

# UNIMA Bulletin



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## Exit stage left...

At the time that you are reading this Bulletin, the curtain of the stage that is UNIMA has once again been opened for another performance of academic rigour at our institution. A new cohort of students is on campus ready for studies.

But first, something magical happened at the start of this academic year. The university welcomed its first-year students to the campus at the very same time that the institution held graduation ceremonies, one of which involved the conferment of an honorary degree to a Head of State.

Try to imagine that graduation through the eyes of a first-year student who has just arrived that very same week. It was, for all intents and purposes, their first role as spectators of a sacred performative ritual by the university. For this group of students, the wonder emerged from the fact that, in the midst of the awe accompanying their arrival to Chirunga campus, they were also able to witness a foreshadowing of the culmination of their journey – the graduation ceremony. Every one of them who arrived in that week hopes to one day dress in that magnificent black and maroon gown, to one day don the majestic mortarboard, to one day – one sweet day

– have the colourful scarf draped across their shoulders. On that day, they too shall be the main actors on graduation day. They too shall have their name announced through massive loudspeakers to the whole of Zomba, nay the entire world, as a UNIMA graduate. They too shall walk to the front of the Great Hall and be greeted by the Chancellor.

We can therefore imagine the arrival of the first years and the graduation ceremony as the staging of a ritual, one that is to be repeated annually, *ad infinitum*, similar to how Shakespeare thought of life. The graduates are those exiting from the stage, having successfully played their parts. The first year students form part of the new cast, ready to perform and hopefully exit - stage left - with their degrees in hand.

But they have to wait a couple of years first.

With the start of the new academic year, the excitement is everywhere. First years have to figure out the difference between Mwambo and Wadonda lecture theatres, to ensure they don't turn up at the wrong lecture venue. Continuing students have to decide which ones will be their majoring subjects. Finalists now have to turn

towards a more serious chapter of their lives at UNIMA, ensuring that there is enough time for their projects, as they feel the beckoning call of the 'world'.

Lecturers are not spared, either. Now is the time when we make sure our study materials are updated, PowerPoint slides created, assignments ready to be thrust upon eager students, and to somehow balance all that with individual research. It is an annual ritual that somehow never gets old.

All players take their positions, and the performance commences.

### EDITORIAL TEAM:

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



*The Chancellor, Dr Lazarus McCarthy Chakwera congratulates the Mozambican President, Dr Filipe Jacinto Nyusi*

## Mozambican Leader Filipe Nyusi Honoured with Doctorate by University of Malawi

All eyes were on the Great Hall at the University of Malawi on the morning of the 28th of August, 2024, as the institution conferred the PhD in International Relations and Diplomacy (*Honoris Causa*) on His Excellency, the President of the Republic of Mozambique, Filipe Jacinto Nyusi. As a departure from the usual trend of UNIMA congregations, the Mozambican Head of State was the sole recipient of a degree on that day. Nevertheless, the Great Hall was packed with various individuals who came to witness this momentous occasion.

The event was presided over by the Chancellor of the University of Malawi, His Excellency Dr Lazarus McCarthy Chakwera, who noted that Malawi and Mozambique were always ready to assist each other in times of celebration and times of tragedy. He cited climate change, security, trade, and cultural exchanges as some of the areas where the two nations collaborate. He also noted that the University of Malawi had not awarded many honorary degrees to

individuals in its years of existence. “This is a testament to the University’s respect for standards in only awarding those who have truly distinguished themselves by their achievements,” he observed.

Taking his turn to speak, the Vice Chancellor of the University of Malawi, Prof. Samson Sajidu, expressed pride in his institution’s awarding of the honorary degree to “an individual who embodies the very essence of academic excellence, diplomacy and global citizenship, a paragon of virtue, a luminary whose tireless efforts have illuminated the path of progress, fostering a culture of collaboration, innovation and mutual understanding.” He highlighted how the University of Malawi had already started making connections with various universities in Mozambique. He cited memoranda of understanding that UNIMA has with universities such as the Púnguè University, University of Rovuma, and Joaquim Chissano University. He noted that there are already some students from these universities studying at UNIMA. Taking a moment to speak in fluent

Portuguese, the Vice Chancellor conveyed his wish to continue collaborations with more Mozambican universities.

In an acceptance speech delivered in Portuguese but rich with Chichewa proverbs, His Excellency President Dr Filipe Jacinto Nyusi expressed his thanks and appreciated the close relations between the two nations. “Malawians are not just our friends,” he said. “They are our brothers and sisters.” He also observed that the awarding of the honorary degree confirmed that UNIMA shows interest in international relations. He looked forward to a continuation of such relations between the two nations.

The conferment of the honorary doctorate on the Mozambican president coincidentally comes a few days after the Malawian President, His Excellency Dr Lazarus Chakwera, was also honored with an honorary Doctorate Degree in International Cooperation and Development by the Joaquim Chissano University.



*Proud UNIMA graduates*

## UNIMA Celebrates Second 2024 Graduation Ceremony, Awards Top Graduates

Each year, the university awards certificates to men and women upon the completion of their studies. This moment is marked by a colorful ceremony traditionally held in the Great Hall, where relations of graduands are invited to witness the event. On 29th August 2024, the Vice Chancellor, Professor Samson Sajidu, presided over the ceremony and conferred various certificates to 1,291 graduates.

