

## New dawn in Kenya as private varsities admit Govt-sponsored students

Mount Kenya University receives most applications, admits highest number of students

The placement of the first batch of Government-sponsored students in private universities since independence marks a major milestone in Kenya's higher education sector.

Mount Kenya University (MKU) attracted the highest number of applications and admitted the bulk of the sponsored students in its September 2016 intake. MKU took in 1,126 (or more than 10 percent) of the 10,000 students sponsored by the Government.

In an interview, MKU Vice Chancellor, Prof Stanley W. Waudu, described this as a move in the right direction for the country.

"These private universities based in the country train Kenyan students," he said. "The institutions were established in accordance with the processes and procedures laid out in the Universities Act 2012, which recognises all universities and subjects them to the same quality standards."

He added: "Qualified Kenyans train in both public and private universities, which should receive equal treatment."

A report by the Commission for University Education (CUE) recognises MKU for supplementing "government efforts to provide education and equip learners with competencies that enable them play a significant nation building role."

CUE conducted an institutional quality audit at the MKU Thika Campus between 15 and 17 November, 2016.

"The university provides a conducive environment and resources to enable student(s) acquire desired academic goals," observed CUE in the exit report.

MKU Registrar Academic Affairs, Dr Ronald Maathai, confirmed that all the Government-sponsored students were admitted to the university's main campus in Thika town.

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MKU VC, Prof Stanley Waudu addresses new students during orientation

### Don't just look for work; create some, Prof Magoha advises fresh graduates

Graduates should discard the mentality that acquiring a university education is their passport to salaried employment. They should instead consider it a licence to innovate and create jobs for themselves and for others too.

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### Public Service, NGOs, prestigious firms hire MKU graduates

The number of Mount Kenya University (MKU) graduates working in prestigious firms globally is growing fast.

A survey by the university's Graduate Alumni Relations Office (GARO) that traced the alumni, found that the former students were employed by Kenya's public sector, blue chip firms and non-governmental organisations across the world.

In addition, enterprising graduates eager to fill service gaps in markets are running their own successful businesses and creating jobs for themselves and others.

When the Commission for University Education (CUE) conducted an audit of the university between 15 and 17

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### MKU's Nutrition and Dietetics department is set to offer postgraduate training



The department of Nutrition and Dietetics at MKU admitted its first group of students in 2005.

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### Highly-ranked MKU Rwanda appoints Chancellor-Designate, moves to own ultramodern complex in Kagarama.

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Varsity celebrates 20 years of continuous improvement. Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC) Chairman Prof George Magoha (left) assists MKU Co-founder Jane Nyutu alongside Founder and Chairman Prof Simon N. Gicharu, CBS, to cut the anniversary cake.

## Government-Sponsored Students

# For these students, studying at MKU has special meaning

Many people remember 2016 for various reasons, but to a group of 1,126 students who joined Mount Kenya University (MKU) in September, the year has a special meaning.

Thanks to sponsorship by the Government, which for many of them came in the nick of time, they found an academic haven where they are now busy pursuing their dreams.

This is the group sponsored by the Government to pursue various degree programmes at MKU. They are among the 10,000 students from those who passed the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) in 2015 that the government, for the first time in the history of Kenya, placed in private universities in the country.

One of them is Victor Mung'oni Kusimba. He is living his dream at MKU, taking a course in dental technology.

Since his visit to a dentist as a young boy, Victor's passion has been locked on dentistry. But after completing Form Four in 2015 with an impressive B+ score of 70 points, this dream appeared to fade away after he failed to secure admission into a public university to study dentistry.

However, when the Government declared it would sponsor 10,000 students to private universities, he grabbed the chance and applied to Mount Kenya University for a course in Dental Technology. He was admitted.

Linet Wairimu Mwangi was destined to join MKU. Even before the Government decided to sponsor 10,000 students to private universities, she had applied to join the university for a course in economics and finance. However, when the government offer arrived, she switched to Bachelor of Education in Special Needs and was offered a place.

"I love children and I love teaching," she explains.

Lynna Norah Mulama believes that had

the Government not decided to sponsor her, she would not be at MKU or any other institution of higher learning for that matter.

"My parents are poor," she says. "They could not raise money to take me through a parallel degree programme or even a diploma course. I probably would still be teaching at the local primary school just like I did after completing Form Four."

When she was not selected to a public university, she knew she was set for a long stay at home. Then came the chance to still be sponsored by the Government to a private university, and MKU it was for her: "I thank God for bringing me to MKU. I am delighted to be here and will work towards attaining my goal.... My parents thank God for this opportunity... As the first born, I can open the way for my siblings."

Lynna is studying for a Bachelor of Arts degree in Economics and Statistics.



Embracing technology. MKU students enjoy free Wi-Fi at MKU villas



Philip Mutunga Titus  
Bachelor of Business Management



Lynna Norah Mulama  
BA Economics & Statistics



Victor Mung'oni  
Bachelor of Dental Technology



Johnson Kaberia  
BSc Animal Health & Production



Government sponsored students during a practical dental session

Rita Nafula Kibiti narrates a similar account: "I sat my Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examination with my elder sister. My parents could not take us both to college. My sister joined KMTC, where she is pursuing a diploma in clinical medicine. They had to fund-raise to pay her fees. I was to stay at home, hopefully until 2017, so that they raise money for my college fees."

Rita says she is grateful to the Government for sponsoring her to MKU, where she is studying for a degree in Economics and Finance.

Geoffrey Gitui Njoroge is another happy student at MKU because, as he says, he is pursuing his "dream career": a course in dental technology.

"I really appreciate the Government for supporting me with Ksh70,000 every semester. My parents would not have raised this kind of money on top of the Sh11,500 they contribute," he says.

Edwin Oloo Odhiambo thought he was dreaming when he got admitted to

I thank God for bringing me to MKU. I am delighted to be here and will work towards attaining my goal....



In tune: Linet Wairimu, a first-year student and member of the MKU Band, plays her favourite musical instrument

PROSPECTS FOR AND CHALLENGES OF THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY GRADUATE

*Scaling the Heights of Education*

# Sponsoring students to private varsities is a great move by Government

- Prof Waudo

Mount Kenya University Vice-Chancellor, Prof Stanley W. Waudo, has praised the government for sponsoring students to study in private universities, saying it is a move in the right direction.

It gives deserving young people the opportunity to pursue their academic dreams in higher education institutions established in accordance with the laws of the land. All universities are governed by the Universities Act, 2012, he observed.

"The Act recognises all universities in Kenya and subjects them to the same standards in terms of quality," said Prof Waudo in an interview.

"Qualified Kenyans train in both public and private universities which should receive equal treatment."

He added: "If we continued to deny some Kenyans sponsorship to private universities, we would have created categories such as the *harambee* and public schools. Such government sponsorship is not unique to Kenya, United States has a similar system.

When Prof Waudo talks of the *harambee* mentality, he is referring to the situation where some students who have completed KCPE are left to join schools built in their locality through a public fundraising effort famously known as *harambee*, or pulling together.

The government's action, he says, "levels the playing field for local universities and gives its youth learning opportunities they would have otherwise missed."

## Wise counsel

When the university receives first-year students, including the Government-sponsored ones, they are taken through an elaborate orientation programme. "We welcome them into the new academic environment, inform them of the requirements they have to meet and the university's expectations," he says.

"We have in place a mechanism to enable them to adjust to their new environ-



Prof Stanley W. Waudo, Ph.D.,  
Vice Chancellor

ment. We offer mentorship and advisory services and heads of department interact closely with students. We have assigned academic advisors and mentors to groups of students to support them in their academic aspirations. Lecturers play a major role in mentoring students. They are role models and share their experiences in the world of academia with their charges. The university has in place policies that support peer and general mentorship. We are able to give them a new perspective of the world."

The don adds that guidance and counselling complements the mentoring. He says this system works well because student completion rates stand at over 95 per cent. "The students leave the university a changed lot because we positively impact their character, social outlook and academic growth and development."

During his address to new students who reported to the university in September, 2016, the VC assured them of

the university's commitment to quality training and a holistic approach to it. "It is Mount Kenya University's objective to produce graduates who meet the labour market's requirements and have the ability to create jobs," he said.

His address was on "Breaking a Bad Habit". It pointed out that although it was human to get into destructive habits, it was possible to break them.

These bad habits include "making excuses on why you did not perform well in an examination and involving in activities that cause insecurity," Prof Waudo said

"Instead, adopt habits such as working within given timelines and acquiring friends who add value to your lives, among other, attributes," he advised.

## University future

The VC says MKU is on the path to greater success and growth and that it has adequate academic resources to fulfil its mandate.

"The university projects a positive image, offers quality programmes and the teaching and learning processes are of high quality. We have achieved what is required of us as management and the entire MKU fraternity. The evidence is there in the Webometric ranking, for example," says Prof Waudo.

He adds: "In 2005, an inspection by the Commission for University Education gave our campuses' physical infrastructure, teaching resources, human resources and programmes a clean bill of health. In November, 2016, the Commission carried out an audit of the university and gave a positive exit report. As a young university, we are currently walking. We want to soon start running and be the first. We are focusing on positioning MKU as one of the leading universities in the world."

The VC is convinced that with the continued goodwill of the university Board of Directors and Council, it is possible to attain this goal.

## STAFF PROFILE:



Dr. Evans Mwititi, Dean, School of Business & Economics

Working in a university is both an opportunity to open-up, link and show leadership, as well as a challenge in the pursuit of university goals and objectives.

When I joined Mount Kenya University in October 2015, I wasn't sure what lay ahead; maybe just another university, having previously worked at Kenya Methodist University and Kenyatta University. I was appointed the Dean, School of Business and Economics shortly thereafter in January 2016, taking charge of the second largest school with a student population of close to 10,000.

It's in moments such as these that the teaching of Peter Drucker, that "leaders don't ask what do I want to do, but instead what needs to be done", become relevant as you jump into the deep-end of the management of change.

MKU School of Business and Economics is in the process of creating a paradigm shift in the industry by offering practical market-driven courses using research-based curriculum benchmarked with international standards. The school has come up with initiatives to support entrepreneurial culture among students and alumni for sustainable socio-economic transformation in line with the university vision and mission.

In the past year, the school reviewed the curriculum in response to the changing market dynamics. The review provides a framework that interface practical entrepreneurship, research, academics and policy in a mutually complementary manner. These are delivered using cutting-edge technologies with pioneering research programmes, industry linkage and consultancy that informs an all-inclusive, need-based and market-ready graduates who are well-positioned to address the societal problems and needs in a sustainable manner.

In an effort to benchmark with the international best practices, the school is a member of various international and regional professional associations, such as the African Association of Business Schools (AABS) and Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB).

In fact, I recently represented the school in the AACSB Europe, Middle East and Africa deans' conference in Madrid Spain in October 2016. The school has created a very strong research culture as evidenced by participation in international research conferences.

For instance, in August 2016, the school sent a team of 15 lecturers to present papers at the 21st annual international management conference in Kampala, Uganda, and another team of 10 lecturers to Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, for the "1st roundtable on SMEs innovation and response policies 2016 conference and International Conference on Advancement of Business Management Practices in Africa (ICABUMPA)".

The future of MKU School of Business and Economics is indeed bright. The school is in the process of a major rebranding to position herself as a leader in training and research in business and management in Africa. All these thanks to the continued support and good leadership of the university management under the able stewardship of the Vice Chancellor Prof Stanley Waudo and the founder, chairman and visionary leader, Prof Simon Gicharu.

## 21st Century Graduates

# Don't just look for work; create some, Prof Magoha advises fresh graduates

Graduates should discard the mentality that acquiring a university education is their passport to salaried employment. They should instead consider it a licence to innovate and create jobs for themselves and for others too.

This advice was offered by professors George Magoha and Simon N. Gicharu during Mount Kenya University 11th Graduation Ceremony.

However, to thrive as job creators, graduates must possess the critical skills necessary for success in the 21st Century, said Prof Magoha. He was the Guest Speaker at the ceremony held on December 9, 2016 at the university Happy Valley Grounds in Thika town.

Prof Magoha is the chairman of both the Kenya Medical Practitioners and Dentists Board (KMPDB) and the Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC). He is also the immediate former Vice Chancellor of the University of Nairobi.

In his keynote address titled Prospects for and Challenges of the 21st Century Graduate, he pointed out that the gap between employment opportunities and the number of graduates entering the economy had widened. The country is registering a rising number of graduates against limited employment opportunities.

His sentiments were shared by Prof Gicharu, the Founder and Chairman of Mount Kenya University (MKU), and a strong proponent of entrepreneurship.

Prof Gicharu painted the portrait of an innovative graduate. He said instead of clutching curriculum vitae to deliver to potential employers, the creative graduate will flash portfolios of his or her innovations.

He concurred with Prof Magoha that



**Great minds share ideas during MKU 11th Graduation Ceremony. From left: Guest speaker Prof George Magoha, Chairman of Kenya Medical Practitioners and Dentists Board and Chairman of the Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC), MKU Founder and Chairman Board of Directors Prof Simon N. Gicharu.**

graduands should "think of creating jobs as opposed to the current situation where they all yearn for white-collar jobs."

Prof Gicharu says, more alumni and students should be meeting investors while "displaying their innovations for commercialisation rather than carrying their CVs seeking for jobs."

Prof Magoha thus lauded MKU for establishing the Graduate Enterprise Academy (GEA), and challenged the gradu-

ands to "rise up and take advantage of this act of magnanimity."

He informed them that they were "all called upon to be the next generation of entrepreneurs through the assistance of the Graduate Enterprise Academy."

GEA assists in identifying and nurturing graduates' business start-ups and accelerating the growth of the businesses to productive levels.

Prof Gicharu said MKU was working

with various individual and corporate partners to enhance GEA's capacity to train a bigger number of creative graduates with viable business ideas.

He argued that entrepreneurship was a step towards realising self-sufficiency, asserting that it was the direction the country needed to take. "It is the panacea to joblessness," he stressed.

Prof Magoha challenged universities to produce "ideal graduates" who would thrive in a largely information and service economy. For this to happen and for universities to produce job-creating graduates, they must focus on offering holistic education. The education, he observed, should be designed to help students find identity, meaning and purpose in life. It should give them competencies and skills and instil values that would help them climb the ladder of success.

The professor further advised universities to exploit the available opportunities for strengthening science, technology, engineering and innovation.

This requires partnerships among universities and with other players in public and private sectors. Partnerships facilitate pooling and sharing of resources, resulting in synergy necessary for holistic training, Prof Magoha stressed.

He praised the role of private universities, such as MKU, in increasing access to higher education in this country.

"The Board of Directors of MKU deserves commendation for establishing a premier university that is a major contributor to increasing access to higher education nationally and regionally," said Prof Magoha.

He observed that the university has the best anatomy laboratory in the region and quality infrastructure and academic resources to support training of the next generation of health personnel.

## Let's tighten grip on partnerships; they are handy, Chancellor asserts

Mount Kenya University continues to embrace more partnerships as it solidifies its reputation locally and internationally. "In today's global village, partnerships are key to socio-economic development among both developing and developed countries," said MKU Chancellor Prof Victoria Wulsin during the 11th Graduation Ceremony. "MKU has embraced partnerships within its academic, research and community-based activities." She expressed her appreciation to the university's partners for their continued support.

MKU has worked with diverse partners, among them county and national governments, to serve both the local and global community. The university has 43 linkages with the public sector, 45 partnerships in the private sector and 72 with institutions of higher learning and research institutes globally. Since the last graduation ceremony, it has expanded its international partnerships in Asia, Namibia and Poland.

The Chancellor noted: "Our home-grown 'Africa Agenda 2063' and the (global) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) emphasise the neces-

sity of partnerships for development." Prof Wulsin reported that MKU benchmarks with some of the best universities in the world. This, she said, "has led to MKU being recognized as one of the top universities nationally and regionally".

The university has succeeded in networking for effective teaching, research, and community service. "The pooling and sharing of resources has led to the synergy necessary for effective implementation of our mission," Prof Wulsin added.



**Prof. Victoria Wulsin, MKU Chancellor**

**PROSPECTS FOR AND CHALLENGES OF THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY GRADUATE**

*Scaling the Heights of Education*

# Public Service, NGOs, prestigious firms hire MKU graduates

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November, 2016, it confirmed these facts. In its Exit report, CUE noted that MKU graduates secure jobs competitively in various sectors.

CUE also observed that the University carries out tracer studies on the employability of its graduates.

"The University offers opportunities of employment to their Alumni, an indicator of confidence in the training the University offers," the CUE Exit report further notes.

In her address during the 11th Graduation Ceremony, University Council Chairperson Professor Grace N. Njoroge asserted that, "The University produces well-trained graduates equipped with technological and scientific knowledge and abilities, endowed with ethical values founded on African traditions and principles. With these attributes, the University graduates are expected to act as role models in the society and be drivers of socio-economic activities."

GARO co-ordinator Afubwa Musumi says MKU graduates thrive in diverse work places in the information-driven, globally networked world.

"The university imparts skills and competencies that its graduates need to succeed in a Brave New World," he said



Happy graduands ready for the job-market and service to humanity

during an interview. "They are work-ready and prepared for life. Most of them are absorbed into the job market as soon as they complete their courses. A sizeable number of those who proceed for attach-

ment are retained by employers."

The university works as a team to support students from admission to teaching, and on to research, mentoring and networking.

MKU maintains a database of alumni employability status, carries out alumni tracer studies and maintains partnerships with various industries.

Currently, all alumni can update their information by logging on to <http://app.isurvey.co.ke/view.php?id=42388>.

The university's course curricula are well updated and prepared with the involvement of key players, including industry actors and regulators.

MKU also has a team of mentors and a structured Office of Graduands and Alumni Relations to help the students build successful careers.

