

# UNIMA Bulletin



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## The Legacy of the University

It is now 2025. As the year begins, it is only fitting that we take a moment to reflect on and celebrate our unwavering commitment to academic excellence and innovation.

In this issue, we highlight the university's leadership in higher education. From hosting the 2025 Applied Mathematics Research School to excelling in public university admissions, UNIMA reaffirms its status as the leading institution for academic excellence in Malawi. Our students and faculty are consistently demonstrating their academic excellence. Our scholars, veterans and upcoming academics alike, continue to churn our publications which testify to the rigor of research that is encouraged at UNIMA. For the students, we celebrate their ability to compete on both national and global platforms, as evidenced by the outstanding achievements of young scholars like Chrissy Ulemu and Yewo Manombo.

Our impact extends beyond the classroom. Through our partnerships with institutions

such as Mzuzu University, Centenary Bank, FDH Bank and the National Commission for Science and Technology, UNIMA is geared to increase its reach and impact, ensuring that our research capacity grows even more. The commitment to ethical research, environmental sustainability, and digital transformation underscores the university's role as a thought leader in addressing contemporary challenges.

Moreover, UNIMA continues to provide a nurturing environment for student success. Whether it is through internship opportunities, leadership development programs, or community service initiatives, the institution ensures that students graduate not just with knowledge, but with the skills and confidence to thrive in their careers and contribute meaningfully to society.

As we move forward, we remain confident that UNIMA will continue to illuminate the path of progress for Malawi and beyond. Let us celebrate our university's achievements and remain steadfast

in supporting its vision of excellence. Together, we shape the future.

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*The Minister of Higher Education poses with UNIMA staff at the University Office.*

## Minister of Higher Education Tours UNIMA

On 22nd January 2025, the University of Malawi hosted the newly appointed Minister of Higher Education, Honourable Dr. Jessie Kabwila, who was touring higher education institutions across the country.

The minister and her entourage were warmly welcomed by UNIMA management, led by Professor Samson Sajidu, the Vice-Chancellor of UNIMA. Speaking during the visit, Dr. Kabwila stated that she found it necessary to engage with institutions of higher learning before fully assuming her duties. She expressed her honour in returning to UNIMA and thanked the Vice-Chancellor for effectively addressing some of the university's recent pressing issues.

Dr. Kabwila also assured the management team that she would prioritize addressing the challenges the university is facing. These include accommodation, financing activities for students with special needs, such as transportation between home and campus, and other critical issues.

During the visit, the minister toured the university and observed ongoing projects, including the construction of the new administration block. She expressed satisfaction with the transformation

taking place at the university and looked forward to the completion of the projects, emphasizing her commitment to ensuring

the university receives the necessary support to achieve its goals and operate smoothly.



*Appreciating one of the construction projects.*





*Leaders of the Higher Education sector at the NCHE university admission announcement ceremony.*

## UNIMA Leads in NCHE 2025 Public University Admissions

Annually, the University of Malawi selects, through the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE), students who have performed exceptionally well in their Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE) examinations. On 27th February 2025, NCHE released the names of students selected for various public universities and colleges in Malawi.

The selection announcement ceremony was held at Golden Peacock Hotel in Lilongwe and was presided over by the Minister of Higher Education, Honourable Dr. Jessie Kabwila. The event was attended by vice-chancellors of various public universities and representatives from different government departments. The University of Malawi delegation was led

by the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Samson Sajidu, accompanied by the University Registrar, Mr. Martin Matululu, and the Chair of Executive Deans, Professor Cosmo Ngongondo.

During the ceremony, Dr. Kabwila announced the results and expressed her delight at the number of students enrolled in six public universities and two colleges. She stated that the results reflected the government's strong commitment to increasing access to higher education. Out of the 24,582 students who applied, 8,890 qualified and were enrolled in public universities and colleges. Among those selected were students with special needs.

The ceremony included a session in which vice-chancellors explained some of the

projects that universities are undertaking and the activities in which students are involved. Professor Sajidu highlighted that UNIMA provides comprehensive training in all aspects including natural and applied sciences, education, and other fields. "Students are equipped with theoretical knowledge and practical laboratory work. This is why, when our graduates pursue further studies abroad, they excel, earning various awards and securing top positions in different fields, which reflects the high quality of our training," he said.

He further emphasized the need for collaboration with the industry to enable students to apply and showcase the knowledge they acquire in class. He emphasized the importance of internship opportunities during students' studies, as these experiences expose them to practical industry understandings before they formally enter the job market.

