

# MKU @ 20yrs

INSIDE: A PULL-OUT FOCUSING ON MOUNT KENYA UNIVERSITY RWANDA

MOUNT KENYA UNIVERSITY | 1996 - 2016



## Government of Kenya absorbs 47 pioneer MKU pharmacy degree graduates

**MKU goes into history as the first private university to successfully train pharmacists in Kenya since independence**

**S**omewhere in the State of Georgia, USA, one Dr Jimmy Mulu Wambua is preparing to undertake his registration exam to enable him practice pharmacy in the US. He flew to the US in July to pursue his dream of becoming a top pharmacist.

Dr Wambua is an alumnus of MKU's pioneering Bachelor of Pharmacy class of 2009 that claimed a special place in the university's and country's annals of medical training history.

These first graduates of the five-year Bachelor of Pharmacy programme graduated in December 2013 during MKU's 5<sup>th</sup> Graduation Ceremony.

Through a survey, the university tracked its pharmacy graduands. Of the 84 who graduated, 47 immediately embarked on the process of becoming registered to practice as pharmacists, completed the process and were absorbed by the Government of Kenya. The rest are at various stages of the process. Upon graduation, the MKU pharmacy graduates sat the mandatory Stage 1 Pharmacists Pre-Internship Examinations. Those who passed were posted by the Ministry of Health for a one-year paid internship in community pharmacy practice (3 months), industrial pharmacy internship (3 months) and Hospital pharmacy practice internship (6 months). The Graduates were then examined a second time by the Pharmacy and Poisons Board (PPB) after internship in the Stage 2 PPB Pharmacists Pre-registration Examinations. Those who passed were registered as pharmacists, and on 10 August, 2015, they were posted by the Ministry of Health to serve in various county hospitals across Kenya.

Dr Wambua, a Kenyan born and raised in the US for 20 years, bucked a common trend when he decided to travel to Kenya in 2009 to undertake his Bachelor of Pharmacy degree course. As is the norm, thousands of Kenyans usually travel to the US, the United Kingdom, India, South Africa and Uganda among other destinations for their university education.

Now here was a Kenyan already living in the land of opportunity but who sought education back home.

Dr Jimmy Wambua notes that the motivation to return to Kenya to pursue his pharmacy degree was largely based on the



**Jimmy Wambua as a student explaining to the then President H.E. Mwai Kibaki operations of a mixer at the pharmacy stand during the University Charter Award Day**

affordable fees that MKU was charging as compared to pursuing a similar programme in the USA.

"In MKU, I was paying roughly Ksh312,000 per year, while the same programme in the US costs about Ksh2.5 million per year on average" he says.

The other key consideration was the duration of the programme. The MKU Bachelor of Pharmacy programme, being a five-year course, met the minimum duration accepted in the United States.

Had he wanted, Dr Wambua would be working in Makeni County where the Ministry of Health had posted him.

When he arrived in Kenya, he received a culture shock, having lived in the US his whole life. "From the food, to the language, to the showers, to the people, even greetings, were all so different," he recalls.

He was privileged to serve as class representative from second to fourth year.

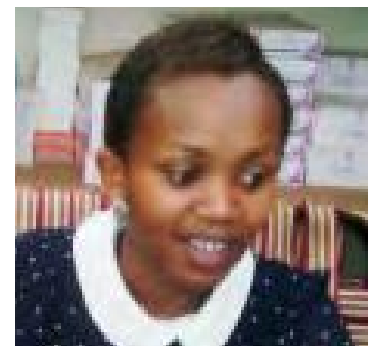
"I had practised as a pharmacy technician before coming to MKU," says he. "But I really gained a lot of valuable knowledge, which was much deeper than I knew because of the theoretical work and knowledge I had learned in class. So now, returning to the same pharmacy I was working in before, I am at a whole new level in knowledge and experience, which I believe will make me one of the best pharmacists in the company."

"Armed with a Masters' degree and experience from the US as a pharmacist, I will come back to practice in Kenya with new knowledge and experience. That may be useful to society as Kenya and the Pharmacy practice continues to develop."

His quest to fulfill a longstanding dream mirrors the journey of hundreds of others who found an academic haven in MKU.

Dr Geraldine Wanja, a classmate, is the hospital pharmacist at the Matuu sub-

I had practised as a pharmacist technician before coming to MKU," says he. "But I really gained a lot of valuable knowledge which was much deeper than I knew because of the theoretical work and knowledge I had learned in class



**Dr. Geraldine Wanja Alumnus from pioneer B. Pharm class, School of Pharmacy, MKU**

county hospital where she heads a department of eight, all men.

Hers too, has been an illustrious journey.

Having lost both parents early in life, she depended on her grandparents to see her through university. She scored a B at KCSE. However, she was not admitted for a pharmacy degree under the then Joint Admissions Board (JAB).

She qualified for the Module II programme at the University of Nairobi, but the fees was out of the reach of her elderly grandparents. She joined MKU, whose fees they could afford. The rest is history for the Class of 2009.

In 2010, another batch of students joined the MKU Bachelor of Pharmacy programme.

Dr James Githinji was in this lot. By then a diploma holder from the Kenya Medical Training College (KMTTC), he found the university a convenient avenue through which he could pursue his degree. MKU opened an avenue that previously did not exist for continuous professional development for diploma holders in not only pharmacy training, but in many of the health sciences, such as clinical medicine and dental technology.

Dr James Githinji is one of the beneficiaries of this increased access for career and professional development.

### Mountains varsity climbed to mount pharmacy courses

Mount Kenya University's pharmacy training journey is the stuff that powerful folktales are crafted from. The hurdles that the university had to overcome in its formative years are legendary and legion.

Dr John Kisengi, Accreditation Co-ordinator, College of Health Sciences, had been at the history-making university before it evolved from Thika Institute of Technology. He witnessed these interesting developments.

He reveals that for the university to be granted authority to mount the Bachelor of Pharmacy degree was nothing short of the extraordinary – if not a miracle.

Consider this: Thika Institute of Technology, the university's forerunner, hit the higher education scene when pharmacy training was the preserve of two public institutions. Only the University of Nairobi offered the Bachelor of Pharmacy, while only Kenya Medical Training College (KMTTC) of-

fered diploma in the same field of study.

Also consider that to mount a health science programme requires massive investments in equipment and faculty. The institution must also develop a suitable curriculum for accreditation by both the Commission for University Education and the Pharmacy and Poisons Board.

Then keep in mind the fact that MKU, like its

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**20 YEARS OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT - WITH EXCELLENT RESULTS**

*Scaling the heights of education*

## Pharmacy Degree Graduates

# Enhancing pharmacy training to boost regional drug manufacturing capacity

**MKU enriches curriculum to bridge region's pharmaceutical manufacturing gap**



Pharmacy students demonstrate how to inject a rabbit

In a significant twist to its epic tale of success, Mount Kenya University is investing millions of shillings to transform its pharmacy training. MKU, East Africa's largest health sciences private university, has enriched its pharmacy degree curriculum and recruited international faculty to help produce pharmacists who are highly skilled and specialised in industrial pharmacy.

This is a timely shot in the arm for the region's economies that are poised for industrial take-off.

East African nations currently import pharmaceuticals, including simple cosmetics that can be produced in the region with the right skills and expertise.

For example, Kenya imports pharmaceuticals worth \$500 million (about KSh 50.5 billion) per year from India. This is according to the Health Principal Secretary Nicholas Muraguri. Anti-retroviral drugs imported from India cost the country Sh22 billion every year.

The bulk of such imports can be manufactured in the region if locally trained pharmacists can bridge the technological gap that exists between the two countries.

And now, in a paradigm shift, the reviewed MKU Bachelor of Pharmacy curriculum planned to be implemented from January 2017 will give trainees requisite skills to make them competent in the industrial manufacture of medicines and cosmetics.

Dr S. Chandrasekhar, the Dean School of Pharmacy, said the university awaits regulatory approvals but is optimistic that this will be granted. He pointed out that the university is adding to, and not removing content from its approved and accredited curriculum.

The dean, who boasts nearly 38 years' pharmaceutical industry experience stretching back to 1977 in India, says the university's draft curriculum heavily borrows from the Indian pharmacy training structure which has made the Asian country the global leader in pharmaceutical manufacturing.

Said Dr Chandrasekhar: "The revised MKU Bachelor of Pharmacy curriculum aims to produce pharmacists well equipped to seamlessly transit from university to the

pharmaceutical and cosmetics manufacturing industry. The university is adopting a training curriculum heavily inspired by the Indian model curriculum for pharmacists while also retaining the clinical training aspects for those graduates who wish to pursue a career in the hospital and community pharmacy sectors.

"To ensure there is adequate technology transfer, the university's management has recruited several professors from top Indian universities to join the faculty in the MKU School of Pharmacy. The university has also recruited faculty that has extensive hands-on pharmaceutical manufacturing experience in local and international pharmaceutical manufacturing plants to ensure that the training is practical," the dean said.

Kenya's Vision 2030 aims to position the East African nation as the regional provider of choice of highly specialised health care and a "health tourism" giant in Sub-Saharan Africa. This vision in part requires a strong pharmaceutical manufacturing base which can only be achieved through strengthening of the local pharmaceutical manufacturing capacity and human resource through technology transfer initiatives.

Dr Chandrasekhar reveals that MKU pharmacy students will also receive practical training in formulation of cosmetic preparations (cosmetology). They can be employed in the cosmetic manufacturing industry, a multibillion dollar sector in East Africa.

In addition, the Kenyan cosmetic industry is currently estimated to be worth over Sh6 billion (\$ 59.8 million) and is further estimated to grow to over 7.4billion (\$ 73.7 million) by 2018. This is according to Euro Monitor International. It is estimated that the combined Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania

cosmetics market will hit \$231 million by 2018.

He adds that there has been a shift in pharmaceutical care towards providing personalised medicine and targeted drug delivery systems. "Nowadays, it is ideal to give doses fit for the individual patient as opposed to the practice of giving all patients the same dose yet they are unique in body and physiology," Dr Chandrasekhar explained.

The international faculty expected to spearhead the implementation of the new curriculum include:

**Dr Epaphrodite Twahirwa, PhD:** Dr Twahirwa is a Rwanda/Belgium citizen with extensive industry experience in East Africa and Europe.

**Prof Ramalingam Rama, PhD,** has extensive teaching experience from top pharmacy schools in India. He will be one of the key pillars in the technology transfer from India to Kenya in ensuring that the MKU Pharmacy graduates are at par in Industrial Pharmacy training with their Indian counterparts.

MKU's planned training of Bachelor of Pharmacy students in industrial pharmaceuticals units such as pharmaceutical engineering will make them ready to transit directly to the industry on graduation. There will be no need for expensive and time-consuming on-job training of pharmacy graduates immediately they are employed in pharmaceutical manufacturing plants.

In addition, the added units such as pharmaceutical medicine will ensure that the graduates are competent to be employed as regulatory affairs pharmacists in regulatory agencies or drug registration departments of pharmaceutical companies.

## Mountains varsity climbed to mount pharmacy courses

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precursor, is a privately-funded institution. It is not funded by Government, a faith organisation, a professional body or a non-governmental organisation.

You then begin to appreciate the mountains the institution had to climb to become the first private university in Kenya to offer the Bachelor of Pharmacy degree. It made history when it did.

Some well-established universities tried to offer the programme and failed. They have never re-ignited interest in it.

Dr Kisengi recalls that even for TIT to be allowed to offer a diploma in pharmacy was an uphill task.

The door to pharmacy began to crack open for private institutions in Kenya when in 2002, the government succumbed to the need to train more paramedical personnel. TIT began to train pharmacy dispensers at certificate level.

Then the then Kenya Institute of Education (KIE), now Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD), released an approved curriculum allowing institutions to offer the certificate course.

However, industry regulator Pharmacy and Poisons Board (PBB) ran a newspaper advert warning that only UoN was authorised to offer the Bachelor of Pharmacy degree programme. The notice also said only KMTC could offer the diploma programme.



Institutions of higher learning were displeased with the order because it locked them out. They petitioned Ms Charity Ngilu, the then Minister for Health, to rescind the decision. She obliged.

PPB retracted the advert and a task force to look into the matter of pharmacy training in Kenya was formed. The task force went around the country to establish which institutions had the infrastructure to train pharmacy technologists.

It found that five institutions had the requisite infrastructure to offer the course. TIT was in the list published on 22 November, 2003, becoming the first private institution in Kenya permitted to offer the Diploma in Pharmacy programme.

In 2004, TIT admitted the first class of pharmacy diploma students. A whopping 96 registered for the course.

The institute then embarked on investing in improving the academic resources (teaching staff and facilities) that led to success of the programmes.

Thika Institute of Technology showed its intent to be a leading light in pharmacy training by having Bachelors and even Masters holders in pharmacy teaching in the Diploma programme, while other institutions were hiring Higher Diploma holders to teach in the diploma programme.

"In September 2005, The management realised that there were no affordable core pharmacy reference books and sponsored one of its senior Pharmacy lecturers' at the time, Dr Philip Mwagiru, to publish the first pharmacy textbook ever written by a Kenyan, for local and regional pharmacy training. The book, titled Fundamentals of Pharmaceutical Chemistry, remains the only locally authored pharmaceutical chemistry reference book that is in use by Diploma and Degree Pharmacy students in Kenya.

**20 YEARS OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT - WITH EXCELLENT RESULTS**

*Scalis altitudines educationis*

# Thanks to our MIS, we've shed costly excesses and vastly improved on academics — Registrar

Varsity drastically reduces part-time staff

Technology has helped Mount Kenya University streamline academics and shed excess part-time staff capacity that unnecessarily gobbled up resources. Using its management information system (MIS), the university cut teaching units in January, enabling it to significantly slash the number of part-time lecturers on its payroll.

Dr Ronald Maathai, Registrar, Academic Affairs, revealed that the university did not need the thousands of part-time lecturers across its 16 campuses.

"We realised that some units were created unnecessarily," he said in an interview. "Some lecturers were teaching 12 students or less, and thus had a low workload. We also realised that some full-time staff members were taking less teaching loads. They would then give the full classes to part-timers. Technology has helped us tremendously. We can view from a computer the units offered and the number of students registered in any campus."

This is possible because the university management centralised the Directorate of Teaching to gain a bird's eye-view of academics.

The Registrar said MKU had fallen into the traditional part-time lecturing trap that snares many universities and costs them millions of shillings in unnecessary salaries.

Dr Maathai said the associate faculty had ballooned to become unmanageable. At one point, the university owed the lecturers Sh500 million, yet that was an unnecessary expenditure in the first place. After streamlining the units, the university managed to clear the debt. "The university was not in control of the situation... Most of the part-time lecturers were pursuing their own agenda," the Registrar noted. "They were not complying with university regulations. The problem was lack of coordination and managing of part-timers."

The impact has been a huge improvement in class attendance because the university's MIS helps monitor teaching. "Daily class attendance has increased from 90 per cent to 98 per cent," said Dr Maathai.

"Coverage of the syllabus is 100 per cent. The campuses are often quiet because students are attending lectures. You will see



A public lecture



Professor Ramalingam Ramani, Ph.D

## Ramani's Experience

Professor Ramalingam Ramani is a BPharm., M.Pharm & PhD holder in Pharmaceutical Chemistry with over 15 years of teaching experience. He completed his PhD from Osmania University, India.

Professor Ramalingam has guided both BPharm and M.Pharm students with 23 research publications both in Indian and international journals. He is keen on Research & Teaching.

very few students outside, and these are usually busy revising."

The feedback from students has been that "we are zealous in chasing them to come to class," according to the Registrar.

