

UCT campus evacuated, classes suspended after fire guts library

 By Shan Raddiffe

19 Apr 2021

The University of Cape Town's library has been destroyed and students evacuated after the fire that started on the slopes of Table Mountain near Rhodes Memorial yesterday spread onto the Rondebosch campus.



Image source: [University of Cape Town on Facebook](#)

A message posted on the UCT Libraries' Facebook page from Ujala Satgoor, Executive Director of Libraries, said: "At this stage, we can confirm the Reading Room is completely gutted and thankfully the fire detection system in place triggered the fire shutters thereby preventing the spread of the fire to other parts of the Library. Some of our valuable collections have been lost, however a full assessment can only be done once the building has been declared safe and we can enter the building."

Student evacuation

A release issued by UCT last night established that emergency accommodation was being arranged for students evacuated from residences.

It also confirmed that arrangements for food were being made: "Approximately 4000 meals were prepared for distribution on Sunday evening and further meals will be prepared at Old Mutual's offices in Pinelands, Cape Town and from there these will be distributed to the locations where our students are accommodated. The necessary arrangements have also been made to cater for our Muslim students."

Yesterday, Den Anker Restaurant offered meals to displaced students:

“ Any UCT res students who have been directly affected by the fire are welcome to come over to Den Anker this evening.

We will serve you a plate of food, you will need to provide us with proof of your res card.[#DenAnker](#) [#NewlandsFire](#) [#UCTStudents](#) [#Fire](#) [#CapeTownFire](#)— Den Anker Restaurant (@den_anker) [April 18, 2021](#) ”

The restaurant has since extended its offer for the rest of the week, with spaghetti bolognese on the menu tonight:

“ We're extending the UCT dinners for the week. We will provide a different meal each night. Tonight is spaghetti bolognese. [#DenAnker](#) [#NewWandsFire](#) [#CapeTownFires](#) [#UCTStudents](#) [#Fire](#) [#CapeTownFire](#) <https://t.co/sJH7p8MILF>— Den Anker Restaurant (@den_anker) [April 19, 2021](#) ”

E-hailing services have also jumped on board to provide assistance to stranded students, with Uber offering two free rides of up to R100 each, while Bolt is providing one free trip.

“ This is a free ride to get to safety. Please only use this code (SafeUCT) if you need to get somewhere safe 🚗🚗🚗🚗 [#capetownfire](#) pic.twitter.com/bVCqXHzGZ6— Bolt South Africa (@Boltapp_za) [April 18, 2021](#) ”

“ For those needing to evacuate the UCT campuses, please apply the promo code UCTFIRES in your Uber app. This offers you 2 free trips (up to R100 each) from this location! Valid until 19 April 2021 - please evacuate safely. [#UberCommunity](#)— Uber South Africa (@Uber_RSA) [April 18, 2021](#) ”



Emergency relief efforts for Rhodes Memorial, UCT fire under way - here's how to help

Sindy Peters 19 Apr 2021



Public assistance

The public is asked to donate any essential items and food which they may wish to contribute at Old Mutual West Campus, 91 Jan Smuts Road, Pinelands, Cape Town.

Emergency relief fund

An emergency relief fund has been set up for those willing and able to donate. The details are as follows:

Account name: UCT Donations Account

Bank: Standard Bank of South Africa

Branch code: Rondebosch Branch, 025009

Account number: 07 152 2387

Swift code: SBZAJJ

Donors should please include their name if you so wish to, as well as the purpose/reference for your donation ([#UCTFire](#)).

Counselling services

Counselling services are being provided to students and staff who had to be evacuated. The following services are standing by on a toll-free phone line to support the affected members of the campus community:

- SA Depression and Anxiety Group: 080 024 2526
- ICAS: 080 111 3945

Academic impact

All academic activities have been suspended today and tomorrow (Tuesday, 20 April 2021). Further information regarding

the reopening of campus and classes will be provided in due course. UPDATE | 20 April: Classes have been suspended for the remainder of the week and will resume on Monday, 26 April.

Said the UCT statement: "We thank all emergency services support staff who have worked with the university, City of Cape Town and SanParks thus far. Our thoughts are with the incredible fire fighters at this time, we wish them strength and endurance as they work tirelessly to extinguish this devastating fire."

Further updates will be provided via the [UCT website](#) as and when more information becomes available.

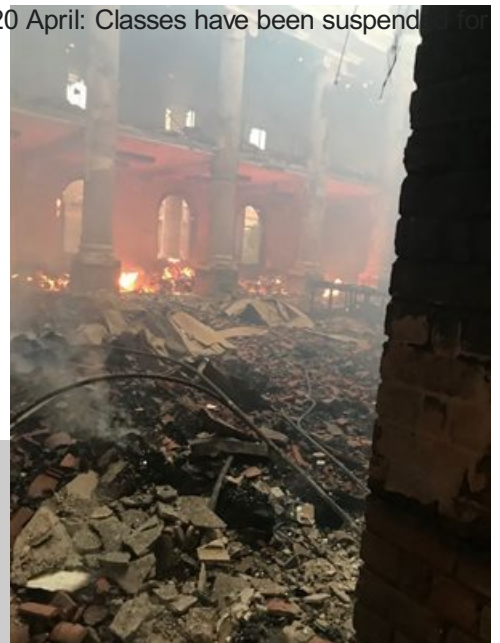


Image source: [University of Cape Town on Facebook](#)

Read more:

- [Man arrested for Table Mountain fire](#) - eNCA
- [UPDATE - Evacuations under way in Cape Town as runaway fire spreads to Devil's Peak, Vredehoek](#) - News24
- [Cape Town fire: residents urged to avoid City Bowl and work from home](#) - IOL
- [Raging fire damages section of Rhodes Memorial Restaurant](#) - EWN
- [Two firefighters hospitalised as Cape Town heritage gems including Mostert Mill and UCT library gutted](#) - TimesLIVE

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