The University of Malawi has selected 2,898 candidates, comprising 1,743 males (60%) and 1,155 females (40%). These candidates represent 30.9% of the total admissions to public universities in Malawi. Among them, 42 are Special Needs Education (SNE) students.

The minister concluded by expressing gratitude to all stakeholders who contributed to the success of the selection process and extended special thanks to FDH Bank for its financial support.



*Prof Samson Sajidu outlines the projects on going at UNIMA.*





UNIMA and MZUNI Leadership formally signing the MoU.

## A Meeting of Minds: UNIMA and MZUNI Strengthen Collaboration

In an effort to enhance continuous collaboration, the University of Malawi has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Mzuzu University on 29th January, 2025. The event, which was held at Ekhaya Luxury Resort in Mangochi, was attended by the leadership teams of both universities. The collaboration aims to create opportunities that will benefit students and staff, unlock innovative solutions to societal challenges, and promote academic excellence through joint initiatives, among other objectives.

The MoU, signed by the two esteemed institutions, symbolizes a paradigm shift from rivalry to partnership and unity. The Vice-Chancellor of the University of Malawi, Professor Samson Sajidu, introduced the university by outlining its various schools and highlighting some of its existing MoUs with international institutions. He expressed enthusiasm for the newly signed MoU, emphasizing that the partnership marks a significant milestone in the history of higher education in the country. This is the first time two public universities have come together to agree on a shared vision for

collaborative research, joint academic programs, and the exchange of students and staff, among other initiatives.

“When we pool our resources, knowledge, and talents, we not only enhance our institutions but also contribute meaningfully to the progress of our nation,” he said. “Our two universities are vast and diverse in all aspects, including the programmes we offer, the research we conduct, the innovations we produce, and the contributions we make to the country. This is what public universities in this country should strive for. We should be beacons of knowledge, innovation, and unity by working hand in hand toward a common goal.”

Among the topics discussed was the collaboration between students from various programmes at both universities, allowing them to leverage their diverse expertise to develop joint projects. Additionally, the sharing of resources was emphasized, such as students from both institutions utilizing each other’s facilities.

Speaking during the ceremony, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Mzuzu University,

Professor Wapulumuka Mulwafu, stated that the MoU signifies growth in collaboration among universities, as they seek to strengthen relationships and identify areas where they can work together in the best interests of both institutions and the nation.

“It is always beneficial to work as a team and pool resources, as this allows us to leverage the strengths of all universities. This is what we aim to achieve. MZUNI excels in certain areas, and we want to take advantage of these strengths by collaborating with our colleagues to advance the national agenda, Malawi 2063,” he said.

“We will ensure that this collaboration succeeds. We have already witnessed the benefits of working together, and this partnership will further enhance the quality of education.”

Prof. Sajidu and Prof. Mulwafu thanked the leadership teams of both universities for their vision, commitment, and determination. They expressed optimism about this journey toward transforming both institutions, uplifting communities, and contributing to the national agenda.

# UNIMA Explores Financial Opportunities with Centenary Bank

On 22nd January, 2025, the University of Malawi hosted a delegation from Centenary Bank. The team paid a courtesy visit to the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Samson Sajidu, to explore potential collaborations between the two institutions.

The delegation, led by the Managing Director, Mr. Godfrey Byekwaso, presented several proposals aimed at fostering a mutually beneficial partnership between the bankers and UNIMA. During the meeting, the officials introduced several of their products, including a platform for paying tuition fees through mobile banking, as well as loan services for staff members, among others. They also highlighted opportunities such as supporting students and the community, emphasizing that one of their main objectives is transforming people's lives.

The Vice-Chancellor expressed his excitement and gratitude for the visit. He emphasized the vital role of partnerships in advancing UNIMA's strategic goals, particularly in improving operational efficiency and enhancing service delivery. "We appreciate the visit as it is a crucial step in fostering strong and beneficial



*The Vice-Chancellor hosts delegates from Centenary Bank at the University Office.*

relationships," he said. "As a community of diverse professionals dedicated to learning, research, and innovation, we are ready to explore financial opportunities that can enhance personal growth."

As the leading university in Malawi, UNIMA remains committed to fostering partnerships with both international and local institutions. These collaborations do not only enhance the efficiency of service delivery but also create opportunities

that directly benefit stakeholders of the university. As such, the university is always open to discussion with various potential partners who share its vision of advancing higher education in Malawi.

The meeting marked the beginning of what is expected to be an impactful relationship between UNIMA and Centenary Bank, with both parties looking forward to further engagement to ensure the successful implementation of the proposed initiatives.

