

New

Mount Kenya



University

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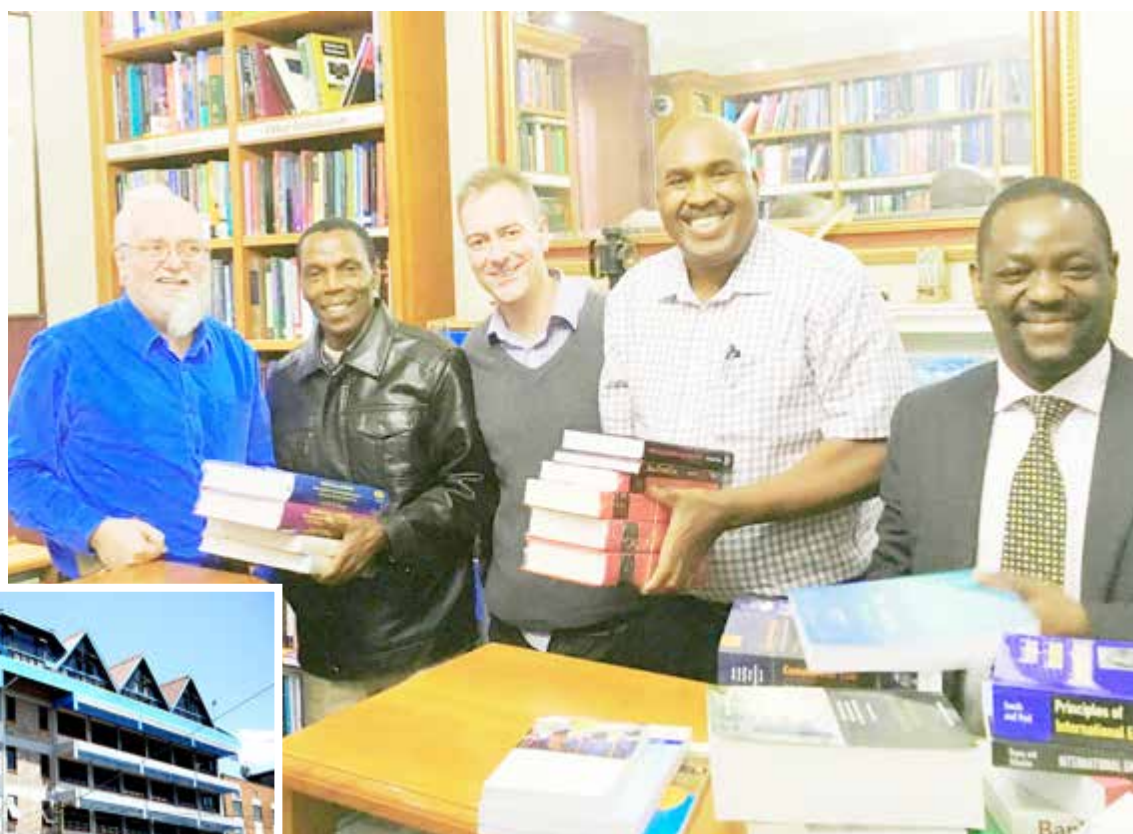
Govt report shows MKU law students excel in Bar exams

Mount Kenya University (MKU) is among universities in Kenya that effectively train law students at undergraduate level.

Those who undertake their LLB studies at the university go on to perform well in the Kenya School of Law (KSL) Bar examinations.

This is according to a report by the Task Force on Legal Sector Reforms.

The Task Force presented the report at a conference held 14 to 18 January in Mombasa under the theme, *A Legal Profession for the 21st Century*. The Council of Legal Education (CLE) and Office of the Attorney General and Department of



Mount Kenya University Chairman and Founder, Prof Simon N. Gicharu (second right) with MKU Representative in London, Mr Lukas Njenga (right), and MKU Kigali Vice-Chancellor designate, Prof Evans Kerosi (second left), after signing an agreement to buy new books from Wildy & Sons Ltd, represented by Overseas Sales Manager Mr Joth Pethick (left) and Mr Mathew Regnar (centre), Subscription Manager.



LEFT: MKU School of Law, Parklands, Nairobi

INSTITUTIONS WHERE BAR EXAM CANDIDATES UNDERTOOK UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES	
Legal Education Trainer	Pass Rate
JKUAT	98%
Nazarene University	98%
Mount Kenya University	96%
University of Nairobi (Mombasa Campus)	95%
Kabarak University	94%
Catholic University of Eastern Africa	92%
University of Nairobi (Parklands Campus)	80%
Moi University	78%
Kenyatta University	70%

Justice organised the meeting for stakeholders to give their input and validate the report.

The task force was appointed by Attorney-General Prof Githu Muigai on 26 September

2016, and is chaired by Senior Counsel Fred Ojiambo.

The report found that a high percentage of MKU students who sit the Bar exams pass, compared to those from other universities. MKU had a pass rate of 96 per cent, second highest after Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology's (JKUAT's) and African Nazarene University's similar 98 per cent pass rate.

Kenyatta University had a 70 per cent pass rate, Moi University 78 per cent, University of Nairobi Parklands Campus 80 per cent and its Mombasa Campus, 95 per cent, Kabarak University 94 per cent and Catholic University of Eastern Africa 92 per cent.

The report revealed that nationally, 8,549 law students out of 16,000 – or a massive 53 per cent – who sat their Bar examinations between 2009 and 2016, failed.

Bar examinations are mandatory for law graduates who want to join the Bar in the country.

Varsity receives Ksh107m for research as it re-brands

Ideas by MKU faculty and postgraduate students attract National Research Fund grants

Mount Kenya University (MKU) has re-branded and reved up its research drive in its bid to unlock infinite possibilities for individuals

and communities. Research proposals by faculty and post-graduate students are winning grants, racking up Ksh107 million worth of funding

from the National Research Fund (NRF) in the last financial year alone. "This raises to Ksh400m the total amount of grants MKU

has received from diverse external sources over the last 12 months," said Vice-Chancellor Prof Stanley W. Waudo.

Full story on page 2



Mr Joseph Gakuru (of MKU Innovators' Platform) demonstrates to the National Council for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) team how his three-dimensional printer works at the main campus, Thika.

Corporate Affairs

Varsity receives Ksh107m for research as it re-brands

Ideas by MKU faculty and postgraduate students attract National Research Fund grants

MKU unveiled its new brand identity and guiding principles during its 13th graduation ceremony held mid last December.

This happened as the university received several three-year research grants amounting to Ksh107million awarded by the National Research Fund (NRF) in the 2016/2017 financial year.

NRF, as established under the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013, is mandated to facilitate research, science, technology and innovation for national development and connected purposes.

The NRF grants are for multi-disciplinary research and for PhD students' projects.

Recipients of the multi-disciplinary research funds are: Dr Paul Sifuna Oshule, Dr Benson Njoroge, Prof Francis Muregi, Dr Catherine M. Mwendu, Dr



Happy graduands

Jesse Gitaka, Mr Francis Makokha and Prof Njeri Wamae.

The PhD students who received the grants are: Kamau Joyce Muthoni, Laban N. Ireri, Nancy Ng'ang'a and Oscar

Onyango Sangoro.

Professor Francis W. Muregi, the Director in charge of MKU's Directorate of Research and Innovation, said the university's researchers are increasingly attracting

external grants.

Prof Muregi has been, and remains instrumental in nurturing the university's research culture. He has received several grants from diverse external sources.

On 6 December 2017, the Minister for Education, Science and Technology appointed Prof Muregi as a member of the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) for a term of three years.

"Every year, our researchers publish at least 30 publications and register two patents," Prof Muregi indicates. "Through the Vice-Chancellor's Research and Innovation Grant established in 2011, we sponsor our researchers to participate in local and international conferences to disseminate their research findings. The Grant also meets full publication costs in refereed journals as well as for filing copyrights and patents with relevant bodies.

How stakeholders stand to gain from varsity's re-branding - VC

Professor Stanley W. Waudo, the inaugural Vice-Chancellor, who has been at the university's helm since May 2008, explains that the re-branding amplifies MKU's promise to its stakeholders – to help them explore limitless opportunities.

"MKU continues to improve and excel in discharging its core mandates," the VC says. We want to better communicate who we are and what we are capable of doing after years of investing in our ability to serve."

Teaching and Learning

"We train to impart competencies and skills, but we expect our graduates to explore limitless possibilities; beyond what they ordinarily envision."

He adds: "Life achievements – which can be limitless – are the true mark of how much the trained individuals have unlocked in the knowledge they acquired. How you apply the skills associated with your Ph.D, Masters' degree, postgraduate diploma, degree, diploma or certificate in life, is what matters, ultimately."

Empowering Staff to Excel

The university enables its faculty members to excel professionally by giving them the opportunity to practise what they are especially good at.

The Commission for University Education (CUE) stipulates that each lecturer and administrator should have a weekly



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

workload of 40 hours. The management of MKU has broken down these hours for its teaching staff and administrators (deputy vice-chancellors, registrars and directors), in a way that is paying huge dividends.

"For example, our Director of Research and Endowments, Prof Francis Muregi, is able to teach, write research proposals that attract grants, and interact with communities," Prof Waudo points out.

Community Outreach

"The knowledge we generate as a university has to be passed on to com-

munities to help them solve the social and economic challenges they face," Prof Waudo says.

He adds: "The ongoing neonatal project in Bungoma County that the university is carrying out in collaboration with various partners is a good example. The medical research team is working to provide facilities that help reduce deaths of new-borns. This is a scientific project with positive impact on the community."

Facilities

MKU, Prof Waudo says, continues to expand its facilities for greater delivery of its mandates. "For example, the auditorium we are currently building will benefit both the university and the surrounding community. Hotels in and around Thika will find this ultra-modern facility ideal for conferences," the VC explains.

Partnerships

MKU started forging partnerships and linkages immediately it received its Letter of Interim Authority in May 2008.

"Partnerships facilitate the sharing of resources and knowledge. We can enter into partnerships with institutions in the use of the auditorium, much the same way we did with Thika Level V Hospital for excellent and effective training of our students."

Has science affected Christianity in Africa?

Don receives scholarship to study relationship between science and religion

Prof Francis Muregi will by the end of 2019 be in a position to conclusively reveal to what extent science may be influencing Christianity in Africa. He is the Director of Research and Innovation Directorate at Mount Kenya University (MKU).

He is the MKU "SCIO Visiting Scholar in Science and Religion", following the award of a grant last year to undertake the study.

SCIO, which stands for Scholarship & Christianity in Oxford, is the UK subsidiary of the global Council for Christian Colleges & Universities.

Prof Muregi won a two-year grant from the organisation to conduct a study titled, "Influence of Scientism on Christian Faith in Africa: A Case Study of Kenyan Universities", starting February 2017.

The grant is given by Bridging the Two Cultures of Science and the Humanities II, a project run by SCIO with funding by Templeton Religion Trust and The Blankmeyer Foundation.

Prof Muregi's elaborate study involves participating in seminars held at Lady Margaret Hall and St Hugh's College at the University of Oxford,



**Prof Francis Muregi
Director, Research and
Development Division**

working with University of Oxford faculty (amongst others) and using the university's libraries.

This, however, is as a result of SCIO being located in Oxford. The study has no direct connection with the University of Oxford.

The project will also involve provision of start-up funding for a science and religion student club, among other activities that will be of benefit to MKU as a whole.

Jobs are coming; please make MKU brand count, State House Spokesman advises graduands

Secretary of Information and State House Spokesman *Mr Manoah Esipisu*, attended Mount Kenya University's unveiling of its new corporate identity on 15 December 2017. He spoke on how MKU's re-branding parallels President Uhuru Kenyatta's 'Big Four' agenda whose focus is to transform the country in the next five years. Here is Mr Esipisu's speech:



Manoah Esipisu, State House Spokesman

"Young people are at the centre of the President's 'Big Four' Agenda. These are the key things that will transform this country in the next five years. They are: Universal Health Care, Manufacturing, Affordable Housing, and Food Security and Nutrition.

All these offer massive opportunities for those of you who are joining the job market. They do offer a big stretch of opportunities that people will be looking out to fill. They are the things that are important to drive our country forward and to which the President is committed.

The one thing that happens in transformation is rebranding. It is how you are perceived. It is how your name is being perceived. It is how people relate themselves to you. Which is why branding is very important.

So, when you go out there, people ask: 'And who are they?'

If you say you want to deliver something, they first of all ask: 'And who are you?' This is because the brand promises whether you will deliver what you promised to or you won't.

Mount Kenya University is transforming its brand, and it is up to you to make the brand count.

The President, as a brand, has laid out the foundation for the country's development over the last four years. We do hope in the next five years, you will see the full fruition; the full investment of his last four years and the next five come to bear.

I thank you."

Equipment worth Ksh30m to benefit engineering students

The MKU School of Engineering, Energy and the Built Environment has acquired state-of-the-art equipment worth Ksh30m through the support of Board of Directors.

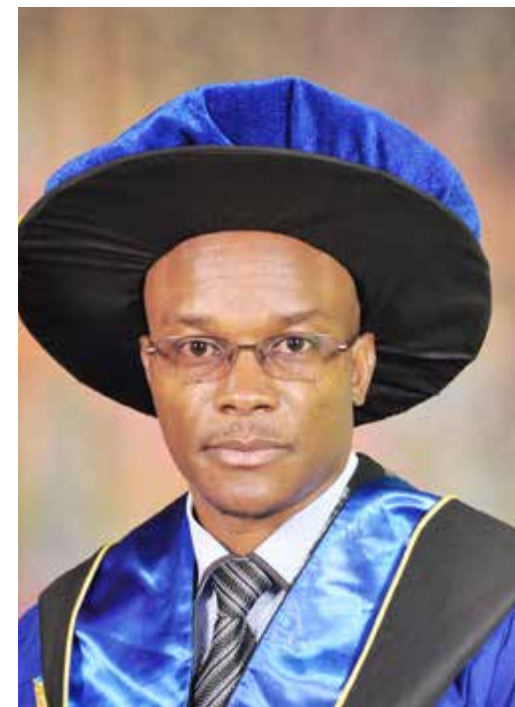
The School is upping its effort to provide quality teaching and release well-equipped graduates who are ready for challenges of the 21st century and are able to meet the needs of the labour market.

This is according to Dr Isaac Alukwe, the school's Dean.

The equipment is currently on high seas and will soon be available to students for training in areas of renewable energy and petroleum engineering.

Dr Alukwe said students will have the opportunity to learn new technologies in design, operation and optimisation of meeting a mix of technologies and integrated schemes using solar, wind, geothermal sources.

This achievement adds to the already ongoing construction of a modern school of engineering, estimated to cost over Ksh1 bil-



Dr Isaac Alukwe, Dean, School of Engineering, Energy and the Built Environment.

lion, on 100 acres at Landless Happy Valley in Thika.

The design and masterplan of new school is ready.

More than 83,000 graduands have exited MKU gates and joined the employed ranks, established own businesses or ascended to leadership positions. Kajiado County Deputy Governor, Mr Martin Moshisho, is one of them.



H E Martin Moshisho, Kajiado County Deputy Governor and MKU alumnus.

Call me His Excellency Deputy Governor, but I'm also a proud alumnus of MKU

"My name is Martin Moshisho Martine. I am the Deputy Governor of Kajiado County, so people address me as "His Excellency". Importantly, I am a proud alumnus of Mount Kenya University, and I have returned as a postgraduate student.

I first joined MKU in September 2009 to pursue diploma studies in banking and finance. In 2014, having moved on to degree studies, I graduated with a Bachelor of Business Management (Human Resource). I'm currently pursuing a Master of Business Administration, still at MKU.

Student Leadership

During my studies at the university, I got the opportunity to serve my fellow students in various leadership capacities. These included being a class represent-

ative and chairman of Mount Kenya University Students Association (MKUSA) Electoral Commission. I held these positions in 2010 and 2011 respectively.

In 2012, I was elected President of MKUSA, a position that enabled me to also serve at the National Secretariat of Kenya University Students Organisation (KUSO).

With these experiences, I bear testimony that Mount Kenya University offers equal opportunity to students to pursue their dreams and aspirations regardless of their background, faith, colour or gender.

Working at MKU

In 2015, the university gave me the opportunity to work as coordinator of foreign students, and later as coordinator in charge of clubs and associations. In 2017, I decided to join politics, not

because I was tired of working at MKU, but because the university gave me a lot more to share with the world.

Amazingly, MKU Management gave me ample time to campaign, without terminating my contract. Ultimately, I got elected.

Working with MKU was a great experience. I am sincerely indebted to the leadership of the university for supporting employee development and growth.

Serving My County and the Nation

Now serving the nation as Deputy Governor of Kajiado County at the age of 33, I am proud to be squarely in the bracket of young leaders in Kenya. With this, I can confidently tell fellow youths that they have a place in the leadership of this country. They just have to believe in their dreams and push on."

Corporate Affairs

Re-branding goes beyond change of corporate identity

Mount Kenya University (MKU) is on a campaign to make its stakeholders aware of the diverse services it offers and those under consideration.

Prof Peter Wanderi, Principal-Designate, Corporate Services, who is also the Quality Assurance Director, explained that the university's rebranding would go beyond changing the corporate identity.

"Through various forums beginning this January, we want to let our stakeholders know the many opportunities the university provides," he said.

For instance, to take its highly successful entrepreneurship training programme – Graduate Enterprise Academy (GEA) – right to the counties and is in discussion with governors on this issue.

The idea is to reach out to many more young people – even non-graduates – so that they may benefit from the initiative.

Prof Wanderi added that the university is exploring how to enhance its linkages with other universities and industry. The linkages will be guided by quality assurance provisions, he added.

MKU, like other institutions of higher learning, is in the process of transitioning from the ISO 9001:2008 Quality Management System to the latest edition of the standard: ISO 9001:2015.



Prof Peter Wanderi, Principal-Designate, Corporate Services and Quality Assurance Director.

To enhance its internationalisation, MKU has developed opportunities for short summer/spring programmes targeting students from abroad. At the same time, modalities of raising the number of MKU students going abroad on exchange programmes are being enhanced.



MKU members of staff attend a workshop on transition from ISO 9001:2008 to ISO 9001:2015 Certification as the university continues to improve her quality assurance.

Guess where current Miss World Africa studied

Magline Jeruto, Kenya's representative at the Miss World Pageant 2017 in Sanya, China, nervously waited for the winner to be named.

The names were called out. Suddenly, she heard hers. Magline had impressed the judges. They gave her the Africa crown, and she emerged fifth overall out of 118 contestants.

"Being crowned Miss World Africa was such a good surprise, considering I had only two months of preparation," says the former Mount Kenya University (MKU) student.

She adds: "I had complete faith in God and His grace, and that is what pushed me through to the top and to win the Miss World Africa crown. Determination, hard work, discipline, focus and prayers spurred me on."

Magline goes on to narrate:

"Miss World beauty pageant is all about giving back to the society through empowerment and mentorship, as well as engaging in social work to uplift the underprivileged and marginalised.

My next plan is to use this God given platform to make a difference in people living with autism, a condition that not so many people understand, especially in our country, due to lack of awareness.

The key benefit of being crowned Miss World Africa is the exposure that comes with the title. This is a huge platform to meet and work with people from different countries and cultures. Apart from that, it gives me an opportunity to showcase my talent as well as change lives in the world.

My experience in Mount Kenya University not only prepared me for my career in tourism, but it also prepared me for life outside my career. I must say I gained skills that cannot be taught. Through interactions with my lecturers, internship supervisors, fellow students, co-workers, as well as other university staff, I earned a degree in people and social skills that I did not even sign up for. All this has made me who I am today.

My advice to young people is that: Identify your goal in life and strive to achieve no matter the obstacles. Success does not come to you; you go for it.

I will forever be grateful to MKU and especially the Tourism and Hospitality department. Thank you for the knowledge and skills.

May God Bless you."



Full Name: Magline Jeruto

Age: 24years

Hobbies: Travelling, modelling and volunteer services.

Achievements: Miss World Africa 2017
Miss World Kenya 2017

Motto: Success does not come to you; you go for it.

Profession: Travel Consultant. Holds a Bachelor's degree in Travel and Tourism Management from Mount Kenya University.

Self-description

A God fearing, ambitious, self-driven, honest, adventurous and confident lady with the ability to cope with people from different walks of life.

Career Ambitions

To be established in the tourism industry and create opportunities to young people through employment, mentorship and empowerment to make the world a better place.

Future Ambition

Looking forward to empower girls to go for what they want and be who they want to be.

Vice-Chancellor treats new students to educative talk on growth mind-set

Carol Dweck, a psychology professor at Stanford University in the US, is widely known for her book, *Mind-set: The New Psychology of Success*.

