



GREAT ZIMBABWE UNIVERSITY NEWSLETTER

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER FOR GREAT ZIMBABWE UNIVERSITY

New GZU Council charts the next chapter

Great Zimbabwe University has entered a new phase of its institutional journey following the induction of a new University Council, whose mandate places governance, innovation and sustainable growth at the centre of the institution's future.

The three-day induction workshop, held from 4 to 6 May 2026, provided more than an orientation for newly appointed members. It served as a strategic platform to align the Council's responsibilities with Zimbabwe's Vision 2030, the National Development Strategy 2 and the University's own ambitions for transformation over the next five years.

The discussions reflected a growing expectation that universities must extend their influence beyond teaching and research to become drivers of industrialisation, innovation and economic development.

Delivering remarks on behalf of the Minister of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development, Ambassador Dr Frederick Shava, Deputy Minister Honourable Simelisizwe Sibanda reminded Council members that effective governance is measured not by oversight alone but by the institution's ability to achieve meaningful results.

He said that universities are increasingly expected to operate within a rapidly evolving technological and economic environment while remaining accountable to the public they serve. This requires strategic leadership, sound financial stewardship and a clear commitment to institutional performance.

A recurring theme throughout the workshop was the need to transform research into products, services and enterprises capable of contributing to national development.

Innovation, participants agreed, must move beyond laboratories and conference presentations to create tangible social and economic value.

The Minister also encouraged the institution to strengthen its financial sustainability by broadening its revenue base beyond tuition fees through commercially viable ventures and strategic partnerships. Such diversification, he noted, is essential for universities seeking long-term resilience in a changing higher education landscape.

For Council Chairperson Professor Mandivamba Rukuni, the University's future will be determined by the quality of its governance and the collective commitment of its leadership to relevance, excellence and accountability. He stressed that effective governance provides the foundation upon which academic achievement, innovation and institutional growth can flourish.

Vice Chancellor Professor Rungano Zvobgo presented the University's strategic direction, highlighting its continued transition towards science, technology, innovation and industrialisation. He outlined a vision in which the institution serves not only as a centre of learning but also as a catalyst for knowledge-driven development that addresses national priorities and creates opportunities for communities.

The induction therefore marked more than the beginning of a new Council's tenure. It signalled a renewed commitment to positioning Great Zimbabwe University as an institution where sound governance, innovation and public service converge to shape a sustainable and impactful future.



The Deputy Minister of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development, Honourable Simelisizwe Sibanda delivers opening remarks at the Council Induction Ceremony



GZU Council Chairperson Professor Mandivamba Rukuni gives welcome remarks at the same event

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SRC induction shapes a new generation of student leaders



Pro Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Administration Professor David Chikodzi



Newly elected Student Representative Council (SRC) following proceedings

Leadership at a university is measured not by authority but by service. It is a responsibility that demands integrity, sound judgement and an unwavering commitment to the community one represents. These principles formed the foundation of the three-day Student Representative Council (SRC) Induction and Team Building Workshop held at Outward Bound in Chimanimani from 7 to 9 June 2026.

Conducted under the theme "Leading Ethically, Living Ubuntu," the programme sought to prepare the newly elected student leadership for a role that extends beyond advocating for student interests. It challenged them to become custodians of the University's values, ambassadors of its reputation and partners in its continued development.

Throughout the induction, participants were encouraged to view leadership as an opportunity to create solutions rather than simply respond to challenges. The emphasis was on building a council capable of engaging constructively with management, promoting academic excellence and fostering an inclusive campus environment.

In remarks delivered on his behalf by the Pro Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Administration, Professor David Chikodzi, Vice Chancellor Professor Rungano Zvobgo reminded the incoming council that leadership is fundamentally an act of service.

The Vice Chancellor said that the University's mission is not to produce individuals who seek positions of influence for personal gain, but leaders who accept the responsibility of safeguarding the

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From Research to Results

Connecting innovation with industry



Vice Chancellor, Professor Rungano Zvobgo giving insightful remarks at the Research and Innovation Day

Universities generate knowledge, but their greatest impact is realised when that knowledge improves lives, strengthens industries and contributes to national development. This philosophy defined Great Zimbabwe University's Research and Innovation Day, where academics, students and industry representatives gathered to explore how research can move beyond publication to practical application.

Hosted by the Julius Nyerere School of Social Sciences, the event reflected a growing recognition that higher education institutions must serve as engines of innovation, creating solutions that address societal challenges while supporting economic transformation.

Across disciplines, researchers showcased projects aimed at improving production systems, enhancing service delivery and creating opportunities for entrepreneurship. The diversity of presentations demonstrated the breadth of scholarship within the University and the increasing emphasis on interdisciplinary collaboration.