## Banking on Collaboration: FDH and UNIMA Explore New Opportunities

Just three days after officials from First Discount House visited the staff of the University of Malawi, the university hosted FDH Bank employees on 17th January, 2025, at the new Economics building for a meet-and-greet event. The gathering aimed to create a warm and informal atmosphere to encourage engagement between the staff members of the two institutions.

The University Registrar, Mr. Martin Matululu, warmly welcomed the FDH Bank delegation, which was led by Deputy Managing Director Mr. George Chitera. In his remarks, Mr. Matululu commended the strong partnership between UNIMA and the Malawian bank, emphasizing the potential to strengthen their collaboration and explore new areas of collaboration.

During his speech, Mr. George Chitera acknowledged that UNIMA staff



*UNIMA and FDH staff engage during the meet-and-greet.*

members comprise a key customer base for the Zomba branch. He further noted that the presence of UNIMA in Zomba played a major role in the bank's decision to establish a branch in the city. Mr. Chitera also responded to the Registrar's request for customized soft loan options for UNIMA staff, assuring him that the proposal would be considered. Additionally, he announced plans to extend the FDH graduate start-

up programme to include UNIMA. This initiative will provide UNIMA students with start-up capital to support their entrepreneurial aspirations.

The event continued with productive interactions between the two groups. During this time, bank representatives assisted attendees interested in opening accounts with FDH Bank on the spot.





*Mr Ramsey Njema from the Department of Computing makes a presentation at the function.*

## UNIMA Joins Global Commemoration of International Day of Education

The University of Malawi (UNIMA) reaffirmed its commitment to academic excellence and digital transformation by participating in this year's International Day of Education, commemorated on 31st January 2025 at Katoto Secondary School in Mzuzu. While the global observance falls on 24th January, Malawi held the event on 31st January. This year's theme, *AI and Education: Preserving Human Agency in a World of Automation*, underscored the growing role of artificial intelligence in shaping the future of education.

The university's exhibition highlighted some of its key projects that demonstrate its commitment to leveraging digital transformation for sustainable development. Led by Mr. Ramsey Njema, a Staff Associate in the Department of Computing, the UNIMA team presented ongoing collaborations with government ministries in areas such as healthcare, agriculture, and climate resilience. Among the showcased initiatives was the Integrated Community Health Information System (iCHIS), a digital platform developed in partnership with the Ministry of Health to enhance community health service delivery. The system facilitates automated data reporting, enables rapid point-of-care decision support, and fosters evidence-based policy formulation. Another key initiative was the National Agricultural Management Information System (NAMIS), a real-time

data collection platform developed with the Ministry of Agriculture to improve access to agricultural information and enhance data utilisation. The university also highlighted its AI-driven climate and health interventions, which form part of broader multi-sectoral efforts to address environmental challenges through digital solutions. These are just some of the many initiatives UNIMA is leading as part of its broader commitment to technological advancement and national development. These efforts are coordinated through HISP UNIMA, a brainchild of the collaboration with the University of Oslo in Norway, which serves as the digital transformation hub in the Department of Computing.

The event was graced by Hon. Dr. Jessie Kabwila, Minister of Higher Education, and Hon. Madalitso Kambauwa Wirima, Minister of Basic and Secondary Education. In her remarks, Dr. Kabwila urged institutions to embrace AI as a tool for innovation, ensuring that its integration empowers rather than diminishes human values. She further called for ethical AI adoption to bridge socio-economic disparities in education. Hon. Madalitso Kambauwa Wirima reaffirmed the government's commitment to integrating AI into national governance instruments, ensuring alignment across key policy areas. She assured participants that the government will introduce awareness workshops for teachers and students,

promoting ethical AI use and responsible adoption of digital tools in education.

Through its participation, UNIMA continues to position itself as a leader in AI-driven education and digital transformation, reaffirming its role in national progress through research, innovation, and strategic partnerships.



*Minister of Higher Education and Minister of Basic and Secondary Education.*





*The Bwalo la Amayi Group takes a break during the tree planting exercise.*

## Chanco Radio Plants Trees at Chingale

Every year, the period between November and April is designated as National Tree Planting Season. Chanco Community Radio, through its Bwalo La Amayi Group, has participated in various tree planting exercises in various areas across its catchment area. This year, the radio station planted over 200 tree seedlings in Asika Village in the area of Sub TA Nkapita in Zomba district on Saturday 8th February, 2025.

