

UNIMA Bulletin



Inside this issue:



UNIMA and
AstriaLearning launch
UNIMA E-Campus

page 03



Department of
Chemistry trains
Water Specialists

page 06



Students recruited for
library internship

page 09



Ten Years of Chanco Community Radio and Beyond

When a child is born, we are happy. We also celebrate various milestones along the way as the baby grows. In 2023, one of the University of Malawi's babies celebrated a major milestone: Chanco Community Radio clocked ten!

As it was envisioned over a decade ago, the radio has been instrumental in helping the communities within the Lake Chilwa Basin and surrounding areas to understand and take part in environmental management and conservation, and climate change adaptation. More importantly, this has been one of the ways of community outreach we in the University of Malawi boast about as one of our core values.

Being the first radio in Malawi to specially focus its broadcasts on the aforementioned themes, the radio has closely worked with various departments which also focus on those same issues. These include the Department of Geography, Earth Sciences and Environment and the Department of Biological Sciences and Biomedical Health Sciences in the School of Natural and Applied Sciences, among others.

Many other departments have also been involved, both directly and indirectly, and the radio and its sister departments have constantly complemented one another. The results of various research projects that have been made known through Chanco Community Radio.

Given that UNIMA houses many experts in their various fields, they have also utilised the radio to share their knowledge to the wider world beyond the academia. In the same way, the radio has found a good supply of quality sources and content at its disposal for its various programmes which are continually assisting in the livelihoods of the communities in its catchment area.

The radio has also complemented in the training of students from the University of Malawi and other media training institutions. Some have gone on to become prominent personnel in various institutions, while some continue to actively contribute to the growth of the radio, thanks to the training and experience Chanco Community Radio has accorded them.

Indeed, as the radio celebrates this milestone, we cannot help but join in and celebrate with it in reflection of what it has achieved and the challenges it has encountered this far. We believe it still has a great untapped potential which if properly utilized and supported can help in promoting the university.

This anniversary could not come at a better time than now when we are settling into the new UNIMA. It is a turning point for UNIMA at large, as it is with Chanco Community Radio.

EDITORIAL TEAM:

Prof. Ken Lipenga Jr
(Chief Editor)
Mr Alfred Banda
Mr Christopher Chingwa
Ms Lawrencia Kapina
Mr Grey Chasuka
Mr Gracious Mulinga



UNIMA and AstriaLearning staff at the launch

University of Malawi and AstriaLearning launch UNIMA E-Campus

The University of Malawi recognizes the significance of strategic collaborations and acknowledges the imperative to adapt to changing educational models, embracing technology for progress. In an effort to harness the power of digital innovation to enhance educational accessibility, improve learning outcomes, and foster a culture of continuous improvement, the University of Malawi, in collaboration with AstriaLearning, an American EdTech company, launched the UNIMA E-Campus during a conference held on December 12th and 13th, 2023, in Lilongwe at the Bingu International Convention Centre (BICC).

The launch was graced by the Vice Chancellor of the University of Malawi, Professor Samson Sajidu, and the Chief Executive Officer of AstriaLearning, Dr. Jeff Bordes. Those present during the launch included the University of Malawi management, members of the UNIMA council, the Astria E-Learning team, government officials, various international guests, representatives from public and private universities, as well as individuals from different organizations.

Addressing the attendees during the function, Prof. Sajidu expressed delight by extending gratitude to Dr. Bordes for the great partnership forged. He further conveyed his excitement about the initiative, highlighting its alignment with the council's mission and vision for the University, as well as the government of

Malawi's goal to enhance access to higher education.

"Some of our departments have already implemented programs offered through e-learning. For example, the School of Education, as well as the Department of Geography, Earth Sciences and Environment and the Department of Statistics offer online education using ODEL approaches. We aim to offer almost 50 percent of our programs through e-learning to increase student enrollment by 2026," he stated.

In his remarks, Dr. Bordes stated that the partnership with UNIMA marks a significant and brighter step for the university. He further mentioned that the UNIMA E-Campus exemplifies inclusive and equitable education for all, aligning with Malawi's 2023 Vision. Continuing, he highlighted that the E-Campus addresses the gap for individuals who are working but still wish to access higher education.

