



HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

SECTION ONE: OVERVIEW

History

In the mid-1980s, as United Methodism grew on the continent, African bishops of the United Methodist Church (UMC) began articulating a desire for the church to invest in the provision of higher education in Africa. In 1984, Bishop Arthur Kulah of Liberia and Bishop Emilio J. M. De Carvalho of Angola were eloquent, passionate and convincing in their (separate) presentations to annual meetings of two UMC agencies—Higher Education and Ministry, and Global Ministries. Through their efforts, and with a positive response from within the church, the 'Africa Initiative' was born.

Various consultations on higher education needs and challenges in Africa took place between 1985-1986. Church officials explored possible approaches to establishing and financing the initiative and set up a site selection committee which toured seven African countries (Angola, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo (then Zaire), Liberia, Mozambique, Sierra Leone and Zimbabwe) before deciding on Zimbabwe as the best location for the new university.

Africa University was the first private university to open in Zimbabwe. The setting up of the university included a national process of consultation. It served as a catalyst for new legislation leading to the creation of the National Council for Higher Education to supervise higher education development in Zimbabwe.

Groundbreaking and Official Opening

Zimbabwe Area United Methodists donated 1542 acres of land in the Nyangambu River Valley, across the road from the Old Mutare UMC Mission Centre, as the site for Africa University and in April 1991, thousands of people converged on that site for the groundbreaking ceremony.

On 21 January 1992, His Excellency, the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, Robert Gabriel Mugabe, issued an official proclamation declaring Africa University to be established and setting forth the terms of the Charter which gave a legal basis for the existence of Africa University.

Academic and capital development

By 23 March 1992, the university was operational, with 40 young people from six African countries enrolled in undergraduate programmes. At its inception, Africa University offered bachelor's degree programs in two faculties, Agriculture & Natural Resources and

Theology. The latter being an ecumenical seminary for the preparation of persons for ordination in the various denominations.

Work on the development of a modern, well-equipped campus began in 1992 with the completion of the "Bridge to Dreams", a gift from the Central Illinois Annual Conference, which offered secure access to the site. On April 23rd and 24th 1994, there was joyous celebration as the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, Robert Gabriel Mugabe, officially opened Africa University. The new buildings were dedicated and the founding Chancellor and Vice Chancellor were formally installed.

The University's master plan listed seven faculties at full development. By 2005, six faculties and an institute were in place. These are Agriculture and Natural Resources, Education, Humanities & Social Sciences, Management & Administration, Health Sciences, Theology, and the Institute of Peace, Leadership & Governance.

Following a period of internal review and restructuring, the AU Board of Directors approved the merging of the seven existing academic units into three colleges—Health, Agriculture and Natural Sciences; Business, Peace, Leadership and Governance; and Social Sciences, Theology, Humanities and Education. The colleges offer a range of bachelor's and master's degree programmes as well as specific short-term professional development opportunities. Doctoral programs are being developed and implemented. The first — a PhD in Peace, Leadership, Governance and Development — launched in 2016. The only academic area on the university's master plan that remains to be fully implemented is Science & Technology.

Ethos, Character and Pan-African nature of the institution

Africa University's founders chose an indigenous tree, the flat-top Acacia, set against the backdrop of a rising sun as the most prominent feature of the institution's logo. This signaled their desire for an institution that would, like the tree, sink its roots deep into the African soil before it sought to grow tall and provide shelter and nourishment. The rising sun symbolized a new day and renewal for a beloved continent.

Vision Statement: Africa University aspires to become a world class university for leadership development in Africa.

Mission Statement: The mission of Africa University is to provide quality education within a Pan-African context through which people can acquire general and professional knowledge and skills, grow in spiritual maturity and develop sound moral values, ethics and leadership qualities.

Enshrined in the Africa University Charter, issued by official proclamation in 1992, is the international, pan-African nature of the institution. This includes a commitment by the University to enroll 60% of its students from outside Zimbabwe and 40% from Zimbabwe.