This section drives soft skills mentoring to enhance students' employability and networks with employers to find guest speakers from industry to participate in career talks, and also to facilitate on-campus recruitment.

The alumni section has revised its soft skills delivery model to cater for the new student, right from the students' boarding at the university.

In November 2016, the university held a successful recruitment fair in which Tecno Mobile Limited (communication), Fuzu Limited (a giant online recruitment and soft skills training firm), Techno Brain Technologies (IT) and Europa Group of companies (pharmaceuticals) among others, participated.

Other close associates invited to pave the employability path for MKU students include Kenya Commercial Bank, Tukoworks, Kamakazi Limited, and The Bridge. These are just a few examples.

The integrated approach is the secret to the release of all-round graduates preferred by employers.

## Council Chair vows: We won't let down our guard on quality

The Mount Kenya University (MKU) Council remains focused on ensuring that quality and the promotion of science, technology and innovation are sustained. This is according to Council Chairperson, Prof Grace N. Njoroge.

"The Council, in discharge of its oversight role, has ensured adherence to the national values and principles of governance as stipulated in the Kenya Constitution 2010," she said during the university 11th Graduation Ceremony. "It has focused on promotion of quality teaching, training and research, especially in fostering science, technology and innovation."

Prof Njoroge pointed out that the University Council had approved the admission capacity policy, with clear minimum entry requirements for each programme well stipulated, as guided by the Commission for University Education.

She explained: "These requirements apply

to all our clients irrespective of status. The policy has further given direction in adherence to the set standards for teaching space allocation, library facilities, laboratory facilities, as well as student/lecturer ratios."

The Council equity and accessibility of the university services by stakeholders.

It ensures that governance practices are efficient, effective and transparent.

It has also overseen the establishment of synergetic partnerships, among others.

"The Council," said the Chairperson, "recognises that to build a viable academic community, it is essential to put systems that support academic integrity."

She added that this is exemplified by the development and approval of policies that discourage engagement in plagiarism, unauthorised collaborations, cheating, altering marks, impersonation, contracting other people to undertake thesis or assign-

ments, and other unethical practices.

This will go a long way in ensuring honesty in teaching, assessments, research and the development of staff and students with enhanced character for nation-building.

Prof Njoroge revealed that in line with MKU's vision, "To be a global centre of excellence in training, research and innovation in science and technology", the university is currently training hundreds of students in various scientific fields.

Presently, 564 students are pursuing courses at the School of Engineering, Energy and Built Environment. The School of Pure and Applied Sciences has 627 students, while the School of Computing and Informatics has 305.

The College of Health Sciences has the majority, with 7,368 students enrolled in its diverse programmes.



Prof Grace N. Njoroge, MKU Council Chairperson

PROSPECTS FOR AND CHALLENGES OF THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY GRADUATE

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## Entrepreneurship

# International university fetes MKU founder

**M**ount Kenya University (MKU) Founder and Chairman Professor Simon N. Gicharu is the recipient of an Honorary Professorship, *Honoris Causa*.

Namibia's International University of Management (IUM) bestowed him the honour.

The university described him as "an outstanding businessman and entrepreneur" whose efforts to promote higher education in East Africa are worth noting. Professor Gicharu dedicated this award to "all students studying in private universities in Africa."

This was during the university's 12th Graduation Ceremony held on 26 September, 2016 in Windhoek, Namibia.

The event was witnessed by Namibia Prime Minister, Dr Saara Kuugongelwa, and Kenyan ambassador to Windhoek Samuel Njenga.

Prof Peter Wanderi, who accompanied Prof Gicharu to Namibia, pays tribute to the MKU Founder and Chairman saying, "His desire to give African students access to university education continues to burn strong over the last two decades," he notes. "He went to the United Kingdom in 1996 to study entrepreneurship. He witnessed first-hand how Kenyan students in UK universities were suffering. He decided to come back home and seek ways of helping Kenyans acquire accessible, affordable training right at home."

Prof Wanderi adds: "This exceedingly humble leader who is an institution himself, had a vision, which he has very well executed and which has seen MKU grow and develop into the vast university that offers certificate, diploma, under-



**MKU founder and Chairman Prof Simon Gicharu display an award of Honorary Professor awarded for his Promotion of higher education in Eastern Africa Region and professional activities during the 12th graduation ceremony at International University of Management (IUM) in Windhoek-Namibia.** | PHOTO: JOHN MUCHUCHA

graduate and postgraduate programmes to tens of thousands of students from different countries."

He says the Namibian university recognised that Prof Gicharu was making a positive difference in the community. MKU's partnership with Thika Level 5 Hospital, a public entity, is a prime example of such support to the community.

The university equipped the funeral home and does not share the revenues that the facility generates. It uses the facility for teaching its medical students, who, upon graduation, serve the community.



**Prof Gicharu being awarded Honorary Professorship by the International University of Management founder Hon. David Namwandi as IUM Chancellor and vice-chancellor look on during the 12th graduation ceremony at International University of Management (IUM) in Windhoek-Namibia.** | PHOTO: JOHN MUCHUCHA



**MKU founder and Chairman Prof Simon Gicharu congratulated by Kenyan Ambassador to Namibia Mr Samuel Njenga. Looking on are; Jane Nyutu, MKU Board member and Prof Gicharu's son Nelson Nyutu.** | PHOTO: JOHN MUCHUCHA

## Academy fuels business dreams of enterprising graduate students

### MKU's Graduate Enterprise Academy (GEA) is nurturing the next generation of African entrepreneurs

As if establishing Mount Kenya University (MKU) was not enough, Professor Simon N. Gicharu is now busy nurturing Africa's next generation of entrepreneurs.

A beneficiary of a UK entrepreneurship training programme in the mid-1990s, he is keen to mould the continent's youth so that they too can attain their dreams of building business empires from scratch with relative ease.

At Cranfield University, he studied two courses: managing enterprise development and finance for enterprise growth. He used the knowledge he acquired to found and grow MKU into the academic giant it is today.

"If I had mentors all steps of the way, I would have built MKU much faster

and avoided many pitfalls.... I want GEA to be the bridge to entrepreneurial success for the youth of Africa," says Prof Gicharu.

He is the patron of GEA – Graduate Entrepreneurship Academy. GEA's focus is on graduates with business start-ups. These are creative young people with the potential to create impact in the community and the economy.

In 2014, Prof Gicharu created GEA at MKU, expressly for that purpose, and pumped Ksh40 million into this initiative.

Passionately committed to its success, he wants to mentor a critical mass of young people who will go on to create jobs in Africa.

He explains the reason behind this initiative, saying: "The public sector is



**MKU Graduate Enterprise Academy (GEA) Patron Prof Simon N. Gicharu, CBS, shares words of wisdom with budding entrepreneurs during a boot camp at the University's Main Campus in Thika.**

not creating enough new jobs to match the numbers of youths completing university education and entering the job market every year. In the past, the

Government was the biggest employer. But with the freeze on employment, except for a few critical areas, young people are graduating into unemploy-

ment. Even the private sector is not creating jobs at the desired rate."

For Prof Gicharu, therefore, GEA is the vehicle he created "to inculcate an entrepreneurial culture in the young graduates to prepare them for self-employment".

In 2014, nine graduates joined a residential entrepreneurship training programme between February and May 2014, and successfully completed the programme, received seed capital and are currently in the market running own enterprises.

In April 2016, 15 graduates were enrolled to the programme and are undergoing practical training and mentorship in business through a well-planned mix of three weekend boot-camps and digital incubation through mentoring and networking spread over six months.

**PROSPECTS FOR AND CHALLENGES OF THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY GRADUATE**

*Scaling the Heights of Education*

New Academic Programmes

# Senate approves 18 new programmes

The Mount Kenya University (MKU) Senate has approved 18 new programmes: seven at Masters level; six additional Bachelors courses, one Postgraduate and four Certificate studies.

The certificate courses are in Food and Beverage Service, Food Production, Hospitality Operations and Travel and Tourism Operations.

The Postgraduate programme is in Journalism.

The new Bachelors degree offers are in Science in Community Health and Development, Science in Computer Electronic Systems, Science in Health Education and Promotion, Health Systems Management, Nursing, Mental Health and Psychiatry and Science in Oral Health.

This was revealed by Vice Chancellor Prof Stanley W. Waudo.

He said findings of the recent quality audit of the university by the Commission for University Education (CUE) placed the university's quality management systems above the Commission's quality compliance threshold. This, he added, indicated that the university was a quality driven institution of higher learning.



Hospitality students during a practical session

He said to ensure that Mount Kenya University academic programmes facilitated a balanced learning process, the design of the programmes took into account the required standards, ensuring

they provided a broad knowledge base. Prof Waudo pointed out that to offer programmes commensurate with institutional accreditation status, the university ensured its academic programmes were

**To ensure quality of the programmes, the university has internal quality assurance mechanisms and works closely with regulatory bodies, including the Commission for University Education.**

“in compliance with national and international standards and guidelines”.

He added: “To ensure quality of the programmes, the university has internal quality assurance mechanisms and works closely with regulatory bodies, including the Commission for University Education.”

Today, universities are taking on additional roles. For example, they are expected to serve as centres for character building. MKU ensures that its students, besides developing academic competencies, also undergo character development. To achieve this, the university has in place mechanisms of enhancing character development. They include mentoring, counselling and guidance.

The goal is to produce graduates with relevant competencies and skills, and good character. The knowledge and skills acquired by the students will enable them to be successful in their daily endeavours.

MKU is committed to continuous development of its strengths and competitive advantages, and focusing on positioning itself among the top universities. So far, there are signs that the university is moving towards the league category.

## VICE CHANCELLOR ACADEMIC MERIT AWARDS



BSc Information graduand Bernard Silla Mulobi is delighted to receive Vice Chancellors Merit award for Best Male Candidate from MKU Chancellor Prof Victoria Wulsin.



BSc Dental Technology graduand Caroline Jebet Yatich cannot hide her happiness as she receives Vice Chancellors Merit award for Best Female Candidate from Prof Victoria Wulsin, MKU Chancellor.

## PROSPECTS FOR AND CHALLENGES OF THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY GRADUATE

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# 11<sup>th</sup> Graduation Pictorial



MKU Founder Prof Simon Gicharu with Rwandan graduands during the graduation ceremony



MKU Chancellor Prof Victoria Wulsin confers Dr Kennedy Muna with a Ph.D degree as his supervisor adjusts his gown



Happy graduands



The future of the University is bright: MKU Chancellor Prof. Victoria Wulsin presided over a successful 11th graduation ceremony presided where Prof George Magoha delivered the keynote speech



Sabina Wanjiru Chege, Women Representative for Murang'a County and Chairperson of the Parliamentary Committee on Education in the Parliament of Kenya, addresses the graduates during MKU's 10th graduation ceremony



Executive Masters of Business Administration Class of 2016

**PROSPECTS FOR AND CHALLENGES OF THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY GRADUATE**

*Scaling the Heights of Education*

# MKU sets up College of Health Sciences

**New institution to advance synergies in medical and health training within the various schools**

**M**ount Kenya University is the first chartered private university in Kenya to launch a College of Health Sciences that will house five schools including:

- Medical School
- School of Pharmacy
- School of Clinical Medicine
- School of Nursing
- School of Public Health

The Mount Kenya University College of Health Sciences was established by the University Council in 2016 pursuant to the powers conferred to the University Council as contained in the Mount Kenya University Charter (Section 6 (a) – Powers of the University). The Mount Kenya University Charter legally empowers the University to establish “divisions, constituent colleges and campuses, schools, centers, institutes, faculties, departments.....”

The principal aim of establishing a College of Health Sciences is to derive synergies in medical and health training within various schools. The emerging thinking in medical and health training is to train personnel that operate as members of a healthcare team (rather than as individuals) in the provision of healthcare services. The housing of the various health professional courses under one umbrella of a College of Health Sciences therefore is a timely move and epitomizes Mount Kenya University’s adoption of best practices in health training.

The courses in the College of Health Sciences are geared towards producing graduates with diagnostic, preventive, promotive and curative skills that will enable the graduates play a vital role in Kenya’s and regional health care structures.

## COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

The University has invested in state-of-the-art infrastructure for medical and health training. The Thika Level 5 Hospital (which is located less than 400 meters from MKU Main Campus) serves as the main teaching hospital for the College of Health Sciences. Through a public Private Partnership between the County Government of Kiambu and Mount Kenya University, established a Postmodern Funeral Home (General Kago Funeral Home) and state of the art Anatomy and Pathology/Histology Laboratories within the hospital grounds. In addition, a medical references library, several medical lecture rooms, conference facilities and lecturers offices were also developed on the grounds with the aim of housing the pre-clinical medical staff at the hospital grounds. The Ksh 300M facility is the first such Public Private Partnership by a Private University with a County government in Medical training.

## STAFF PROFILE



**Dr. Stanley Kamwari Kang'ethe**  
Principal, College of Health Sciences, MKU

**PhD. Medical Microbiology from Kenyatta University**  
**MSc. Infectious Diseases from Kenyatta University**  
**Member, Royal Society of Biology**

### Work experience

- Mount Kenya University: Senior Lecturer Medical Microbiology
- Leadership and Management of academic programmes.
- Kenya Medical Research Institute: Disease surveillance, Diagnostics of Childhood Infectious Diseases

### Research Interest

- Antimicrobial resistance
- Childhood diarrhoeal diseases
- Bacterial vaginosis

### College Vision

To become a leading Premier Centre in teaching and producing high calibre Health professionals, medical scientists and leaders to support sustainable development of Health Sector industry in Kenya and beyond.

## STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS AND INSTITUTIONAL LINKAGES

The college of health sciences gains synergy from the following University partnerships and institutions:

### GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIPS

- Ministry of Health, GoK
- Bungoma County, Ministry of Health
- Kiambu County, Ministry of Health
- Nakuru County, Government Department of Health Services

### RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS PARTNERSHIPS

- Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI)
- Institute of Primate Research
- International Centre of Insect Physiology & Ecology (ICIPE)
- Kenya Forestry Research Institute (KEFRI)
- African Mental Health Foundation (AMHF)

### HOSPITAL LINKAGES

- Thika Level 5 Hospital - Main teaching hospital
- Machakos Level 5 Hospital
- Mathari National Teaching and Referral Hospital
- Pumwani Maternity Hospital
- Gatundu Level 4 Hospital
- Chulaimbo Sub-district Hospital

- Consolata Hospital, Nkubu
- Nairobi West Hospital
- Njoro Sub-County Hospital

### NGO COLLABORATIONS

- SOTENI Kenya
- Partners for Care/ Ohio State University, USA

### UNIVERSITIES AND TRAINING INSTITUTIONS PARTNERSHIPS

- Northern Kentucky University
- Clarke University, USA
- University of West of Scotland
- University of Almeria (Spain)
- Leipzig University
- Jingshan University, China
- XinYu University, China
- Makerere University, Business school
- Gulu University
- Kyambogo University, Uganda
- St. Francis School of Health Sciences, Cameroon
- Scholarships and Funding agencies
- Higher Education Loans Board
- CFBT Education Trust- Daadab Scholarship
- Fountain Africa Trust

## ACCREDITATIONS AND REGULATORY APPROVALS

To ensure best international practices in the training of programmes in medical and health sciences and ensure marketability of its graduates, Mount Kenya University has always ensured that the College of Health Sciences programmes it offers are accredited by the respective professional regulatory bodies which provide a critical external quality assurance mechanism through their periodic accreditation inspections. The professional regulatory bodies include:

| SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT                         | PROGRAMME   | REGULATORY BODY   |
|---|---|---|
| Medical School                            | Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery  | East African Medical Council<br>Kenya Medical Practitioners and Dentist Board |
| School of Pharmacy                        | Bachelor of Pharmacy<br>Diploma in Pharmaceutical Technology  | Pharmacy and Poisons Board  |
| School of Nursing                         | Bachelor of Nursing   | Nursing Council of Kenya  |
| School of Clinical Medicine               | Bachelor of Science in Clinical Medicine and Community Health<br>Diploma in Clinical Medicine and Surgery     | Clinical Officers Council of Kenya  |
| Department of Health Records              | Bachelor of Health Records and Information Technology<br>Diploma in Health Records and Information Technology | Health Records and Information Managers Board                                 |
| Department of Environmental Health        | Bachelor of Environmental Health<br>Diploma in Environmental Health   | Public Health Officers and Technicians Council                                |
| Department of Nutrition and Dietetics     | Bachelor of Nutrition and Dietetics<br>Diploma in Nutrition and Dietetics                                     | The Kenya Nutritionists and Dietitians Institute                              |
| Department of Medical Laboratory Sciences | Bachelor of Science in Medical Laboratory<br>Diploma in Medical Laboratory Sciences                           | Kenya Medical Laboratory Technologists and Technicians Board                  |

## Nutrition and Dietetics

# Coming soon: Postgraduate studies in nutrition

The department of Nutrition and Dietetics at MKU admitted its first group of students in 2005. It was the first time a private institution in Kenya was offering nutrition training at diploma level.

The institution, through its faculty members, took up a leading role in shaping the country's training in diploma programmes in nutrition and dietetics by participating in curriculum development, review and implementation at institutional and national levels.

Currently, the department runs programmes at certificate, diploma and degree levels, and is at advanced stages of initiating postgraduate studies.

As the nutrition profession became more visible in the country, an Act of Parliament (The Kenya Nutritionists and Dietitians Act, 2007) was enacted to oversee the training and practice.

The Act creates a regulatory body – the Kenya Nutritionists and Dietitians' Institute (KNDI) – mandated to oversee the implementation of the law.

KNDI has, amongst its council, representation of private academic institutions. MKU, by virtue of being the only private university offering nutrition training, represented private institutions in the inaugural council.