Addressing participants, Vice Chancellor Professor Rungano Zvobgo described innovation as the essential link between academic inquiry and societal progress. He noted that research should not conclude with the generation of new knowledge but should continue through processes that enable discoveries to reach communities, industries and policymakers.

The Vice Chancellor observed that universities occupy a strategic position within the national innovation ecosystem. By connecting researchers with industry and government, institutions of higher learning can accelerate the translation of ideas into products, technologies and services that create measurable economic and social value.

Council Chairperson Professor Mandivamba Rukuni reinforced this perspective by encouraging researchers to align their work with production systems and market demands. He argued that meaningful scholarship is distinguished not only by intellectual merit but also by its capacity to solve practical problems and contribute to sustainable development.

Industry representatives echoed these sentiments, highlighting the need for stronger collaboration between academia and business. They noted that many promising research outcomes fail to achieve their potential because engagement with industry often begins after projects have been completed rather than during their development.

Greater collaboration, participants observed, would enable researchers to better understand market needs while allowing industry to benefit from the creativity, expertise and analytical capacity found within universities. Such partnerships also create opportunities for commercialisation, technology transfer and the development of locally driven solutions.

The event featured forty-five research presentations and innovation pitches spanning diverse fields of study. Twelve projects received awards in recognition of their originality, scalability and potential contribution to national development, demonstrating the University's growing capacity to produce research with practical significance.

For students, the programme offered valuable insight into the role of research beyond the classroom. It illustrated that academic excellence is not solely measured by examination performance or publication records but also by the ability to generate ideas capable of transforming communities and industries.

The occasion reflected a broader shift within higher education, where universities are increasingly expected to become catalysts for innovation-led development. As Zimbabwe advances its industrialisation agenda, institutions that successfully connect research with enterprise will play an increasingly significant role in shaping the country's future.

The Research and Innovation Day therefore served not merely as a showcase of scholarly achievement but as a statement of intent. It affirmed Great Zimbabwe University's commitment to fostering a culture in which discovery leads to application, innovation drives development and knowledge becomes a catalyst for lasting national progress.

SRC induction shapes a new generation of student leaders

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interests of those they represent. The newly elected SRC was therefore encouraged to approach its mandate with humility, accountability and a commitment to evidence-based decision-making.

An important component of the programme focused on institutional governance. University Registrar Dr Sinikiwe Gwatidzo introduced the council to the legislative and administrative framework that guides the institution, including the University Act, Ordinance No. 2 and the structures through which decisions are made.

Understanding these systems, she said, enables student leaders to represent their peers more effectively while providing accurate guidance on academic regulations, policies and procedures.

Acting Dean of Students Ms Saliwe Neganda reminded the council that student leadership should enhance rather than hinder personal academic achievement. The ability to balance service with scholarship, she said, is itself an important demonstration of discipline and responsibility.

Guest facilitator Ms Thandiwe Chivasa, Dean of Students at Zimbabwe Open University, encouraged the council to cultivate a leadership culture founded on professionalism, innovation and collaboration. She urged members to

embrace diversity of opinion while remaining united by a shared commitment to improving the student experience.

The workshop also highlighted the significance of institutional reputation in an increasingly interconnected world. Director of Information and Public Relations Mr Anderson Chipatiso encouraged the SRC to recognise that every interaction, statement and digital engagement contributes to public perceptions of the University. Student leaders, he said, are among the institution's most visible ambassadors and therefore carry a responsibility to communicate responsibly and uphold the values of the University.

Complementing this perspective, Director of Information and Communication Technology Mr Daniel Govo explored the ethical use of digital platforms, saying that social media should serve as a tool for constructive engagement, information sharing and responsible leadership.

Campus safety and compliance formed another important area of discussion. Director of Security Services Mr Kudakwashe Tagwirei encouraged the council to work collaboratively with the University's security structures in promoting a safe and orderly learning environment where students can pursue their studies without unnecessary disruption.

The induction equally recognised that effective leadership depends upon personal well-being and

inclusivity. Students Counsellor Mrs Sibizowe Kasenya encouraged participants to prioritise mental and emotional wellness, noting that resilience and sound judgement are strengthened by a healthy balance between leadership responsibilities and personal development.

Disability Resources Centre Administrator Mrs Tatenda Moyo challenged the SRC to become advocates for accessibility and inclusion by ensuring that the voices and needs of students with disabilities remain central to campus development initiatives and decision-making processes.