During the conference, various speakers shared insightful e-learning knowledge through panel discussions and presentations. Dr. Jeff Bordes' presentation spurred thoughtful reflections from the panel, which included Dr. Simon Chiziwa, Director of ODel for the University of Malawi; Dr. Sunduzwayo Madise, Deputy Vice-Chancellor; Dr. Emma Thomson, Acting Director of the Teaching and Learning Center at KUHES; and Dr. Levis Eneya, Director of Higher Education

from the Ministry of Education. The discussion highlighted the benefits of blended learning in improving educational outcomes and acknowledged challenges such as limited internet access, technology costs, infrastructure limitations, and digital literacy. Dr. Madise emphasized the drawbacks of face-to-face learning, citing a reduction in students accessing higher education, but countered concerns about technological readiness by illustrating the success of public university online applications introduced by the National Council for Higher Education. Furthermore, Dr. Eneya discussed the transformative impact of COVID-19 on e-learning, urging proactive solutions for connectivity and power issues. He emphasized that the challenge lies in gadget access, not technological literacy, and proposed exploring manufacturing solutions. The dialogue collectively emphasized the potential of eLearning to address challenges and advance education inclusivity.

The conference was enriched with various activities. The Ngwenyama group, comprised of UNIMA students, staged a captivating performance portraying the birth of UNIMA E-Campus, along with traditional dances that were a marvel to watch.

In addition to the cultural performances, a raffle draw was conducted throughout the two-day conference, and some attendees walked away with Astria tablets as prizes.



Part of UNIMA Management at the anniversary

A Milestone Celebration: Chanco Radio 10th Anniversary

There was a whirlwind of joy on 28th September, 2023 at Jali Hunger Project Ground as the University of Malawi's media house, Chanco Radio, celebrated its 10th anniversary since embarking on the journey of broadcasting various programs. Over 200 Chanco Radio listeners from various Zomba communities, such as Chiwamba, Muwa, Nankhuni, and Mulapo, as well as Nyalungwe and Chiwale in Phalombe, gathered to celebrate this milestone with UNIMA's management and staff members from the media house.

During the function, the Guest of Honor, Mr. Zadziko Mankhambo, Director of Broadcasting at the Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority (MACRA), applauded and recognized Chanco Radio for being a distinct media house that exclusively broadcasts programs focused on environmental and climate change issues. He further stated that the media house serves as a model for others in its consistent dedication to the programs covered by its broadcasting license.

In an interview with one of the listeners, Mr. Kampeni Kaduya from Mulapo Village, he expressed his gratitude to the Chanco Radio team for assisting people in various communities by showcasing their

talents through the radio. He stated, "The team came to my village after recognizing my talent in carpentry. Through the footage they captured of my work, I was featured on the 'Luso Langa' program, which airs every Friday. As a result, I gained numerous customers from across Zomba and Phalombe, earned money, and received exposure to many people who were previously unaware of my talents."

The Vice Chancellor of UNIMA, Prof. Samson Sajidu, expressed his appreciation for the Chanco Radio team as they celebrated their 10th anniversary. He commended their diligent hard work, creativity, and dedication throughout the years. Additionally, he elaborated on some of the achievements Chanco Radio has attained.

"The radio has successfully trained numerous journalists from various public universities, such as Soche Technical and the University of Malawi, among others. Furthermore, the radio has played a significant role in fostering relationships among people in various communities through its phone-in programs, which are regularly aired on our media platform," he said.

Ms. Sakina Majawa, the Station Manager, was also present at the function. "Having a wide audience for our programs that solely broadcast environmental and climate change issues was not easy," she explained. "People want to be entertained and prefer to listen more to political matters, which is contrary to our goal. However, our coordination and creative efforts in producing many programs broadcast on our media house have attracted audiences from various communities."

"For example, in 2017, Chanco Radio received an award for being the best green media house of the year, which encouraged our team to put in even more effort in all the programs we produce. The media house broadcasts over 80 programs."

The celebration was spiced with various mesmerizing activities, including drama, poetry, music performances, and dances. Showcasing the University of Malawi's commitment to community engagement, the day started with the team cleaning the Jali Market and concluded with a gift presentation from the UNIMA management to Jali market representatives.



The Chancellor, Dr. Lazarus McCarthy Chakwera, joined by UNIMA leadership during the graduation

UNIMA Graduation: Celebrating Achievements

The graduation ceremony held at the University of Malawi between 11th and 12th October, 2023, brought joy to graduands and parents, and also brought delight to business professionals in the city of Zomba. On both graduation days, the University of Malawi campus was bustling with vendors of various products and services, as 1,330 women and men received their certificates.

The Vice Chancellor of the University of Malawi, Professor Samson Sajdu, was delegated by the Chancellor of the University, Dr Lazarus McCarthy Chakwera, to preside over the second day of the graduation ceremony. The graduation had two sessions, with the first session commencing at 8.30am, and the second session starting at 1.30pm.

The congregation was colorful as the Executive Deans, University Registrar, Deputy Vice Chancellor, and Vice Chancellor were all spotted wearing new University of Malawi graduation attire. During the graduation, parents were invited to join the celebration in the Great Hall, and all of them beamed with delight as they witnessed their sons and daughters graduating.