The university promptly aligned itself with the new regulations and was accredited by KNDI. It became the first private institution to receive full accreditation after compliance with the regulations for training in certificate, diploma and degree programmes in nutrition and dietetics. Accreditation is an important milestone, as it guarantees successful graduates the necessary registration to practice.

Students in the programme have opportunities for exposure in the course of training by participating in community outreach programmes. These programmes



MKU Nutrition and Dietetics Department staff display certificates after Kenya Nutritionists and Dietitians' Institute (KNDI) awarded the department full accreditation to train in Bachelors, Diploma and certificate programmes.

also benefit community members through free screening for nutrition related problems, nutrition education and counseling.

MKU has invested in advanced equipment for training in Nutrition and Dietetics.

To date, the institution has graduated more than 500 Nutrition and Dietetics professionals, who now serve in public and private sectors, locally and internationally.

Opportunities for academic progression have seen many of the graduates return to pursue higher education at the university. Those already in practice and are unavailable to train under the full-time mode of study can attend weekend classes. This flexibility has seen many diploma holders keep their day jobs and pursue degrees concurrently.

Students in the programme also receive

The combination of highly qualified teaching and up-to-the-minute facilities will elevate local and international recognition of graduates from the offered programmes

mentorship through institution-based mentorship programmes. They also participate in international leadership and mentorship programmes.

The institution has kept abreast with international events in nutrition, such as participating in the global movement

in Scaling up Nutrition (SUN), and most recently in the Academia and Research Network (ARN) that held an inaugural symposium for sharing information, knowledge and networking in order to transform actions and collaborations in nutrition into results.



Nutrition and Dietetics students during a camp

## Experiences of enchanted Clinical and Community Nutrition graduates

Dorris Mwendwa graduated from MKU in October 2010 with a Clinical and Community Nutrition degree. She was hired a year after completing the course and only three months after her formal graduation.

Her clinical and community nutrition background earlier earned her attachment opportunity at Makadara Health Centre, where she gained practical experience on the management of malnutrition.

She says: "With this practical experience, I applied for the position of nutrition officer at Action Against Hunger, one of the leading NGOs in the world in nutrition. I was employed in January 2011. My career has been a great turning point from various national to international positions."

Her fellow nutrition graduates are working as nutritionists with the Ministry of Health. Others are with NGOs, while a few more have established their own consultancies. According to Dorris, anyone interested in scaling the heights in a career in nutrition should take up the course at MKU.

On the other hand, Henry Ng'ethe graduated in August 2010 with a Diploma in Clinical and Community Nutrition and received a posting letter for his first job the same week.

He credits the education he received at MKU for equipping him "with a lot of knowledge and technical skills" that have eased his nutrition practice.

Before joining MKU, Henry worked as a community health volunteer and it is during a workshop on nutrition, he got inspired. "I did my research on which college was offering the course and I landed at MKU where I found lecturers who were committed to deliver... True to their word, my expectations were met," he says.

Another professional, Lucy Muli graduated in 2009 having been in the first Nutrition and Dietetics class. She was employed by Nairobi West Hospital for four months upon completion of her course.

"I am competitive in the job market because of the vast knowledge on clinical nutrition that I received," she says. "MKU has a very good base for both clinical and community nutrition."

What inspired her choice of course? "My mum had cancer of the colon in 2004. She is well now though. But during that period, she had struggles feeding and lost almost half her body weight.... That really affected me, seeing her in that state, and that's what moved me to choose that specific course and focused on the clinical bit."

Lucy is convinced no one can go wrong with a course in nutrition at MKU. As she says, "MKU is an institution that not only teaches, but also empowers you to use your skill for self-employment, just like I did. I highly recommend it. The fee is very manageable."



Kenya Nutritionists and Dietitians' Institute (KNDI) inspectors tour one of the labs at MKU

PROSPECTS FOR AND CHALLENGES OF THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY GRADUATE

*Scaling the Heights of Education*

## Why MKU's medical lab science programme is far from ordinary

When Charles Rombo says that he is currently working while also pursuing a Master's degree, you can easily dismiss him, since millions others are doing the same.

Let him explain further and you will appreciate the weight behind his excitement.

Mr Rombo, the National Quality and Safety Manager at the National Blood Transfusion Services, was among Kenya's first medical laboratory science higher national diploma holders for whom Mount Kenya University opened the door to university education. His lot is the first in independent Kenya to gain a medical laboratory science degree from a local private university.

"When we completed our higher national diploma studies in the late 2000s, the path to university education was basically a dead end, a cul-de-sac," he reminisces. "If you had the money you could travel abroad to join an expensive foreign university. This is because only one public university in the country offered very limited degree chances. Most of my colleagues and our predecessors were resigned to fate. Many in this profession desired to progress academically, but accepted that there was no way up. People have worked and retired without ever getting the opportunity to acquire university training."

Matters took a positive turn when Mr Rombo learned that MKU was offering a degree programme in his area of specialisation. He joined the pioneer class of 2009 to pursue his degree in medical laboratory science, and as he says, "the rest is history."

According to Mr Rombo, two things enabled him to enrol for the course. "First, the cost was affordable," he says. "Secondly, the study programme was flexible – starting on Friday and running through Saturday and Sunday. It meant that I could work and study with ease. Mount Kenya University mounted some unique programmes that had never been offered in Kenya before, and the Medical Laboratory Science degree programme was one of them.

Mr Rombo continues: "The common perception has been that you cannot offer medical science programmes part-time and also that they are costly. MKU smashed this myth and has proved that medical courses are affordable to the qualified masses, too. This made us run to the university."

For his Masters in haematology and



**Charles Rombo, a medical laboratory technology Masters student, busy at his work station, the Kenya National Blood Transfusion Services head office in Nairobi**

blood transfusion, Mr Rombo decided to return to his stomping ground: MKU Main Campus in Thika.

He has vast experience gained from working with the Government of Kenya, USAID/ CDC funded programmes, health care facilities and the community. He has also worked outside Kenya.

He is trained in quality management by American Association of Blood Bank (AABB) and South African National Blood Service (SANBS) in Nairobi and Johannesburg, respectively.

Says he: "I am a qualified Strengthening Laboratory Management Towards Accreditation TOT (trainer of trainers)... I am a certified internal auditor of ISO 15189-2012 with Kenya Accreditation Service. Currently, I sit in Medical Laboratory Accreditation Technical Committee at the Kenya Accreditation Service, where I have participated in the development of assessment criteria for laboratories. I have participated in the assessment of over 18 facilities in Kenya."

Mr Rombo is a member of the Association of Kenya Medical Laboratory Assessors and also a certified medical laboratory assessor with the African Society for Laboratory Medicine (ASLM).

He further wears several professional hats. He is the Deputy Country focal person for Stepwise Laboratory Quality Improvement Process Towards Accreditation (SLIPTA). He is also Vice President, African Society for Blood Transfusion (AfsBT), where he champions good blood transfusion service standards across 15 countries in East Africa.

Mr Rombo credits his recognisable leadership skills to the training he underwent at MKU. This, he says, has given him the knowledge and confidence that make him stand out in international conferences on blood transfusion. "Participants realise that I have knowledge to share," he explains.

This matters to him because he wants to serve Kenyans and the rest of humanity with cutting-edge knowledge.

## Thanks to MKU, I'm enjoying global recognition

BY MARAGIA MARCOMIC JAMES

I am an alumnus of MKU. Pursuing my BSc. in Medical Laboratory Sciences at MKU (Lodwar Campus) was a boon in my career path. It has placed me at the pinnacle of Global recognition. This is in tandem with the university's vision: "Global Centre of Excellence in Education, Research and Innovation in Science and Technology."

Through the skills and knowledge gained at MKU, I have been able to spearhead the process of accreditation at Lodwar County and Referral Hospital laboratory department.

Due to outstanding implementation of Laboratory Quality Management System (LQMS), I won a scholarship to attend a Training of Trainers (TOT) for Strengthening Laboratory Management Toward Accreditation (SLMTA) at African Centre for Integrated Laboratory Training (ACILT) in Johannesburg, South Africa, in March 2016.

I won another scholarship to make an oral presentation at the 6th Infection Control Africa Network (ICAN) Conference in Johannesburg, South Africa, in September 2016.

Locally, I have won awards at the 4th and 5th Infection Prevention Network Kenya (IPNET-K) conferences consecutively in the best County Oral Presentation category.

Mount Kenya University moulded and mentored me to be self-driven and innovative, and to boldly distinguish myself from the ordinary. These virtues have been my driving force in all my endeavours.

To uphold the vision of Mount Kenya University, my prowess opened another opportunity at Cape Town, South Africa, to attend and make a presentation at the African Society for Laboratory Medicine (ASLM) Conference in December 2016. To achieve these in a calendar year, glory be to God. I live and trust that truly, MKU is scaling the heights of education.



**Maragia Marcomic James (right) with Dr. Stanley Kang'ethe, Principal, MKU College of Health Sciences**

PROSPECTS FOR AND CHALLENGES OF THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY GRADUATE

*Scalis Altitudines Educationis*

## School of Engineering

# MKU building new school to engineer Africa's future

**M**ount Kenya University (MKU) is busy establishing a modern school of engineering in Thika. It is harnessing its heritage of excellence in applied science and technology training gained during its 20-year journey since it was established as a post-secondary technical institution.

The construction of the stand-alone engineering school on MKU's Landless Happy Valley land is part of the university's five-year Strategic Plan. By the time the school is ready, it will have state-of-the-art engineering workshops and laboratories, executive offices for administrators and other staff, modern ICT facilities and attractive recreational amenities, among other infrastructure. The school is planned to be fully operational by 2018.

Through the support of management, the School of Engineering, Energy and The Built Environment (SEEBE) is actively in the process of advancing and developing a broader suite of Engineering Programmes and related disciplines in training and research.

"The MKU Green School of Engineering, Energy and The Built Environment will be one of its kind in East and Central Africa," declares Dr Isaac A. Alukwe, Dean and Senior Lecturer I at SEEBE.

The school has embarked on recruitment of highly qualified members of staff. It has already hired one Associate Professor, three PhD holders and three Assistant Lecturers.

Several collaborations have been mooted, including with Xinyu University and China University of Petroleum (both in China), VIVO Energy Company and Thika Level 5 Hospital. Such collaborations will bolster staff and student exchange, internships, mentorship and research.

Procurement of hi-tech laboratory equipment is already underway, with equipment manufacturing already started.

Dr Alukwe says benchmarking of the intended engineering infrastructure has already been performed and the designs are being worked on.

The proposal to start a stand-alone school



Engineering students learn about machine parts during a practical lesson

seeks to enhance and expand the visibility of engineering at MKU by transforming the recently created school to provide a modern learning environment and the highest professional standards in learning, research and innovation, which can be achieved and maintained as the school expands.

Over the years, demand for engineering studies at MKU has continued to increase despite the old thinking that the course is expensive to offer and attracts few scholars.

However, advanced training facilities and laboratories are required to achieve elevated levels of engineering training, argues Dr Alukwe.

The combination of highly qualified teaching and up-to-the-minute facilities will elevate local and international recognition of graduates from the offered programmes.

The importance and the role played by engineering graduates cannot be overemphasised. It continues to be an area of growing importance as advanced technological applications play an increasingly important role in economies, including Kenya's.

The combination of highly qualified teaching and up-to-the-minute facilities will elevate local and international recognition of graduates from the offered programmes



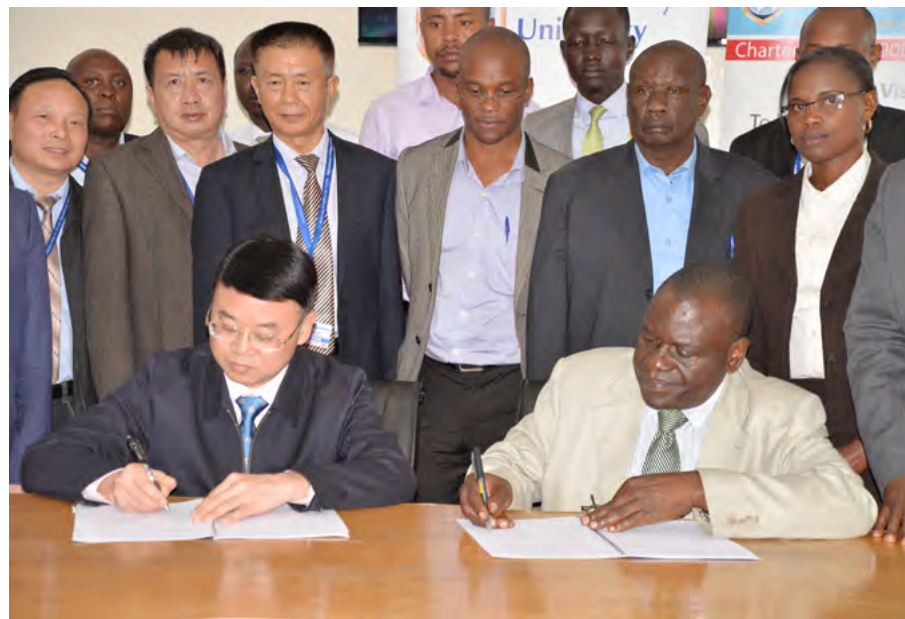
An artist's impression of the planned School of Engineering set to be built at MKU's Happy Valley Grounds in Thika.



Dr Isaac Alukwe, Dean, School of Engineering

### School's Range of Programmes

- PhD in Energy and Power Engineering (starting 2017)
- MSc. In Energy and Power Engineering (starting 2017)
- MSc. In Renewable Energy and Environmental Engineering (started 2016)
- BSc. Energy and Environmental Technology
- BSc. Petroleum Exploration and Production
- Bachelor of Real Estate Management
- BTech. In Computer and Electronic Systems
- Diploma in Electrical and Electronic Engineering
- Diploma in Medical Engineering



MKU Vice-Chancellor Prof. Stanley Waudo and Mr Shi Ke, President of XinYu University of China, sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the two institutions.

When construction is completed in 2018, the school is expected to acquire the internationally recognised Leadership in Environment and Emission Design (LEED) Certification for Green Buildings.

MKU School of Engineering is an offshoot of the former Department of Engineering, which was started in 2004, under the School of Pure and Applied Sciences (SPAS).

The Department offered Diploma Programmes in Electrical and Electronics, Medical Engineering and Computer Engineering.

In 2012, the need to develop a stand-alone School was shared by SPAS.

Later in 2013, two degrees programmes in Energy and Environmental Technology, and Petroleum Exploration and Production were mounted.

Dr Alukwe explains the genesis of the proposed school. "The process for the current vision to have the school as a stand-alone actively commenced in 2015 when the School of Engineering, Energy and The Built Environment (SEEBE) was started. At this time, the founder and Chairman of BoD of MKU, Professor Simon N. Gicharu, had a grand vision to set-up a state-of-the-art School of Engineering, an only one of its kind in East and Central Africa."

In August 2015, SEEBE was officially established.

"We aspire to have local and international accreditation and recognition for all our programmes," Dr Alukwe shares.

It is estimated that over 5,000 students, 50 academic staff and five Departments, all with over 20 programmes, will be at the School.

PROSPECTS FOR AND CHALLENGES OF THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY GRADUATE

*Scaling the Heights of Education*

# Our latest graduation reflects MKU's major academic strides

Mount Kenya University 11th Graduation ceremony held on December 9, 2016 marked many milestones.

The university's Deputy Vice-Chancellor in charge of Academic and Research Affairs, Dr Bibianne W. Waiganjo, says the event comes with progress on several fronts. Six doctoral students were among the graduands. This is a clear indication that the institution continues to attract students at all levels of academic endeavour: from certificate, diploma and undergraduate to postgraduate.

The institution has also made the leap from manual processing of students' marks to the use of a modern automated information system to boost efficiency.

"This means cases of students complaining of missing marks will be a thing of the past," says Dr Waiganjo. "Since 2014, we have enforced the use of our Management Information System (MIS) in processing marks. The transition posed a challenge, being a new system. But now students do not have to come to the university to confirm whether marks for each unit were recorded. They can simply visit the students' portal and view their marks.



**Dr. Bibianne Waiganjo, Deputy Vice Chancellor - Academic and Research Affairs**

The DVC says she put in place a mechanism to ensure all historical marks are stored in the university's system and audited.

"You know, for various reasons, some students come to graduate years later

since they first joined the university," she explains. "They should not return to find their marks missing. For example, you will find a student who joined the university in 2009 who has returned to complete studies and is eligible to graduate."

"This year, we plan to establish a special section within the examinations office to carry the students' academic records," she says adding: "The office will capture class and examination attendance. We will also examine any discrepancies in registered marks. Where these are evident, we will ask the respective schools to explain.

"We want to tighten the loop so that students eligible for graduation do not face hiccups because the records in the system will tell us all we need to know about each student's academic journey. I am sure during the 12th Graduation in July this year we will not have students complaining that their marks are missing if they registered for the required number of units, attended classes and sat all examinations successfully."

#### Enriching the academic experience

Dr Waiganjo says the university continues to enrich the students' academic experi-

“We want to tighten the loop so that students eligible for graduation do not face hiccups because the records in the system will tell us all we need to know about each student's academic journey”

ence. She explains that the changes it introduced in the Medical School that emphasise the phrase "cleanliness is next to godliness." The school has stepped up the campaign that medical trainees must maintain the highest possible standards of hygiene and project the spic and span image associated with medicine.

She says the new dean, Dr Juliet Gathara, has set high standards of hygiene, with some universities seeking to benchmark with the MKU Medical School's anatomy laboratory. She also plans to establish a teaching hospital.

"The school aims to offer post-graduate training to doctors who want to specialise in certain disciplines while also working," Dr Waiganjo adds.

#### Engineering

Also in the pipeline is a fully-fledged school of engineering and the institution is working closely with the Engineers Board of Kenya (EBK) to meet all regulatory requirements for establishing the school.

