

## UCT COUNCIL ELECTIONS 2024 – CONVOCAATION NOMINEE



### MARK OPPENHEIMER

#### CONVOCAATION NOMINATORS

- Adv Tongayi Masvikwa
- Mr Simon Apfel
- Adv Gabriel Cross
- Ms Aimee Pullon
- Mr Hugh Bauer
- Mrs Yardená Arnoni

#### STATEMENT OF INTENT

As a human rights lawyer and the host of the philosophy discussion show, Brain in a Vat, I have spent my professional life at the intersection of legal advocacy and philosophical inquiry. My work has not only been about defending freedom of thought and expression in courtrooms or exploring those ideals in active dialogues on my show but has also involved fostering environments where diverse perspectives thrive.

I am concerned that recent trends at UCT have narrowed the traditionally broad space for academic freedom—a cornerstone upon which the university's proud traditions are built. Ensuring that a diverse range of viewpoints is not just tolerated but actively encouraged is paramount to the achievement of academic and societal progress. I am committed to contributing to the council's efforts to safeguard and expand this space, ensuring that UCT continues to be a beacon of free thought and diverse academic inquiry in South Africa and beyond. My unique blend of legal and philosophical expertise will be an asset to the council in these endeavours.

# BRIEF CURRICULUM VITAE

## Education and professional qualifications

2002–2007	BA, BSocSci (Honours in Philosophy), LLB at UCT
2009	Admitted to the Johannesburg Bar

## Occupation and offices held

2010 – Present	Practicing Advocate
2020 – Present	Member of Council at the South African Institute of Race Relations
2021 – Present	Member of Rule of Law Project’s Board of Advisors

Mark Oppenheimer graduated from UCT in 2007 and has been a practicing advocate and member of the Johannesburg Bar for 15 years. He has appeared in the [Supreme Court of Appeal](#) and the [Constitutional Court](#) in a series of cases that seek to determine the boundary between freedom of expression and genuine hate speech.

He is frequently [a guest on South African television](#) to discuss human rights and the rule of law. Mark has [authored submissions](#) to Parliament on the Hate Speech Bill and to the UN Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on escalating racial tensions.

He frequently appears on television, radio, and online platforms to discuss recent legal developments. He produced a [documentary film](#) starring Justice Albie Sachs about the Constitutional Court and its art collection. He hosts a weekly [discussion show](#) with Dr Jason Werbeloff where they interview prominent academic philosophers from around the world. He has published a book on the [philosophy of law](#) and a series of [popular philosophy](#) books.

He is regularly invited to speak at conferences on civil and political rights. He has also given guest lectures at St Andrews University in Scotland and Rhodes College in Memphis Tennessee.

He has been involved as a coach and an adjudicator in international law moot competitions and coached the University of the Witwatersrand team that competed at the University of Oxford Price Media Law Moot.