In his remarks during the tree planting exercise, Chanco Community Radio's Station Manager, Gracious Mulinga, advised the people to manage the trees that they have planted in their area so that they can benefit from them later.

"Every tree planting season, we hear of millions of trees being planted countrywide. However, the most important thing is how we take care of those trees rather than just planting for show. Here, we encouraged the people of Asika Village to take care of the trees we have planted so that the purpose of the tree planting season can be realized," Mulinga said.

Mulinga said aside from producing environment conservation programmes, the radio believes it is good to take part in such practical activities in order to make a more positive impact in environmental conservation.

San Daniel Nkunga, Zomba District Officer for Wildlife and Environmental Society of Malawi (WESM), an organization which provided the tree seedlings, said they always train members of the community on how to take care of the trees and expressed commitment to continue working with Chanco Community Radio in environmental management by providing seedlings every tree-planting season.

"To ensure that the trees are well taken care of, we train the community members on how to look after the trees and we monitor them throughout the year. This has helped us in maintaining survival rate with more than 80 percent," Nkunga said.

In her remarks, President for Bwalo La Amayi women, Emily Tizola, said they realise the hardships women go through due to environmental degradation hence their passion in planting trees every year.

"Women suffer the consequences of environmental degradation more, which include scarcity of water, food, firewood and other things that help them take care of their homes," Tizola said.

Bwalo La Amayi is a radio programme which airs on Chanco Community Radio and the women who participate in the programme often organise themselves to take part in various social activities such as tree planting and charity works.



*Mulinga and Nkunga jointly plant a tree.*



# Siyaya Recognised as Best Radio Sports Reporter

One of Chanco Community Radio and Television's presenters, Raymond Siyaya Jnr, has scooped the award for Best Sports Journalist of the Year (Electronic) at the Malawi Sports Awards 2024. Speaking after he had just received the award, Siyaya said this is an indication that community radio broadcasters are capable of producing content that can reach far and wide.

"This also shows that as community radio presenters, we have the expertise to analyse and produce sports programmes that are top notch and are recognised by many," explained Siyaya.

Siyaya walked away with a prestigious trophy and a cash prize at the 6th edition of the awards after beating two other contenders from TV Islam and Zodiak Broadcasting Station (ZBS). "My two passions, sports and radio, have finally culminated into an award. Many thanks to my colleagues at Chanco Community Radio and Television for the love, space



*Raymond Siyaya (R) receiving the Award.*

and conducive environment that allowed this to happen today," Siyaya added.

His award also makes him the first ever winner in the electronic category as this was the first time the Malawi Sports Awards

were recognising journalists in different categories.

In December last year, Siyaya was also named Best Radio Personality at the Zomba Arts Awards.

## TRS Society Hosts Mkutche's Public Lecture



*Mr Wonderful Mkutche*

On Friday, 28 February 2025, the Department of Theology and Religious Studies, through the Theology and Religious Studies (TRS) Society, hosted Mr Wonderful Mkutche who

delivered a public lecture on the theme "Understanding Theology in Malawian Context." In his lecture, which he delivered from the humanistic perspective, Mkutche highlighted the need for Malawians to look at the country's problems with modern solutions than heavily relying religious teachings.

"We have seen how we have been invited as a nation to pray for particular problems such or pray for good leaders. However, we cannot fix the economy with prayer but rather putting in place measures that would fix the economy, including uprooting corruption. After praying for such leaders we come back later and complain about how bad they are," Mkutche said.

One of the participants, Innocent Maliango, said the lecture was insightful and he encouraged fellow students to patronise such events so that they can broaden their knowledge and understanding of what they learn in class. "The public lecture was exciting, wonderful and well-presented.

It was so encouraging. I am sure a lot of people have benefited as. I would like to also encourage all students to attend public lectures that will be organised so that they can gain more knowledge about various things," Maliango said.

In his remarks, President of the TRS Society, Immanuel Chimadzuma, expressed his satisfaction with the public lecture, saying the ideas that were shared challenged them as students to critically think about various issues affecting Malawi as a country. "I would like to extend my gratitude to Mr Mkhutche for accepting our request to come and deliver such a very wonderful public lecture which has tackled a number of critical issues about our country's economy and religion," Chimadzuma said.

### CONTRIBUTOR:

Mr Billy Mataka (Bachelor of Arts in Theology, second year)





*Awardees pose for a picture with family and friends.*

## School of LEG Honours Outstanding Academic Staff

As part of its effort to celebrate the accomplishments of academic staff, the School of Law, Economics, and Government at the University of Malawi has awarded six of its academic members for their outstanding work in various categories, including journal publication, early career research, book publication, entrepreneurship, and book chapter publication.