In his remarks, the Chairperson of the University of Malawi Council, Dr. George Partridge, expressed gratitude to the

government for their unwavering financial support to students through the Higher Education Students Loans and Grants Board (HESLGB). He further explained that the increased intake of students aligns with the implementation plan of Malawi for 2023, where higher education is expected to expand access to education. He also emphasized that UNIMA is planning to have 15,000 students by 2025.

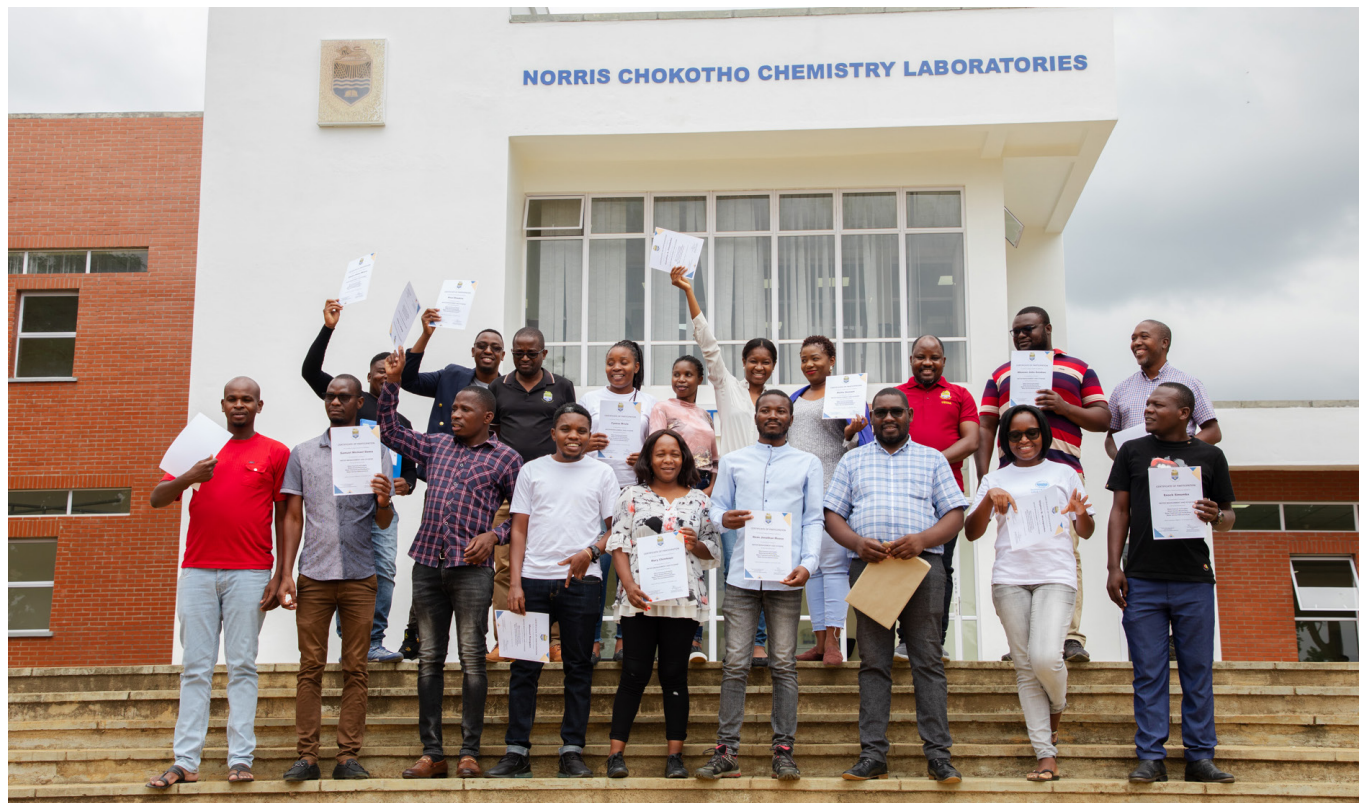
When he took to the podium to make his speech, the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Samson Sajdu, shared some of the achievements that the University has accomplished over

the past years. He mentioned that the institution has collaborated with various international universities and has welcomed international students who are currently studying at UNIMA. He also announced the establishment of the Alumni Office, which will foster alumni engagement. Continuing, he advised the graduands that as they venture out into the world, they should take pride in knowing they are not leaving UNIMA behind but rather carrying a piece of UNIMA with them. He sincerely congratulated all the women and men who received their awards.



Graduands sing the national anthem

Department of Chemistry trains Water Specialists



Certificate awardees pose for a picture

Various departments of the University of Malawi equip citizens with knowledge to enhance their work performance in different institutions. The Department of Chemistry and Chemical Engineering in the School of Natural and Applied Sciences conducted a Water Management and Hygiene training from November 6th to 10th, 2023, attracting 17 participants from various institutions,

including Waterboard, non-governmental organizations, and other academic institutions.