- Teaching/research efforts are informed by the knowledge and experiences of students and faculty; and both are strongly encouraged to focus their attention on practical concerns affecting community life in Africa.
- Similarly, new academic initiatives at Africa University are evaluated on their pertinence/usefulness not just in Zimbabwe, but across sub-Saharan Africa. The University seeks to meet training and skills gaps where they exist, rather than replicating what is offered elsewhere.
- Collaborating with African and international institutions, documenting what is being learned, and increasing exposure for African academics and students in global gatherings are high priorities for Africa University. Examples: The master's

program in Intellectual Property is a collaboration between Africa University, the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), and the African Regional Intellectual Property Organization (ARIPO); and it is supported by the Government of Japan. The Open Society Initiative of Southern Africa (OSISA), United Nations Development Program (UNDP), Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), University for Peace, Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law, and the W. K. Kellogg Foundation are partnering with Africa University in strengthening capacity in Africa in the areas of peace-building, human rights, governance, leadership formation and public policy.

- The outreach activities of the University are quite diverse. They include providing training and technical support to individuals and communities—for example, small-holder farmers in areas neighboring the university can bring materials to its labs for testing, procure disease-free pigs to begin piggery operations, attend workshops on the University Farm to learn agro-processing skills or receive ongoing advice and technical support as they experiment with new crops.
- Through ongoing partnerships, Africa University is engaged in capacity strengthening initiatives that are improving the quality of life in countries from the Horn of Africa to the Great Lakes region and into southern Africa. Joint initiatives have ranged from the revitalization of the agricultural production and training efforts of Angola's oldest and largest university—Agostinho Neto University, to public sector management training for senior managers in East and Southern Africa, and the enhancement of community-led peace-building efforts in northern Uganda, South Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Student characteristics

- The majority of students receive financial assistance through AU in order to complete their studies (full or partial scholarships, direct grants and merit awards).
- Some students, coming from such countries as Burundi, Liberia, Sierra Leone, the DRC and Angola, are not able to go home for the duration of their degree programs (they stay in Zimbabwe for four or five years without seeing their families).
- Many are the first in their families to attend a university.
- Some are unconventional, i.e. mature and studying under innovative new programmes. For example, the graduating classes of 2005 and 2008 included persons receiving certificates under the Educational Leadership, Management and Development (ELMD) program. Funded by W. K. Kellogg Foundation and implemented in collaboration with the University of Fort Hare in South Africa, this was a community empowerment initiative. Members of a community in the Chimanimani area of Zimbabwe were enrolled in the program as a group, regardless of their level of educational achievement (primary, secondary, teacher's college, etc.). ELMD program participants are all involved with education in the community as parents, teachers, school administrators, or members of the School Development Committee. Each ELMD registrant progressed through the programme from his or her start point to an earned certificate, bachelor's degree, post-grad diploma or master's degree, as appropriate. The aim of the ELMD initiative was to equip community leaders with the knowledge, skills, and confidence for self-directed development to take root.
- Most AU graduates are destined for important mid to senior level jobs in their countries because of a paucity of skilled/experienced professionals and the critical needs existing in those countries. Few have any difficulty securing employment and/or opportunities for further studies.

Demographics

Students

Africa University's has an annual full-time enrollment of around 1500 students. Female students always account for more than 50% of the total enrollment. Over the past three years, the number of African countries represented within the student population has ranged from 25 to 27.

Faculty, administrative and support staff

The university has about 250 staff members at present. Of these, 119 are faculty members.

Alumni/graduates

The university has 7,000+ graduates to date. The Class of 2016, comprised of 841 students, was the largest graduating class to date.

Governance

Africa University's overall development is guided by a 30-member Board of Directors which includes persons from across Africa, the United States of America and Europe. The Board includes representation from the United Methodist Church worldwide, the Government of the Republic of Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe business sector and civil society. It meets twice a year in Zimbabwe. The University's executive team is made up of a Deputy Vice Chancellor, Associate Vice Chancellor, Deans of colleges, the Bursar, the Librarian and the Registrar, under the leadership of the Vice Chancellor.