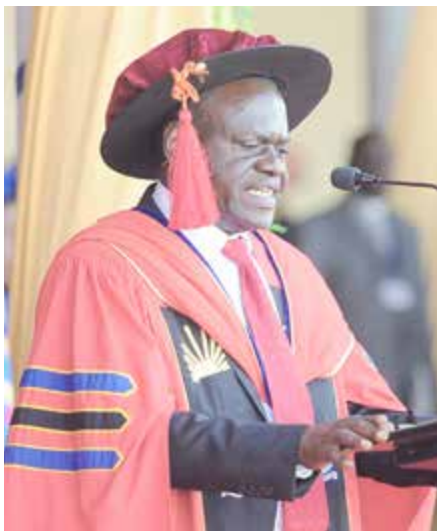
The book is based on research, in which Dweck established how success in school, work, sports and any other activity could be radically enhanced by instilling a growth mind-set and removing a fixed mind-set. The former refers to belief in continuous improvement in one's abilities, while the latter applies to those who see talent and intelligence as fixed.

Prof Dweck argues in the book that praising hard work and effort promotes a growth mind-set. She details how teachers and managers, for example, can use the concept of growth mind-set to foster exceptional accomplishments.

It was this book that inspired the orientation address by Mount Kenya University (MKU) Vice-Chancellor, Prof Stanley W. Waudo, when he addressed new students on 8 September 2017.

The VC's talk sought to encourage the students to embrace a growth mind-set. He titled it, *"Growth Mind-set for a Prosperous Future"*.

Growth mind-set facilitates taking on challenges and gaining experience, which in turn leads to increasing ability and achievement



Prof Stanley W. Waudo, Ph.D
Vice Chancellor

"Growth mind-set is a process of change of mind-set," he began. "Growth mind-set facilitates taking on challenges and gaining experience, which in turn leads to increasing ability and achievement," he continued.

Quoting Prof Dweck, he went on: "When students believe they can get smarter, they understand that effort makes them succeed. Therefore, they put in extra time and effort, and that leads

to higher achievement."

Those with fixed mind-sets, on the other hand, due to their belief that intelligence or talent are fixed traits, spend time documenting their abilities instead of developing them, Prof Waudo said. Such students become difficult to correct, as they hide their flaws to avoid being judged as or labelled 'failures'.

"In a growth mind-set, a person believes that flaws are a feedback for improvement towards mastering valuable skills. Failure is a temporary setback," Prof Waudo stressed.

The growth mind-set brings about several benefits, the VC said. It improves the sense of self-worth. It makes one enjoy the process of learning. The learner looks forward to acquiring new skills and knowledge to become a better person.

With a growth mind-set, one realises that perfection is overrated. There is always space for improvement. Such an attitude helps the learner to continue yearning for more rather than imagine that they have reached perfection.

Moreover, because the growth mind-set makes someone recognise that mistakes don't mean they aren't good or won't

be but are opportunities to learn more, it boosts confidence. Such a mind-set further enables learners to disregard stereotypes and to manage setbacks positively.

In view of these, Prof Waudo's concluded: "Growth mind-set is associated with success that leads to a prosperous future."

He urged that new students to use the growth mind-set to objectively assess their abilities and capabilities with the aim of embracing continuous improvement.

"Mount Kenya University will provide a conducive environment for growth mind-set," he said.

MKU dons awarded at Kampala conference

Kyambogo University (Uganda) has awarded Mount Kenya University's Vice-Chancellor, Prof Stanley Waudo, with a "Champion Award".

Presenting the award at the International Interdisciplinary Research Conference in Kampala, Uganda, the Vice-Chancellor of Kyambogo University, Prof Ali Katunguka, commended Prof Waudo for his 10 years of sterling leadership at MKU.

Prof Waudo was represented by Prof Evans Kerosi, the Vice-Chancellor Designate, MKU Kigali. Prof Kerosi led a high-powered delegation of MKU scholars who attended and presented papers at the conference hosted at Kyambogo University on 1-5 August 2017.

Prof Peter Wanderi, the Principal-designate, Corporate Affairs and also the Director, Quality Assurance and Linkages at MKU, received the award of "An Initiator", at the same event.



New students listen to an orientation address by Mount Kenya University (MKU) Vice-Chancellor, Prof Stanley W. Waudo.

13th Graduation

Why we love partnerships - MKU Chancellor reveals

The partnership between Mount Kenya University (MKU) and various institutions, local and foreign, was a key highlight during its 13th Graduation held on 15 December 2017.

Addressing guests and graduands at the university's Happy Valley Grounds in Thika, Prof Victoria Wulsin, the MKU Chancellor, dwelt on the power of partnerships. She highlighted how the strong links between MKU and Vincent Pol University (VPU) in Poland, for instance, had been of benefit.

This partnership had resulted in selected students benefiting from useful foreign study exposures through an exchange programme.

MKU's partnership decisions are guided by its robust Partnerships and Linkages Policy, said the Chancellor whose second term five-year term is close to ending.

Since July last year, MKU has entered into four new partnerships. Collaboration between MKU College of Health Sciences and Makerere University College of Health Sciences seeks to champion research in human health within East Africa and to stimulate internationalisation of the programmes at both colleges, among other goals.

Secondly, MKU is now part of the United Nations Academic Impact (UNAI), having joined over 1,200 institutions in more than 120 countries globally to

work with the UN to promote peace, human rights and sustainable development.

"This outstanding achievement comes after a successful application by MKU for membership to the UNAI and subsequent certification. It goes a long way towards raising the global visibility of MKU's impact in the education sector," said Prof Wulsin.

The MKU-Family Bank of Kenya partnership involves mentoring graduates to become job creators. This is done through MKU's Graduate Enterprise Academy (GEA), whose beneficiaries receive full-year support in business mentorship and networking.

A partnership with Leuphana University of Germany has seen MKU participate in the development of funding proposals, which have been sent to various donors. Preliminary funding has been obtained, enabling 12 MKU staff members to be trained and certified as trainers of the globally renowned Students Training for Entrepreneurial Promotion (STEP).

Outreach, Prof Wulsin observed, is also a core business area of MKU. Since July 2017, MKU has been involved in a number of community outreach activities. Among them is a week-long community activities in Malindi jointly with the USA-based Partners for Care, and the Bungoma County Collaborative New Born Support Project. The latter project

This outstanding achievement comes after a successful application by MKU for membership to the UNAI and subsequent certification. It goes a long way towards raising the global visibility of MKU's impact in the education sector.



Prof. Victoria Wulsin, Chancellor, MKU.

has involved setting up of neonatal special care units in seven sub-county hospitals in Bungoma County, and training of 72 nurses and 18 clinicians.

MKU further provides teaching support to inmates who serve as teachers to fellow prisoners at the Naivasha Maximum Prison. The prison outreach, spearheaded by MKU School of Education, is geared towards improving the standard of teaching at the prison. The project has run for two years.

"I invite more organisations in Kenya and beyond to join us at MKU to work together in university-industry partnerships as a proven strategy to reach out to communities, for public good," Prof Wulsin concluded.

Prof Wulsin who has served MKU passionately and diligently over the last ten years, is optimistic that the university will forge many more beneficial more partnerships and linkages.

Tell you what; let's grow this relationship, VPU tells MKU



Madam Jane Nyutu, Co-founder and Board Member, Mount Kenya University (MKU), presents a gift to Madam Dorota Stefanek-Langham, Vice-President, Poland's Vincent Pol University (VPU). Ms Stefanek-Langham, chief guest during MKU's 13th Graduation ceremony, witnessed the unveiling of the university's new identity.

The theme of Mount Kenya University's (MKU) 13th graduation ceremony on 15 December 2017, *"The Role of Partnerships in the Implementation of the University Mission"*, connected well with the deepening relationship between MKU and Vincent Pol University (VPU) in Poland.

"This theme has a very significant impact, for it is all because of partnerships that we got to know each other as MKU and VPU," said the VPU Vice-President, Dorota Stefanek-Langham, representing the Guest Speaker, Dr Henryk Stefanek. Dr Henryk is the President/Chancellor and Founder of VPU.

Ms Stefanek continued: "The same spirit of partnerships has made us to be here today as a sign of great milestones that shall be covered by the two universities together in the future."

A delegation of six officials from VPU was present at the MKU ceremony, indeed demonstrating the solid relationship between the two institutions.

Ms Stefanek noted that the partnership had seen MKU benefit from 100 percent Erasmus Programme sponsorship through VPU.

This had enabled two MKU academic staff to visit VPU in 2016. Owing to the same, two MKU students participated in an exchange programme at VPU from February to May 2017. Three others are presently studying at the Polish university on a five-month programme that ends in March 2018.

"The choice of the students who have benefitted so far has been based on merit, and we are happy to note that these have been very out going and bright students," said Ms Stefanek. "We are sure the experiences they gain at VPU will be of positive and tremendous lifelong impact in their lives," she added.

The VPU Vice-President likened the partnership with MKU to a marriage, saying the two institutions must deliberately remain committed to ensure sustainability



Dr Henryk Stefanek, President/Chancellor and Founder of VPU.

of the relationship, so that their impact on communities in both Kenya and Poland is strongly felt.

She said: "We have started well, but we need to upscale this partnership so that it could be a living model of what university partnerships ought to be."

13th Graduation Ceremony

How MKU is improving learning outcomes and other services

Mount Kenya University (MKU) Council Chairman, Prof David Serem, has commended the management for conforming to the set national quality standards.

In an audit by the Commission for University Education (CUE) early in the year, MKU was found to comply with the Universities (Amendment) Act, 2016, Universities Regulations 2014 and Universities Standards and Guidelines, 2014.

"This was indeed not a mean achievement," Prof Serem told congregants at the MKU 13th graduation ceremony at Happy Valley Grounds in Thika. "I congratulate the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Stanley Waudo, and academic and

non-academic staff, for the sterling leadership that has led to this tremendous achievement," he added.

Prof Serem further shared his joy at the progress registered so far in the various projects the university is implementing to improve learning and other services.

"MKU has continuously developed and modernised teaching and research facilities. I thank the Board of Directors for the completion of the magnificent 13-storey [building] that has created spacious staff offices and other facilities. This has greatly improved service provision," he noted.

The Ksh1 billion structure is a towering feature in Thika town.

Prof Serem also lauded the management's strategic decision to introduce performance contracts for MKU staff. This, he stressed, would help to improve achievement of performance targets, leading to enhanced service delivery to all stakeholders.

Improvements in staff welfare, a key priority area for the University Council, is also in progress. The university's 2015-2019 strategic plan provides for allocation of resources to promote staff welfare. Alongside this, the Human Resource Policy champions for competitive hiring of talent.

These improvements, Prof Serem stated, continue to elevate MKU's status not only regionally but also globally.



Prof David Serem, MKU Council Chairman, delivers his speech during the 13th graduation ceremony.



MKU Chancellor, Prof Victoria Wulsin, presents the Vice-Chancellor's Academic Merit award for Best Female Student to Jesca Lomongin during 13th Graduation ceremony.



Members of a delegation from Poland's Vincent Pol University (VPU), pose for a photo with MKU Board Member, Madam Jane Nyutu (third left), during the local university's 13th Graduation ceremony.

University establishes provident fund for staff



The iconic Ksh1 billion Alumni Plaza provides spacious staff offices, board rooms and other facilities. Besides that, MKU has established a provident fund for staff.

Mount Kenya University (MKU) has created a provident fund to benefit retiring staff and to cater to bereaved families of deceased employees.

It has been registered with the Retirement Benefits Authority (RBA) as Mount Kenya University Staff Provident Fund.

MKU founder and Chairman Prof Simon Gicharu announced this on 15 December 2017 during the university's 13th graduation ceremony, held at Happy Valley Grounds in Thika.

"The main purpose of the provident fund will be to provide retirement benefits for members of staff when they attain retirement age. In addition, the fund will provide relief to dependants of members who die while employed," Prof Gicharu announced.

The provident fund will be built

through member and employer contributions, and will be administered by trustees.

It will be run professionally, guided by the Trustee Act, Retirement Benefits Act and regulations, and the Income Tax rules, among other relevant legal frameworks.

The creation of the staff provident fund is among recent developments at the university as it seeks to create a deeper social impact in society.

Earlier in the year, MKU established a foundation to create a formal platform for managing its scholarship programme and community outreach activities.

The foundation's mission is "To advocate for and support the advancement of higher education in Mount Kenya University by obtaining, investing and administering grants".

Towards this, Prof Gicharu said, the foundation will establish an endowment fund as well as lobby for scholarships and bursaries for students.

The foundation will also manage grants from the university that are meant for community outreach activities and student empowerment.

It was established to normalise and increase the university's social support, previously administered without a specially created structure.

In the last five years, for instance, the university has directly awarded an upward of 100 scholarships. With a foundation now in place to manage such support, Prof Gicharu predicts a much bigger impact.

"We are committed through the foundation to increase these scholarships to 50 annually," he said.

Blended Learning

Why MKU is fine-tuning and enriching the DIBL module

Students are finding blended learning at Mount Kenya University (MKU) an increasingly exciting and enriching experience.

The university's Directorate of Distance and Institution Based Learning (DIBL) is helping them sharpen their computer literacy skills, and is as well granting them greater access to the online portal.

The technical support staff help students navigate the platform.

DIBL Director, Prof Pamela Ochieng, confirmed last year that the university had embarked on increasing access to the student portal, targeting 100 percent by December 2017 from 75 percent.

Since September 2017, the directorate has been implementing procedures and schedules on the training of staff and students on the use of the digital platform. "My vision as the director is to improve the quality of education offered, possibly through benchmarking and collaboration, both locally and internally," Prof Ochieng said.

The university created the DIBL Directorate in October 2016 to offer blended learning and distance education programmes. It serves students who are separated from their lecturers by time and space.

The university ensures that the distance learning provision is of equal quality



DIBL students line up to register for holiday classes.

to classroom study in terms of teaching methods and scholarly rigour. This is in accordance with conventional provision to ensure satisfactory delivery of programmes and provision of support and assessment of students. MKU has put in place the necessary administrative, technical and ICT infrastructure to support

digital and distance learning.

The delivery modes include traditional distance education by correspondence courses, online provision and interactive CD ROMs, e-learning and blended learning to open learning centres, and face-to-face sessions.

A significant element of flexibility, self-study and learning support is an integral part of this mode of delivery, which relies on a mix of multimedia technologies, such as e-learning, video conferencing, internet and print.

E-learning technology creates web-based learning and virtual classrooms. Audio technologies entail the use of pre-recorded lectures and video conferencing. These technologies enhance interactive learning. Prof Ochieng says the learners should be equipped with modern ICT skills for the country to achieve the Vision 2030 goal of mainstreaming information technology in schools. It is embedded on the philosophy of education globally.

The MKU Directorate of DIBL aims to:

- Expand access to higher education;
- Provide an alternative way of obtaining quality academic qualifications to those who cannot attend the face-to-face mode of learning;
- Allow students to access education without changing areas of residence;
- Reduce the cost of education;
- Allow the university to offer teaching that is appropriate to the digital age;
- Enable the university to build on its international reputation by recruiting students worldwide; and
- Enrich students' perspectives and learning experiences.

Prof Ochieng notes that the DIBL has generally improved the teacher training programme in Kenya and globally. The programme includes teaching practice, which is carried out during the students' final session. The students are assessed by both the internal and the external examiners.

Sacco has new name

TIT Sacco is now Mount Kenya University Sacco, having re-branded on 24 November 2017.

The Sacco that was founded in 2005 has grown and now has over 1,000 members and member deposits in excess of Ksh100 million.

It was initiated by nine staff members of the then Thika Institute of Technology Welfare. The team came together and contributed Ksh7,800 in cash. This encouraged other staff members, who, during a welfare meeting in February 2005, instructed the Thika Institute of Technology

Accounts Department to commence check off deductions from their salaries to the welfare.

After operating for one year, the welfare was driven by the wish to provide savings and credit facilities to its members, and on 29 December 2005, TIT Sacco Society Ltd was registered under the Ministry of Co-operative Development and Marketing.

Why MKU Sacco

- Inculcates the culture of savings among members and encourages them to improve their spending habits.

- Offers financial empowerment and investment opportunities to members.
- Members get access to affordable and competitive loan facilities.
- Interest on loans is as low as 1 per cent per month on reducing balance.
- Guaranteed interest on deposits and dividends on share capital at competitive interest rates as approved in the Annual General Meeting (AGM).
- No hidden charges compared to some financial institutions.



Sacco members peruse documents at an Annual General Meeting (AGM).

Open, Distance & Electronic Learning (ODEL)

Expanding ODEL

Mount Kenya University (MKU), in its quest to accommodate the current and emerging trends in distance education, has broadened the scope of its Open, Distance and Electronic Learning (ODEL) to include Distance Learning (pure online) and Distance and Institutional Based Learning (DIBL).

The ODEL is responding to the growing interest in alternate approaches to distance learning that have created a convergence of distance and on-site study. These learning environments ensure students on site and students at a distance have much the same learning experiences.

The university aims to enable thousands of professionals to conveniently access higher education even as they attend to work and other commitments, says ODEL Principal-designate Susan Nyokabi.

"With ODEL, we bring learning to the people. Anyone with an electronic gadget that has internet connectivity – smart phone, computer, laptop or tablet – should be able to access higher education," she asserts.

Last August 2017, the university beefed up the ODEL directorate, which has since lined up several initiatives to enable many more qualified students pursue higher education.

The Distance and Institution-Based Learning (DIBL) is a key component of ODEL. It is headed by Prof Pamela Ochieng.

DIBL directly supports the School of Education by training teachers face-to-face during holidays and also online. Thirty per cent of learning is through face to face and 70 per cent is via the online platform.

Ms Nyokabi says the university is equipping ODEL lecturers to facilitate video lectures, Skype and video conferencing. It is also improving its website to make



Susan Nyokabi, ODEL Principal-designate

it more interactive so that students are able to apply, register, pay fees, communicate with their lecturers and receive feedback more easily and effectively.

"We aim to minimise the need for students to visit our campuses to seek help when they can be assisted online from wherever they are," Ms Nyokabi says.

The university uses the Sakai system, considered one of the best electronic learning platforms. It is user-friendly.

Varsity sharpens ODEL experience

Quality learning and efficient service delivery are the ultimate goals of the series of initiatives Mount Kenya University (MKU) has embarked on at its Open, Distance and Electronic Learning (ODEL) directorate.

ODEL Principal-designate Ms Susan Nyokabi expresses optimism that progressively, the university will have significantly transformed the ODEL platform to be of greater benefit to its students.

The university plans to increase the number of ODEL degree programmes (Bachelors and postgraduate) from the current 33 to 48 within the next one year.

"We want to enhance service delivery so as to reduce complaints," she adds, indicating that the university plans to achieve this through timely resolution of students' queries.

Ms Nyokabi reveals that ODEL has started a tracking system to establish the status of each student's email and resolve any reported incidents.

Two mobile phone lines have been set aside to serve ODEL students who need immediate feedback on their concerns. These lines are: 0702041042 and 0724205417. A third line will be introduced.

Further, the university is improving

the website to make it friendlier and to allow users quick access to all relevant information.

A server dedicated to the students' portal has been put in place to ensure students enjoy smooth interactions with the learning platform, says the ODEL head.

A review of the modules to improve quality, enrich content and capture new changes wrought by modern technology and evolving trends is ongoing. The ODEL modules are developed in line with the MKU curriculum that are approved by the Commission for University Education (CUE).

"We are also decentralising ODEL services to all campuses so that students are not served only from the main campus in Thika," Ms Nyokabi adds. "Students can then choose an examination centre closest to them. Diaspora students sit examinations at the Kenyan embassy in their respective countries. Locally, they can choose an MKU campus or centre they can access conveniently."

Besides a dedicated team at the Directorate of ODEL, MKU has strong academic schools and departments that provide mentorship, guidance and support to ODEL students.

TSC chief on new initiatives to improve education in Kenya



Dr Nancy Njeri Macharia, CEO, Teachers Service Commission.

The Teachers' Service Commission (TSC) has developed the necessary framework to reinforce teacher leadership skills and enhance the quality of education in Kenya. It has done so with reference to global trends in teacher management.

Unesco, the UN body responsible for education, science and culture matters, says in the 2017/2018 Global Monitoring Report that "beyond instruction and facilitating learning, teachers are asked to be counsellors, researchers and data analysts".

TSC chief executive officer Dr Nancy Njeri Macharia said last December that the commission had as such strengthened focus on institutionalising high quality teaching.

Dr Macharia was a keynote speaker on the subject of "Re-engineering the Teaching Profession in the 21st Century for Effective Curriculum Reform", at the Kenya Primary School Head-teachers Association (KEPSHA) conference in Mombasa.

She detailed the initiatives TSC was implementing or would implement to empower head teachers and teachers to effectively lead the country through effective execution of the new national curriculum.