Dr. Timothy Bizwick, the Head of the Department of Chemistry and Chemical Engineering, expressed his appreciation to all participants and thanked the various institutions for sending their representatives to the training. He further encouraged

them to excel and perform exceptionally in their respective workplaces, showcasing the knowledge acquired during the training.

Highlighting the significance of the training for both participants and the nation, Mr. Grant Kutumanji, the Chief Lab Technician, explained that the training aimed to address gaps in how institutions and citizens manage water challenges. He detailed that the training covered four key topics: water sources and supply, water service monitoring, water treatment and purification, and water service administration.

One of the representatives, Mbauwo John Gondwi from Northern Region Waterboard, expressed gratitude for the remarkable training. He emphasized the benefits and importance of the training, noting that it provided them with invaluable knowledge and skills. He promised to invest the acquired knowledge in their companies and share it with others.

The training concluded with the presentation of certificates to all participants who attended the program.



Dr. Timothy Bizwick, Head of Chemistry and Chemical Engineering, presents a certificate to one of the attendees



Students pose for a picture at Mbuna Research Facility

For the love of entomology: A visit to Mbuna Research Facility

The University of Malawi stresses to its students the significance of gaining additional knowledge beyond the classroom setting. On 1st December, 2023, a group of students pursuing the Bachelor of Science in Biological Sciences programme in the School of Natural and Applied Sciences visited Mbuna Research Unit Facility in Mangochi at Cape Maclear for their field practical sessions.

The purpose of the trip was to conduct research on various species of insects found in Mangochi, including both flying and non-flying insects active during the day and night. Additionally, the students aimed to identify species living in close proximity to aquatic areas and those that are solely terrestrial dwellers. The trip served as an opportunity to provide students with expertise in fieldwork, demonstrating how different insects are collected, identified, and preserved for educational purposes.

During the trip, students ventured into various fields to collect insects using an insect trapper. They proceeded to the Mbuna Research Unit Facility Centre, where another session involved collecting insects near the lake, followed by the preservation of specimens.

The students were brimming with excitement throughout the trip, having identified new insect species and gained knowledge not covered in their classrooms. Following the session, Mr. Prince Sata, one of the students, expressed the trip's significant impact on him and his classmates. He explained that the experience provided them with new insights into handling different insect species and utilizing various entomological tools.

“The trip has also enriched our understanding of how insects behave in different ecosystems, their significance in the ecosystem and their roles in food webs. Studying insects has equipped us with knowledge to differentiate harmful insects from those beneficial to humans and understand how they can be effectively utilized,” he remarked.

As the session progressed, students engaged in discussions, exploring various ways in which insects prove beneficial and impactful in the agriculture sector as well as other areas of human activity. They emphasized that studying insects plays a crucial role in understanding their significance. They stated that in agriculture,

various insects, such as bees, serve as major pollinators for crops.

They concluded by explaining that studying insects provides valuable knowledge applicable in forensics. Certain insect species play a crucial role in unraveling mysteries surrounding the death of organisms, including humans, by aiding in the detection of the time of death of the individual.

At the end of the day, Ms Annie Kondwani, Lab Technician in the Department of Biological Sciences, who accompanied the students, expressed gratitude to the University Management for their financial support. She stated the importance of the practical session for the students, highlighting its invaluable contribution to their understanding of the research process, including the collection, identification, and preservation of insects for future use. Additionally, she expressed her confidence in the students, stating that she has faith in their ability to excel in the industry. She believes they will skillfully combine their classroom learning with the practical experiences gained in the field.



Prof. Nick Tembo hands some of the donated items to a representative of the inmates

Literature students interact with inmates

In the spirit of ensuring that the education discourse is not limited to the classroom, a final year class comprising of Literature students from University of Malawi organised a trip to visit and interact with inmates at Chichiri Prison in Blantyre on 2nd December, 2023. The trip was also aimed to engage in some charity work, through the donation of various items to the prison. The initial plan was just to donate clothes and foodstuffs to the prison, but the visitors ended up benefitting much more from the trip.

According to their course lecturer, Prof. Nick Tembo, who accompanied the 49 students on the trip, the group was moved by a willingness to help and motivate the inmates. Prior to the visit, the students engaged in fundraising activities, from which they raised some money. They used this money to purchase bales of sugar and salt, cartons of washing soap, bales of soya pieces, as well as classroom stationery for the inmates. The package also included numerous items of clothing that the students received as donations from well-wishers.

