

# CHANCELLOR COLLEGE BULLETIN



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Desks spaced more than 1 metre apart in the lecture rooms

## Balancing the right to education with the right to life

It's several months down the line and we are still talking about Covid-19. But at least now we can say that Chancellor College has been able to open its doors to its students, despite Covid-19. In March, we faced the painful decision to close our doors, as a way of keeping everyone – staff as well as students – safe. However, based on the observation of the decline in the spread of the disease, Government decided that institutions should once again open their doors, while placing some Covid-19 preventive measures.

At Chancellor College, these preventive measures are to be seen on almost every corner. The most obvious is that the college has only opened for fourth year and postgraduate students. The rest of the students will probably be joining the campus later on. Additionally, all students and staff have been given face masks, beautifully designed by our own Human Ecology Department, and bearing the logo of the university. The list goes on: we have hand sanitizers available for each department, soap and water dispensers are to be found around the corridors of the campus, the classrooms have desks that are widely spaced apart, and masks are being given to everyone. Prior to

opening the college, rooms on campus were sprayed with disinfectants.

The cherry on the cake is the hiring of nurses around campus. It gives a warm feeling of reassurance, when, as you arrive on campus, a uniformed nurse politely stops you and requests permission to take your temperature. It makes you appreciate the effort taken by the college to ensure that the campus remains Covid-19 free.

The mention of some of these products could be an indication of the college deciding to embrace a business model, seeking to place the face masks and disinfectants on the market for the public. As others have said before, Chancellor College is a brand. We have been selling college branded study guides and textbooks produced by the Publications Section, but perhaps now we can do more, taking advantage of a client base that already, and justifiably, associated Chancellor College with excellence. We have been slow to capitalize on that brand, but perhaps this is the time to do so, of course with the safety of Malawians at the forefront.

While we exercise these precautionary measures, our eyes remain firmly set forward. We are an institution of higher learning, after all, and the country expects us to deliver. In that light the delinking

process is continuing. Staff are ensuring that their programmes are updated and ready to deliver. The institution is growing academically (there are more programmes being developed, some for online delivery) as well as physically (infrastructure continues to be erected on college grounds).

At some point, NCHE came to the campus and were blown away by the state of readiness in which they found us. At Chirunga, they found the epitome of excellence in higher education, and could not help but grant positive accreditation status. This was just a way of confirming what the whole country, or indeed the whole world, already new.

Covid-19 is not over, even though the daily statistics give us hope. Meanwhile, even in the presence of this disease, the show must go on.

### EDITORIAL TEAM:

Associate Prof. Ken Lipenga Jr  
(Chief Editor)

Prof. Samson Sajidu  
(Vice Principal)

Mr Alfred Banda

Mr Gervasio Manyungwa

Mr James Ngwenya

Mr Felix Mwalemba

# Managing Chirunga Polling Centre

One of the most exciting events to occur in Malawi in the last few months is obviously the fresh elections, which were held after the courts annulled the presidential elections held in 2019. During these elections, Chancellor College was one of the many polling centres around the country, just as it had been in 2019, and in other years previously. In 2020, it was decided that the polling centre premises would be at the Sports Complex. A total of 639 votes were cast on the day of voting.

Mrs Mupu Chonzi, Senior Chief Executive Officer (HRM) at Chancellor College, served as the Presiding Officer at the Chirunga Polling Centre (code 0328). She pointed out that the Presiding Officers were trained by the Malawi Electoral Commission (MEC) at Mponda TDC, after which they trained the Polling Officers at their polling centres. "Because of our training and our preparation, the voting went very smoothly," Chonzi points out. "We had two voting streams, due to the number of registered voters. This made it quite



*Mrs Mupu Chonzi, Presiding Officer at Chirunga Polling Station*

easy for us to manage the voters and to count the votes once the voting was completed. Chirunga polling centre was really one of the most organized in the country."

Prior to the day of voting, there was a lot sensitization done, such that most voters knew what to do when they arrived at the

polling centre. There were voters present as early as 6.00am. In the queuing process the Presiding Officer and Ushers ensured that social distance was observed. They also rendered quick assistance to disabled persons, the elderly, and pregnant women who came to vote. There were also security officers available to ensure that everything went smoothly.

## College preps for re-opening



*Delegates from MoE and NCHE appreciating the Mpondagiya handwashing facility assembled by the Physics Department*

The Ministry of Education (MoE) recently undertook a tour of various institutions to assess their preparedness for opening amid the Covid-19 pandemic. The tour was also in response to the Presidential

directive that schools should open from 7th September 2020.