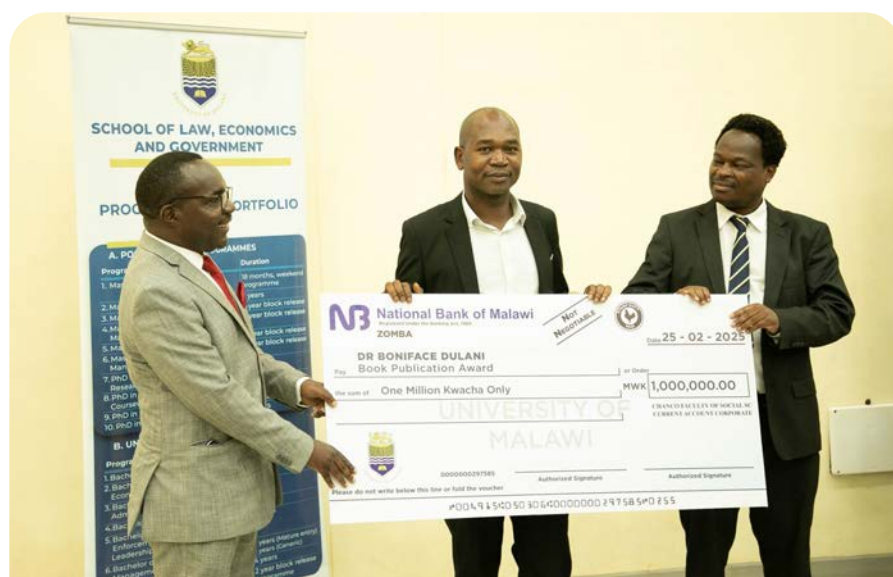
Speaking at the award presentation event, which took place on 25th February, 2025 at the Wadonda Lecture Theatre, Professor Happy Kayuni, the Executive Dean of the School, mentioned that the school realized that the academic staff members rarely receive recognition for their efforts, unlike students who are frequently celebrated through awards such as the Dean's List or Vice Chancellor's Awards. As such, the

school introduced these awards to motivate and acknowledge the dedication of its academic staff.

Professor Cosmo Ngongondo, who presided over the ceremony on behalf of the Deputy Vice Chancellor, Dr. Sunduzwayo Madise, emphasized the importance of recognizing academic staff for their research contributions. He pointed out that universities are known for their research output, and these awards will encourage academics to continue working hard and conducting research that benefits the nation. He also noted that the selection process was highly competitive, indicating that many lecturers are going above and beyond their teaching responsibilities to conduct valuable research that not only benefits the nation but also enhances the university's reputation.

The event was marked by joyful moments as the awardees, alongside their families, received cheques for their prize money. Some awardees received cheques worth MK1,000,000, while others received MK500,000.

This initiative highlights the value the university places on its academic staff, who play a crucial role in shaping the students who will become tomorrow's leaders.



*Prof. Michael Chasukwa (middle) receives a dummy cheque on behalf of Dr. Boniface Dulani.*





*Participants at the Research School.*

## UNIMA Hosts 2025 Applied Mathematics Research School

The University of Malawi hosted the 2025 Applied Mathematics Research School, which ran from 20th to 31st January, 2025. This is the second time the event is taking place in Malawi, as the Malawi University of Business and Applied Sciences (MUBAS) hosted it last year. The event, which brought mathematicians together, aimed to explore ways of using mathematics to solve real-life problems.

This year's event attracted participants and facilitators from across the Southern African region, including countries such as Zimbabwe, Namibia, Tanzania, and South Africa.

Speaking during the launch on 20th January, 2025, Professor Cosmo Ngongondo, Executive Dean of the School of Natural and Applied Sciences at UNIMA, mentioned that the participants, who also included academics from local universities such as MUBAS, would be trained on using various softwares and tools in mathematics to analyse data and address real-world challenges in areas such as health, the environment, and more. He also highlighted that such events help to strengthen relationships between UNIMA

and other African universities, fostering regional integration in higher education.

Professor Farai Nyabadza, Head of the Department of Mathematics and Applied Mathematics at the University of Johannesburg, provided an overview of the Applied Mathematics Research School. He emphasized the importance of the program and expressed hope that, by the end of the school, participants would emerge as well-rounded researchers capable of writing quality publications and conducting research ethically, especially in this era of AI advancements. He further highlighted the aim of the school which is to develop a pool of mathematical modellers within Malawi and the SADC region who can advance mathematical modelling as a research field.

