



MEDIA STATEMENT: GZU SETS THE RECORD STRAIGHT

MASVINGO - FRIDAY, 08 MARCH 2024 - The attention of Great Zimbabwe University has been drawn to an unsubstantiated report on social media claiming that “power struggles” have left the University “in ashes”. Great Zimbabwe University is disappointed at this irresponsible and sensational reporting and would like to set the record straight as follows:

- For the avoidance of doubt, Great Zimbabwe University hereby explicitly refutes all the allegations made against its Registrar, Dr Sinikiwe Gwatidzo, and notes with deep concern, the hurt and damage caused to her person and reputation by the social media article. Members of the University Community and general public are enjoined to completely disregard the report.
- Mindful of the challenges that women, particularly those in leadership and decision making positions face in the workplace, Great Zimbabwe University, as a progressive and pacesetter institution of higher learning, has an operational Gender Policy that addresses issues of gender bias and stereotyping at the institution. The policy empowers and encourages capable and qualified women access to the institutional ladder to the top without placing any ceilings.
- It is also important to point out that decisions at Great Zimbabwe University are made through a committee system. While decisions of a committee are binding to all, it is however worrisome for some faceless professors as quoted in the article to pick out an individual member of the committee simply because they would be doing their duty of implementing committee decisions, and apparently because they are women who are firm and fair.
- Whereas the article, sourced from faceless persons alleges that the Registrar of Great Zimbabwe University, Dr Gwatidzo has been running down the institution through her autocracy and favouritism, and that she wields so much power as to appoint her superiors, the truth is that the institution has its University Act, governance systems and policies that guide its operations. No single individual can tamper with the Act, the systems and policies, and succeed. For the record, the Registrar cannot appoint a Vice Chancellor, a Pro Vice Chancellor or even members of the University Executive Committee. Such powers rest with the Chancellor, after consultation with the Minister and the University Council.
- In the event that an acting Vice Chancellor has to be appointed the University Council has the powers to appoint one. It has to be emphasized that the University Council has the prerogative to decide and act in ways that best benefit the institution.
- The Registrar cannot single-handedly appoint any employee, even the lowest grade employee, as she has to get approval from the responsible head of department before making that appointment. Simply put, the Registrar is an implementer of decisions - sweet or sour - that would have been made by various committees of the University. The Registrar has no powers to veto any such decisions.
- The article further alludes to the existence of power struggles in the University. While, as is common in any organisational set-up, there might be differences of opinion on management of issues from time to time, there are certainly no power struggles at Great Zimbabwe University as alleged. The University Senate offers an open forum for the University Management, Professors, other Senior Academics and student representatives to exercise their minds over issues that affect the running of the institution. Very frank and open discussions obtain in Senate before progressive and binding consensus is reached.
- Besides Senate, the University Council and the Vice Chancellor have an open door policy that welcomes any employee or student to meet them and share their concerns without any prejudice.
- Great Zimbabwe University, just like most Universities in the country, has of late seen a worrying increase in numbers of members of staff - both Teaching and Non-Teaching - leaving for greener pastures. Such a situation cannot be blamed on an individual. While the departures are unfortunate, some are unavoidable. To prevent avoidable departures, the University is currently in engagement with workers' unions in order to craft sustainable staff retention strategies.
- Over the past decade, Great Zimbabwe University has worked out of the box to ensure that it provides unique and modern teaching and learning facilities for its students and staff as well as suitable accommodation. While we acknowledge that some structures may now require some upgrading, as is happening now, we wish to assure our stakeholders that the well-being and comfort of our staff and students remains the University's top priority.
- Great Zimbabwe University has been on an unprecedented growth trajectory in terms of its physical infrastructure and academic programmes since 2012. That expansion has seen the University growing its brand and market share to become one of the leading higher and tertiary institutions in the country. All stakeholders are, therefore, reassured of the University's commitment to its vision of being an exceptional Pan-African university championing heritage-based scholarship and modernisation/industrialization.

ENDS.