Chancellor College was visited on 9<sup>th</sup> September by a team composed of the MoE officials led by the Deputy Director

of Higher Education, Dr V. Zimpita, and the Chief Education Officer, Mrs R. Kalizangoma. The National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) Chief Executive Officer, Dr Ignatius Jimu, also joined the tour. Chancellor College management team, led by the Vice Principal, Prof S. Sajidu, received the delegation. During the tour, the delegation received a presentation on the college's preparedness for reopening with respect to each element set in the Ministry's guidelines for reopening of colleges and universities. The presentation was made by the Chanco Covid-19 Task Force Chair, Associate Prof. D. Pemba.

After the presentation, the delegation toured the college's Physics Department where hand washing facilities commonly known as *Mpondagiya* were being assembled; Biological Sciences Department where sanitizers and disinfectants were being prepared; and Human Ecology Department where face masks were being tailored. Additionally, the team visited the hostels to appreciate the accommodation arrangement for students; and the library and classrooms to appreciate for sitting arrangements. The visit was concluded at the College's facility for isolation and quarantine at the former Extension wing hostel.

# Accreditation of the University of Malawi – Chancellor College



*NCHE officials visit one of the lectures in session*

In September, 2020, The National Council for Higher Education (NCHE), announced that various programmes at Chancellor College had finally been accredited, in pursuit of its Act which mandates the Council to ensure quality higher education in Malawi. NCHE had visited Chancellor College in October 2019 for accreditation of both the institution and its programmes. The institution and all the presented programmes (except one) have now been accredited as published on NCHE’S webpage.

NCHE developed its accreditation and evaluation framework for education programmes offered in higher education institutions. Institutional accreditation makes reference to achievement of acceptable standards, in terms of physical, human, financial, teaching and learning resources; management and operational procedures; and an acceptable standard of academic life focusing on teaching, research, community service and expert service.

Chancellor College excels in all these areas, the evidence of which is in the accreditation status, of which few were ever in doubt. What was recently in focus were the programmes at

the college, at various levels of study, which have now been accredited. Programme accreditation takes into account several factors, including the following: the academic qualifications of all members of staff employed by a higher education institution during the period of assessment, including those expected to be employed by the higher education institution; the total number of students enrolled in each programme of instruction offered at a higher education institution and the standards attained by those that have graduated during the

period of assessment; information and communication technology infrastructure and the provision for training; the size and quality of the library and other teaching and learning resources; the financial resources available for the exclusive use by a higher education institution, certified by its auditors; the physical facilities including land, land available for the exclusive use by a higher education institution; student-staff ratio of a higher education institution; and the currency, relevance and frequency of review of the curriculum for each programme for comparability, nationally and internationally.



*The Principal takes the delegation on a tour of the campus*

# Chancellor College in Digital Migration

As part of the reform process, Chancellor College is in the process of going paperless as the institution has embarked on a digital migration process that will see it conduct all its transactions online. Speaking during an interface meeting on 17th September, 2020, when the ICT department appraised members from registry and finance on this development, the ICT Director, Ms Bridget Nyirongo, said her department is in the process of cleaning data from the Human Resource section.

Ms. Nyirongo said since most of the data at the college has been paper based, a data cleaning exercise would be important so that records of all staff members like their grades, specific roles and designations are uploaded online to assist in the smooth completion of any online transactions. Elaborating this point, she stated that, “transactions like claiming per diem, applications for holidays, loans, part time lecturing claims and all sorts of claims and applications will be



*Mrs Annie Saeluzika, ICT Technician*

done online. The online applications or claims will follow a similar process where one fills a form to apply or claim for something.

She added that the online applications for subsistence allowance, for example, will also include the possibility of an individual claiming for a group of people

as is being done currently with paperwork.

It is believed that the online transactions will cut short the period within which approvals are sought from various stages of authorizing officers as well as preventing documents from going missing. The on-line transactions are also particularly critical at this time of COVID-19.

## Chanco infrastructural expansion underway



*Construction of lecture theatres*

As we celebrate the completion of the Economics Departmental building containing staff offices and a library, the Government, through the Public Sector Investment Program (PSIP), continues to support the construction

of both undergraduate and postgraduate classrooms for the Economics Department. The project is aimed at enhancing the quality of Economics graduates while improving the financial sustainability of the college. Its outcomes

include, among others: creation of a conducive teaching and learning environment; creation of conducive facilities for research and community engagement; and improvement of revenue for the institution. The outputs are largely, the construction and refurbishment of the completed office block with its resource centre and classrooms. So far, the construction works for the classrooms are at over 50% completion.