The graduation ceremony attracted many notable figures from across the country and beyond, including some faculty members of the University of Rovuma in Mozambique, who were invited to witness the colorful event. During the ceremony, Professor Sajidu congratulated all the graduates for their hard work and dedication throughout their studies and advised them to enter the industry with the intent to make a difference. He further urged them to utilise the skills and knowledge acquired in the classroom to contribute to the development of the country. Additionally, he emphasised that they should not merely seek jobs but also focus on creating jobs through entrepreneurship.

In his remarks, the new Chairman of the University Council, Dr Christopher

Guta, stated that when students attend institutions of higher learning like the University of Malawi, they acquire firsthand data that strengthens their knowledge. He urged the graduates to reflect on the skills they have gained through the education system, particularly within UNIMA, and to consider how they can effect change in society by implementing the country's strategies and policies.

During the ceremony, it was announced that the Chancellor of the University, Dr. Lazarus McCarthy Chakwera, who is also President of the Republic of Malawi, had awarded MK200,000 to each of the undergraduate and postgraduate

students who performed exceptionally well during their studies and graduated with distinction. One of the recipients, Mr. Jonathan Chanachi, expressed gratitude and excitement for being recognised in such a way by the Chancellor. He stated that during his five-year stay at the University of Malawi, he acquired many skills that proved invaluable, including time and resource management. He emphasised that because time and resources are always limited, the ability to prioritise activities is crucial. "To those pursuing various programmes, I would say hard work always pays off and students should be willing to put in the effort in whatever they are doing."



*The Vice-Chancellor presiding over the ceremony*



*The UNIMA Vice-Chancellor welcomes the Mayor to the University Boardroom*

## Zomba City Mayor pays a courtesy visit to the Vice-Chancellor

The University of Malawi has long been associated with Zomba City, sometimes referred to as a university city by enthusiasts of the university. Since the construction of the university in Zomba, UNIMA has continued to be an important part of the city, serving as a historical landmark, but also playing a significant role in the city's economy. This is why the city and the university have for a long time enjoyed a good relationship.

In a recent development, His Lordship the Mayor of Zomba City, Councillor Christopher Jana, paid a courtesy visit to the Vice Chancellor of UNIMA, Professor Samson Sajidu, on 23 July, 2024 to discuss potential areas for collaboration between the city council and UNIMA. The meeting, held at the university boardroom, proved to be fruitful for UNIMA and marked the

beginning of a potential memorandum of understanding with the city council. Several issues affecting both UNIMA and the city were discussed during the visit, including safety and security, environmental concerns, and accommodation issues, particularly for students living off-campus.

During the meeting, the mayor commended UNIMA for its initiatives in keeping the city green through tree planting and maintaining clean surroundings, highlighting the university's commitment to protecting the environment. He emphasised the importance of institutions along the road maintaining green surroundings to enhance the city's environment and beauty. The mayor also encouraged the university, along with other institutions and residents of the city, to take a keen interest in the

affairs of the city council and to follow up on issues affecting them. He further stressed the need for collaboration among the council, institutions like UNIMA, and businesspersons to jointly develop the city rather than working in isolation.

The Vice Chancellor had the opportunity to learn about the current projects and future plans of the city. Addressing the issue of accommodation, the mayor mentioned plans to engage local chiefs in Chikanda and surrounding areas where UNIMA students reside to discuss ways of improving hostel standards.

As an institution of higher education, UNIMA was asked to come up with programs that could assist the council in achieving some of its goals, a suggestion the Vice Chancellor readily agreed to support.

In an effort to explore areas of collaboration and mutual benefit, Dr. Jonas Mwatseteza, the UNIMA Director of Students' Affairs, who was also present at the meeting, proposed to the mayor that the city council should involve UNIMA students in voluntary work that could benefit both students and the city, providing valuable experience for the students. He further suggested using Chanco Community Radio and TV as tools to educate residents on important issues such as environmental conservation, to address some of the challenges the city faces.



*UNIMA's Administration block*



*The UNIMA Deputy Vice-Chancellor with Huawei Technologies Managing Director for Malawi*

## Huawei and UNIMA collaborate to enhance ICT opportunities for students

In this era of rapid technological advancement, the University of Malawi recognises the need to build strategic partnerships with industry leaders to harness their expertise and expand opportunities for its students. On 12th July, 2024, UNIMA signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Huawei Technologies, one of the leading global companies in ICT infrastructure and intelligent devices.

This collaboration will enable UNIMA students to participate in Huawei's Seeds for the Future program, a corporate social responsibility initiative aimed at equipping the next generation with digital talent. Additionally, students will benefit from an annual Campus Recruitment Drive hosted by Huawei, which will introduce job opportunities available at Huawei to final-year students in ICT-related and administration programs, as part of the localisation of the Huawei Malawi office.

During the MoU signing ceremony, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Sunduzwayo Madise, emphasised that the partnership will open doors for many students. He expressed hope that the partnership will explore other areas for potential collaboration, noting the importance of providing internet connectivity to students residing off-campus in the Chikanda area. He also highlighted the crucial role of ICT in achieving Malawi 2063, underscoring the university's commitment to ICT education.

Mr. Gomez Gu, Huawei Technologies Managing Director for Malawi, highlighted the significance of this collaboration, stating that it aligns with Huawei's commitment to fostering ICT talent through educational partnerships. He believes that the partnership will be mutually beneficial for both parties and for Malawi as a whole.