The final presentation turned attention to financial stewardship. Deputy Bursar Mr John Jamela reminded the council that student union resources are public funds entrusted to their care and must therefore be managed with transparency, prudence and accountability. He encouraged the establishment of sound budgeting practices, proper record-keeping and effective internal controls while assuring the SRC of continued support from the Bursar's Office in financial planning and governance.

Beyond formal presentations, the workshop programme incorporated practical team-building activities designed to strengthen trust, communication and collective responsibility. Nature-based exercises, collaborative challenges and reflective discussions around the bonfire created opportunities for participants to build relationships and develop a shared understanding of leadership grounded in cooperation rather than individual achievement.

Law programme prepares students for Africa's emerging space economy



The Executive Dean of the Herbert Chitepo Law School, Nkosana Maphosa and Faith Ndhlovu a Law Lecturer pose with the winning students

The rapid expansion of Africa's space sector is creating new legal, policy and governance challenges that require a generation of lawyers capable of navigating an increasingly complex international landscape. From satellite communications and Earth observation to environmental monitoring and technological innovation, space activities are no longer the preserve of a few global powers but have become integral to the continent's development agenda. Great Zimbabwe University's growing investment in legal education is positioning its graduates to participate in this evolving field, a reality

demonstrated by the University's outstanding performance at the 17th African Regional Round of the Manfred Lachs Space Law Moot Court Competition, held in Pretoria from 25 to 29 May 2026. Competing against eighteen universities from across Africa, the University's team finished as second runners-up, placing among the continent's top institutions in the specialised discipline of international space law. The achievement was further strengthened by the recognition of one of its advocates as the competition's

second-best oralist, underscoring the quality of legal training and advocacy skills being developed within the Law School. Representing the University were team captain Christopher Dembure, Thilivhali Msipa and Makanaka Nyabvure, who were accompanied by their coach, Mrs Faith Ndhlovu, and the Executive Dean of the Law School, Mr Nkosana Maphosa. The competition, organised under the auspices of the International Institute of Space Law in partnership with the South African National Space Agency and South Africa's Department of Trade, Industry and Competition, is Africa's premier academic contest in space law. Participants are required to prepare detailed written memorials and defend their arguments before panels comprising academics, legal practitioners and experts in the space sector. Success in such a competition demands far more than courtroom advocacy. It requires rigorous legal research, analytical reasoning and the ability to interpret evolving principles of international law within the context of rapidly advancing technologies. As African nations expand investments in satellite systems, telecommunications, disaster management and Earth observation, expertise in space law is becoming increasingly important for shaping policy, regulating innovation and protecting national interests. Great Zimbabwe University's participation in the regional finals followed an impressive performance in the Zimbabwe national rounds, where the team earned the right to represent the country at the continental competition. Their success reflects the University's broader commitment to producing graduates who are prepared for emerging areas of legal practice rather than traditional fields alone. Beyond the moot court proceedings, the delegation participated in the inaugural African Space Law Conference, engaging with policymakers, legal scholars, scientists, regulators and industry leaders on the governance challenges accompanying Africa's growing involvement in space activities. The programme also included a visit to facilities operated by the South African National Space Agency, providing participants with first-hand exposure to satellite operations, Earth observation programmes and international collaborative initiatives.

Building a continental platform for climate solutions



The VUT (Vaal University of Technology) delegation participates in the meeting to discuss preparations for the upcoming conference



Pro Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Prof David Chikodzi leads the delegation

Climate change is increasingly demanding solutions that transcend national boundaries and academic disciplines. As governments, researchers and industry seek practical pathways towards sustainability, Great Zimbabwe University is preparing to host a continental platform designed to foster exactly that kind of collaboration. The University's preparations for the Second International Conference on Climate Resilient, Smart and Sustainable Futures (ICCRSF 2026) gathered momentum with a two-day planning visit by a high-level delegation from Vaal University of Technology (VUT) on 13 and 14 May 2026. The engagement marked another important milestone in the partnership between the two institutions as they work towards delivering the conference in Victoria Falls from 12 to 14 August 2026. Rather

than serving as a routine planning meeting, the visit reflected a shared commitment to positioning universities as drivers of innovation and practical solutions to some of the world's most pressing environmental challenges. Discussions centred on strengthening coordination and ensuring that the conference provides a meaningful platform for research, policy dialogue and international collaboration. The conference will be held under the theme, "Designing Systems for Accelerating Climate-Resilient and Sustainable Societies," highlighting the need for integrated approaches that connect science, technology, policy and community action. It is expected to attract researchers, policymakers, development agencies, industry leaders, funding organisations and