Dr Maathai said the MIS helped the university realise that it was offering too many units in its curriculum. For example, for business courses, MKU was offering 56 units against the Commission for University Education's (CUE's) recommended minimum of 40 units. Accordingly, the university has reduced these units to 42. The

change will only affect new students.

The Registrar pointed out that implementing these changes was not easy. He recalled how people asked him what magic he was going to employ to cut units.

"Part-time teaching is a cash cow for many people," Dr Maathai noted. "So it was natural for some people to campaign against and resist our new approach to managing the part-time community. As many universities were established, part-time lecturing became a career commonly referred to as 'moonlighting'."

## Facts

- The University reduced part-time lecturers.
- The varsity has continuously increased full-time staff as compared to part-time teaching staff. This has given students more time to interact and consult their lecturers as the varsity enhances service delivery.
- Class attendance has increased from 90 per cent to 98 per cent after the streamlining of the academics at the University using its Management Information System, UNI-PAC.

He said after the streamlining of teaching, the Directorate of Teaching vets any new part-time lecturer for integrity, qualification and competence. Those who fit the bill are then eligible for interview. After that, their names are stored in the university's database and should they misbehave or lack commitment, the university blacklists them.

"For example, we can say confidently that we have a manageable number," said the Registrar. "MKU will never be the same again. We use an approved curriculum, hire qualified and competent part-time lecturers and offer exams whose quality is assured through external examiners."

Dr Maathai said this was a desirable state of affairs. "Academics is what brings students to MKU. So, we track a student right from admission to class attendance up to graduation. On class attendance, we monitor both students and their lecturers to ensure the syllabus is covered. Our exams are centralised. All students, irrespective of campus, sit the same exam."

The Registrar has appealed to the CUE to create a database of all part-timers in Kenya to ease their monitoring. "We have to keep in mind that we are training for the nation."

Mount Kenya University is a major contributor to employment creation in Kenya. The university employs full-time academic staff, associate faculty and research staff, administrative staff and support staff.

The academic, associate and research staff comprises professors, associate professors, senior lecturers, lecturers, assistant lecturers, tutorial fellows and graduate assistants.

The impact has been a huge improvement in class attendance because the university's MIS helps monitor teaching.

20 YEARS OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT - WITH EXCELLENT RESULTS

Scaling the heights of education

## History

# MKU: Grain of wheat produces rich harvest

Thika Institute of Technology was the first private institution to be accredited by the Pharmacy and Poisons Board to offer a Diploma in Pharmacy in Kenya in 2003.

The academic seed that Dr Simon N. Gicharu planted in the form of a commercial computer outreach centre in 1996 has borne fruit. Two decades later and the transition to Thika Institute of Technology in 2002 and finally to a fully Chartered University in 2011, MKU's growth and development has had a profound impact on society.

Since 1996 about 70,000 graduates of the precursor, Thika Institute of Technology and Mount Kenya University, have been awarded various certificates, diplomas and conferred degrees in the various market driven programmes disciplines.

At inception, the Computer Outreach Centre had just one programme in computer packages. The number of programmes has grown over the 20-year period. The increase in the number is in response to the market demand to increase access to university education.

The management of Thika Institute of Technology from its inception had made a strategic focus to concentrate on health science programmes. At the time (early 2000),

all colleges seemed to be focusing on social sciences, business and art programmes which were relatively easier to mount and operate.

The capital investment needed to mount health programmes and the strict regulations by respective health professional bodies was (and still is) a great barrier to entry. In addition, since most of the private institutions are profit driven, the lower returns on investments associated with health courses discouraged private institutions from mounting such courses. The management at Thika Institute of Technology was therefore delving into unchartered territory as health science training was a preserve of government institutions.

Among the first health programmes to be mounted at Thika Institute of Technology was Pharmacy Training at Certificate level in 2000. Before then, the training of Pharmacy professionals was for a long time the preserve of only a few government institutions. The Diploma in Pharmacy programme was only available at the Kenya Medical Training Institute (KMTI) while



The old computer lab

the Bachelor of Pharmacy programme was offered only at the University of Nairobi.

Thika Institute of Technology was the first private institution to be accredited by the Pharmacy and Poisons Board to offer a Diploma in Pharmacy in Kenya in 2003. Five years later, Mount Kenya University was also to become the first Private University (and only the second University in Kenya) to be approved by Commission for Higher Education (the precursor of Commission for University Education) to mount the Bachelor of Pharmacy programme in 2008.

In 2006, the Commission for Higher Education (CHE) validated TIT programmes and approved collaboration between TIT and Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, JKUAT to offer some diploma and degree programmes mainly in business courses. The collaboration

provided opportunities to the management of TIT to gain valuable experience on management of the teaching of degree programmes.

In May 2008 Mount Kenya University was established and mandated to offer three CHE approved programmes namely, Bachelor of Business Information Technology, Bachelor of Science in Medical Laboratory Science and Bachelor of Pharmacy.

Mount Kenya University adheres to the quality processes of programme approval. Instruments in place to oversee this process include Departmental /School Curriculum development and review committees, the Senate, Commission for University Education and accredited by the respective professional/regulatory bodies which provide a critical external quality assurance mechanism through their periodic accreditation inspections and review.



Thika School of Management Studies → Thika Institute of Technology → Mount Kenya University

Number of Programmes in 1996	Number of Programmes in 2000	Number of Programmes in 2016
Certificate - 1	Certificate - 3 Diploma - 4	Certificate - 45 Diploma - 50 Degree - 67 Post-graduate diplomas - 6 Masters - 55 Ph.D - 8

## MKU leads in number of approved courses among private varsities

Mount Kenya University (MKU) has the highest percentage of approved professional courses among private universities in Kenya.

The university's curricula are designed to match the demands of the modern job market, and this has enabled it to get the approval of various professional bodies, including the Council for Legal Education, Pharmacy and Poisons Board and Kenya Medical Laboratory Technicians & Technologists Board.

The university started as Thika

Institute of Technology in 1996. In 2000, the institute developed into a commercial college of management and computer training. It was registered by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology in 2001.

The college initiated paramedical, information technology and business and entrepreneurship education in 2002.

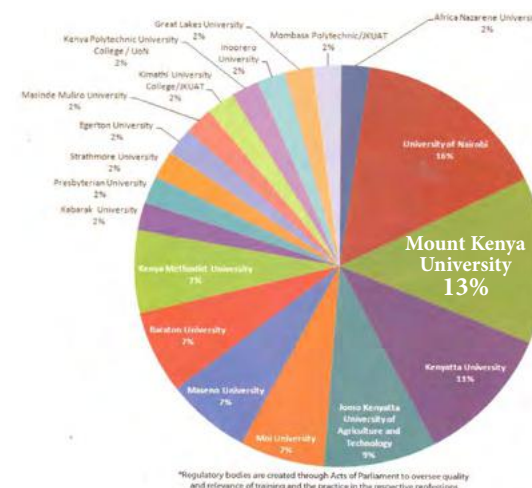
It became the first private training centre in Kenya to be allowed by the Pharmacy and Poisons Board to train pharmaceutical technologists.

That was in 2005.

In 2006, the Commission for Higher Education, the predecessor of the Commission for University Education, approved the institute's request for collaboration with JKUAT to offer diploma and degree programmes.

After fulfilling all the requirements of establishing a private university, Mount Kenya University received its charter in 2011.

It has campuses in Kenya and other East African countries.



\*Regulatory bodies are created through Acts of Parliament to oversee quality and relevance of training and the practice in the respective professions.

## 20 YEARS OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT - WITH EXCELLENT RESULTS

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## Entrepreneurship

# How Dr Gicharu's enterprising spirit opened university doors to thousands

We have an obligation and a responsibility to be investing in our students and our schools. We must make sure that people who have the grades, the desire and the will, but not the money, can still get the best education possible. - Barack Obama, US President

When the door to his teaching job slammed shut 20 years ago, Dr Simon Gicharu embarked on an odyssey into the unknown. Coincidentally, this fateful dismissal swung open a new window of opportunity and forever changed his destiny and the lives of thousands of others.

After intense thinking about his plight, he saw a path he could follow: entrepreneurship.

He charged down the new path, trying one business after another. But he knew it was one big risk he was assuming. He had just traded the comfort of a salaried job in the public service with the uncertainties of the fluid world of entrepreneurship.

Not until he established a college did his wandering entrepreneurial spirit find a true home.

A visionary with an indomitable will, Dr Gicharu founded Mount Kenya University and gave deserving students the opportunity to access university education – with other doors shut to them.

In so doing, he revolutionised higher education. Today, he is among the most famous entrepreneurs and educationists in Kenya.

Dr Gicharu knew that limited capacity in publicly-funded universities locked out tens of thousands of Form Four leavers who had attained joining qualifications. They had three options: to join the expensive Module II programme, enrol in private universities and pay equally high fees, or swallow their pride and settle for a diploma programme.

He saw a void and moved to create an alternative path for them, instantly transforming himself from a teacher to a cele-



Mount Kenya University Chairman and founder Dr. Simon Gicharu (centre) Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs, Sicily Kariuki (right) and Cabinet Secretary Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government, Joseph Nkaisery (left) follow proceedings during MKU's 10<sup>th</sup> graduation ceremony held at the University's Pavilion in Thika. More than 10,000 graduates were conferred various degrees and awarded diplomas and certificates.

brated entrepreneur.

"We did not establish MKU to compete with other institutions," he insists. "MKU came to fill a gap in higher education and especially in Kenya. We are filling that gap well and we are happy."

By successfully nurturing Mount Kenya University since its formative years as Thika Institute of Technology to the academic titan it is today, Dr Gicharu has demonstrated the spirit of entrepreneurship. His resilience is stuff that truly distinguishes successful entrepreneurs from the rest.

He challenged the *status quo* and debunked the industry assumption that others had been educated to accept that only religious institutions, professional association, rich individuals and non-governmental organisations could establish a university in Kenya.

Most private universities in Kenya are sponsored by religious groups. The majority of these institutions are limited in capacity. Their annual admission ranges from about 500 in the smallest institutions to 2,000 in the largest.

For long, entry to university education in Kenya had been mostly dependent on a student's socio-economic background. High cost deterred many – even those with the relevant marks – from enrolling in these institutions.

Yet access to university education is not only one of the fundamental rights of an individual, but also an important exit route from poverty.

The 50,000 students enrolled at Mount Kenya University – making it the biggest such private institution in Eastern Africa – found the route to realising their dreams. They are the reason the university exists and is thriving. Their huge numbers are proving Dr Gicharu right: Kenya and the region need this university.

With a bias for science and technology programmes, Mount Kenya University has treaded where few private universities dare not venture. These programmes require huge investments in infrastructure and faculty, something that Dr Gicharu has not shied from.

His eyes dance with laughter when he recalls the experiences he endured as he doggedly built the fledgling institution. His visit to Abarakant in Punjab State, India, to buy equipment for pharmacy training readily springs to his mind.

He was there for one week tying loose ends of logistics. For all that time, he subsisted on bread and soda. "I could not eat the spicy Indian food," he reminisces with a chuckle. "I was used to eating meat back home. To me, going one week without tasting *nyama choma* was a huge sacrifice."

He is delighted that the School of Pharmacy he has built since then has attracted a sizeable international faculty. "The Indians who supplied the University with equipment have now come to teach and transfer technology in Kenya," he notes.

And, by setting up campuses strategically across the country even in shunned regions like Lodwar, Mount Kenya University is making higher education affordable and accessible.

Individuals thirsty for higher education now need not leave their hometowns to travel to where they must pay for accommodation. The university is right at their doorstep.

## Library grows

The Library Section of the University has undergone tremendous growth. The Thika Institute of Technology Library had a sitting capacity of 100 users only. The University current Library sitting capacity is 4,444 users

Mount Kenya University Library (main campus), is fully automated and Wi-Fi enabled and has various sections such as Reprographic section, Technical section, Circulation section, Reference section, Children's section, Periodical section, Cultural centre, Digital and Multimedia Section, study Carrels, Reading area, Stack area, library staff offices, library Staff common room and Library discussion Villas. The library complies with the standards and guidelines for establishment of

Statistical Analysis			
	Item	Thika Institute of Technology	MKU 2016
1.	Capacity	100	4,444
2.	Print books	4,000	87,600
3.	E-books	Non	Over 80,000
4.	Operation system	Manual	Automated
5.	Computers	9	438
6.	Kindles	0	50
7.	Staff	2	66

an academic library as stipulated by the Commission for University Education (CUE).

The villas are Wi-Fi enabled and fitted with electrical accessories for use both at night and day. Its setting has an ambiance that is conducive for learning and study. The library user education is conducted for proper utilization of the ICT facilities; the Wi-Fi enabled library environment enhances use of laptops, smart phones and other gargets within the university. The Wi-Fi zones are distributed on all the floors of the library, the study villas and the library yard. This has demystified the library theory of a building into a virtual space.

Mount Kenya University subscribes to various electronic resources such as journals, eBooks through the Kenya Library and Information Services Consortium (KLISC) to supplement the print resources.

The library services are automated executed

using a library Information Management System. The library has Computers fully networked with free internet for library patrons and Amazon Kindles (EBook readers) for access to online resources.

The library users are able to renew borrowed information resources on their own whenever they are by logging in to Online Public Access catalogue.

### Library improvement

Mount Kenya library started with a sitting capacity of 100 users and currently we have a total capacity of 4,440. There has been a continuous improvement due to the support given by the University management in providing the highest quality of library facilities, resources and qualified staff.

## 20 YEARS OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT - WITH EXCELLENT RESULTS

*Scaling the heights of education*

## Entrepreneurship

# Practical training and partnerships: A great roadmap to wealth creation

**A**frican countries can catch up with the Asian Tigers if tertiary training is more practical-oriented and integrates mentorship.

This is according to Mount Kenya University founder Dr Simon Gicharu, who says there is too much theory and “copy-cat” approach in the education system in Africa.

The four Asian Tigers – Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan – transformed from backwater countries to highly developed societies by reforming their education model. More focus was placed on technology and an export-oriented manufacturing.

“Institutionalisation of practical oriented teaching and learning in schools and universities should be our guide towards economic prosperity and job creation,” says Dr Gicharu.

He explains that his experiences led him to establish the Mount Kenya University Graduate Enterprise Academy, a post-graduate incubation and mentorship lab meant to transform would-be job-seekers into job creators.

The lab is backed by a Sh40 million war chest that is expected to create hundreds of



**Dr Felistas Wangui, a coach, addresses apprentices during the opening of the second cohort of the Graduate Enterprise Academy Boot camp**

jobs in the next five years. Dr Gicharu says technical training is a viable solution in stemming the unemployment tide.

“As training institutions, we should ensure up to 85 per cent of teaching and learning is practical oriented. Theoretical training leads to production of ‘copy-cat’

engineers, teachers, entrepreneurs, doctors, among others.”

Dr Gicharu poses: “Why can’t we have policies that allow students to get evaluated on their contributions to the industry? Such a policy would add value to both the teaching and to partnering organisations.”

## Students delighted with varsity services – Survey

Students are satisfied with infrastructure and facilities, teaching, learning and service delivery at Mount Kenya University. In a market survey, they, however, suggest that the university has room to strengthen its research and innovation pillar.

MKU conducted the market survey in February 2015, seeking feedback to enable it improve its products and services. The target group was students – the university’s primary customers.

The Marketing Department carried out the survey with technical guidance and support from the Department of Public Health, School of Health Sciences.

Students filled questionnaires that sought information on how they came to know about MKU, how they rated the university’s services and their suggestions on how key institutional pillars could be strengthened.

They gave infrastructure and facilities a high rating of 77 per cent, followed by teaching and learning (76 per cent) and service delivery (67 per cent).