“We targeted inmates at Chichiri Reformatory School, which is within Chichiri Prison, as it houses a lot of youths

that need material help, and that could use messages of hope and encouragement,” Prof. Tembo said. “Upon arrival, we learnt that there are over 280 juvenile inmates at the school. The majority are in primary school, while others are in secondary school. Unfortunately, there are only 4 qualified teachers.”

During the visit, the students interacted in different ways with the inmates. The male students engaged in a football match, while the female students played netball. The students also played chess, draughts and cards with the inmates. There were also classes where the students offered lessons and gave career talks. The inmates also took the opportunity to share their stories with their guests. This interaction erased the anxieties that the students had initially had about the prison.

At the end of the visit, Education Coordinator for Chichiri Reformatory School, Inspector Nyirongo, who acted as the host and coordinated all the activities, confessed that this was the first time in the history of Chichiri Prison for university students to visit the facility and cheer inmates. Despite the difficulties faced by the Reformatory School, which include shortage of teaching and

learning materials and the inadequacy of teachers, he highlighted that one positive development is that inmates from the school have been getting selected to public universities consistently since 2017. In 2023 alone, two students have been selected to enrol at University of Malawi and Malawi University of Business and Applied Sciences, respectively.

The representative of the student group, Japheth Karlos Alberto Abel, points out that initially, he and his fellow students were apprehensive and filled with anxiety, stemming from the gravity with which they understood the word ‘prisoner’. However, the trip turned out to be an eye-opening experience. “The trip offered participants with raw information and understanding of human experiences within the context of being imprisoned. As literary scholars, we learn of prison experiences through different literary texts, and this visit surpassed the boundaries of the classroom,” he said. “Through our engagement with the inmates, we felt more comfortable to call them our brothers, sisters, mothers and fathers.”

The excitement from the trip has led them to start planning for a similar one next year.

Students gain knowledge at NBM

On 29th November, 2023, fourth-year students from the Physics and Electronics Department in the School of Natural and Applied Sciences at the University of Malawi visited the National Bank of Malawi offices in Blantyre. The purpose of the visit was to engage with Information Communication Technology (ICT) professionals, gaining insights into the challenges faced in the field that require technological solutions, and to acquire first-hand experience from the experts.

During the sessions, students had the opportunity to visit various departments, including the section responsible for automated teller machines (ATMs), and power supply. They also visited the Data Center. These sessions proved highly engaging as students observed the composition and functionality of the ATM, gaining insights into its working mechanisms. Furthermore, students acquired knowledge about the best room temperature required for the installation of ATM.

In addition to this, students learned



Physics students listening to a presentation at NBM

more about online transactions, including common errors faced in this domain. Finally, the students visited a room housing batteries with the aim of observing the ideal temperature for the efficient functioning of Uninterrupted Power Supply (UPS) systems.

The class representative, Hayless Guwende expressed gratitude to the NBM management for granting them a golden opportunity to learn from them, despite their busy schedules. They pledged to do their best to generate brilliant innovations.

Concluding the event, Mr. John Mitchell, the Head of the ICT department, commended the students for their active engagement throughout the sessions. He emphasized that providing this opportunity to the students is a way of exposing them to firsthand information. Mr. Mitchell stated that the department is prepared to sponsor innovations, and if the students are ready to propose solutions and innovations, the department is open to welcoming their ideas.

Students recruited for library internship



Student interns undergoing training in the library

The University of Malawi has maintained a continuous involvement of students in diverse activities, enabling them to learn and sharpen their skills during their academic studies. On the 28th of November 2023, Dr. Jonas Mwatseteza, the Director of Student Affairs (DOSA), introduced the first cohort of 15 students who have been recruited as interns to work in the University's library.

Addressing the selected students in the library, Dr. Mwatseteza emphasized the importance of discipline and focus, as the University management anticipates high-quality work from them. He pointed out that the students will work 4 hours per week, during which they would get the opportunity to learn from the directives provided by the library officials.

SRC President, Mr. Thanks Elia Mwalwanda, expressed gratitude to the Vice Chancellor, Professor Samson Sajidu and the entire University management for the commendable initiative aimed at providing students with an internship opportunity, thereby offering financial assistance. He went on to encourage UNIMA students to collaborate with their fellow interns who will be serving in different sections of the university library. Mr. Mwalwanda advised the recruited students to maintain discipline and patience as they undertake their roles.

Jayne Kanyangale, a third-year Public Administration student, expressed her excitement about the internship opportunity. She commended the University management, stating that the initiative has instilled a sense of significance among the students, demonstrating that their voices are heard and considered.

The selected students commenced their work on November 29, 2023, and will be engaged for the duration of one academic year. Depending on their performance, the DOSA will consider recruiting additional interns for the next cohort in 2024.