Continuing with the PSIP support, the college submitted proposals for three other projects which are principally approved. However, their implementation will be in phases in the near future. The projects include the construction of an Inclusive Centre, considering that the college has intensively responded and embarked on a course to institutionalize inclusive education. There are also plans to construct a teaching and learning complex which will contain classes and staff offices, in order to create more teaching space. The third plan is for the construction of an administration block befitting a fully-fledged modern university.



*Dr Mathero Michelle Nkhalamba, lecturer in the Psychology Department*

## Talking COVID-19 and Mental Health

While the COVID-19 pandemic has claimed a lot of lives in Malawi and beyond, one thing that health workers have come to realize is that it is also taking a toll on mental health. A lot of individuals are facing a new level of mental stress as they try to cope with the pandemic. As a result, there are some professionals who have taken it upon themselves to provide positive advice, so that people may cope better with the mental strain that has come with the pandemic. One of these professionals is Dr Mathero Michelle Nkhalamba, a lecturer in the Psychology Department at Chancellor College. She is no stranger to counselling, having featured several times on Chanco Radio, and also currently working as a volunteer counsellor at Tisungane Clinic, Zomba General Hospital.

Since July 2020, Dr Nkhalamba has been featured as a permanent guest on the “Mental Health Chat Segment” programme on Times Radio where she addresses issues related to mental health in Malawi. Due to the currency of the COVID-19 pandemic, issues tackled on the programme have included depression, relations with those who have lost loved ones due to COVID-19, and managing of children in times of new socialising restrictions. The programme began as a way of initiating discussions on mental health, through simple conversations and a platform where people can listen in. The show is broadcast in Chichewa, ensuring that it has broad listenership.

In one of the programmes, for example, Nkhalamba observes that those with pre-existing conditions are liable to experience a higher level of stress, due to the understanding that they are at greater risk of succumbing to COVID-19. She

also observes that medical workers also experience more stress, due to the fact that they have to care for patients, while also protecting themselves.

Although currently, the focus is on COVID-19 and mental health, Nkhalamba points out that the show shall continue in future with other mental health topics. “The idea is that at some point we take the programme to the community with a radio or TV journalist to facilitate a discussion and gain their views about mental health issues,” she stresses. This can be a way of enlightening people on mental health issues, but also of hearing what communities in Malawi think about mental health. “For most Malawians, there is a stigma attached to mental health, where people associate mental health issues with being locked up or being violent. We want to make it okay to be talking about mental health without being labelled.”

# Chanco engages nursing interns

Chancellor College has engaged nursing interns to assist in collecting Covid-19 related data as a way of improving its efforts to positively and rapidly respond to any possible Covid-19 suspected cases among staff and students. These are nurses registered by the Nurses and midwives Council of Malawi, and are graduates of various nursing institutions in Malawi. There are currently 11 nurses on campus, with the possibility of increasing the numbers later.

The nurses have been stationed at strategic locations where there is a lot of traffic into and out of the campus. According to the Chancellor College ICT Director, Ms Bridget Nyirongo, the nursing interns have been equipped with tablets and thermal body scanners for screening body temperature. Both pedestrians and motor vehicle drivers are scanned as they come to the campus. “They will use the gadgets to capture Covid-19

related data which in turn will inform the Covid-19 Technical Advisory Team in its responses”, Nyirongo said. “The tablets have been specifically configured to capture categories such as student, staff, visitor, or patient designation. The nurses can also record one’s physical address, any other contact details, temperature

checks, age, signs and symptoms related to COVID-19, among others.”

The initiative to engage nursing interns is a direct response to one of the requirements from the Ministry of Education for safe reopening of the College which will see the nursing interns stay at the College for a period of five months.



*Checking temperature at one of the carparks*

## College staff appointed to boards

On 23rd September, 2020, Government announced the names of individuals in the country who had been appointed to various boards of parastatal organisations. The appointment of new board members is something that is often expected with the entry of a new governing regime, an event which happened in Malawi in the past few months. The boards are often populated with academics, lawyers, technocrats, party loyalists, traditional chiefs, and members of the clergy, among others.

For us in the academy, we consider the presence of academics in these boards as a positive contribution to the running of parastatals in the country. It is a matter of pride that a good number of these individuals on the boards are also serving at Chancellor College. Some are chairing the boards, whereas others are mere members. One of the most predictable names is that of the College Principal, Prof.