It is believed that the new competency-based national curriculum will make schooling more rounded and equip learners with necessary skills to help them navigate through life.

In the new order, school heads, Dr Macharia said, will be expected to actively play the roles of "lead quality assurance and standards officers in their schools".

Teacher Professional Development

Among the initiatives the TSC is accordingly introducing is the Teacher Professional Development (TPD) programme, to be rolled out in 2018 through various models by accredited service providers and teacher training institutions.

Competitive Appointment of Administrative Staff

The teachers' commission will also strengthen competitive appointment of administrative staff in schools.

"We have finalised the development of a policy on Identification, Selection and Deployment of Institutional Administrators," said Dr Macharia.

According to policy, head teachers and deputy head teachers will have to be holders of Bachelor of Education degrees. Principals and deputy principals in post-primary institutions must be Master of Education degree holders.

To avoid conflict of interest, head teachers will no longer be allowed to serve in their home counties or be in one school for more than nine years, the TSC CEO explained, adding that it was the commission's hope the policy would enhance cohesion and appreciation of diverse cultures.

Academic Affairs

Dons from Makerere University and MKU hold joint benchmarking workshop

A delegation of four senior faculty members from Makerere University's College of Education visited the School of Education at Mount Kenya University (MKU) Main Campus, Thika, for a joint three-day workshop. The event ran from 10-12 January 2018.

The team of scholars from Makerere University were Prof Fred Masagazi Masaazi (Principal, College of Education and External Studies), Dr Henry Busulwa (Chair, Department of Science, Technical and Vocational Studies), Dr Nich-

olas Itaaga (Chair, Department of Foundations and Curriculum Studies), and Assistant Professor Anthony Mugagga (Ag. Director, Institute of Education Research).

The workshop took place at MKU's new Senate Boardroom. Participants covered the following key areas:

- 1) Undergraduate and postgraduate teacher education programmes
- 2) Preparation and supervision of student teachers during school/teaching practice
- 3) Teachers' community engagements

- 4) Continuous professional development and other teacher professional engagements
- 5) Quality assurance mechanism.

MKU Vice-Chancellor, Prof Stanley Waudu, promised the team of delegates who paid him a courtesy call accompanied by MKU Senate members, that the university management would support the recommendations from the workshop. He, however, advised that they should start with the "low-lying fruits" to ensure programme feasibility.



MKU Vice-Chancellor Prof Stanley W. Waudu (third right) welcomes Makerere University's College of Education dons.

"I was looking for a kidney buyer, but Prof Gicharu came with a scholarship"

His decision to announce in media that he was selling one of his kidneys to finance his studies gave him his biggest break in life yet.

Daniel Sifa Wanje, 22, sat his Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) examination in 2015 and attained a B+. However, for lack of fees, he could not proceed to university.

When Mount Kenya University (MKU) Founder and Chairman Prof Simon Gicharu came across his announcement in a newspaper, Daniel's life took a new twist. "Prof Gicharu gave me a one-year scholarship, which covers tuition fees, hostel fees and out of pocket money," he says.

Daniel narrates his story:

"I am 22 years old. I sat my KCSE examinations in 2015 at Ribe Boys High School and attained a mean of B+. Due to lack of funds, I could not join university as expected. I stayed out for one year. After the one year, I decided I would sell my kidney to get school fees.

My family was against it, but they could do nothing to about it. They had to agree with me because they could not raise the fees required.

In the process of looking for a buyer through media, a well-wisher, the Chairman of the MKU Board of Directors, Prof Gicharu,



Daniel Sifa Wanje.

came out and promised to pay for my studies.

After receiving the scholarship, I felt good. In fact, I could not believe it until the day I was admitted.

I joined the university on 4 August 2017 and begun my studies. This marked a change in my life and I can see myself heading in the direction I wanted to. I really appreciate Prof Gicharu for his help. He has made a big and positive impact in my life.

I advise other students from families that are struggling never to give up. They should work hard and never be afraid of coming out to the public to seek help.

In fact, I am still looking for help from other well-wishers and bursaries to cover the remaining years of my study."

Patrick never gave up, now his dream is materialising

In Patrick Kiarie Mwaura's vocabulary, the phrase 'giving up' is absent. He is a 'never-say-die' learner whose relentless pursuit of higher education has seen him overcome several obstacles to attain his dream.

After spending seven years in secondary school (instead of the usual four), Patrick heaved a sigh of relief last year. He had finally made the cut, joining the thousands of government-sponsored students who embarked on their universities studies last September.

He narrates his experience:

"I am the last born in a family of six. My schooling was marked with hardships. When I was in Class Eight, my parents were unable to raise my exam fee because that same year, my older sister was to join Form One.

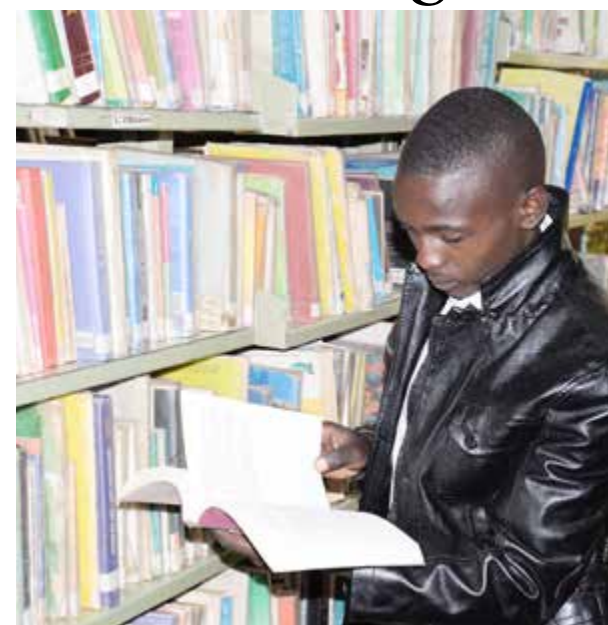
My parents did odd jobs to make ends meet and had no regular source of income. I would work during the holidays to help support the family.

After competing Class Eight, I joined Kigumo Secondary School in Kiambu County in 2008. In 2012, I sat my first Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) examination and obtained a mean grade of B-.

I failed to join college or university because of lack of school fees and stayed at home for the whole of 2013.

In 2014, I decided to go back to secondary school and repeat from Form Three in the same school. Due to hardships, I would sometimes miss up to three weeks of learning per term. I even contemplated quitting at some point, but my parents encouraged me to persevere.

I sat my second KCSE exam in 2015 and



Patrick Kiarie Mwaura.

attained a mean grade of C+.

I did not lose hope of joining university through the Kenya University and College Placement Service.

I registered for the KCSE exam a third time. The school management also made me a peer teacher to enable me earn some money. In 2016, I sat the exam and obtained a mean grade of B-."

In a year when students performed poorly nationally, this grade enabled me to gain government sponsorship.

I am happy I never lost hope. In September, I joined Mount Kenya University (MKU) to pursue a degree in Bachelor of Education (Science). With my savings from the teaching stint, I paid my university fees.

I advise other young people who may be undergoing similar challenges to fear God and not lose hope."

MKU in Pictures



1. Chief Justice David Maraga (left), chats with Abdirazak Mohamed, MKU School of Law student, at the Supreme Court in Nairobi. The Chief Justice had just admitted new advocates to the Bar, officially allowing them to practise law in the country.
2. The Students Training for Entrepreneurial Promotion (STEP) programme opening ceremony at MKU, Thika Campus on 29 January 2018. This programme sponsored by Leuphana University of Germany is set to benefit 200 MKU students.
3. MKU students give free health advice to delegates during the 2017 Kenya Secondary School Heads Association (KESSHA) conference held in Mombasa.
4. Prof David Serem, Chairman, MKU University Council (left), exchanges performance contract documents with Vice-Chancellor Prof Stanley W. Waudu.
5. MKU present a Ksh1 million cheque to Dr Betty Gikonyo of Karen Hospital's Heart to Heart Foundation. The money will enable sick and needy children to undergo open heart surgery.

Academics

Why MKU is the place to be – DVC ARA

MKU Newsletter engaged Dr Bibianne Waiganjo-Aidi, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic and Research Affairs, on a wide range of academic issues. Here are her responses:

Q. MKU has in recent times invested in various infrastructural developments. Which of these directly support its academic mission?

A: The recently commissioned Ksh1 billion Alumni Plaza, located in the main campus, houses all academic administration offices, hence creating more room for lecture halls and laboratories, which are currently being renovated and stocked. The Chancellor's Tower houses the majority of our lecture halls, and we have developed similar structures in our other campuses.

Last November, the university, through the Board of Directors, launched the new ultra-modern senate boardroom, which is complete with state-of-the-art communication and presentation equipment. The university has commenced the construction of a new ultra-modern 18,000-seater auditorium to create more space for students forums, conferences, public lectures, among many other academic seminars and workshops.

Our laboratories have been stocked with up-to-date equipment, and then we have a commitment with partnering institutions and stakeholders to add more equipment due to the increasing number of students, especially for the government sponsored students.

Currently, we are establishing more labs, which upon completion, will make the total number of labs to 42, serving different programmes, with emphasis given to those in the College of Health Sciences.

Q. What quality assurance mechanisms does the university have in place? How effective are these in delivering the desired results?

A: MKU has put in place stringent mechanisms of monitoring student and lecture attendance through compulsory lecturer and student sign-ins. These are updated daily in the university's management information system to enable the deans and heads of department make analysis and give appropriate recommendations. They access the data through administrator's credentials provided to them. This has been done with an aim of ensuring 100 per cent class attendance for both students and lecturers.

In addition, our directorate of quality assurance carries out a minimum of two internal and one external quality audit each academic year, so as to promote continuous improvement of quality service provision for staff, students and other stakeholders.

Feedback from customers is also a key component of MKU quality service pro-

vision. In promoting feedback, the university, through the directorate of quality assurance, conducts spontaneous surveys among students during the semester/trimester to obtain recommendations for action on areas where the students will have identified as requiring attention.

These actions have become a component in MKU strategic strides in providing unmatched academic services to its students and the community at large.

Q. What measures are in place to curb exam cheating and to secure credible evaluation, and therefore maintain the integrity of examinations at MKU?

A: MKU examination processes are anchored in its statutes and examination policy guidelines. These provide for the appointment of internal and external invigilators. All applicants to these positions must submit a recommendation from employers or supervisors from within and without the institution, in addition to integrity letters from the Ethics and Anti-corruption Commission (EACC). Training on their mandate once appointed also forms part of the preliminary process before they are deployed to examination halls.

During the September-December 2017 semester/trimester, the university rolled out its new range of examination booklets that are barcoded and can be traced from the point of issuance to the point of archiving. This has been achieved through the use of barcode reading machines, which are capable of transmitting recorded data to examination directorate in the main campus for tracking. This has ensured that only genuine booklets from the university are used during examination sessions. Any remainder can be accounted for, and only the examination officers can demand for any unaccounted booklet at any time.

The coding and archiving process of student's booklets once the university senate has approved examination results, further enables the institution to ensure that no students' marks are lost. This resolves the challenge of 'missing marks'.

These efforts, in addition to clear examination disciplinary processes and stiff penalties, have reduced by a significant margin, cases of examination cheating amongst our learners. In its long-term plans, the institution is endeavouring to introduce CCTV cameras in examination halls to boost the efforts of invigilators.

Q. MKU's programmes are accredited by the Commission for University Education (CUE) and other regulatory



Dr Bibianne Waiganjo-Aidi, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, ARA

bodies. What does this mean considering the university is fairly young and privately-sponsored?

A: Accreditation and approval of MKU programmes by CUE and relevant regulatory bodies, especially in the College of Health Sciences, is a hallmark of confidence on the institution's ability to mount quality, market driven programmes. The process that go into the development of such programmes is exhaustive and rigorous, thus yielding to market-driven programmes admired by both local and international students. Our physical presence in Kigali, Rwanda, is an attestation of such efforts, in addition to our DIBL (Distance and Institution-Based Learning) programmes that have attracted international students from across Africa and other parts of the globe.

Q. How have Kenya's CUE and Rwanda's HEC audits assisted the university to remain on track in the delivery of quality education?

A: CUE audits have assisted the university and its campuses to enhance adherence to academic bodies and regulatory guidelines concerning accreditation and reviews of programmes, and more so to ensure that the university offers market driven quality programmes. These have also assisted the university in establishing adequate modern facilities, among them laboratories and lecture halls, while expanding the existing ones to meet student and staff needs.

The university had numerous CUE

audits in the year 2016. The latest audit was carried out in January 2017. During these audits, the university has always emerged compliant to CUE requirements, and has continued to be acknowledged by the commission for its satisfactory preparation for such audits, availing of requisite information and documentation to the CUE audit teams.

The transparency with which the audits are conducted has given an impetus to the institution, since all the recommendations made from such audits have been embedded in our decision-making mechanisms to further provided quality education to our clients.

The Rwandan Higher Education Council (HEC) audits have also returned a compliance verdict for MKU-Kigali Campus, which has strived to meet all the set guidelines as envisaged by the HEC. The Kigali Campus has continued to meet the academic needs of Rwandan Students.

Q. In terms of programmes, how does the university compare with other private universities?

A: The university's programmes are approved by the Senate and CUE, and are listed on the commission's website. They include postgraduate diploma, undergraduate, master and PhD programmes. The university prides itself in offering market driven courses, which are heavily developed through stakeholder involvement. MKU has crafted a niche in technology, business, IT, social sciences and the health sciences programmes.

In addition, we pride ourselves as offering cutting edge programmes and training. This has enabled the institution to attract comparatively some of the highest numbers of student applicants and transfers. We are additionally reputed for efficient service delivery. We are in the process of implementing a revised advisory student services so as to boost our competitive edge among other service providers.

Q. MKU has spontaneously attracted the highest number of government-sponsored students. How much a mark of confidence in the university's quality education is this?

A: The confidence expressed in this institution by the high number of government-sponsored applicants underscores the demand for our market driven programmes. The experiences of our students reflect what true campus life should be like. Our students are exposed to adequate and well equipped lecture halls, labs, halls of residence and other co-curricular activities that make studying in MKU attractive. We pride ourselves in maintaining an open-door policy where students can access all university officers at any given time of their study.

“
Accreditation and approval of MKU programmes by CUE and relevant regulatory bodies, especially in the College of Health Sciences, is a hallmark of confidence on the institution's ability to mount quality, market driven programmes.”

Introducing Bachelor of Pharmacy - Diploma Entry Programme

The Pharmacy and Poisons Board (PPB) has approved the Bachelor of Pharmacy Implementation Plan of the Mount Kenya University (MKU) School of Pharmacy, for students progressing from Diploma in Pharmacy/Pharmaceutical Technology to the Bachelor of Pharmacy (BPharm) degree, under what will be known as Bachelor of Pharmacy (Diploma Entry) Programme.

The PPB, in approving the MKU implementation plan in January 2018, indicated that it was in tandem with the PPB Credit Waiver Policy Guidelines for Progression from Diploma in Pharmacy/Pharmaceutical Technology to Bachelor of Pharmacy.

The PPB Credit Waiver Policy, approved in December 2013, is a useful tool for facilitating the progression of diploma holders in pharmacy to degree holders in the same.

The policy recognises that enrolled Pharmaceutical Technologists (Ordinary Diploma holders) have the relevant and necessary experience that demonstrates their appropriateness for entry into the pharmacy degree and subsequent exemptions in some course units. This is because



A student explains the essentials of an anatomy specimen to Rwanda High Commissioner to Kenya, His Excellency James Kimonyo.

they have undergone certified and experiential learning.

The policy also recognises that the holders of the National Higher Diploma in Pharmacy (HND) have attained more knowledge than Ordinary Diploma holders, and may hence be granted advanced standing by individual universities after the assessment of their academic history.

Bachelor of Pharmacy (Diploma Entry) Programme Entry Requirements

a) The applicant must have studied the Diploma in Pharmacy/Pharmaceutical Technology in a PPB accredited institution.

b) The applicant must have satisfied the general criteria for admission into the Diploma in Pharmaceutical Technology (DPT) programme as per PPB guidelines. The PPB general minimum requirements for admission into the Diploma in Pharmaceutical Technology (DPT) programme are:

- (i) KCSE Mean Grade C (Plain) or its equivalent as equated by KNEC;
- (ii) A minimum of C (Plain) in each of the following four cluster subjects: English or Kiswahili; Chemistry or Physical Science; Biology or Biological Science; Mathematics or Physics.

c) The applicant must be enrolled as a Pharmaceutical Technologist by the PPB.

Loise Ng'ang'a, Pharmacy student, explains the working of various products to Group Chief Executive Director Radio Africa Ltd Mr Patrick Quarcoo (left) and Star newspaper staff during their visit to MKU.

Programme Structure

- Pharmacy diploma holders who scored a pass (or a GPA >3.0) in their diploma programme will not receive any credit waivers in the BPharm course, hence a minimum course duration of five academic years.
- Pharmacy diploma holders who scored a credit grade will be considered for credit waivers for courses covered during the First Year of the BPharm programme. They may join the BPharm programme in the Second Year of study.
- Holders of Higher National Diploma (HND) in Pharmacy are granted advanced standing in the BPharm programme. They get credit waivers in the First and Second years of study, and may join the BPharm programme in the Third Year level.
- Studies are scheduled for four days per week (Thursday to Sunday), exclusively at the Thika Campus.
- Course assessment will involve continuous tests, practical work, bedside exam, oral exam and end of year examination.

FEE: Ksh128,200 per semester

Fee Payment Funding and Plans

MKU is working closely with the Higher Education Loans Board (HELB) to ensure the Bachelor of Pharmacy (Diploma Entry) Programme students secure funding through HELB via the following products:

- i) HELB Continuing Education (CE) Loan Programme
This loan targets salaried students who are able to repay while studying. The loan attracts a small interest of one percent per month and is repayable in 48 months.
- ii) HELB Direct Entry Student (DES) Loan
This loan is for students joining public or private universities within the East African Community. It attracts a very small interest of four percent per annum, and students repay the loan at the completion of their studies.
- iii) MKU Pay as you Learn (PAYL) Fee Payment Plan

This is an innovative fee payment plan designed and developed by the MKU Finance Department for salaried students or those doing business and therefore earn monthly income. The fee payment plan allows the student to pay their fees on agreed monthly instalments.

Study Leave for Civil Servants

The School of Pharmacy is working closely with the Office of the Chief Pharmaceutical Technologist in the Ministry of Health to help pharmaceutical technologists working at the Ministry of Health to obtain study leave.

Academics & Research highlights

CURRICULUM REVIEWS

Diploma curriculum reviews make MKU a pacesetter

Mount Kenya University (MKU) concluded the reviews of its diploma programmes, paving the way for their implementation in the 2017/2018 academic year.

The exercise was carried out in line with the dynamic market demands and as per Commission for University Education (CUE) requirements. It was a pivotal step in fostering pleasant learning experiences and enabling good content coverage.

The revision took into consideration the course duration as recommended by CUE and in line with the Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC) minimum hours of instructions.

The revision saw a team of dedicated faculty staff from all the schools offering diploma programmes patiently take long hours of consultation and information

sharing involving key stakeholders, such as the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD). This culminated in the university senate approving the diploma programmes, thus setting the stage for their rollout with the September 2017 intake.

The exercise enables MKU to offer unrivalled diploma programmes for learners seeking to venture into start-up or employment, and for those intending to further their studies to undergraduate level.

The revision has stimulated stakeholders' interest as witnessed in the increased enrolment in various diploma programmes. This is in line with the university's commitment to offer unrivalled quality education while taking into account the entire curriculum perspective.



MKU Vice-Chancellor, Prof Stanley W. Waudo (seated second second right), and Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic and Research Affairs, Dr Bibianne Waiganjo-Aidi (seated third right), pose with participants of a postgraduate workshop held last June at the Thika main campus.

ADMISSIONS

Over 3,700 govt sponsored students join MKU in just two years

In 2016, a total of 88,626 candidates qualified for university admission after meeting the minimum entry requirement of grade C+. The Kenyan Government made a decision to admit all of them.

Out of this total, public universities were allocated 71,089. The rest were allocated to private universities. Among these, Mount Kenya University (MKU) attracted the highest number, just like in the previous year, getting 2,905. This was nearly double the 1,580 students who were allocated to MKU in the previous year.

So far, the university has a total of

3,739 government sponsored students who have reported. In the year 2016, 1,127 students reported. This year (2017), the university has received a total of 2,612 government sponsored students.

The high number of government sponsored students joining MKU in just two academic years is a sign of preference for the university by learners, owing largely to the high quality standards that the university has maintained in all its sectors. MKU will continue improving to produce quality graduates for all sectors of the economy.



The Dean, School of Postgraduate Studies, Dr Samuel Karenga (back third left) poses with postgraduate students (virtual students) from Burundi Marketing Centre after a training workshop held on Saturday, May 20, 2017

RESEARCH

New projects by Research Directorate

The Directorate of Research has received grants for new projects in nutrition and health, among other fields.