The respondents suggested that the university should conduct random surveys on all its customers (students, staff, regulator partners, and collaborating partners).



**GEA apprentices, their coaches and speakers from Stima Sacco pose for a group photo during the second Boot camp at SACDEP, Thika**

The surveys, they proposed, should focus on MKU products and services, and their prices, among other features. Further, promotional strategies should be regularly undertaken, preferably every three years, to contribute to mid-term review of the MKU Strategic Plan.

The students also suggested that demo-

graphic, geographical, socio-economic and cultural profiles of all customers in each campus and school should be regularly undertaken. This would provide insights into how to strengthen the university’s Pillars of Excellence, including how to achieve gender parity in admissions and staffing.

## Alumni excel as entrepreneurs

During the Mount Kenya University 8<sup>th</sup> Graduation Ceremony in July, 2015, the then Education Cabinet Secretary Jacob Kaimenyi hailed the university as a “hotspot for training successful entrepreneurs.”

In a survey of Kenya universities, he said, MKU ranked among the best in producing “job creators, not job seekers.”

True. Propelled by a scholastic approach that emphasises independence and freedom of thought, MKU graduates complete their studies with a mind-set of applying the skills they have acquired to build something of their own.

The university’s Graduate Enterprise Academy, which offers entrepreneurial training and seed capital to a select number of alumni, has also gone a long way in moulding these successes.

The institution’s founder Dr Simon Gicharu, was himself in 2015 inducted into the World Entrepreneurs of the Year Hall of Fame.

Vice-Chancellor Prof Stanley Waudo says: “In Dr Gicharu, ambitious entrepreneurs need not look beyond the university’s walls for a role model.”

The list of successful alumni entrepreneurs includes a 27-year-old who educated himself and his five siblings through a Wines & Spirits and milk distribution businesses, a bubbly 26-year-old who sells fish in a landlocked country, and a 24-year-old trading in Congolese vitenge throughout East Africa.

Their bank accounts and workforce bulging, they say it is more fulfilling to create a job than to look for one.

And that is the nature of a typical MKU graduate

## Employers prefer Mount Kenya University graduates - Survey

Mount Kenya University graduates have been ranked the top 10 most sought by the employers. This is according to the latest employability survey by Corporate Staffing Limited that found employers preferred to hire fresh graduates from MKU and nine other universities.

The survey noted that employers receive too many job applications from poorly qualified candidates.

To date, MKU has sent to the labour market over 70,000 graduates. Over 20 per cent have created jobs while the rest seek employment in various industries.

The university through Graduands and Alumni Relations Office (GRAO) has developed several employability soft skills trainings. The aim is to support students to become successful in the market. The office has strong partnerships with industry and networked the alumni for internship employments.

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# Varsity in hot pursuit of talented student-graduate entrepreneurs

**Graduate Enterprise Academy identified as a vehicle to support graduate entrepreneurs**

**M**ount Kenya University is cognizant of the fact that the number of job opportunities globally is not increasing compared to the number of graduates joining the labour market.

Prof Peter Wanderi, Director, Quality Assurance, Linkages and Partnerships, says the university actively pursues collaborations with other institutions and individuals. When other parties seek to partner with it, MKU welcomes them with open hands.

"We set our objectives clearly and go out of our way to identify strategic partners," Prof Wanderi revealed during an interview. "We are also available to respond to queries by prospective partners who want to engage with us and embrace their ideas. More often than not, we go beyond their expectations."

The university has a dedicated directorate of linkages. "We are even on the ground – our staff, students and management – to look for more and more linkages. We do timely reports and share them with management. They in turn give us feedback."

Prof Wanderi appreciates that he and his team work with a Board of Directors, University Council and Senate that are highly supportive of linkages. "They appraise any linkages we suggest and they, too, provide new ones," says Prof Wanderi. "The environment that MKU provide is attractive and helps us retain linkages and partners."

He is happy to note that student activities have attracted corporate organizations such as banks and other institutions that offer services to them. Banks such as Equity, KCB, National Bank of Kenya, Cooperative Bank, Family Bank and Commercial Bank of Africa engage with MKU students on financial issues.

"Telecommunications giant Safaricom has shown interest in setting up students care centre within the main campus at its own cost," adds Prof Wanderi. "Our students shall also be offered internships to practice their skills."

"Firms such as Vivo Energy have indicated that they would like to engage with our students on the issue of attachment. Media organizations engage with our journalism students. Business-related organizations such as the Chandaria Foundation, through Manu Chandaria, are also interested in working with MKU. Dr Chandaria graced one of our gala events during the ICA-BUMPA conference."

Several small and medium firms also approach MKU for support and mentorship.

MKU will soon sign a Memorandum of



Graduate Enterprise Academy's patron Dr. Simon Gicharu addressing apprentices of the academy



Prof. Peter Wanderi, Ph.D  
Director Quality Assurance and Linkages

Understanding with the University of Bradford to jointly host an international peace conference in Kenya next year.

The university has training arrangements with the Administration Police Training College (to train police), Kiambu County (to train members of county assembly). MKU also partnered with the latter to equip the Thika Level 5 Hospital where the university's health sciences students train on the practical aspects of human health. The university equipped the hospital's anatomy laboratory with Sh300-million equipment.

To nurture the next generation of entrepreneurs, MKU struck several partnerships. It took on board University of Edinburgh's Professor Emeritus Peter Rosa as a consultant for its Graduate Enterprise Academy programme. The don has been consulting for Makerere University's Business School (MUBS) since 2003.

"MKU wants to nurture startups for its students and alumni so that by the time they graduate, they are job creators," says Prof Wanderi. "Family Bank and Bidco, among others, are helping us mentor the budding entrepreneurs."

## Key linkages in health training:

- Machakos Level 5 Hospital
- Thika Level 5 Hospital
- Mathari Mental Hospital
- Chulaimbo Hospital
- Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital

## Objectives

- To raise the visibility of MKU locally and internationally
- To enhance university network for quality addition
- To market MKU regionally and internationally
- To contribute towards improvement of University rating.

MUBS exchanges staff with the university. It also helps in student-to-student leadership benchmarking, curriculum development and implementation.

MKU is also working with the University of West of Scotland in the United Kingdom and Lephana University in Germany on programmes in entrepreneurial development among students. The programme is titled *Students Training for Entrepreneurial Promotion (STEP)*. "This is a programme I introduced in Kenya while teaching at Kenyatta University," Prof Wanderi reveals. "We are now working with the UNESCO Regional Office in Gigiri, Nairobi, to appraise the progress of STEP in Kenya. This will enable UNESCO to seek additional funding for more students to be trained."

The MKU-UNESCO collaboration also aims at mainstreaming co-curricular sustainability issues into academia.

MKU is one of the biggest private universities in the region and offers various health science programmes. Naturally, it attracts a lot of attention from accrediting bodies that accredit programmes.

## No effort spared in entrenching quality at MKU

Quality has been at the heart of Mount Kenya University's operations right from the start, stretching back to the days of its precursor. Thika Institute of Technology, the university's forerunner, benchmarked for quality with Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and technology (JKUAT) and Uganda's Gulu University.

MKU offered programmes in collaboration with the two universities. By then, quality assurance at the institution was only by benchmarking with the two universities.

"This helped raise MKU's stature to a level where in 2008, it could run own programmes," says Prof Peter Wanderi, Director, Quality Assurance, Linkages and Partnerships.

He continues: "This paved the way for MKU to be granted a Letter of Interim Authority (LIA) in 2008. The university then put in place structures on quality assurance and became ISO 9001:2008 certified in 2012. All its teaching and management activities were certified."

Every year, the Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS) undertakes two external audits on the university's processes and activities. Likewise, the university's 300 ISO internal auditors carry out quality audits within the institution. Of this number, 40 had their training enhanced and became Lead Auditors. They are distributed throughout the university's campuses. All quality assurance operations are coordinated from the Thika main campus.

Students, too, participate in the quality assurance exercise. Every semester before they receive their exam cards, they are required to appraise their lecturers and fill the evaluation form online. The appraisal results are then sent to management.

The Quality Assurance Directorate also carries out surveys on customer satisfaction. It provides a questionnaire that the students and other stakeholders fill to indicate their levels of satisfaction with the services they receive at MKU. The results are passed on to management to take corrective actions.

MKU's quality assurance journey is set to move to another level as the university prepares for transition to ISO 9001:2015 on the advice of KEBS.

"The university is working towards attaining this standard by 2017, although we have until March 2018 to do that," says Prof Wanderi. "We were recertified early this year as we work towards ISO 9001:2015."

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## Alumni

# Early Christmas gift: Plaza named in honour of Alumni



Majestic look of Alumni Plaza

Mount Kenya University is set to honour its alumni later this year by naming its tallest building in the Thika campus after them. Alumni Plaza is the university's gesture of appreciation of all its former students.

Mr Afubwa Musumi, the Graduands & Alumni Relations Officer, acknowledges the pivotal role students played in the university's growth and development.

"These former students believed in the MKU dream and that of its forerunner.

They participated in the university's growth and are currently giving back to MKU and society. The plaza is a symbol that unites alumni to stay connected to the university and continue to contribute to their alma mater," he says. "It will serve as a figurative umbilical cord."

"MKU has remained in touch with its alumni through several services and sustained communication," he reports.

"Therefore MKU applauds its graduates wherever they are. They should know that they own part of the building throughout their life."

Alumni Plaza will be ready by December for its official opening.

It will serve as a one-stop administrative centre of the university, for efficient service delivery to the student community, parents, guardians and other stakeholders.

## MKUSA leadership articulates pertinent student concerns

Student leadership at Mount Kenya University (MKU) is moving in the right direction. The voter apathy that had hit the student population has dissipated.

This is according to Mr Charles Karondo, MKU Student Association (MKUSA) President, who declares that the student body is achieving its set objectives.

"At one time, students had despaired in voting," he reports. "They felt that MKUSA was not articulating their issues well."

According to him, sometimes it is all about dealing with small matters affecting the students.

"We deal with the small matters that matter a lot to student, and it makes a big difference to them," Mr Karondo says. "It could be about how students relate with the lecturers. It could be about a delay in processing a student's Higher Education Loans Board (HELB) money. It could be about how the security personnel at the gate handle them. Or it could be about the quality of food in the 'mess'. It is about how students can learn smoothly without being distracted by such issues."

MKUSA is also concerned about recreation for students because, as Mr Karondo notes, this is critical for all-round development of the MKU undergraduate.

"Even though we study a lot, the recreational time is there, so we need games facilities," says the MKUSA President, who was elected to this position last February. "We are aware that the Mombasa campus has a sporting arena at the Student Centre. We would like similar facilities put up in all campuses."

Mr Karondo says the student body has sent delegations to South Africa and South Korea to benchmark with sporting facilities available to students in universities in the two countries.



Charles Karondo  
President, MKUSA

## Sudanese student aspires to become a great leader

Majok Makur Malak is a South Sudanese national who joined MKU in January 2014 as a diploma student in electronic and electrical engineering.

He switched to pursue a degree in Economics and Statistics in September the same year.

"I had vision of joining campus politics while in high school in Kampala, Uganda," he explains why he stood for student leadership at MKU.

Mr Malak attended his primary and secondary school education in Kampala, Uganda and moved to Kenya in 2013.

He vied against four Kenyans. He projected his dream and focus to fellow students "despite where I come from, I won the election."

His slogan was "Africa, we are one" which was ranked as the first and unity promoting slogan in the MKUSA 2016 elections.



Majok Makur

## President's Award Kenya



Mount Kenya University Nairobi Campus staff and students in a group photo with H.E. President Uhuru Kenyatta, the Patron of President's Award Kenya and other government officials during the Gold Award presentation ceremony at State House on 22 July, 2016.

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# MKU among top-four sporting universities in Kenya – survey

**M**ount Kenya University (MKU) has emerged fourth among 55 universities and institutions of higher learning in Kenya ranked for excellence in sports. The ranking was done by global market and social research firm, CPS International, following a survey.

The research firm released its report during the first week of August 2016, detailing the ranking of Kenya-based universities according to their sports activities.

In a survey that lasted two months, the pollster placed a premium on sports facilities, awarding more points for excellent playgrounds. It also considered the budgets allocated to sports by the various institutions of higher learning. Another key consideration was the number of sporting activities promoted by the institutions.

On learning about the university's ranking, Prof Peter Wanderi said, "I congratulate MKU for this achievement, which comes at a time that sport has become a fast growing social institution in the world with unlimited potential for youth personal edification, character formation, a career for income generation as well as a potent avenue for local, regional and international diplomatic relations. Keep it up MKU."

MKU has over the years invested in facilities for various sports disciplines across its campuses. It has also built teams that participate in competitions in Kenya and outside the country.

The university owns 100 acres along the Thika-Garissa road, 4 km from its main campus, set aside for expansion in the stra-



Mount Kenya University rugby team in action

tegic plan period 2015-2019.

Currently, the vast land is hosts graduation pavilion, sporting activities, conference facilities, capacity and team building events and university functions.

Recently the university athletics team participated in a championship held in South Africa and they performed very well. We urge our students to spare some time from their academics and make good use of excellent sporting and games facilities provided by the university.

Popular sports disciplines at MKU, and for which the university has provided facilities, include swimming, rugby, soccer, handball, badminton, volleyball, netball, hockey and athletics.

The university's campuses also have facilities for indoor games, such as pool table,

darts and table tennis. In addition, martial arts disciplines such as karate and taekwondo are also popular among students.

According to the Dean of Students, Mr Evans Omwango, the university values sports as a key feature in the holistic education it provides. This has seen the institution nurture sports talents in various fields. Some of the outstanding performers have gone on to represent the country internationally.

Mr Omwango reveals that the university also provides scholarships to students with talent in sports, such as Martin Owila, who is on a full rugby scholarship. It also plans to issue another 10 full scholarships in various sports disciplines in the next academic year.



Swimming competition at the university



Martin Owia Omondi, MKU student who plays for the Kenya IRB Sevens team

## Top 10 Best Universities in Sports Ranking in Kenya

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Kenyatta University                    | 7. Egerton University                                     |
| 2. University of Nairobi                  | 8. Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology |
| 3. United States International University | 9. University of Eldoret                                  |
| <b>4. Mount Kenya University</b>          | 10. Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University                     |
| 5. Strathmore University                  |   |
| 6. Moi University                         |   |

## Uganda's Opatia nurtures his leadership skills

**He came. He saw. He conquered.**

Edwin Opatia came to Kenya from his native Uganda in June 2012 in search of knowledge. He ended up being a leader too.

By the time he was elected external affairs officer of the Mount Kenya University Students Association (MKUSA) with a 40,000 strong membership, he had conquered his fears and won the hearts of fellow students.

The Bachelor of Clinical Medicine student was inspired by the Government of Kenya's effort to stem the corruption tide through the Ethics and Anti-corruption Commission.

Awareness of the movement also made him known widely within the MKU community.

Mr Opatia says coming to MKU has helped nurture his



Edwin Opatia

leadership skills.

He learned about MKU while still in his home country, and decided he wanted to have international learning experience.

"I saw MKU as an outstanding university in East Africa, growing fast. I had tried to apply to other universities for the degree in clinical medicine, but MKU was the only one offering the course," he narrates. "I was welcomed well and have enjoyed my stay here."



Body building and aerobics lessons at the university gym



MKU's taekwondo team battle for top honours in a competition

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## Digital Varsity

# Mount Kenya University Digital Varsity goes global

**MKU digital varsity is a collaborating partner of Sakai Platform of USA**

MKU Digital Varsity started as an abstract in July 2010, motivated by the Mount Kenya University's desire to expand access to higher education and to provide an alternative way of obtaining quality academic qualifications to those who could not attend the campus-based mode of learning.