Law students, faculty, and RITZ staff pose for a picture

Law students participate in the 3rd RITZ Moot Court Competition

The University of Malawi places a strong emphasis on competence-based learning, ensuring that students actively engage in various activities, including competitions, to apply the theories learned in class. Students enrolled in the Bachelor of Laws (Honours) programme within the School of Law, Economics and Government participate in moot competitions both locally and internationally every academic year. One of these competitions has been the RITZ Moot Court Competition, whose third edition launched on 27th November, 2023.

The Guest of Honor, Mr. Sean Longwe, Head of Business Development and Communications at RITZ Attorneys-At-Law, expressed how impressed the law firm been with the performance of UNIMA students during the RITZ moot competitions over the past two years. He emphasized that the RITZ competition is a commercial moot court competition, focusing on the commercial space where RITZ is more dominant as a law firm.

Mr. Longwe continued by stating that RITZ partnered with UNIMA as a means of enhancing legal minds in the commercial space, thereby empowering students with skills they can apply after completing their studies. He concluded by commending the

remarkable journey, which began in 2021, and mentioned that the winning students in the competition have the opportunity to intern at their law firm. He confirmed that their firm has engaged a significant number of successful candidates from UNIMA through this platform.

During the launch of the 3rd RITZ moot court competition, Dr Bernadetta Malunga, the Head of the Private Law Department, expressed gratitude to RITZ for their endless support over the past two years. She conveyed that the department is actively involved in various activities and is open to sponsorship opportunities. Furthermore, she extended her appreciation to the participants and acknowledged their expectations throughout the competition. She encouraged them not only to argue their cases based on what they have learned in class but also advised against mere memorization of concepts. Finally, she assured Mr Longwe of the students' brilliance and their commitment to delivering quality sessions.

The session was characterized by brilliantly articulated arguments. One of the participants, Mr Ntchindi Chiyamwaka, a third-year student, found motivation from the competition, viewing it as an opportunity for further training through

practical application. He highlighted that the competition provides a platform to engage in real-world scenarios, facilitating learning, gaining valuable experience, and allowing for the possibility of making mistakes. Chiyamwaka believed that involvement in this moot competition would contribute to shaping him into a professional in the legal field.

Out of the 24 students who took part in the first round, 16 have successfully qualified for the semi-finals. The competition will conclude on 1st December, 2023.



Mr. Sean Longwe



A section of the new UNIMA Student Representative Council

A New Era Begins: Swearing in the New UNIMA SRC

On 23rd November, 2023, Students gathered in the Chikowi Lecture Theatre to witness the swearing-in of the president-elect, Mr Thanks Elia Mwalwanda, and the entire Student Representative Council. On that day, Vice Chancellor Professor Samson Sajidu delegated the Executive Dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Dr Emmanuel Ngwira, to oversee the swearing-in of the new leadership. Among those present at the ceremony were the Director of Student Affairs (DOSA), Dr. Jonas Mwatseteza, and the Acting Assistant Registrar (Students and Welfare), Mrs. Eluby Kafumbata.

Dr. Mwatseteza opened the ceremony by addressing the attendees. He congratulated all those who were elected to the new Student Representative Council (SRC) and acknowledged the courage displayed by those who contested but did not make it. Additionally, he commended the Electoral Commission and the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) for overseeing a splendid aspirant presidential debate and ensuring integrity in the elections. Dr. Mwatseteza advised the new SRC to foster a positive working relationship between the SRC and the

office of the DOSA for the betterment of students. He expressed gratitude to the outgoing SRC for their outstanding work and excellent relationship enjoyed with his office. Furthermore, he emphasized his expectation for the new SRC to approach their responsibilities in a new and unique way.

After swearing in the new SRC President, Dr. Emmanuel Ngwira addressed the group. He emphasized the significance of the ceremony and congratulated the incoming SRC for their courage in taking on the responsibility of leading the students. Dr. Ngwira also commended the outgoing SRC for their demonstrated excellence in leadership. He further emphasized that the success of the SRC would depend on the cordial relationship between the university management and the SRC.

Dr. Ngwira advised Mr. Mwalwanda to thoroughly understand the rules and regulations governing the University of Malawi. He stated that leadership is a shared responsibility, urging them to work as a team and to communicate clearly and honestly with both management and their fellow students. He concluded by

urging them to balance their leadership responsibilities with their academic studies.

Mr. Elia Thanks Mwalwanda expressed gratitude to the outgoing SRC for their unwavering commitment in serving the students and the community. He assured the students of his dedication to creating an inclusive environment and enhancing the student experience through various initiatives. This includes advocating for resources to support students' mental health and well-being. Mr. Mwalwanda acknowledged the importance of establishing a good relationship between the SRC and the administration.