civil society representatives from across Africa and beyond. Its programme will examine climate financing and resilience-building, sustainable development, digital transformation, legal and policy frameworks, climate-responsive tourism and heritage management, as well as the application of artificial intelligence and smart technologies in advancing sustainability. By bringing together expertise from diverse sectors, the conference aims to generate solutions that extend beyond academic debate to inform policy and practice. The collaboration between Great Zimbabwe University and Vaal University of Technology was strengthened during the inaugural ICCRSF conference held in Johannesburg in 2025, where Great Zimbabwe University secured the opportunity to host the second edition. The two institutions also signed a Memorandum of Understanding to deepen cooperation in research, innovation and internationalisation, laying the foundation for the joint initiatives now taking shape. The VUT delegation was led by Deputy Vice Chancellor for Research, Innovation, Commercialisation and Internationalisation Professor Speech Nelana and included Director of Research Professor Tumisa Seodigeng, Research Professors Professor Kaitano Dube and Professor Susanna Burger, Director of Internationalisation Mr Vido Kungune and Public Relations Officer Ms Palesa Ubane. Beyond the planning sessions, the delegation toured the University's Innovation Hub, the Simon Mazorodze School of Medical and Health Sciences and the Innovation Centre of Excellence in Drylands Agriculture in Chivi. The visits provided an opportunity to showcase ongoing research and innovation initiatives while exchanging ideas on climate adaptation strategies for drought-prone environments. The delegation, together with University officials, also inspected the conference venue in Victoria Falls, engaging with management teams as preparations entered an advanced stage. As anticipation for ICCRSF 2026 continues to build, the conference is set to reinforce Great Zimbabwe University's growing role as a convener of knowledge, innovation and partnerships dedicated to building climate-resilient and sustainable societies across Africa.

Equipping scholars for a new era of knowledge creation

Artificial intelligence is rapidly reshaping the global research landscape, changing how scholars gather information, analyse data and communicate knowledge. Rather than viewing this technological shift with uncertainty, Great Zimbabwe University is embracing it as an opportunity to strengthen research excellence and academic productivity.

In a significant step towards building digital research capacity, more than fifty lecturers from the Munhumutapa School of Business Sciences and the Robert Mugabe School of Heritage and Education participated in an intensive workshop on the application of artificial intelligence in academic research and scholarly writing.

The programme reflected a growing understanding that modern scholarship increasingly requires researchers to combine disciplinary expertise with digital competencies. As universities across the world adapt to emerging technologies, the ability to use artificial intelligence responsibly and effectively has become an important component of academic practice.

Facilitated by senior lecturer Dr Tafirenyika Mashamba, the workshop introduced participants to practical uses of Claude, an artificial intelligence platform capable of supporting literature reviews, organising research ideas, synthesising information and assisting with analytical tasks. Participants explored how such tools can improve efficiency while allowing researchers to devote more time to critical thinking, interpretation and innovation.

The discussions made it clear that artificial intelligence is not intended to replace academic judgement or scholarly integrity. Instead, it serves as an intellectual assistant that can reduce routine tasks and enable researchers to concentrate on developing original arguments, generating new knowledge and addressing complex societal challenges.

Equally important was the emphasis on ethical use. Participants examined the responsibilities associated with integrating artificial intelligence into academic work, including the need for transparency, verification of information and adherence to principles of originality and intellectual honesty. Technology, they



Lecturers attentively follow proceedings during the AI research training session

noted, should strengthen scholarship rather than compromise it.

The workshop forms part of the University's broader strategy to enhance digital literacy among academic staff and ensure that teaching, learning and research remain responsive to a rapidly evolving technological environment. Investing in these skills positions the institution to participate more effectively in global academic networks while improving the quality and competitiveness of its research outputs.

For many participants, the training represented

more than the introduction of a new digital tool. It signalled a shift in the culture of research, where innovation is increasingly driven by the thoughtful integration of technology and human expertise.

As artificial intelligence continues to

influence higher education worldwide, universities that adapt responsibly will be better placed to expand knowledge, solve emerging challenges and prepare graduates for the demands of the future. By equipping its academics with these capabilities, Great Zimbabwe University is strengthening its capacity to produce research that is not only intellectually rigorous but also relevant, efficient and impactful.

The workshop therefore marked another step in the institution's ongoing transformation into a modern university where technological innovation supports scholarly excellence and where the pursuit of knowledge remains firmly connected to the changing needs of society.

Career Expos extend GZU's reach and inspire future scholars



Information and Public Relations officers, Peace Mahaso and Tatenda Chizu interact with students during a question and answer session at the Rock Conference Career Fair

For many young people, the decision to pursue higher education begins with a conversation, a demonstration or an encounter that transforms aspiration into possibility. By taking its programmes beyond the campus and into communities across the country, Great Zimbabwe University continues to ensure that those opportunities reach learners

wherever they are.