Omena Blackbox Innovation Project

Funding Agency: Grant Challenges Canada (GCC)

Funded Amount: 100,000 Canadian Dollars

The Omena Blackbox project addresses the challenges of malnutrition in the Lake Victoria region of Kenya.

It targets to increase the availability of dried fish in remote areas by providing a stack of racks within a box that has internal black surfaces, which accumulate the sun's energy. The box is also designed to improve airflow. These attributes maximize fish drying.

The solar drier provides a new and easy-to-assemble technology aimed at addressing unhealthy ways of drying omena fish on the ground or misuse of bednets for the same and exposing people to malaria. The use of the Omena Blackbox retains the quality of omena, hence more consumption and market availability.

Rapid and Multiplex Diagnosis of Maternal Bacterial Infections

Funding Agency: Grant Challenges Africa (GCA)

Funded Amount: \$100,000

Rapid and Multiplex Diagnosis project aims at improving maternal health

in Bungoma County by addressing the heavy burden of new-born deaths.

The project involves rapid and multiplexed diagnosis of implicated bacterial infections, and testing the impact of the strategy on pregnancy and new-born outcomes.

There is increasing evidence that bacterial infections that are mostly subclinical contribute significantly to the inflammatory processes that underlie still births and preterm labour, and endanger new-borns.

Recently, the Principal Investigator, Dr Jesse Gitaka, attended a 10-day workshop in the United States of America, sponsored by the donor.

National Research Fund (NRF) Grant

Funding agency: National Research Fund

Funded Amount: Ksh150,000,000

Mount Kenya University is already reaping the fruits of research sensitisation efforts to both staff and postgraduate students. In 2017, five (5) postgraduate students and seven (7) staff members won about Ksh150 million through competitive proposal writing.

Funds for the five postgraduate students and one multidisciplinary project have been disbursed to the university. The researchers have embarked on research activities, and have promised proper utilisation of the grants for quality outcomes.

Academics & Research highlights

MKU Research Centre serves others

The Research Centre serves not only Mount Kenya University students, but also other institutions, such as Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT) and Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI).

Currently, nine projects are using equipment such as the High Performance Liquid Chromatography (HPLC), Ultra-violet-visible spectroscopy (UV-Vis) and the Atomic Absorption Spectrophotometer (AAS).

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The Dean, School of Postgraduate Studies, Dr Samuel Karenga (extreme right) poses with postgraduate coordinators after a training that was held on 26-27 August, 2017.

SCHOOL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

How postgraduate school enriches studies

Mount Kenya University (MKU) School of Postgraduate Studies coordinates all matters related to postgraduate programmes and training.

The university offers Masters and PhD postgraduate programmes. The school has postgraduate students not only from Kenya, but also from other countries, among them Burundi, Rwanda, United Arab Emirates and Uganda.

Training workshops

The school is determined to serve students with efficiency and effectiveness. In this regard and over the last one year, the school organised a number of training workshops across the campuses for the benefit of postgraduate students, postgraduate coordinators and supervisors.

The workshops involved training in research writing skills, data analysis and dissemination of findings and academic integrity (plagiarism and ethics).

One such workshop, which was opened by the MKU Vice-Chancellor Prof Stanley Waudo, was held on 15 and 16 June, 2017 at Thika campus. Over 280 postgraduate students and members of staff attended the training.

The school also organised a workshop for Burundi students. It was held at Best Hotel, Bujumbura, on 26-27 August 2017.

A postgraduate coordinators' workshop had been held earlier in May 2017 about the requirements for postgraduate students and supervisors.

Sensitisation on available funding opportunities

During the training workshops, the School of Postgraduate Studies, in partnership with the Directorate of Research and Innovation, trains postgraduate students on writing fundable research proposals.

Such a workshop was conducted in 2016, and out of those who attended, four (4) PhD students were awarded research grants amounting to Ksh2 million each.

This year, a similar workshop will be

conducted in November. We envisage that more postgraduate students will be successful in securing research grants.

The school also circulates other local, regional and international research grant calls to students through their individual emails.

Officers from funding organisations, such as HELB, are usually invited to advise students on funding opportunities for postgraduate studies.

Office of postgraduate editorial officer

The school has established the office of an editorial officer. The officer is expected to ensure that proposals, theses and research projects submitted to the School of Postgraduate Studies are in form and quality suitable for publication.

In this regard, the editorial officer provides guidance to ensure the documents meet the required standards as per the University's Standards and Guidelines. The officer also advises on the acceptable university level of similarity index.

Embracing technology

The school of postgraduate studies appreciates and embraces the role of modern technology in training. As such, the school has adopted and implemented the postgraduate presentations by Web Technologies Policy Guidelines that were approved by the University Senate on Friday 2 June 2017.

These guidelines are meant to guide on how students, and especially distant

students, may present their proposals via web technologies. It is worth noting, however, that despite the use of the web technology, the student is expected to appear in person for the final oral examination.

The school of postgraduate studies successfully conducted its first web-based presentation earlier this year.



A Rwanda postgraduate student uses web technologies to present his proposal from his country to his lecturers in the Thika main campus, Kenya.

Partnerships

Talks on for tripartite collaboration with NTU and Makerere University

On 14 September 2017, a joint Makerere University-Nottingham Trent University (NTU) delegation visited Mount Kenya University (MKU) to discuss how the three institutions could collaborate in training health experts in East Africa.

The meeting, hosted by the MKU College of Health Sciences, agreed on several areas of cooperation. Key among these include joint grant writing, supervision, mentorship and PhD training.

The officials also resolved to explore staff and student exchange programmes. They further deliberated on the possibility of starting a Master's in Public Health course for the region, and to host. Additionally, they proposed joint seminars and publications.

NTU collaborates with the School of Social Sciences at Makerere University. It has a background in nursing, with its area of specialisation being Master of Arts in Public Health. It also offers traditional public health programmes.

The NTU representative, Dr Linda Gib-



A delegation of NTU and Makerere universities pay a courtesy call on MKU Vice-Chancellor, Prof Stanley W. Waudo.

son, revealed plans of establishing a Doctorate Hub in East Africa, where students from MKU and other universities could be guided by professors and doctors.

She added that her institution was ready to support the delivery of an MA programme in Public Health at MKU.

The Principal of MKU College of

Health Sciences, Dr Stanley Kang'ethe, thanked the delegation and said launching an MA in Public Health course at MKU would help to improve community health practice.

NTU alumnus, Esther Wanaswa, supported the proposed international hub, citing its importance in helping many students who were financially challenged and unable to afford education abroad.

Dr John Kariuki, the Dean, MKU School of Public Health, said the school's five departments offer different programmes at PhD, Masters, undergraduate, diploma and certificate levels.

Others from MKU who attended the meeting included Dr Juma Joseph and Dr Dominic Mogere, both senior lecturers at School of Public Health (SPH); Dr Idah Muchuaku, Acting Dean, School of Social Sciences; Leah Mututho, Head of Department, Nutrition and Dietetics; Joseph Muchiri, Head of Department, Community Health; Jackline Nyaberi, Head of Department, Epidemiology and Biostatistics; Vivian Mmbone, Tutorial Fellow, SPH; and Lynette Muthoki, Assistant Lecturer.

UK and China universities warm up to MKU

Nottingham Trent University (NTU) of the United Kingdom (UK) and Shijiazhuang Tiedao University (STU) of China are warming up to collaborations with MKU.

Speaking during two separate visits to the top MKU management, delegates from NTU identified collaborative

activities in public health and Graduate Enterprise Academy as priority areas.

The STU officials, on the other hand, identified collaboration in engineering and ICT programmes at the School of Engineering, Energy and the Built Environment, and the School of Informatics and Computing, respectively.



Representatives from Shijiazhuang Tiedao University (China) headed by Professor Jinjie Chen (STU Vice-President) during their courtesy call to the MKU Chairman of Board of Directors, Prof Simon Gicharu, and the Vice-Chancellor, Prof Stanley Waudo

MKU gets nod as centre for Certified HR Professional course

Mount Kenya University (MKU) is now an accredited training and exam centre for the Certified HR Professional (CHRP).

The HRM Professionals Examination Board (HRMPEB) gave the university the accreditation nod last November.

The CHRP (K) certification is a compliance requirement for those working in or aspiring to get into the HR field.

HR practitioners who wish to continue working in this field have a certification deadline of year 2020.

At MKU, the CHRP programme is domiciled in the School of Business and Entrepreneurship (SoB&E), Department of Management.

Equip Africa is partnering with the school to implement and run the programme in identified campuses outside Nairobi.

This is an important milestone for both institutions.



Students share knowledge at the Main Campus study villas in Thika. MKU has been accredited as a training and exam centre for Certified HR professional course.

Makerere University and MKU sign MoU

A new milestone was registered on 19 September 2017 when Mount Kenya University and Makerere University signed a memorandum of understanding to collaborate in the improvement of improving higher education the region.

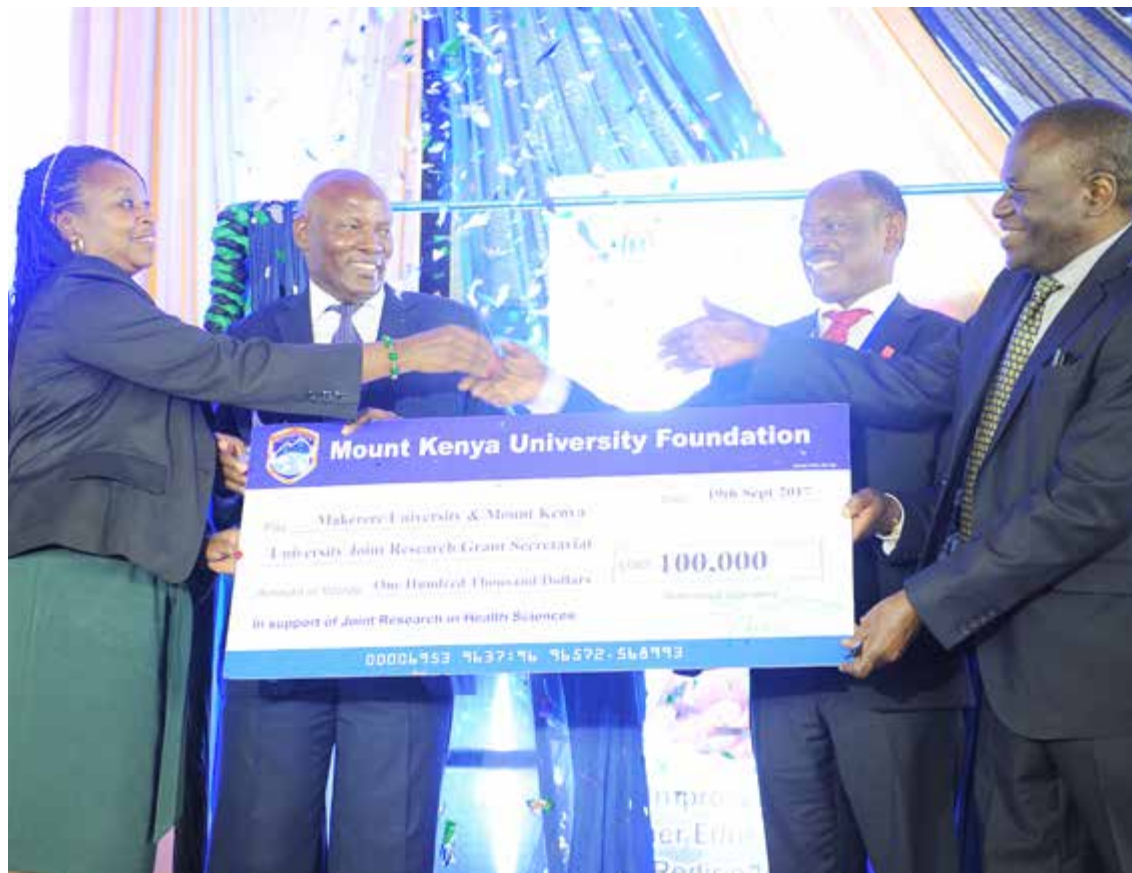
Makerere University was represented at the ceremony by Prof Barnabas Nawangwe, the Vice-Chancellor; Dr Isaac Okullu, Deputy Principal, Makerere University College of Health Sciences; Prof Moses Joloba, Dean, School of Biomedical Science; Mr Goddy Muhanguzi Muhumuza, Ag Director, Directorate of Legal Affairs; and Prof Nazarius T Mbona, Chair, MoU Coordinating Committee, Makerere University.

In attendance for MKU were Prof Stanley Waudo, the Vice-Chancellor; Dr Vincent Gaitho, MKU Council Vice-Chairman; Dr Stanley Kangethe, Principal, College of Health Science; and Madam Jane Nyutu, Member, Board of Directors.

Makerere University College of Health Sciences (MakCHS) and the MKU college of Health Science (MKUCHS) will work together as equal partners towards the improvement of higher education in the region through exchange programmes for both students and faculty, joint teaching and research.

The goals of the collaborations are as follows:

- To stimulate communication, cooperation, and partnerships between the two colleges, including exchange of students and faculty, and to develop twinned curricula, thus enhancing the educational quality and resources of both.



Mount Kenya University Vice-Chancellor Prof Stanley Waudo (right) and Makerere University Vice-Chancellor Prof Barnabas Nawangwe (second right) receive a cheque of Ksh10million from MKU member of Board of Directors Jane Nyutu (left) and MKU Vice-Chairman Dr. Vincent Gaitho. The colleges of health sciences in both universities will work together to improve higher education in East Africa through exchange programmes for students and faculty in joint teaching and research.

- To provide information on academic programmes of both colleges so that students take full advantage of existing international education opportunities.
- To create a collaborative relationship between MakCHS and MKUCHS, in which either party will recognise the other as a partner in training and research.

The goals of the collaborations are as follows:

To stimulate communication, cooperation, and partnerships between the two Colleges including exchange of students and faculty and to develop twinned curriculum thus enhancing the educational quality and resources of both Colleges.

To provide information on academic programmes of both Colleges so that students take full advantage of existing international education opportunities.

To create a collaborative relationship between MakCHS and MKUCHS in which either party will recognize the other as a partner in training and research.

Health Sciences students to reap benefits

It is expected that the grant will highly benefit postgraduate students from Mount Kenya University and Makerere University who will jointly be supervised by faculty members from both institutions.

Update on MKU and Makerere University business schools partnership

On 17 December 2015, Mount Kenya University School of Business and Economics (MKU-SBE) and Makerere University Business School (MUBS) agreed to collaborate on a number of undertakings. They signed a memorandum of understanding, whose scope included the following:

- Staff and students exchange
- Exchange of academic information and material
- Joint proposal development for funding
- Joint research and publications
- Participation in conferences and academic meetings
- Joint development and certification of short and postgraduate courses
- Joint promotion of entrepreneurship project and programmes.

Since then, the two institutions have engaged in a number of collaborative activities. Following are



A section of MKU students and staff join Uganda delegation during the signing of MKU and Makerere University's Partnership.

the highlights:

- MKU chairman donated seed fund of \$5000 towards the Makerere Business Journal (MBJ) to promote joint research and publications.
- So far, staff from both institutions have participated in joint research conferences. For instance, in 2016, 14 staff from MKU School of Business and Economics presented their research papers at the 11th Annual International Management Conference (AIMC) hosted by MUBS in Kampala, Uganda, while four presented their papers at the 12th AIMC hosted by MUBS in Jinja, Uganda, in 2017. *(The highlighted need to be confirmed and corrected. MUBS website indicates that this year's AIMC held in Sept was the 22nd edition, meaning the 2016 AIMC was the 21st).
- Student leaders from the two institutions have been able to exchange visits for benchmarking and sharing of ideas.
- On 12-13 October 2017, two professors from

MUBS conducted a capacity building workshop in proposal writing to promote joint research grant applications (can get photos of the training from marketing). As a result, a number of MKU-SBE staff are already working on joint research projects and grant proposals with counterparts from MUBS.

Joint initiatives in process

- The two institutions jointly developed an Executive Master of Business Administration (EMBA) to be hosted at Equip Africa Institute in MKU.
- Discussions are ongoing to work out modalities of launching a joint Doctor of Business Administration in MKU and MUBS.
- Plans are at an advanced stage to have MKU as the Kenya agent for Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) through the support of MUBS.

Linkages

Partnerships that matter

Mount Kenya University (MKU) is recognised for its effective application of partnerships. The university engages in both university-industry linkages and university-to-university collaborations, keenly selecting those that support any of its core activities of teaching, research and community outreach.

Some of MKU's outstanding partnerships with industry include those with Safaricom, Vivo Energy and Thika Level 5 Hospital among many other health facilities around the country, such as Mathari Hospital, Getrudes Children's Hospital, Karen Hospital, Pumwani Hospital, Chulaimbo Hospital, Machakos Level 5 Hos-

pital and many more.

In 2016, MKU Nakuru Campus established a partnership with UNESCO office at Paris. This has helped the campus to promote digital education. MKU also signed a memorandum of understanding with the Kenya National Commission for UNESCO (KNATCOM-UNESCO) to engage in joint youth empowerment programmes.

In relating with other universities, MKU enjoys very active engagements with the University of West of Scotland, Clarke University (USA), Leuphana University (Germany), Makerere University (Uganda), Gulu University (Uganda), Makerere University Business School (Uganda),

Bonn Rhine Sieg University (Germany), Vincent Pol University (Poland) and the International University of Management (Namibia).

These linkages help MKU to pursue four broad objectives, these being to enhance its visibility locally and internationally, market itself regionally and globally, raise its ranking and benchmark with the best universities.

Additionally, the partnerships have enabled successful application for research grants, and have further benefitted MUK staff and students through academic and cultural exchange programmes and empowerment initiatives.

GEA training re-branded, gets additional features

Mount Kenya University (MKU) marks the Graduate Enterprise Academy's (GEA's) fifth anniversary this year. To-date, 24 strong businesses owned by the 24 beneficiaries of GEA are thriving in different parts of the country.

Training at GEA was initially a residential, but was later converted into boot-camps.

Now the programme has been rebranded, and will be offered as LEAD, standing for Leadership, Entrepreneurial and Development (LEAD) training. This is thanks to collaboration with faculty from Clarke University (USA). The aspects of leadership and development have been introduced to create greater impact on trainees.

The Kenya National Commission for UNESCO (KNATCOM-UNESCO) has joined MKU at GEA to sell it to a wider cross-section of partners, including Sports Kenya and County Governments.

Other significant partners working with GEA include Family Bank, Stima Sacco and Image Horizons Limited, which is instrumental in offering induction on access to Government Procurement Opportunities (AGPOs).



Thika Level V Hospital, equipped with an ultra-modern anatomy laboratory and a funeral home to the tune of Ksh300 million by Mount Kenya University. The hospital is a teaching facility for MKU health sciences students.



MKUSA President Martin Owillah joins fellow students and MKU staff to register for participation in World AIDS Day activities on 1 December 2017.

Examples of MKU linkages by core activity

Teaching	Research	Community Outreach
Partnerships between MKU's College of Health Sciences and referral Hospitals		Partnership with Bungoma Hospital Neonatal Clinic, where MKU staff established incubators for new-borns
Partnerships with Banks (attachment)	Partnership with ICIPE	
Partnerships with Safaricom (attachment) at the Blaze Zone	Partnership with Leuphana University (Germany)	Linkage with Naivasha Maximum Prison to promote education



MKU Kisii Campus students perform a traditional dance during a cultural day.

Thanks to MKU and partners, newborn deaths in county now expected to reduce

Mount Kenya University (MKU) and its partners have presented to the County Government of Bungoma eight neonate facilities.

The units, equipped at Ksh50 million, were officially handed over on 19 December 2017. They will help reduce the rate of deaths of infants in the county.

Bungoma County First Lady Caroline Wangamati graced the occasion, accompanied by county health officials.

She expressed her deep concern over the high newborn mortality rate in Bungoma County, and indicated that she would lead from the front in fighting for better maternal and infant health.

The sorry state of health in the county, she added, could be reversed through strengthening collaborations as exhibited by MKU. Mrs Wangamati further called for more resources to be put into research and innovation towards preventing premature deliveries, complications and deaths.

MKU Vice-Chancellor Prof Stanley W. Waudu reiterated the university's commitment to its values of teaching, research and community outreach. He indicated the university's commitment to synergistic partnerships with county governments towards achieving the national development priority goals, including health,



Caroline Wangamati, the First Lady of Bungoma County, commissions a newborn unit at Webuye Sub-County Hospital.

food security as well as job and wealth creation.

