

MIDLANDS STATE UNIVERSITY

GENDER POLICY

2006

PREAMBLE

The Midlands State University (MSU) Gender Policy enunciates strategies designed to create and promote a supportive environment in the University for a rational and sustained approach to gender equity and equality.

The strength of the policy lies in its sectoral approach to the mainstreaming of gender in the University. Individual and collective actions on issues related to gender mainstreaming are to be guided by the policy and the accompanying goals, objectives and strategies as articulated in this document. The policy is important, in as far as it is an effort to cement and consolidate strides made through the National Gender Policy. The policy will therefore be applied in the three key University sectors, which include; Academic Activities, Human Resource Systems and Students Affairs, in an effort to create a community in which equity, equality and justice on gender issues shall always be prioritized.

The policy is meant to ensure that the National Gender Policy cascades down to institutional levels, which process ensures operationalisation of the policy through identified programmes and activities culminating in a University that is a shining beacon of gender equity and equality.

RATIONALE

The Midlands State University, which was established in 2000, is a development-oriented University committed to gender equity and equality as enshrined in its Vision, Mission and Core Values.

In response to the magnitude of gender inequalities, the University has decided to tackle gender as a fundamental social and cultural issue that pervades all spheres of human endeavor. This is reinforced by the fact that gender biases, stereotypes and prejudices have impacted negatively on development in Zimbabwe, Africa and globally. The population ratio in Zimbabwe is 52% female and 48% male, yet men continue to have a higher development index compared to their female counterparts. It has been observed that in political participation, power relations, access to education as well as control and ownership of economic and productive resources, women are marginalized and discriminated against. These gender disparities pose a serious impediment to sustainable development hence the indictment for deliberate intervention strategies to address this anomaly.

Zimbabwe has signed, ratified and acceded to several declarations, conventions and protocols, which are concerned with human rights and equal opportunities for men and women. These are, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Convention on Civil and Political Rights (CCPR) and the Equal Remuneration Convention among others. In addition, Zimbabwe signed the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development. This culminated in the formulation of a National Gender Policy, which is a broad based undertaking, challenging various sectors to participate in the fight against gender imbalances and inequalities.

It is against this background, that the Midlands State University has formulated a Gender Policy whose goals and broad strategies are aimed at operationalising the defined guiding principles on gender as outlined in our National Gender Policy.

VISION

To be a beacon of gender equity and equality.

GOALS

- i. To mainstream gender in the university.
- ii. To eliminate practices impeding equality and equity of sexes.
- iii. To empower students and staff with knowledge, skills and attitudes that enable them to create and live in a gender-sensitive society.
- iv. To have a critical mass of women on campus that gives them confidence in the university so that they begin to create a conducive learning environment for themselves.
- v. To achieve a critical mass of female role models in the University.
- vi. To promote a gender responsive environment.

OBJECTIVES

- i. To ensure gender balance in student enrolment in all degree programmes, ie;
 - 52%-48% female-male ratio in Humanities and Social Sciences by December 2006.
 - 40%-60% female-male ratio in Sciences by December 2010.
 - 52%-48% female-male ratio in Sciences by December 2015.
- ii. To ensure gender balance in recruitment, promotion and retention of staff by 2010.
- iii. To make provision for the training of a critical mass of staff in gender analysis skills across the University, especially among the following;
 - Senior management, heads of departments and Gender Studies Centre staff by December 2007.
 - All staff members by December 2008.

- iv. To ensure the integration of gender in university research by December 2006.
- v. To ensure integration of gender perspectives in university outreach programmes by December 2006.
- vi. To ensure that at least 50% of decision makers at all levels are female by December 2010.
- vii. To ensure the use of gender-sensitive language in all forms of communication by December 2008.

GENERAL STRATEGIES

The Gender policy views the University holistically as a learning institution as well as a place of work, which is made up of various departments. The policy implementation strategies, therefore, use a sectoral approach in three key sectors viz: academic, human resource and student affairs.

The broad strategies are to:

- i. Train the University community to implement the University Gender policy, monitor and evaluate its impact.
- ii. Review University Policies for gender sensitivity.
- iii. Redress gender imbalances through affirmative action and empowerment.
- iv. Engender University budgets at all levels.
- v. Create awareness and carry out educational campaigns on gender issues in and outside the University community.
- vi. Carry out gender responsive and gender-sensitive research and ensure its use in planning and project implementation in the University and the community.
- vii. Develop, maintain, update and provide gender-disaggregated data at all levels.
- viii. Discourage the use of gender-insensitive language, stereotypes and prejudices in all forms of communication.
- ix. Formulate rules and regulations that discourage gender violence.