The university has invested in reliable ICT infrastructure, integrated students management and digital learning management systems to actualise digital learning.

Like the proverbial long journey that starts with only one step, MKU Digital Varsity started as a small distance learning centre housed at the Main Campus in Thika, offering Bachelor of Business Management and Bachelor of Psychology.

With just a population of around 50 students, the centre morphed into MKU's Virtual Campus in July 2011, and later to Virtual Varsity in 2012. Now it is Digital Varsity.

Currently, over 10,000 students are enrolled in various course programmes, with the number set to grow to over 50,000 students.



Joyful MKU graduands

## MKU Digital Varsity's appeal: Flexible, Convenient "Anytime, Anywhere" studying

MKU Digital Varsity is a collaborating partner of Sakai digital platform of USA. This is the platform of choice by over 350-plus world's top-ranked universities, including Stanford and Oxford universities.

The platform serves upwards of 1.25 million students in the US and 4 million students globally. This

number includes more than 10,000 Mount Kenya university students.

Within a single platform, the MKU Digital Varsity supports virtually any type of instructional approach, including elements of the educational experience that are unique to specific programmes.

Our exceptional team of technical support staff help students to navigate the platform. Students connect with the Student Support Team by phone, email, and online chat.

MKU Digital Varsity offers students the opportunity to study at Mount Kenya University wherever they are in the world. They enjoy access to innovative learning resources, leading-edge curriculum and the experience of friendly and dedicated staff. The students are offered personalised support all along the way from enrolment to graduation.

Students choose from a growing programme offered at Digital Varsity, including Master of Business Administration, Master of Public Health, Bachelors in Criminology and Security Man-

agement, among others.

The digital learning format include an introductory orientation week for students to meet fellow students and prepare themselves for 12 weeks of lecturer-led independent study and discussion. Students are able to study "anytime, anywhere", and contribute to ongoing lively discussions and debates with fellow students and their lecturer, each week. Active participation is expected and encouraged.

In the final week, students are expected to sit for end of trimester examinations at the nearest Digital Varsity examination centre.

MKU Digital Varsity has a proud history of serving the education needs of the military, police service and other security agencies. Currently, the varsity offers diploma, undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in security studies.

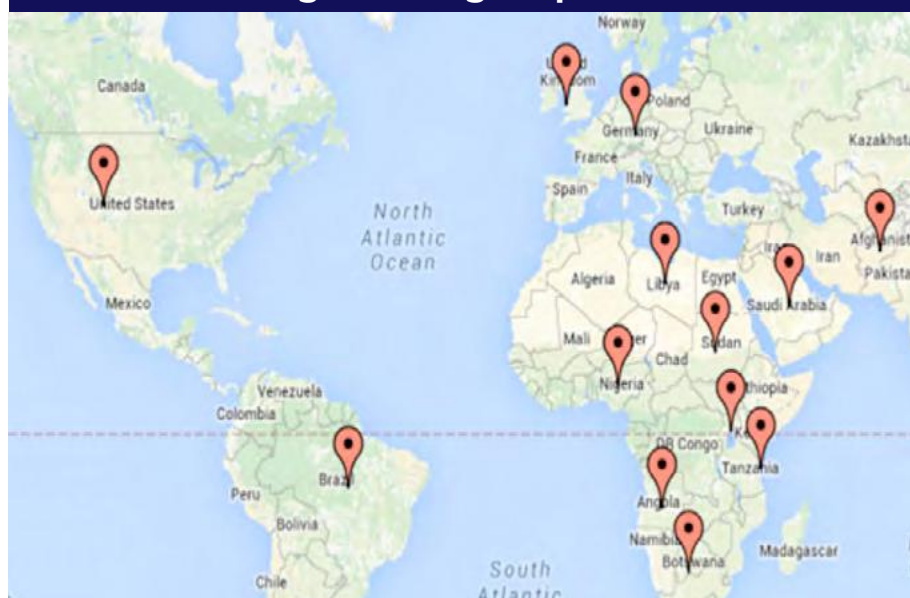
By providing broad access to quality higher education through distance learning, MKU Digital Varsity has become the choice of more than 2,250 men and women serving in various security agencies.

Amidst the fast-changing and challenging role of Members of Par-

### Why has the Digital Learning at the University become so popular within a short time?

- The University Digital Learning Management system is one of the best learning system and has powerful and added features that enhance learning, access to resources, Virtual interaction, online CATs, assignments, marking and grading of the CATs and self paced learning.
- Because of the flexibility it offers, It is also affordable. Students also like the way we take care of them by solving any challenges they may face in using the platform."
- Because Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is available, it is easy for students to stay in contact with the university should they need assistance.
- Diaspora Students sit for exams in Kenyan Embassies abroad hence convenience and cost savings instead of them travelling back to Kenya.
- The Digital students as well sit for exams in the university approved campuses and centres making the mode of learning flexible and friendly.
- The learning is flexible and courses run on trimester basis and credit transfers are given on application by the academic heads
- Reliable students academic, technical support and customer care team through the varsity call centre.
- Two graduation ceremonies per year hence it enhances academic progression.

### MKU global digital presence



liament, 12 members of National Assembly and a member of Senate are currently pursuing programmes through the Digital Varsity.

The Digital Varsity remains committed to making a positive and enduring impact in communities. This commitment is best expressed by the motto, "Scaling the Heights of Education". When students succeed, countries prosper and societies benefit.

The Varsity offers a unique learning experience that combines web based supported learning, and strong student, technical and academic support through the use of interactive and feedback learning tools embedded in the Digital Learning Management system.

The online lecturers and university professors provide the required academic support to students. Learning combines various digital instructions with e-tutorials through the learning system. The university has an elaborate students' mentorship programme to ensure their academic life is catered for from the time of enrolment

Continued on page...19

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## Inauguration

# Mount Kenya University Rwanda set for inauguration in November

**Varsity to move into own building in Kagarama, consolidating its three campuses**

**N**ovember 2016 will see the inauguration of Mount Kenya University Rwanda in Kagarama, Kicukiro District. The ceremony will be held at the university's brand-new complex in Kagarama, a landmark edifice with state-of-the-art lecture facilities, laboratories, offices and equipment worth billions of Rwandan Francs.

The inauguration is a key step towards the establishment of a locally chartered varsity with independent governance structures from its parent, Mount Kenya University (MKU) in Kenya.

The MKU Board of Directors has tapped Distinguished Professor John J. Struthers from the University of the West of Scotland (UWS) to be the Chancellor of Mount Kenya University Rwanda (MKUR). He is currently the Director of the Centre for African Research on Enterprise and Economic Development (CAREED) at UWS.

An accomplished researcher and scholar, Prof Struthers boasts numerous publications, among them a book titled, *"Money: Institutions, Theory and Policy."* In addition, he has attracted over \$100,000 in grants and funded projects.

Prof Struthers will be instrumental in navigating MKUR to greater heights in academics, governance and international collaborations.

Dr Prudence Ngarambe, a Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science and Security Studies graduate of Salve Regina University, Newport, Rhode Island, USA, has been tapped by the MKU Board of Directors as the Mount Kenya University Rwanda Chairman of Council designate.

Once in place, the University Council will engage stakeholders in creating opportunities for resource mobilisation and synergies for global collaborations to implement experiential learning and teaching.

To enhance the international quality of education, the university will maintain strategic affiliations through Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) and strategic partnerships. The quality offered by the university will be guided by International Quality Standards.

## Tremendous growth

Mount Kenya University (MKU) has been operating an off-shore campus in Rwanda since 2010. The institution has undergone tremendous growth since.

The MKU Board of Directors has been following global higher education devel-



Kigali Campus dance troupe entertains guests during a graduation ceremony



Kigali Campus graduands celebrate their success

opments in general, and specifically those in the Eastern Africa, and is now convinced more than before that operating a full-fledged institution of higher learning accredited in the system it is serving is more relevant and quality focused and manageable than running a campus operating on cross-border basis.

It is against this background that the proposed Mount Kenya University in Kigali is dedicated to bringing quality, relevance and affordability to the population of Rwanda and beyond.

MKUR opens its doors to support national development and reconstruction with the philosophy that rapid advances in health sciences, science and technology across a wide range of resources from information and communication technologies

(ICTs) to biotechnology materials, business and innovation, provide great potential for countries to accelerate and strengthen their economic development.

MKUR is the outcome of sustained investments in infrastructure and other learning resources. It is also a response to Rwanda's unmet demand for human resources to help drive the nation to its desired destination: a bright future for its people.

## Ultra-modern facility

The MKU Board of Directors invested nearly 4 billion Rwandan Francs in constructing an ultra-modern facility in Kagarama, Kicukiro District. The facility can accommodate at least 5,000 students by the end of this year.

The last six years have marked a huge



**Dr. Prudence Ngarambe,**  
Chairman designate, Mount Kenya  
University Rwanda Council

milestone for the university.

In 2011, student enrolment stood at only around 1,000. To date, the university has over 3,000 students in three locations, namely Kicukiro, Camp Kigali and Town campuses. Growth of academic programmes in Rwanda included those that were mainly offered in public institutions.

From its humble beginnings, the institution has, in less than a decade, attracted and trained thousands of students. Some have graduated and are making their mark in society. Others are still undertaking their studies in various disciplines.

MKU is making deliberate efforts to improve access to higher education in Rwanda. It is committed to investing in the country, especially in the areas of science and technology; the heartbeat of any knowledge-based economy.

The university has invested heavily in IT and modern science laboratories at the Kicukiro centre in order to offer programmes such as nursing, pharmacy, medical laboratory science and clinical medicine and surgery.

MKU acquired land for the construction of additional infrastructure in preparation for the transformation of its Rwanda campus into a university. The construction will be in phases, with the first phase scheduled for completion by the end of this year.

The infrastructure that will be ready after the first phase of construction will give the university the capacity to train 7,000 students over and above the current population.

Phase Two will expand the university's capacity by a further 3,000.

The legal process for the granting of government permission to establish the university is ongoing. The Government of Rwanda has been highly supportive of the idea, just like it has supported the MKU Kigali Campus.

To enhance the international quality of education, the university will maintain strategic affiliations through Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) and strategic partnerships.

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*Empowering Generations through Education*

MKU Rwanda Vice-Chancellor

# Mount Kenya University Rwanda's VC outlines his plan for varsity success

Some people might call him audacious. Others might consider him a high risk-taker, or even a dreamer. Well, Prof Edwin Odhuno will gladly accept any of these descriptions because he appreciates the enormity of his new responsibility: Mount Kenya University (MKU) Rwanda's first Vice-Chancellor.

Yet he has bet big on the institution attaining unparalleled success in years to come.

"I am honoured to be the university's first vice-chancellor," he offers during an interview. "I did not anticipate the appointment, but the university must have seen that I had something to offer. I welcome the appointment, and I will take this job seriously."

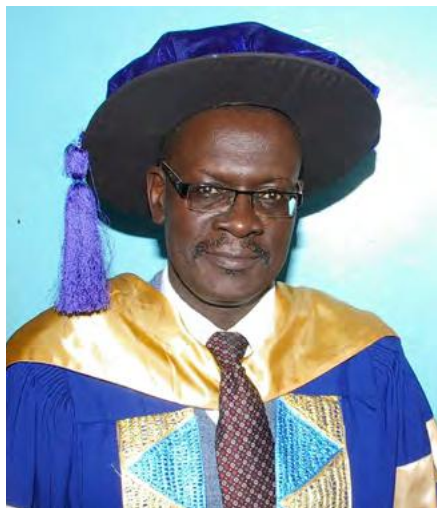
Prof Odhuno goes ahead to give himself a target: "If in five years I feel we are not achieving what we have set out to do in Rwanda, I will not want my contract renewed."

Clearly, he has staked his academic reputation by promising to set MKU Rwanda on the path to glory, in just five years.

The Vice-Chancellor of the university that has sprouted from the Mount Kenya University Kigali Campus is confident that the ingredients for a rosy future exist. His job, according to him, is to ensure each jigsaw piece fits in place.

He is excited that the university already enjoys immense goodwill in Rwanda. And by faithfully contributing to Umuganda – voluntarily supporting the vulnerable in society and socially advancing Rwanda's community – the university has kept its finger on the pulse of the nation.

Prof Odhuno, however, acknowledges that Rwanda's higher education scene differs from Kenya's, where MKU has its roots. But he is quick to point out that MKU Rwanda has the benefit of learning from its Kenyan parent, which has scaled the heights of education after overcoming the natural challenges that face nascent academic institutions – and especially the privately funded.



Prof Edwin Odhuno, Ph.D, MKU Rwanda, VC

## Rwanda's Higher Education Council gave MKU courses a clean bill of health.

Language is a key challenge the MKU management did not anticipate when entering Rwanda.

"We must accept that Francophone Rwanda has for long used French as the official language," he notes. "It only recently added English as the other official language. Kenya is Anglophone, so students are taught in English right from primary school. We have to take language differences into consideration."

"Also, as MKU, we went into Rwanda with Kenyan accreditations, based on the Kenya Qualification Framework. Yet the requirements for accreditation for health science courses like pharmacy, nursing, public health and medical laboratory technology are different because the curricula for the two countries differ. These courses had to be subjected to accreditation by Rwanda

authorities. So, here we are talking of double accreditation. As you know, Rwanda's Higher Education Council gave MKU courses a clean bill of health."

Prof Odhuno says right from the outset that MKU Rwanda has woven its curriculum with strands from Rwanda Vision 2020 – the country's long-term development blueprint that charts the path to a brighter future.

Rwanda Vision 2020 lays strong emphasis on the promotion of science and technology as the key to unlocking the country's economic potential.

In part, Rwanda Vision 2020 states: "At the core of our development process will be what constitutes Rwanda's principal asset: its people. Human resources will be improved, so that Rwanda can become a knowledge-based economy. In particular, we will actively encourage science and technology education and ICT skills, which will also help in addressing the fact that our country is landlocked."

Prof Odhuno explains that the university "has reviewed its Vision and Mission to ensure it reflects the current demands of the market place and also its strategic realignment in the Republic of Rwanda, which comes with great expectations from both the citizens and the government". He adds: "During the 2016-2025 Strategic Plan period, delivery of the curriculum shall be improved by increasing the number of teaching staff, providing infrastructure, introducing experiential learning as well

as introducing new teaching and learning methodologies. Research and innovation shall be enhanced, and incubation facilities increased."

The VC envisions MKU Rwanda graduates playing an influential role in this intricate web of social and economic development. This is because beside focusing on science and technology training, the university aspires to graduate highly employable individuals.

To achieve this goal, the university has set out to train its students in collaboration with industry.

"We will strengthen our school of health sciences and the other three schools – Pure and Applied Sciences, Business and Management, and Education," explains Prof Odhuno.

"We have gone overboard in providing adequate learning resources," asserts the VC. "We have invested heavily in technology and students can access knowledge through our library, kindles and the e-repository."

Prof Odhuno promises to make the university highly competitive by focusing on quality. This, he says, involves limiting intake even when demand increases, and maintaining five schools – the existing four and later, a School of Research and Post-graduate Studies.

"Ten years from now, we will not have 10 schools that are headed nowhere," he declares. "We want managed growth because we are keen on quality, not quantity."

I am honoured to be the university's first vice-chancellor," I did not anticipate the appointment, but the university must have seen that I had something to offer. I welcome the appointment, and I will take this job seriously.



Dr Rusibana Claude

I am an Assistant Lecturer at the School of Business and Economics in Rwanda, teaching courses in accounting, banking and finance. What I know about Mount Kenya University (MKU) is that it was the first to bring Master's Programme in Rwanda. That was in 2008.

