such as education and literacy, food and nutrition, health and safe shelter.

## **CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD**

Guided by UJ's Strategic Objectives for 2025, the various functions that constitute University Relations remain focused on promoting and protecting the reputation of the



UJ Brand. In 2022, all areas within University Relations will continue to engage stakeholders promptly and regularly with a unified voice to the benefit of UJ and the communities, it works with.