

# In the Issue

## 01 HOSTING US SECRETARY OF STATE

The University of Nairobi was once again privileged to host a high profile international figure – The US Secretary of State, Hillary Rodham Clinton.

## 02 CHANCELLOR'S TOUR

Early this year, the Chancellor, Dr. Joseph Wanjui made an extensive tour of the University to familiarize himself with ongoing development activities and addressed students and staff.

## 03 TALKS ON ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE

The University of Nairobi's Faculty of Agriculture hosted to Regional Universities Forum in Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) Annual General Meeting at the Serena Beach Hotel, Mombasa,

## 04 INTERNATIONAL STUDENT RECRUITMENT

In an effort to attract international students and bolster the image of the University, UoN ventured beyond the borders and exhibited its academic products and services to Tanzanians in April this year.

## 05 WEBSITE WINS AWARD

The University of Nairobi website has won the 2008 best entry award from the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU).

## 06 BARCLAYS ENDOWS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

Barclays Bank Ltd became the first bank to endow the School of Business to the tune of Kshs.12 million for three years.

## 07 SONU 10TH ANNIVERSARY

Students Organization of Nairobi University (SONU) the largest student organization in East and Central Africa, celebrated its 10th anniversary.

### Cover Picture



US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton at the University of Nairobi after an interaction on governance and corruption with students and civil society.

## VarsityFocus

### Published By

Office of the Vice-Chancellor  
Public Relations Department  
University of Nairobi  
P. O. Box 30197 - 00100 Nairobi  
Tel: 020-318262 Ext. 28263  
Telefax: 020 2246369  
Email: pr@uonbi.ac.ke  
www.uonbi.ac.ke

### Copyright

University of Nairobi, 2009  
All rights reserved

### Editor

Charles E. Sikulu

### Editorial Team

Soita Chesoni  
Njeri Muhoro

### Contributors

Prof. Walter Jaoko  
Dr. Elijah Omwenga  
David Maina  
Kigara Kamweru  
Tom Kwanya  
Tilo Weber  
Winnie Sambu  
Ruth Bubi

### PHOTOGRAPHY

David M. Syuki  
Charles Muriuki

### Creative Design

PinkFoot Consult  
+254-20-2070489  
creative@pink-foot.net

### Printed By

Impress Communications  
Printers & Stationers  
Tel 020-312850/020-313646.

A  
busy  
season

**W**ELCOME TO THIS EDITION of Varsity Focus that will give you a review of what has happened in the University of choice in the recent past. The edition highlights the visit by the US Secretary of State, Hillary Rodham Clinton in the country. Her visit climaxed with a highly publicised interaction with the University community and other stakeholders at Taifa Hall.


We also bring you the highlights of the visit by the Chancellor, Dr. Joseph Barrage Wanjui earlier in the year. The visit included the inauguration of various projects completed in the recent past and inspection of ongoing projects that will take the University to the next level and make it more attractive and competitive locally and internationally.

University of Nairobi academic units had a busy year too. The School of Education launched the education in emergencies course – the first ever in Africa – which among others seeks to address existing gaps in the provision of higher education during emergencies. The course is expected to carve a regional niche. More recently, the Faculty of Agriculture successfully hosted the annual Regional Universities Forum in Agriculture (RUFORUM) meeting. RUFORUM seeks to address agricultural and environmental challenges facing the region.

The University has continued with its outreach programme by participating in local and foreign education exhibitions. Among those the University took part in include the exhibition organized by the Commission for Higher Education. The University later on staged its own open day at the Great Court. At the International level, UoN took part in a higher education exhibition in Tanzania organized by the country's higher education authority. On another front, our online outreach efforts received international accolades after our website won a Commonwealth Universities award in the 2008 PR, Marketing and Communications category. To enhance partnerships locally and internationally the University of Nairobi has opened links with various organizations both private and public. This initiative has opened up more areas of collaboration.

Our students have had an active year with the election of students' leaders of the Student Organization of Nairobi University (SONU) and with AIESEC's engagement of diplomats in a bid to cast their net wide in terms of international opportunities.