He encouraged students to freely reach out to him with any ideas or concerns for the University. Lastly, he advised his fellow leaders to work as a team and concluded by expressing gratitude to all students for entrusting him with the significant responsibility to serve them.

During the ceremony, all those who made it into the SRC were led by Dr. Ngwira as they took their oaths. Students were filled with joy witnessing their elected leaders assume the responsibility of serving them.

A Day at RBM: Actuarial Science Visit



Striking poses in front of RBM: Actuarial Science students

In the course of their studies, University of Malawi students often have the opportunity to interact with and gain firsthand experience from potential employers. Not only do they acquire valuable experience, but they also showcase the skills and knowledge they have acquired during their years at the University. This is what happened on 24th November, 2023, when fourth year students from the School of Natural and Applied Sciences, specifically those pursuing Actuarial Science, visited the Reserve Bank of Malawi offices in Blantyre.

During the visit, students learned from notable presenters, including a Senior Monetary Policy Analyst, a Senior Dealer, a Government Debt Operations Expert, a Chief Examiner, and officers dealing with Pension and Insurance, among others. The presenters covered various topics which included Derivative Markets, Interest Rate Determination in Malawi, Overview of the Financial Sector, and Regulation of Pension Funds. The goal was to help students understand and relate these topics to what they learn in the classroom.

Throughout the sessions, presenters encouraged students to share their expectations. Students eagerly participated in the discussions, asking probing questions, which providing presenters with insight into what additional subjects to address. Some of the issues that the students raised queries on included the reasons behind the devaluation of the

Kwacha, as well as the impact of inflation on shares, treasury bills, and bonds. The students expressed satisfaction with the answers they received from the presenters. For instance, in response to one of the questions on devaluation, the presenters clarified that the Kwacha is not devalued haphazardly but rather in response to imbalances in the country's imports and exports.

One of the students, Mr Gift Tayali, conveyed gratitude to the RBM presenters for the insightful session. "As an Actuarial Science student, the experience has exposed us to the practical application of concepts learned in class, such as those regarding pensions and financial markets," he said.

One of the students, Ms. Rennie Kilembe, mentioned that the presenters addressed

significant issues that had not crossed the students' minds before. She further stated that the way the presenters explained the concept of devaluation completely changed her perspective. She confirmed how she now sees the positive side of devaluing the Kwacha based on the insights gained during the session.

The Senior Monetary Policy Analyst, Mr. Chikumbutso Gareta, commended the students for their brilliant participation throughout the entire session. He also stated that engaging with both academic and non-academic institutions aligns with RBM's goals of communicating the organization's activities to a diverse audience, allowing them to receive valuable feedback from citizens.



Discussions underway at RBM

Student field trip to Kangamkunde REE Project



Dr. Moses supervises students practicing using a compass in structural mapping

On 16th November 2023, second year Bachelor of Science in Geology students travelled to Kangamkunde Hill in Balaka on an academic field visit. The area is a target for the prospecting of Rare Earth Elements (REE). The REEs, described as “The Vitamins of Modern Industry”, are a group of seventeen chemical elements, among which are Cerium (Ce), Lanthanum (La), Neodymium (Nd) and Praseodymium (Pr) that are at the center of an explosive demand over the last few decades.

According to Dr. Dyson Moses, Lecturer in Geology, who accompanied the students on the trip, the demand is due to the expansion in the applications of REE and their alloys in various high technological devices such as computer memory, rechargeable batteries, autocatalytic converters, super magnets, mobile phones, superconductors, LED lighting, fluorescent materials, solar panels and

magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) agents. Thus, as part of the Geology curriculum, the trip was aimed at fortifying class work with real field experience to understand the formation of REE in carbonatites/monazites.

At the site, students also received hands-on experience of the exploration process and engaged in other practical activities. These included geological core logging, structural logging, core recovery and rock quality designation calculations, and sampling procedures which constitute key aspects of drilling exploration. One of the students who went on the trip, Mr. Samuel Banda, pointed out that the trip had been beneficial since they were able to connect classroom discussions to what actually happens on the ground. “We were able to actually see the minerals that we had been talking about in our lectures, as well as the equipment used for mining. This has been truly eye-opening to all of us,” he said.

Upon returning from the trip, students were tasked with writing field reports, where they drew upon their experience as well as what they have been learning in class.

The Kangamkunde project is operated by Lindian Resources Limited. Currently, the company’s Mineral Resource Estimate indicates that the prospect is totalling 400 million tonnes of REE at an average of 2.0% total rare earth oxides (TREO). The company has managed to drill two 1 km long holes which would see the resource being upgraded to 800 million tonnes at 2.7% TREO. As it is anticipated to build a processing plant, the company is undertaking air core drilling for geotechnical tests. There is a high expectation that the company will commence mining towards the end of 2024 since they already have a mining licence issued.

