"If you haven't found it yet keep looking"
Steve Jobs

- University Introduces Climate Smart Crops
- International Students Go Green
- University Welcomes New Students
Welcome to yet another exciting edition of *The Pulse* as we take a look at developments that took place at the country’s premium institution of higher learning during the last couple of weeks.

Research excellence remains one of the University’s key pillars and in this edition, we look at efforts being made by the University through the Faculty of Natural Resources Management and Agriculture (NRM&A) to build resilience through the introduction of climate smart crops.

Still keeping with research, we also feature a workshop organised by the Communication Skills department in conjunction with the Research and Postgraduate Office, and the Library Services department to bring academics up to speed with the use of reference management software in academic writing.

Elsewhere in this edition, we welcome our principal stakeholders, both new and returning undergraduate students as lectures commenced on the 19th of February 2017. We also explore possible partnerships that are being pursued by the Institution as it moves to increase student accommodation.

Last but not least, we take time to applaud our international students who undertook a tree planting exercise as part of efforts to ensure a healthy, green and eco-friendly learning environment.

I leave you with a famous quote from Walter Gropius “Under trees, the urban dweller might restore his troubled soul and find the blessing of a creative pause.”

So until next time, happy reading!
University Complements Efforts to Build Resilience in Zimbabwe through Introduction of Climate Smart Crops

Early last year, Midlands State University members participated in the bid for the Zimbabwe Resilience Building Fund, within the UNDP framework which is expected to run for 10 years. MSU participated in consortium led by DanChurch Aid. The consortium is one of the two that won the 2017 round of the ZRBF grant of USD 5 123 367.00 dollars, culminating in the Sizimele Project. Sizimele aims to support resilience building efforts in three districts of Matebeleland, namely Lupane, Insiza and Matopo.

The initiatives are premised on the understanding that communities suffer setbacks in development owing to environmental (unusual climate events such as floods & droughts) as well as socioeconomic shocks. These shocks often lead to loss of development gains societies would have accumulated. Sizimele interventions thus aim at safeguarding societies from loss of development gains in the face of shocks and stressors.

As part of the Sizimele efforts, Midlands State University was mandated to spearhead the introduction of climate smart crops in order to diversify the farming systems in the targeted districts. The first project which is currently underway is the introduction of a climate smart crop called Quinoa. Quinoa is an all nutrient crop originating from Peru and Bolivia.

The quinoa grain, also known as a pseudo grain contains all essential amino acids, vitamins, minerals in amounts exceeding those recommended by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). Quinoa has exceptional capabilities of thriving in drought prone areas and in poor soils where most crops will fail.

In view of quinoa’s exceptional nutritional quality and versatility, United Nations General Assembly declared 2013 as the International Year of Quinoa”. The introduction of quinoa is going to take place in three phases: Seed Multiplication, Sensitization/Awareness and Preparation of Quinoa Production Manual.
Phase 1: Seed Multiplication

Quinoa seed was imported from Ethiopia and planted at Midlands State University Agriculture Practice department on the 17th of November 2017. The planting will be followed by a second phase of seed multiplication to be rolled out at the campus farm in Kwekwe. After multiplication and approval by the Ministry of Agriculture, Mechanisation and Irrigation Development’s department of Research and Specialist Services (plant quarantine), the seed will be introduced to communities in Matabeleland in the 2018 growing season. The first planting of quinoa is at the milk dough stage, a stage just before maturity. The first harvest is expected soon. Commenting on the experiences with the crop to date, this is what one of the researchers had to say about the crop:

‘It is an amazing crop. The first planting we did at the University on the 17th of November is now a milk dough stage, exactly two months after planting. No other crop is capable of achieving this kind of field time. Maize would require a minimum of 80 days while sorghum almost the same amount of time. This means the crop can do well even in areas with the shortest rain seasons” said Dr Muziri.