The MoU outlines plans to integrate ICT courses into UNIMA's curriculum, promote ICT talent certification standards,

and expand the enrollment and operations of an ICT Academy at the university. Through the Academy, UNIMA will provide training in Huawei technologies, encourage students to pursue Huawei certification, and help students develop practical skills relevant to the ICT industry and the community.

Since the launch of Seeds for the Future in 2016, Huawei Malawi has created significant opportunities for students. In 2022, students from the UNIMA participated in the program, and both parties have agreed that students from UNIMA will take part once again this year.

Through this strategic alliance, UNIMA and Huawei Technologies are committed to empowering students with practical skills, preparing them to thrive in the dynamic ICT sector, and contributing meaningfully to their communities.



*Participants at the “Make Noise” workshop*

## Enhancing disability sports through strategic partnerships

Various schools within the University of Malawi collaborate with different sectors and other universities, both international and local, on various projects that are beneficial to the country. Among these is Parasport Against Stigma (PSAS), a collaborative research project between Loughborough University and UNIMA's School of Arts, Communication, and Design. On 3rd July 2024, a “Make Noise” workshop was led by Dr. Mufunanji Magalasi, the Executive Dean of the School of Arts, Communication, and Design. This workshop, held in Blantyre at Mount Soche hotel, focused on interacting with officials from various departments to discuss strategies for enhancing the dissemination of information regarding the participation of people with disabilities in sports.

The interaction attracted officials from different sectors, including the Malawi Paralympic Committee, the Malawi Council of Disability Affairs (MACODA), the Federation of Disability Organisations in Malawi (FEDOMA), the Department of Disability and Elderly Affairs under the Ministry of Gender, and journalists from various media houses.

During the workshop, Mr. James Chiutsi, the President of the Malawi Paralympic Committee, announced that four Malawian athletes with disabilities have qualified for the Paralympic Games. He stated that the workshop was organized to highlight the crucial role the media must play before,

during, and after the Paris Games 2024. Chiutsi emphasised that, despite the qualification of these athletes, awareness and knowledge about the Paris Games remain limited in many communities.

“We encourage the media to disseminate this news extensively to the Malawian public, as this event is of great significance for the country. It is the very first time that our athletes have qualified,” he said.

He further emphasised that the committee is promoting inclusion in Malawi, advocating for the social integration of people with disabilities in all aspects of life, not just in sports.

Dr. Magalasi added that the widespread

dissemination of information would raise awareness about the athletes who have qualified for the Paris Games. Once people are aware, they will be able to offer their support.

“When the nation talks about the athletes, they will be highly motivated. Due to the recognition from the media, they will feel proud and acknowledged as representatives of the country,” he stated.

The workshop included various activities such as group discussions, during which participants from various media houses shared their views on the best ways to disseminate messages about the Paralympics to diverse audiences.



*Magalasi interacts with parathletes at the Sports for Persons With Disability Awareness activity in Zomba.*

# UNIMA Signs MoU with Nation Publications Limited

The School of Humanities and Social Sciences has entered into a memorandum of understanding with Nation Publications Limited, one of the country's award-winning media houses. This partnership aims to provide students with valuable internship opportunities at the media house, allowing them to gain practical experience in the field of journalism.

The signing ceremony was held in the Boardroom of the University office on 22nd July, 2024. During the ceremony, Dr. Sunduzwayo Madise, Deputy Vice Chancellor of the University of Malawi,

stated that the collaboration will help students at the university to understand the journalism industry and gain hands-on experience.

"It's very important for us as a university to understand what the industry is all about, what it wants, and what it does," he said. "By sending our students and having them assessed, we will be able to determine whether we are on the right track, identify areas that need improvement, and decide which aspects we do not need to concentrate on. In the long run, we believe this is a partnership we can expand beyond

the School of Humanities and Social Sciences."

Mr. Ephraim Munthali, Managing Editor of Nation Publications, mentioned that the partnership will improve the standard of education in the journalism industry by ensuring that students do not just focus on the theoretical side of academics but also gain practical experience, which is critical for improving the quality of education students receive from the University of Malawi. He added that the partnership would provide an opportunity for the university to generate knowledge, ultimately promoting the industry of journalism.

Established in 1993, Nation Publications Ltd publishes some of the most popular newspapers in the country: *The Nation*, *Weekend Nation* and *Nation on Sunday*. This collaboration is expected to benefit both the University of Malawi and Nation Publications Limited by fostering a closer relationship between the academy and the industry, thereby improving educational standards and industry practices in the country.



*The UNIMA DVC, and the Managing Editor of Nation Publications signing the MoU*

## Nippon Foundation donates books to UNIMA

On 18th July, 2024, the Nippon Foundation, a non-profit organisation based in Tokyo, Japan, donated books to the University of Malawi. The donation comes at a time when Japan is celebrating 60 years of diplomatic relations with Malawi.

His Excellency Youichi Oya, Ambassador of Japan to Malawi, made a symbolic presentation of the books and certificate on behalf of the Nippon Foundation. In his remarks, he emphasised that Japan will not spare efforts in supporting Malawi, particularly in the education sector. He expressed hope that students at UNIMA will utilize the books to enhance their understanding of Japan, its culture, and its development. The books cover various subjects such as economics, politics, and international relations and will be housed in the UNIMA library, which accommodates over 800 students at once.