Richard Tambulasi, who has been appointed as Chairperson of Malawi Institute of Management (MIM). He is joined at MIM by Dr. Blessings Chinsinga. Another person chairing a board is Dr. Sunduzwayo Madise, current Dean of Law. He has been appointed Chairperson of the Malawi National Council of Sports.

The list of other Chancellor College staff members appointed to boards includes the following: Dr. Chomora Mikeka (National Commission for Science and Technology), Dr Jacob Mazalale Electricity Supply Corporation of Malawi), Mr. George Mandere (Electricity Supply Commission of Malawi), Dr Boniface Dulani (Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority), Mr Bright Theu (Public Private Partnership Commission), Dr Levis Eneya (Malawi Bureau of Standards), Prof. Edge Kanyongolo (Competition and Fair Trade Commission), Dr Ronald Mangani (Malawi Environmental Protection Authority), Mr Chikosa Banda (Malawi Environmental Protection Authority), Dr Marlene Chikuni (National

Herbarium and Botanic Gardens of Malawi), Prof. Cosmo Ngongondo (Southern region Water Board), Mr. Elius Chizimba (Blantyre Water Board), and Dr Bernadette Malunga (Sunbird Tourism PLC).

The Vice Chancellor of University of Malawi is an ex-officio member of several boards. There are also other academics, from outside Chancellor College, who have been appointed as board members. The general consensus is that this will help to ensure that the boards are manned by people who understand the parastatals, instead of mere handclappers who are after allowances.

The announcement of the boards also significantly includes the appointment of members of the University of Malawi Council. The new Council features Prof. Jack Wirima as a returning Chairperson, as well as Mr George Patridge, Mr. Mordecai Msisha, SC, and Prof. Moira Chimombo.

# Minister applauds campus COVID-19 fight

Minister of Education Agnes Nyalonje on 22nd September, 2020, applauded Chancellor College for the strides made in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. The minister was on a tour to appreciate the level of preparedness of the college, which resumed Fourth year classes on 14th September this year.

On the tour, the Minister visited several sections of the college, including the Department of Human Ecology, where the college is making University of Malawi-branded face masks for its staff and students for free. She also visited the Department of Chemistry, where the college is producing hand sanitizers that are being distributed to students and staff.

Speaking when she engaged the college management in the Great Hall, the minister emphasized the need for institutions to collaborate with government in its efforts to combat the pandemic. She spoke highly of the college's efforts as a testament to the fact that education should foster innovation.

Speaking earlier, the College Principal Professor Richard Tambulasi thanked the Minister for coming to Chancellor College as her visit had shown the Ministry's commitment towards higher education. He welcomed government's decision to open education institutions, which are entrusted to impart skills and build the human resource that will manage the country's economy. In his speech, he outlined a number of measures that the college has put in place to ensure that students and members of staff are kept safe from the pandemic. These include the production and free distribution of face masks and hand sanitizers, the introduction of temperature checking points around the campus, social distance indicators in classes, the library and other areas, and – working with Zomba District Health Office and Zomba District Council – the establishment of a quarantine center.



Associate Professor Dylo Pemba explains the hand sanitizer production process to the Minister

## MBS pre-certifies anti-COVID-19 products

The Malawi Bureau of Standards (MBS) has pre-certified Chancellor College products and initiatives meant to complement government's efforts in preventing the further spread of COVID-19.

MBS has been testing samples of these products, including hand sanitizers, using a Draft Malawi Standard for the product that has just been developed (DMS 1548:2020, Hand sanitizers (Alcohol-based specification). This follows voluntary submission of samples by manufacturers/distributors. Among the pre-certified products are handwashing machines

locally known as *Mpondagiya*, safe hand sanitizers, face masks and disinfectants.

In a questionnaire response, the college's COVID-19 Technical Advisory Team Chairperson, Associate Professor Dylo Pemba, said the college's hand sanitizer as well as disinfectants are alcohol-based, which complies with the standards set by the Bureau.

"We have been producing ethanol-based Chanco produced disinfectants", Pemba said. "Our sanitiser is alcohol-based, and the composition is indicated on the bottle as required by MBS", he added.

In its recent press release, the Bureau warned that the pre-certification exercise it is currently carrying out for different companies does not entail approval of the said products. "We wish to stress that the list of the products does not entail that the products have been certified by the MBS, since the control of the approval of the product is the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Health", reads the press release.

