



## Overview

On February 20th, 2024, the Library-Academic staff workshop was held with the Vice Chancellor, Pro-Vice Chancellor, Registrar, University Librarian, and academic staff in attendance. The workshop focused on enhancing academic outcomes through collaboration and integration of resources between faculty and the library. Discussions were held about modular approaches to curriculum design, fostering inclusivity and diversity, research innovation, and Education 5.0, which envisions the integration of emerging technologies, personalized learning experiences, and a holistic approach to student development.

*"The library is the heart of the university hence there is a need for librarians and lecturers to complement each other to promote students' academic success."*

*M. Sibanda (University Librarian)*

## Faculty – Library Interrelations

The Librarian's address highlighted the relationship between faculty and the library noting that this mutual bond is crucial for the success of any educational institution. The relationship can be strengthened through regular communication, collaboration, and shared decision-making on library resources and services. Faculty members can benefit from the library's expertise in information literacy, research methods, and data management. In contrast, the library can benefit from faculty input on collection development which is providing the librarians with a list of core materials for student access. Co-teaching by way of blended librarianship is the way to go between library staff and lecturers.

## Use of ICT in Teaching and Learning @ RCU



The Vice-Chancellor, Prof. E. Dumbu, (pictured on the podium) emphasized that RCU, as an educational institution, has to embrace the use of ICT in teaching and learning to enhance the overall learning experience of its students. RCU implemented the online learning platform [e-CHERA](#) to facilitate online learning models. The platform enables students to access course materials, participate in discussions, and collaborate with their peers outside of the traditional classroom setting. This flexibility allows students to learn at their own pace and accommodate their schedules. He further noted that, though the use of e-CHERA started well, the usage statistics have since decreased indicating that academics no longer use it for teaching. With the adoption of modularization, all lecturers were advised to make use of e-CHERA as a learning platform.

## Modularisation

Prof. J. Makaye addressed participants on the concept of modularisation. He highlighted that to embrace modularization, the university's courses are to be divided into smaller, more manageable units called modules. Each module focuses on a specific topic and students are assessed on their understanding and mastery of that module before moving on to the next one. The year will be divided into 4 quarters with 2 quarters per semester. Lecturers are advised to shift from traditional teaching to student-centered learning. Modularization will allow for a more flexible learning experience and encourage active learning and engagement, as students are required to demonstrate their understanding through regular assessments rather than simply absorbing information passively.

## Assistant Librarians' Profiles and Services Rendered

The assistant librarians introduced themselves and presented their divisions to the audience. Library divisions are as follows:

Miss H. Ncube:	Assistant Librarian – Client Services
Ms. P. Mabhena:	Assistant Librarian – Content Management
Mrs. R Podzo:	Assistant Librarian – Inclusive Library
Mr. B. Ncube:	Assistant Librarian – Research Support
Mr. E. Munemo:	Assistant Librarian – Systems

## Artificial Intelligence

The discussion on Artificial Intelligence (AI) was enlightening as the speakers provided comprehensive knowledge and made sure that attendees understood the concept of AI. At Reformed Church University, AI can be utilized to enhance teaching, learning, research, administrative tasks, and overall campus operations. It can facilitate interdisciplinary collaborations by connecting researchers with similar interests or complementary expertise. AI provides lots of information however the



question is what and how to use that information. Participants learned that AI plays a crucial role in accelerating the pace of discovery and innovation. Researchers can leverage AI algorithms for data analysis, pattern recognition, and predictive modeling in various disciplines. AI-driven tools can help researchers process vast amounts of data quickly, identify trends, and generate insights that may have otherwise been overlooked.

## Inclusivity

Participants learned that Inclusivity is broad and that it goes in hand with diversity. Inclusivity means designing and delivering educational programs that are accessible and equitable for all students. It promotes a positive learning environment that values diversity and respect, leading to improved outcomes and a greater sense of belonging. Mr. Ndlovu shared his experience with people with disabilities, emphasizing the need for sensitivity and care. The discussion on inclusivity was ecstatic, and engaging, and indeed provided an opportunity for further discussion at a separate workshop to be arranged.

## Dissertations and the IR

The Institutional Repository (IR) collects, preserves, and provides access to the intellectual output of a university. IRs can typically contain a wide range of materials, including journal articles, conference papers, theses, dissertations, book chapters, and research data. The Reformed Church University, like many other academic institutions, maintains an institutional repository that serves as a digital archive for scholarly works and research outputs produced by the university's faculty, students, and staff. The content available in the institutional repository typically includes a wide range of materials such as dissertations, journal articles, and research papers. IR helps to enhance the institution's research profile by showcasing the diverse range of topics and methodologies explored by its students and faculty, increasing the visibility and impact of their work, as it becomes accessible to everyone. It was noted that the university needs to have a comprehensive and bound standard for dissertation writing considering the quality, text alignment, referencing, and plagiarism issues.

## Research Innovation & Education 5.0

It was noted that collaborative research is an aspect of Research Innovation & Education 5.0. The workshop discussed the benefits of collaborative research, including the need for clear communication, effective teamwork, and data management. The participants also explored the role of technology in facilitating collaborative research. Lecturers were advised to publish research articles at least twice a year. It was noted that the university has launched the RCU Journal (JOIIP) Journal of Inclusive and Innovative Practices with the library assisting in editing its contents. Each faculty was advised to have a research

coordinator who ensures that research studies are conducted efficiently, effectively, and ethically.

## Upcoming event

❖ *RCU and the Road to Disability Inclusion.*

## Editor's Corner

*The Reformed Church University Library **newsletter** aims to provide valuable information, updates, and resources to the members of the RCU community. It is published monthly, distributed in print format within the university premises, and digitally through email or the library's website for easy access by all members, offering a comprehensive overview of the library's events, upcoming events, and other relevant content. With his expertise in library science and passion for promoting literacy and knowledge within the community, Mr. M Sibanda the Chief Editor is well-equipped to curate engaging and informative content for the publication.*

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