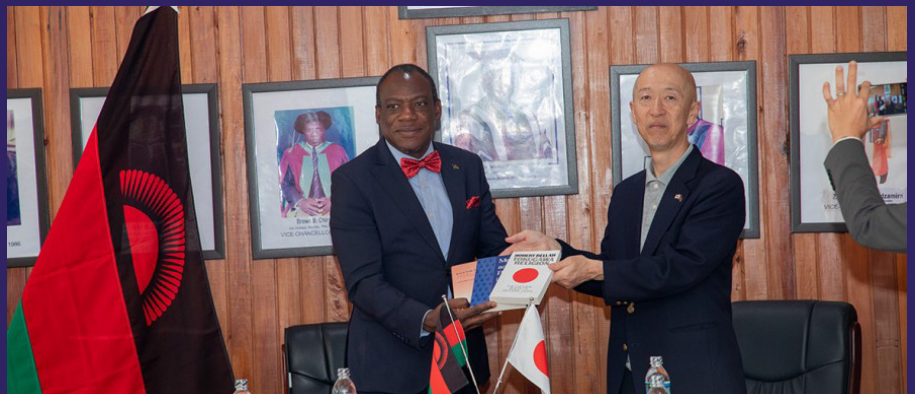
Representing the UNIMA Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Sunduzwayo Madise, the Deputy

Vice-Chancellor, expressed gratitude for the donation. He acknowledged the longstanding positive relationship between Japan and UNIMA, highlighting the opportunities that UNIMA staff have to study in Japan as well as the presence of Japanese staff at UNIMA.

Dr. Madise also shared the plans UNIMA has to establish a dedicated Japanese

corner within the library that will feature Japanese books focusing on culture and development, aimed at providing deeper insights to students and other enthusiasts of Japanese culture.

UNIMA aims to expand its library facilities with a digital library to ensure broader access to books for its students.



*The UNIMA DVC receiving a symbolic presentation of books from the Ambassador of Japan to Malawi*





*Presentation of the dummy cheque*

## Standard Bank provides boost to UNIMA Theatre Festival

The University of Malawi's School of Arts, Communication and Design offers programmes promoting diverse art forms in the country. Over the past years, the school has celebrated art through various activities, including festivals. On 8th August 2024, Standard Bank Malawi presented a MK15,000,000 cheque as a donation to the Department of Drama and Theatre Studies, in support of the UNIMA Theatre Festival scheduled from 22nd to 24th November, 2024.

The ceremony took place in the University Office Boardroom and was attended by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Sunduzwayo Madise; University Registrar, Mr. Martin Matululu; Standard Bank's Head of Brand and Marketing, Ms. Tamanda Ng'ombe; Head of the Drama and Theatre Studies Department, Dr. Catherine Makhumula; and Director of the Festival, Dr. Zindaba Chisiza.

Ms. Ng'ombe noted that the festival represents a significant growth opportunity for Malawi, showcasing the nation's rich culture. She emphasized that as a bank, they are committed to supporting Malawi's development in areas such as film, music, dance, and entertainment, which can create various opportunities for the youth. She further stated that the festival would

not only highlight talent and growth but also position Malawi as a country worth visiting and investing in. She concluded by expressing Standard Bank's intention to further engage in Malawi's art and culture space.

In his remarks, Dr. Madise expressed his excitement over the donation made by Standard Bank to the University and extended his gratitude to the bank's management. He further stated that Standard Bank has increasingly demonstrated its commitment to the arts. Dr. Madise mentioned that one of the challenges the University faces is a lack

of resources, and that Standard Bank's donation has come at an opportune time. He urged the department to make the most of this opportunity. Additionally, he assured the Standard Bank management that the University would use the donation according to its intended purpose.

The ceremony concluded with the presentation of a dummy cheque from Standard Bank to the University of Malawi.

Last year, the UNIMA Theatre Festival attracted professional and amateur performers from across the country.



*Ms Ng'ombe (2nd from right) poses with UNIMA officials*



*Former President of Malawi, Dr Joyce Banda, making her presentation at the conference*

## UNIMA Champions Women's Leadership in Higher Education

As a way of empowering women to take on leadership roles in higher education, the University of Malawi organized a conference on 7th and 8th August, 2024, under the theme “Breaking Barriers, Building the Future: Women's Leadership in Higher Education.” The event featured several notable women holding various positions in Malawi's academic and non-academic sectors. These remarkable women included Professor Address Malata, Vice Chancellor of Malawi University of Science and Technology (MUST), and Mrs. Edith Jiya, Chief Executive Officer of Old Mutual Malawi, among others. The event was honoured by the presence of the former President of the Republic of Malawi, Dr. Joyce Banda.

In her keynote address, Professor Address Malata urged women, particularly young women, to take on leadership roles in higher education. She emphasised the importance of increasing not only the number but also the quality of women in these positions. Malata highlighted the need to start building young leaders at earlier stages, such as in early childhood, primary, and secondary education, to ensure that, as they enter universities, the number of women in leadership roles will rise.

“Most of the people attending this

conference are those who are teaching, aspiring to be Deans, Heads of Departments, and perhaps even Vice-Chancellors. We need to start building that group of young women who can take on those positions,” Malata said.

Taking her turn to speak, Dr. Joyce Banda delivered a brilliant inspirational speech, drawing from her own experiences. She stated that her invitation to the conference was to share her story to inspire women as they encourage each other to move forward. “These women believe that as they empower each other to make progress, they need to hear other inspiring stories. Somehow, the women of Malawi believe that I have a story that can impact their lives,” Banda said.

She emphasized the importance of women supporting each other and being concerned about the challenges other women face, including encouraging girls to pursue education. She also urged women not to allow men to use them against one another.

