

# Need funds? Take a hike!

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## **Prega Govender**

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The University of Cape Town (UCT) is appealing to parents to donate the equivalent of its proposed 10.3% fee increase to its financial aid fund for needy students.

And the vice-chancellor of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University in Port Elizabeth, Professor Derrick Swartz, is leading a 23-member team on a four-day fundraising hike to Machu Picchu in Peru,

South America. The expedition hopes to raise R4-million for students who were unable to finish their studies because of a shortage of money.

These are some of the creative ways universities are using to raise extra cash to help alleviate the funding crisis in higher education.

These initiatives come in the wake of a steady decline in government subsidies to universities and demands by students that fees not be increased next year.

UCT spokesperson Elijah Moholola said the university had to “renew” efforts to raise funds from foundations, corporates, donors and alumni.

He said UCT had also introduced new revenue-generating initiatives such as online courses.

“Some of these have made profits but we cannot be confident at this stage, in a very competitive global market, that they will deliver significant revenue, certainly not at

the levels we are seeking.”

Moholola said they were already generating almost 20% of their annual “recurring” revenue from sources other than student fees or state funding.

Swartz said he and the hiking group would leave for Peru on August 27, adding that at least R1.5-million of the R4-million target set for the hike had already been raised by asking backers to pay R43 for every mile walked. The Inca Trail is

26 miles (43km) long, according to a trekkers’ guide, *incatrailperu.com*.

Swartz added: “There are literally thousands of students who drop out for one or other reason, usually financial reasons. It’s such a monumental waste. We spend hundreds of millions of rands to give them opportunities and the rate of attrition is just so high.”

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**Read the full story at [mg.co.za/feesfund](http://mg.co.za/feesfund)**