According to global and national statistics, Kenya has among the worst newborn health indicators in the world. Although the country has made significant progress over the past two decades in reducing newborn mortality, the rate

still remains high at 22 deaths per every 1,000 live births. This is in stark contrast to countries such as Japan that have 1 death in every 1,000 live births, or Cuba with five.

In Kenya, Bungoma County is among six counties with the worst newborn mortality indicators at 32 deaths in every

1,000 live births.

"In the next one year, we envisage that Bungoma County newborn mortality will reduce significantly," asserts Dr Jesse Gitaka, the lead investigator of the project.

Big milestones have been achieved over the last 20 months of the project.

"We have increased the capacity of newborn facilities in Bungoma by refurbishing and installing modern equipment in eight newborn units across eight sub-county health facilities, from only two inadequately equipped facilities," says Prof Francis W. Muregi, the Director of Research and Innovation at Mount Kenya University.

He adds that from a capacity of only 100, the facilities can now handle 320 newborns at any given time.

Additionally, about 10,000 mothers have been supported through the Call Centre service. Thousands more have been reached over the radio programme and drama.

Further, 95 nurses and clinicians have been trained on neonatology, and a telehealth platform has been installed to offer virtual paediatric support and continuous mentorship to clinicians.

Prof Muregi said the project was a model of how universities should leverage on intellectual resources by working collaboratively with communities to address socio-economic challenges.

Which model of entrepreneurship teaching should East Africa adopt? Visiting professor shares some views



Prof Peter Rosa, George David Emeritus Professor of Entrepreneurship and Family Business, University of Edinburgh Business School, Scotland.

Universities must step up to the plate in promoting entrepreneurship to help diffuse the "ticking time bomb" that is youth unemployment in East Africa, estimated at between 40 and 60 per cent. The challenge is which model of entrenching entrepreneurship the region should adopt.

Professor Peter Rosa, Makerere University Business School visiting don, recently delivered a public lecture on this subject at the Mount Kenya University (MKU) main campus in Thika.

In a presentation titled, *New Directions for Entrepreneurship Development and Education in East Africa*, Prof Rosa explored the region's unemployment challenge and analysed possible solutions to it.

Focusing on the Kenyan situation

with some reference to Uganda, he argued that the region's universities had much to do to tackle the unemployment challenge.

He noted that while Kenya had witnessed a rapid expansion of universities (now numbering more than 70), the large number of graduates who ended up jobless was a matter of grave concern.

The visiting professor interpreted this to mean that as much as youths were generally positive towards entrepreneurship, given a choice, many would rather have a "good, secure job in a large organisation".

This, he said, was the result of the system of university education in East Africa. It is geared to match skills with careered jobs, not self-employment, he observed.

He said for instance, that business schools in the region are generally geared to create management professionals and CEOs, not entrepreneurs.

This is a paradox, the professor noted, in the sense that despite desiring employment, youths tend to look up to prominent entrepreneurial millionaires as role models.

Prof Rosa then went on to discuss three models that have been employed in different times to promote entrepreneurial culture in universities.

One model, adopted in the 1980s to the 1990s, sought to create entrepreneurship centres attached to business schools.

A model that dominated the late 1990s sought to embed entrepreneurship into core university

degrees.

The third model, which emerged in the 2000s and is still in use, promotes entrepreneurship and innovation systems that help to commercialise university science and research discoveries and inventions.

All methods have advantages and disadvantages, but Prof Rosa's overall observation is that: "The most prosperous countries are those that produce the most scientific innovations and richest self-made billionaires, and have 'ecosystems' and infrastructures capable of commercialising them."

Prof Rosa is also a George David Emeritus Professor of Entrepreneurship and Family Business, University of Edinburgh Business School.

Rwanda High Commissioner's Visit

MKU lauded for its quality education

Mount Kenya University (MKU) is doing a fabulous job of providing access to quality higher education.

Rwanda High Commissioner to Kenya, Ambassador James Kimonyo, made this remark when he visited the university on 4 October 2017. He particularly appreciated MKU for training Rwandan citizens who are playing a critical role in helping the country to attain its Vision 2020 industrialisation dream.

"Allow me to appreciate the MKU Management for the good work they are doing in providing access to quality higher education," said Kimonyo.

MKU Vice-Chancellor Prof Stanley Waudu assured the diplomat that the university was committed to providing requisite academic resources and applying best practices necessary for imparting and sustaining quality training.

Kimonyo continued to emphasise MKU's importance to human capital in Rwanda. "A private citizen who invests his resources in education deserves support and recognition. We appreciate the major investment that MKU has undertaken in Rwanda. We view the university's infrastructure as our own because the training offered benefits the Rwandan citizens and helps the country achieve its desired human capital," said Kimonyo.

He was in Thika to check on students from Rwanda, and to also welcome those who had joined the university in September to study for various health courses.

The diplomat had earlier visited MKU when it had hosted an international



Rwanda High Commissioner to Kenya, His Excellency James Kimonyo (centre) with MKU Founder Chairman, Prof Simon N. Gicharu and Purity Kimwe, MKUSA Vice President.



His Excellency James Kimonyo, Rwanda High Commissioner to Kenya, greets one of the Rwandese students studying at the MKU main campus in Thika, Kenya.

peace conference in Nairobi. He had been among the chief speakers.

Vice-Chancellor Prof Waudu thanked the Rwanda Government for supporting the university as it progressively established a campus in Kigali.

MKU Rwanda is set to become a fully-fledged autonomous university next year.

"We have invested over Ksh2 billion or Rwandan Francs (RWF) 16 billion to develop the land we acquired at Kagarama in our efforts to see the university grow into an autonomous institution before the end of 2018," revealed Prof Simon Gicharu, MKU founder and chairman.

Prof Waudu thanked the Government

of Rwanda and the line ministries "for their unwavering support that enabled the establishment of the MKU Kigali Campus". He expressed hope that Rwanda's government will sustain its support for MKU Rwanda.

"Demand for relevant competencies and skills in the workplace are growing," observed Prof Waudu. "Therefore, governments and other stakeholders, including regulatory bodies, demand that universities produce competent graduates."

He noted that MKU was, through its Graduate Enterprise Academy (GEA), training students to develop a mind-set change from job seeking to job creation.

Kimonyo challenged Rwandan pharmacy students to learn as much as they could from GEA. This, he said, would enable them, upon completing their studies, "to venture into job creation through establishment of own pharmaceutical retail shops as well as other formal business opportunities that will create employment for themselves and many other persons in Rwanda".

There are 70 Rwandan students currently in the MKU Thika campus. This is the single largest group of international students enrolled in a particular faculty in a Kenyan university.



His Excellency James Kimonyo, Rwanda's High Commissioner to Kenya, joins Rwandese students studying at Mount Kenya University in a Kinyarwanda jig.



Rwanda High Commissioner to Kenya, His Excellency James Kimonyo (left), with Rwandan students studying pharmacy at Mount Kenya University, during a courtesy call.

School in elaborate growth plans

The School of Education intends to increase the number of departments from the current four to eight, and transform into a college.

The eight departments will thus be: Educational Psychology; Educational Management and Curriculum Studies; Early Childhood Studies; Special Needs Education; Educational Communication and Technology; Educational Foundations; Teaching Practice; and Physical Education.

The school also plans to increase the number of degree programmes on offer from 11 to 15 by year 2019. The additional programmes will include Bachelor of Educational Technology, Bachelor of Education (Physical Education) and Doctor of Philosophy in Special Needs Education.

Further, the school intends to increase the number of public lectures from three to five per year.

It will also increase the number of collaborations with local and international institutions of higher learning from the current four to six by 2018.

The student population is envisaged to grow by about 10 per cent by 2020. Hence, the school has within its plan to increase the teaching staff with doctorate degrees by five per cent by 2020 in order to enhance the supervision of theses by students, as per the Commission for



Dr. Benson Njoroge, Dean, School of Education

University Education guidelines.

The school also intend to increase the number of PhD graduates from the current eight per year to 20 by year 2020.

Reasons to enrol for a course at the MKU School of Education

- 1) The programmes at the School of Education comply with the Commission for University Education (CUE) Standards & Guidelines. The programmes offer more instructional hours than the minimum stipulated by CUE as tabulated:

	CUE Requirements		MKU		
	Duration	Instructional hours	Duration	Instructional hours	
Bachelors programmes	8 semesters	1680	8 semesters	2016	
Master of Education	4 semesters	630 hours for course work	4 semesters	756 hours for course work	
PhD in Education	• 6 semesters (3 years) • 1 year course work • 2 years of research	1 year course work	6 semesters (3 years)	• 6 semesters (3 years) • 1 year course work • 2 years of research	• 405 hours for course work

- 2) Adequate and highly qualified staff at all cadres: Professors, associate professors, senior lecturers, lecturers and assistant lecturers. The academic staff are appointed as per the Universities Standards and Guidelines, 2014.
- 3) Enough lecture rooms for the various programmes.
- 4) An ultra-modern micro-teaching laboratory, early childhood development and special needs education resource room. These resources ensure the graduates are well prepared with pedagogical skills.
- 5) Affordable school fees for the various programmes.
- 6) The programmes are market driven.
- 7) Constant reviews of curricula as driven by industry needs and CUE requirements. The curricula are reviewed in consultation with major stakeholders, such as the Teachers Service Commission, Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development, curriculum experts in other universities and members of the public.
- 8) Adequate ICT facilities to support learning and teaching.
- 9) Completion of courses at the stipulated time in the curriculum.
- 10) Flexible mode of school fees payment.
- 11) Open policy on administration: The Dean of School and his staff are open to students at all times. No appointments needed.
- 12) Regular meetings with students to address their issues.
- 13) Opportunity to learn together with government sponsored students.
- 14) Adequate and fully equipped science, research and anatomy labs for the science-based subjects.

School's community outreach and collaborations

MKU School of Education offers pedagogical skills training at Naivasha Maximum Security Prison. This is a CSR initiative.

On 18 March 2017, the school collaborated with the Kenya National Commission for UNESCO to donate a television set, DVD player, TV antennae and digital content from Kenya Institute for Curriculum Developing (KICD) for use by inmates to prepare for their

KCSE examinations.

The Kenya National Commission for UNESCO is also a partner in a study by the School of Education at the Naivasha Maximum Security Prison. The research aims to establish the "Effectiveness of Offline Study Desk on Prison Education". It has been shortlisted for funding by the National Research Fund (NRF).

A memorandum of under-

standing between MKU and the Kenya National Commission for UNESCO was signed at MKU main campus in Thika town on 12 June 2017.

It is hoped that upon completion of the study at Naivasha Maximum Security Prison, its results will inform prison education policies in Kenya and probably beyond



Members of the School of Education pose for a group photo after completing their corporate social responsibility mission at the Naivasha Maximum Security Prison.



MKU students play trumpets during a Sunday mass organized by the MKU Catholic Community. MKU Chairman Prof Simon N. Gicharu donated musical instruments to the MKU Young Catholics Students Association.

Research

MKU researchers working to help bring down malaria

The war on malaria is far from being won, and all stakeholders should join the fight so as to bring the disease down. Mr Francis Makokha, head of the Human Health Research Programme in the Directorate of Research and Development at Mount Kenya University (MKU), argues that the success so far recorded against malaria is not absolute. It is a mere mirage.

Himself a researcher, Mr Makokha has his sights aimed at the malaria parasite.

He cites the World Health Organisation 2016 Malaria Report, which shows that an estimated 212 million malaria cases were reported in 2015. Over 90 per cent of these malaria cases were reported in sub-Saharan Africa, with children below five years old and pregnant women being the most affected.

Mr Makokha is one of several MKU researchers working to reduce the malaria burden.

He reports that Dr Jesse Gitaka, also from R&D, is currently working on a project to control and eliminate malaria in the Lake Victoria islands. Dr Gitaka is also working on improving the diagnosis of malaria at the point of care.

R&D Director Prof Francis Muregi, Director of MKU Foundation Dr Peter Kirira, and Ms Hannah Nyakio, a lecturer in the School of Pharmacy, are working on developing hybrid drugs for malaria treatment.

Hybrid drugs consist of two different malaria medicines joined together as one molecule for ease of action against the malaria parasite.

Mr Makokha is studying the biology of the parasite. His aim is to understand the severe forms of malaria and identify possible targets for vaccine development.

One challenge towards development of



Several MKU researchers are involved in research to control malaria, spread by mosquitoes.

an effective vaccine against *P. falciparum* is the parasite's ability to change the vaccine targets at a high frequency. This usually renders the responses to the administered vaccine less effective.

Additionally, Mr Makokha and Mr Bonface Malala, also from R&D, are studying the genetic markers of drug resistance in malaria parasites collected from patients.

He notes that reports from the national malaria control programme indicate that myriad interventions employed over the last decade have significantly reduced malaria cases. However, malaria researchers still report a high number of cases on average, especially during drug efficacy studies.

It is generally agreed, though, that the number of deaths attributable to malaria

has reduced, the researcher acknowledges.

"While the malaria control achievements are laudable, the situation still remains grim," argues Mr Makokha. "The recent malaria epidemics reported in the country are just a warning of possible future outbreaks. That these epidemics occurred in low malaria transmission regions showed the need for early warning surveillance systems to stem the burden of the disease."

Mr Makokha points out that the major challenges of malaria control in Kenya include resistance of the malaria parasite to anti-malarial drugs, insecticide resistance by the mosquito vector, change of feeding behaviour by the mosquito and socio-cultural practices.

He reports that parasite drug resistance

has been the main challenge to malaria management in sub-Saharan Africa.

Chloroquine (CQ), introduced in Kenya in 1930s, remained the first-line malaria treatment until 1998 when it was officially replaced by sulphadoxine-pyrimethamine (SP) based drugs such as Fansidar. This decision was made following confirmed resistance of the parasite to CQ that resulted in high levels of treatment failure.

SP drugs also failed after a short time, reporting over 65 per cent treatment failure in some endemic regions.

In 2004, there was a change in treatment policy that resulted in the adoption of use of ACTs as first-line treatment drugs. Resistance to artemisinin-based combination therapy (ACTs) has been reported in Eastern Asia along the Cambodia-Thailand border. This is a cause for worry for sub-Saharan Africa.

"Early this year, treatment failure by ACTs was reported among patients who returned to United Kingdom after visiting Africa, two of who had visited Uganda," reports Mr Makokha. "This indicates that parasites circulating in the region may have acquired resistance to ACTs and a possible large-scale treatment failure might just be a matter of time. Heightened surveillance for resistant parasites is needed to better contain the spread."

Current efforts to control malaria are focused on the development of an effective vaccine. These efforts have seen the development of a vaccine referred to as RTS, currently undergoing clinical trials in Kenya, Ghana and Malawi. However, initial trials showed that the vaccine had an efficacy of about 38 per cent.

The main malaria control strategies adopted in Kenya (and much of sub-Saharan Africa) included accurate diagnosis of patients exhibiting malaria-like symptoms before treatment, enhanced coverage and effective use of insecticide treated bed nets (ITNs) to reduce contact between the mosquito vector, and public education through various media channels.

In support of government efforts, the MKU researchers hope to scale up their research and help reduce the malaria burden in Kenya and the region.

Varsity spearheads anti-malaria project in Lake Victoria islands

Malaria, schistosomiasis and soil transmitted helminthes (STH) are a major public health burden for the Lake Victoria islanders.

The epidemiology and control programs of these diseases have been implemented independently and haphazardly in the Lake Victoria region of Kenya where these conditions are highly prevalent, affecting same or different members of the household simultaneously. Integrating our malaria community and household surveillance and control activities which have been

on-going for the last 3 years with schistosomiasis and STH surveillance and MDA has realized greater cost effectiveness by leveraging on the community mobilization and engagement.

This strategy has taken advantage of field work infrastructure already in place including a 30 person capacity motor boat which has eased inter island transport of project staff, parasitology laboratory and clinics. The study activities span from basic sciences, laboratory, social, clinical work and public

health.

The community leaders and public health officials have lauded the integrated multidisciplinary approach as a game changer to the triple burden that has continued to lower the quality of life for the islanders. Going forwards, Mount Kenya University and project partners are working to expand the project in phase 2 from the current population of 52000 in the islands to 500,000 in mainland shore areas of Homabay County.



Dr Jesse Gitaka (holding hat), Head of Pure and Applied Sciences Research Programme during an anti-malaria community sensitisation forum in Homa Bay County.

Unlocking Infinite Possibilities

Meet Dr. Gitaka, accomplished researcher in human health

At just 37, Dr Jesse Gitaka is well accomplished in the field of medicine. The distinction grades he has earned from Bachelors to Masters and PhD levels demonstrate his deep passion for the profession.

An alumnus of the University of Nairobi's School of Medicine, he graduated with a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery in 2006, earning distinctions in Anatomy and Pharmacology.

With a PhD in Medical Science from the Institute of Tropical Medicine at Nagasaki University in Japan, and a Master of Tropical Medicine degree from the same university, Dr Gitaka currently heads the Pure and Applied Sciences Research Programme at the Directorate of Research and Development at Mount Kenya University (MKU), Thika. Prior to this, he was a lecturer in the Department of Clinical Medicine at MKU.

Dr Gitaka also lectures at Kenyatta University, and further serves as senior medical officer at Mary Help of the Sick Mission Hospital in Thika.

The young doctor and scholar started off as a medical officer in the Ministry of Health in 2008, before moving to the Kenya Medical Research Institute as a clinical trials doctor and field research officer.

The former Kakamega High School student has wide experience in project work. From 2015 to present, he has been working on the Integrated Control of Schistosomiasis and Soil Transmitted Helminths project in Western Kenya as the principal investigator. In addition, Dr Gitaka has been the project lead of the Collaborative Newborn Support Project in Bungoma County. The project is supported by MKU and partners.

Dr Gitaka has also led significant malaria projects across the country, mostly in areas with high malaria endemicity, including Kilifi at the Coast and parts of Lake Victoria islands around Mbita.

This is not all. Dr Gitaka has been involved in health policy interventions, the latest being as a Member of the Research Technical Working Group at the Neglected

Tropical Diseases Unit of the Ministry of Health. That was in 2016.

A year earlier (2015), he represented the Ministry of Health in the Post-Ebola Health Systems Strengthening in Liberia. There, he played the key roles of trainer in Safe and Quality Health Services and Foreign Medical Team Physician. He had by then participated in policy discussions on Kenya Ebola Outbreak response and preparedness at the University of Nairobi's Institute of Tropical Infectious Diseases, in 2014.

Dr Gitaka has co-authored more than 15 publications, many of them on malaria.

A registered member of the Kenya Medical Practitioners and Dentists Board, as well as a member of the

Kenya Medical Association (Thika Chapter), and the Infectious Diseases Society of Kenya, Dr Gitaka is not all about work. He is an ardent football player, with skills as a striking midfielder. He also enjoys playing scrabble and the violin.



Dr Jesse Gitaka, Head of Pure and Applied Sciences Research Programme.

MKU welcomes 'globe-trotting' STEP

Effective November 2017, MKU became the second Kenyan University to host the internationally renowned STEP Programme.

STEP stands for Student Training for Entrepreneurial Promotion. It was developed by Leuphana University (Germany) in collaboration with Makerere University

Business School (MUBS), and has been introduced in over 15 countries worldwide.

Twelve MKU members of staff have been trained on STEP. They will train

200 students between January 2018 and March 2018.

A unique element about STEP is that students are given Ksh10,000 in groups of five to use in practising their entrepreneurial skills during the training. They return the seed money after the training, and keep the profit.

STEP thus uses real money in

real time to teach entrepreneurship. It is research-based, and is fully funded through Leuphana University.

Expected funding from the programme will enable the MKU team, together with two members of staff from the Kenya National Commission for Unesco (KNATCOM-Unesco), to recruit and train 200 students. They will take the students through 12 weeks of STEP entrepreneurship training between January and March 2018.

STEP has spread to several developing countries across the globe, and MKU appreciates the support from Leuphana University to make it happen at the institution.

In Kenya, the programme is championed under a tripartite partnership that includes

the university delivering it, Leuphana University (Germany) and KNATCOM-Unesco.



STEP trainers from MKU and KNATCOM display their certificates. With them is the team of trainers from Leuphana University, Germany.

Alumni

MKU engineering alumnus among 10 winners in global innovation competition

An innovation by Mount Kenya University (MKU) engineering alumnus Victor Shikoli and his friend Brian Onyiego has won in a major contest.

HydroIQ, a hardware device developed by their firm, Hydrologistics Africa Limited, emerged among the 10 winners of a competition organised by United States-based start-up accelerator, Techstars. The innovation won a highly coveted prize in the social enterprise competition hosted in France in September 2017.

HydroIQ is internet-based and plugs gaps in existing water supply networks. It turns traditional water networks into smart water grids. It is also used to monitor water consumption and provide real time data, thus allowing consumers to pay for the amount of water they consume on a pay-as-you-go basis via mobile money.