During the conference, speakers presented on a range of topics, including professional and career development, mental health, networking and community engagement, personal branding, and developing leadership skills, among others. Various activities, such as a musical performance by the Folk Trio and a dance performance by the Ngwenyama dance group, were incorporated, adding an extra layer of vibrancy to the conference.



*Some of the participants at the conference*



*Discussions underway at the writing workshop*

## Literary Studies Department launches 'Malawi Writing Better' workshop

On 19th August 2024, the School of Humanities and Social Sciences' Literary Studies Department officially opened its five-day "Malawi Writing Better" workshop, held in the Economics Boardroom. The event was graced by the Executive Dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Dr. Emmanuel Ngwira.

In his remarks, Dr. Ngwira congratulated the 20 participants who were shortlisted

out of a total of 160 applicants. He expressed excitement and commended the department for the significant progress it has made through organising a platform that would offer training to some of the country's writers. He also conveyed his gratitude to the Copyright Society of Malawi for their financial support towards the workshop. Additionally, the Dean encouraged the participants to approach the workshop with an open mind and a willingness to learn and unlearn.

"This workshop is an opportunity to deepen our understanding, explore new techniques, and most importantly, learn from one another," he said. "Beyond technical skills, the workshop is also about connecting with fellow writers and editors, sharing experiences, and building relationships that will support our writing."

Dr. Asante Mtenje, the coordinator of the Malawi Writing Better Project, mentioned that the initiative is an intervention by the Department of Literary Studies aimed at training writers of various categories and literary editors. "These individuals, as crucial players in literary studies, are being equipped to better understand the technicalities of creative writing and the elements involved, with the ultimate goal of improving the quality of literature produced both locally and internationally."

The workshop commenced with various topics presented by three facilitators from the department. Also present on the opening day were the Head of the Literary Studies Department, Dr. Wesley Macheso and the Copyright Fund Manager, Mr. Blessings Botha.



*Prof. Pascal Kishindo stresses a point on the need for editing in the writing process*

# Ndasauka publishes new book: African Mind, Culture and Technology

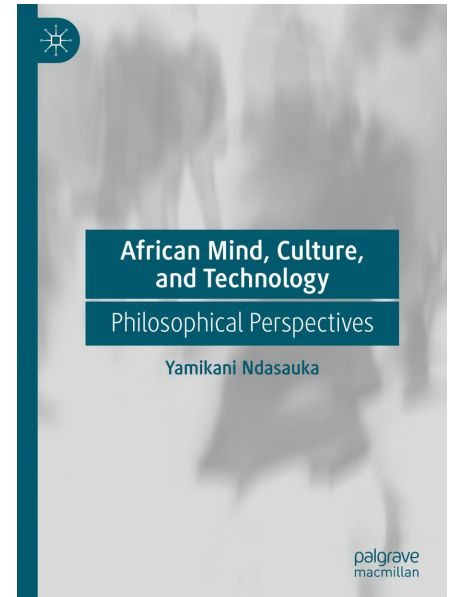
African philosophy has a lot to contribute to people's understanding of technology, whether in Africa or any other part of the globe. This is the argument that is convincingly advanced in Dr Yamikani Ndasauka's latest book, *African Mind, Culture and Technology: Philosophical Perspectives*. This momentous publication is the latest in the University of Malawi scholar's wave of publications, a book in which he employs surprisingly accessible language to articulate the complex relationship between African thought systems and technology.

Dr Ndasauka points out that the book would have come out earlier if it were not for other academic commitments. However, it is something he has been wanting to write about.

"My interest in the philosophy of technology has been a constant thread throughout my academic career, starting from my PhD. However, I noticed that there were very few African cultural and

decolonial perspectives on technology. It struck me that we have been adopting new technologies without fully considering how they reshape our thinking patterns and cultural norms. This realisation naturally led me to explore the interconnections between African culture, the mind, and technology."

The book is divided into nine chapters, in which the author explores a variety of issues at the intersection of African philosophy and technology. In the book, the author challenges the pervasive notion of epistemic superiority associated with Western knowledge systems, highlighting how African philosophy offers fresh perspectives through its emphasis on communitarianism and balanced individualism. The arguments are made from an informed and well-researched perspective, with the author engaging with thinkers such as Thaddeus Metz, Kwame Gyekye, Desmond Tutu and Grivas Kayange.



*The front cover of the Book*

The book has been published by Palgrave Macmillan, and is available on all major online book selling platforms.

## Voices on Academic Freedom Unite in New Book



*The Academic Freedom book*

The University of Malawi has for a number of years laid claim to the title 'The home of academic freedom.' This claim has now been strengthened by the emergence of

the book *Academic Freedom in Africa: The Struggle Rages On*, which has been edited by Dr. Yamikani Ndasauka and Prof. Garton Kamchedzera and published by Routledge.

The book is a collection of essays on the subject of academic freedom, written by various individuals from Finland, Japan, Malawi, Nigeria, South Africa, Norway, and the United Arab Emirates. The editors point out that the book has its origins in an academically disturbing period in the University of Malawi.

"Between 14th February and 14th November 2011, the majority of academic members of staff at Chancellor College were too afraid to teach due to the infringement of academic freedom by the Police, the President, and the University Council," the editors point out. "The impasse resulted in the closure of the College in February 2011. It was reopened with little teaching in July 2011, but closed again in August, 2011 due to persistent protests by the majority of academic members of staff and students."