Recent participation in career expos in Bulawayo, Chiredzi and Mutasa District formed part of the institution's broader strategy to connect prospective students and their families with information that enables informed educational choices. The engagements provided a platform to

showcase academic programmes, explain admission requirements and highlight

The diverse pathways available through higher education.

Rather than functioning solely as recruitment exercises, the expos created spaces for dialogue between the University, schools, parents and communities. Learners were encouraged to explore their interests, ask questions about university life and consider how their talents could contribute to national development.

Academic staff and recruitment teams introduced prospective students to programmes spanning agriculture, engineering, business, law, education, heritage studies and technology. Particular attention was given to emerging fields that respond to the changing demands of the labour market and the knowledge economy, reflecting the University's commitment to producing graduates equipped for contemporary challenges.

The conversations also extended beyond academic programmes to include innovation, entrepreneurship and problem-solving as essential attributes for future professionals. In an increasingly competitive global environment, participants were encouraged to view higher education not merely as a qualification but as a platform for creativity, leadership and lifelong learning.

Parents and teachers welcomed the opportunity to engage directly with University representatives, receiving guidance on programme structures, career prospects and the support systems available to students. Such interactions help bridge the information gap that often exists between secondary education and university, particularly for learners from underserved communities.

By taking information, guidance and opportunity directly to communities across the country, Great Zimbabwe University is helping young people envision possibilities that extend beyond the classroom. Each career expo becomes more than an information session. It becomes an invitation to imagine, to aspire and ultimately to participate in shaping the nation's future.

Partnership expands mental health support for young people

Mental health has increasingly become a central concern in education systems worldwide, with growing recognition that academic success is closely linked to emotional well-being, resilience and access to psychosocial support. In response to this reality, Great Zimbabwe University has entered into a strategic partnership aimed at strengthening mental health awareness and support services for young people across Masvingo Province.

The collaboration with the Masvingo Root of Development Organisation Trust (MaRODO) marks an important step in expanding community-based mental health interventions, particularly for learners and youth navigating academic, social and economic pressures.

At the heart of the partnership is the HEARTS initiative, a programme designed to promote counselling, mentorship and resilience-building while creating safe spaces where young people can access psychosocial support without stigma or barriers. The initiative reflects a broader shift towards preventive and community-centred mental health care rather than reactive interventions.

Under the partnership framework, the University contributes academic expertise, research capacity and student engagement, while MaRODO provides coordination of community outreach and implementation of youth empowerment programmes. This complementary arrangement ensures that interventions are both evidence-based and grounded in lived community realities.

The collaboration also highlights the evolving role of universities as active participants in public health and social development. Beyond their traditional mandate of teaching and research, institutions of higher learning are increasingly called upon to contribute directly to addressing pressing societal challenges.

For students within the University, the initiative creates opportunities for practical engagement in community mental health programmes, offering exposure to real-world challenges while strengthening applied learning. For communities, it enhances access to structured support systems that promote emotional well-being and resilience.

The partnership is particularly significant in the context of young people, who often face barriers

to accessing mental health services due to stigma, limited resources or lack of awareness. By integrating academic institutions into community support structures, the initiative seeks to bridge these gaps and promote a more inclusive



The Registrar Dr Sinikiwe Gwatidzo and the MaRODO Founder and Executive Director, Acknowledge Mawere exchange signed copies of the MOU after the signing ceremony

approach to mental health care.

Stakeholders involved in the programme said that mental well-being is not separate from educational achievement but an essential foundation for it. When students are supported emotionally and psychologically, they are better equipped to succeed academically and contribute meaningfully to society.

The HEARTS initiative therefore represents more than a collaborative programme; it signals a shift towards integrated development approaches that recognise the interconnectedness of education, health and community well-being.

Putting staff well-being at the centre

Behind every thriving academic institution is a community of dedicated staff whose expertise, commitment and professionalism sustain teaching, research and administration. Recognising this, Great Zimbabwe University continues to place staff well-being at the heart of its institutional culture.

The recent Human Resources Open Week and Wellness Programme reflected a deliberate effort to strengthen communication between employees and the Human Resources Division while promoting a healthier, more supportive working environment across the University.

The Open Week created structured opportunities for staff members to engage directly with HR personnel on matters relating to remuneration, career development, workplace policies and employee benefits. These interactions helped foster transparency, improve service delivery and strengthen trust between staff and administration.