Quinoa at the milk dough stage

Phase 2: Sensitization/Awareness

A team of researchers (Dr Muziri, Dr Manjeru, Mr Manhokwe and Mr Mugandani) recently carried a quinoa sensitisation exercise in Insiza about the new crop. It was indeed a belated Christmas for the people of Filabusi as they were treated to 2 days of festivity by Midlands State University lecturers and Community Capacity Building Initiatives Centre for Africa (CCABICA) officers. The communities were given an opportunity to taste and evaluate dishes of quinoa, sorghum, maize and rice.

Midlands State University researchers and Community Capacity Building Initiatives Centre for Africa (CCABICA) officers during the Community awareness exercise held on the 27th – 28th of December 2017.
As the University continuously seeks to provide requisite physical infrastructure for both students and staff alike, student accommodation remains a great preoccupation for the institution as it works to ensure that the majority of students are housed on campus.

Over and above, the construction of two model halls of residence that are already over 90% completion at the Graduate School of Business Leadership, Faculty of Law and Faculty of Commerce Campus, the University is also looking to partner with various private sector investors in the construction of additional halls of residence.

Cognisant of the above, on Wednesday the 21st of February 2018, the University through the assistance of the parent Ministry met with officials from CoraCore Africa PVT Ltd to discuss the possibility of entering into a partnership that will see the latter financing the construction of student halls of residence among other projects on a build-operate-transfer (BOT) arrangement.

The delegation from CoraCore, led by Engineer Mhangwa, said the South African based property development and investment firm has worked with a number of leading South African universities and was therefore keen to also invest in student accommodation and other projects locally. If successful, the partnership would significantly increase the University’s capacity to provide on-campus accommodation.

The meeting which was chaired by the University’s Acting Vice-Chancellor, Professor V N Muzvidziwa was attended by the Pro Vice-Chancellor, Business Development and Administration, Professor K H Wekwete, the Registrar, Mr E Mupfika, Librarian, Ms N P Chibanda and the Bursar, Mr A Zvandasara among other senior members of the University administration.

The meeting ended with a tour of the new University Chapel and Administration Office block at the
International Students Go Green

Midlands State University South Sudan Students, in conjunction with the National Forest Commission, embarked on a tree planting exercise at the Graduate School of Business Leadership campus (GSBL) on the 30th of January 2018. The exercise aimed at creating a vibrant and healthy environment for the students and the surrounding communities.

The project coordinator, Kan Gueh Kan Lapdhor, highlighted that the initiative was driven by the ideals of Zimbabwe’s National Tree Planting Day which is held annually in December. He said the initiative was meant to improve the learning, working and living environment for Midlands State University and the surrounding community as trees provide clean air.

“The role of trees on the planet is comparable to that of lungs in human beings. Therefore, it is imperative to plant trees at our University to improve the living conditions of human beings and bring balance to the ecosystem through the production of clean air,” said Kan.

The Midlands State University International Relations Office also highlighted that this initiative came as a result of the need to join the world in combating global warming which has affected most parts of Sub-Saharan Africa.

International Relations Office representative, Qinisani Bhebe, weighed in on the tree planting initiative by highlighting its contribution towards the reduction of global warming.

Mr Ilunga, representing the Student Affairs Division, applauded the efforts made by the Midlands State University International students towards creating a green environment. He also went on to thank the National Forest Commission for the donation of two hundred and fifty trees.

“As the Student Affairs Division, we would like to commend the South Sudan students for coming up and implementing an initiative that would help preserve our environment. This tree planting initiative is also going to leave a lasting legacy of their courtesy not only towards Midlands State University but the nation at large.

This tree planting exercise shall be an ongoing process at Midlands State University as the International students scale up their fight against global warming to make this world a better place to live in.
The country’s premier institution of higher learning welcomed new students on the 15th of February 2018. To help the freshmen settle into their new home away from home for the next four to five years, the University through the auspices of the Division of Student Affairs conducted a four-day orientation programme.

The orientation programme, which ran from 15 to 19 February, and was designed to support new students in their transition from high school to university life, witnessed resource persons from various support service departments within the University furnishing new students with information about the demands of tertiary education as well as offering them critical advise that will see them successfully complete their studies and pursue their desired career paths upon graduation.