On 25 and 26 June 2012, the Chancellor College Academic Staff Union (CCASU) organised a symposium on academic freedom. The symposium was themed "Intellectual Freedom in the Context of Good Governance, Development, and National Security." CCASU later resolved to publish some of the papers from the symposium in a refereed book. The breakthrough for the book was in December, 2022, when CCASU re-planned the book to involve a continent-wide scope.

The book refers to the struggle raging on because academic freedom is often disrespected, unprotected, unpromoted, or neglected. In the book's chapters, the growth and decline of academic freedom is discussed with relevant examples that make it irrelevant or kill it. In addition to Malawi, there are cases in the book on Zambia, Nigeria and South Africa, which show the persecution of academics.

The staff union is planning for a launch for the book, the date of which is yet to be announced.



*Course participants celebrate with certificates upon course completion*

## UNIMA Course empowers food sector professionals with cutting-edge skills

The Department of Human Ecology and Agricultural Sciences at the University of Malawi recently conducted a 10-day short course designed to address gaps in the country's food industry. This course was developed after extensive consultations with industry representatives to identify deficiencies in knowledge and skills required from graduates in fields such as food nutrition, chemistry, and biological sciences, who often work as quality managers.

In an interview on the final day of the short course, Dr. Victoria Ndolo, the Head of the department, explained that the course was created to bridge these gaps based on industry feedback.

"In developing the short course, we also aimed to equip participants with skills that could enable them to become independent or start small- and medium-sized enterprises where they can develop food products," she said.

Dr. Ndolo emphasised the importance of maintaining strong relationships between the industry and UNIMA. She noted that the university can assist with research, ingredient analysis, and recipe formulation, helping industries to produce nutritious products using locally available ingredients, thereby making it easy for Malawians to have access to such products.

The course, which covered topics such as product development, food safety and hygiene, food microbiology, entrepreneurship, and business communication, was attended by 15 participants, including UNIMA alumni, members of the Small and Medium Enterprise Development Institute (SMEDI), and students from Magomero College. This short course also served as a pilot for the collection of feedback for future improvements.

Funding for the course was provided through a grant from the Transforming Higher Learning Institutions project, managed by Michigan State University and USAID. This initiative supports the university's policy on research and outreach by engaging with the industry to identify gaps and incorporate findings into the generic curriculum, ensuring that graduates are well-prepared to meet

industry demands.

Mr Filimon Jere, an alumnus of UNIMA from the department of Chemistry and Chemical Engineering who participated in the short course, shared his positive experience. He explained that the course has equipped him with knowledge to develop innovative products, including food products made from raw materials typically considered as food waste, such as potato peels. He also mentioned that the knowledge gained would be valuable in the market. The success of the short course demonstrates how well-targeted educational programs can drive economic growth, create new opportunities, and improve community well-being. As the participants move forward with their new knowledge and skills, the benefits of this course are expected to positively influence the food industry and support sustainable development across Malawi.



*Participants discussing the fine points of food safety and entrepreneurship*



*Award-winning students display certificates*

## LEG Awards Exceptional PG Students

Each year, the University of Malawi recognizes students who perform exceptionally in their academic studies, both at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. On 19th July 2024, the School of Law, Economics, and Government (LEG) recognised its 15 exceptional postgraduate students. The aim was for the School to celebrate students who had displayed exceptional performance in three categories: coursework, thesis development and publication. Each awardee received a certificate and a cash prize of MK100,000. The ceremony was held in the magnificent Wadonda Lecture Theatre, attracting several people from both within and outside the university. The event was graced by Professor Grivas Kayange, the Head of Postgraduate Studies.

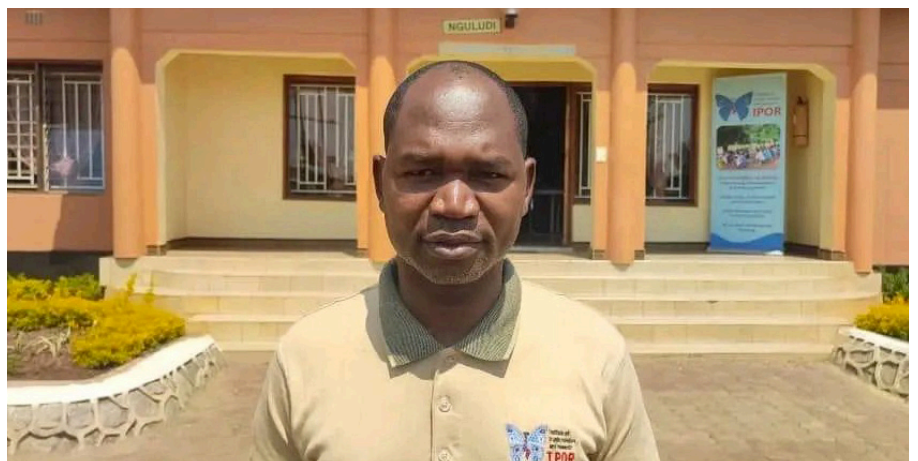
Professor Kayange expressed satisfaction with the number of exceptional students and commended the school for the initiative, as it also motivates other postgraduate students to work extra hard. “The papers are contributing to the development of the country because

these students have been doing research in different areas and are contributing something to society,” he said. He further encouraged the students to continue their research even after they graduate.