This edition also features a new top management appointment of the Principal, College of Architecture and Engineering, Prof. Bernard Njoroge and covers the reappointment of the Chancellor, Dr. Joseph Wanjui and top managers mid this year – Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic Affairs, Prof. Jacob Kaimenyi, Principal, College of Education and External Studies, Prof. Henry Mutoro and Principal, College of Biological and Physical Sciences, Prof. Lucy Irungu.

Enjoy reading and feel free to give your feedback. 

*Charles Sikulu*



Prof. George A. O. Magoha,  
Vice-Chancellor.

UoN remains  
the **main**  
**source**  
of highly  
trained  
manpower

**H**AVE GREAT PLEASURE in welcoming you to our 41st graduation ceremony which will take place on Friday September 18, 2009. This is the first graduation this year and involves four of our six colleges: College of Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences; College of Architecture and Engineering; College of Biological and Physical Sciences and College of Education and External Studies. This event which will culminate in the conferment of degrees and award of diplomas to graduands marks yet another milestone in our journey towards academic excellence. The second graduation ceremony of the University of Nairobi, as has become customary, will be held in December.

The University of Nairobi has over the years remained the main source of highly trained manpower that is playing an important role in our national development. Our journey towards becoming a world-class centre of academic excellence is on course. To date we remain the University of choice of leading scholars and personalities who wish to meet and exchange ideas with our students and staff. We are especially honoured to have played host to such leading figures like Dr. Anna Tibaijuka, UN Undersecretary General and Executive Director, UN-HABITAT and Hillary Rodham Clinton, US Secretary of State, in the recent past.

The University places a lot of premium on the establishment

of linkages with industry in areas of research, development and academic chairs. We have thus not only sought to create new partnerships with the industry but also made considerable effort to consolidate and strengthen existing links. This has begun to bear fruit.

One of our key partners, Barclays Bank now has a full fledged branch at the Main Campus, and also became the first bank to endow a chair for the School of Business. We thank Barclays for this generous donation and appeal to other stakeholders to emulate their good example.

Our vision and mission are clear; we shall not relent in our endeavour to provide quality University education and training that embodies the aspirations of the Kenyan people and the international community through the creation, preservation, integration, transmission and utilization of knowledge. Indeed this graduation is testimony to our commitment to academic excellence.

I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate all the graduands for completing their studies successfully. You have received excellent training from a reputable institution of higher learning and should be able to be successful in your chosen careers.

Remember, you are always welcome to come back either to further your studies or to contribute to the development of your 'alma mater'.



# Clinton's concerns on governance

US Secretary in a well attended interactive session at Taifa Hall comprising mainly students and members of the civil society.

The University of Nairobi was once again privileged to host a high profile international figure – The US Secretary of State,

Hillary Rodham Clinton. Secretary Clinton was in Taifa Hall on August 6, 2009 in a typical “Town Hall” Interview hosted by Fareed Zakaria of CNN in a question and answer

session with the audience.

Secretary Clinton, in her remarks, mainly dwelt on good governance and corruption. Her apt introduction of noticing “corruption-free-zone” signs at the University, culminated in an interesting discourse on the twin aspects of corruption and governance affecting the African continent. The questions from the audience mainly drawn from youth and representatives of the Civil Society, touched on governance and US relations with the rest of the world. Secretary Clinton was received by the Minister for Higher Education, Science and Technology, Hon. Dr. Sally Kosgei and University Officials including the Chancellor, Dr. Joseph Wanjui, the Chairman of Council, Mr. John Simba and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (A&F) Prof. Peter Mbithi who was the acting Vice-Chancellor.

Clinton thanked the University Management for hosting the event noting that she was pleased to be at this great University which has such



US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton flanked by top ministry of higher education and University of Nairobi officials as she signs the visitors' book.



Secretary Clinton plants a commemorative tree in front of the main administration block.

reputation of excellence not only in Africa but beyond the Continent.


Secretary Clinton's visit came barely three years after US President Barack Obama (then Senator) visited University and gave a high profile lecture on democracy. Clinton acknowledged this by observing that "it is a pleasure to be at the University where now President Obama came as a Senator and delivered a very strong message".