Since COVID-19 began to spread in Malawi, the country has seen a proliferation of the homemade products to prevent or fight the disease, the majority of which have not been certified or approved by the relevant authorities, casting doubts of the safety of such products.





# Lecturers win SSRC Covid-19 Grant



*Dr. Timwa Lipenga and Dr Hendrina Kachapila*

The research profile of Chancellor College continues to grow as two female academics, Dr. Hendrina Kachapila (Department of History) and Dr Timwa Lipenga (Department of French), have been announced among the winners of the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) Rapid Response Grants on Covid-19 and the Social Sciences.

These grants are offered in partnership with the Henry Luce Foundation, and with generous support of the Wenner-Gren, Ford, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur, and William and Flora Hewlett Foundations. This year, there were around 1300 applications, out of which 62 emerged successful. Each grant is worth not more than \$5,000. The grants offer research support for up to six months toward research-

related expenses. These include, but are not limited to, access to data sets, archives and relevant publications, costs related to conducting online research of various kinds, and research assistance.

The research project has sprung from a paper that the two lecturers developed for a conference presentation in 2017. When they saw the call for research ideas on innovative approaches to the COVID-19 pandemic in April 2020, they decided to collaborate in developing a proposal, which they eventually submitted to SSRC." Delete the existing first sentence. The project focuses on lessons that can be drawn from past epidemics in responding to Covid-19. The lessons range from assessing the success for practices used to contain those epidemics, to an examination of the relationship

between colonial administrators, health practitioners, and local inhabitants.

The researchers shall consult archival material and conduct interviews with major stakeholders in the present pandemic. "What we observe is that there is an issue of power in relation to control of disease within different context, such as colonial Malawi. We are therefore interested specifically in government policies in controlling the spread of the diseases, as well as media coverage of the pandemics, across different historical periods," the researchers said. They believe that their findings will inform the formulation of workable responses to the COVID-19 pandemic in Malawi.

The research is due to commence in October 2020, with a projected end date of March, 2021.



# Kanyongolo appointed Standard Bank Board Chairperson



*Dr Ngeyi Kanyongolo*

At Chancellor College, we always celebrate moments when our people are recognized in various fora in the country and beyond, through the appointment to various positions. One of the most recent of such

acknowledgements is the appointment of Dr Ngeyi Ruth Kanyongolo, an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Law, as Chairperson of Standard Bank PLC. She becomes the first female Board Chair in 50 years for Standard Bank Malawi.

Dr Kanyongolo has been part of the Standard Bank PLC board since 2013. She sees her participation in various boards as part of the outreach mandate of an academic. “I include my participation in various boards as part of outreach. I am offering myself and sharing my expertise and serving the nation in private capacity. It is a service to the nation. As academic staff, we are encouraged to do that.” She notes that engaging with the bank has enabled her to appreciate the business world better, but at the same time she takes her position as an opportunity to emphasize the social aspect of doing business, the need to be responsive to staff, customer and other stakeholder interests.

Apart from her role at Standard Bank, Kanyongolo is involved in other outreach positions. She is a founding member of the Women’s Lawyers Association, where she is still active, and also a board Member of Tilitonse Foundation, Equality Effect of Canada, SASPEN, an Association of Social Protection Experts in Southern Africa.

## Philosophy holds Ethics webinar

On evening of 26th August, 2020, the Philosophy department held a webinar on “The Role of Ethics in Combating Corruption in Malawi”. Facilitators of the webinar included Mr Lawrence Mpekansambo, a lecturer in the Philosophy Department; Mr Reyneck Matemba, Director General of the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB); and Ms Martha Chizuma, the Ombudsman. The webinar was moderated by Ms Tawina Chisi, from the Department of Philosophy.

Ms Chisi observes that the success of the webinar, held on the Zoom platform, is seen primarily in the observation that it drew over 70 attendees from a cross section of industry, public service, private sector, the academia as well as civil society.

During the webinar, the various facilitators made presentations, after which they engaged with the participants. There was heated debate on the topic of corruption in Malawi, and the roles of the academia, the

Office of the Ombudsman, and the ACB in tackling the problem. There were many ideas that came from the participants, including the need to structure ethics in public institutions, the need to make ethics a compulsory subject at primary and secondary school levels, the need for all individuals to embrace ethics, and the need to make it part of the country’s education philosophy.

Dr Yamikani Ndasauka, Head of the Department of Philosophy pointed out that the idea of this particular webinar sprung from current discussions on corruption in Malawi. This prompted the department to discuss the role of ethics in combating corruption. At the end of the webinar, he promised to continue with such conversations on ethics.



