

AFRICA UNIVERSITY TALKING POINTS

1. What is Africa University?

Africa University is a United Methodist Church sponsored and supported university located in Zimbabwe, the country located immediately north of South Africa. The university has a long history, beginning in 1898 when Methodist Bishop, Joseph Crane Hartzell, stood on Chiremba Mountain above Old Mutare Zimbabwe and envisioned a school for young people. Bishop Hartzell shared his dream with Cecil Rhodes and was granted a large tract of land that was part of the original grant Rhodes had received from Chief Tendai.

2. What is the mission of Africa University?

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

3. What is the academic structure of Africa University?

Presently, the university offers six specific courses of study within its curriculum:

Academic Majors

Agriculture and Natural Resources
Humanities and Social Sciences
Theology
Education
Management and Administration
Health Sciences

Institute of Peace, Leadership and Governance

As institutions, agencies, foreign governments and indigenous people strive to improve the lives of the African people, all have come to the consensus that the lack of honest, moral and ethical leadership is the single largest impediment to realizing the potential of Africa. The administration and faculty were aware of that situation and made and implemented bold plans to offer training that could, one day, change conditions as they are. The University established the Institute of Peace, Leadership and Governance and began offering the program as both an undergraduate and graduate major. The university has produced its first graduates, and the major is now one of the most popular curriculum options at AU.

Africa University has a four point strategy for training graduates to meet the urgent needs of the people of Africa:

- I. Initiation and implementation of **six basic areas of training** that equip graduates to provide the type of services needed to offer an acceptable quality of life to the African people
- II. **Establishment of an Institute of Peace, Leadership and Governance**, which is now in place and has trained its first graduates. The objective of the Institute is to provide training in moral and ethical leadership skills, which are sorely lacking all over Africa

III. Construction of an *Ubuntu Gathering Center*, providing both meeting space and residential facilities that can be used to provide conferences on specific subjects, offer advance training where required, and provide space for Volunteer In Missions teams who come to the university. The facility will permit the university to expand academic opportunities and broaden its local and national outreach of service.

IV. Design and construct an “Economic Incubator” facility that will permit small businesses to be created that can provide jobs in new emerging businesses.

4. What is the make up of the student body?

If one word describes the student body, it is diversity. Students come from twenty four of the fifty three major countries in Africa. The current total enrollment is about twelve hundred. Half are men and half are women. Students enroll in Africa University for a myriad of reasons, but principally, for the quality education they will receive. Many African educational institutions offer inferior training; others operate on a literal day-to-day basis so students do not know if they will be able to complete their education. Faculty members are often poorly trained; yet in other instances, political turmoil often impacts university operations. At Africa University, students know that they will be immersed in a rigorous academic setting with well trained and experienced faculty, where the economic and political standing of the university is solid, and where they will live and study in a Christian atmosphere. In addition, other students enroll in the university to escape political turmoil or to experience a new location, new people and new experiences. The student body is truly a caring “community” where each individual is supported and encouraged to do their best and serve others. Eighty-five percent of the graduates return to their home countries. The tie that binds the student body together is unquestionably the collective unyielding commitment to a quality education and service to the African people.

5. What is the nature of the proposed *Ubuntu Gathering Center* proposed for Africa University?

Africa University has a compelling need for a Gathering Center that can provide space and facilities for advanced training, on-site conferences and Volunteers in Missions (VIM) teams. Expansion of all three types of activities is needed to support the continued growth and development of the university and its programs. Because the university provides substantial contributions to the peace and prosperity of the African continent, its ability to promote conferences and hands-on programs and projects to nurture that work is essential to the welfare of the African people. The facility is particularly needed by the Institute of Peace, Leadership and Governance as “a base for non-degree activities including training, debate, and exchange of ideas and experiences.” The Institute runs workshops, conferences and retreats for leaders, professionals and practitioners from both the public and private sectors. Such events are “intended to provide opportunities for groups of leaders and potential leaders in Africa to consider topical issues in the Institute’s areas of concerns.” Similarly, the Institute also provides an Executive Development Program to upgrade the skills of leaders, as well as in-service training of practitioners in Disaster and Emergency Management. The demand for such programs has outstripped the University’s ability to respond effectively due to a lack of suitable space and increased its costs since accommodations for those enrolled in the various programs can only be found off-campus in expensive hotel facilities. In the past, the university has paid for those accommodations, but the cost today exceeds their capability to continue to provide such support.