The HydroIQ device allows consumers to regulate and manage their water use, and cuts revenue losses arising from typical poor cash collection.

Techstars' objective is to support the best 10 winning technology start-ups in the contest. Among this year's 10 teams, Hydrologistics was the only African company. Four were French, and one each from Armenia, Portugal, India, America and Luxembourg.

Shikoli says: "In the first and subsequent stages, the competition was stiff. Our idea was among the 100 short-listed. The number was then narrowed down to 40 and eventually best top 10."

He adds: "In the third stage, the judges needed an endorsement from our referees. Fortunately, as an alumnus of MKU, I had maintained my contacts with the



From left: Mr. Victor Shikoli, MKU alumnus, Ms Beatrice Nere, lead mentor and Programmes Coordinator at the Bill & Melinda Foundation, and Brian Bosire Onyiego.

alumni office and getting the endorsement letter from the Vice-Chancellor on short notice was not a challenge. I thank the Vice-Chancellor, Prof Stanley Waudo and Afubwa Musumi, the Director of Alumni Services, for their timely action."

Shikoli has been focused on innovation. "My research and innovation journey dates back to high school and later at Mount Kenya University, where I undertook my Electrical and Electronics Engineering course," he begins to narrate. "I graduated in July 2016, a year later (than I should have), as I had concentrated on establishing Hydrologistics Africa Limited and developing the prototypes for HydroIQ together with my co-founder Brian, whom I met while we were both on internship at Mumias Sugar Company more than four years ago."



Hydrologistics Africa team at Techstars mentors sessions



Prof. Stanley W. Waudo, MKU Vice-Chancellor, (centre), exchanges the HydroIQ innovation brief with Victor Shikoli, as Co-founder Brian Bosire (right) looks on. To the left are Mr Afubwa Musumi (far left, Director, Alumni Services) and Mr Fredrick Mulei, MKU Head of the Electrical and Electronics Engineering Department. The two innovators paid a courtesy call on the Vice-Chancellor.



Victor Lichoti Shikoli and Techstars hardware partner, Samuel Bernier from FabLab, pause for a photo after printing HydroIQ 3 design in Paris, France.

Since then, the two have worked to solve Africa's pressing problems through technology.

Shikoli was an active member of the research and innovation team that worked on projects such as biodiesel production from sorghum stalk residues. Although some were not fruitful, HydroIQ, through Hydrologistics Africa, presents him with a great opportunity to explore his real potential.

He has learnt that perseverance and discipline are key success factors for any aspiring young person wishing to venture into business.

The winners of the competition are in Paris, France, for a three-month mentoring and coaching session on project implementation, facilitated by leading CEOs, founders of renowned firms and corporate partners.

The final award ceremony will be held on 6 December 2017.

Bertier Luyt, Techstars Paris Director General, congratulated Victor Shikoli and Brian Onyiego. "I am very proud and humbled by the courage Victor and Brian have shown in trusting us as a reliable partner, and moving to Paris for the length of the programme. Victor and Brian are part of an elite group of entrepreneurs and great role models for upcoming African entrepreneurs."

Techstars has invested in Hydrologistics Africa to help the founders grow the firm fast and for it to effectively become a pan-African leader in the water industry. The money will be used as seed capital to deploy the first batch of the HydroIQ smart meters in Kenya, and later scale the operation across East Africa.

Shikoli is full of praises for MKU. "I really appreciate the foundation I got from the university to shape my career path. I was a class representative, and the School of Engineering, through the Head of Department, described our class as being the best under my leadership. I had the opportunity to learn hands-on skills from MKU labs. Above all, I appreciate the room that the institution gives to students to explore entrepreneurial opportunities."

His message to young aspiring entrepreneurs is that "they should be curious to learn and explore the many opportunities the world has set forth".

Shikoli, together with his co-founder Onyiego, co-own another company, Electrosoft Kenya Limited. The firm initially invested in water, agriculture and environment management, but recently changed to selling automatic sanitary ware.

MKUSA complies with amended election law

On 2 February 2018, the Mount Kenya University Students Association (MKUSA) conducted its elections in line with the Universities Amended Act of 2016.

The amended Section 41 of the principal Act dictates that, "The students' association shall constitute itself into electoral colleges based on either academic departments, schools or faculties, as may be appropriate."

The new MKUSA election process began in September 2017 and came to a close in the first week of February 2018. It started with sensitisation of students on the changes.

Thereafter, the election of delegates, which was based on departments/schools, took place on Thursday, 1 February 2018. On Friday, 2 February 2018, the delegates elected the MKUSA council using the collegiate system.

The amended Act further states that, "Every students' association shall, in consultation with the university, formulate and enact rules to govern the conduct of elections, including regulation of campaigns, election financing, offences and penalties."

The MKUSA constitution was revised to comply with the Amended University



MKU students pick ballot paper during MKUSA elections.

Act 2016. The Act adds that, "An election conducted pursuant to this section shall comply with the general principles of the Kenyan electoral system under Article

81 of the constitution and the rules governing the election of members of the student council."

Varsity team qualifies through round-one of data science funding

A team of MKU members of staff have participated in writing a grant proposal on data science, entitled, "North-South Knowledge Transfers in Data Science to Kenyan SMEs in 5 Counties through a Multidisciplinary Training Model."

This initiative is a culmination of a grand effort by the MKU team and a team of data science researchers from μ -Data Institute of Germany.

The German team comprises Dr Emily Ngobia-Kesse and Dr Lavri Labi. The MKU team has Prof Peter Wanderi (Principal-designate Corporate Services), Dr Erastus Thoronjo and Linda Mwangi of Equip Africa Institute.

The proposal successfully went through the first round of vetting.

Unstoppable resolve: MKU releases its first movie

The never-ending suspicion between the rich and the poor comes into play in Mount Kenya University's (MKU's) first movie.

Pesh, a first year student, hails from a rich family. She falls in love with Chris, her classmate, but who is from the other side of the social divide.

Neither her family nor her friends can stop her from pursuing her heart's desire, despite their spirited efforts.

The drama film further reveals issues that afflict students in institutions of higher learning. It especially touches on examination irregularities.

The hilarious film, titled 'Unstoppable Resolve', features both students and staff of Mount Kenya University. It is a production of the Institute of Film, Creative and Performing Arts, and it is directed by Nyaga Makotho and Kanyua Nyaga.

Part 1 of this production is set to premier in the second week of February 2018 at MKU's main campus in Thika.

Ms Ruth Mutahi, Director, Institute of Film, Creative and Performing Arts, says: "The institute intends to share it with one of the popular media houses through the film director to have it screened on TV. It is intended to clear the way for a TV series the institute is preparing."



Students cannot hold back their excitement during a live TV show presented from the MKU main campus in Thika by Kambua Manundu (on stage with microphone).

Infrastructural Development

Stylish Senate Boardroom unveiled

The magnificent 11-storey Alumni Plaza at Mount Kenya University (MKU) is a unique structure in Thika region. The ultramodern building cost the university about Ksh1 billion to put up. Its beauty extends to the interior.

This was closely witnessed on 24 November during the handing over of the Senate Boardroom to the university.

Tastefully furnished and creatively designed and lit, the boardroom projects an aura of both warmth and power.

"This state of the art ultra-modern senate boardroom will go a long way to create a conducive environment for the senators as they conduct their business of keeping the university on the path to achieving its vision and mission," said Prof David Serem, chairman of the University Council at the handing over ceremony.

"This day represents the coming of age of the University," he added.

Indeed, MKU has come a long way, as reiterated by the Vice-Chancellor Prof Stanley Waudo at the same ceremony.

Prof Waudo recalled how the institution transformed from an idea in 1996 to a computer outreach centre housed in rented premises, before it was constituted into Thika Institute of Technology in 2002 and six years later as Mount Kenya University.

Today, the university boasts of amazing infrastructure such as the Alumni Plaza, which houses the Senate Boardroom.

"The proverb, 'Rome was not built in a day', implies that behind any success, there are unlimited efforts and commitment. This proverb connects very well



MKU Chairman and Founder, Prof Simon Gicharu (centre) hands over the ultra-modern boardroom to MKU Council Chairman Prof David Serem as Vice-Chancellor Prof Stanley Waudo (right), Ms Purity Kimwe, MKUSA Vice-President, 2017 (second right) and Dr Bibianne Waiganjo-Aidi, Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academic and research Affairs (far right) look on.

LEFT: The ultra-modern senate boardroom.

with Mount Kenya University. It has taken lots of effort and commitment to make Mount Kenya University what it is," he said.

The success, he added, was achieved because of patience and determination of the founders, Prof Simon Gicharu and his wife. He likened their patience to that of a crow when building its nest. "It brings dry sticks and twigs from the trees using its beak, puts them at joint of two branches and rearranges them and does not give up until a nest is formed," said Prof Waudo.

"The patience of a crow is what we need in order to achieve our goals," he advised.

Construction of modern eco-friendly auditorium begins

Mount Kenya University (MKU) is building a 1,800-seater auditorium at its main campus. Construction commenced in September 2017, and will be completed in 18 months.

The site planning takes advantage of proximity to other common tuition areas and students facilities, so that there is easy walkability.

Architect Kariuki Kamaru explains that the auditorium will have a sloping floor and a raised stage, and two balcony (upstairs) seating.

Modern theatre furniture, fittings and other equipment, including advanced ICT systems, will be installed. The facility is planned to also have advanced security features, including biometric controls.

It will have green architectural features,

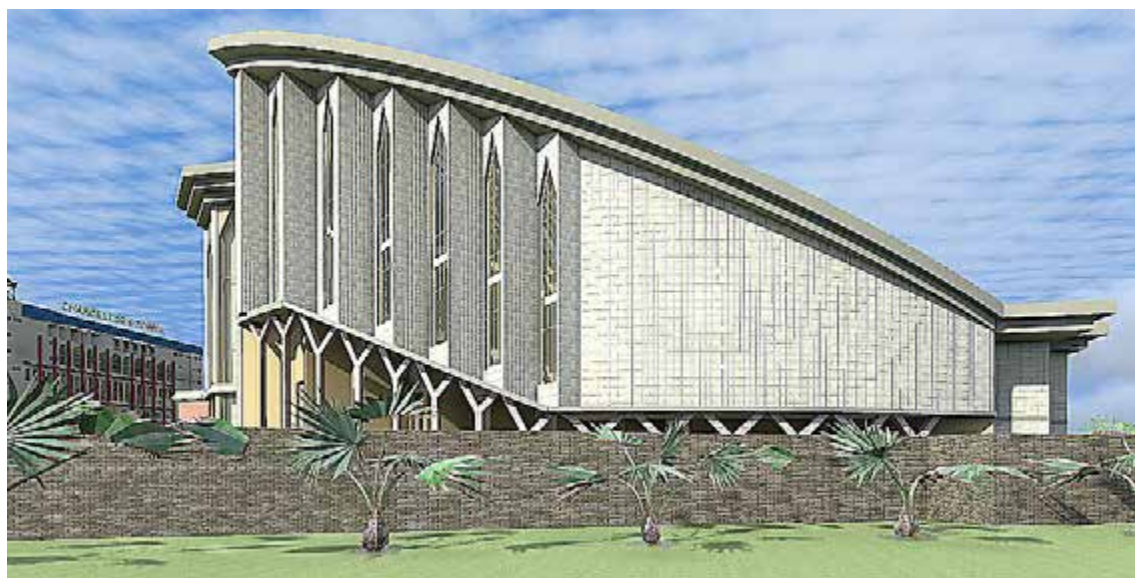
such as solar roof, sun shaded break out areas, cross-ventilation with high level windows, controlled indoor climate, water harvesting, good sight lines and comfortable views. The materials being used are generally locally available.

The acoustics have been well considered; what with walls that are tapered, high level ceilings and sound absorbing finishes.

Persons with disabilities have been taken care of by way lift and ramps.

Professional landscaping will help to beautify the facility, cool it and provide spill-over spaces.

The facility will be used for tuition, entertainment, seminar and conferences, worship and general meetings.



An artist's impression of the auditorium.

Nigerian guests' visit to open more doors

Mount Kenya University (MKU) has a large population of foreign students. Some of these are privately sponsored, while others are supported by the governments of their respective countries in East Africa.

On 27 November 2017, MKU received two special visitors from Nigeria, in mission that could result in a fruitful collaboration with the Government of Nigeria, and trigger greater recognition of the university in West Africa. This would put MKU on course to receiving government sponsored students from countries beyond East Africa.

The guests from Nigeria – the Deputy Chief Clerk and the Finance Director of Zamfara State House of Assembly – were received by the MKU Director of Quality Assurance and Linkages Professor Peter Wanderi, Deputy Dean of Students Mrs Purity Wairimu Thuo and Marketing staff, among other personnel.

At a meeting held at the MKU Senate Boardroom, the guests were treated to comprehensive information about the

university, including details about the welfare of foreign students at the university.

Vice-Chancellor Prof Stanley Waudo later had a lengthy discussion with the visitors. The conversation dwelt largely on collaboration. The Nigerian officials promised to have MKU considered among the list of universities to be approved for scholarships by their government.

The visit was coordinated by Saeed Musa, a Pharmacy student, and the writer of this article, Yusuf Usman, President of MKU International Students Chapter. Both are from Nigeria.

*God Bless Mount Kenya University,
God Bless Mount Kenya University
International Students Chapter,
God Bless Kenya,
God Bless Africa...and
God Save the World.*

– Yusuf Usman, President, MKU International Students Chapter



From right: Yusuf Usman, President, MKU International Students Chapter, Alhaji Mahmud Aliyu, Deputy Chief Clerk, Zamfara State House of Assembly, Prof Peter Wanderi, MKU Principal-designate, Corporate Services and Director, Quality Assurance and Linkages, Alhaji Zayyanu Sayyadi, Finance Director, Zamfara State House of Assembly and Musa Sa'id, international student, MKU.



Group photo of International students on a retreat in Nakuru.

We are happy here – International students

By Yusuf Usman

President, MKU International Students Chapter

The International Students Chapter (ISC) is an important establishment at Mount Kenya University (MKU). It safeguards the interests of all foreign students under the core values of Diversity, Integration and Excellence.

The chapter is governed by a cabinet headed by Mr Yusuf Usman from Nigeria, as the President. Mr Usman is assisted by Malawian Violet Kadyoma, as the Vice-President.

Other officials are Mr Abraham Abuok from South Sudan as the Secretary, Mr Batrand Ishara from DR Congo as the Finance Secretary and Mr Pierre Muco Ndwyezu from Burundi as the Information Secretary. This leadership team further includes all country representatives.

The cabinet has an operational office at the Students' Centre at MKU Thika. It is on Second Floor, Room SC20. For ease of transportation, the chapter has a bus at its disposal, offered by the university.

The chapter has achieved much this year. In the September 2017 intake, it registered 300 new members. The numbers were significantly boosted by the transfer of 73 students from the School of Pharmacy at Mount Kenya University Kigali, Rwanda. This was capped by a special welcome ceremony for the Rwandans, organised by the university.

The colourful event was graced by the Rwanda High Commissioner to Kenya, Ambassador James Kimonyo.

The new foreign students were further treated to a trip to Lake Nakuru, which many of them, being first time visitors to Kenya, described as an unforgettable to student life at MKU.

Then there was dinner, which provided a pleasant bonding atmosphere for all foreign students at MKU Thika.

To say the least, the hospitality granted to foreign students at MKU is remarkable.

God Bless Mount Kenya University. God Bless Mount Kenya University International Students Chapter. God Bless Kenya. God Bless Africa, and God Save the World.

Community Outreach

MKU Nairobi Campus President's Award Club interact with Nyeri Prisons

Gold Level participants of the Mount Kenya University (MKU) 2017 President's Award (PA) Club have left a mark at the Nyeri GK Prisons.

In a residential project that ran from 7 October to 11 October 2017, they put up and equipped a science laboratory (Physics, Biology & Chemistry Laboratory) for the Nyeri Main Prison inmates who were preparing for their 2017 Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) examinations.

MKU Nairobi Campus Clubs Coordinator and Patron, PA Club, Major L. Musyoki, says that the programme has transformed lives at the university. So far, 85 MKU students have participated in the programme that started at the Nairobi Campus in 2012, and have been awarded certificates by His Excellency the President, at State House.

Mr Musyoki mentions Stellamaris Kathomi and Gatambia Ndung'u as some of the MKU Nairobi Campus PA Club alumni who have benefitted immensely from PA skills.

Ms Kathomi, a Bachelor of Business Information Technology (BBIT) graduate, is the Director of Stejos Tours & Travel, a hospitality firm.



President Uhuru Kenyatta presents a life membership certificate of the President's Award (PA) scheme to Mr Gatambia Ndung'u, an alumnus of MKU.

Mr Ndung'u, an LLB graduate and advocate of the High Court of Kenya, is currently a Legal and Human Rights Officer with the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR) in the North Rift region.

"To qualify for the Gold Award Certificate, students have to complete the Gold Level, (highest level of the programme) and should understand the value of giving service to others and their community, develop personal interests and practical skills

(Skills), and participate in sport and other physical recreation for the improvement of health and fitness (Physical recreation)," Major Musyoki, explains.

The PA programme runs in three levels: Bronze, Silver and Gold.

To attain the highest level (Gold Level), says PA Chief Assessor at MKU, Mr Bernard Magangi, one must go on an expedition (adventurous journey) using a compass and maps, through a route approved by PA Kenya National Office.

The expedition promotes the spirit of adventure and discovery whilst undertaking a journey in a group.

The Gold Level expedition lasts five days and four nights. The residential aspect of the expedition, which is the final stage of the process, lasts a similar period.

The residential project is an activity undertaken with the permission of the PA Kenya National Office in liaison with the respective Unit Leader.

The PA residential project aims to broaden participants' horizons, working with their colleagues in a residential setting. It offers Gold Award

participants' unique experiences that truly broaden their views and challenge their outlook.

At the heart of the residential project is the undertaking of purposeful work with people who are not their usual companions, to accomplish a common goal.

Mr Musyoki says: "It is hoped that the residential project rewards Gold Award participants with a sense of personal achievement, enhanced social connection with new and interesting people, and a truly life-changing experience."

The Residential Project of the Gold Award participants at Nyeri Prisons was unique. They constructed and handed over the science laboratory to the Officer in Charge, Assistant Commissioner of Prisons/County Prisons Commander, Nyeri, Mr Patrick M. Aranduh.

The inmates were able to do their science practical exams inside the facility.

Previously, they had to be taken to Nyeri High School Science Laboratory daily, at a cost. The Gold Award participants of MKU Nairobi Campus PA Club has solved that problem once and for all.

Eldoret Campus shows spirit of sharing at thanksgiving service

Students and staff of Mount Kenya University (MKU) Eldoret Campus participated in the North Rift Region Thanksgiving Service for the Disciplined Uniformed Officers and Families, held at The Sacred Heart Cathedral in Eldoret town, Uasin Gishu County.

The North Rift uniformed forces support charitable organisations in the region. To contribute towards this, MKU donated food, clothes and several other items as part of the university's corporate social responsibility.

The donations are done after the prayers



Members of the disciplined forces arrive for the thanksgiving service.

in the spirit of sharing with the less fortunate members of society.

Among those who attended who attended include Campus Director, Dr Emily Kirwork, the Coordinator, School of Business, Dr Ibrahim Nyaboga, Quality Assurance Officer, Ms Suzanne Standa, the Head of Marketing, Mr Monoi Amos, and MKUSA officials led by their Chairman, Mr Erick Bett.

The thanksgiving mass was presided over by the Rt. Rev. Salecious Mugambi, Bishop In-Charge of the Catholic Diocese of Meru, assisted by the Bishop In-Charge of the uniformed Service.

"We urge all the disciplined forces and all of us catered at this service today to serve others well and in good faith, and by also not making others do mistakes. Making others do mistakes is against the will of God. Let's always work for others as if we are working for the Lord and not for men," advised Bishop Salecious Mugambi as he delivered his sermon.

Law students give back to society, learn more

Students of MKU School of Law have taken to sharing the bits of knowledge they have acquired with communities; for free. This is to give back to society, the act itself presenting opportunities for practical learning.

Apart from being academically outstanding, the MKU School of Law appreciates social responsibility and strikes thoughtful relationships with urban neighbourhoods.

In May, for instance, students from the school conducted free clinics to Kibera residents, offering legal tips. The six-hour exercise treated the students to some deep revelations touching on human rights violations,



Law students Faith Naomi Kimani (left) and Carol Muchiri during the official launch of the Law Centre at MKU.

criminal matters and family succession conflicts.

Such clinics, in addition to helping community members, thus provide students with practical exposure to problem identification and solving, legal analysis, law research, interviewing, investigation and counselling, among other necessary skills.

