**SECZ HOLDS 2ND INTERNSHIP INNOVATION CHALLENGE**

It was a moment of eagerness and enthusiasm as seven university students who had been on attachment at the Securities and Exchange Commission for the past 12months sat in anticipation of an announcement of the winners of the recently- held Internship Innovation Challenge.

A few days before the Innovation awards ceremony, the students had contended in presentations of their written projects which they submitted as they concluded their internship with the Commission.

The Innovation Challenge was introduced in 2019 to encourage students on attachment by recognizing and awarding them for the fresh ideas which they brought to the table, with a vision to bring innovation to the Commission and the Securities industry at large. All students were required to exhibit original work and the entries would be their own ideas. The challenge required them to propose new or improved ways to implement existing solutions in the Commission’s operations or combine them or adapt them to a different context, whilst attaining SECZ’s objectives of originality and novelty of the project.

Tafadzwa Chinamo, CEO of the SECZ, thanked the students for the innovative ideas which he said the Commission had benefitted from. He advised the students on the need for proper time management and that the innovations had to be well presented in the time that was allocated to each student. He added that it was imperative for the innovation ideas to be novel, and not preach to the converted by presenting ideas that were already being actioned. The presentations were to be narrowed down to two items; actual evidence to problem and the solution.

“Innovations are there to solve problems”, Tafadzwa said and highlighted the importance of the practicality of the innovation, its applicability in the Zimbabwean context, and whether it would save the company human and financial resources.

He concluded by encouraging the students to continue with innovations even after their internship and wished them the best in the future.

“You applied yourselves and came up with very interesting ideas. I hope that you will keep that spirit of innovation post your time with the Commission and that will make you stand out in your workplace. The world stands by people who are always looking for better ways of doing things,” he said.

Chairman of the Innovation technical committee, Grace Berejena said the committee, which comprised five members, assessed the written projects which were submitted by the students. The submissions were of high quality, she narrated, and said that the committee enjoyed reviewing all of them. The assessment process had two sections, the first part was the technical aspect of the report- originality of ideas, the academic knowledge was also a requirement as the concepts had to match what the students learnt at their respective universities. Other requirements were the visual properties like the legibility of font used, the feel of the report and the word count which was limited to 1500 words and the contribution of the idea to the Commission, that is practical examples.

The second part of the assessment was the actual presentation of the project and the technical team looked at the student’s grooming: dressing and confidence and how their linked their ideas in the presentations.

Grace noted that with the requirements to stagger staff due to Covid-19, some students faced challenges as they needed to have access to a lot of data and gadgets which were limited as they worked form home. She highlighted that despite those challenges, students still delivered high quality projects and thanked supervisors for enabling the students to deliver.

Though all the students gave their best only 3 could be awarded as winners.

The overall winner of the project was Christabel Tadiwanashe Nyatsine, who walked away with USD $500 plus a laptop and a floating trophy. She was also awarded for Best Presentation and Best Written submission, which earned her USD $200 for each and a certificate. Her total cash award was USD $900.



**Pic 1: Overall winner: Christabel Tadiwanashe Nyatsine**

The first runner up was Mutsawashe Nikisi who was awarded USD 350, and the second runner-up was Joey Gubwe, who got USD $250.

Christabel’s project, titled “The Help desk System” was created to enable email users to enquire and get solutions through the system which was set up on the website. It cut the long process of sending individual emails and awaiting response. The automatic system has proved to be popular with SECZ employees who have found it quite convenient.

Christabel expressed her gratitude to the Commission for the support and encouragement she received whilst on attachment. She also thanked her supervisor who encouraged her to explore and be a better programmer than she was when she initially started her internship.

She also introduced more artificial intelligence and big data, which were programming languages and solutions on how to send big data to one another.

“I am truly grateful to everyone at SECZ, to my lecturers and parents, and particularly to my supervisor who pushed and challenged me. I can now award myself a junior programmer because of the support I received”, she said. She added that whilst her work was a lot stressful especially in coding as a little error like a comma could prevent the coding from running and because she had the necessary support, she managed to overcome.

We wish all the students a bright future as they complete their internship with the Commission.



**Pic 2: Winners of the Internship Innovation Challenge : Christabel Tadiwanashe Nyatsine (Overall winner) flanked by Mutsawashe Nikisi ( left -first runner up) and Joey Gubwe (right- second runner-up)**