

Mount Kenya University announces expansion plans with a Kshs 1 billion engineering school

The announcement was made at the institution's 11th graduation ceremony at Happy Valley grounds in Thika

By Amos Wachira

Thika based Mount Kenya University intends to start the construction of a Kshs 1 billion school of engineering starting January 2017.

Speaking during the graduation ceremony at Happy Valley grounds in Thika where more than 7000 students were conferred with degrees, diplomas and certificates, MKU founder Dr Simon Gicharu said that the proposed school will be the premier engineering institution in the region. He also announced plans to transform MKU's Rwanda Campus into a fully fledged university.

"I'm also delighted to announce that our Kigali campus in Rwanda is soon becoming an autonomous outfit. The objective is to have it develop its own culture and mobilise its own resources," he said.

With 20 campuses spread across the region, the institution has been on an expansion drive in the recent past. Partnerships have also been a major driving force for the university, which is now ranked position 8 out of 63 universities in Kenya and the third best private university in Kenya by Webometrics.

MKU recently initiated collaboration with two leading educational institutions in the United States — Clarke University and the University of Dubuque.

Under the agreement, the institutions will share facilities and have exchange programmes for students.

In May, MKU entered into an academic partnership with China University of Petroleum (East China) with the aim of getting assistance in the training of experts in the oil industry.

Through the partnership, the two institutions will exchange students and

engage in joint scientific and technological research projects, among other activities.

"We have 43 and 45 linkages with the public and private sector respectively, and 72 with institutions of higher learning and research institutes from around the world. Since the last graduation ceremony we have expanded our international partnerships in Asia, Namibia, and Poland," said Prof. Victoria Wulsin, Chancellor, Mount Kenya University.

After making significant strides in physical expansion, the university is now undertaking consolidation of programme, giving more attention to virtual education as well as research and quality training. On the backdrop of this, the varsity recently received kshs90 million as research grant from a US consortium.

Prof Lemma Sembet, the executive director of African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) said the organisation's board met in New York on November 28 and approved the grant, which will be for three years.

On August 24, MKU submitted a proposal for the establishment of the Institute of Development Research and Outreach.

MKU Chairman Dr Simon Gicharu welcomed the grant, saying it will help in the development of the university.

"The grant will make us the best in business and entrepreneurship," said Dr Gicharu who started an entrepreneurship academy at the institution to enhance entrepreneurship training in the region.

"We have set up graduate enterprise academy, a step towards realizing self-sufficiency. This is the direction the country needs to take. It is the panacea to joblessness. I want to challenge the graduands to think of creating jobs as opposed to the current situation where they all yearn for white-collar jobs. Relying on salary amounts to a life of challenges," he told graduands in Thika.

So far the university has stepped up its commitment to continuous development of its strengths and competitive advantages, and focusing on positioning itself among the top universities globally.

According to MKU Vice Chancellor Prof. Stanley Waudo, there are signs that the University is moving towards positioning

itself in the league of the best universities category. For example, the findings of the recent quality audit of the university by the Commission for University Education (CUE) that placed Mount Kenya University quality management systems above the Commission for University Education quality compliance threshold indicate that it is a quality driven institution of higher learning.

What they said:

Josphat Kiama Mukinyo, Teacher,



Studied bachelor of early childhood education at Main Campus, Thika

My experience for the last four years at the main campus was great. I can testify that the school is well managed. The institution is also considerate when it comes to fee payments. Students are allowed to pay fees in affordable instalments, giving even the financially challenged people a chance to get an education. I intend to come back for my masters degree. I want to challenge fellow men to come back to school as they are lagging behind in terms of advancing their studies.

Augustine Kalekezi, lecturer at a private institution in Rwanda



Studied International relations and diplomacy, Kigali campus

I chose MKU because it had the course that I wanted to pursue. I would be happy to go back to MKU for my PhD studies.