Mrs. Mirriam Muhome Matita, a PhD student in Economics who was awarded for her excellence in publication, expressed excitement upon being recognized as the

best performer. “I did not expect this, and it has come at the right time to give me more energy to keep on publishing. I commend the department for thinking of recognizing us.”

The ceremony concluded with the presentation of certificates and cash prizes to the awardees by Professor Kayange and Professor Michael Chasukwa.



*Professor Michael Chasukwa*



Winning essay writers display their certificates

## MBS awards UNIMA students for essay writing excellence

Students at the University of Malawi consistently participate in various competitions organized by different public and private institutions in Malawi, where they showcase their research and writing skills, gained during their studies. Recently, on July 5th, 2024, two students, Mr. Dumisani Nyirongo (Bachelor of Science in Biological Sciences) and Ms. Yamikani Bottomani (Bachelor of Arts in Development Economics), received trophies, certificates, and cash prizes from the Malawi Bureau of Standards (MBS) after emerging winners in an essay writing competition organized by MBS in collaboration with the African Organization for Standardization (ARSO). Mr. Nyirongo secured second place, while Ms. Bottomani achieved third place. The 11th ARSO essay writing competition's theme was "Empowering Consumers through Standardization to Achieve their Rights to Safe Quality Goods and Services." Experienced judges reviewed all 86 essays submitted by students from accredited universities and colleges across the country.

The award presentation ceremony was held in Blantyre, at the Protea Ryalls Hotel, where Mr. Fred Sikwese, the Director of

Standard Development at MBS, presented the awards on behalf of the Director General to the winners. During the ceremony, he expressed satisfaction with the number of applicants who participated in the competition as well as the winners. He stated that the competition is organized annually and aims to bridge the knowledge gap regarding standardization among the population. He further encouraged students in the country to participate in future competitions by conducting thorough research. He mentioned that through their participation, the youth are acquiring more knowledge, which helps them to spread accurate information to their peers and communities.

Mr. Nyirongo mentioned that he learned about the competition through an email sent to UNIMA students by the university administration, while Ms. Bottomani learned about it through social media. Both were motivated to participate because they strongly believe in the importance of empowering consumers through standardisation.

"I am passionate about ensuring that consumers have access to safe and quality goods and services, and participating in

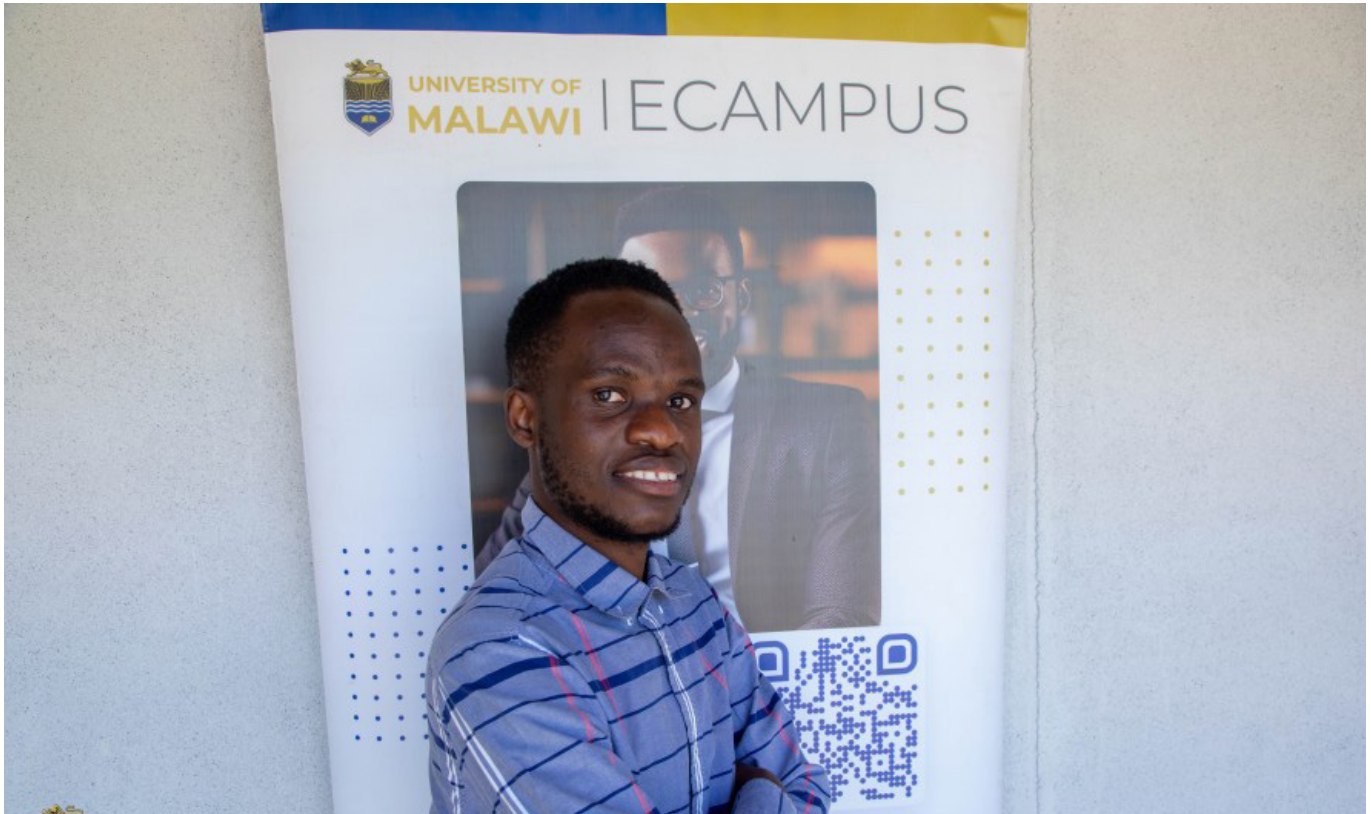
this competition provided me with an opportunity to advocate for consumer rights," he said. "I believe that what made me stand out among all the participants in the competition was how I was able to effectively communicate my deep understanding of the importance of standardization in empowering consumers."