Beyond administrative engagement, the initiative also sought to reinforce a culture of openness where employees feel heard, supported and valued. By creating accessible channels for dialogue, the University continues to build a more responsive and people-centred working environment.

Complementing these engagements was a comprehensive wellness programme that brought a range of health services directly to staff. These included eye examinations, blood pressure monitoring, blood sugar testing, HIV counselling and

other preventive health screenings designed to promote early detection and healthier lifestyles.

The programme extended beyond clinical services to reinforce a broader message: organisational success is closely linked to the well-being of its people. A healthy workforce is better positioned to deliver quality teaching, conduct impactful research and provide efficient administrative support.

The initiative also underscored the importance of preventive health care in the workplace. By encouraging staff to take proactive steps in managing their health, the University is contributing to long-term wellness outcomes that benefit both individuals and the institution as a whole.

In parallel, the engagement sessions highlighted the value of continuous communication between management and staff. Open dialogue remains a critical component of organisational cohesion, ensuring that concerns are addressed promptly and that institutional policies are clearly understood across all levels.

The wellness programme further demonstrated the University's commitment to fostering a supportive workplace culture where staff development is not limited to professional growth but extends to physical, emotional and social well-being.



Human Resources staff members attend to a fellow employee at the HR consultation desk



Staff accessing health screening and wellness services from various healthcare providers during the Wellness week

A Lasting Legacy: Celebrating Victor Nkiwane's contribution to legal education

Institutions are often shaped not only by policies and programmes but by individuals whose vision, discipline and commitment leave an enduring imprint on their foundations. Few figures embody this reality more profoundly within the Herbert Chitepo Law School than its founding Dean, Mr Victor Nkiwane.

Recently, colleagues, students, alumni and members of the legal fraternity gathered to honour a career that helped transform a newly established academic unit into one of Zimbabwe's respected centres of legal education. The occasion was not merely a farewell, but a recognition of a legacy that continues to influence the trajectory of legal training at the University.

When the Law School was established in 2014, it entered a competitive and demanding academic landscape. Under Mr Nkiwane's stewardship, the School developed its academic identity through careful curriculum design, rigorous accreditation processes and a strong emphasis on professional formation.

His leadership extended beyond administrative responsibilities. It was characterised by a commitment to academic rigour, mentorship and the cultivation of intellectual curiosity among both staff and students. These qualities helped shape a learning environment grounded in discipline, ethical awareness and scholarly ambition.

Over the years, the School's participation in moot court competitions at national and international level further enhanced its visibility and reputation. These platforms not only showcased student talent but also reinforced the institution's capacity to compete and collaborate within broader legal education networks.

Speakers at the gathering described Mr Nkiwane as a mentor whose influence transcended formal teaching spaces. Many credited him with shaping their professional journeys, instilling values of integrity, diligence and critical thinking that continue to guide their careers in law and beyond.



Vice Chancellor Professor Rungano Zvobgo and Mr Victor Nkiwane pose for a group photo with lecturers from the Law School following the farewell ceremony

Reflecting on his tenure, Mr Nkiwane described the establishment of the Law School as the defining achievement of his professional life. He expressed appreciation for the support received from colleagues and took pride in the achievements of graduates who now serve in various sectors of the legal profession.

His remarks carried a tone of continuity rather than conclusion. The School, he noted, stands as a living institution whose future is secured by those who continue to build upon its foundations.

Students explore the power of Public Policy and Environmental Law

Legal education extends far beyond statutes, case law and classroom analysis. It is ultimately about understanding how societies organise themselves, how decisions are made, and how communities are protected within evolving social and environmental contexts.

This perspective came to the fore during a recent public lecture organised for law students in collaboration with the Zimbabwe Environmental Law Organisation and the Zimbabwe Gender Commission. The engagement created a platform for students to examine the intersection of public policy, environmental governance and community participation.

Rather than following the structure of a conventional lecture, the session was designed as an interactive forum. Students were encouraged to interrogate contemporary legal issues, debate policy choices and reflect on the practical implications of environmental legislation in everyday life.

Central to the discussions was the role of citizens in shaping policy outcomes. Participants explored the mechanisms through which communities can influence decision-making processes, particularly in relation to environmental protection and sustainable resource management.

The dialogue highlighted that effective governance depends not only on legal frameworks but also on the extent to which those frameworks are understood,

accessed and utilised by the public. In this sense, law was presented as a living system shaped by continuous interaction between institutions and the communities they serve.

Environmental law formed a significant part of the conversation, particularly in relation to sustainability, climate change and the protection of natural resources. Students examined how legal instruments can be used to balance development needs with environmental conservation, a challenge increasingly relevant in many jurisdictions.