UNIMA Students Participate in 2nd TESSAM 2023 Festival



Some of the UNIMA athletes during the festival

Students from the University of Malawi excel not only in their studies but also in various competitions, including sports. On 4th and 5th November, 2023, UNIMA was among the 12 public and private colleges and universities that participated in the 2nd Sports Festival of the Tertiary Education Students Sports Association of Malawi (TESSAM), held in Lilongwe under the theme “Together we Thrive.” Over 400 students competed in various sports codes, including netball, football, basketball, athletics, and volleyball, among others.

During the opening ceremony, Mr. Samson P. Mawephe, the General Secretary of TESSAM, expressed his delight at the number of students who gathered in Lilongwe to participate in the Sports Festival. He emphasized the significance of these games to students, as they promote unity among all universities and colleges in the country, which is one of TESSAM’s key objectives: ensuring that all students are united through sports. Mr. Mawephe also mentioned that the festival provided a platform for TESSAM officials to select students who will represent Malawi in the 2024 Confederation of Universities and Colleges of Southern Africa (CUCSA) games in South Africa. He concluded by expressing gratitude to Nyasa Capital Finance and National Bank of Malawi for sponsoring the 2nd TESSAM Festival.

Commenting on the performance of UNIMA students, Mr. Courtex Nzima, UNIMA Sports Officer, expressed his delight at the way the students performed in the festival. He mentioned that the students delivered a remarkable performance in most of the sports codes when compared to their previous performances. He further indicated that, based on their performance, UNIMA might have a significant number of students selected to represent Malawi in the 2024 CUCSA games. Mr. Nzima also extended his gratitude to the University’s management for their financial support in enabling the students’ participation in the

sports festival.

UNIMA achieved victory in athletics, with Mr. Benedicto Saka, a third-year student pursuing a Bachelor of Communications and Cultural Studies, earning two gold medals for completing the 5000-meter and the 1500 meters. In other sports disciplines, UNIMA students secured silver medals by finishing in the second position in men’s football, women’s basketball, and netball. They also claimed bronze medals by attaining the third position in women’s volleyball.



UNIMA female students showcasing basketball skills

ANNOUNCEMENTS



Since September 2023, when the last issue of the UNIMA Bulletin was released, a number of notable events have occurred, both laud worthy and tragic.

For instance, a number of significant appointments were made, which include the following:

Dr. Symon Chiziwa was appointed Head of Open, Distance and E-Learning (ODEL).

Dr. Jean Chavula was appointed Head of Centre for Language Studies.

Dr. Grivas Kayange was appointed Head of Postgraduate Studies.

Dr. Bosco Rusuwa was appointed Head of the Natural Resources and Environment Centre (NAREC).

Dr. Ken Ndala was appointed Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement.

Dr. Maurice Monjerezi was appointed Head of Research.

Dr. Doroth Nkhata was appointed Head of Centre for Education Research and Training.

Mrs Eluby Kafumbata was appointed Acting Assistant Registrar (Staff and Students Welfare).

Ms. Mupu Chonzi was appointed Senior Human Resource Officer.

We wish these officers all the best as they serve the institution.

It is also during this period that the University of Malawi promoted a number of individuals to the rank of Professor, the highest academic rank achievable. These include:

Professor Grivas Kayange

Professor Nick Tembo

Professor Asiyati Chiweza

We join others in congratulating these exemplary academics.

Sadly, the University witnessed its share of grief during this period.

Some members of staff lost loved ones. In this vein, we mourn with Mr. Greyson Chikopa, on the passing of his daughter. We also offer condolences to Dr. Ndekha, on the passing of his mother. We offer prayers of comfort to Mr. Mathews Beleko, who lost his father. We also offer prayers to the families of Mrs Miriam Kumwenda, Dr Benjamin Kaneka, Mr Ian Berry, Mrs Colleen Makunganya, Mr Blessings Sabili, Ms Sakina Majawa, and Mr. Dennis Mdeza, whose fathers passed on during the same period. May the good Lord offer comfort to the families of Mr Gerad Chitera, Mr Benson Mataka, and Mr Harvey Chilembwe on the passing of their mothers, respectively.

The institution also bid farewell to some members of the student community. We offer peace to the soul of Mr Joseph Banda, who was until his passing a student in the Bachelor of Education (Biological Sciences) programme. We offer condolences to the family of Mr Gibson Masache, who was until his passing pursuing his PhD in the Department of Politics and Government. Our condolences also go to the family of Mr Edward Litete, who was a fourth Bachelor of Science student. We offer prayers to the soul of Ms Cecilia Makina, who was, at the time of her death, studying in the Masters of Education (Psychology) programme.

May their souls rest in peace.

Connect with Excellence