ACADEMIC SECTOR

Ensure a gender responsive academic environment through:

- i. Provision of equal and equitable educational resources to males and females.
- ii. Elimination of all forms of discrimination against males and females in all faculties.
- iii. Making deliberate policies for the inclusion of women in Sciences, Mathematics and Technology programmes by:
 - Conducting career guidance outreach programmes at secondary schools.
 - Offering bridging courses for females in Science programmes
- iv. Lowering entry points for females in all programmes with less female representation.
- v. Providing support framework to enable female students who fall pregnant to continue with their education.
- vi. Supporting gender studies and research activities that will provide disaggregated data for educational planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation.
- vi. Engendering the University curriculum through sensitisation of lecturers and provision of gender sensitive teaching and learning materials.
- vii. Teaching Gender Studies as a compulsory module across all faculties.

HUMAN RESOURCE SECTOR

Ensure that the human resource base represents the national statistics of 52% females and 48% males in recruitment, promotion, benefits, access to resources and other ancillary matters. This can be achieved through:

- i. Advocating for increased recruitment, promotion and retention of female staff.
- ii. Equitable funding for the staff development of female and male staff members.

- iii. Empowering women and men to deal with the effects of gender discrimination and subordination.
- iv. Advocating and promoting increased participation of women in decision-making bodies such as, Council, Senate and all other University Committees.
- v. Elimination of gender blind and gender neutral policies as well as promoting organisational culture, norms and practices that take into consideration needs and concerns of both genders.
- vi. Formulate gender-sensitive policies across all Human Resource functions and reviewing existing policies for gender sensitivity.

STUDENTS' AFFAIRS SECTOR

Promote, advocate and ensure provision of equitable campus space through:

- i. Equitable provision of facilities such as entertainment, health, catering, transport and sporting.
- ii. Equitable representation of males and females in student bodies by promoting female participation.
- iii. Equitable allocation of on-campus accommodation for both female and male students
- iv. Promoting the formulation of gender sensitive policies, for example, regarding Sexual Harassment Policy.
- v. Facilitating empowerment programmes and workshops through partnership with outside organisations.
- vi. Providing equal and equitable leadership training programmes to male and female students.
- vii. Sensitising and empowering students on issues relating to sexual harassment and mutual respect.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Gender

Gender is the meaning that society attaches to sexual identities. This meaning gives rise to socially constructed differences between the two sexes. These differences relate to the roles, responsibilities, behaviors, opportunities, values, beliefs and attitudes that society holds on the two sexes.

Gender Equality

Gender equality is not only the absence of discrimination and bias on grounds of sex, but also the equal enjoyment of opportunities, responsibilities and rights to access and control of resources and benefits.

Gender Equity

Gender equity is the state of being fair, just and right to both women and men. The fairness and justice is in relation to opportunities, responsibilities, and allocation of resources, benefits or access to, and control of social resources and services.

Gender equity has also to do with proportional distribution of social services, representation, and participation of men and women in the development process. In Zimbabwe today the population ratio is 52:48 (52% females and 48% males). Thus then, the composition of men and women has to be commensurate with the 52:48 ratio. Gender equity is a step towards gender equality.

Gender Sensitivity

Gender sensitive is the ability to recognize or take note of issues of gender. It is thus the mere ability to perceive existing gender differences and inequalities. It is the beginning of gender awareness. It is gender perceptiveness.

Gender Awareness

It is the ability to identify gender disparities or problems arising from gender imbalances, inequalities and differences even where these disparities/problems are hidden.

Gender Responsiveness

Taking action to stamp out gender biases and discrimination. It is giving due consideration to the problems and needs of males and females arising from the socially determined differences between the two sexes.

Gender Blindness

It is the inability to recognize gender disparities due to mere ignorance of gender as an integral determinant of social outcomes. This entails failure to recognize that policies, programmes and activities can have different effects on females and males and hence failure to provide for the differences.

Gender Neutrality

It is the deliberate failure to take gender as a determinant of social outcomes because one wants to present oneself as non-aligned in terms of gender bias and discrimination.

It is the claim that one is indifferent to issues of gender yet this indifference translates into discrimination as it fails to pay attention to the special needs of men and men.

Gender Mainstreaming/Engendering

It is the consistent integration of gender concerns in all plans, programmes and activities. It can thus be taken as:

- An integrationist strategy where gender issues are addressed within the existing development plans, programmes and activities.
- Agenda setting where a transformation of the existing development plans, programmes and activities is made using a gender perspective.

These two concepts are not mutually exclusive and work best in combination.

Gender Empowerment

It is a process through which marginalized and or discriminated against people become aware of their subordination and or discrimination and acquire skills and knowledge that they need to analyse and overcome their subordination. They usually do this through education, for education is a regenerative tool, which eradicates ignorance and creates new awareness, consciousness of realities and potentials hitherto unknown.

Gender Disaggregation

It is revealing the differential impacts of development activities, plans and programmes on men and women, and the effects these impacts have on development efforts.