*Ms Tawina Chisi*



## Chirunga campus disinfected

During the week of 3rd to 7th August 2020, Chancellor College underwent a disinfection exercise, which saw a number of experts coming to campus and spraying strategic areas to reduce the potential for the spread of COVID-19. This happened at a time when cases of the disease were on the rise in Zomba.

The college had reportedly recorded some positive cases, which prompted the administration to swiftly carry out a disinfection exercise in liaison with the Ministry of Health's Zomba District Health Office (DHO). A member of the college's COVID-19 Technical Advisory Team, Dr. Placid Mpeketula, who coordinated the exercise, said the aim was to take a precautionary measure to ensure safety of the college's staff against contracting COVID-19 through touching surfaces that might have been exposed to the virus.

"As you know, the College had closed for some time. Nevertheless, essential services were still taking place and at that point in time cases were increasing in Zomba. So, doors and doorknobs, and passages as well as frequently visited places were thought to be high risk areas worthy of disinfecting out of abundance of caution", Dr. Mpeketula explained.

Disinfection of surfaces is a highly recommended exercise from the Ministry of Health. That is why the college undertook this exercise in conjunction with the DHO who provided the technical know-how. However, the College played a significant role in providing resources for the disinfection.

Said Dr. Mpeketula, "First, all the materials (chemicals) used to produce the disinfectant were provided by the

college. Secondly, the campus is vast and has lots of buildings and it could have been a daunting task if the DHO team were to be left alone to do the exercise.

He added that the DHO played the crucial role of drilling and training the Chanco disinfection staff, and most importantly harmonized the approach to the exercise in order for the College team to operate according to national guidelines as recommended by the Ministry of Health.

He further said the team from DHO specified the needed chemicals and the entire process of how to come up with the disinfectant.

"They demonstrated the processes and together with the Chanco team, proceeded to make volumes enough for the exercise as well as conducted the actual exercise together with the Chanco team", he concluded.

## ERT training reveals e-Learning potential

In the week of 17 to 21 August 2020, academic staff at Chancellor College underwent training in Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT). This was a way in which the institution prepared for online teaching of students.

The training was conducted on the Zoom platform. There were various topics covered during the orientation sessions.

According to Dr Mtemang'ombe, the Acting Director of e-Learning there

was a very good response to the call for training. A lot of people logged in for the live sessions. "There will be more training sessions," Mtemang'ombe says. "We are encouraging faculty to make use of the available platforms to supplement face-to-face delivery which still faces some restrictions due to COVID-19 measures." Mtemang'ombe points out that Faculties and Schools are now being encouraged to identify modules that may be fully offered online, both at undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented the college with an opportunity to review its systems. Judging from the response to the ERT training, there is now an ongoing mindset shift in favour of online teaching and learning. What remains is to invest in ICT infrastructure, so the college is able to handle any volumes of traffic that are created through online teaching and learning.



Dr Frank Mtemang'ombe: Acting Director of e-Learning



## Kainja receives CIPESA Fellowship



*Mr Jimmy Kainja*

Mr Jimmy Kainja, a lecturer in the LACS department, was recently selected as one among nine recipients of the Collaboration on International ICT Policy for East and Central Africa (CIPESA) 2020

fellowship. The fellowship programme aims to increase the quality, diversity and regularity of research and media reporting on ICT, democracy, and human rights in Sub-Saharan Africa. The fellowship programme cultivates

links between the academic community and practitioners in the ICT field for mutual research, learning, and knowledge exchange, so as to create the next generation of ICT for democracy and ICT for human rights champions and researchers.

Kainja has attended CIPESA annual State of Internet Freedom in Africa conferences since 2016. These conferences have been held in various locations in Africa. Kainja also contributes reports on the state of internet freedom in Malawi to the CIPESA annual report. As a researcher, Mr Kainja has always been passionate about in media policy and regulation. In particular, his current research interest is in access to information in Malawi, data protection laws, and government policy on the same.

The fellowship will allow Kainja to conduct research in his area of interest. He is required to produce research output in areas that overlap with CIPESA's research themes, which include the role of intermediaries in internet freedom, and restrictive regulation with regard to internet freedom, among others.

## ONSE donates plumbing materials for COVID-19 Care Facility

The Organised Network of Services for Everyone's Health Activity (ONSE) on 3rd September, 2020, donated plumbing items to Chancellor College, to be used at the COVID-19 Care Facility. ONSE is Malawi's flagship program for health, funded by USAID. It supports the Government of Malawi in its efforts to reduce maternal, newborn, and child morbidity and mortality.