The EBK has the overall mandate of developing and regulating engineering practice in Kenya.

#### Research and development

The division has a research kitty that supports staff to publish and to present research papers in conferences. In 2016, the division supported the publishing of seven publications, 23 staff attended regional conferences and 34 employees attended international conferences. The total amount spent in 2016 on these activities is in excess of KSh2.5 million.

## Varsity engineering department staff receives Netfund support

Engineering technologist and innovator Peter Mithamo has earned incubation space at Netfund. One of his innovations, Integrated DC/AC Poultry Incubator, has been recognised by the Fund as an innovation worth commercialising.

Netfund stands for National Environment Trust Fund, a state corporation through which the government, with the support of multi-lateral and bilateral partners and corporate bodies, fund impressive initiatives focusing on environmental, natural resources and climate change solutions in Kenya. It operates under the Ministry of Natural Resources and National Development.

Mithamo's device comprises a brooder and an incubator. Once the chickens have been hatched, it is easy to raise them in the same unit.

The system can be powered by the solar energy or the battery, and even the AC mains. It's ideal for small scale and large scale farmers alike.

Chick brooding refers to the early periods of growth (0-8 weeks), when young chicks are unable to maintain their normal body temperature without the aid of supplementary heat.

The designed brooder system com-



**Peter Mithamo, MKU Engineering Technologists staff demonstrates how his new innovation of a solar dehydrator works on preservation vegetable to NACOSTI team.**

prises a special heating element, a thermostat and a regulator. Locally available materials have been used for the construction, chiefly comprising polyurethane glass that make it

easy for the farmer to see the movement of the baby chicks.

The system has been tested and has demonstrated great efficiency. It is portable and easy to maintain.

This innovation was nominated for incubation by Netfund this year. Mr Mithamo is in the process of patenting the innovation.

#### It is not his first.

Last year, he patented two others. One is the Compost Tumbler. This is a barrel that can be rotated or turned once filled with organic yard and kitchen food wastes, to speed up the making of compost. It is often made from recycled plastics.

The other is the Solar-Powered Food Drier, which is designed to dry and preserve perishables like Kales, spinach, onions and tomatoes, among other vegetables, using solar energy.

The system reduces wastage of agricultural produce. It also makes transportation of such dried produce easy and promotes the health and welfare of the people.

Mr Mithamo is also in the process of patenting a Domestic DC/AC Food Dryer. This is a recycled system that uses electrical energy to dry perishables.

#### Importance of the innovations

All these projects are locally designed.

They are affordable and very efficient. They are all agricultural based, having in mind that agriculture is the backbone of our country. They fit any size of farming household, be it small scale or large scale, and also suit youth and women groups.

#### University Input

Mount Kenya University has facilitated the design and production of the prototypes through its Research Division. The university has nominated the innovations twice for awards (2013 and 2015 respectively) during graduation ceremonies, where KSh100,000 was given in each. The university is in the process of commercialising the projects.

MKU has also facilitated the projects to be presented in various exhibitions, including:

- NACOSTI Science Week 2014 at KICC
- University of Nairobi Science Week in 2015
- Interuniversity Exhibition, Eldoret, 2014
- Medical Engineering Conference, Nakuru, 2014
- Nairobi International Trade Fair, from 2012 to 2016.

## Alumni

# Treading the paths of success for being MKU graduates

**T**housands of graduands have studied at Mount Kenya University, graduated and proceeded to build impressive careers. Others are 'booked' up by employers even before they complete their studies.

Yet more joined the university to upgrade their skills and subsequently climbed corporate ladders. Another group comprising creative individuals not averse to risk use knowledge from MKU to establish own enterprises.

These are the paths MKU graduates are treading.

The University's Graduate Alumni Relations Office (GARO) made an effort to trace former graduates. It found that they were in all sectors of the economy. A good number work outside the country with firms such as Qatar Airways, Emirates Airlines, among others.

Blue chip companies like Safaricom, Nation Media Group, Equity Bank, KenGen, CIC Insurance Group, KCB Group, Bidco Africa, Serena, Tribe Hotel, British American Tobacco (BAT), Kenya Power and Nakumatt, are among the employers of MKU graduates.

The list extends to public service, county governments, savings and credit co-operative societies (SACCOs), microfinance institutions and private businesses.

The University, too, is an employer of its

graduates, as are other universities.

Some of them gave their views on studying at MKU and thriving in today's demanding workplaces.

Mrs Nancy Chepng'eno, who works at Egerton University, is one of them. She graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in dental technology and has positive words to say about her academic experience.

"I came to MKU to upgrade my skills, since I was already employed at Egerton University," she explained in an interview. "I studied for my degree from 2013 to 2015 and learnt a lot. The knowledge I received – and especially during practicals – has been effective for me. I am now able to deal better with clients using advanced dental technology."

Mr Nicholas Muriithi Nyaga, a teacher employed by the Teachers Service Commission (TSC), graduated with a Bachelor of Education degree and is proud to have been in the pioneer class. "We were the first people in MKU class of the B.Ed programme," he recalls. "The university is student-oriented. For example, allowing us to pay fees in instalment and not lump sum was a big relief to us. The skills we acquired are also very useful. You leave MKU fully baked."

Mr Patrick K. Gachini graduated in December 2013, and it took him three months to get a job. He says: "Having undergone a hands-on practical experience and good



MKU graduands in a past graduation ceremony

**I advise anyone joining MKU that they are making the right choice, and that they are getting to an institution where they will be nurtured and provided with the best modern skills that will help them get their dream jobs**

theoretical work, it was easy to cope with my job demands. I would advise anyone keen to get a good university education to join MKU, since it is a centre of excellence."

Patrick Kinoti, Area Trade Marketer, Bidco Africa, graduated in December 2014 with a Bachelor of Commerce (Marketing option) degree.

He was employed immediately after graduation. He shares: "The quality education I received at MKU was the major contributing factor to me securing a job at Bidco Africa Limited, a market leader in Fast Moving Consumer Goods in East and Central Africa. To be part of that company, you must have some unique skills and competencies. All my abilities and skills were instilled in me by the university through improved infrastructure, among them the ultra-modern library, ample study rooms and villas and

lecturers, some of whom I will never forget for the personal support and hard work to ensure we got the best."

Mr Kinoti continues: "I advise anyone joining MKU that they are making the right choice, and that they are getting to an institution where they will be nurtured and provided with the best modern skills that will help them get their dream jobs. It is an institution that supports innovations and recognises talent. Thus, for the most creative students, they get full support to take their innovations to another level and become their own bosses and create employment for others.

"MKU offers the best at an affordable cost. I first enrolled at the institution as it was affordable, and my guardian was able to settle my fees without much struggle. I'm grateful to God for that."



Mr Humphrey M. Mwamboo

## MKU, a premier university of its own class in the region

I joined Mount Kenya University in January 2015 to Head the Socio-Economic Research Programme, a docket that was later expanded to include Community Engagement. As a researcher, I led all endeavors in my docket including fundraising where I joined hands with experienced faculty such as Dr Jesse Gitaka and won a grant (40 million) from County Innovation Challenge Fund (CICF) to aid in community work. Later, working in a team led by Dr. Francis W. Muregi we won a grant (83.6 million) from Templeton World Charity Foundation Inc., to establish Christian and Scientific Association of Kenya (CSAK). CSAK is a professional, non-political, non-sectarian Association geared

towards facilitating synergetic interaction between science and Christian faith. Being knowledgeable and experienced in project management, Mount Kenya University offered me an opportunity to serve as the first Executive Administrator of CSAK.

In Mount Kenya University, I have realized the unfolding of professional world. Interaction with experienced faculty as well as the opportunity to utilize knowledge and skills gained overtime has enabled achievement of strides otherwise not possible outside Mount Kenya University. A culture of mentorship and teamwork underpinned by professionalism remains the fuel to scaling the heights of education and service to community in this

institution. Boundless opportunities for staff development including interaction with donors in Kenya and abroad, linkages with other best rated universities in the world, interacting with government officials as well as serving and learning with the community in the field clearly make Mount Kenya University a unique premier university in the region.

The ingrained culture of staff and student support as well as open door policy right from the Chairman of the university Prof. Simon Gicharu and the University Management under the responsive leadership of Prof. Stanley Waudu makes Mount Kenya University the bastion of education in comfort.

The ultra-modern infrastructure of Mount Kenya University enables research of all kinds leading to creation of new knowledge that not only benefits Mount Kenya University students but the world at large. This qualifies Mount Kenya University as a university offering not just quality education and service to community but an institution of career mentorship, growth and development to its students, staff and Kenya. Truly, the vision bearer of Mount Kenya University, Prof. Simon Gicharu has not only touched the core of the nation's area of need but has also shown the way for other enterprising individuals. God Bless Mount Kenya University.

**PROSPECTS FOR AND CHALLENGES OF THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY GRADUATE**

*Scaling the Heights of Education*

## Committed to quality through ISO 9001:2008 Certification

The ISO 9001:2008 quality management system (QMS) has been a major boon to the MKU. It has helped the university to remain at the top in offering services to clients (students). It has also been vital in the cultivation of healthy relationships with stakeholders owing to its robust systems and procedures which are regularly audited every quarter of an year. MKU has put in place modalities of transiting from ISO 9001:2008 to ISO 9001:2015 Certification by the end of 2017.

This is according to Professor Mwangi Peter Wanderi, MKU's Director of Quality Assurance, Linkages and Partnerships.

He reveals that various accrediting bodies have visited the university and given positive feedback on its academic status. A prime example is the Commission for University Education that conducted an audit of the university's academic resources and processes at the Main Campus in November 2016 and at the campuses in 2015.

Prof Wanderi says the directorate uses partnerships as a means of benchmarking. "We have targeted international and local partners for benchmarking with very positive results. A good example is our benchmarking with universities," he says.

According to him, the university has three objectives for benchmarking:



**Prof. Mwangi Peter Wanderi, Director, Quality Assurance, Linkages and Partnerships**

- 1 To add quality by benchmarking with best practice
- 2 Increasing the university's visibility
- 3 Teaching, research and community outreach beyond the university.

In its quality policy, the university says it is "committed to the provision of quality teaching, research and consultancy, and community service to meet the requirements of its customers."

## Well done, Prof Gicharu tells Dr Matiang'i

Mount Kenya University Founder and Chairman Prof Simon N. Gicharu has commended efforts of the education ministry in rooting out examination cheating. He praised Education Cabinet Secretary Dr Fred Matiang'i and the Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC) fraternity for a job well done in the 2016 national examinations.

He noted that the CS has injected fresh energy and incomparable zeal that promises to bring about the needed reforms.

"Cheating in exams has far-reaching ramifications," said Prof Gicharu in his address to the 11th Graduation congregation.

He warned that the multiplier effect of exam cheating in the economy is enormous.



**Dr Fred Matiang'i, Education Cabinet Secretary**

## At MKU, quality assurance and linkages are key

Quality assurance and linkages are central tenets in all the services and processes at Mount Kenya University. To support this commitment, the University management instituted the Directorate of Quality Assurance and Linkages. It is headed by Professor Mwangi Peter Wanderi.

According to Prof Wanderi, linkages of value to the university are sought and established. These include partnerships with institutions, such as hospitals, where students get practical experience in their fields and where resources are also shared to the benefit of both partners.

Mount Kenya University has continuously initiated multi-million shilling community-oriented academic support projects.

One such outstanding project is the construction of the Ksh300 million General Kago Road Funeral Home in Thika.

In 2013, the University signed a memorandum of understanding with Thika Level 5 Hospital, a government facility, for the construction of a Ksh300 million funeral home for the community in Kiambu County, Kenya. The new mortuary, with the capacity to accommodate 200 bodies, replaced an old, dilapidated one that had been built by the British settlers in 1940 and had space for only 20 bodies.

Besides giving the community a modern facility whereby the bereaved can preserve their lost ones with dignity, the University uses one wing of the mortuary for training its medical students.

The University also sponsors international and national conferences and summits that provide forums for policy makers to exchange ideas towards community development. Examples include the National Water Summit held in Turkana County in 2014, the International Conference on Innovation and Entrepreneurship held in 2013, and the International Conference on Administration and Business Management (ICABUMPA) held in 2015 and the International Conference on Peace, Security and Social Enterprise to be held at Safari Park Hotel between 16th and 17th June 2017. Other examples include, Annual Kenya Primary and Secondary Schools Heads Associations conferences.

MKU is also contributing towards reducing unemployment. Currently, unemployment in Kenya stands at 40 per cent. One solution to this is



**MKU GEA Apprentices during their bootcamp at SACDEP Thika 2016**

entrepreneurship. The Graduate Enterprise Academy (GEA) offers free training on entrepreneurship to the University alumni. MKU established a US\$ 400,000 (KSH 40,000,000) grant for this as explained on another column).

Some recent international MoUs signed include:

**MKU-Hawkhill Partnership:** Hawkhill is a Norwegian based company and has an office in Nairobi. Through the MoU signed in November between MKU and Hawkhill, a joint grant proposal was developed and submitted to NORAD for possible funding.

**MKU-Wadhvani Foundation Linkage:** Wadhvani is a Foundation based at Silicon Valley in the USA. It supports entrepreneurship training in Universities in developing countries as a community outreach. Accordingly, 18 MKU staff will be trained as ToTs and others as Master Trainers on online entrepreneurship promotion course to be offered to students as co-curriculum activities.

**MKU-BRSU Linkage:** Bonn Rhein Sieg University of Applied Sciences in Bonn, Germany, has been linked to MKU's Graduate Enterprise Academy by a German Professor Emeritus, Prof. Dr. Richard Sikora. The new relationship has seen GEA's programme presented for benchmarking at a conference in Bonn in November 2016. A follow-up visit to GEA by BRSU Vice Rector, International Affairs, is scheduled for mid-January 2017.

**MKU - Vincent Pol University Partnership**

The Vincent Pol University partnership is a product of collaborative grant writing effort by the two partner universities that resulted in grant of the Erasmus+ Program Grant application in January this year (2016). The Erasmus+ Program spearheaded by Vincent Pol University supports staff and student exchange among others. For example, the Dean School of Hospitality, Travel and Tourism Management and the Head, Department of Management in the School of Business and Economics are participants in this programme. Two students, are scheduled to participate in a 5 month exchange programme from January to May 2017 at Vincent Pol University.

**MKU - Clarke University partnership**

The MKU - Clarke University partnership also supports staff student exchange among other activities. Mount Kenya University will host 12 undergraduate students and a team of top management from Clarke University between May and June 2017. The partnership supports interaction between the two universities via teleconferencing.

**MKU - Xinyu University partnership**

The MKU - Xinyu University partnership will create synergy necessary for the growth and development of the MKU School of Engineering, Energy and the Built Environment.

## MKU Pictorial



1. H. E. Jhony Bara Arimendi, Venezuela Ambassador to Kenya, makes a courtesy call to Prof Stanley Waudo, MKU Vice-Chancellor
2. Prof. David Some, CEO, Commission for University Education (CUE) shares a word with the Vice-Chancellor Prof. Stanley Waudo during the closing assembly of the Distance & Institution Based Learning (DIBL) Session
3. A visit by Uganda's High Commissioner to Kenya, H.E Angelina Wapakhabulo
4. Zhang Taicheng, President Professor, Jingtangshan University, signs the visitors' book at the MKU Vice Chancellor's office. Looking on is Deputy Dean & Associate Professor (China)
5. MKU Vice-Chancellor Prof Stanley Waudo meets Mr Martin Clark from Brunel University, United Kingdom, during the latter's visit to the university's main campus in Thika
6. Stella Maris Kathome, a Graduate Enterprise Academy graduand, receives a certificate from Vimal Shah, CEO, Bidco Oil Refineries Limited.

**PROSPECTS FOR AND CHALLENGES OF THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY GRADUATE**

*Scaling the Heights of Education*

# MKU Pictorial



**7** Radio presenter William Tuva of Mseto East Africa music programme during a campus tour to nurture talents at MKU

**8.** New students orientation at the campus

**9** Some of the comedians during Churchill Live Show held at MKU graduation Pavilion, Thika

**10** MKU students during a security awareness forum on security and disaster response at the university grounds

**11** MKU student leader Mr Charles Karondo gives a word of advice to General Kago Primary School class 8 candidates prior to their 2016 KCPE exams

**12** DVC, Academic and Research Affairs, Dr. Bibianne Waiganjo makes vows that bind with Aidi Kamau



## Digital Varsity

# Finally, a fully integrated digital learning system acquires shape

MKU Digital Varsity, the technology and digital hub responsible for providing online and e-learning, has moved its main offices from MKU Union Towers in Nairobi to the Main Campus in Thika.

This is to actualise the long-term dream of the university management to fully integrate digital learning and realise a target of 20,000 students in the next three years.

A majority of the university's academic schools have made their courses available on the digital learning platform.

The Digital Varsity exposes students to interactive technologies. They interact with their online instructors and fellow students through the Digital Platform, and submit their assignments and CATs online.

Lecturers mark and deliver results to the students using the same system, which then archives all the details for reference by the academic faculty.

Students undertake courses at their own pace and can read ahead or go back to some topics at any time.

The Digital Varsity has attracted students from over 30 countries, who take their examinations through the approved Kenyan Embassies.

The university offers additional students support through highly qualified academic and other staff, who link up with the students online and provide mentorship in every programme.



Mount Kenya University continues to excel in ICT use in education. It won the Information and Communications Technology Association of Kenya (ICTAK) 2015 ICT Value Overall Award. It also won the Best Use of ICT in Education Award, Digital and Virtual Learning Excellence Award and Enterprise System Excellence Award as well as ICT Manager of the Year Award.