On her part, Ms. Bottomani urged her fellow students to be participating in such competitions and have the belief that they can make it.

"Before attempting the question, they should give themselves more time to read and understand the question, research and outline points," she said

The ceremony ended with the presentation of awards to all the winners. Mr. Nyirongo received a sum of K300,000 for securing the second position, while Ms. Bottomani received a sum of K250,000 for achieving the third position.

This is not the first time for UNIMA students to shine in the MBS essay writing competition. Last year, a student from UNIMA, John Mundewe Banda, scooped the first prize in the same competition.



*Daniel Kawonga poses for a photo*

## UNIMA's Winning Streak Continues as Daniel Kawonga Claims SADC Essay Prize

For the second year in a row, a student from the University of Malawi has scooped the first prize in the SADC essay writing competition. On 17th August, 2024, at the official opening ceremony of the 44th Ordinary Summit of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Heads of State and Government, Mr. Daniel Kawonga, a fourth-year student pursuing a Bachelor of Education in Social Studies at UNIMA, was named the first-prize winner of the 2024 SADC Tertiary Institutions Essay Competition.

The competition was open to all institutions of higher learning in the SADC region, and invited students to write on SADC's achievement of the vision of its founders. Kawonga's winning essay provided a comprehensive and well-researched analysis of SADC's achievements since its formation, evaluating how these accomplishments measure up against the vision set by the organisation's founders. The essay highlighted notable progress in regional integration, economic development, peace, security, and climate change mitigation. However, Kawonga

also pointed out ongoing challenges such as poverty and inequality, demonstrating a balanced and insightful perspective.

For a long time, students of the University of Malawi have made winning international competitions look easy, clinching awards in various disciplines. Many students from the university have been recognised in various competitions for their outstanding performance, both local and international. The university takes immense pride in such achievements, particularly when the hard work and dedication of the students earn regional recognition.

Kawonga's participation in the essay competition was driven by his profound interest in the history and development of SADC. His motivation reflects UNIMA's commitment to understanding and addressing the challenges and opportunities within the region.

For UNIMA, Kawonga's success in the competition is a proud moment that underscores the quality of education and support provided. Being recognized at a regional level is not just an individual

achievement but also a reflection of the university's commitment to nurturing academic excellence and regional engagement.

"It feels incredibly rewarding and humbling to be recognized at a regional level for my academic work," Kawonga said. "This recognition motivates me to continue researching and writing about important issues affecting our beloved region."

As the winner, Kawonga has been awarded \$2000 by the regional body. He credits the support from his peers and the mentorship from his lecturers as crucial to his success. At UNIMA, building strong support networks is considered fundamental to student achievement. Students are encouraged to seek out and utilise these networks, including peer support and faculty mentorship, to maximise their potential and achieve their academic goals.

In 2023, the SADC Tertiary Institutions Essay Competition was won by Viveck Chimwaza, another student from the University of Malawi.



## ANNOUNCEMENTS



The University of Malawi would like to congratulate the new members of the Council of the University of Malawi, appointed with effect from 12th August, 2024. The new members include Dr. Christopher Guta (Chairperson), Dr. Harry Gombachika, Mr. Allan Chinula, SC, Mr. Eric Chapola, Mrs. Gertrude Kabwazi and Mrs. Regina Msolomba. The UNIMA Council also includes the Vice-Chancellor, One Senate Member, as well as one male student and one female student elected by the Student Representative Council. The Council also includes Ex-officio members, who include the Secretary for Education, the Secretary to the Treasury, and the Comptroller of Statutory Corporations.

As per tradition, we always celebrate those who have completed their studies. In that regard, we join the Department of Psychology and Medical Humanities in congratulating Demoubly Kokota who successfully defended his PhD Thesis at Kamuzu University of Health Sciences in August.

The past two months have also had their somber moments. During this period, the university lost students. We bade farewell to Mr Yassin Mkwanda, a Bachelor of Science in Electronics student, who passed away at Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital in Blantyre. The university also lost Mr Emmanuel Mapunda, a

Bachelor of Arts in Sociology student, during the same period.

We grieve with various members of staff who have also lost their relatives during this period. We mourn with Mr. James M'bwana of the Forestry section, whose wife passed on recently.

We offer condolences to Ms. Jennifer Masamba of Forestry section, whose father also passed on during the past two months.

We offer prayers to the soul of the father of Ms. Febbie Chingota of the University Library - Security section, upon his demise.

May the Lord offer comfort to the family of Mrs. Towera Mwachunga, Assistant Registrar (Academic), on the passing of her mother.

May the Angelic Host welcome the soul of Mrs. Mary Mthambala Chintokoma, mother of Mr. Moses Chintokoma of ICT, upon her passing.

And to Dr. Malunga, we pray that the one true God will bring healing to her family, on the passing of her son.

May all their souls rest in peace.



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