This event is one of the key initiatives in which UNIMA participates, fostering collaboration among individuals, departments, and institutions across the Southern African region. It promotes knowledge-sharing, strengthens networks among universities, and contributes to the advancement of research and innovation in applied mathematics. By bringing together

experts and aspiring researchers, the event also serves as a platform for addressing regional challenges through mathematical solutions and interdisciplinary cooperation.



*Prof. Cosmo Ngongondo*





*Participants at the workshop.*

## UNIMA Strengthens Standards with Research Ethics Orientation Workshop

The University of Malawi held a comprehensive one-day research ethics orientation workshop on 20th February 2025 at Nalipiri Eco Resort in Mulanje. The workshop aimed to equip University of Malawi (UNIMA) staff with essential knowledge and tools to uphold the highest standards of research integrity.

The event brought together key stakeholders from across the institution, including the University Registrar, Executive Deans, Heads of Departments and Centres, School Research Coordinators, and members of UNIMAREC's Main and Sub-committees.

In his welcoming remarks, Mr Martin Matululu, the University Registrar, set the tone for the day, followed by an opening address from Professor Cosmo Ngongondo, Executive Dean of the School of Natural and Applied Sciences, who represented the Deputy Vice Chancellor, Dr Sunduzwayo Madise. Prof. Ngongondo emphasised the importance of conducting research with integrity, stating, "As we pursue excellence in research, we must also ensure that the highest ethical standards guide our endeavours." He called upon participants to foster a culture of accountability and transparency in their

respective units.

The workshop covered various critical topics, presented by experts from the National Commission for Science and Technology (NCST), UNIMAREC Chairperson Dr Victoria Ndolo, and other committee members. Mr. Mike Kachedwa, NCST's Research Manager and Head of the Division of Standards, Development and Enforcement, delivered a presentation on the importance of ethics in academia, ethical principles and guidelines and, the establishment of Research Ethics Committees. Other topics covered the structure and role of ethics committees, the ethical review process, the informed consent process, data privacy and confidentiality, handling ethical dilemmas, and research ethics monitoring and compliance.

Participants engaged in interactive discussions, practical case simulations, and an open Q&A session, which offered a platform for reflecting on ethical considerations in their research work.

The event concluded with closing remarks from Prof. Cosmo Ngongondo. He reaffirmed UNIMA's commitment to promoting responsible research practices and highlighted NCST's crucial oversight role in ensuring that ethical standards are upheld.



*Part of the organising team.*





*UNIMA Economics Society Students.*

## Economics Association of Malawi (ECAMA) Empowers UNIMA Economics Students

Students at UNIMA belong to various academic societies that enrich them with knowledge and provide opportunities to interact and connect with professionals in the industry. Recently, Economics students hosted the Economics Association of Malawi (ECAMA) on 21st February 2025. The event, held at the Wadonda Lecture Theatre, aimed to equip students with practical Economics knowledge beyond the classroom, offering insights into real-world economic practices and fostering a deeper understanding of how theories are

applied across various sectors.

The campaign attracted a number of students from first to final year, all eager to learn and engage with experienced professionals in the field. The event was graced by Mrs. Mervis Seyani, an Executive Member of ECAMA, who delivered an inspiring keynote address emphasizing the importance of bridging academic knowledge with practical industry experience. She encouraged students to take advantage of ECAMA's mentorship programs and networking opportunities.

Mr. Lucious Pawa, a senior economist at ECAMA, was among the notable guests. He shared valuable insights on Malawi's current economic landscape and the role of young economists in shaping the country's future.

Mr. Emmanuel Banda, President of the Economics Society at UNIMA, expressed gratitude to ECAMA for visiting the University and acknowledged the importance of such initiatives in motivating and preparing students for their professional journeys. "I encourage my fellow students to join ECAMA, as the association fosters an environment where students can voice their perspectives, collaborate on research projects, and engage with industry leaders and policymakers," Banda said. He expressed hope that this collaboration would continue, creating more opportunities for students to grow and contribute meaningfully to Malawi's economic development.

The session was interactive and featured various activities, including group discussions and a quiz. Students who actively participated and answered questions correctly were awarded branded ECAMA items such as T-shirts and notebooks.