A customer care desk manned by qualified customer care personnel connects with the students, receives and acts on incoming mails and provides prompt feedback on [virtual@mku.ac.ke](mailto:virtual@mku.ac.ke).

Credit transfers also apply in the Digital Varsity, and a student transferring from another university can get a maximum of 15 credit transfers, which is equivalent to two academic semesters.

## Setting the right environment

### Learning Management System

The university has provided an interactive learning management system that effectively supports e-learning. This provides for student-to-student interactions, student-and-instructor interactions, and evaluation of interaction.

### Institutional, Technical and ICT Support Infrastructure

MKU has invested to ensure availability and adequacy of technical and ICT infrastructure, and well trained technical support staff.

### Institutional Organisational Structure

The university has put in place internal organisational structures to facilitate the development, coordination, support and management of electronically offered programmes.

### Preparation of Course Materials

There is a clear process of preparation of course materials and instructional design, quality content and ease of delivery being the ultimate objective.

The Digital Varsity team trained more than 80 faculty staff members from November 7-10, 2016 at the main campus in Thika, and assigned them as module writers and peer reviewers. They are fully equipped with the necessary practical skills and knowledge on modules development, review and delivery. They are in a good position to implement the Distance and Institution Based Learning (DIBL) from December 2016.

### Self-Learning Materials (SLMs)

The university has ensured availability of self-learning materials to suit learners' needs, based on a clear layout and format as approved by the university.



### Extra benefits

The digital learning programmes offers a number of other extra benefits:

**Flexible Students Registration:** The option of online registration brings about convenience and comfort.

**Affordable Education:** Digital learning students access university resources online. This reduces the cost of their learning.

**Easier to use Online Systems:** Courses and relevant resources, including learning materials, are arranged in an easy to access manner. Students can reach learning materials using any ICT gadget they have in hand: smart phone, tablet, laptop or desktop computer.

**Sitting exams through Kenyan embassy:** All Diaspora and foreign students sit for exams at Kenya Embassies abroad.

**Strong Students Support:** There is a team of dedicated staff to offer support to students.

The Digital Varsity is largely web-centred, but does not necessarily limit itself to learners outside a conventional classroom. It uses multimedia, and, besides delivering content, also enables a high level of interaction among learners, teachers, peers and administration, both synchronously and asynchronously.

### Staff Support

#### Orientation and Training on Development of Learning Materials

The university conducts appropriate orientation and training on requirements, skills and strategies of developing materials for open and distance learning, by use of facilitators and training manuals.

#### Orientation of Course Tutors

The university ensures appropriate orientation to course tutors or lecturers and counsellors by expert trainers on ODEL systems.

#### Orientation of Non-academic Staff

The university ensures appropriate orientation of non-academic staff.

### Student Services

The university has facilitated orientation for learners to prepare them to undertake ODEL programmes.

#### Residential Sessions

The university organises residential sessions for learners for effective administration of the ODEL programmes.

#### Assessment Procedure

The university has put in place appropriate assessment procedures that will ensure proper assessment of the learner's ability and achievement and communication of results to the learners.

#### Student Evaluation

The university ensures that evaluation and assessment of students meet the objectives and learning outcomes of the curriculum and objectives of the learners and the world of work.

PROSPECTS FOR AND CHALLENGES OF THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY GRADUATE

*Scaling the Heights of Education*

# Daniel scales academic heights – thanks to a favourable classroom, ‘revolutionary digital experience’

*He earned a Bachelor’s degree, is undertaking his Masters and now contemplates pursuing his Doctorate – all through MKU Digital Varsity*

Highly mobile worker Daniel Ekuwom spends a lot of his spare time online. But no, he does not use this time to trawl social sites exclusively for fun. To him, the Net – courtesy of Mount Kenya University’s Digital Varsity – is his classroom.

Daniel is among the thousands of Kenyans in the Diaspora – and even others within the country’s borders – pursuing university education through Mount Kenya University’s Digital Varsity.

“I have been working out of Kenya for long,” he says, explaining that because of the nature of the work he does, settling down to attend classes at a physical campus is almost impossible.

“I needed a convenient way to study for a degree while still working,” he continues. In 2012, therefore, he enrolled at MKU’s Digital Varsity and completed his Bachelor’s degree studies in 2014 while deployed to serve in Sierra Leone in an Ebola Response programme.

He is back at the Digital Varsity and completed the course work for his MSC in Procurement and Supplies in December 2016.

He is considering “whether to pursue a PhD programme through the digital campus due to the platform’s flexibility.”

“MKU Digital Varsity,” he declares, “is one of the best models for making higher education accessible, given that not everyone will get time to physically attend lectures. It is more flexible. As a



**Daniel Ekuwom, an MKU MSC in Procurement and Supplies Student, discusses a point with his academic colleagues.**

student, it is easy to check with lecturers to air your view.”

He describes studying through MKU’s Digital Varsity as a “revolutionary digital learning experience.”

Daniel is happy to report that he receives prompt responses from lecturers and management. “They are committed and accessible,” he says. “If there are any issues, they are resolved fast.”

He studied for his Bachelor of Development Studies degree through MKU’s Digital Varsity while working in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

Daniel presently works with the UN mission-MINUSCA in the Central African Republic (CAR), but does not know where tomorrow will find him.

“With this mode of study, I have never had any problem with my employers – whether a local or international non-governmental organisation (NGO),” he says.

Daniel has spent more than 10 years working with different global agencies such as World Food Programme (WFP), Unicef and the UN Peacekeeping Mission in CAR, among others.

## Sacco supports members’ economic and social interests

TIT Sacco started in January 2005 when nine members of the Thika Institute of Technology (TIT) Welfare came together and contributed KSh7,800. This encouraged other staff members, who during a welfare meeting in February 2005, proposed a check-off system to facilitate consistent contributions.

One year later, TIT Sacco Society Ltd obtained formal registration.

With the motto, “Save Regularly, Borrow Wisely and Repay Promptly”, the Sacco is working hard to support the economic and social interests of its members in accordance with co-operative principles.

### Membership

TIT Sacco has undergone tremendous growth, and now has 1,247 members drawn from Mount Kenya University (MKU) employees. It also admits members’ nominees.

This growth in membership translates to the following statistics:

- Loans to members stand at KSh5

million per month on average.

- Monthly remittance from MKU averages KSh5 million per month.

### Products and Services

**Normal loan:** This is granted in support of long term development. The repayment is spread over 24 months. The maximum loan amount granted is up to three times the members share deposit, with interest charged at 1% per month on the reducing balance.

**School Fee Loan:** This caters for primary and secondary education. It is repaid within 24 months at an interest rate of 1% per month on the reducing balance.

**Emergency Loan:** This supports emergency needs such as accidents, hospital bills, court fines, etc. The loan is repayable within 24 months at an interest rate of 1% per month on the reducing balance.

**Salary Advance:** This is a cash advance against a members’ salary. It attracts an interest of 5%, and is repayable within



**Emma Kamau, TIT Sacco Chairperson**

one month.

Through these products, the Sacco has transformed the lifestyles of its members, enabling them to:

- Educate their children
- Start or improve businesses
- Build properties
- Improve farming.

## Dons lay ground for exchange deal with Polish university

MKU Acting Dean, School of Hospitality, Travel and Tourism Management Jane Kanjuru, and John Muhia, the Head of Department of Management, have returned from Poland. This follows a successful 10-day visit, which was fully sponsored by Erasmus+ Programme.

Two Mount Kenya University students are set to visit the same university under the same programme from February to May 2017.

The Dons paid a visit to Chancellor and Founder of Vincent Pol University (VPU) in Lublin, Poland, and finalised on the students’ travel plans. They visited University Academic Physiotherapy Centre and Cube Club, where the visiting students will be accommodated during their stay.

The duo held a meeting with the Commission for International Scientific Co-operation in Tourism and Business, and discussed the modalities of students’ exchange programmes. Possible topics to be offered online by Vincent Paul University lecturer Dr. Grzegorz Gil, will include:

- Sports tourism
- Branding the nation
- Political tourism
- Trends in tourism transport
- Influences of information technology in tourism
- Economic significance in tourism of regions of the world.

During their stay, the dons attended staff training mobility at VPU, and delivered the staff mobility lecture to Tourism, Hospitality and International Business Management students.

## My creative edge comes from MKU, says former student

Bryan Okello graduated from MKU in 2012 with a Bachelor in Business Information Technology (BBIT), and went on to found a tech firm.

He was already employed at the Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA) when he was pursuing this degree, and says the course added value to his life. Other than earning him a promotion at his workplace, the degree, he testifies, sharpened his creative edge.

That is how in 2015, jointly with a few of his friends, he founded an IT company – Jabotech Creative Media Ltd ([www.jabotech.co.ke](http://www.jabotech.co.ke)).

They were driven by the desire to transform lives by disrupting the status quo in the health and education systems in Africa. The Jabotech team discovered an opportunity to use digital and mobile technology to revolutionise maternal health and child care in Kenya and Africa.

Bryan describes himself as a “highly motivated, passionate and result-oriented professional”.

He says he has a keen interest in engaging, developing and impacting communities through the creative and innovative use of information communication technologies (mobile and digital technologies).

As an IT professional, he strives to deliver highly effective and creative solutions to business and technology challenges.

If people he knows wanted to join MKU, his advice to them would be: “It is the university of choice for quality education.”

He adds: “Many of my fellow graduates are either employed or self-employed, and are currently doing very well in their respective careers.”

## ICT

# Management information systems (MIS)

Information technology is transforming how members of the Mount Kenya University fraternity conduct business at the institution. The Management Information Systems department has automated its processes and succeeded in enhancing efficiency manifold.

This drive to entrench ICT since 2013 has won the university various awards from the Information Communication Technology Association of Kenya (ICTAK).

The MIS Department supports the university with systems that make management operations extremely efficient. It supports staff and students to enable them engage in their academic activities smoothly.

MIS deputy director Vincent Karuru reckons that the university has embraced technology at an impressive pace. "Automation has reduced costs of various functions," he explains.

Mr Karuru adds that, "Through re-engineering, automation has eliminated redundant processes (those that do not add value). It has also cut costs by reducing paperwork. For example, there is no need for face-to-face interaction during clearance. Students apply online and are notified of their status through the same process. Even for admission, students can download forms from the student portal and they do not have to travel to campus. The processes are integrated with SMS which is used to notify the students."

Regarding student finance, the systems have enabled the university to drastically cut queues that were common at the finance office especially during the beginning of a semester and just before graduation.

MKU is working with banks to integrate its system with theirs such that as soon as students deposit money in the university account. The deposits will be reflected real-time.

"We are now rolling out biometric systems for access control, time and attend-



Chesoni Chetambi a first year BMLS student goes through the process of Biometric registration with the assistance of Deputy director Mr Vincent Karuru ( right)

ance as well as visitor management," says Mr Karuru. "Biometrics help in real-time data capture."

The systems are function-specific. The Library Information System (LIS) aids in recording issuance of books, returns and bookings, among others. It is also the backbone of the library's e-repository system. The system also allows students to access e-resources both on and off campus.

The e-learning management system supports digital or distance students to access learning materials.

The student management information system is integrated with other functions such as finance because students pay fees, thus the link to finance. The system captures student data during application, administration and registration; student finance; course registration; class attendance; exam-



Vincent Karuru, Deputy Director Management Information Systems

The e-learning management system supports digital or distance students to access learning materials.

ination and results processing; student attachment, teaching practice and internship; processing of graduands; student clearance; gown issuing and returns. By January 2017, the system will be able to issue certificates.

By mid 2017, the university will have installed an information system that will help the university keep track of students doing projects and theses. For postgraduate students, the system will provide information on when presentations will be made and who is supervising each presenting candidate.

Mr Karuru says what MKU is doing is in line with the Commission of University Education's guidelines. The guidelines require that universities electronically maintain biodata of all students.

"We had embarked on the process even before CUE issued the guidelines."

Mr Karuru says biometrics is game-changing. Regarding access control, the university is able to know who is in the premises and who is going out. Portable biometrics readers will be used for recording class and examination attendance. "The software for attendance will be integrated with the student management system," says Mr Karuru.

The faculty portal is also undergoing enhancements so that lecturers can access a variety of information and perform diverse functions at the click of a mouse. Both full-time and associate faculty will be able to access information on their workloads for a semester, view teaching and examination timetables and know the names of the attachment or teaching practice students they have been allocated to supervise. They can then key in feedback if it is needed. They can enter continuous assessment tests (CAT) and examination marks or results. They will also mark student attendance.

## MKU ready to set up teaching hospital as medical school grows

Mount Kenya University plans to build its own teaching hospital to support the learning of an expanding list of medical programmes.

MKU's Medical School has already lined up several new programmes it intends to introduce by the end of 2017.

Dr Stanley Kang'ethe, the Principal, College of Health Sciences, has indicated that preparation of curricula for Bachelor of Science programmes in Anatomy, Biochemistry, Microbiology and Physiology is in progress.

He has also revealed that the school will introduce a Masters in Medicine (MMeD)

programme in 2018 to help develop more medical specialists for the country and East Africa in general. He says the programme will help to bridge the shortage of surgeons, gynaecologists and paediatricians, among other medical specialists, in the country.

Before the MKU Teaching Hospital is completed, the university will rely on its Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with other hospitals for the practical teaching of the students. The MoUs are in place.

Dr Kang'ethe says the vision for the school is to produce extremely well educated world class graduates who can work in any health or academic setting. These

will be professionals capable of delivering timely health care, both professionally and ethically.

The Medical School has introduced changes that include more frequent student assessments. These assessments look at not only academics but also how students participate in class and practical lessons, and how they talk and relate to each other. The most recent is the enforcement of a professional dress code for the medical students. They are slowly transforming to little doctors, and the academic staff are happy with the changes they are noting so far.



PROSPECTS FOR AND CHALLENGES OF THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY GRADUATE

*Scaling the Heights of Education*

# Professional ICT Certification Training

The recently established Mount Kenya University's School of Computing and Informatics offers various computing masters, degree, diploma and certificate programmes in computing. It is also giving a chance to students to undertake different professional courses.

The professional courses give MKU computing graduates a competitive edge as they are able to prove to employers that they possess hands-on skills. This is according to Mr John Kamau, Dean, MKU School of Computing and Informatics who said demand for information technology (IT) skills is in high demand in the East African region.

MKU has 4,000 students pursuing IT programmes across its campuses. With the University developing more facilities, it will be able to handle double this number within the next six months.

Some courses are still being developed.

**Those in the pipeline include:**

- Bachelor of Science in Computer Science
- Diploma in Computer Science.

The current programmes offered in the school of computing:

**Masters**

- Master of Science Information Technology
- Master of Science in Information Science
- Masters in cyber security

**Bachelors**

- Bachelor of Science in Information Technology
- Bachelor of Science Information Science



Students using the digital e-section at the main campus, Thika

- Bachelor of Business Information, Communication Technology
- Bachelor of Business Information Technology

**Diploma**

- Diploma in Information Technology
- Diploma In Information Science
- Diploma in Business Information Technology
- Diploma In Information Systems

**Certificates**

- Certificate In Information Technology
- Certificate In Business Information Technology

Mount Kenya University recently signed agreements with Cisco and Oracle professional certification bodies to give training in ICT a boost. Both Cisco and Oracle

are based in USA.

The university has set up a Cisco Networking Academy at the MKU Union Towers, Nairobi, and has put up advanced training laboratories, workshops and coordinating offices.

The academy is being managed by Cisco certified instructors, coordinators and technical team. Intake is conducted monthly (Contact Cisco Academy via [ciscoacademy@mku.ac.ke](mailto:ciscoacademy@mku.ac.ke) or visit Union Towers, 5th Floor).

The academy has the potential to grow and launch all the online Cisco courses in selected campuses and centres of the MKU.

Cisco provides the curriculum, learning platform and support resources. Local university instructors enrol students, provide training, support and mentorship.

**Why enrol at the MKU Cisco Networking Academy**

- Prepares Students for Success: Cisco Networking Academy identifies and develops the skills people and businesses need to thrive in a digital economy. The academy works with educators, employers and technology experts to create courses that prepare students for the future.
- Curriculum Features: The Cisco Networking Academy curriculum is delivered online using a proprietary learning platform. It's an engaging, up-to-date curriculum created by experts in technology and instructional design.
- Offers hands-on labs and online activities for practical application of learned skills.
- Uses Cisco Packet Tracer, a network configuration simulation tool used for teaching, gaming and team building.
- Provides instructor guides, conducts community forums, and offers professional development support to instructors.
- Innovative online assessments include embedded activities, simulations, text questions and performance-based reviews.

**Courses offered at the Cisco Academy**

- IT Essentials: Learn how to build and set up a computer and connect it securely to a network: your first step to an IT career.
- CCNA Routing and Switching (level 1-4): Learn networking fundamentals and advanced concepts with hands-on practice and simulations to develop your skills.
- CCNA Security: Learn to design, implement and support security for networked devices and become an in-demand security professional.
- Introduction to IoT: Learn how the Internet of Things (IoT) and the digital transformation of business create new value and new job opportunities.
- Introduction to Cyber security: Learn how to protect yourself online and in social media, while discovering careers in cyber security.
- Cyber security Essentials: Learn the fundamental principles, procedures and practices of information and networking security.
- NDG Linux Essentials: Learn basic open source concepts and how to use the Linux operating system and command line.

## Oracle Training

MKU recently emerged as the first university to partner with Oracle Corporation in offering training leading to Oracle certification.

Under the Oracle Workforce Development Programme (WDP), the university is offering the Oracle Database Administration Course comprising of Oracle Certified Associate (OCA)-100 hours, and the Oracle Certified Professional course (OCP)-60 hours.

Are you interested in becoming an Oracle Certified Professional (OCP)? Join MKU's one-year Oracle Workforce Development Programme today and open your future in Government, Counties, Banks and other global organisations using your Oracle E-Business suite and Oracle Data Base Administration.