The Minister for Higher Education, Science and Technology, Hon.

Dr. Sally Kosgei, who introduced Secretary Clinton to the audience lauded the long friendly relations between the US and Kenya dating back more than 50 years.

Before leaving for other assignments, Secretary Clinton planted a commemorative tree at the University. Her entourage included top US administrators among them Johnny Carson, Assistant Secretary of State and Formerly an Ambassador to Kenya and the U.S. Ambassador to Kenya, Mr. Michael Ranneberger.

A day before, Mrs. Clinton had addressed participants at the AGOA Conference that was held at KICC, Nairobi.

Other prominent personalities who attended the "Town Hall" included environmentalist and Nobel Prize Laureate Prof. Wangari Maathai, Prof. Onesmus Mutungi, a High Court Judge and former Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic Affairs, former nominated MP Njoki Ndungu, top UoN administrators, students and members of staff. 

**T**HE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI'S Faculty of Agriculture hosted to Regional Universities Forum in Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) Annual General Meeting at the Serena Beach Hotel, Mombasa, from August 26 to 28, 2009. The forum brought together scholars and top administrators from 25 universities in the region to discuss and tackle pertinent issues regarding agriculture and the environment.

In the official opening address Nobel Laureate, Prof. Wangari Maathai, urged scholars to cultivate environmental education to youth with values and ethos of safeguarding our environment. She opposed the shamba system arguing that it encourages soil erosion and ultimately takes away the livelihood it is meant to provide.

Enumerating the government's initiative in supporting environmental efforts, the Assistant Minister for Agriculture Hon. Gideon

# Talks on environment and agriculture

Ndambuki, said that the government is keen to partner with the academia and other sectors in protecting forest cover.

RUFORUM is a consortium of 25 universities in Eastern, Central and Southern Africa which was established in 2004. It had previously operated as a programme since 1992 under the Rockefeller Foundation who still are its main financier's to date.

RUFORUM's vision is to be "a vibrant agricultural sector linked to African universities which can provide high performing graduates and high-quality research, responsive to

the demands of Africa's farmers for innovations and able to generate sustainable livelihood and national economic development." With such a vision, the output of impact-oriented research and the maintenance of collaborative working relations among researchers, farmers, national agricultural research institutions, and government".

RUFORUM also facilitates regional postgraduate training supports policy advocacy, coordination and resource mobilization for tertiary education in Africa. The forum also served as the first AGM.

The University of Nairobi, which is a member of RUFORUM, represented by the Faculty of Agriculture, hosted the AGM for members. The Vice-Chancellor, Professor George Magoha, led top College of Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences Officials in attending the AGM board meetings. The Deans of participating universities later met for a week to brainstorm on the activities of the Forum. Vice-Chancellors from Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Egerton and Moi Universities also attended the three-day AGM.

The AGM also discussed how the development of IT infrastructure in office should be used in improving communication between RUFORUM members.



RUFORUM delegates at the Serena Beach Hotel.





AIESEC officials in a group photograph with US Ambassador Michael Ranneberger and the immediate former German Ambassador Walter Lindner.

## AIESEC hosts Embassy day


**T**HE EMBASSY DAY WAS the first of its kind in the AIESEC calendar and more so at the University. The main drive behind the event was to echo AIESEC's values of cultural diversity and exchange.

The event graced by the US Ambassador Michael Ranneberger and the immediate former German Ambassador Walter Lindner, laid emphasis on the role that students can play in the leadership of the country to move it to the next level. They informed students of the various donor funding relations that both countries have with Kenya and the education opportunities available for University students.

The two diplomats made presentations that touched on the role of the youth leadership in Kenya before engaging in a question- answer session with the

students.

The idea behind the Embassy Day was to create a forum for foreign missions in Kenya to showcase the different opportunities available in their countries and the activities they undertake in the country. However due to constraints of time and resources, an exhibition expected did not take off and was postponed to a later date.