*Mrs. Mervis Seyani (L) presents branded ECAMA items to students.*





*Proud members of UNIMAWES pose with primary school students.*

## UNIMAWES Inspires Young Minds in Environmental Conservation

The University of Malawi Wildlife and Environmental Society (UNIMAWES) visited Bwaila Primary School on 12th February 2025 to inspire young minds about environmental conservation. The visit was led by the patron of UNIMAWES, Mr. Vitumbiko Chijere Chirwa, who was accompanied by 38 UNIMAWES students.

UNIMAWES was motivated to visit schools as part of its goal to unite environmental clubs within all academic institutions in Zomba District at primary, secondary, and tertiary education levels to amplify youth voices in environmental conservation.

The visit included powerful presentations on the effects of thin plastics and on environmental conservation measures. As part of the initiative, UNIMAWES and the learners collaborated in planting trees, taking a step toward a greener and more sustainable future. Through interactive presentations and engaging discussions, pupils learned about protecting nature, proper waste management, and the role of trees in combating climate change. Over 40 primary school students from Bwaila Primary School planted 100 acacia trees.

The president of UNIMAWES, Mr. Henry Supedi, a Bachelor of Science in Actuarial Science student, stated, “The majority of Malawi’s population consists of children, so this initiative is important because we are inspiring and teaching them the responsibility of participating in environmental conservation. This will help them grow with that mindset and become responsible citizens of Malawi.”

The trees were part of the 800 donated by Dr. Edister Jamu, an Associate Professor of

Psychology at UNIMA. The involvement of staff members and students in the tree-planting exercise demonstrates the university’s commitment to protecting the environment and maintaining the beautiful scenery of Zomba City amidst the ongoing deforestation of Zomba Mountain.

So far, the society has planted 500 trees across five primary schools in Zomba and plans to plant the remaining trees at various secondary schools.



*UNIMAWES: protecting the environment.*





*Manombo (center) poses with other UGRAD students.*

## A World Full of Opportunities: Manombo's UGRAD Experience

Students at UNIMA often participate in student exchange programmes with other universities across the globe, experiences which help them gain international exposure and skills. One of these is the Global Undergraduate Exchange Program (Global UGRAD), a student exchange programme that permits students to study for one semester at an American university. Yewo Manombo, a third-year student enrolled in the Bachelor of Science in Computer Science programme at UNIMA, recently took part in the Global UGRAD

at the University of Wisconsin–Eau Claire (UWEC) in the United States of America.

The desire to experience and learn new things motivated Manombo to apply for the Global UGRAD, and he was selected from a competitive pool of over 6,000 applicants. During his stay at UWEC, he acquired various skills and knowledge, including community service and cross-cultural communication. Beyond these skills, he described the experience as enriching, as he made friends from various countries

and had the opportunity to witness and appreciate the diversity of global cultures, including his own Malawian heritage.

“Through this programme, I have learned the power of socialising, standing out, taking on leadership roles, and making connections,” he said. “This world has a lot of opportunities, but they only present themselves to people who have good connections.”

He described the Global UGRAD journey as both an educational experience and an adventure. Some of the key activities included attending a workshop in Washington hosted by World Learning, visiting various states, and engaging in community service and volunteer work as part of giving back to the host community.

Manombo concluded by encouraging his peers who wish to participate in the exchange programme to volunteer and take on leadership roles, as these experiences can strengthen their applications. His exchange journey began on 25th August 2024, and he completed the programme on 21st December 2024. Currently, two other students from UNIMA are also in the U.S. for the Global UGRAD.



*Manombo in Wisconsin*





*Chrissy Ulemu and her UGRAD colleagues.*

## From UNIMA to the USA: Chrissy Ulemu Thrives in UGRAD Exchange

Chrissy Ulemu, at University of Malawi student who is currently in the United States of America for her UGRAD exchange programme, took some time to share with us her experience since she started her classes at California State University, Bakersfield. One of the first things she notes is that settling down in the States has been made possible due to the skills she gained at UNIMA.

“One of such skills is public speaking, which I learned through my academic studies at UNIMA,” she said. She explained that the lessons she received at UNIMA on speaking confidently in public, particularly through class presentations, have enabled her to voice her opinions in a class full of strangers. This has been particularly significant because class participation through speaking is part of the final grade.

“Public speaking is helping me manage my responsibilities as both a student and an exchange visitor because I am able to engage in extracurricular activities while meeting deadlines for my academic assignments,” she said.

UNIMA emphasizes the ability among students to balance academic life with extracurricular activities. These include participating in social weekends, as well as sports activities both at national and international levels, among others.