The WDP prepares a new generation of IT specialists to enter the workforce with the most in-demand Oracle skills.

By offering authorised Oracle training content as a part of existing certificate, diploma, and/or degree programmes, MKU provides relevant and desirable job skills for the increasingly competitive work environment.

The programme also addresses the shortage of skilled employees in the global technology industry.

A recent study reveals that over 87 percent agree that Oracle Certification enhances their professional credibility. About 84 percent of certified students have seen their job prospects improve, and over 70 percent say that Oracle certification improved their earning power. More than 83 percent find themselves to be more productive in their jobs.

Oracle training is conducted at the MKU Union Towers by Oracle approved instructors. The first group of students will sit for Exams in December 2016.

The university has plans to integrate and extend Oracle training in all the other campuses, including Rwanda.

**The Oracle students benefit from:**

- High quality course content developed by the Oracle product teams and based on real-world customer implementations.
- Comprehensive, lab-based, hands-on practice with Oracle.

Contact: [oracle@mku.ac.ke](mailto:oracle@mku.ac.ke)

## Why county minister has kind words for MKU

Gitau Thabanja has had an eventful personal journey since 2011. That year, he joined Mount Kenya University as associate faculty. A year later, he moved to the university's marketing directorate, where he participated heavily in the drive to motivate secondary school students to perform well.

"I remember in 2013, I visited 63 high schools with the marketing team," he recalls.

Then in February 2014, the Nyandarua County Governor appointed Gitau as a member of a task force that looked into land matters in the county. He must have impressed the governor, who seven months later, appointed Gitau the Nyandarua County Government minister for land.

At 31, Gitau became one of the youngest ministers appointed to serve in a county government in Kenya.

Despite his fast political rise, Gitau has retained the urge to advance academically.

"I had a passion to pursue a Masters in Governance degree," he explains how higher education has made a difference in his life. "I had applied to universities in Germany and Belgium, but no university in these countries offered this particular course. Then while surfing the Internet, I saw that Mount Kenya University offered the programme. I enrolled in 2012 for the Masters in Governance & Ethics programme and the knowledge and skills I acquired made me a better manager."

Gitau undertook his studies as a digital varsity student because of the demanding nature of his job. "This offered me the flexibility I needed,"



Peter Gitau Thabanja, Minister for Land, Nyandarua County Government

he says.

He goes on: "I used to sit my examinations in the nearest MKU campus. For example, one time I sat one while marketing for MKU in Kitale and another in Eldoret. Even while outside the country, I am able to do my Continuous Assessment Tests (CATs). I sat one in London in the United Kingdom as well as in other nations."

Gitau reports that his interaction with lecturers has been impressive. He values their support.

He was among the Masters graduands at MKU's 11th Graduation Ceremony.

## Research

# How MKU injects research-based knowledge into partner projects

**M**ount Kenya University staff and students are making a difference in the community by bringing their knowledge to bear on partners' health initiatives.

Dr Peter Kirira, the Deputy Director of Research, says two projects in Marsabit run by Partners for Care are examples of such initiatives. For two years now, the university has sustained its partnership with the non-governmental organisation (NGO).

The NGO is involved in an anti-jigger campaign in the county. Also, with the support of US-based MedShare, it is improving Marsabit Hospital's infrastructural capacity.

MKU researchers critically investigate these projects to determine the impact they have on the beneficiary communities. They will then prepare and disseminate reports of their findings for the benefit of humanity.

As Dr Kirira explains, "some people might look at what we do as corporate social responsibility, but that is not the case. Even though our staff and our nursing students go to Marsabit to assist with the anti-jigger campaign, our primary mission is to confirm the impact of jigger treatment."

He adds: "Partners for Care's anti-jig-

ger campaign has treated pupils in 14 schools in Marsabit. As a university research team, we want to confirm how the campaign has improved school attendance and the health of the beneficiaries of the treatment. We are also interested in identifying the factors that trigger jigger infestation or measures that can deal with this problem."

Dr Kirira reveals that the MKU team has learnt, for example, that when members of the community smear their houses with cow dung, they seal cracks on the walls where fleas hide.

### Equipping Marsabit Hospital

The equipping of Marsabit Hospital is yet another case study the MKU researchers are undertaking.

Working with US humanitarian aid organisation MedShare, Partners for Care has helped equip Marsabit Hospital with incubators for newborns. MedShare sources and directly delivers surplus medical supplies and equipment to communities in need around the world. MedShare brought in the equipment and Coca Cola cleared the containers.

"MKU identifies how beneficial that intervention is to a needy hospital such as Marsabit Hospital," says Dr Kirira.



Mount Kenya University lecturers and Partners for Care staff members during a planning meeting

### Water backpack

Another initiative that MKU is studying is the water backpack that Partners for Care is promoting. The special backpack is an alternative to water Jerricans that are popular in rural Kenya as containers for transporting the precious liquid – often on the backs or shoulders of women and girls, and for long distances in dry regions such as Marsabit County.

"The Jerricans are very dirty inside because it is difficult to clean them in the inside," notes Dr Kirira. "The foldable water packs are better than the cans. Water stored in the packs can be treated and accessed through a tap. They also cool the stored water."

Explaining the involvement of MKU in the project, he says: "Partners for Care identified where women trek long distances to collect water. The role of MKU is to determine whether the water backpacks have been used for intended purposes. We have learnt that the women suffer from muscle pains from carrying

Jerricans for long on their shoulders."

The MKU researchers are studying whether members of the community use the water backpacks, if they use them correctly, and whether they clean the liner. The study also looks at whether people can buy the water backpacks if manufactured in Kenya.

Dr Francis Muregi, the Director of MKU's Directorate of Research, Grants and Endowments, says community outreach programmes are meant to disseminate the university's knowledge.

"It is about communicating our research in a language that people can understand," he says as he explains the rationale behind community outreach programmes. "An example is our partnership with Partners for Care and the Bungoma Hospital neonatal project. Others include dryland farming in Lodwar, Turkana County, medical camps throughout the country and the MKU-Kenya Forestry Research Institute project funded by CIIIL."

MKU researchers critically investigate these projects to determine the impact they have on the beneficiary communities.

## VC's research grant spurs faculty to innovate, create new knowledge

**T**hanks to the Vice Chancellor's research and innovation grant, Mount Kenya University faculty members have sharpened their innovation tools. An unprecedented number of them have published and presented research papers over the last one year alone.

Dr Francis Muregi, the Director, MKU's Directorate of Research, Grants and Endowments, says the culture of innovation has taken root in the university.

"The grant has built the institutional capacity of staff and students," Dr Muregi indicates. "This is seen in the increasing dissemination of research findings. If the researchers want to attend a conference to share their findings, the grant will sponsor them to the function. If they want to publish their research and a journal asks them to pay, the grant will take care of the expense 100 per cent. If researchers want to protect and copyright their intellectual property, through regis-

tration or patenting with relevant bodies, the grant will lend support."

Dr Muregi explains that the grant exists to spur a research and innovation culture at MKU for knowledge generation.

He gives the example of the engineering department's Mr Peter Mithamo who has been assisted to register two patents: a tumbler compositor that creates compost from food wastes and a solar food drier.



Dr Francis Muregi, the Director, MKU's Directorate of Research, Grants and Endowments

PROSPECTS FOR AND CHALLENGES OF THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY GRADUATE

*Scaling the Heights of Education*

## With MKU on our side, our mission in Kenya is bearing lasting fruits – Partners for Care founder

**M**s Connie E. Cheren, the Founder and President of non-governmental organisation Partners for Care (PFC), makes a profound statement regarding Mount Kenya University. She says her organisation's relationship with the university is "one of the most important things we have in Kenya."

Partners for Care is in the business of saving lives by implementing innovative health interventions in communities "where other organisations don't go" – the unreached people. MKU is in the business of teaching, research, community service and consultancy.

Their businesses may appear to be unrelated, but in research and the desire to improve the people's quality of life, they are on common ground.

Ms Cheren points out that their partnership with MKU commenced in 2013 and has been fruitful.

"We would like to set up models of successful interventions that bring change," she says. "The impact or outcome of the interventions is what matters. MKU carries out research on the interventions and tells the story of the impact."

She continues: "Researching, studying and publishing results of these interventions is crucial. Why? We want to know: Is the intervention making a difference? If so, then it is worthwhile to tell the story to the world for the rest of humanity to pick key lessons and embrace the intervention. Informed by research, we can change course or shift to new interventions. This helps donors to know whether the funds they donated – for example, computers or hospital equipment – are making the desired difference."

Describing the core mission of the US-based NGO, she adds: "Our job is to render our help anywhere to decrease deaths among children under five. We work with local people – in this case, Kenyans – to implement our projects. We believe Kenyans can do a lot to help the country develop. Partners for Care does its part to bridge the development gap."

Partners for Care works with US organisations such as MedShare, Peace Passers, Ohio State University, Greif, Mobility Worldwide and Worldreader, as well as Coca Cola Foundation Africa among others, to deliver interventions in communities.

For example, MedShare donated seven 40-foot containers worth of equipment to Marsabit Hospital through Partners for Care. The theatre equipment worth hundreds of thousands of dollars and medical supplies has given the hospital a huge boost.

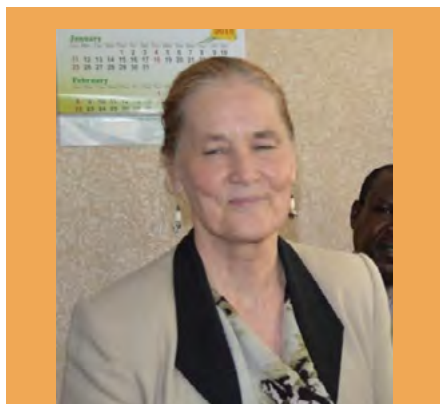
Ms Cheren is grateful to MKU for its support in analysing the NGO's inter-



From left: Dr Peter Kirira with President Partners for Care Madam Connie E. Cheren and her team during their visit to MKU Main Campus in Thika.

ventions. She is in particular impressed by the Vice Chancellor Prof Stanley W. Waucho and researchers drawn from University schools and the research directorate. In her words, "they are very dedicated and supportive."

"The MKU researchers led by Dr Jonathan Mwangi carried out an employee and customer satisfaction survey after we delivered equipment to Marsabit Hospital," she narrates. "They found that the seven 40-foot containers of medical supplies had a tremendous impact. With the new facilities in place, now more than three times the number of children is delivered at the hospital compared to before. These findings encourage MedShare to do more."



**'Our job is to render our help anywhere to decrease deaths among children under five'**

Ms Connie E. Cheren, Founder and President, Partners for Care

Another team of researchers led by MKU researcher, Dr Peter Kirira, is studying the impact of anti-jigger campaign efforts in Marsabit primary schools. These campaigns are carried out jointly every year by the NGO and MKU students. Preliminary results of the study indicate that the children's school attendance and performance have improved since they were rid of jiggers.

The research team also found that Partners for Care's promotion of a water backpack as an alternative to the ubiquitous Jerri cans was making a difference in the health of women, children and entire communities. Water carried in the backpacks is treated and rendered safe for drinking. The research team will be publishing the research findings on the intervention.

Also, working with MKU, the NGO will implement "Circle of Health", a medical insurance scheme for the poorest of the poor in three Nairobi slums, this year.

Residents of the slums will contribute KSh50 every month to be covered by the insurance scheme. They will have their health assessed on a regular basis so that they can adopt certain behaviours to stay healthy. Weekly monitoring of the diabetic will help them get appropriate treatment so that they do not develop kidney disease. MKU researchers will study this intervention to confirm its impact and publish a report on their findings.

Partners for Care also works with MKU nursing students to provide care at Marsabit Hospital. "We take interns from MKU to care for patients at the hospital as part of their learning," says Ms Cheren.

She adds: "Ours is a good partnership because MKU wants to make a positive difference in society by doing their part and we do ours. This way, we are able to positively impact the lives of the people of Kenya."

## MKU in collaborative project to curb mother and infant deaths

In August 2015, Mount Kenya University was awarded a grant from the CICF to implement a project focused on increasing new-born survival in Bungoma County. Evidence from a recent Kenya Demographic Health Survey indicated that Bungoma's estimated 31 neonatal deaths per 1,000 live births is among the highest in Kenya, where the average neonatal mortality is 22 deaths per 1,000 live births.

The County Innovation Challenge Fund (CICF) was created by the UK Department for International Development (DfID) to support the Kenya Government's efforts to reduce maternal and new-born mortality across the country. The programme is aimed at funding the design and implementation of innovative interventions, processes, technologies and services that disrupt the current model of service delivery to provide easier access to quality care for mothers and infants.

The CICF works across six focus counties in Kenya that have been identified as the locations with the poorest outcomes for maternal and neonatal health as well as confronting unique demographic and socio-cultural challenges. These counties are Homa Bay, Bungoma, Kakamega, Garissa, Turkana, and in Nairobi's Embakasi and Kamukunji sub-counties.

Mount Kenya University is collaborating with Fountain Africa Trust, a Non-Governmental Organisation based in Bungoma County, and the Bungoma County Ministry of Health to implement a health project aimed at saving the lives of mothers and their babies. The project entails the creation of special new-born care units where seven sub-county hospitals will receive essential equipment and training to manage new-born health complications. In addition, the team will work with the two referral hospitals to strengthen their ability to provide specialized new-born care. Through strengthening health care providers' ability to deliver quality care and connecting community health workers to these providers via a tele-health technology platform, the team hopes to reduce the number of neonatal deaths in Bungoma County by 30 per cent by the end of the implementation period. MKU and partners have also focused on involving the communities through sensitization training and education which the Health Minister expressed is essential for the sustainability of the project.

Since the beginning of the project, the MKU team and partners are in the process of implementing a series of activities in Bungoma County. They have begun setting-up the seven sub-county specialized neonatal care units and upgrading the current neonatal units at Bungoma and Webuye County Referral Hospitals. While upgrading the units, the team is also training 72 nurses and 18 clinicians, based in the hospitals, to diagnose and manage common newborn problems and make timely referrals.

Project manager Dan Gatungu has been very impressed with the milestones and achievements of the initiative thus far. The tele-health platform has been established to provide health care workers with easy access to support from skilled physicians when dealing with new-born health complications. A call centre was set-up to follow-up with mothers who have been discharged for the hospital to provide routine wellness checks for both the mother and new-born. In addition to updating clinical guidelines and disseminating them to health care providers, the program has trained 95 clinicians on neonatology and specialized care for new-borns. Lastly, the team has run sensitization and education meetings in an effort to increase the demand for care as well as promoting new-born care through the local FM radio stations.

MKU and their partners have worked hard to design an intervention aimed at tackling many of the delays in accessing care for mothers and new-borns from increasing families seeking care to improving the quality of care new-borns receive while at the hospital. During implementation, the team has been careful to include communities at every step of the process to ensure that the project will be sustainable well-beyond the end of the CICF and make a lasting impact on the communities in Bungoma County.

## MKU Rwanda

# Such honour to be Chancellor-Designate of this promising University – Prof Struthers

Experienced economics don promises to develop MKUR into a centre of excellence in higher education beyond East and Central Africa

**M**ount Kenya University Rwanda (MKUR) has named Professor John J. Struthers the institution's Chancellor-Designate.

The highly experienced economics don, currently a Personal Professor at the University of West of Scotland (UWS) among other academic engagements, is expected to take up the new appointment with immediate effect.

He has promised to help develop the new standalone university into a centre of excellence in higher education beyond East and Central Africa.

The Chancellor-Designate says he is excited to assume this responsibility because he is convinced the University, given its heritage as an offshoot of the high-riding Mount Kenya University (MKU), has the potential to become the best in the region.

Prof Struthers, 64, boasts extensive research, teaching and managerial experience, which spans nearly four decades in various universities in Scotland, Africa, Oceania and the Middle East.

Presently, he is the Director of the newly created Centre for African Research on Enterprise and Economic Development (CAREED), at UWS. The centre was launched in November 2015.

CAREED is a unique research centre that specialises in a range of key economic issues across Africa, with a strong focus on commodities and trade, logistics and global value chains, and

entrepreneurship. Professor Struthers was the co-founder.

Commenting on his appointment as MKUR Chancellor-designate, he says: "I am greatly honoured to be appointed as Chancellor of Mount Kenya University Rwanda. As an economist, I am deeply committed to the role that education, especially within the university sector, can play in the on-going development of the African continent."

He continues: "I am particularly honoured to be taking up this role for Mount Kenya University, which is rightly regarded as one of the most dynamic and progressive universities in East Africa. I thank the Mount Kenya University Rwanda Board of Directors for bestowing on me this great honour."

#### Biography

Prof Struthers (MA Hons (Glasgow); MPhil (Glasgow); FHEA; FRSA) is an experienced academic and respected economist with over 35 years of work in a variety of universities in the UK and Africa, and other countries. Within Africa, he has lectured in Nigeria and Sierra Leone, and he has carried out research on Ghana, Nigeria and Ethiopia.

Outside universities, Prof Struthers has held a number of key positions, including public appointments. He has previously been a Director of a leading Scottish Chamber of Commerce. He has also been a Board member of Waterwatch Scotland, a water industry



**Prof. John J Struthers, MA (HONS), MPhil, FRSA, FHEA MKUR Chancellor-Designate**

consumer body, as well as an Academic Assessor for the UK Government's Fast Stream Civil Selection Board, which recruits top economics graduates for positions in the UK civil service.

Since 2009, he has participated in and chaired a number of Quality Assurance Reviews for the Higher Education Unit of the Quality Assurance Authority of Bahrain. He is a current member of the Westminster Africa Business Group in London. In 2015, he was appointed Honorary Consul for Ethiopia in Scotland.