The donation, worth about four million kwacha (MK4,000,000), includes, among other items, two 5000-litre reserve water tanks, water sinks, wash hand basins, and HDPE pipes.

Receiving the donation during a ceremony held at the COVID-19

Care Facility, Chancellor College Principal Professor Richard Tambulasi thanked ONSE for the timely donation, particularly at a time the College was about to reopen. "Your organization, during its first visit, promised to donate plumbing items and we are very delighted to receive this donation, especially now that we are preparing to reopen the College. The water tanks will go a long way towards providing water", he said. The Principal appealed to other organizations to emulate ONSE's gesture, stressing that the College would use the donated plumbing items for their intended purpose.

Speaking at the same function, ONSE representative, Mrs Thandiwe Kamanga, said her organization targets major improvements in health through

sustainable approaches and increased country ownership. "ONSE is running a five-year project that delivers a package of health interventions to strengthen the health system and bring maternal, newborn, and child health; family planning and reproductive health; malaria; nutrition; and water, sanitation, and hygiene services to 16 districts, reaching more than half of the country's population with primary health care services", she said.

Currently the plumbing works are underway at the 34 roomed Covid-19 Care Facility where each room will have a wash hand basin as way of improving sanitation. The College is working in partnership with Zomba District Health Office (DHO), District Council and Zomba City Assembly in managing the Covid-19 Care Facility.



# Chanco Radio offers literature lessons



Dr Emmanuel Ngwira

Despite the largely negative effect of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is an undeniable fact that it has also given birth to some innovative endeavours among institutions and individuals. Chancellor College is no exception, with the college making several strides to continue offering its services amidst the pandemic. These include services to the general community.

In the latter regard, the selfless effort of individuals should perhaps be lauded to a greater degree. One of such is the move by Dr Emmanuel Ngwira, a senior lecturer in the English Department at Chancellor College. Driven by the need to contribute during the stressful COVID-19 times, he thought of using Chanco Radio to offer English literature lessons to secondary school students both in

lower and upper levels. “Being someone in the education field, I thought of doing something I could easily relate to,” he pointed to.

Chanco Radio was chosen due to a number of reasons. First, Ngwira has easy access to the station since it is already a part of Chancellor College. Secondly, he realised that the lessons would be one way of helping the station to broadcast material about the activities of the college. “And finally, since I was targeting mainly underprivileged students, I thought radio as a mass media tool would be ideal”, he said.

The content of the lessons follows the secondary school syllabi. Apart from general discussions of literary genres, literary terms, and literary devices, he also discusses John Steinbeck’s *The Pearl* and William Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*. MSCE lessons air on Tuesdays from

9.30am to 10.00am, whereas JCE lessons are broadcast on Fridays from 9.00am to 9.30am.

The feedback on the programme has been very encouraging, with many teachers in Zomba offering to help on a voluntary basis. As a result, there are now some lessons in Chemistry and Physics. The Zomba District Education Office has also requested the possibility of running similar programs for Standard 8 pupils. In the near future, the plan is start beaming the programme on Chanco TV, and to introduce other subjects, such as English Grammar and Mathematics. “We also plan to archive these lessons on the Chanco Website so that pupils can listen at their own time if they so wish. Ultimately, we would also want to have interactive tests online so that after listening or watching a lesson, students should test what they have learnt by taking an online quiz”, Ngwira says.



# CCASU interacts with insurance companies

In the month of September, the Chancellor College Academic Staff union (CCASU) arranged separate Zoom meetings between its membership and representatives from NICO Pensions/MINET and Old Mutual, as well as a pension expert.

Mrs Gift Makanje, Secretary General of CCASU, points out that members of the union have for a long time been worried about the amount of pension benefits given to employees upon retirement. Additionally, members wanted to be fully acquainted with pension issues, following the decision by the University of Malawi to stop gratuity payments.

The first meeting was with Mr Peter Kambalame, an expert on issues regarding pensions. In his informative presentation, he highlighted the rights that the employees have, with regard to their pension contributions.

The next two presentations, were from NICO Pensions/MINET and Old Mutual. Both presentations were



Mrs Gift Makanje, CCASU Secretary General

comprehensive and tailor-made to suit the Chancellor College context. NICO Pensions/MINET, who are currently managing the pensions of Chancellor College staff, made a presentation highlighting the contributions from the college. In the discussion, members

wanted the company to account for what the members and the employer contribute towards the pension. The meeting with Old Mutual was arranged in order for the members to appreciate how differently the company would manage their pensions, if given the opportunity.