An **Advisory Development Committee**, set up in 1992, supports the work of the Africa University Development Office (AUDO). The office is located in Nashville, TN and is charged with making friends for AU and raising funds for the Africa University operating budget as well as priority capital and endowment projects of the institution. Friends and funds are cultivated and delivered in 6 specific areas: Apportionments, Capital and Special Projects, Endowment Fund, Direct Scholarships, Planned Giving, Alumni, and the Honorary Alumni Association. Members of the advisory development committee are volunteers, drawn from across all sectors, who meet twice a year in the USA. They are passionate, proactive and committed to telling the Africa University story and utilizing their networks to help AU to develop.

Finances

As a ministry of the worldwide United Methodist Church, Africa University receives core funding for its operations from the general church budget. Africa University is one of seven general apportionment funds of The United Methodist Church. When the General Conference met in 2016, it established support for Africa University for the 2017-2020 quadrennium at just under \$9.4 million. This amount is apportioned among the 30,000+ United Methodist local congregations in the United States. The apportionment dollars provide for the day-to-day operating expenses of the university. In 2016, local congregations invested 94.85% of the annual asking (to the AU Fund.

The University is building an endowment fund to ensure fiscal sustainability in the long-term. As of December 2016, the permanent endowment totaled approximately \$65 million. The earnings and interest income thereon are used to provide scholarships and other financial assistance for our students as well as meet the emerging needs of the institution.

Other important sources of funding include tuition fees, gifts and grants for capital development. Currently, the university's annual operating budget is +-US\$10M.

Stewardship of the AU Permanent Endowment

The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM) Investment Committee manages and invests the bulk of the endowment funds. However, it became necessary to lodge some of the funds (planned gifts) with The United Methodist Church Foundation because GBHEM discontinued its management of AU's charitable gift annuities. All gift annuities and some matured bequests are now managed and invested by The United Methodist Church Foundation. The value of the UMCF account is approximate \$2 million.

As a member of the Association of Fundraising Professionals, Africa University subscribes to the AFP Code of Ethical Principles and Standards of Professional Practice. The Code provides that "...members shall take care to ensure that contributions are used in accordance with donors' intentions...and shall obtain explicit consent by the donor before altering the conditions of contributions."

Every donor who contributes to Africa University is given assurance that his or her gift will be used for the purpose for which it is given. This is particularly so for those donors who have established endowed accounts with Africa University---endowed chairs, professorships, scholarships, or the general endowment.

Every donor of an endowed account is assured that the principal amount given remains inviolate and that only a percentage of the income and earnings is distributed. The current distribution rate established by the GBHEM Investment Committee is 4% of the 12-quarter earnings rolling average.

Every donor of an endowed account receives an annual statement showing the account's income, earnings, and distributions.

Facilities

Teaching and learning:

There are seven fully-equipped teaching and learning buildings on the campus—the De Carvalho/Kulah Building which houses most of the administrative units; the Ireson/Kurewa Centre for Agriculture & Natural Sciences and the Humanities; the Agricultural Engineering Building, the Bishop J. Lawrence McCleskey Theology Building; the Jokomo/Yamada Library, the Health Sciences Building, and the Peace, Leadership and Governance Building.

Services

There are four service buildings – the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Centre, the Kwang Lim Chapel, the Bishop Alfred Norris Health Clinic, the Ubuntu Retreat Centre, and the Ndorimana Bonaventure Dining Hall/Student Union Building.

Housing:

The University has 12 residence halls for students with an overall capacity of about 968 beds. There are also 16 staff houses on the campus.

Institutional outlook

At almost 25 years old, Africa University is well-established and is the institution of choice for a growing number of African students. As outlined in its Strategic Plan, Africa University is evolving into a center of excellence—moving towards fuller expression of its vision and mission and greater impact in serving sub-Saharan Africa. In addition to increasing scholarship support for students and refining its programs, AU is currently prioritizing investment in student living/learning facilities and e-learning capacity.

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