Malindi Campus declares war on Kilifi jiggers

Mount Kenya University (MKU) Malindi Campus has mounted a campaign to eradicate jigger infestation in Kilifi County. This is in partnership with Partners for Care (PFC), a local non-governmental organisation whose scope includes anti-jigger campaigns and management of drug abuse and HIV.

The decision follows a study that details the big challenge of jiggers in the area.

On 6-7 November 2017, teams from MKU and PFC visited Kijiwetanga and Mama Rossana School in Watamu, Kilifi County, to remove jiggers from victims. Local communities here suffer the jigger menace, with children being the most affected.

The volunteers were made up of MKU students and others from PFC. They were led by MKU Director of Research and Development, Prof Francis Muregi, MKU Head of Socio-Economic Research, Mr Humphrey Mwamboo, and PFC founder, Madam Connie E. Cheren.

Jigger treatment is simple. It involves cleaning the infected areas with water and soap, wiping it dry and then soaking in water mixed with potassium permanganate for at least 10 minutes.

Thereafter, petroleum jelly is applied to the treated part. This is immediately covered with cloth or gloves to avoid dirt for some time before the person can resume normal daily activities.



MKU Malindi Campus staff carry children they treated against jigger infestation in Kilifi County.

The teams treated a total of 178 individuals, including old men and infants of about two years.

MKU Malindi and PCF will continuously monitor the situation and mount repeat anti-jigger campaigns to completely

eradicate the menace from the region. The exercise will be up-scaled to other parts of the country.

Meanwhile, MKU, jointly with PFC and development partners, will carry out a study aimed at establishing ways to

increase income levels in the area and improve hygiene standards.

The findings of the study will be broadly shared with other parts of Kenya with similar challenges. The plan is to also have the report published in peer reviewed journals of international repute.

Jiggers thrive in dirty environments, and mostly affect individuals who fail to observe personal hygiene. Scientifically known as "*Tunga penetrans*", these small organisms hide in crevices and cracks on the floors and walls of dwellings.

They are mostly found in warm climate and in sandy or dusty environments. They feed on warm blooded hosts, including man, cattle, dogs and cats among others.

The female jigger burrows into the skin of its victim and starts sucking blood. The resulting itching sensation deprives the victim of comfort.

Because they are poor jumpers, jiggers mostly affect the feet. However, it can also dig itself into any other parts of the body.

Once under the skin of its host, the female jigger releases up to 100 eggs in two weeks. These fall onto the ground through the skin opening that the jigger uses to breathe. From the ground, the pests pick new victims.

Jigger infestation makes walking difficult, leading to stigmatisation that further results in school dropouts among children.

Meet the new DIBL Director at MKU

An attempt to describe Prof Pamela Atieno Ochieng without dropping in phrases like education policy, research and innovation would fall short. These combined, it can be said, are her forte.

Indeed, Prof Ochieng has these well laid out in her vision for Mount Kenya University (MKU). In August, she was appointed the Director of Distance and Institutional Based Learning (DIBL) at the university. Now she doubles this with her position as associate professor at the Department of Educational Management and Curriculum Studies in the School of Education.

Through her CV, she expresses her keenness to promote "pedagogical excellence" and best practice in "emerging national and international trends in digital and blended learning".

She also states that she will work to "enhance innovation through education, research and technology and foster responsive partnerships with key stakeholders across the university".

Given her extensive professional and academic exposure, her elaborate vision is not far fetched.

Prof Ochieng is a career educationist with a PhD in Education Administration, a Master's Degree in Educational Administration Planning and Curriculum Development (both earned at Moi University) and

a Bachelor of Education (Arts) from the University of Nairobi.

By the time of her recent appointment as the DIBL director, she had served MKU diligently in different capacities and locations since March 2012.

She previously worked as associate professor at the MKU School of Education. Earlier, she had served as senior lecturer in the Department of Educational Management and Curriculum Studies at MKU Eldoret Campus.

Before then, she was the Director of MKU Nakuru Campus and senior lecturer at the School of Education. That was after she served in similar capacities at Kabarnet Campus.

From August 2013 to June 2014, Prof Ochieng was the Deputy Director of Academic Affairs and Quality Assurance at MKU Kitale Campus, and as well a senior lecturer.

Her first full-time interaction with MKU was at the Eldoret Campus in March 2012. She joined as senior lecturer and coordinator of postgraduate studies.

Prior to that, she was an education lecturer for four years at Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology. It was within this period that she started offering part time lectures at MKU Eldoret. Ultimately, her diligence earned her a full-time

position, and she has stayed on at MKU since, rising steadily through the ranks to her present assignment.

Her 18-page CV shows she has grown through diverse teaching experiences from secondary school level to college and ultimately university level.

Through that journey, she has won awards and honours at the institutions she has served; participated in more than 30 conferences, seminars and workshops; engaged in numerous research work; and have had articles published in a number of international peer-reviewed journals.

Prof Ochieng is a member of various professional organisations that position her well for regional and international networking opportunities. They include: African Network for International Education (member since 2008); Research Gate Scientific Network (since 2009); Research Africa International (since 2009); International Association for Commonwealth Universities (since 2012); and Codesria (since 2012). She is also a member of Research LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com/in/pamoc123) since 2009.

With such connections and exposure, and with her elaborate, academic, professional and research work, Prof Ochieng can only be expected to steer MKU DIBL to greater heights.



Prof Pamela Atieno Ochieng, Director DIBL

MKU Kigali

Big boost to MKU Kigali as Chairman donates hospitality and tourism books

The Mount Kenya University Kigali hospitality and tourism department has received books worth \$30,000 from MKU Founder and Chairman, Prof Simon N. Gicharu. The books, presented on 19 January, are a major boost to training at the university.

MKU University Council Vice-Chairman, Dr Vincent Gaitho, presented the books to MKU Kigali Vice-Chancellor designate, Prof Evans Kerosi, on behalf of Prof Gicharu.

Dr Gaitho was in Rwanda for four days to assess the university's projects. MKU Kigali relocated to its new ultra-modern centre in Kagarama, Kicukiro District, early last year.

Present to witness the presentation at the university's Peter Claver Nyombayire Library was the Rwanda Representative of MKU Board of Directors, Mr Antony Kamau. Others included the Librarian,



Students study inside the Peter Claver Nyombayire Library.

Ms Aline Hoza, the Head of Hospitality and Tourism Training, Mr Benson Abuto, other university staff, and students.

Dr Gaitho said: "Our commitment to investment is to achieve excellence in teaching, learning and research, and to

develop leaders in many disciplines, and who make a difference in society locally and globally."

He added: "We have also realised that the hospitality and tourism sector has a great potential for the development of this country. So, we are now focusing on playing a part in growing the industry by setting up a centre of excellence to produce qualified hands-on staff who also create jobs."

Dr Gaitho praised Hon Mukandutiye Speciose, the Rwandan Member of Parliament who vacated her land for the university to build its campus. Such a gesture, he noted, helps promote education.

MKU Kigali continues to modernise in a bid to enhance learning. The university further plans to build a student's hostel, a journalism studio, a basketball pitch, study villas and a swimming pool on the additional land it has since bought.

Dr Gaitho also witnessed the signing of a PhD training agreement between the university and Rwanda Police. Under this arrangement, the university will train police officers in law enforcement and justice.

In support of 'Girinka'

On 16 June 2016, Mount Kenya University Rwanda (MKU Kigali) donated three cows to less privileged families in support of the "Girinka" programme. This is a government initiative of donating a cow to needy families.

The programme was initiated by the country's President Paul Kagame towards poverty alleviation. It works on the basic principle that a cow produces not only milk for consumption, but also dung that can be used as manure for better

farming outcomes. This helps to reduce child malnutrition.

MKU Kigali made its donations at Kagarama. The occasion was presided over by the Mayor of Kicukiro District, Dr. Nyirahabimana Jeanne, and other local leaders.

Speaking during the ceremony, the MKU Kigali Vice Chancellor, Prof Edwin Odhuno, said the donations were a confirmation that the University took its corporate social responsibilities seriously.



MKU Staff, Prof Edwin Odhuno, is taken through the Rwandan cultural ritual of cow giving.



The Mayor of Kicukiro District, Dr Nyirahabimana Jeanne (right), appreciates one of the beneficiaries of the "Girinka" programme. Looking on is Prof Edwin Odhuno.

"A small act of compassion can change lives for development. We shall continue pursuing our strategic core goal of corporate social responsibility within the district and the country at large," he said.

The mayor applauded the University for contributing to the economic growth of Kicukiro District and the country through its world class teaching and global dynamism.

"MKU Kigali has not only enhanced

the development of the country, but has (also) changed many lives positively since opening up in Kicukiro District this year. Today's activity is a good example of how serious the University attaches great value to the community and our culture. We shall continue supporting the University to achieve its goals to enhance the development of the country," said Dr. Nyirahabimana.

MKU Kigali to train RwandAir Staff

Mount Kenya University Rwanda (MKU Kigali) has signed a memorandum of understanding with RwandAir to strengthen their partnership in the field of academic training and research.

The move will see MKU Kigali design relevant market driven programmes for RwandAir and train their staff at reasonable rates. The university will award degrees in Bachelors, Masters and other levels as agreed by the parties and in line with local and international standards. This will help raise RwandAir's global competitiveness.

In a press release, the Chairman, Board of Directors of Mount Kenya University Rwanda, Prof Simon Gicharu, hailed the partnership and promised to support the initiative for it to succeed and become a model in East Africa.

"We note with admiration the airline's ambitious commitment to growth and offering quality service, which has made it stand out as the airline of choice in

the region. As a university committed to excellence and empowering generations through education, we want to be part of the airline's continuous growth by offering quality training to its staff," he said.

Prof Gicharu added that higher education institutions are encouraged to pursue industry linkages in their training programmes.

"These relationships will assist in establishing career programmes and internships that will lead to well-paying skilled jobs as well as economic development for the country," Gicharu said.

Since its establishment in the country eight years ago, MKU Kigali has entered into a host of MoUs with a variety of companies. A partnership with Lemigo Hotel, for instance, supports hospitality training.

With a state of the art campus in Kagarama, Kicukiro District, the university is aligning its programmes to Rwanda's vision 2020.



MKU Kigali campus.

Kigali Campus to focus on niche courses

As part of its strategic goal to supplement efforts by the Rwanda Government to provide affordable and quality education, Mount Kenya University (MKU) Senate resolved in August 2017 to restructure and focus on identified areas of niche at its Kigali campus.

The School of Health Sciences and School of Business, Information Technology and Social Sciences are offering the niche courses.

"The aim is to make MKU Kigali a centre of excellence in areas where the university has a niche and is competitive," said Dr Kenneth Muna, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor in charge of academics.

MKU, which has constructed a state of the art modern campus in Kicukiro District at a cost of over \$6 million, is expanding its infrastructure by putting up structures such as sports facilities, hostels and a students' centre. The university

continuously recruits highly qualified staff in various disciplines to ensure the high quality training of its students in its areas of niche are maintained.

Students taking other courses will not be affected as the restructuring continues. The Senate approved a teaching out arrangement that to ensure students continue with their studies and graduate as envisaged. The affected programmes are now being offered at MKU Main Campus in Thika, Kenya, effective September 2017.

Those that continue to be offered in the School of Health Sciences in Rwanda include Bachelor of Science in Nursing, Bachelor of Public Health, Masters of Science in Nursing and Masters in Public Health.

MKU is a chartered International University with campuses in Somaliland, Rwanda and major towns in Kenya.

MKU is now a member of United Nations Academic Impact

Mount Kenya University (MKU) has joined over 1,200 institutions in more than 120 countries working with the United Nations to promote global priorities of peace, human rights and sustainable development.

This outstanding achievement comes after a successful application by MKU for membership to the United Nations Academic Impact (UNAI), and goes a long way towards raising the visibility of MKU's impacts into the education sector globally.

UNAI's 10 grounding principles

1. A commitment to the principles inherent in the United Nations Charter as values that education seeks to promote and help fulfil;
2. A commitment to human rights, among them freedom of inquiry, opinion, and speech;
3. A commitment to educational opportunity for all people regardless of gender, race,

religion or ethnicity;

4. A commitment to the opportunity for every interested individual to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary for the pursuit of higher education;
5. A commitment to building capacity in higher education systems across the world;
6. A commitment to encouraging global citizenship through education;
7. A commitment to advancing peace and conflict resolution through education;
8. A commitment to addressing issues of poverty through education;
9. A commitment to promoting sustainability through education;
10. A commitment to promoting inter-cultural dialogue and understanding, and the "unlearning" of intolerance, through education.

MKU Foundation

MKU charity work now under newly formed foundation

"Enable, Empower, Inspire". This is the slogan of Mount Kenya University's latest institution, the MKU Foundation.

The university has deemed it fit to establish a foundation to help coordinate its growing list of charitable activities.

"Though the foundation is relatively new, the university has carried out many charitable initiatives in a non-coordinated manner. These activities will now be coordinated by the foundation," says Dr Peter Kirira, its director.

"I am in the process of constituting a strong passionate team that will steer the activities of the foundation," he adds.

Already, the foundation is establishing itself as a more structured avenue through which individual philanthropists, corporations and MKU alumni and friends can deliver support for the university's charitable initiatives in education, research and community service.

In this, the foundation has an elaborate mission: "To advocate and support the advancement of higher education in Mount Kenya University by obtaining, investing, and administering grants and prudently discharging its fiduciary obligations to the university, donors, and designated beneficiaries."

Soon after its formation this year, the foundation took over the various activities that the university has been implementing for the benefit of society.

For instance, MKU has been awarding scholarships to needy students, and has in the last five years supported a total of 50 of them.

The foundation will now manage such scholarships, and the director has big plans. "My vision is to establish an endowment fund that can give scholarships to 100 undergraduate and postgraduate students annually in perpetuity," he declares.

The foundation also takes over the role



Dr Peter Kirira, Director, MKU Foundation

of raising support for MKU's Graduate Enterprise Academy (GEA), which mentors learners who exhibit entrepreneurial spirit.

Other programmes that have also come square under the mandate of the MKU Foundation include the university's annual community outreach activities such as medical camps and anti-jigger campaigns, and conferences that share knowledge with society, including the water summit hosted in Turkana in 2015 and the Conference on Peace and Social Enterprise held in Nairobi this year.

The foundation also supports research. Recently, it donated Ksh10 million in support of a joint study by the colleges of health sciences at Makerere University and MKU. The study is titled:

"Research for Better Health in the East African Region".

Dr Kirira wants to see these and more activities expand under the foundation to deliver greater impact. "We are establishing other funds that will support the community outreach activities and research agenda of the university. I am therefore building close relationships with the MKU alumni, benefactors, NGOs, donors and the government," he says.

"At the same time, I am developing proposals for income generating projects that the foundation can initiate in order to have an alternative source of revenue."

The foundation, the director says, targets to raise \$1 million in the next two years.

Ksh10 million boost for joint research secretariat

Madam Jane Nyutu, a member of the Mount Kenya University (MKU) Board of Directors, recently gifted the Makerere University and MKU Joint Research Grant Secretariat with a cheque of \$100,000, to facilitate regional research. The secretariat will be led by Prof Harriet Mayanja-Kizza of Makerere University and Dr Peter G. Kirira, the director of MKU Foundation.

This was after MKU and Makerere University signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) aimed at creating synergetic partnerships towards improving higher education in the region through exchange programmes and joint teaching and research.

Makerere University management, which was represented by the Vice-Chancellor, Prof Barnabas Nawangwe, appreciated the donation and expressed the university's commitment to improving regional capacity in health research. Makerere University is among the best learning institutions in health research in Africa.

The \$100,000 joint research grant with an overall theme of "Research for Better Health in the East African region", is intended to stimulate a South-South research partnership that will provide innovative home-grown solutions to debilitating health care challenges in Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda.

This grant is intended to lead to practical innovative solutions to the health problems afflicting East Africa, and aims to significantly impact low resource communities.

Grant will highly benefit postgraduate students

It is expected that the grant will highly benefit postgraduate students, who will jointly be supervised by faculty members from both institutions.

The grant will be administered through Mount Kenya University Foundation, which is the charitable arm of Mount Kenya University.

MKU Foundation programmes are geared to harnessing public and private support that benefits the educational, research and community service mandates of the university.

The foundation provides a structured avenue for alumni, friends, corporations, institutions and philanthropists to give gifts and donations.

**For more information, write to:
Mount Kenya University Foundation
Email: mkufoundation@mku.ac.ke**

Professional student associations and clubs eye Ksh3 million grant

MKU Foundation set to disburse Ksh200,000 to each successful group

Professional student associations and clubs that applied for a Ksh3 million grant from Mount Kenya University Foundation (MKUF) await the outcome. The application deadline elapsed on 31 January 2018.

Successful groups will each receive Ksh200,000 to fund their projects.

MKUF established the grant to

promote innovation and creativity among clubs and professional student associations.

Foundation Director, Dr Peter Kirira, notes that the current global trend in addressing socio-economic challenges strongly focuses on innovation and creativity.

"In line with its mission and vision, MKU is supporting profes-

sional student associations or clubs as potential breeding grounds for the country's innovative and creative minds," Dr Kirira explains.

He says the Foundation's move is inspired by the overwhelming success of college start-ups such as Microsoft, Facebook, Dell, Google and Yahoo, which are all now global digital giants.

Dr Kirira argues that supporting professional student associations offers several advantages.

Strong clubs and professional student associations will enable members participate in national discussions and establish beneficial networks. Once they graduate, these students will form a strong alumni network.

Also, promoting professional associations will weaken ethnic-based student associations, many of which have ended up being counter-productive in relation to national cohesion.

Dr Kirira thanks the MKU Board of Directors for the generous grant.

Thrilling talent on display at YCS extravaganza

By Sarah Wahu

It was a night packed with excitement as the Mount Kenya University (MKU) Young Catholic Students (YCS) hosted a talent night at the main campus.

The Chancellor's Tower hall was full to capacity. More than 1,000 students had braved the heavy rains to watch and present over 35 items in different categories. These included choral and solo verses, own compositions, oral narrations and traditional secular and sacred dances.

The date was Friday, 3 November 2017. Arnold Njora from the School of Pharmacy and Clare Bosibori from the School of Nursing were crowned the new Mr and Miss YCS at the fashion and beauty pageant that crowned the talent extravaganza.

The MKU Catholic Chaplain, Rev. Fr. Raphael Wanjau, oversaw the variety show.

"The MKU Catholic Students talent night is an annual event that provides a forum for students to showcase their talents and creativity. Such activities encourage the students to develop positive values and attitudes that will enable them to have a sense of self-confidence and develop a spirit of teamwork. The event promotes cohesion among students, who come from diverse backgrounds," said Fr Wanjau.



Students celebrate the extravaganza.

The students are organised into five cells that form Small Christian Communities (SCC), popularly referred to in Kiswahili as 'Jumuiya'.

The contest among the jumuiyas was very competitive in all the items. Stu-

dents from Nairobi Campus YCS also took part. St. Michael SCC comprising students from the School of Pure and Applied Sciences, School of Engineering, Energy and Built Environment, and the School of Computing and Informatics,

emerged the best overall, taking the trophy from the defending champions St. Rita jumuiya (College of Health Sciences).

"The YCS has been holding this annual event five years in a row, and this year recorded impressive performance and demonstrated a lot of talent," said MKU staff member Donatus Njoroge, who was one of the judges.

Mr Njoroge pointed out that the students portrayed outstanding talent in the Own Composition category. The performances were not only entertaining, but also creative and very informative.

Other judges were Madam Ruth Muthi, the MKU Director of Filming and Creative Arts, and Ms Catherine Kiragu from the Counselling Department.

They applauded the organisers and the university management for supporting the Catholic Chaplaincy in staging the successful event.

The YCS Patron, Mr Raymond Nyata, congratulated the participants for inspiring their peers by showcasing their talents through thrilling performances.

The best performers will represent the university in the Catholic Archdiocese of Nairobi inter-universities extravaganza competition scheduled for March 2018.

The writer is an Administrative Assistant at the School of Clinical Medicine

Why scientists are trooping to MKU Research Centre

Serious researchers and science students will always desire to complete their work on time. Hence, to avoid being delayed, they'd want to conduct their study in well-equipped laboratories or research centres with convenient access and flexibility, and the necessary support.

The Head of the Mount Kenya University (MKU) Research Centre, Mr Jared Onyancha, explains that this is why researchers and students from other institutions are trooping to the MKU facility.

"Our research centre is open throughout the week, including during odd hours, weekends and early hours, based on arrangements with the users," he says. "So, researchers are able to complete their work early as is common in the developed countries."

Mr Onyancha further says that the

University would like to see research results or ideas translated into products that can be prepared for large-scale production after incubation.

He adds: "We are working towards making the research centre a centre of excellence in the country in the areas of quality control, research and drug development, and innovation. We plan to explore collaboration with other research centres within and outside the country to enhance our centre's status."