The involvement of the Zimbabwe Environmental Law Organisation and the Zimbabwe Gender Commission added depth to the engagement by introducing practical perspectives on advocacy, rights-based approaches and inclusive policy development. These contributions helped bridge the gap between academic theory and real-world application.

For students, the session provided an opportunity to move beyond passive learning and engage directly with the complexities of legal practice in contemporary society. It reinforced the importance of critical thinking, public engagement and interdisciplinary understanding in legal education.

The lecture also reflected a broader shift in legal training towards experiential and participatory learning models.



Mr Simbarashe Musikavanhu (Zimbabwe Gender Commission) and Ms Emerge Masiya (GZU Law School Lecturer) coordinate proceedings during the Public Lecture

Not Just One Open Door, but an Open-Door Policy in Public Management



Julius Munodawafa, Director, Monitoring and Evaluation

Introduction

Public sector institutions have long been criticised for operating closed and highly bureaucratic systems that result in slow decision-making, stifle innovation and creativity, deliver poor service, increase costs and reduce efficiency, among many other shortcomings. However, driven by stakeholder expectations, public sector reforms and international best practice, many institutions have adopted open-door policies as part of their management approach.

What has emerged, however, is inconsistency and a lack of complementarity in implementing these policies. In some institutions, only the Chief Executive Officer's door is open while all other doors remain closed. In other cases, the CEO's door is closed while the rest of the organisation claims to operate an open-door policy. Modern management practice calls for consistency and complementarity in the way institutional "doors" are treated.

Everyone's door—from junior employees and supervisors to managers, executives, the CEO and even board members—should be open. Every employee should be accessible to both internal and external stakeholders. Public institutions should be prepared to engage their stakeholders whenever the need arises, while technology should enable services to be delivered around the clock where appropriate.]

Benefits of an Open-Door Policy in Public Institutions

Improved Communication

Public sector institutions that embrace an open-door culture remove barriers between the organisation and its stakeholders. Such institutions receive real-time feedback, enabling them to address issues while they are still manageable. Greater accessibility also strengthens trust and confidence among stakeholders.

Faster Problem Solving

An effective open-door policy allows stakeholders to raise concerns without waiting for scheduled meetings. Urgent matters such as fraud, safety hazards, service failures and customer complaints can be addressed promptly. Every employee becomes a gatekeeper, capable of identifying inefficiencies that may have been overlooked by colleagues or senior management.

Technology has further transformed service delivery by enabling institutions to provide services at any time and from virtually anywhere. Gone are the days when customers queued for routine banking services such as balance enquiries, cash withdrawals, fund transfers and utility payments. Today, many of these services are readily available online.

Improved Morale, Trust and Retention

When both internal and external stakeholders know their voices are heard, morale improves and institutions are better positioned to retain employees, customers and partners. Employees are more likely to take ownership of their work when leadership genuinely listens to their concerns and ideas. Likewise, organisations with strong feedback cultures enjoy greater customer loyalty because people value institutions that respond to their needs.

Greater Innovation and Creativity

Frontline employees—including cleaners, receptionists, tellers, drivers and security personnel—interact with clients daily and often have the clearest understanding of customer pain points. When given the opportunity, these employees can generate valuable ideas that improve organisational performance. Research consistently shows that open organisational cultures encourage innovation because employees feel valued and included in decision-making.

Enhanced Transparency and Accountability

Public sector institutions have a responsibility to operate transparently and remain accountable to the citizens and stakeholders they serve. Open-door systems promote openness, reduce unnecessary bureaucracy and help minimise many of the problems associated with closed organisational cultures.

An Effective Early Warning System

Institutions that embrace an open-door

culture are better able to detect emerging challenges before they escalate into major problems. Continuous feedback enables management to identify risks early and respond proactively. Such systems promote two-way communication, continuous improvement, accountability, transparency and better-informed decision-making.

Conclusion

An open-door policy succeeds only when everyone is willing to listen and engage. It requires commitment from employees at every level, particularly senior management, the CEO and the board. Leaders must remain accessible and create an environment where stakeholders and employees can freely raise concerns, share ideas and report problems without fear of intimidation or retaliation.

Public sector institutions should move beyond the traditional notion of a single open door. Instead, they should adopt a truly organisation-wide open-door policy—one in which every door is open, every voice matters and every stakeholder has meaningful access to the institution.

