



MUAST Unveils the Faculty of Development and Behavioural Sciences

The Marondera University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology (MUAST) proudly announces the establishment of its newest academic division, the Faculty of Development and Behavioural Sciences (FDBS). This strategic move further consolidates MUAST's unwavering commitment to delivering world-class interdisciplinary education while strengthening its focus on agricultural innovation through human-centric lens.

The inauguration of the Faculty of Development and Behavioural Sciences reaffirms MUAST's status as a future-oriented Higher Learning Institution. This strategic effort not only expands academic breadth, but also strengthens the University's responsiveness to Zimbabwe's Vision 2030 and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. This faculty is poised to become a vibrant platform for transformative learning, where agricultural expertise is complemented by an incisive understanding of the people, institutions, and systems that shape developmental outcomes.

Firmly embedded within MUAST's pillars of specialisation, this faculty brings the university's intent to promote inclusive development and sustainable rural transformation into sharper focus. It represents an academic progression that links the technical rigour of agricultural sciences with the sociopolitical complexity of development practice.

The Faculty is responsive to MUAST's areas of specialization: Agricultural Sciences, Environmental Sciences, Engineering, Technology and Innovation, Agribusiness and Value Chain, Food Systems, Urban and Regional Development, Social and Agrarian Community Studies, Education and Extension, Disaster Management, Governance, and Policy Studies.

Thus, the Faculty is organised into four departments, each addressing a critical area of development, governance and behavioural sciences. Each of these departments is designed to nurture a unique set of competencies that equip graduates to respond to national, regional, and global development challenges, as follows:

Department of Development Sciences: Serving as the intellectual anchor of the faculty, this department explores the political economy of development, participatory approaches, and evidence-based strategies for social transformation.

Department of Urban and Regional Development: Dedicated to generating solutions for spatial inequality, urbanisation challenges, and integrated planning frameworks for sustainable regions and regional development.

Department of Public Management and Governance: Focused on cultivating professionals who can navigate institutional reform, policy design, and leadership for effective service delivery.

Department of Public Health and Disaster Management: Consolidating insights from health sciences and risk management to produce practitioners adept at safeguarding public well-being in dynamic contexts.

MUAST recognises that addressing pressing socio-economic challenges requires the integration of technological advancement and a sophisticated understanding of human behaviour, governance systems, and community dynamics.

MUAST's efforts are underpinned by a renewed understanding that farming is not just about cultivating crops; it is about cultivating and transforming communities, developing policies, and consummating possibilities for sustainable development.

Consequently, the launch of the FDBS is a timely clarion call for integrating science and society and shaping graduates capable of innovating with strategy and purpose, at a national, regional and global level.

The new Faculty boasts of well qualified and competent staff, determined to pursue its unique mandate in line with the University's strategic plan and the nation development imperatives as articulated under the Vision 2030 blueprint. **Dr. Toendepi Shonhe**, serves as the Acting Dean of the Faculty, spearheading the transformative endeavour. Dr. Shonhe is an accomplished scholar in agrarian studies and development practice. His academic footprint spans agrarian studies, land reform, climate resilience, and participatory research design. Under his stewardship, the faculty is poised to become a nexus for multi-inter-and transdisciplinary thought, producing graduates capable of acting with responsiveness, strategising with insight, and leading with integrity across the development spectrum.

A formidable academic team, whose collective expertise anchors the faculty's strategic and intellectual foundation, co-leads the establishment of the faculty. This includes **Dr Edwin Chigova**, an expert in public administration, urban resilience, and civic innovation; **Dr Machingo Hlungwani**, a specialist in development economics and institutional governance; **Dr Tanyaradzwa Conscience Rukasha**, a seasoned agricultural economist driving work in climate-smart agriculture and sustainable food systems; **Dr Prince Muzuva**, whose research focuses on indigenous knowledge systems, youth empowerment, and civic engagement; and **Ms Moira Tambaoga**, a governance and administration scholar contributing depth to institutional development and public policy education.

To this end, the University stands ready to welcome all students to enroll in various aforementioned academic disciplines at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, contributing positively towards its growth trajectory.