In her welcome remarks, the Acting Dean of Students, Mrs Mhlanga assured students that their welfare was at the heart of all her department’s undertaking and that the Division of Student Affairs would spare no efforts to ensure that it provides a conducive environment both in and outside the lecture room, for well-rounded student development in which creativity and innovation thrive.

Speaking during the same orientation programme, the University Chaplain, Dr Reverend M Mpofu called on new students to maintain the institution’s core values and not to lose sight of their core business.

On behalf of the entire Midlands State University community, we extend a hearty welcome to all new students and say, congratulations on becoming the latest members of our pace-setting family, we wish you success in all your academic and sporting endeavours.

Lectures for both new and returning students commenced on Monday the 19th of February 2018, with most students reporting for lectures and some completing their registration formalities.
The University’s department of Communication Skills in conjunction with the Research and Postgraduate Studies Office and Library Services department on Friday 23 February 2017, hosted a one-day workshop. The chief aim of the workshop was to discuss issues pertaining to referencing using modern desktop and web-based reference management software as well as to introduce and demonstrate to participants how to use the software.

In her welcome remarks, the Acting Pro Vice-Chancellor, Research and Academic Affairs, Professor D.Z. Moyo underlined the importance of referencing one’s work in academia.

‘Referencing is a system that allows one to acknowledge the sources of information used in one’s writing ... it is also part of a sound academic practice and skill that should be mastered by every University student or academic’, noted Professor Moyo.

Delivering a presentation on why people should use reference management software, University Sub-Librarian, Mr E. Makeke, said it was impossible to come up with your own work without acknowledging that of other scholars.

He further highlighted that referencing also clarifies ideas that are crucial to one’s written discussion and guards against plagiarism.

In his presentation, Dr Guyo from the Research and Postgraduate Studies Office, pointed out that whenever people are writing academic essays they need to reference because referencing allows you to acknowledge ideas from other scholars and it always gives credit to the concepts and ideas of other authors and it helps to authenticate the writer’s work, in addition to making one’s work more persuasive.

During the workshop, Dr G. Mehlana, a researcher in the department of Chemical Technology who is conversant in the use of reference management software, outlined the benefits of using Mendeley, a reference management software from Elsevier.

In her closing remarks, Dr L. Gumbo from the Communication Skills department said the workshop would go a long way in helping academics enhance their referencing and citation skills.
In an exciting development, the University’s Film and Theatre Arts department, was this year nominated for its first ever National Arts Merit Award (NAMA) in the Outstanding Screen Production category.

College Central’s as the Department’s production team is popularly known, was nominated for its short film, ‘Things we do for love’, which went up against two other productions, ‘Ruvimbo’s Wedding’ and ‘Baba the joys of fatherhood’ by Ben Mahaka and Ignatious Matope respectively.

‘Things we do for love’ was produced by Godknows Chera, a member of staff in the department of Film and Theatre Arts and directed by Derby Bheta, a former student in the department, who graduated last year.

College Central is still riding high in the film industry, after having won the 2017 best short film award in the Hi-5 category late last year, during the joint Zim- babwe International Film Festival, (ZIFF) and International Images Film Festival (IIFF) festival. While, winning a NAMA would have seen College Central add another much deserved award to their trophy cabinet, this was not to be as the award for the Outstanding Screen Production went to Ben Mahaka for ‘Ruvimbo’s Wedding’ on the awards night.

Despite falling short of winning the award, in an interview, Chera said, the nomination in itself was a great achievement for the Department as a whole and for those involved in the production of ‘Things we do for love’.

The awards ceremony was held on Saturday the 17th of February 2018, at Reps Theatre in Harare. Notwithstanding, the fact that College Central did not walk away with the award, we believe they are still winners for getting that far and on behalf of the entire University community, we applaud their unwavering commitment and unparalleled passion for film and theatre.
University Undertakes Cholera Prevention Drive

The Midlands State University’s Health Services department in conjunction with Faculty of Medicine have taken a lead in the prevention of cholera within the University and its neighbouring communities. The Department, together with the Faculty have launched an aggressive campaign that seeks to educate community members on the causes, symptoms and more importantly, simple precautions that can be taken to control outbreaks and prevent the spread of cholera.