**Article by Julius Munodawafa
Director, Monitoring and Evaluation
and Performance Management
Great Zimbabwe University**

University exhibits at the National Culture Week celebrations

Great Zimbabwe University recently participated at the National Culture Week celebrations held at Barbourfields Stadium, Bulawayo, where His Excellency the President, Honourable Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa, was the Guest of Honour. The celebrations were held under the theme: “Diversity and Creativity Advancing Vision 2030.” The GZU exhibition stand showcased various innovations including traditional grains meal (zviyo and mapfunde) from the Innovation Centre for Drylands Agriculture. The University also exhibited student-led start-ups featuring dried fruits, vegetables, and pure honey products, highlighting the importance of entrepreneurship, heritage preservation, and sustainable development. The event also provided an important platform for Great Zimbabwe University to market its 2026 August Intake to prospective students, giving them an opportunity to explore various academic programmes and career opportunities offered by the University of Choice.



Showcasing traditional grain products at the GZU exhibition stand

“ Diversity and Creativity Advancing Vision 2030 ”

Celebrating Success: Inclusive Education class reaches major milestone

Achievement in higher education is often measured in examinations and graduation ceremonies, but its deeper meaning is found in the resilience, discipline and commitment that carry students through years of study. For the Class of 2026 pursuing the In-Service Bachelor of Education Degree in Inclusive Education (Sign Language Specialisation), this milestone represents precisely that kind of journey.

The programme brought together practising teachers who balanced demanding professional responsibilities with the equally rigorous demands of academic study. Their progression through the degree reflects years of sustained effort, sacrifice and determination to advance both personal qualifications and national educational capacity.

At its core, the qualification speaks to a broader national priority: the development of inclusive education systems that ensure no learner is left behind. By specialising in sign language and inclusive teaching methodologies, graduates are equipped to support learners with diverse needs in classrooms across Zimbabwe.

Their achievement therefore extends beyond individual

advancement. It strengthens the education sector’s ability to deliver equitable learning opportunities and contributes to building schools that are more responsive, accessible and inclusive.

Throughout their studies, the cohort navigated the dual pressures of professional teaching and academic coursework. This balancing act demanded not only time management but also a deep sense of purpose, as many worked directly within classrooms while simultaneously refining the skills needed to improve them.

The completion of the programme marks the emergence of a cadre of educators better prepared to champion inclusive practices within their institutions. Their training enables them to advocate for learners with disabilities, implement inclusive teaching strategies and contribute to the ongoing transformation of education systems.

As they transition into this next phase of their professional journey, their impact is expected to be felt not only in individual classrooms but across the broader education landscape, where inclusive practices



The Bachelor of Education Degree in Inclusive Education (Sign Language) Class of 2026 in celebration mode after their final examination.

continue to gain importance.

The milestone stands as a reminder that education is both a personal and collective investment—one that yields benefits far beyond the individual, shaping communities and strengthening national development goals.

Through this cohort, the University continues to contribute to the creation of an education system that values diversity, promotes equity and ensures that all learners are given the opportunity to succeed.

From Campus Radio Studios to the international stage

University education often serves as a launchpad into unexpected and far-reaching professional pathways. For Virginia Tlou Nyambe, a graduate of Media and Cultural Studies, that journey has evolved from campus broadcasting studios to national and international recognition.

Her early exposure to media production began at the University's Campus Radio Station, where she developed foundational skills in broadcasting, presentation and communication. These formative experiences provided a practical training ground that complemented her academic studies and shaped her future career trajectory.

Following her graduation, she built a career in radio and television across Zimbabwe and South Africa, establishing herself as a versatile broadcaster, master of ceremonies and media personality. Her work reflects both technical proficiency and a strong command of audience engagement across diverse platforms.

Her recent crowning as Miss Intercontinental Zimbabwe 2026 marks another significant milestone in her evolving public profile, positioning her as a representative of Zimbabwe on an international stage.

Beyond pageantry, her journey illustrates the broader potential of media studies graduates to contribute across multiple sectors, including communication, entertainment, cultural diplomacy and public engagement.

Her career reflects a blend of talent, discipline and opportunity, demonstrating how university platforms can serve as critical incubators for professional development. The transition from campus radio to national media highlights the importance of experiential learning in shaping employable and adaptable graduates.

In addition to her professional achievements, she has also taken on mentoring roles, contributing to the development of emerging talent in broadcasting and media practice. This dimension of her work reinforces the cycle of knowledge transfer that often defines successful creative industries.

Her story stands as an example of the diverse trajectories available to graduates who combine academic grounding with practical experience and personal initiative.

As she steps onto the international stage, her journey continues to reflect the growing visibility and influence of University alumni in media, culture and public life—demonstrating the far-reaching impact of higher education beyond the classroom.



Virginia Tlou Nyambe, Miss Intercontinental Zimbabwe 2026