MKU came to solve the problem of many Rwandese, who had to spend a lot of money to go abroad to pursue studies. MKU brought Bachelor's programmes that

## A lecturer's testimony

helped the community to enhance their knowledge and be in position to get jobs. One such important programme is that of banking, finance and risk management.

Students that enrolled in the programme are already working in major insurance companies and in banks such as GT, Equity and KCB among others in Rwanda.

MKU has policies and manuals that enable students to know exactly what they expect from the university. It is also ISO certified.

When students enrol at MKU, they are guided by mentors, and most of them end up eventually being employed by the organisations in which they do their internship.

At MKU, exams and results are moderated by internal and external examiners to ensure quality of the work performed by lecturers. Another favourable feature at MKU is that the maximum number of students in a class is 50. This enhances the quality of teaching and learning.

## Prof Edwin Odhuno's experience

- March 2016 – Present:** Vice-Chancellor, Mount Kenya University, Kigali
- Jan 2013 – Feb 2016:** Dean, School of Business and Economics, Mount Kenya University
- June 2012 – Dec. 2012:** Associate Dean, School of Business and Public Management, Mount Kenya University, Thika
- February 2012:** Associate Professor at the School of Business and Business Management, Mount Kenya University
- July 2011:** Associate Professor, Kampala International University (KIU), Dar es Salaam College
- March 2011 –Jan 2012:** Director of Academic Affairs, Kampala International University, Dar es Salaam Campus
- October 2010:** Senior Lecturer and Director of Academic of Affairs, KIU College, Dar es Salaam.
- March 2008 – July 2009:** Assistant Professor and Principal, American Hospitality Academy, IHMS in Romania.
- 2001 - 2008:** Head of Department, Maseno University's Department of Ecotourism, Hotel, and Institution Management
- 1996- 1997:** Team Leader in Training at Burlington Marriott and Boston Marriott hotels in Massachusetts, USA
- 1995 – 1998:** Held various management positions in Front Office and Housekeeping departments at Bethesda Marriott in Maryland and Washington DC., and Burlington, Massachusetts, USA
- Summer 1994:** Entremetier at the Good Earth restaurant in Palo Alto, California, U.S.A.

## Achievements and Professional Recognition

- June 2014:** Awarded **Education Leadership Award** by the World Corporate Universities Congress, Mumbai, India
- July 2011:** Appointed Associate Professor, Kampala International University
- July 2011:** Appointed External Examiner, Technical University of Mombasa
- 2006 – 2013:** International Advisory Board Member, American Hospitality Academy
- 2011 – Present:** External Examiner, University of Eldoret, Kenya
- 2001 – 2008:** External Examiner, Kenyatta University, Kenya. Curriculum consultant for the United States International University and the Kenya Institute of Education, Kenya
- 1996:** Willard Marriott Award of Excellence
- 1989:** DeCosta Scholarship, Morgan State University, USA

20 YEARS OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT - WITH EXCELLENT RESULTS

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## Community Affairs

# Varsity's 'Umuganda' gift to needy genocide survivors

On 30 July 2016, officials from Mount Kenya University Rwanda (MKUR) handed over a house that the university had built for a blind widow, who had survived the infamous genocide of 1994.

Dr John Nyiligira, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Planning, led the team that included the varsity's Royal TV and FM representatives in presenting MKU Rwanda's *Umuganda* gift to the widow, her daughter and a granddaughter.

Dr Nyiligira handed over the keys of the finished house to the executive of Nyakabanda sector in the presence of Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF), Nyakabanda representative, National CNLG representative and the adviser of Nyakabanda sector in the presence of other people from two *Midugudus*.

Dr Nyiligira explained that helping the needy was one of the university's social pillars.

He added that MKUR was also contributing to the Government of Rwanda and RPF programmes of developing the country and people as well.

The DVC explained that since its establishment, the university has continued to



The official handing over of the house built by Mount Kenya University Rwanda in collaboration with Royal TV to a genocide widow, in the presence of Nyakabanda sector local authorities' representatives

support families affected by genocide in every annual commemoration of the tragedy.

This year, the university donated food and other items to 20 families in Nyakabanda sector and started building a new house for the widow, who had been identified by the sector local authorities as requiring

that kind of support.

The university has also awarded scholarships to genocide survivors, and plans to donate cows to needy families as identified by the local authorities.

Dr Nyiligira thanked the local authorities and the community for working hand-in-hand with the university to build the house.

## Rwandese student receives scholarship worth Rw 24 million Francs

Rwandese student Angeli-que Redempta has received a full scholarship to study for a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBChB) programme at MKU Main Campus.

The 24 million Rwandan Francs scholarship covers tuition fee and accommodation for six years, the entire duration of the course. It was offered by the university as part of its Corporate Social Responsibility.

The five member states that make up the East African Community have a uniform curriculum for the MBChB, meaning that Ms. Redempta will be qualified to work at any hospital in East Africa once she graduates.

"I would like to thank the university for this generous scholarship. I will pay back by working extra hard and assisting other bright students in future," she said.



Angeli-que Redempta

## MKUR awards students in contest to grow reading and writing culture

Mount Kenya University Rwanda (MKUR) is committed to helping youth develop their talents and a reading culture to broaden their knowledge.

On 23 July this year, it awarded a female secondary school student of Lycee Notre Dame De Citeaux the grand prize of a laptop. The student had emerged top in the *Urubuto Magazine* writing competition, which had attracted 310 students from different schools in Kigali.

The winner also received a T-shirt and arm band from Kepler University and certificate by *Urubuto Magazine*.

Lycee Notre Dame De Citeaux took home the highest number of certificates, as it also had many entries. The school's effort was lauded by the Editor of *Urubuto Magazine*, Denise Angela.

The function took place at the Kigali Public Library in Kacyiru. It was graced by MKUR Vice Chancellor Prof Edwin Odhuno, who stressed the importance of reading and writing, and developing great literary skills.

Mr Philippe from Kepler University appreciated everyone who took the time to write an essay, and also introduced the services offered by the university.

## COLLABORATION

### Northern Michigan University officials' visit

Two officials from Northern Michigan University (NMU) led by Prof Madison N. Ngafeeson of information systems and director of MBA programme, paid a courtesy visit to Mount Kenya University Rwanda (MKUR) in July to explore the following:

- Students' exchange programmes, especially in the area of business and nursing, where NMU is very strong;
- Staff exchange programme;
- Joint research and publications between staff and postgraduate students;
- Twinning programme agreements for some health science related courses, especially in the area of informatics.

After the meeting, the MKUR Vice Chancellor Prof Edwin Odhuno, was positive of the collaboration, saying one of the university's successes was focus on collaborations that improved academics as well as physical infrastructure.

## Star alumni awarded for their work in Rwanda

The university has recognised three alumni who have excelled at their areas of work, leading to monumental social change in Kigali, Rwanda.

Ruzindana Egide, Mbabazi Yvonne and Seraphine Kanyenyeri, were feted during a dinner held in their honour as Mount Kenya University Kigali Campus alumni.

Egide used his savings to found Love for Hope Children Home. The home, based in Gihogere village, Rwanda, rehabilitates street boys into upright members of the society.

"The lecturers at Mount Kenya University were not merely teachers. They were friends. When I started this home, they were among the first to pay a visit," he says.

Ms Mbabazi started Mother and Child Development Centre, a community organisation that helps women street vendors develop business skills. The centre also cares for the children of these mothers while they are away working. Mbabazi holds a Master's degree in Public Health from Mount Kenya University.

To Seraphine Kanyenyeri, it has been a patriotic calling, serving the Rwanda Military Hospital for 17 years. When Mount Kenya University became the first university in Rwanda to offer a Bachelor's degree in Medical Laboratory Sciences, she saw an opportunity to upgrade her skills.

She held a Diploma in Medical Laboratory from Kigali Health Institute. The promotion came soon after graduation. She works as the Biosafety, Biosecurity officer and store manager.

Ruzindana received an all-expenses paid trip to Mombasa, Kenya while Mbabazi and Kanyenyeri received plasma TVs.



Ruzindana Egide surrounded by some of the children from Love for Hope Children Home which he built using his savings



Seraphine Kanyenyeri

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## MKU Rwanda Alumni

# It's a fulfilling range of benefits for MKU Rwanda graduates

Studying at the Kigali-based Mount Kenya University (MKU) Rwanda is a lifetime's opportunity to build ties that truly bind.

The Alumni Relations Office keeps in constant touch with MKU Rwanda graduates to keep them abreast of all the exciting activities open to them as alumni, and the benefits that come with being a graduate of the university.

The coordinator, Mr Patrice Baraka, says the host of activities the office runs go a long way in opening new paths for alumni. Activities such as career networking, social events, educational programmes, cultural and sporting activities as well as volunteerism, enhance alumni profiles.

His office also organises and facilitates exit trainings, workshops, exhibitions, conferences and inter-student academic competitions and forums.

"The Alumni Association provides a life-long connection to our alumni through a variety of programmes and services," he says. "You get more than the satisfaction of staying connected and making a difference. Membership gives you access to exclusive benefits, unique events, and valuable discounts."

He breaks down the value of being an alumnus as follows:

## Member Discounts

The Alumni Association has partnered with MKU's Institute of Capacity Building (ICB), which offers short leadership and management courses. The institute gives alumni discounts on every short course they pursue. Also, MKU gives discounts to alumni who want to study for other degrees.

## Beneficial sense of belonging

Membership in the Mount Kenya University Alumni Association is a great way to show



Kigali Campus graduands all smiles on their big day



Mount Kenya University Rwanda



Patrice Baraka, Alumni Relations Coordinator

your MKU pride. First, you have a place to call home in Rwanda. Your membership is also a vote for the value of MKU education, and enables the Alumni Association to do

great things for members, students, and alma mater. Membership offers many other great benefits.

## Tesi returns for Masters, wins Guild presidency



Tesi Esther, MKU Rwanda Guild President

The first time she was a student at Mount Kenya University Kigali campus, she served as the Student Guild's secretary. Tesi Esther joined the university in 2013 to study for a Bachelor of Information Science degree, and was elected to the student leadership body in 2014.

She graduated with First Class Honours and returned to the same university early this year for her Masters Degree programme. This February, she vied for the top guild seat and clinched it, making history by becoming first woman guild president in the history of MKU.

"I am passionate to contribute to society, and that is why I am ready to lead even at village level," she explains her love for leadership. "I enjoy being part of the group providing solutions rather just sitting there and complaining when things do not go right."

Her biggest challenge as a student leader during her undergraduate studies was the location of Mount Kenya University Rwanda campus in three different places.

"In Kigali, MKU was not housed in one building, and coordinating student affairs was a challenge," Ms Tesi says. "But now the university is shifting to the new building at Kagarama, and this will make our work easier."

Ms Tesi explains that she chose Mount Kenya University Rwanda for her undergraduate degree because the Bachelor's degree is accomplished in about three years, when in other universities it takes four years. "The university is also ISO 9001:2008 certified, meaning it meets global quality standards," she adds.

Tesi says she also enjoyed the support she received from management. "These factors encouraged me to return here for my Master's programme. My department's coordinator had also informed me that if I came back to MKU for my second degree, I would get a 10 per cent reduction in tuition fees. And now, here I am. Long live MKU."

## Where student welfare, co-curricular interests get generous support

Mount Kenya University Rwanda runs a vibrant student welfare system driven by a team of energetic students and staff. Now with the coming of all academic activities under one roof at the university's building in Kagarama, things are expected to get even better, according to Ms Purity Wairimu, the Dean of Students.

"We are excited that the institution is becoming a fully-fledged university," says the dean. "We are also excited that we are moving to our new building in Kagarama, a one-stop shop and more spacious. We intend to increase activities so that our students continue enjoying the environment within the campus and discover as well as harness their talents."

The university receives students of all nationalities, and it endeavours to make them comfortable.

"Working closely with the management team, we aim to ensure that students are all-rounded," Ms Wairimu says as she explains why the university intends to expand the range of co-curricular activities open to students.

Students engage in volleyball, football and others, and take part in several competitions across Rwanda. University indoor games include pool, dart and table tennis.

The university's debate club is famous in Rwanda as a winning outfit. The club participates in different forums, including regional debates, and often emerges top. The team has won several trophies. It is currently preparing for the East Africa University Debate Championship to be held in Rwanda, and looks forward to winning.

During MKU's ninth and 10th graduation ceremonies, the university's outreach club entertained guests with the beautiful Rwanda cultural dance known as *Itorero*. This group visits schools and other learning institutions to entertain and deliver messages of hope, and to encourage students to work hard in their studies. They have been involved in the community service (*Umuganda*), carried out every month in the whole of Rwanda.

The health science students have not been left behind. They have an umbrella club called Health Sciences, which consists of students in nursing, pharmacy, laboratory sciences and public health.

Every semester, the club holds an open day and invites the general public and high school students to learn more about health. The students offer free check-ups, such as body mass index (BMI), blood pressure, blood sugar, haemoglobin tests, among others. The club wants to extend its outreach to other districts.

## Freedom of worship.

Regarding life's challenges, the dean says, "We do understand that sometimes life and academics pressures can overwhelm our students, and this is why we have a university counsellor available 24 hours for the students." Students and staff exercise freedom of worship and the university supports their initiatives.

20 YEARS OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT - WITH EXCELLENT RESULTS

Empowering Generations through Education

# From humble beginning to ICT savvy university

**Computer outreach initiative offered certificate of participation; MKU trains up to PhD level**

**M**ount Kenya University is the university that technology built. Information and communication technology has remained a powerful ally of the university since Dr Simon Gicharu, the founder, made tentative steps to build an academic institution in 1996.

From a computer outreach then, MKU has scaled the heights of ICT. At inception, the Computer Outreach Centre had just one programme in computer packages. Participants were awarded certificates of participation.

Today it not only offers programmes in ICT but also uses the technology to deliver education to thousands of students spread across the world.

With 10,000 students, MKU's Digital Varsity is one of the largest private universities providing access to education in East and Central Africa through this medium.

It has been a dizzying rise to zenith of ICT use.

One man who recalls this epic tale is the Right Reverend Joseph Maina, the Moderator of the African Christian Churches and Schools.

"Gicharu approached the church way back in 1996 to request if he could be allowed to use space in our churches to offer computer training classes," he remembers. "He said, 'give me space for a class. I will bring computers. If the business makes a profit, we will share with ACC & S. If I de-



cide to move on, I will leave the computers to the church.'

"He brought computers and teachers. They started operating in our branches in Kigumo, Gichagi-ini, Gituro, Mwarano, Ichagi-ini and Kandara, among others.

"In all these places, generators had to be carried around because electricity was not available in most of rural Murang'a then."

Rt Rev Maina says Dr Gicharu then founded Thika Institute of Technology (TIT), the forerunner of MKU. "He came back to Thika and put more efforts in the small institute he already had there. He was able to build TIT from then. I admire him for his determination because even though the computer outreach initiative did not succeed as envisioned, he soldiered on and went on to build the great institution that is Mount Kenya University. He has a great mind. But back then, no one could have imagined that the computer outreach idea would germinate into a university."

When Dr Gicharu came up with the computer outreach initiative, the development

of Information Communication Technology (ICT) both Mobile Telephony and Computer Technology had started gaining momentum in rural and urban centres.

In the year 2000, Dr Gicharu established Thika Institute of Technology, a tertiary college offering management and computer training programmes. In the same year the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology registered the Thika Institute of Technology, TIT.

