

Governors State University

## OPUS Open Portal to University Scholarship

---

Newsroom

Marketing and Communications

---

12-3-2019

### **South African Consulate Visits Governors State**

Office of Marketing and Communications

Follow this and additional works at: <https://opus.govst.edu/newsroom>

---

University Park, IL,  
December  
03,  
2019

# South African Consulate Visits Governors State



The young South African diplomat, dressed in majestic blue, was full of wonder as she walked the halls of Governors State University, flanked by her staff, and university leaders.

Pausing before entering the [Center for Performing Arts](#), she spotted a poster announcing an upcoming show to honor pop-star Whitney Houston.

Phumzile Mazibuko recognizes the woman starring in the tribute and asks, “Is that the same Belinda Davids from South Africa?”

Once inside the reception area outside the auditorium, she wonders out loud again. “Is that a natural body of water? It’s really beautiful.”

Based in Chicago, Mazibuko is South African Consulate General—the highest ranking African diplomat in the Midwest. She recently visited campus to continue dialog between the university and Africa’s culturally and historically rich nation at the southernmost tip of the continent.

In her role as Consul General, part of the Department of International Relations, Mazibuko is responsible for the overall management of the Consulate General whose objective is to promote trade and investments, and enhance participation in the fields of arts, culture, and education.

In effect, the career diplomat serves as a bridge between South Africans in 14 Midwestern states the United States.

For Americans seeking to invest in South Africa, the nation's most advanced economy fueled by one of the world's largest diamond trades, or to explore cultural and educational opportunities, Mazibuko helps navigate the wealth of opportunities.

Earlier in the month, the diplomat met with Governors State students preparing for a Study Abroad trip to South Africa over the holidays.

Drs. Carlos Ferran, Professor of Accounting and Management Information Systems, and Vickii Coffey, Assistant Professor of Social Work in the College of Health and Human Services, are the leading the trip to explore business and culture.

In addition to exploring business opportunities, the group will compare approaches to social justice, Coffey said.

"Our work is framed in the values of freedom, justice, equity, and parity, and South Africa is doing substantial work in the same area."

Mazibuko returned to campus a week later, underscoring the relationship the [College of Business](#) has been cultivating for a decade through on-campus workshops and outreach to universities.

"Governors State has a wonderful partnership with South African government," she said. "The university has been sending students to South Africa for the last 10 years to broaden their horizons and expose them to our culture, and we want to see a more structure arrangement."

Dr. [Olu Ijose](#), Division COB, Chair for Marketing, Management and Entrepreneurship, Director Supply Chain Innovation Center and Business Incubator and director of a sub-award from The Center for International Business Education and Research (CIBER) at Kelley School of Business, Indiana University that supports study abroad courses in the college, said Governors State wants a stronger alliance with South Africa, a deep

reserve of culture and history that gave the world two Nobel Peace Prize winners.



Both South African Anglican cleric *Desmond Tutu* and Nelson Mandela, the first black president of South Africa, were honored by the Swedish committee for their work against apartheid, a system of racial segregation that promoted white supremacy and the oppression of blacks, the dominant race.

Ijose said South Africa's lessons run as deeply as its iconic rivers.

"South Africa's history is particularly instructive," Ijose said. "It demonstrates the bad and good of mankind, the power of the collective - individuals, businesses, governments and institutions — to overthrow evil."

Rebuilding its image after 50 years of strict segregation that led to two race riots and ultimately U.S economic sanctions, the largest nation in southern African is taking a position the world stage.

Mazibuko is proud to play a role, extolling the natural beauty of her homeland, where the iconic Table Mountain offers sweeping views of the countryside and the lush coast of the Indian and South Atlantic oceans.

She later discussed the continent's natural beauty during a presentation of the National Development Plan in the Hall of Honors.

“We see images of the United State in the media,” Mazibuko said. “However, there is very little visually Americans see of Africa on television. We want you to come see it – to see Africa in a new light.”

For her part, Mazibuko is busy boosting the nation’s visibility. In Chicago and throughout the region, the diplomat meets with students, educators, and investors to promote travel, trade, and good will.

Though she’d traveled to the United States many times as Chief of Staff for the Department of International Relations, her arrival in January 2018 was her first time seeing Chicago, which was much larger and diverse than she expected.

Soon after arriving in Chicago, Mazibuko joined World Vision, a charity seeking to bringing clean water to children in developing countries. Within a year, she was training for the Chicago Marathon, which surprised even her.

“I’m not a runner so it was a first, and one of many. Chicago really has been a place of firsts. I’d never seen snow and I’d never run a marathon.”

Mazibuko called her position in the U.S., “my singular honor.” However, the privilege of hosting an international figure is not lost on Ijose.

“It is not often Governors State is oppertuned to receive a senior diplomat. We should examine the full potential here.”