## New leadership for CCASU



Dr Tiyesere Chikapa

On 30th September, 2020, the Chancellor College Academic Staff Union (CCASU) held a general assembly, at which, among other things, they elected new leadership. According to the constitution of the

union, leadership changes after a two-year term.

The new leadership includes Dr. Tiyesere Chikapa as the new president. She is a senior lecturer in the Department of Political and Administrative Studies. Reacting to her election, Dr Chikapa responded with humility, expressing her gratitude that her colleagues held her in such high esteem. "I have been teaching Human Resource Management for over 15 years. This puts me in a position to advocate for what I have always 'preached' and believed to be the ideals of how to manage key resources in organisations," she said.

There are a number of issues that the union is looking into, and which the new leadership intends to continue. These include the matter of gratuities,

following the announcement of plans by the University to curtail the provision of gratuities to staff. The new President also registers a concern with the flow of communication between college management and staff members.

Among the people elected are Dr Yamikani Ndasauka, as Secretary General, Dr Peter Namphande as his deputy and Ms Chikondi Shaba as the Treasurer. Other elected members include Dr Stanley Mlatho, Mr Yamikani Phiri, Mr Omega Zimba, and Ms Theresa Chome.

CCASU is one of the best-known unions in the University of Malawi. Its membership comprises members of academic staff, whose welfare is at the centre of the union's concerns, together with that of the provision of a conducive learning atmosphere at the college.



# Students welcome college re-opening

The College opened at the beginning of September, 2020. However, this opening was only to Fourth Year and Postgraduate students. This is in line with the phased approach to opening which the college has decided upon, as a way of preventing the possible spread of COVID-19. Students in other years of study may join the campus later on.

The dominant opinion among the students on campus is one of appreciation that they are now able to resume their studies, having been idle at home for several months. They point out that at home, it was difficult to focus on their studies or do their assignments, because the home environment was not conducive to such activities. Most of them were also busy doing chores for their parents.

Three female Fourth year Bachelor of Arts (Humanities) Students, Eunice Jemi, Pauline Chidakwa and Tiyamike Kananji, express optimism that they will now be able to complete their studies. "We feel that we are safer here than at home, because we are just a few and we meet the same people every day in our classrooms," they said. This is particularly the case because students in the other years of study are not on campus. "In addition, the service and space in the library are superb. We are able to access resources



*Eunice Jemi, Pauline Chidakwa, and Tiyamike Kananji*

freely and sit wherever we like. We would actually prefer if this arrangement was maintained until we complete the semester," they said.

The students have all been given face masks, which they wear on campus. They also appreciate that their lectures have commenced smoothly, with social distancing being observed in the classrooms. That is because the college has allocated spacious rooms for the lectures. The students also observe that the presence of the nurses at strategic points on campus is a positive move.

"They make me feel confident when I meet them in the morning and they take my temperature and tell me that it is in the normal range," said one student. "This make me walk onto campus with a positive attitude."

One key observation from the students is that Wifi access is more stable and faster since they are a small group. They are therefore hope able to work on their assignments and conduct other research work assigned to them. It is their hope that the internet access will continue to be excellent.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS



There have been a lot of events at Chancellor College over the past months. Whereas some events are occasions for celebration, others are regrettable.

This has been a period when several individuals have completed their studies. We offer congratulations to Dr Bob Maseko of CATS Department, for the completing of his PhD studies. Similar congratulations to others who have completed their doctorates go to Dr. Grace Tomoka-Bakuwa of Philosophy Department, Dr Tsirizani Kaombe of Mathematics, and Dr Emmanuel Souza of Population Studies.

We also offer congratulations to Dr. Zindaba Chisiza on his promotion to the rank of Associate Professor.

Unfortunately, this has also been a period of tragedy. We mourn the deaths of several of our students, including Edward Kaswada (MDS Student), Kelvin Kuda (Bachelor of Science) and Bernadette Kazingachire (MED – Social Studies).

During this period, we also lost two members of staff: Dr Lucy Binauli of Human Ecology and Mr John Bisika of Education Foundations. May their souls rest in peace.

We also grieve together with members of staff who have lost loved ones. These include Mr Bernard Mmame, whose mother passed on during this period; Dr Samson McJessie Mbewe, whose father passed on; Dr Bob Chulu, who lost his father; Dr Grivas Kayange, who lost his mother; and Prof. Dorothy Nampota, whose husband passed on. May they all rest in peace.