Cholera is an acute diarrhoeal infection caused by ingestion of food or water contaminated with the bacterium Vibrio cholerae. It can be caused by ingesting (oral) fecally contaminated water or eating undercooked or raw food that is contaminated, this includes fruits and vegetables. While it largely affects humans, some animals can be affected and contamination comes from fecal material from infected individuals or animals. Cholera is often as a result of poor sanitation and lack of and or inadequate safe or clean water supplies.

Symptoms include severe diarrhoea, vomiting, dehydration and shock (in severe cases). If untreated, death can occur within hours.

Speaking during the campaign, Acting Health Services Director, Ms C Mugwamba, highlighted some of the precautions that can be taken to prevent or control the spread of cholera.

‘People should avoid eating raw or undercooked food, ensure that cooked food is served hot and when eating fruits and vegetables these should be thoroughly washed’, she said.

Other crucial prevention measures include basic sanitation and good hygiene practices, such as washing one’s hands with soap or disinfectant after using the toilet, drinking water from clean and safe sources or even just boiling it before drinking.
The written rules are often found in policy manuals and other guide books. But they are other things that are not written and let’s find out!!

Office Etiquette or Office Manners is about conducting yourself respectfully and courteously in the office or workplace. First impressions are important.

Keep yourself on point by dressing professionally and dressing for the position that you are aspiring for, bearing in mind that you are the ambassador(s) of the business. Always act with honesty and dignity.

Let’s highlight some of the don’ts

• Chewing gum and popping bubble gum in the presence of co-workers or whilst attending customers is neither cool nor dignified
• Wear appropriate office attire, for example correct footwear, not thongs (flip flops) - they are strictly casual
• No exposed midriff to display tattoos and body piercing
• Be neat, clean and as conservative as the business requires you to be
• We are put off by smelly people. So, be sure to shower regularly and use a suitable deodorant
• Do not cough or sneeze in anyone’s direction
• Use a tissue, if possible, to contain the germs and then say “Excuse me”

The essence of good manners and etiquette is to be respectful and courteous at all times. Therefore, treat your co-workers, cleaners, maintenance people and others with respect and courtesy.
10 Interesting Facts about Valentine

1. The most popular theory about Valentine’s Day’s origin is that Emperor Claudius II didn’t want Roman men to marry during wartime. Bishop Valentine went against his wishes and performed secret weddings. For this, Valentine was jailed and executed. While in jail he wrote a note to the jailor’s daughter signing it “from your Valentine”.

2. In the Middle Ages, young men and women drew names from a bowl to see who would be their Valentine. They would wear this name pinned onto their sleeves for one week for everyone to see. This was the origin of the expression “to wear your heart on your sleeve.”


4. About 1 billion Valentine’s Day cards are exchanged each year. This makes it the second largest seasonal card sending time of the year.

5. Richard Cadbury produced the first box of chocolates for this holiday in the late 1800s.

6. 73 percent of people who buy flowers on this day are men, while only 27 percent are women.

7. Red roses are considered the flower of love because the colour red stands for strong romantic feelings and the red rose was the favorite flower of Venus, the Roman goddess of love.

8. A kiss on Valentine’s Day is considered to bring good luck all year.

9. Teachers will receive the most Valentine’s Day cards, followed by children, mothers, wives, sweethearts and pets.

10. In 2011, Iran banned Valentine cards, gifts, teddy bears, and other Valentine tokens as part of an Islamic republic backlash against the spread of Western culture. Additionally, some religious activists in India and Pakistan protest Valentine’s Day as a day of shame of lust. They view it as a Western holiday in which Westerners satisfy their “sex thirst.”
For more information, visit the Information & Public Relations Office, or email infoandpr@msu.ac.zw, or call the following numbers:
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