In order to remain relevant with the training needs of the society, the institute initiated training programmes in the fields of paramedical, information technology

**Thika Institute of Technology (TIT), the forerunner of MKU which used to offer computer training**



**An old generator that would be carried around African Christian Church and Schools branches to power computer outreach classes run by Dr. Simon Gicharu in 1996**

and business/entrepreneurship education in the year 2002. In the year 2005, the Institute became the 1<sup>st</sup> private institution in Kenya to be allowed to train pharmaceutical technologists by the Pharmacy and Poisons Board of the Ministry of Health.

In 2006, the Commission for Higher Education (CHE) validated and approved the institute's request for collaboration with Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT) to offer both diploma and degree programmes.

The Institute continued to work closely with the CHE in line with the stipulated guidelines for establishing a privately funded university. In May 2008, the CHE after verifying all the requirements as stipulated in the guidelines of establishing a privately funded University (1989 Rules) establishment of a full-fledged privately funded chartered university called Mount Kenya University following grant of a Letter of Interim Authority.

The MKU Digital Varsity is a new students learning experience and it's the evidence of integration between learning and technology at the university.

MKU's Digital Learning has a number of state-of-the-art features. One of these powerful features is the ability to offer group collaboration sites. These sites are easy to set up, and users easily serve themselves. On many campuses, collaboration sites have become so popular with faculty and students that the learning environment popularly known as Learning management systems, has had an increased rates of adoption, with little resistance than expected. Collaboration sites have diverse uses: they can be used by researchers who need to work with their colleagues around the world, faculty engaged in governance committee work can also make use of it, and so can students working with research committees, study groups, or activity clubs.



Francis Kariuki

## Tweeting Chief: Varsity raises alumnus' profile

Had Lanet's tweeting Chief Francis Kariuki encountered Dr Simon Gicharu in 1996 carrying a generator to power computers for teaching computer literacy classes, and be informed that one day the computer training initiative would grow into a university that would award him a degree through ICT, he would have ordered Dr Gicharu's immediate arrest with no option of a fine – for using outdated technology.

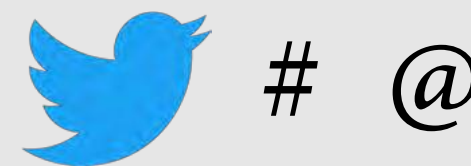
Chief Kariuki, the Umoja Lanet Chief who is popular for using Twitter to fight crime, graduated with a Bachelors degree in Counselling Psychology from Mount Kenya University.

Thanks to his selfless service, this humble but gallant "people's servant" has previously been profiled on CNN, Daily Telegraph, BBC and Huffing-

ton Post among other international media outlets.

In December 2012, he made a presentation on the use of social media in improving human rights, at the UNHCR world human rights day in Switzerland. The following year, Chief Kariuki spoke at the Google ideas conference in New York, USA. In 2014, he was the keynote speaker at the Social Media & Internet Law Enforcement (SMILE) conference in Tampa, Florida. His presentation was on the use of Twitter as a tool for community policing.

He has won several awards, notably the Tweet of the Year at the annual Social Media Awards (SOMA) and The Giraffe Heroes Award. Chief Kariuki worked as a teacher for 21 years before he was transferred to the Office of the President in 2010. His last teaching career was at The Lord's School



Ranjuera, Rongai. "As a head teacher, I was only serving a group of 300 pupils and 12 teachers. I felt I have a bigger capacity to serve more therefore being a Chief provided me the platform to exercise my potential." He responds to tweets by his over 50,000 followers in real time. He says he chose MKU Digital Varsity because of the flexibility of study and the "global standard when it comes to educational materials and standard CATS." The father of three has a desire to train other Chiefs in the country on how he uses social media in his work. "Hopefully, together we can make the world a better place to live in."

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*Scaling the heights of education*

## Student Affairs

# Varsity establishes 40 digital study villas

Student Wi-Fi buses, swimming pool, computer game centre and gym make the university stand out.



St Paul's Secondary School students during an academic tour at the University

An ultra-modern student centre with a wide variety of facilities and an expansive playing field are today available to students.

In just two decades, MKU and its predecessor have come a long way in providing for the welfare of students.

MKU precursor TIT, located in Thika town and constrained of space, offered sport-minded students little joy.

"The institute did not have recreational facilities for students," MKU Dean of Students Evans Mwango recalls. "Students would pour out into the street outside to bask as they waited for the next lesson to start. We would later hire the General Kago Primary School's field. Students would visit other schools to play games but as an institution, we did not have a field of our own."

Once the university was established, "we put up a basketball court, swimming pool and indoor games facilities," says Mr Omwango.

"We have been growing since and built a modern student centre. It has an indoor arena, gym, salon, supermarket, cyber café, a sitting area with Wi-Fi and open spaces with roofing for students to relax and bask in comfort."

Mr Omwango says even housing at MKU has evolved over time. He remembers the

former students lived in Thika town, some with their relatives, others in people's servant quarters. The town lacked hostels and getting accommodation was tough for students. Today, MKU has hostels that comfortably accommodate more than 2,000 students.

The dean reveals that even student health underwent positive change. From availability of painkillers to manage pain, MKU has a health clinic with all the necessary equipment, personnel and medicine.

From an institution that did not have its own field, MKU is today the home of sports champions. Indeed, it ranks among the best in sports in Kenya with its athletes participating in national and international competitions and giving opponents a run

for their money.

In June 2016, the MKU athletics team won eight medals in South Africa in June.

"It is remarkable that these days MKU nurtures sporting talent and produces winners," remarked Mr Omwango.

Kenya's 15s rugby team has one MKU student, Martin Owilla.

Even in politics, MKU has produced leaders, youthful Uasin Gishu Senator.

"Student leadership in the university is issue-based," the dean points out. "It is not about which tribe you belong to or where you come from. It is about the ideas you have. Two of our student leaders are international: one from Uganda and the other from South Sudan."

## MKU Athletics team shines in South Africa



The university sponsored 4 players to South Africa for the 8th edition of the Federation of Africa University Sports (FASU), following a spectacular win during the universities trial games that were held in Eldoret on 14th May 2016.

The team scooped 8 medals in total; 1 Gold medal, 2 silver medals and 5 bronze medals. The team faced steep competition in the 200m and 100M races from the Ghananians whom they had met earlier at the All Africa Senior games in Durban.

The University team comprised of sprinters Sylvester Nakeel, Peter Mwai, Mathew Rapando and Charles Wanjiru was ranked 3rd position in Africa. Late last year they were crowned KUSA Relay Champions at Bondo.

Speaking during their home coming celebration, the Dean of Students Mr. Evans Omwango congratulated the team and assured them of the support from the management towards their all-round growth.

### Fact file on sporting achievements

- 2013
  - Kenya Universities games overall runners-up
  - Kenya Universities games soccer champions
  - Kenya Universities games runners-up in tennis, rugby & athletics
- 2014
  - World University cross country gold medal in the 10.5 Km race
  - Africa University games silver medal in men's soccer
  - East Africa University games Gold medallists in athletics and karate
  - East Africa University games runners up in handball and athletics
  - East Africa University games second runners up in volleyball
  - Kenya Universities cross country gold medals in 12km men & 8km women
  - Kenya Universities women athletics championship third position overall
- 2015
  - Kenya Universities games champions in women's handball
  - Kenya Universities games runners up in Karate, Volleyball & athletics
- 2016
  - Africa University games gold medal in 110 m hurdles



Trophy chest

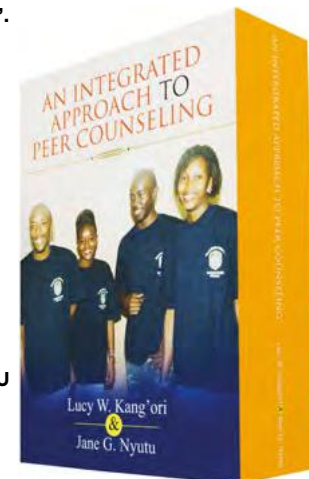
### Can we stem tide of school unrests?

MKU has not taken a back seat on the recent series of unrests in and burning of schools. Two university counsellors and faculty members have authored a book titled, "An Integrated Approach To Peer Counselling".

It is aimed at equipping teachers with knowledge to guide and counsel the youth.

The MKU Centre of Counselling has university counsellors, peer counsellors and mentors, who guide students on pertinent issues such as campus life, family therapy, coping with education and financial challenges, among others.

The book is on sale at the MKU bookshop, and one can also book a copy through emailing [lifeskillsmku@gmail.com](mailto:lifeskillsmku@gmail.com).



20 YEARS OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT - WITH EXCELLENT RESULTS

*Scalis altitudines educationis*

## Student Affairs

### MKU School of Law students emerge Best Orators at Manfred Lachs Moot Court Competition in South Africa

**M**ount Kenya University School of Law was declared Best Orators at the Manfred Lachs International Space law Moot Court Competition held in Pretoria, South Africa, on the 26th and 27th May 2016.

The Space law competition comprised complex matters of damage and liability caused by space objects. The students were required to defend and argue for the two states (Rastalia and Banche) that were involved in the launching and de-orbiting of the above mentioned space objects.

The School of Law orators impressed the judges to emerge top at the East African Region by crushing two teams from Makerere University.

The MKU team also emerged second in the Oral rounds by tying with the University of Pretoria for the second runner-up position. The difference in the oral rounds between the winners, Orifowomo University from Nigeria, and Mount Kenya University, was only one point.

#### Scholarships for refugee students at MKU

The Danish Refugee Council (DRC) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Mount Kenya University that will see more students from the world's largest refugee camp get sponsorship to study at MKU.

DRC provides protection, livelihood and scholarships to refugee students. The organisation, which works closely with the Department of Refugee Affairs and the Refugee Consortium of Kenya, is currently supporting over 80 students at MKU by paying their school fees, maintenance and medical care



**MKU Parklands School of Law in Parklands, Nairobi is a centre of excellence in legal training. It has some of the best facilities in the region including an ultra-modern Moot Court and a well-stocked library**

costs. The students are from Daadab and Kakuma Refugee camps.

The sponsored students are currently pursuing their studies at the university.

MKU Vice-Chancellor, Prof Stanley Waudu, appreciated the role DRC was

playing in helping transform the lives of the refugees.

DRC Country Director, David Kang'ethe will in the near future deliver a Public Lecture on "Refugee Management" at MKU Thika Main Campus.

#### Freedom of worship



**Mount Kenya University Muslim students praying at their mosque**



**The MKU Christian Union hosts Citizen TV Kubamba Gospel Sunday**

### Institute of Creative and Performing Arts nurtures talents

Creative and performing arts have thrived since their introduction at MKU in 2002. The drama and music clubs have over the years catapulted brilliant students from local talents to national and international fame.

The drama club hosts a biweekly show known as "Kill it Thursday", where some of the most creative actors, comedians, poets and musicians take the stage to entertain their fellow students.

#### MKU Brass Band



#### Kenya National Music Festival Winners



The MKU troupe won in 16 items during the Kenya Music Festival, 2016. Two of the awards it won were in two Central Bank of Kenya sponsored music classes. This also earned the MKU teams KSh350,000.

The troupe also bagged an award in the "Nyumba Kumi" category sponsored by the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government.

As a result of their exemplary performance, two MKU teams from the main campus were slotted for the gala scheduled for 19th August, 2016.

#### Fact file on drama and music performances

- 2012 Twelve (12) awards at the National Music festivals
- 2013 Nineteen (19) awards at the National Music festivals
- 2013 One (1) award at the National Drama festivals
- 2015 Nine (9) awards and University category overall winners in the National Drama festivals

## 20 YEARS OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT - WITH EXCELLENT RESULTS

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## MKU Scholarships

## This university was built for me – Jespher Onyango

“This university has transformed my life. I would not be who I am today if I had not come to MKU. It has been my home for the last ten years.”

### She says MKU scholarship transformed her life

If you wish to appreciate Mount Kenya University's *raison d'être*, meet Jespher Nyaboke Onyango. If she is not attending a lecture, you are likely to find her working in the university's medical laboratory on the ground floor of the Chancellor's Tower.

Listening to her life story, you would not need to interrupt her with questions. Her tale flows easily. And after she pours out her heart, you will not need to ask who needed who between Ms Onyango and MKU.

“MKU was built for me,” she declares, eyes misting with tears that threaten to burst forth if unchecked. “This university has transformed my life. I would not be who I am today if I had not come to MKU. It has been my home for the last 10 years.”

This bold statement is not an attempt to praise the university, but the passionate declaration of a touched soul.

Ms Onyango arrived at the university in 2007 from Nyamira armed with a KSh4,000 from the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) kitty. She had scored a C in the previous year's Form 4 examinations and promptly applied for a certificate course at MKU.

“By the time I arrived there, I had spent all the money on shopping, buying essentials,” she reminisces. “I approached the then registrar, Mr Afubwa Musumi, for help. I explained my case to him, telling him I was an orphan and had nowhere to



Jespher Nyaboke Onyango

turn to for fees.

“Mr Musumi thought how he could help. He fished KSh100 from his pocket and instructed me to deposit it into the university's account. He reasoned that once my name was on the bank slip, I would have technically become a bona fide student.”

And so, it came to pass.

Ms Onyango, the young girl who lost the Good Samaritan whose name she carries, became a student of MKU. The man who adopted and educated her up to secondary school died when she needed him the most.

Mr Onyango had seven daughters when he picked the girl who had no home after fleeing her abusive adopted parents' home in Kisii.

She narrates: “They mistreated me, damaged one of my ears through caning and slapping. Despite this, they planned I get married while I was still young. This forced me to escape that home.”

At MKU, she had not discussed with her latest benefactor – the Registrar – where she would sleep. Already overwhelmed with his generosity, she feared burdening him.

She found an unorthodox solution to her predicament, though. Once lectures were over, she would return to her class and sleep on the floor.

However, it did not take long for her secret to be discovered.

“One day I overslept,” she recalls. “A watchman known as Nathan tried to push the door open and wondered why it could not yield to his effort. I had placed desks across the door. But finally, it gave way. I had been found out after days of sleeping in class.”

To her shock, when her fellow students learnt of her plight, they did an impromptu harambee and secretly raised funds for her. Trying to solve her problem, she approached St Patrick's Church in Thika town and several non-governmental organisations for help.

“It seemed that they did not realise how desperate I was,” she narrates her frustration.

Ultimately, she received KSh30,000 from the church.

In the meantime, her classmates went and tactfully approached the university's Founder and Chairman, Dr Simon Gicharu. They confronted him and asked what he could do if he learnt that someone was sleeping in a university class. He said he would help that person.

Unknown to Ms Onyango, they had just changed the course of her destiny. Dr Gicharu offered her a scholarship, “So that I could be like the rest and study without any problem,” she says. He also offered her a job at the university.

Under this arrangement, she completed her certificate course and registered for a diploma. She then proceeded to her undergraduate studies and earned her first degree. She is currently studying for her Master's degree in medical laboratory technology sciences.

An orphan whose single mother died while she was only two and was adopted twice, Ms Onyango has succeeded beyond her wildest dreams.

Her poignant pursuit of university education is an illustration of the resilience of the human spirit. Her narrative also demonstrates how far determination can propel an individual in life. It is also a vindication of philanthropy and the transformative power of university education.

“I hope one day I will be able to help other students achieve their goals just as Dr Gicharu helped me as though I was his child,” vows the proud scholar. “He has inspired me to support others. Without patrons willing to support less privileged students like me, I would never have attained advanced health care education.”

## Against the odds: Moses Thuo's triumph in scholarship

An encounter with Moses Thuo, 29, will confirm the truism that Lady Luck smiles upon those who persist in pursuing their dreams. He is the epitome of determination.