In academia, he was in 1996 appointed Personal Professor at UWS (then the University of Paisley). He has been Dean of Faculty of Business at UWS, Head of Department of Economics and Enterprise, and founding Head of the UWS Graduate School. At UWS, he currently co-chairs the University Professoriate Group.

For more than 10 years, he has been researching on commodity price volatility in developing countries. In this context, he has collaborated with a number of UN organisations, such as FAO in Rome and UNCTAD in Geneva.

His publications (some co-authored) have appeared in the following journals: *Development and Change*; *Journal of Energy and Development*; *Journal of Economic Studies*; *Journal of International Development*; *Oxford Development Studies*, *Journal of Developing Areas*, and *Qualitative Research in Financial Markets*, among others. He is a Lead Editor of the *Journal of Social Business*.

Prof Struthers has authored, co-authored and contributed to a number of academic books. In 1986, for example, he co-authored (with H. Speight) the advanced textbook titled, *Money: Institutions, Theory and Policy*.

He has supervised 18 Ph.D students to completion, many of whom came from a variety of African countries. He has also been external examiner for more than 30 doctorates at a number of UK universities. He is a Visiting Professor of Economics at the University of Glasgow within the Adam Smith Business School.

In 1993, Prof Struthers became a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts in London (FRSA), and in 2007, a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (FHEA, UK).

## English conference to take place in MKU Rwanda

Mount Kenya University Rwanda will host the "English Language in Education and Research Conference" on 7 and 8 March, 2017. The conference seeks to bring together English as a Second language (ESL) teachers, specialists, and publishers for an enriching two-day professional development and community building.

The conference theme is: "Emerging Issues in Education and English Language Learning"

Abstracts or full papers and/or posters should be e-mailed ahead of the deadline

to [eler-conference@mku.ac.ke](mailto:eler-conference@mku.ac.ke). Abstracts must not exceed 3000 words, and should clearly highlight the objectives of the problem, the methodology, key findings/results, conclusions, recommendations and 3-5 key words. Each abstract should indicate the name of the author(s), affiliation(s) and contacts.

**Full Paper Submission:** 15 February, 2017

**Early Registration:** 15 February, 2017

**Deadline for participants, exhibitors and PowerPoint presentations registration:** 30 February 2017

## MKU to host peace, security and social enterprise conference in May 2017

Mount Kenya University will host an international conference on Peace, Security and Social Enterprise. The event will be held on May 16-19, 2017, at Safari Park Hotel in Nairobi, Kenya.

Dr Vincent Gaitho, the conference organising committee chairman, reveals that they have extended the deadline for submission of papers to 17 February, 2017. This is a two-month extension from the earlier deadline.

The conference, whose theme is "Peace for Sustainable Development", is informed by the need to promote shared security and therefore peace through concerted

efforts.

MKU is the lead conference sponsor and has supported cause to a tune of KSh10 million shillings.

Dr Gaitho welcomed other players to team up with the University in supporting the initiative.

He highlighted the strides that the university has made in promoting peace education in Kenya, such as the creation of an Institute of Security Studies, Justice and Ethics, which offers certificate, degree, diploma, masters and Ph.D programmes in peace, governance, ethics and security.

**PROSPECTS FOR AND CHALLENGES OF THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY GRADUATE**

*Scaling the Heights of Education*

# High Rwanda ranking shows varsity on course to the top

**M**ount Kenya University Rwanda (MKUR) is highly ranked by the Higher Education Council (HEC). MKUR was ranked First among Kenyan institutions operating in Rwanda, 11th nationally and Second among international universities.

HEC ranking in Rwanda is conducted to promote competitiveness in higher education sector and thus raise quality.

Among the parameters assessed were physical and academic infrastructure, which accounted for 23 percent of the assessment.

MKUR was assessed at its three rented locations: Town, Camp Kigali and Kicukiro centres.

However, the university's new location at Kagarama is not only ideal for learning, but will also increase capacities all round, and significantly in Health Sciences and information technology (IT).

MKUR Vice-Chancellor Prof Edwin Odhuno argues that, "had the HEC assessment focused on this facility, MKUR would have ranked among the top five in Rwanda. That will be the focus of the institution in the next three years."

The three centres have been consolidated.

Since January 2017, students are using the Kagarama facility.

For academic programmes, MKUR has partnered with the American Hospitality Academy in USA to offer virtual studies in hospitality. It has also signed a Memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Northern Michigan University, and further collaborates with the University of West of Scotland and several Danish institutions.

Prof Odhuno says since the relocation to Kagarama, the university's focus is now to streamline operations to ensure it



Mount Kenya University Rwanda

achieves the highest level of operational efficiency. This, he adds, will affirm that the university is on course for academic and administrative self-determination.

"We have started this process with the consolidation of facilities. This will be followed by rationalisation of our academic resources to support our goals. We will focus on the needs of our students as we are aware of the competitive nature of the operating environment. We will also maximise our human capital for purposes of growth, motivation and development," he further explains.

The VC continues: "Sometime this year, we will host a Thanksgiving event, where we will interface our vision, mission and goals with the aspirations of key stakeholders in Kicukiro District, and members of the nearby community."



MKUR library

## Courtesy call on Mayor of Kicukiro

The chairman thanked the mayor for providing an enabling environment to the university to construct an ultra-modern campus in the district. The campus will offer staff and students some of the best facilities available in higher education in the country.

The Mayor, on her part, expressed gratitude to the university for setting up a campus in the district, and for its significant contribution to human capital development and promotion of higher education in the country.

She said the district will

continue to offer support to the university so that it may achieve its goals of expanding graduate studies and research.

The two agreed that the district will work and collaborate with the university in research, one cow per family (Girinka) project for the very poor, and in training of staff, to build pride in the community.

As part of its corporate social responsibility, the university will open doors to institutions in the district to use its state-of-the-art science laboratories to carry out research for the benefit of mankind.



The Chairman of the Board of Directors of Mount Kenya University, Prof. Simon N. Gicharu, shares the university prospectus with the Mayor of Kicukiro, Dr. Nyirahabimana Jeanne, during a courtesy visit to her office in November 2016. Looking on is Dr. John Nyirigira, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor in charge of Administration, Planning and University Advancement.

### Meet Maclean, the fresh MKU Rwanda graduate who left an impression at IUCEA conference in Dar

She is young and brimming with boundless energy.

Maclean Raissa Tuyisenge Kayitare, the Head of Membership and Office Manager at Rwanda ICT Chamber, and a December 2016 graduate of MKU Rwanda, fits into her role perfectly as a tenon on a mortise joint.

When the Vice-Chancellor Prof. Edwin Odhuno met her at the 2016 Academia-Public-Private Partnership Forum and Exhibitions held on November 23 - 24, 2016 in Dar es Salaam, he was filled with the pride of having his own student on the plenary panel tackling an important topic: "Innovations in ICT as Accelerator of New

Economies in East Africa".

What drives Maclean is the passion in the ICT industry. We asked more.....

#### On a typical day in this position, what do you do?

I coordinate all our member companies, offering services that range from advocacy and skills development to access to markets and finance.

#### What part of this job do you find most satisfying? Most challenging?

An aspect that is both challenging and satisfying is that you meet people who have been in the industry for many years than you. This is challenging in that you have to quicken your learning to be on the same page. On the other side, satisfaction is achieved when new concepts are learned from such persons. The fruits are a satisfying job that has a positive impact to the society.

#### What opportunities for advancement exist in this field?

ICT sector is cross-cutting. This means that all other sectors need ICT innovation to drive their day-to-day functions. In Rwanda, the market is still open for those who want to delve into ICT innovations.

#### Tell us about your experience in Tanzania

It was a humbling experience being among a group of professionals, as young as I am. I was chosen among very many people to talk about ICT innovations as accelerator of new economies in East Africa at the 2016 Forum and Exhibitions organised by the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA). I interacted with people from different fields and learnt a lot.

## MKU Rwanda

# MKUR students participate in civic education

More than 30 students from Mount Kenya University Rwanda attended a one-week civic education programme dubbed "Intagamburuzwa", ahead of the beginning of the 2016-2017 academic year.

The training was conducted by the Ministry of Education in collaboration with the National Itorero Commission and Ministry of Youth and ICT, and other government institutions. It was held from September 5, 2016, and it attracted more than 2,500 students from 44 institutions of higher learning.

Conducted under the theme, "Job Creation and Employment Opportunity", the training aimed at equipping trainees with both leadership and entrepreneurship skills and perspectives.

Itorero is a nation-building initiative that attempts to shape new Rwandan citizens through civic education. It was launched in 2009 as a unique vehicle for social transformation by educat-



MKU Rwanda students on a civic education programme

ing, sensitising and re-educating people on their roles and responsibilities as Rwanda citizens.

Itorero has been introduced in several institutions of higher learning, Mount Kenya University being the first international university operating in Rwanda to

launch the programme in March 2015.

In line with its mission, students are urged to combine positive Rwandan cultural values with skills learnt at school, to be successful.

## MKU Rwanda wins universities' debate competition



Mount Kenya University Rwanda student Juliet Tumusime, working with Royal TV as a presenter of the popular TV show, 'Power of Praise' presents the award the TV won in the category Best Gospel TV Show awarded by Groove Awards Rwanda in November 2016, to the Founder and Board of Directors, Mount Kenya University Rwanda, Prof. Simon N. Gicharu during a luncheon at a popular Kigali Restaurant to congratulate staff for a job well done.x. PHOTO | MUSISI

Mount Kenya University Rwanda clinched the top place in the recently concluded East African Community Youth Debate (EAUDC) championship.

Armed with facts, MKUR students impressed with their defence of the motion, "Monetary Union is Unrealistic to achieve in 2024", and their act propelled the varsity to the top position.

One of MKUR's students, Mr Mekha Rousseau, further scooped the medallion of the best speaker.

The debate was organ-

ised by Aspire Debate Rwanda in conjunction with the Rwanda chapter of East African Community Youth Ambassadors Platform (EAC-YAP), with the support of the Ministry of East African Community and University of Rwanda. The main aim of the debate is to enhance and enrich cooperation among university students and the youth from partner states.

The four-day event attracted 12 universities from Rwanda and Uganda.

"Mount Kenya University Rwanda has moved to its own ultra-modern complex in Kagarama, Kicukiro District. The physical resources here are more than adequate and the consolidation of our three campuses into one location starting January 2017 will lead to more efficient use of academic resources." – Prof Edwin Odhuno, Vice-Chancellor, MKUR.



## US firm in big trouble after spirited bid to con MKU out of KSh20 million flops

A man's brazen bid to defraud Mount Kenya University (MKU) of Ksh20 million (US\$200,000) has landed him in trouble.

Apart from losing a "breach of contract" suit against MKU over a film making plan, Yves Tchatou and his company XL Squad Entertainment LLC were also ordered by a United States district court to show cause why they engaged a lawyer not permitted to practise in Atlanta, Georgia, where the case was heard.

At the same time, MKU plans to sue Mr Tchatou and his firm for damages.

"MKU intends to file a formal suit to claim damages, including the US\$10,000 he fraudulently took from the University," says MKU's Mr Wilson Mbugua.

XL Squad Entertainment had filed a suit on 25 March 2016 against MKU, alleging breach of contract, trademark and copyright infringement, among other claims.

The firm's CEO Mr Tchatou had presented himself to MKU in 2015 as a reputable international film-maker. Tchouta is a Camerounian naturalized in the United States.

Mr Tchouta proposed that XL Squad Entertainment (his company) could partner with the University to produce a film titled, *The Last Result*.

He then drafted a Letter of Intent outlining the proposed movie deal, and both parties signed.

MKU welcomed the idea because it was developing its Directorate of Film, Creative and Performing Arts to address the capacity needs of persons interested and talented in film, theatre arts and music and dance practice.

However, matters took a different turn when representatives from MKU went to

visit the plaintiffs in Atlanta. Mr Mbugua, who led the MKU team to the fact-finding mission to Atlanta, says they found that the firm neither had an office nor staff. "Mr Tchatou had collected persons to pose as staff. These individuals were not even aware of what the movie project was all about," he says.

Following this, MKU sent a note of withdrawal from the Letter of Intent on July 29, 2015, to XL Squad Entertainment.

On March 25, 2016, XL Squad Entertainment rushed to court and filed a suit demanding to be paid Ksh20 million – or the amount budgeted for the production of the movie. The firm alleged breach of contract.

On December 30, 2016, the court dismissed the claim in totality, noting that there was no evidence to suggest that MKU had received "anything of value up until this point."

Before then on 22 December 2016, Judge Thomas Thrash Jr had demanded to know why the plaintiffs had been represented by an attorney who had not filed an appearance in the case.

"The court has observed during these proceedings that Emmanuel Nsahlai, an attorney licensed in California, has taken three depositions and signed multiple filings on behalf of the plaintiff. The plaintiff's local counsel, Sara Eslami, has never filed a *pro hac vice* (representation for this occasion only) motion to admit Mr Nsahlai to this jurisdiction (of Georgia)," said Judge Thomas.

He then ordered the plaintiff to explain in writing within 21 days, why Mr Nsahlai and Ms Eslami should not be sanctioned for the unauthorised practice of law.



MKU students gestures during the official launch of MKU Studio at Nairobi campus. The studio will enhance quality training for students in the Journalism and Mass Communication School at the university. Nation Media Group's Linus KaiKai was the chief guest.

PROSPECTS FOR AND CHALLENGES OF THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY GRADUATE

*Scaling the Heights of Education*

# Community Service



**1.** Children from Prayers Beyond Boundaries Ministries Home Care Centre in Maai Mahiu Naivasha, Nakuru County, celebrate after receiving foodstuffs and Christmas gifts from MKU staff. The Centre supports 70 children displaced by the post-election violence

**2.** Mount Kenya University athletic team and the public participate in a race to raise funds during the Saidia Mtoto Africa Charity Race held at Thika stadium

**3 and 4.** A Mount Kenya University medical camp held at the Nakuru campus. Thousands of local residents turned up for screening

**5.** MKU students participate in a tree planting exercise at Mount Kenya Forest

**6.** MKU and Ohio State University students join hands to eradicate jiggers in Marsabit. The event was jointly organized by the University and Partners for Care (NGO)

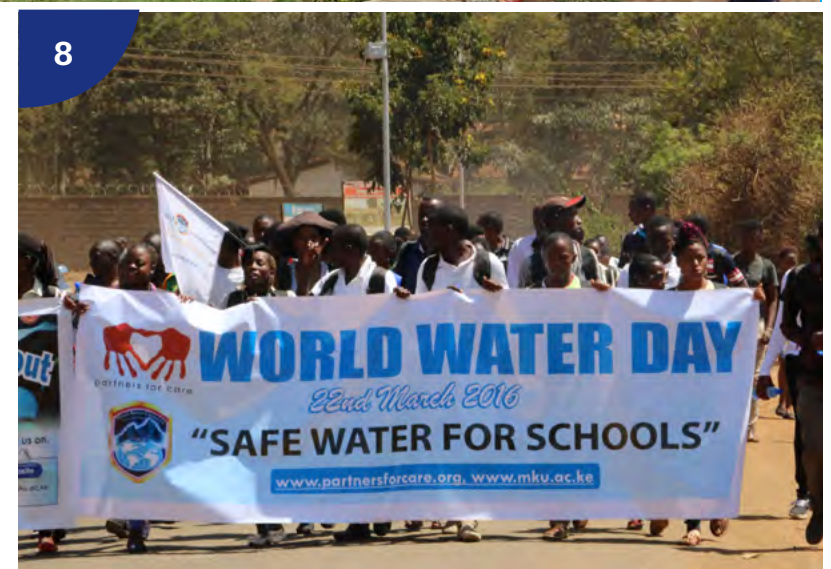
**7.** MKU School of Education faculty member with Naivasha Maximum Prison staff and inmates after a training session.

**8.** MKU students participate in a walk to mark World Water Day.

## Corporate Social Responsibility

The College of Health Sciences regularly undertakes CSR activities. These include:

- Medical Camps
- Health Awareness Activities
- Nutrition Advice Clinics



## Infrastructure Development & 21st Century Learning

# Vice Chancellor's view on 21st Century learning

**M**ount Kenya University (MKU) has kept abreast of advances in technology and changes in teaching. It has, over the years, strategically and systematically responded to these changes with great success.

This was said by MKU Vice-Chancellor Prof Stanley W. Waudo during an inaugural address at the Nakuru Campus. It was on the occasion of the commissioning of the Great Rift Plaza, the new premises for the campus.

He explained that MKU's e-learning management system (SAKAI) has features and tools that facilitate electronic scheduling, posting of information resources, self-paced learning, virtual interaction, marking and grading of tests and examinations and feedback.

Prof Waudo said the university has in place mechanisms to ensure that students' expectations are met. He cited the example of the university's ISO certified quality management systems that ensure effective management of the teaching and learning environment and processes.

His address was on *"Teaching and Learning in the 21st Century and the Impact of Digital Learning"*.

Prof Waudo noted that technological advances in education had facilitated individual learning, shifting responsibility from the teacher to the learner.

Learning is no longer restricted to the pedagogy used by the teacher and within the walls of a classroom. Internet access devices



**Commissioning of the Great Rift Plaza, MKU Nakuru Campus: MKU Vice-Chancellor Prof Stanley Waudo (right), with MKU Board Member Jane Nyutu and MKU BoD Vice-Chairman Dr Vincent Gaitho unveil a plaque to officially commission the Great Rift Plaza. This is in line with MKU's commitment to quality assurance in teaching, research and community service.**

give students the ability to learn anywhere and everywhere at their own pace.

Digital content is delivered through technology. Learning is no longer restricted to the pace of an entire class of students.

He said use of the emerging technologies in this digital era should not be perceived as a menace or negative development. It should be embraced positively as is happening in developed economies, such as USA.