Mr Onyancha, who was appointed to head the MKU Research Centre last August, says the University has allocated the facility more space, enabling it to accommodate more laboratories than previously.

It has well-equipped laboratories that support research in the following areas: Ethnomedicine and drug devel-

opment, drug analysis, molecular and biological assays, chemical assays and other laboratory extensions, including the botanical garden, herbarium and animal house.

The strength of the MKU Research Centre lies with its state of the art laboratory equipment, including High-Performance Liquid Chromatography (HPLC), gas chromatography, Ultraviolet and Visible Light (UV/Vis) spectrometer, and Fourier Transform Infra-red (FTIR) spectrometer.

"Currently, the University has a budget for additional equipment, reagents and other consumables," Mr Onyancha says.

Moreover, the facility has competent resource persons who assist students and researchers to get the quality results within the scheduled time.



MKU Founder and Chairman, Prof Simon N. Gicharu, fetes Prof Francis W. Muregi, MKU Directorate of Research Director. The well-equipped and properly managed university's research centre also serves researchers and students from other institutions.

MKU Twins

‘Why I chose MKU’

Beatrice Ng’ang’a (left): I chose MKU because of its large selection of studies, good lecturers and an excellent social life. MKU has given me hope about what higher education can do. I will leave the varsity with three things I hadn’t anticipated: Increased confidence, a broader perspective and amazing friendships that will last a life time. Winnie twinnie: My passion is to thrive in ups and downs, ready to conquer my fears and through hard work, to achieve my ultimate happiness.

Winnie Ng’ang’a (Right) Winnie I am passionate about valuing the little joys in life and being positive. It could possibly be called a passion for optimism, but it’s mainly just not letting the mistakes define your day. Positivity is contagious and it begins with a person choosing to look at the good side. There are lots of chaos going on around us constantly, and I feel like it’s important to take a second and appreciate the little things that make us happy, like friends. MKU is vastly known for high discipline levels and good academic performance. For this and other diverse good characteristics that make the institution outstanding, I chose MKU over any other institution.



Catherine Robert (Right): I’m passionate about the value of life health thus the urge to be a medical practitioner. I Chose MKU because of its dedication towards supporting medical causes.

Grace Robert (Left): The need for good health is core. Each human being deserves it and that is what drives me towards my medical career journey. I chose MKU because it offers quality and affordable education



Jacob Lewa (right): My name is Jacob Lewa. I am a student at Mount Kenya University main campus pursuing Information and Technology. I chose MKU as a place of my studies because it provides a stimulating learning environment and a wide range of accredited courses. Also, it nurtures talent and ability of each student without discriminating any, and above all, it’s the leading private university in Kenya in terms of technology usage.

Daniel Lewa (Left): I am passionate about the evolving world of technology; how technology has created many job opportunities and also helped to simplify many life processes; how technology has led to the growth of many businesses, thus boosting economic growth globally and bettering the lives of many people; and how technology has boosted education sector by allowing virtual learning.



Samuel Mukui (Left): Am passionate about how to enable insurance help many people in the world to sustain their lives and property. I chose mku since it provides better resources and facilities to my related course and also offers high quality education.

Kennedy Mukui (Right): am passionate to providing better health to the society in order to improve the health standard and status in my country. I chose mku since it has a conducive environment for students, better co curriculum activities and because it also provides better facilities and resources to its students.



Rosemary Karungari Namo (left): I’m passionate about bringing people together by encouraging peace and unity for the purpose of making good steps in life. I choose MKU since it has a good record in performance and moral upbringing.

Ann Karugi Namo (right): I’m passionate on all human beings having a successful life thus making new friends and encouraging them towards achieving their set goals.



Marking International Day of Peace at Naivasha Maximum Security Prison

Mount Kenya University (MKU) and Kenya National Commission (KNATCOM) for UNESCO marked the UN International Day of Peace with staff and inmates of Naivasha Maximum Security Prison.

They were joined during the 21 September occasion by Dr Reuben Nthamburi from KNATCOM-UNESCO office. Dr Nthamburi read the speech by the KNATCOM-UNESCO Director General.

The Commissioner of Prisons was represented by Madam Khaemba, the rehabilitation director at Kenya Prison Services.

The chief guest was the Vice-Chairman of the University Council, who is also the President of African Consortium for Peace (AC4P), Dr Vincent Gaitho. He was represented by the Director of MKU Foundation, Dr Peter Kirira.

They were further joined by representatives from Magereza Academy, which shares a compound with the prison.

MKU School of Law and School of Social Sciences at the Institute of Security Studies, Justice and Ethics (ISSJE) use the prison facilities as a teaching resource for units in criminology. Also, the School of Education runs a programme to impart teaching skills to inmates at the Naivasha Maximum Security Prison as part of its CSR activities.

The Naivasha Maximum Prison School not only has primary and secondary sections, but also a tertiary division that offers courses such as CPA.

Earlier in the morning of that day, prison staff and the visiting group engaged in consultations concerning other areas of engagements, with the MKU School of Law looking into ways of assisting



MKU staff present reading materials to Naivasha Prisons.

inmates with pending appeals.

It was humbling to listen to inmates pleading with all Kenyans to maintain peace irrespective of their different political inclinations and ethnic backgrounds. They communicated their messages through song and dance; poems and skits. Their common message? "We are one. Let's work together regardless of tribe or race".

The visiting group later paid courtesy calls at the Naivasha Women Prison and Naivasha Medium Prison, and interacted with inmates.



Dr Peter Kirira, MKU Foundation Director, and Director, Rehabilitation, at Prisons Headquarters, Madam Mary Khaemba, join prisoners for a jig during the celebrations.



Prof Peter Wanderi, Principal designate, Corporate Affairs (third left), looks on as prisoners receive donated text books from Dr Reuben Nthamburi of Kenya National Commission for UNESCO, a key MKU partner.



A group photo of MKU and Naivasha Prison staff outside the main gate.



An inmate teacher in class. MKU is equipping them with pedagogical skills to make them better teachers.

Empowering Generations through Quality Training

MKU Foundation-sponsored Equip Africa College of Medical and Health Sciences a game changer in training

Mount Kenya University Foundation's newest kid on the block, Equip Africa College of Medical and Health Sciences, is on a mission to provide top-notch training and research. With the human and physical resources at its disposal, the college is set to become a game-changer in healthcare training in Africa.

This is in line with its vision of becoming a premier training and research college in health sciences in Africa. The college aims to help bridge the deficit of trained health professionals to serve Kenya and the rest of the African continent.

The Kitale-based TVET institution is driven by the desire to develop healthcare professionals with requisite knowledge, skills and attitude necessary for outstanding service delivery in health care.

Equip Africa College has tapped into the services of highly skilled practising professionals, academics, various regulatory bodies and TVET Curriculum Development Assessment and Certification Council (TVET CDAC) to craft unique competence-based curriculum for each of the courses on offer. This will guarantee that students are equipped with 'real-life' skills to practise effectively in their specialty areas.

Various professional regulators have hailed the curriculum and expressed con-

fidence in the high level of skills to be imparted to Equip Africa College of Medical and Health Sciences students.

The college, founded last May, is accredited by the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Authority (TVETA), and its various courses have the approvals of the relevant regulatory bodies.

MKU Foundation has committed heavy investment in the college, equipping it with world-class laboratories, a well-stocked library and an ultra-modern computer centre with fast internet for easy access to e-learning resources.

In her endeavour to train competent healthcare professionals who will deliver quality and compassionate services that meet the diverse health needs of society, the college has tapped top talent.

Training is conducted by faculty members who boast many years' experience in teaching and professional practice.

The college has also enlisted the services of experienced technical staff to enable students maximise their potential in their respective specialties.

Students will get an opportunity to take practicums and attachment in various hospitals that have partnered with Equip Africa College. The hospitals include Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital, Kitale County Referral Hospital, Kakamega County Hospital, Bungoma County Hospital, Webuye County Hospital, Chulaimbo sub-county Hospital, Uasin Gishu



Equip Africa College of Medical and Health Sciences, Kitale Campus.

Hospital, Thika Level 5 Hospital and Kory Family Hospital.

Equip Africa College admitted its inaugural classes in January 2018. Students commenced their diploma and certificate courses. Other programmes are in the process of approval by various regulatory bodies.

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In her endeavour to train competent healthcare professionals who will deliver quality and compassionate services that meet the diverse health needs of society, the college has tapped top talent



A lecturer guides students in practicals in one of the newly equipped Medical Laboratories at Equip Africa College of Medical and Health Sciences, Kitale Campus.

Diploma Courses

1. Diploma in Clinical Medicine & Surgery (Clinical officers Council)
2. Diploma in Kenya Registered Community Health Nursing
3. Diploma in Medical Laboratory Technology (Kenya Medical Laboratory Technicians & Technologists Board)
4. Diploma in Environmental Health Science (Public Health Officers & Technicians Council)
5. Diploma in Nutrition & Dietetics (Accredited by KNDI)
6. Diploma in Health Records and Information Technology
7. Diploma in Counselling Psychology
8. Diploma in Community Development & Social Work
9. Diploma in Community Health & Development
10. Diploma in Business Management
11. Diploma in Information Technology
12. Diploma in Food & Beverage Management

Certificate Courses

1. Certificate in Environmental Health Science (Public Health Officers & Technicians Council)
2. Certificate in Laboratory Science Technology
3. Certificate in Nutrition & Dietetics (Accredited KNDI)
4. Certificate in Health Records & Information Technology
5. Certificate in Community Development & Social work
6. Certificate in Community Health & Development
7. Certificate in Business Management
8. Certificate in Information Technology
9. Certificate in Food & Beverage production & Service
10. Certificate in Computer Packages

Students in Poland on Erasmus+ study

On 13 October, three students in the School of Hospitality, Travel and Tourism Management jetted out to Lublin, Poland for a five-month Erasmus+ exchange programme. They commenced classes at the Vincent Pol University (VPU) on 16 October and will return home on 16 March 2018, says Jane Kuria, the school's Dean.

Winnie Anyango Otieno, Brian Alphayo Esikuri and Everlyn Wairimu Kahinga comprise the second batch of Mount Kenya University (MKU) students to proceed to Poland on the exchange programme.

From April to June, Collins Wekesa and Grace Wanjiru Maina, two students from the school, studied at VPU courtesy of the same programme. They were the first MKU beneficiaries of this arrangement.

The Erasmus+ programme awards grants to students from various universities to study in European countries. MKU is a beneficiary of the grant through Vincent Pol University in Poland.

On 10 October, the three students paid a courtesy call on MKU Vice Chancellor Prof Stanley W. Waudu to express their gratitude after securing the scholarships. They had emerged the winners following interviews conducted by the Department of Travel and Tourism and the Department of Hospitality Management.

The students were accompanied by the Dean as well Mr Barnabas Macharia, Deputy Director, Quality Assurance and Linkages, and Mr Antony Kiarie, Deputy Director, Quality Management System.

The three fourth-year students will represent the university in a fully sponsored European Union Exchange Programme (Erasmus+ Programme).



From left: Winnie Anyango Otieno, Brian Alphayo Esikuri and Everlyn Wairimu Kahinga

Winnie, a Bachelor of Hospitality Management student, says: "I hope to foster good cultural relations in understanding the Polish way of living, expanding my insights on diversity and carrying the MKU banner high and promoting Kenya as a tourist destination. I am a strong advocate of adventure and hospitality."

On her part, Everlyn, a Bachelor of Science in Travel and Tourism Management student, says: "I'm very humbled and overwhelmed by this chance that God has given me through Mount Kenya University. Being a tourism student, I will learn about international tourism at the Polish university. This will be a plus for the MKU Tourism Department because

I will share what I will learn with my fellow students and our lecturers upon my return."

Brian considers the opportunity to study one semester in Poland as "something unique". He explains: "I will be exposed to new culture and hopefully meet new friends and future mentors. Furthermore, as a travel and tourism student, it will be a chance to be adventurous, explore the unknown and try new activities that have never been within my reach before."

Ms Kuria notes that the students will be accommodated at the CUBE, a top facility located near Vincent Pol University.



Grace Maina

'My stay in Poland a great eye opener'

On 31 March, my colleague Collins Wekesa and I departed Nairobi and arrived in Warsaw on 1 April.

We then travelled to Lublin, where we stayed for three months as the university we attended was located in that town.

On 3 April, we started our classes at the Vincent Pol University. We had to select other units because they were not offering some of the units we have in Kenya.

Also, their mode of study is mainly practical, unlike in Kenya, where learning is mostly theory.

The university awards ECT (European Credit Transfer) points to units learnt. We had to make a total of 30 points for the period we were there.

Communication with locals was very difficult since the majority of the people communicate in Polish. Rarely do you find someone who speaks English. However, they were friendly, not hostile, as much as they were not used to seeing black people in Lublin, a small town.

I found public transport really interesting. They pay

through tickets and there is no conductor to collect bus fare.

On 29 June, we left for Warsaw where we slept overnight so as to make it in time for our 7 O'clock flight back to Kenya on 30 June.

My stay in Poland was a very great experience and an eye opener. I interacted with people from different countries and learnt about their ways of living, especially their education systems.

I am really grateful for the opportunity.

Exchange Programme

'I learnt the importance of paying attention to detail'

I am Wekesa Collins, one of the students who went to Poland for the Erasmus+ Programme.

I must admit that this journey did not just happen. It started many years ago when I was a little boy. I have all along been brought up knowing that nothing in life comes easy. Everything and anything you acquire would always have a price tag on it.

I vividly remember the enormous input by my parents. They inculcated a character of hard work, patience and discipline in us – ingredients that have eventually come to pay off early in my career journey.

I always yearned for an opportunity to get out of the country and experience how life goes out there. Long ago, it only appeared to be a pipe dream. Little did I know that there was going to be a time when my hard work would finally pay off.

Thankfully, when the opportunity for the Erasmus+ Programme presented itself, I was on the ready to take it up. I had a head-start simply because I was well prepared in advance.

I have always taken my studies with the seriousness they deserved, and thus, when the time called, I simply stepped up to the plate and got counted. Everything to me was such an experience of a lifetime – from the application of the travel documentation (Passport, Visa and Yellow Fever certificates), to flight bookings and the eventual travel experience.

Upon arrival at the Vincent Pol University (VPU), we were warmly received by local staff led by Madam Anna, the International Students' Coordinator.

Anna and the staff in general made our transition and eventual integration into our new environment not only easy and seamless, but also homely. We settled in right away and felt valued as team members from the beginning. Despite the wide cultural and environmental differences, I blended in well and deeply immersed myself in studies.

I bet I did ably and pos-



Wekesa Collins

itively represented MKU in the best way possible by simply putting in the best effort. As the English say, "You get out of it, what you put into it!"

I really liked it there. I enjoyed every bit of my stay in Poland, even though the country was way too cold compared to the environment I was used to back in Kenya. But hey! I was fine.

I learnt the importance of attention to detail. At VPU, everything you learn is a deliverable. It gets presented or delivered in front of the class, and as such, must be perfect.

I remember being asked to come up with a tourism product. At first, I was frustrated as it seemed somewhat ridiculous. But I learnt that it was the little things and the details in life that set the best apart from the rest.

I enjoyed learning in an international environment, getting different perceptions from different students. It was absolutely a fantastic experience. I loved my time there, both professionally and personally.

In summary, I firmly believe this programme vastly improved my ability for networking and general communication skills.

I want to most sincerely thank the management of MKU, and particularly the Dean, Mrs Kanjuri Jane, for her unwavering support and encouragement in her endeavour to seeing our journey through the Erasmus+ Programme proceed and end without a hitch.

Long live Mount Kenya University!

Cultural Week

Excitement, big turnout mark brand new cultural week and pageantry

This year's cultural event was the first of its kind. Hosted at a time when the political temperatures were high in the country, the event focused on distracting the Mount Kenya University (MKU) community from divisive politics to embrace a campaign for peace and unity.

This informed the theme, "Peaceful Co-existence through Art and Culture".

Previously, the MKU Students Association (MKUSA) governing council would organise a one day entertainment by mainly invited artists and a few student performers. Not much happened in terms of promoting culture. In fact, there were no themes guiding the events.

This year, the MKUSA council, guided by the Institute of Film, Creative and Performing Arts, was able to offer a brand new experience to the entire MKU community through a five-day cultural event.

Each day attracted an audience of more than 2,000 students. The indoor games arena could not hold the crowd on any of the days, forcing many students to watch the performances from their hostel balconies.

The event offered myriad artistic experiences from the students fraternity, involving cultural groups (both local and foreign), religious associations, as well as art and theatre troupes.

For the first time in the history of the university, Nigerian, Sudanese and Ugandan among other foreign cultures, were displayed live on the stage through dance, alongside local presentations.

Also presented were other foreign dance styles such as salsa, hip hop and ballroom.

Audiences were also treated to hilarious competitions, among them the sack race, egg drop, leg tie, musical chairs, blindfold race and eating contest. There were



From right: Ms Babra Muthoni Ndirangu, Miss MKU 2017/2018, with Mohamed Haji, winner of the Mr MKU title.

also dribbling, acrobatics and tug-of-war entertainment.

The religious groups, including the Muslim community, had an evening of performances through skits, plays, dances poetry, solo and choral singing, as well as *Qaswida* (for the Muslims).

Lovers of traditional food had the opportunity to sample cultural cuisines on the last evening of the event, in an atmosphere of traditional dances and instrumental music. For each of the categories spread out for the five days, those who best captured the theme were awarded.

The five-day fun occasion climaxed with a beauty pageantry and the crowning of

Mr and Miss MKU. More than 40 participants came up to register and train for these contests. Various styles of wear – office, professional, sports, cultural, evening – were showcased.

Ms Babra Muthoni Ndirangu, a Second Year student in the School of Hospitality, Travel and Tourism Management, was crowned Miss MKU 2017/2018. Mohamed Haji, a Third Year student in the School of Business and Economics, Department of Management, won the Mr MKU title.

Other winners were Salma Duot and Doreen Gacingi for Miss MKU 1st and 2nd runners-up respectively, and Masinde Thomas and Kassim Guyo for similar positions under the Mr MKU contest.

My crown will boost varsity's profile, says reigning Miss Diplomacy Tourism World

Bachelor of Business Management (BBM) student Winnie Njeri Gitau is the reigning Miss Diplomacy Tourism World. She won the crown during a competition held on 25 September 2017 in Abuja, Nigeria.

The Mount Kenya University (MKU) student represented Kenya, and says she won the crown through "confidence, intelligence, a good walk and faith".

She outlines her plans:

"Winning this crown and title has a lot of benefits. The pageant's main aim is to empower women economically and to fight against molestation and hunger in our countries.

As Miss Diplomacy Tourism World, I will promote closer international relations, cultural civilisation and econom-

ic relations between various countries of the world.

I have projects to undertake in line with the pageant's aim. By improving my leadership skills, the crown will enhance my profile. I will become an admirable role model and mentor.

Mount Kenya University has been my major supporter. The university sponsored my trip to and from Nigeria. The university's administrators have promised to support me throughout my journey, not only financially but also psychologically as I need advice in this.

During my one year term as Queen, I will improve the university's profile as I will get to invite students from different countries, to our university."



Winnie Njeri Gitau, Miss Diplomacy Tourism World



Students perform during the cultural week.



Body-building contestants display their might.

MKU second overall in national universities games

Mount Kenya University (MKU) sports teams performed well at the 2017 Kenya Universities Sports Association (KUSA) Games, emerging second overall behind Kenyatta University. Twenty-three public and private univer-

sities participated in the games hosted at Dedan Kimathi University in Nyeri County. The MKU teams scooped a total of 55 medals, 12 of them gold, 19 silver and 24 bronze.

Top 3 Medal Table of the Kenya University Sports Association (KUSA) 2017 Games

Position	University	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
1.	Kenyatta University	44	28	23	95
2.	Mount Kenya University	12	19	24	55
3.	Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture & Technology	12	13	8	33

The breakdown of performance per discipline and team

S/No.	Discipline	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Remarks
1.	Handball Men		1		2 nd Overall
2.	Handball Ladies	1			1 st Overall
3.	Soccer Ladies	1			1 st Overall
4.	Badminton				Quarter finals
5.	Rugby Men				Lost at preliminaries
6.	Hockey				Quarter finals
7.	Swimming Men & Ladies		4	14	3 rd Overall
8.	Karate Men & Ladies	6	5	4	3 rd Overall
9.	Athletics	4	9	6	4 th Overall
TOTAL		12	19	24	



Group photo of MKU Handball ladies team.



Group photo MKU Soccer Ladies team.



Group photo of MKU Soccer men team.



MKU Karate team in action.



MKU Rugby team in action.

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 Partnerships:** University partners with research institutions, Universities, hospitals and forges strong industry – academia linkages

Aerial view of a section of MKU Thika (main) campus



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