When a young lad of 12 witnesses his family disintegrate, you will expect his spirit to crumble. Thuo's father and mother divorced when he was in Class 5 but he put on a brave face and continued going to school – a distance of 17km. This is because his mother, Lucy Wanja, deprived of the support of her former husband, relocated Thuo and his five siblings from their 'home' to Githunguri town's Laini Saba slums. That was quite some distance away from his primary school. But the young man kept his ambitions alive by continuing with his education – intermittently.

He sat his KCPE exam in 1998, many years after his peers with whom he had joined Class 1 the same year. To even get to Class 8, he endured the challenge of walking 17km daily to and from school – for three years. The effects of his parents' estrangement appeared not to have affected his studies though. He excelled.

When he received his KCPE results, his family was ecstatic. He had obtained 481 marks out of 700. He had passed and would head to the secondary school of his choice.

But that was not to be. Lack of fees locked him out of immediate entry into secondary school.

Thuo lost ten years since he had to – again and

again – drop out of school for lack of money. Because he had to repeat classes many times, Thuo sat his KCSE exam at the advanced age of 29. This is not the age at which the majority of young people complete their secondary education; they do so while in their teens.

His single mother was too poor to afford taking him to Gathiruiini Secondary School which had selected him to join Form I.

Going back to class became second nature to him because his indigent circumstances forced him to abandon his studies several times. Then he would return to class when his fortunes improved slightly.

To support himself, he worked as an apprentice mechanic from 1999 to 2001 in Githunguri town. Then he switched to welding.

In 2002, he moved to Nairobi in search of better fortunes but things did not work and he returned to Githunguri two years later. In 2007, he decided he would go back to class. He scrounged and saved. By March 2008, he had accumulated Sh10,000 in savings. Friends and former classmates chipped in with Sh7,000, enabling him to pay fees and join Gathiruiini Secondary School in Form 2.

With his welding experience, he did not have to buy a box: he fabricated one himself.

During the holidays he worked at workshops in Githunguri. Supported by bursaries from the

CDF and Ministry of Education, he managed to study up to Form 4.

When the results of the 2010 KCSE were released, he had scored a B-minus of 56 points.

Lacking money to take him to college, he returned to his trusted welding trade. It was a frustrating period for him.

Things were not made easier as he was ridiculed by his colleagues. They told him he had wasted valuable time in school, while some of them were busy minting money.

His pursuit of education was not in vain, though. During a prize-giving day at his former secondary school, he was invited to give a motivational talk. Unknown to him, the chief guest was Dr Simon Gicharu, the Founder and Chairman of Mount Kenya University, himself an old boy of the school.

Moved by the young man's story of persistence in spite of encountering a myriad challenges, he offered him a full scholarship to study Business Administration at MKU as part of the university's corporate social responsibility.

“Thuo is a shining example of how one can conquer financial challenges and shine, and our university is proud to help him achieve his dreams,” Dr Gicharu said.

And that marked the turning point for Thuo. With a full scholarship valued at KSh800,000, he had the opportunity to learn uninterrupted in a



MKU founder Dr. Simon Gicharu congratulates Moses Thuo during his graduation

long while and attain the dream of becoming a financial manager. He took his chance with both hands and excelled in his studies.

Thuo's advice to the youth, especially from poor backgrounds, is never to lose faith in life but to work hard, as there is always a way out of any situation. He promised to work hard so as not to let his sponsor down. He is currently employed at Mount Kenya University Finance Directorate.

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## Research

# University receives research grants amounting to KSh 200m in two years

**Spearheading research, innovation to address society's many challenges**

Society embraces a university's existence if it addresses the people's challenges. Mount Kenya University has moved a notch higher by creating knowledge, with senior staff's research proposals attracting funding at an unprecedented rate. For a university aged just eight but whose heritage stretches 20 years back, MKU has done remarkably well in research.

Dr Francis Wamakima Muregi, the Director, Research, Grants and Endowments, says the young university has made progress in its quest to generate knowledge.

"Because this is the hallmark of academic excellence, MKU had to start undertaking research."

"As a young university, we cannot afford to sit back like established ones. We need to generate income through research while also providing solutions to challenges facing society," he says.

This journey began with a single researcher and his assistant but today MKU has a fully-fledged research centre. This promotes centralised use and management of research equipment and facilities. It also facilitates the establishment of research and academic programmes at undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

In the beginning, the research output was poor with staff publishing five to 10 publications every year. Even the university faculty was young.

The university made it easy for its researchers to publish their work. "Publish-



MKU research centre

ing in journals requires money," says Dr Muregi. "We pay for our faculty. If they attend conferences, we sponsor them to disseminate their research findings."

These days, MKU staff register 40 to 50 research publications every year, an indication that the university is developing into a research hub. Staff members also supervise postgraduate students who also do research.

"We are encouraging research among staff and students, not for job promotion but to address the challenges of our communities," says Dr Muregi.

"No university in Kenya teaches a unit called 'innovation.' But we would like to see our staff and students innovate and generate ideas that address problems facing our communities. Some innovators are not even graduates yet."



Dr Francis Wamakima Muregi,  
Director, Research, Grants and Endowments

This initiative has seen Netfund, which supports environmental initiatives, fund two innovations by MKU.

The university has an initiative dubbed MKUIP – an innovators' platform – that brings together young innovators from the university and experienced ones from outside. The idea is to bring mentors who will guide the young researchers.

Efforts to promote research at MKU over the last three years have borne fruit as funding starts to trickle in. "Research is expensive and you cannot undertake it without funding," observes Dr Muregi. "We are happy that we attracting funding from various sources."

Last year, D Jesse Gitaka, one of the university's lecturers received two grants totalling Sh50 million to undertake health research. The Sh10 million he received from

the Global Fund and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is for research into the ravages of malaria and bilharzia. The Sh40 million is for research into ways of reducing deaths among newborns in Bungoma County.

This year the Directorate of Research and Development received a Sh90 million grant from the Templeton World Charity to promote closer ties between science and faith under the auspices of the Kenya Christian Science Association (KCSA).

According to Dr Muregi, this will help close the gap between science and religion. He cites the controversy that hit the vaccination of children in Kenya when the church challenged the exercise as an example of a misunderstanding that can be ironed out through the KCSA initiative.

MKU, asserts its Director of Research, is also passionate about human health and specifically, non-communicable diseases. "Sub-Saharan Africa has for long invested in the control and management of communicable diseases," he notes. "But non-communicable diseases such as cancer, hypertension and diabetes have become a big public health burden that must be addressed. At MKU, we are establishing a centre for non-communicable diseases and mental health (Cencom). Both have been neglected by the public health system.

"We hope the centre will be ready in six months. It will spearhead the management, prevention and research in these two areas. This research will be aligned to MKU's strength of training in human health sciences like pharmacy, clinical medicine and nursing. These are courses we offer at the university and the research will enable us to optimise the health training facilities we have."

According to Dr Muregi, the university promotes and encourages staff and students to undertake quality research. "Original research is crucial, so we developed a plagiarism policy. Before staff and students publish their findings, we subject their work to anti-plagiarism software."

**This journey began with a single researcher and his assistant but today MKU has a fully-fledged research centre.**

## The MKU research journey

Mount Kenya University was granted a Letter of Interim Authority by the then Commission for Higher Education in 2008. Two years later, it commenced its research journey in earnest.

### Here are the major milestones along the way:

- In 2010, the university began putting in place research structures by establishing the Directorate of Research and Innovation.
- In 2011, it developed research policy documents including research policy, Intellectual Property Policy, institutional linkages policy among other research roadmap documents
- In 2012, it crafted a Research Strategic Plan to run from 2012 to 2018.

## Funding

In 2015, Dr Jesse Gitaka received two grants amounting to **KSh50 million**.

The first grant of **KSh10 million** was from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

The second grant of **KSh40 million** was from the United Kingdom's DFID.

Also in 2015, MKU Chairman Dr Simon Gicharu gave the Directorate **KSh40 million** to spur innovation.



In 2016, a team of MKU scholars led by Dr. Francis W. Muregi, Director, Research, Grants and Endowments received a **KSh90 million** grant from Templeton World Charity for a three-year project on Science and Religion running from 2016 to 2019.

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## CSR

# Varsity sponsors first national water summit

The National Water Summit (NWS) was held in Turkana County in October, 2014. Precisely, the summit took place at the shores of Lake Turkana in northern Kenya.

The event attracted participants from various persuasions.

Dr Vincent Gaitho, who was involved in the organisation of the event, says: "We had participants from academia, governments, politicians, industry, international organisations, non-governmental organisations, among others."

MKU was the lead sponsor/organiser of the Summit. Besides a monetary contribution of Ksh10 million, the university handled the logistics as well as the programme and presentation of papers.

The meeting brought together water experts drawn from both national and international institutions, political leaders and governments, to chart the way forward in the harnessing and management of this vital resource.

Research fronted by UNESCO revealed that Turkana had massive water aquifers that could sustain the entire country for up to 70 years and beyond. The outlook of



Former President H.E. Mwai Kibaki as chief guest with other dignitaries during the first National Water Summit held at Kristine Camp, L. Turkana.

the conference, however, was international, bringing water management and harnessing experience from as far as Israel.

The theme of the conference was, "Water for Socio-Economic Development". This

was advised by the importance of water as a resource and the need to effectively manage it.

The first National Water Summit was a collective effort by several partners, includ-

ing MKU, Ministry of Environment, Water and Natural Resources, County Government of Turkana, Nation Media Group and UNESCO. It was held as the Millennium Development Goals were about to lapse.

The next Summit will be held in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals. It will build on the gains realised, as well as assess the challenges the partners/participants are facing, especially in implementing the policy recommendations made at the inaugural Summit. The venue and theme will also be different in order to expose other regions to the importance of sustainable water management strategies.

The impact has been multi-faceted, the most tangible being the elevation of water issues (availability, access, sustainability, role in conflicts etc) to national debate, and prioritisation in the development agenda of both the national and county governments.

The Summit was officially opened by retired President Mwai Kibaki, then as patron of the Millennium Water Alliance. He was recently appointed UNESCO's special envoy for water in Africa.

Water is in the 2030 global agenda for sustainable development. Building on the Millennium Development Goals, the Sustainable Development Goals on water go further by laying emphasis on its quality, efficient use, protection and restoration of related ecosystems. This means that the breadth of players has now widened.

Time is certainly ripe to take stock through another international Summit.

## MKU sponsors visually challenged beauty pageant

Mount Kenya University was the sponsor of the June 30, 2016 Mr & Miss Visually Challenged beauty contest held at the Thika School for the Blind. The event was organised through the MKU main campus in Thika by the reigning Mr & Miss MKU - Mr Morris Ndonge and Miss Neila Ngina respectively.

The winners were crowned in a colourful event attended by the Associate Dean of Students, Mr Emmanuel Awuor. They were presented with laptops with braille learning support functionality.

The pageant encouraged the visually challenged pupils to see the world in a different way and to appreciate themselves. It was aimed at boosting their self-esteem.

Speaking at the event, Mr Awuor said that MKU had well-constructed facilities that

catered for the comfort of physically challenged and abled-differently people to help them achieve their academic objectives.



MKU sponsored beauty pageant at Thika School for the Blind



Big-hearted: MKU students donate blood

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# Alumnus' love for Rwanda's children provides home and hope

"We are the world, we are the children"

Ruzindana Egide says that even his host community at Gihogere village bears witness to the help he has received from MKU

When we first met Ruzindana Egide in 2014, he was bubbling with hope over the future of children he takes care of at a home he founded in Gihogere village, Rwanda. Now, the hope has turned into reality as some of the boys have since found jobs.

"We have also acquired a three-hectare piece of land on which we are growing maize, vegetables and rearing rabbits," says the Social Work and Administration degree holder. Love for Hope Children Home has 27 children currently. Participate in football, song and dance and handicraft making.

Egide is currently pursuing a Master of Development Studies. "The lecturers at Mount Kenya University were not merely teachers. They were friends. When I started this home, they were among the first to pay



Ruzindana Egide, a MKU alumnus, explains what drove him to establish Love for Hope Children Home

a visit. Through my course, I gained counselling skills which have been very important to me when I am rehabilitating the street children and helping them develop good character. "The lecturers believed in me. They put me on the path to becoming who I am today. I have big dreams and I am

encouraged by the support I have received from various quarters so far. Every human being has potential within themselves of achieving something great for humanity. The secret lies in having the commitment and right skills."



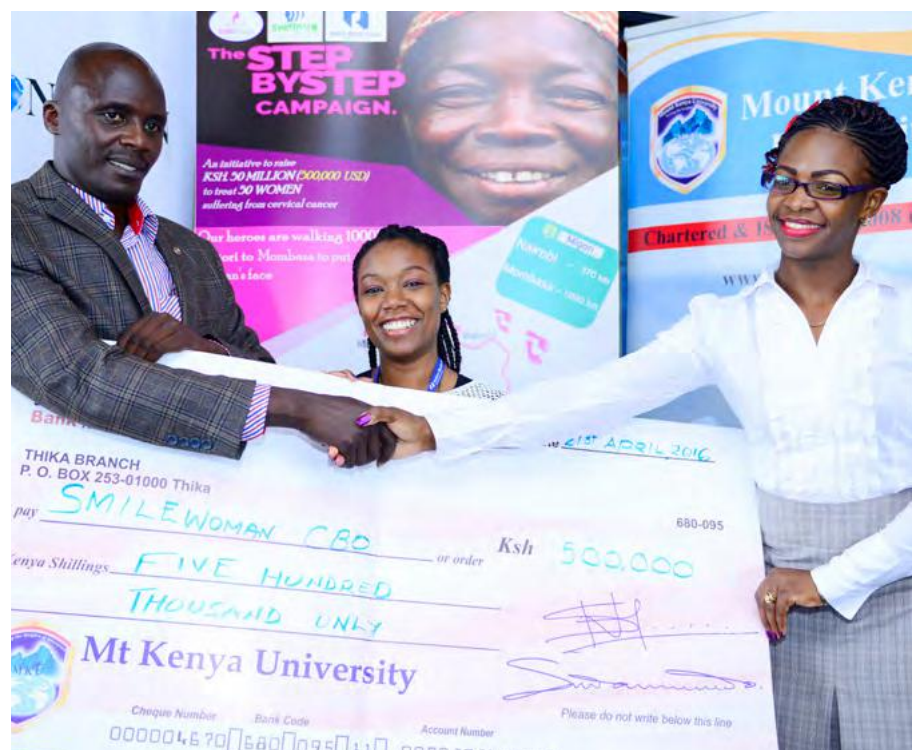
Peace Ambassadors Kenya MKU Chapter students perform noble jobs to physically and mentally challenged children of Majimazuri home, Mwiki.



Keeping the environment clean: MKU pharmacy students in a clean-up exercise along General Kago Road - Thika to mark pharmacy awareness week



MKU Vice-Chancellor Prof. Stanley Waudo, Somalia ambassador to Kenya H.E. Mohamed Ali, MKU staff, CFBT Education Trust officials (donors) and students pose for a photo during the launch of the Dadaab scholarship programme at the varsity's Thika Town Campus.



Mount Kenya University, communications and corporate Affairs Director, Mark Rachuonyo (left) presents a cheque of Kshs 500,000 to Director - Health and medical Advocacy, Dr. Nelly Bosire, to support the Step by Step cervical cancer campaign. This is an initiative of Swiftmed Solutions and Smile Woman Community based organisation in partnership with Mount Kenya University.

The initiative intends to raise Ksh.50 million to provide medical treatment to poor rural women of Migori County suffering from cervical cancer. The five men walked from Migori to Mombasa, covering 1000km to raise this money.

Mount Kenya University has a strong community emphasis, providing high quality education to all Kenyans irrespective of locality. It is this strong sense of community investment that drives the university to give back to society in supporting this initiative.