AIESEC is an international student organization in over 100 countries around the world; it is based in nine Universities in Kenya with AIESEC, UON being the oldest and most vibrant in the region. AIESEC's activities include exchange and people development; among other activities carried out are issue based projects, exchange programmes, events such as conferences, the economic forum, and more recently the Embassy Day. 

*Ruth Bubi, AIESEC Nairobi.*

# Inspection tour by the Chancellor



---

Dr. Wanjui inspected development projects and addressed students and staff.

---

**E**arly this year, the Chancellor, Dr. Joseph Wanjui made an extensive tour of the University to familiarize himself with ongoing development activities and meet students and staff.

The three-day tour which commenced on February 17, 2009 started with a meeting with student leaders in the Council Chamber and a donation of Kshs. 5 million to support need students from the University of Nairobi Alumni Association was presented by its Chair person, Dr. Betty Gikonyo.

The Chancellor, who was accompanied by the entire University top management including the Chairman of Council, Mr. John Simba and the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. George Magoha thereafter proceeded to Kenya

Science Campus where he laid the foundation stone for a new lecture theatre and laboratory intended to accommodate the increased number of students. At the College of Education and External Studies, Kikuyu Campus, he opened the new library, commissioned a new printing section and the AVU computer laboratory.

The team then toured the School of Business, Lower Kabete Campus where the Chancellor was able to see work in progress on the nearly complete 8-4-4 Halls, which stalled in 1990 due to lack of funding before officially opening the new Mwai Kibaki Library.

The second day of the Chancellor's tour of the University took him to the College of Biological and Physical Sciences, Chiromo where he visited various

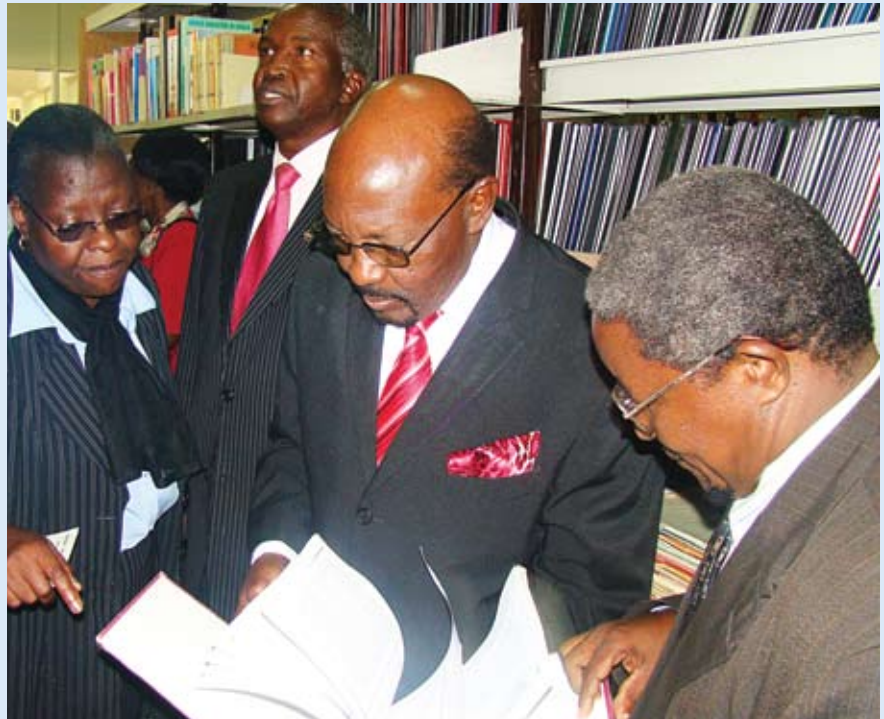


departments before officially opening the ultra modern Central Examination Centre. The new centre houses the entire examination departments and examination halls with seating capacity of 700 candidates.


At the College of Health Sciences, the Chancellor opened the new extension block of the Department of Surgery before touring the Kenya Aids Vaccine Initiative (KAVI), the new Extension Block and the Department of Paediatrics and Child Health, and toured the enhanced Level III Laboratory, University of Nairobi Institute of Infectious and Tropical Diseases (UNITID) and the upgraded teaching facilities for the Department of Surgery.