As a UGRAD exchange student, Ulemu is expected to maintain a good GPA, take at least one course focused on the United States, showcase her country during cultural events, and participate in extracurricular activities to enhance her leadership skills and community service engagement.

So far, she has attended several events, including the Black History Month Kickoff meeting, hockey and baseball games, and two dinner events. She is also expected to participate in other activities, such as public lectures, trips, and the Alumni Rising Motivation event.



*Chrissy Ulemu at CSU Bakersfield.*





*Masongola Secondary School students pose for a photo with UNIMA Geo-students.*

## Shaping Future Careers: UNIMA Geo-Students' Outreach at Masongola Secondary School

The University of Malawi Geography and Geology students on 28th February, 2025 conducted an outreach event at Masongola Secondary School, one of the schools within Zomba city. The students, who are members of the Geo-students society, came up with the initiative with the aim at promoting Geo-related programs and encouraging secondary students to pursue higher education. The event provided an opportunity to showcase UNIMA's academic offerings, highlighting the importance of studying Geography, Geology, and other related disciplines.

It was a platform to inspire students by dwelling much on the career opportunities associated with these fields.

The students were accompanied by Mr. Grey Chasuka, from the UNIMA Marketing and Communications section, who provided an insightful presentation and brought to light the history of the University of Malawi, the variety of programs available, and the newly introduced UNIMA E-learning programmes. His session was instrumental in broadening the students' knowledge about the university, making them aware of the flexible learning opportunities available, and helping them understand the process of joining UNIMA.

Mr. Aubrey Mteteka, President of the society and a third-year Geography student, described the event as a wonderful experience that bridged the gap between secondary school students and higher education. He emphasized how the event enabled students to explore various career paths in the various programs offered at the University of Malawi.

Father Chepeth Kalawa, the Chaplain and Head of Humanities at Masongola Secondary School, expressed great

appreciation for the visit. He acknowledged the importance of such engagements in guiding students toward higher education.

He stated "the event provided a rare but crucial opportunity for our students to gain an in-depth understanding of what they need to do to join UNIMA." His words reflected the positive impact the session had on both students and teachers.

The outreach event at Masongola Secondary School was a resounding success. Not only did it promote the importance of Geo-related programmes, but it also encouraged students to strive for higher education. The collaboration between UNIMA students and the school administration created an inspiring learning environment for the students, equipping them with essential information about their future academic endeavours. Such initiatives are crucial in shaping the next generation of scholars and professionals, ensuring a well-informed and motivated student community.

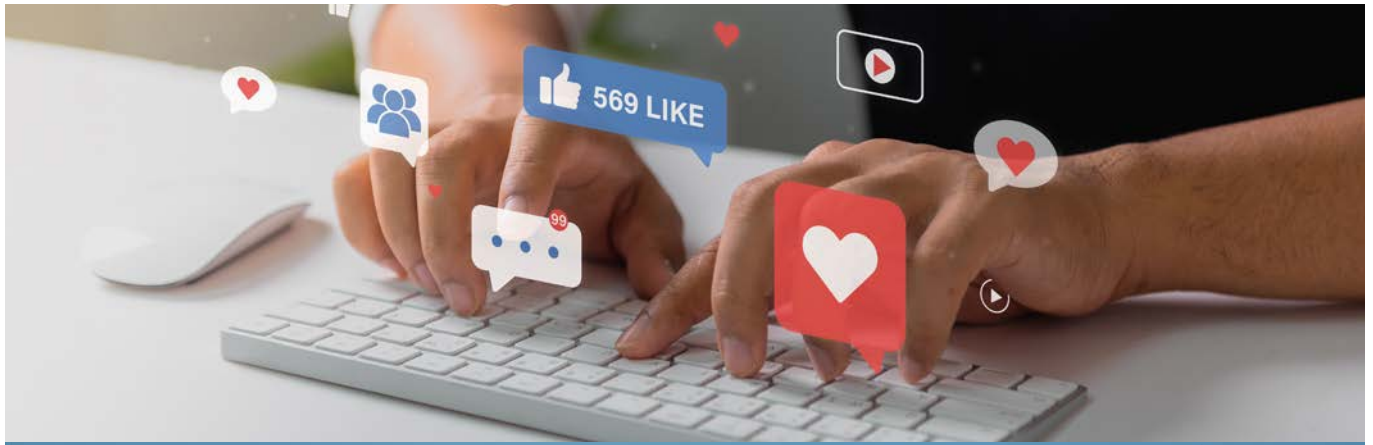
### CONTRIBUTOR:

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*UNIMA Geo-students during the outreach session.*





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