Mount Kenya University donates food and other personal items to Thika children rescue centre

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## VICE-CHANCELLOR

# VC earns three-year term extension

Deal makes him one of the longest serving university staff and is a sign of confidence in him

Vice-Chancellor Prof Stanley W. Waudo's term has been extended by three years. In June, the University's Board of Directors extended the long-serving VC's term in appreciation of his leadership. Their decision was a seal of approval of his performance.

The MKU founding VC has already served the institution for eight years.

As Prof Waudo himself says, he would have stepped down had he felt he was not delivering.

"The VC's job is a calling," he said in an interview.

"Why should I hang around this office if I am not the right person for the job?" he posed. "Even the university would not want to retain a VC who is not delivering. I would say that we have done well as a team. I attribute our success and my longevity at MKU to the existence of a clear governance structure. The Board of Directors, the University Council, the Senate and the Board of Management understand their roles and read from the same script. I have enjoyed my stay and am happy to continue to serve as Vice-Chancellor."

Prof Waudo was plucked from Kenyatta University where he had served in various senior management positions and tasked with the job of nurturing a young institution into an academic giant.

He did not disappoint. The don brought to MKU a wealth of experience relevant to university administration, teaching, research and above all, mentoring.

He recalls that when MKU founder and Chairman Dr Simon Gicharu made him the offer to head the university as chief executive, he was reluctant.

"I remember he gave me a letter of employment when the university had not been granted a Letter of Interim Authority. What was to become MKU was then operating as the Thika Institute of Technology which was only offering diploma courses."

He initially declined the offer. But one day he visited the fledgling institution of higher learning and Dr Gicharu took him to the health science laboratories.

"What I saw impressed me," he says. "I saw that the young man was serious. I was



Prof Stanley W. Waudo, Ph.D

convinced that he had a good vision."

He left KU where he was the Director of the Institute of Open Learning to take up the new challenge.

A plant nematologist, he had also served as the Dean of the Faculty of Science. When the institute became the School of Pure and Applied Sciences, he served as its first dean. He had a stint as Director, Board of Post-graduate Studies. On different occasions, he was called upon to serve as Acting DVC.

Prof Waudo has not looked back since he accepted the enormous task of building MKU from the ground up.

"There is an overlap between the university's vision and mission," he says. "But the overarching concern was to implement the MKU mission to develop excellence in teaching, research and community service.

"I am proud that young as we are as a university, we have made tremendous strides in interacting with the community inside and outside the university. We have established a good research centre and run the Vice Chancellor's grant for research."

MKU established the grant in 2010, just two years after it began operations as a university. The initial amount set aside for this purpose was KSh12 million. By 2013 the figure had doubled to KSh24m. This year it has grown to KSh40m and is projected to increase to KSh50m in 2017/2018 academic year.

"Our interest is to support members of faculty keen on research," says Prof Waudo,

adding that it is encouraging that the research is published in respected international journals.

"We expect senior teaching staff to write and submit proposals that attract external funding."

Such developments in research, he said, are a clear indication that the university has come a long way.

"I joined the university in May 2008 after it had received a Letter of Interim Authority from the then Commission for Higher Education which later became the Commission for University Education. We started with one academic programme.

"The next thing was to make sure we become a chartered university. We needed academic resources. We needed to develop programmes. We needed to collaborate with like-minded institutions."

These efforts bore fruit. The university was granted the University Charter by the His Excellency Mwai Kibaki, the third President of the Republic of Kenya on January 26, 2011 in accordance with the Universities Act Cap 210B.

"From then on, we strived to become an internationally renown, quality-driven university by adhering to best practices.

"We therefore sought ISO 9001:2008 certification. We received it in December 2012," recalls the DVC.

MKU was making real progress.

"We then asked ourselves: how do we sustain operations in line with the quality management system?"

"We had to make sure we had highly qualified staff teaching accredited and internationally recognised programmes," says Prof Waudo.

As the institution grew, it was able to attract senior lecturers from other universities. "Remember that we had to keep adding to our faculty as we introduced more programmes," noted the VC.

After rapid expansion over the last eight years, the university is, as Prof Waudo reports, at a juncture where it has to consolidate the gains made. "To move forward, we have taken a critical look at MKU's achievements and developed a strategic plan that will serve as our roadmap to the future.

**"My working experience at MKU has made me feel more Kenyan. This has taught me that every qualified Kenyan – irrespective of where one hails from – can work anywhere in Kenya." – Prof Stanley W Waudo, VC, MKU.**

## Extract from Prof Stanley W. Waudo's Curriculum Vitae

### EDUCATION

**1984:** PhD. Iowa State University  
Ames, Iowa 50011, U.S.A.

**Major:** Plant Pathology

**Area of Specialization –** Plant Nematology

**1982:** M.Sc. Iowa State University

**Major:** Plant Pathology

**Area of Specialization:** Plant Nematology

**1980:** B.A. Central College

Pella Iowa 50219, U.S.A.

**Major:** Biology

**1974:** African Advanced Certificate of Education  
E.A.S.C.E, Kericho High School

**1972:** East African Certificate of Education, E.A.C.E  
Chebuyusi Secondary School

**1969:** Completed Primary School. Navakholo Primary School

### RESPONSIBILITIES

**May 2008 – present:** Vice-Chancellor, Mount Kenya University  
September 2007 – March 2008: Strategic Leader for Pure and Applied Sciences Rapid Results Initiative, Kenyatta University

**2006 – 2008:** Chairman of Curriculum Committee, Department of Plant and Microbial Sciences, Kenyatta University

**2006 – 2008:** Head of Plant Pathology Section, Department of Plant and Microbial Sciences, Kenyatta University

**2006 – 2008:** Chairman of Appraisal and Promotions Committee, Department of Plant and Microbial Sciences, Kenyatta University 2003 –

## Staff testimonial

When I joined Mount Kenya University I had no doubt in my mind that I had made the right decision. This is what I always wanted to be; a university lecturer. Mount Kenya University gave me the chance of a lifetime, something I will always be grateful for. At Mount Kenya University, one is given an opportunity to put into practice the theory learnt in class under the guidance and mentorship of very good and experienced faculty members. One grows from a mentee to a mentor to help others move up the academic ladder.



**Kariuki Nderitu**  
Director, school-based programmes,  
Mount Kenya University

At Mount Kenya University, I have been able to visit places I would probably never have visited albeit on official duties. When I flew in an airplane for the first time, it was Mount Kenya University that made it possible, thanks to the Board of Directors chairman Dr. Simon Gicharu who organised and sponsored the flight. It was exciting. My challenge is to come up with an innovative idea that will make my employer proud of me. That I am still working on.

Honestly I have been to places that I am not sure I would have been to if it were not for MKU. Kigali, Kampala among others. Many more places are coming soon. MKU is a great place to work in.

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# MKU offers foreign students top-notch support services

"My life dream was to never study at my local primary school, local secondary school and local university and work within my locality thinking that the world revolves around my village," says Vivianne Dewayne. "I had to look outside the box and spread my tentacles. That is the opportunity Mount Kenya University offered me."

At the beginning, MKU had students drawn from Kenya. Over time, it attracted international students and therein lay an opportunity: excelling in making memorable hospitality arrangements for them.

"We had a few students from outside Kenya but their numbers started to grow," says Mr Robert Munyasia, MKU International Students Coordinator. "We realised that we needed to establish an office to take care of them even before they arrived in the country and when they have entered its borders. The ISC office was created.

"By 2014, we had about 50 international students. Now we have more than 300."

ISC handles issues of non-Kenyan students who include citizens of the East African Community states including South Sudan. Others come from Nigeria, Cameroon, Korea, Malaysia, Comoros, Somalia, Malawi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Congo Brazzaville and Zambia, among others.

Mr Munyasia says the international students are helped before they enter Kenya by being advised on whether they qualify for the



International students

programmes they wish to apply for. The office equates their certificates with those offered under the Kenyan education system. They are informed about the requirements of the programmes they desire.

After they have been admitted, the next task is to arrange how they can be picked once they land in Kenya and taken to the university. They can be picked from the airport or border points depending on how they have traveled into the country.

Currently, Nairobi, Mombasa, Nakuru and Eldoret are the MKU campuses with foreign students.

After they arrive, the ISC office assists students to comply with immigration requirements. Largely, this is to help them acquire a student pass that is mandatory. "They can then proceed to pursue their studies without any hassles," Mr Munyasia notes.

He added that his office's other responsibility is coordinate how the students live in the country. This is important because most international students stay in Kenya when the university closes a semester. In particular, the office has to arrange how their health needs will be met.

## Varsity's E-Repository among the top in the world

A recent ranking of world universities by renown Webometrics placed the MKU digital collection of academic scholarly articles among the top in the world. This is the most recent strategy by the varsity to enhance knowledge dissemination.

The University has also been ranked as number 1 most visited private university website in Kenya and position 3 overall by Alexa.com

Another survey of world universities placed MKU at number 7 out of 44 Kenyan universities. The ranking was conducted by 14CU dubbed "the Gateway to Universities and Colleges" based on web rankings.

"Our concerted efforts at improving access to e-learning and sharing academic information through electronic formats are continuously bearing fruit," said MKU Vice-Chancellor Prof. Stanley Waudo. "This impressive ranking accentuates our other successes on the ICT front."

Contribution by staff, student and university toward our knowledge database can be accessed through <https://erepository.mku.ac.ke>, the digital repository has close to 4000 academic materials.

Last year, MKU scooped four awards during the coveted Information and Communications Technology Association of Kenya (ICTAK) Awards. These were; Overall Winner-ICT Value Award, Best use of ICT in Education, Excellence in use of ICT in Education and Best Innovation Award

## Unique botanical garden attracts global review

The Mount Kenya University Botanical Garden has received international recognition. This is through the publication of a peer reviewed research article in the latest edition (June 2016) of the prestigious International Journal of Biodiversity and Conservation.

The article, titled, "Assessment of diversity and conservation status of plants at Mount Kenya University Medicinal Botanical Garden, Thika sub-County, Kiambu County, Kenya", is as a result of an intensive three-year joint research between the School of Pharmacy and the MKU Directorate of Research, Grants and Endowments.

The research aimed at establishing the degree of diversity of the plants at the MKU Botanical Garden, laying special

emphasis on those with medicinal properties. The researchers documented a total of 248 plant species belonging to 60 plant families, highlighting the rich biodiversity of the garden. The research also established that 90 per cent of the plants were indigenous, and 44 per cent had medicinal properties.

The researchers established that the MKU botanical garden had two species of plants that existed only within it. This elevates the botanical garden to a privileged position as a sanctuary for these special plants that are in danger of becoming extinct.

The two plant species, which have not been seen anywhere else in world, need to be protected at all costs. One of them is the subject of a PhD thesis of one of the researchers.

## MKU Digital Varsity's appeal: Flexible, Convenient "Anytime, Anywhere" studying

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to graduation.

Today, MKU serves students from more than 21 countries including US, United Kingdom, Germany, Saudi Arabia, Nigeria, Cameroon, Seychelles, Angola, UAE and Oman.

The Digital Varsity has established networks with alumni who have acquired their qualifications through the online system.

The Digital Varsity is well equipped and has the necessary capacity to cater for the academic needs of both local, regional and international students at the global scene, thanks to information Communication Technology, powerful Enterprise Resource Planning System (ERP), Students Management information System (SMIS) integrated with a scalable learning management system (DLMS) and a capable human resource that ensures both the administrative and academic needs of students are promptly addressed.

The customer relations system is embedded in the digital varsity call centre, which is managed by able customer care

staff. This has upgraded the level of customer and online students support.

The Digital Varsity has positioned itself as a centre of excellence and the preferred centre of choice in promoting educational opportunity by providing quality higher education, training and professional development to meet the learning needs of society.

Digital Learning is borne out of recognition that learning is moving out of the classroom and into the learner's environment, hence virtual technology is central to this inevitable and indispensable transformation. It is embedded on the philosophy of education anywhere, anytime, at your own schedule and place.

The Digital Varsity therefore seeks to provide learning opportunities to students who are unable to take up full-time on campus programmes.

The Digital school provides a wide range of quality programmes at certificate, Diploma, Undergraduate and Post-graduate levels. The convenience that the university offers learners is set for enhancement.

The university plans to have Diaspora

students take their exams online. This will be a huge improvement over the current arrangement, whereby Diaspora students sit for exams in Kenyan embassies abroad. There are also plans to make the call centre available 24 hours a day.

For now though, Kenyans who live outside the country but desire to learn at MKU are assured of gaining access to education. They learn and do continuous assessment tests (CATs) online, but sit their exams at Kenyan embassies and high commissions, wherever they are.

For their graduation, they have to travel back to the country. Everything else, including registration, is done from where they live.

The university's digital learning management system has given virtual students and online lecturers and professors a new interactive and support framework. It enables the students to access their lecturers and resources, including CATs and assignments, and e-learning material and library online. The system allows students to evaluate their lecturers on trimester basis as part of enhancing quality in learning.

# Many reasons explain various world phenomena

## But there are 20 reasons why MKU is a preferred destination for students

- 1. Accreditation:** Accredited by the Commission for University Education, Kenya.
- 2. International recognition:** The University is fully chartered, and is ISO 9001:2008 certified, meaning that it is committed on compliance with international standards on quality.
- 3. Convenient fees payment mode:** Affordable and flexible fees payment in easy percentage instalments of 30:30:20:20.
- 4. Accessible campuses:** Students have a choice to study from any of its accredited campuses in Kenya and other countries, hence increased access to and equity in university education.
- 5. Digital window:** Wi-Fi internet access across all the campuses.
- 6. Superb staff:** Qualified and committed teaching and non-teaching staff.
- 7. Academic resources:** Well-equipped Science and IT laboratories, Library and other academic resources.
- 8. Flexible study options:** Flexible modes of learning, which include fulltime, digital learning, school-based, part-time (evening and weekends).
- 9. Course completion time:** Students are able to complete their course within the stipulated time. Students' academic progress is monitored and evaluated on a continuous basis.
- 10. Student welfare support:** For the convenience of the students, the University has in place accommodation facilities and a student centre that houses a restaurant serving international cuisine. The university also has a gym and a salon/barber shop. There are also shops for the basic needs of students, laundry and dry cleaning services.

The integrated sick bay offers basic health services and ensures a healthy environment for the University community.

The sporting and recreation activities at the university vary and include rugby, football, tennis, volley ball, athletics, swimming and others such as drama.

- 11. Academic/Social trips:** The University has in place a fleet of buses. Transport is always available for aca-

demical and social trips.

- 12. Academic exchanges:** Students benefit from academic exchanges with foreign and local institutions of higher learning.
- 13. Career placement:** The University produces highly skilled graduates who are employable. Others go into self-employment and create jobs.
- 14. Multicultural diversity:** The University recognises the diversity of its student population and develops talents through organising of cultural events. There is unity in diversity.
- 15. Community Service/Engagements:** Mount Kenya University is committed to carrying out corporate social responsibility based activities that add value to the community we live in.
- 16. E-Reading facilities:** Use of ICT and other technologies, such as kindles.
- 17. Research and Development:** We create innovators and support them to commercialise innovations and inventions.
- 18. Academic Character:** Mount Kenya University offers an all-rounded education, including moral and professional education to all persons irrespective of religion, race, gender, political affiliation, social or cultural background.
- 19. Transition rate:** Students progress from one level to another at a very high rate, which is an indicator of satisfaction.
- 20. Security:** Enhanced security in the University and within its environs through 24-hour CCTV camera surveillance and night patrols by security agencies.

A panoramic view of the Chancellor's Tower at the MKU Main Campus in Thika



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