On the third day, the Chancellor toured the College of Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences (CAVS) and College of Architecture and Engineering (CAE). At CAVS, he officially opened the newly completed and equipped 8-4-4 Building and toured other facilities in the College. Among the places he visited included the Department of Clinical Studies, Department of Veterinary Pathology, Microbiology and Parasitological, Department of Animal Production and the Methyl Bromide Project at the Field Station.

At CAE, the Chancellor toured the Computer laboratory in the Department of Mechanical Engineering, the Highway and Concrete Laboratories and the rehabilitated lecture theatre in the Department of Electrical and Information Engineering. The hectic but extremely successful tour came to an end with the official opening of the Civil Engineering Block Building Extension and Lecture Theatre.



**Dr. Wanjui glances library materials. Above: The 8.4.4 Building housing the Department of Agricultural Economics in Upper Kabete Campus among the projects he inaugurated.**

In remarks delivered at the various Colleges that he visited, Chancellor Wanjui commended the University management for the positive changes that are taking place at the University noting that they had been made possible by the existing peaceful atmosphere. He pledged to continue assisting the University in its endeavour to become a world-class institution of higher learning. 

# course on renewable energy



Vice-Chancellor Prof. George Magoha and Kasarani MP Hon. Elizabeth Ongoro congratulate a graduand of the renewable energy course.

One of the issues that has generated interest in renewable energy technologies the world over has been the unsustainable manner in which we currently consume the conventional supplies of energy and the harmful effects this consumption has on the environment.

The factors that are influencing this renewed interest in renewable energy technologies have been their environmentally friendly nature, improved cost effectiveness as the technologies advance and the price instability of oil as the reserves decrease and the demand increase.

In Kenya, the energy policy proposes to promote the development and use of new and renewable forms of energy. This policy was recently re-emphasized when the Minister for Energy introduced new "feed-in" laws for electricity produced from renewable energy sources to feed the national grid. The integration of renewable energy systems into the electricity

supply networks together with the development of autonomous renewable energy systems for electricity supply poses new challenges to a developing country such as ours.

The University of Nairobi has taken on the challenge of equipping staff and students with the tools to meet these challenges. The Institute of Nuclear Science (INS) successfully organized a two-month training in 2008 and 27 students successfully participated and completed the course in Solar Photovoltaic Technology and Biogas Plant

***Institute trains  
27 in solar  
Photovoltaic  
Technology and  
Biogas Plant  
Construction and  
Utilization.***

Construction and Utilization.

The two courses were designed specifically to enable the participants appreciate the opportunities available in the exploitation and utilization of the renewable energy flows that occur naturally within our environment. The students were sponsored by the MP for Kasarani Hon. Elizabeth Ongoro. The Institute of Nuclear Science (INS) organised a graduation ceremony for the students which was presided over by the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. George Magoha. Among those who attended the ceremony included the Principal, College of Architecture and Engineering, Prof. Bernard Njoroge and the Director, INS, Mr. David Maina among others

As the developed world braces itself for greater participation in the exploitation and utilization of renewable energy sources, it is indeed timely that we, at the University of Nairobi are playing our role in enhancing the use of these technologies for the benefit of our communities. **VF**

# Seeking a share of International student market

**I**N AN EFFORT TO ATTRACT international students and bolster the image of the University, UoN ventured beyond the borders and exhibited its academic products and services to Tanzanians in April this year. This exhibition was staged immediately after the Commission for Higher Education (CHE) exhibition in Nakuru in March 2009.

The Tanzanian exhibition was organized by the Tanzania Commission for Universities (TCU),

the equivalent of CHE and attracted the participation of universities from the entire East African region. UoN was among four Kenyan universities that pitched camp in Dar-es-Salaam in a bid to recruit students.

The University of Nairobi sent a six-member team led by the Chairman of the Exhibitions Committee, Dr. Fred Otieno for the three-day education expananza. The exhibitors included representatives from the Admissions Office, Deans Committee, Board of Postgraduate

Studies, Academic Registrar and the Public Relations Office.