"I call upon teachers to embrace the digital era and support learners to benefit from the use of digital resources," said Prof Waudo.

Quoting Tsana Palmer, he pointed out: "Educators are essential to

digital learning. Technology may change the role of a teacher, but it will never eliminate the need for a teacher. With digital learning, teachers will be able to promote personalised guidance and assistance to students to ensure students learn and stay on track."

The VC thanked the Government of Kenya for going digital and promoting e-learning, saying the Laptop project will promote discovery of knowledge.

Pupils and students, he added, should take advantage of the laptops as well as mobile telephony as a basic tool to enable them acquire positive attitudes, skills and knowledge.

### STAFF WELFARE



**Boniface Muriigi, Marketing Director MKU flanked by the Marketing team presents a gift to Mary Anne Ngaru, a staff in the same directorate who has become a new parent.**

### Key milestones in MKU's digital journey

- In May, 2010, the University started offering Bachelor of Business Management and Bachelor of Counseling Psychology programmes using the online learning platform.
- In July, 2011, the University adopted the Virtual Learning platform.
- In 2016, the University adopted the Digital Learning platform and Distance and Institution-Based learning for programmes offered during school holidays.

### 2016 Ph.D GRADUANDS



**Dr Kennedy Kuria Muna:** Kennedy Muna decided to scale the education heights in Mount Kenya University. He chose MKU since it is where assurance is guaranteed through the enabling learning environment and the academic support, both from staff and management. Muna was conferred the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Medical Laboratory Sciences from the Medical School of Mount Kenya University. His Thesis was titled: "Characterisation of Biomphalaria pfeifferi Proteins Expressing Immunogenic Properties Against Schistosoma mansoni: Strategy for vaccine development."

**Dr Kihara David Kung'u:** Kihara was conferred the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Kiswahili from the School of Social Sciences. The candidate's Thesis was titled: Uundaji, Udumishaji na Mabadiliko ya Leksimu katika Sheng' ya Matatu. He says: "I am proud to graduate with a Ph.D in Kiswahili. I am confident that I will add value to the academia in this country and beyond. I chose MKU for my doctorate studies because of the quality teaching and research that it offers. It did not disappoint. Long live my alma mater."

**Dr Misango Burkitt Sedina:** Madam Sedina was conferred the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Business Administration and Management from the School of Business and Economics. Her thesis was titled: Analysis of Factors Influencing Adoption of Cashless Payment System among Passenger Service Vehicles in Nairobi City County, Kenya. She says: "I came

to Mount Kenya University because it is a top-notch university capable of providing all the requirements to pursue my PhD studies. I have found the University to be life changing. The staff and especially school of Business go the extra mile to put their students in positions where they can maximize their potential and learn with relative ease. I have never felt as secure and supported in any program as I felt in MKU."

**Dr Onesmus G. Ntiba:** Gitonga was conferred the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Kiswahili from the School of Social Sciences. His thesis was titled: Ushawishi katika Nyimbo za Kampeni za Jamii ya Wachuka katika Kaunti ya Tharaka-Nithi, Kenya. "I have specialised in Oral Literature in Swahili. My doctoral thesis interrogated political persuasion as depicted in Chuka Campaign Songs. MKU fraternity, especially the lecturers, are approachable, cooperative and humane," he says.

**Dr George K. Ogochi:** Ogochi was conferred the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education from the School of Education. His thesis was titled: An Exploration of Stakeholders' Collaboration in the Management of Conflict in Secondary Schools in Narok County, Kenya. His view: "Pursuing my PhD programme in MKU was a tough but fulfilling experience. It provided me the opportunity to interact with highly experienced and committed academic staff. Indeed, I benefited from the high standards set by the university in scaling the heights of education."

## PROSPECTS FOR AND CHALLENGES OF THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY GRADUATE

*Scaling the Heights of Education*

# How varsity is nurturing law student into art giant

George Mwololo is not your average university student. With a degree in history and fine art, he returned to university, not for his Masters Degree or postgraduate diploma as is the norm, but for a fresh law degree.

Since 2012, he has been studying at Mount Kenya University and this pursuit of a cocktail of knowledge is already paying off handsomely.

George is generating income by putting the skills he has to practical use, and sometimes in high places.

Recently, his portraits of the MKU top leadership were well received by the subjects of his deft artistic hand. Better still, he was invited to personally present a bust sculpture he had made of President Uhuru Kenyatta to the Head of State himself.

He was equally thrilled when the President – accompanied by Machakos Governor Dr Alfred Mutua – unveiled two monuments he had been commissioned to sculpt and erect at the Machakos People's Park. This was during the 2016 Mashujaa Day celebrations on the grounds.

Today, crowds throng the park to view statues of famous freedom fighter Muindi Mbingu and the late Mulu Mutisya, the man who, because of his close association with former President Daniel arap Moi, once straddled Ukambani politics like a colossus.

George also sculpted a "Mother and Child" statue for the Machakos Level 5 Hospital in 2015.

The part-time artist appreciates the support he continues to receive from the MKU management.

"They commissioned me to do artworks for chief guests and for senior management and that helped launch my art career."



George Mwololo presents H. E. President Uhuru Kenyatta with his bust

Focused and with a clear vision, George describes his academic pursuit as "a fun experience." In the past, this journey has been interrupted by lack of fees or his commitment to honour contracts that would take three months to execute.

"I have had to call off some semesters so as not to breach some contracts," he says. "As a law student, I understand what is required of me in my contracts with clients."

It has not been smooth sailing for him,

but he takes it all in his stride.

He recalls: "Before I joined high school, I had dropped out of school for two years due to lack of fees. I went to check my results two years later after I met Tony Newman from Northern Ireland. He paid my high school fee and tuition fee for my first degree. It was my obligation to meet the cost of my off-campus accommodation, food, personal upkeep, stationery and transport, and I also paid for my final semester."

## The story behind new graduate's passionate note to Prof Gicharu

Juma J. Tom joined Class One in 1993 aged five. He progressed without repeating any class, sat his Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) examination in 2001 and scored 300 marks that earned him a place in Sirakuru Secondary School.

Learning uninterrupted at this pace, he would have completed Form Four in 2005 aged just 17.

But poverty and misfortune conspired to rob Tom of many school years. It has taken him 23 years from the day he stepped into Class One to his graduation from Mount Kenya University on 9 December 2016 with a Bachelor of Education degree.

An orphan, Tom dropped out of school while in Form I. He stayed out for two years before going back to start Form I all over in 2004. He completed Form IV in 2007, scoring a B-. The grade, however, denied him direct entry into a public university under the Government-sponsored admission programme.

He remained at home for six years – until MKU advertised a scholarship award scheme for which he applied, praying that he succeeds in this endeavour.

The experience explains his emotional message to MKU on 8 December 2016, the eve of his graduation day. Specifically addressing MKU Founder and Chairman Professor Simon N. Gicharu, he wrote: "I know many people will graduate tomorrow. I am one among the many. You can't know how much you have changed my life.



Tom Juma

My dream is now real. It all started in 2013 through the scholarship award the MKU family granted me. You stand in my heart as a dear father. As I graduate tomorrow, my request is to meet you even for five minutes to thank you for your kindness. May Almighty God bless you abundantly."

In an earlier letter addressed to the university, Tom said the advertisement of 28 July 2013 about the scholarship offered by the institution restored his "ambition, objective and aim of becoming a future professor". He had been shortlisted and interviewed on 5 September 2013.

He recalls that on 6 September 2013, while still at Thika, he received a message at exactly 7pm informing him he had been granted a full scholarship. "I was lost for words after receiving this message," he says.



Charles Mugo find accessing MKU Main Campus facilities on his wheelchair hassle-free

## People with physical challenges well cared for in varsity facilities

To Charles Mugo, the Mount Kenya University Thika campus is a god-send.

His face lights up with a big smile when asked about the university he attends.

"Going to class is easy for me," he says. "The gate to the campus is flat. The ramps and lifts in the compound, and especially the Chancellor's Tower where I attend my lectures, allow me to manoeuvre and move freely on my wheelchair."

An employee of the Postal Corporation of Kenya (Posta) in Thika, he wheels himself just a short distance to the campus to attend lectures. This proximity aside, Charles values the accessibility of the buildings in the campus.

"The campus has enough space for people like me who move on wheelchair," he stresses, saying Chancellor's Tower and the surrounding buildings were designed with the mobility of people with physical disabilities in mind. "They are disability friendly."

Charles joined MKU in May 2015 to pursue a Bachelor of Business Management degree. Now a Third Year student, he declares MKU "a great place to be."

In an exit report of an audit it conducted at the campus mid-November 2016, the Commission for University Education (CUE) made a similar observation. "The university has maximised on the use of land by opting for high-rise buildings for teaching, administration and hostels.

Newer and upcoming buildings cater for persons with physical disabilities as they are fitted with lifts. The buildings are well lit and ventilated. There is an attractive landscaping at the Main Campus."

The report further indicated that the university visibility is prominent due to legible signage along the road and atop the towers visible from afar. The internal signs for directions are distinctly placed.

"Physical facilities have been upgraded from the time the university obtained the charter," the CUE report adds.

MKU has recently built Alumni Plaza in the main campus and a new Nakuru campus building to create room for more students.

## Sports

# Playing it big in sports

**M**ount Kenya University's huge investments in sports infrastructure and personnel are paying enormous dividends. The university's teams have been scooping trophies in many sports disciplines, and the students involved get the necessary support from management.

Mr Evans Omwango, the Dean of Students, says some of the university's athletes excel on the international arena and are called to represent national teams.

"It costs money for the university to have its teams competing in the leagues," notes Mr Omwango. "And these teams perform well."

The university has dedicated two buses at the main campus in Thika to sports. One is for rugby and the second is for athletics and other disciplines.

The main campus has two soccer fields and an indoor games arena.

Each campus must have sports and recreation facilities. Where necessary, the university signs memoranda (MoUs) of understanding with other institutions to hire their sports facilities whenever the students need to play.

Individual sports personalities such as Martin Owilah (rugby), Peter Mwai, Charles Wamweya and Caroline (athletics) represent the nation in various competitions.



Mount Kenya University dean of students Mr Evans Omwango and the basketball team with the trophies they scooped for attaining 2nd position in National KUSA tournament

Owilah is in the Kenya 7s rugby team. He is also selected to the 15s team.

Mwai and Wamweya are sprinters.

Mwai runs in the 100m and the 200m races. He is the national 200m champion. He represented MKU in the Kenya Universities Games in the 100m race and is the reigning champion.

Wamweya won a silver medal in the African Universities Games held in South Africa this year.

The Dean says the athletes receive a lot of support from the MKU Department of Sports. For example, the department employed a coach to train them.



Mku basketball team (in blue) playing against Greta University team during a friendly tournament at the varsity



Mount Kenya University founder and Chairman Prof Simon Gicharu presents a dummy cheque for the air tickets for the MKU athletics team that represented the university in Johannesburg, South Africa during the Africa University Games. The Chairman reiterated his commitment to ensure the university's students receive the best support from teaching and administrative staff.

## Student role model who juggles three balls effectively

### – A beneficiary of MKU sports sponsorship

Martin Owilah is having a ball – literary. He is pursuing a Bachelor in Community Health degree at MKU while also playing rugby for the university and the nation.

This has not denied him the time to lead fellow students in various capacities.

According to him, he is having the experience of a lifetime juggling these three balls, and successfully so.

Owilah was studying in the MKU Nakuru Campus when he got called up to the national rugby team. He played a few games for the campus against Kabarak University, Egerton University, Nakuru Technical Training College (TTC) and Laikipia University among other institutions. He then moved to the Thika campus.

Playing for the national rugby teams involves a lot of international travelling. However, he says being out of campus does not mean he should leave his books behind.

He has learnt to manage his time well, and this has enabled him to lead a full life.

"I carry my books along whenever I travel," he explains. "I will not be on the field all the time, and so I use

my free time to study."

He chose to study at the MKU main campus in Thika because it is easy for him to travel to Nairobi and practise with the national rugby teams.

"We train three times a week in the morning and in the evening," explains Owilah. "Studying in

Thika, I am able to attend classes



Martin Owilah

and national team training sessions.

The university team trains from Monday to Friday. I join them for training on Thursdays and Fridays because on the other days I am at the national team practice."

To ensure his training does not clash with classes, he shares his timetable with the national team manager for ideal scheduling.

In November, Owilah travelled with the Kenya Sevens Rugby Team to Namibia and returned just a day before he was to sit a continuous assessment test (CAT). In December, he had exams and was also in the national Sevens team that took part in the Dubai series. The team performed well but lost in the Bowl semi-finals against the United States team. The Kenyan lads then proceeded to Cape Town Sevens where they did even better. The team lost in the Plate Finals against heavyweights Fiji. Owilah scored the first try against Fiji.

"I coped with the tight schedule," he reveals, saying he is now adept at keeping his eye on the many balls he juggles – without letting any fall.

So successful is he that he is a role model at MKU.



Prof Gicharu, patron of the MKU Titans rugby club, presents kits and a new bus to the Thika-based team. The 27-member team was preparing to participate in a series of exchange matches in France after a good run in the local universities rugby circuit.

# MKU scoops medals in regional games

**M**ount Kenya University was among the top performers during the 10th edition of the East Africa Universities Games. In the event held at Kasarani Sports Centre, Nairobi, mid-December 2016, MKU took position 16 out of 43 participating universities.

The university's Elijah Kipkorir won gold in the 800m race and compatriot Benard Koech took bronze in the 3,000m steeplechase.

Erick Juma shrugged off fierce competition in Karate to grab gold for Mount Kenya University in the under 84kg Male Kumite (sparring). In the individual Male Kata (form), MKU took the bronze through Kelvin Muisyo.

In the female categories, Joan Wam-

bui claimed silver for MKU through Kata. Esther Naipanoi won bronze in the under 50kg Female Kumite. Fridah Naggayi won bronze in the under 58kg category, while Yvonne Mulisa ensured MKU bagged more medals after taking bronze in the over 63kg Female Kumite.

MKU emerged second and third in women's and men's handball competitions respectively.

The university sent a team of 197 students and 24 officials to the East Africa University Games. The players participated in men's and women's events in basketball, handball, soccer, athletics, hockey, swimming, karate, badminton, chess, scrabble, table tennis and volleyball women, netball women and men's rugby.



MKU ladies handball team members are all smiles as they join Dean of Students Evans Omwango in admiring a trophy the university won recently

# Criminology student runs after and captures medals for MKU

Charles Wamweya is running the race of his life. A soldier and a student, he is also an athlete who has won numerous honours and is busy expanding his trophy cabinet to accommodate more awards.

The tireless Charles runs for his employer - the Kenya Defence Force (KDF) - and the nation.

He still finds time to represent Mount Kenya University (MKU)

in various competitions. He does all this while also studying for his Diploma in Criminology.

Charles, 28, is a specialist in the 100 metres, 200m and 4x100m (relay). He is a national champion in the relay.

In the Africa Inter-Universities Games held in South Africa in July 2016, he was among the star performers for MKU. He won

bronze in the relay and the 100m sprint, but ran away with silver in the 200m race.

Through the efforts of the likes of Charles, MKU finished the competition in fourth position out of the 69 universities that participated in the games.

After the end-year festivities, Charles embarked on preparations for the World Relay Championships to be held in the Bahamas in April 2017. He has been selected to represent Team Kenya.

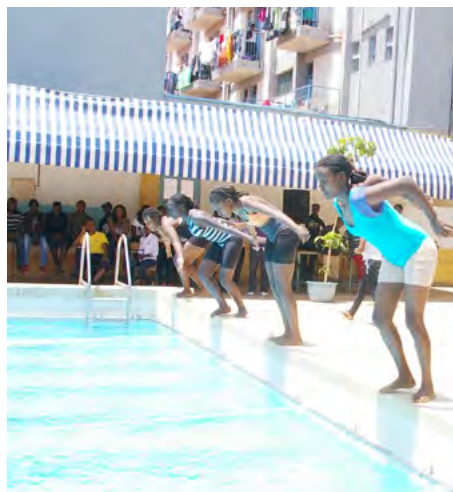
Thereafter, he will begin preparations for the World University games set to be hosted by China in August 2017. He will represent MKU in the games.

Charles credits his success in athletics to the training he receives from MKU coach James Karuri Muriigi and the top-notch facilities available at the Thika town campus. Such facilities include a gym, indoor games arena and a swimming pool, among others.

He says: "MKU is a good university because it enables me to learn online and supports students to nurture their talents," he said. "We get facilities where we practice and coaches who train us. The university also sponsors us to compete outside the country."



Charles Wamweya



Swimming competition at MKU main campus



Ladies handball team in action in an indoor challenge

## Varsity research drive receives KSh90 million boost

A United States consortium has allocated Mount Kenya University KSh90 million for research as the University's partnerships drive continues to bear fruit. This was revealed by New York-based African Economic Research Consortium's (AERC's) executive director Prof Lemma Sembet last December.

The AERC board met in New York on 28 November 2016 and approved the grant.

"After thorough negotiations, the board agreed to allocate KSh90 million to MKU for three years," Prof Sembet said in a statement.

He added, "We will in due course prepare the grant documents."

MKU plans to establish an Institute of Development Research and Outreach. Towards this end, it submitted a funding proposal to the consortium on 24 August, 2016.

Welcoming the grant, MKU Founder and Chairman Prof Simon N. Gicharu said it will aid in the development of the University.

"The grant will make us the best in business and entrepreneurship," Prof Gicharu said.

# Many reasons explain various world phenomena

## But there are 21 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 plus Digital varsity.
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, Institution-based learning, 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 academic 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.
21. **Synergetic Partnership:** University partners with research institutions, Universities, hospitals and forges strong industry – academia linkages



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