The exhibition's theme "Achieving National Development Goals through Higher Education, Science and Technology" was a major crowd puller and the UoN stand was among the major attractions. Indeed, some prospective students purchased application forms to apply for courses of their choice. Others interested in the UoN stand were UoN alumni resident in Tanzania.

The Tanzania expo drew many visitors, key among them high school students, those seeking college admission, parents and other stakeholders. The event was officially opened by Tanzania's Minister for Education, Jumanne Maghembe.

The Minister visited the UoN stand and congratulated the institution for exposing its academic products to Tanzanians. This is the first time that UoN has made a deliberate attempt to market its products within the East African region. This move is likely to increase its international student enrolment which lags behind many leading universities yet it is a key factor in determining UoN's influence outside the national boundaries. 



Prospective students at the University of Nairobi stand at the Exhibition.

# Training Manpower

Open Day 2009 was a useful opportunity to market higher education to the public.



Aah, so this is what the University offers. Prospective students sample the offers on the open day.

Our academic journey as a University continues. The rich heritage and legacy was made manifest during the second annual University

of Nairobi Open Day held on June 5 and 6, 2009. Until last year, the previous Open Day was last held in 1989, a demonstration of the University's resolve to remain a leader in academic excellence in

addition to creating systems and structures that deliver quality services.

The theme of the Open Day "Training Manpower for Vision 2030" ably captured the role that the

# towards 2030

University has played in manpower development - to date it has trained over 105,714 Alumni serving in Kenya, East Africa and in many parts of the world. The University has over 400 academic programmes and is present virtually in all parts of the country including major cities and towns of Mombasa and Kisumu.

The Colleges, Central Administration units and the student body participated in show casing all programmes, services and products generated and created by the University of Nairobi. Indeed over 5,000 people could be seen milling all over the Great Court, attesting to the popularity of our products and services.

The Open day was also attended by high school students, a number of whom "forgot" where they were and lost themselves to the music of "hero". Our partners, Kenya Commercial Bank, Barclays Bank of Kenya, Standard Chartered Bank, The Karen Hospital, and East African Education Publishers also benefited reporting sustained interest in some of their activities. Indeed the Open Day was a meeting ground for stakeholders in the education sector.

The highlights of the Open Day were the interactions, linkages and networking. Dozens of Alumni who attended were able to learn more about the programmes on offer for their children as well as meet former classmates. Alumni have made

suggestions on how to improve the Institution. Some parents found time to interrogate their children on the progress they were making during their sojourn at the University.


The philosophy behind the Open Day is simple: to open up the University to public scrutiny. As a body corporate, funded by taxpayers, the University has a responsibility to open up so that the public can learn how it operates and also for the University to give an account of itself.

The Open Day was also a marketplace for ideas and sale of products and services. The direct products of food and detergents were popular sale items.

Speaking to Varsity Focus, the Chairman of the Organizing

Committee noted the success of the Open Day inspite of several limitations such as space, time and insider publicity.

The 2009 Open Day was formally opened by the Chairman of Council Mr. John Simba. Among those who attended the opening ceremony included the top management led by the Vice-Chancellor, students, staff and visitors. The Chancellor, Dr. Joseph Wanjui also visited the stands.

The University wishes to thank all our partners, parents and stakeholders for standing with us and supporting us. Your presence during the Open Day is testimony that you have and will continue to associate yourselves with a tested and proven institution. 



# Annual varsities expo held

**U**NIVERSITY OF NAIROBI (UoN) participated in this year's Commission for Higher Education (CHE) annual exhibition held at Kunste Hotel, Nakuru. The event drew the participation of 41 institutions comprising public universities, private universities and constituent colleges.

This year's exhibition theme was "Peace Building and Reconciliation for Sustainable Development". The theme was chosen to reflect on the universities' role in reconciling the nation and laying a foundation for stable relations among Kenyans.


This was necessary especially at a time when the country is struggling to reconcile Kenyans following the post-election violence that affected the country

last year.

As is our tradition, all the Colleges and central administration represented the UoN in the exhibition with each being given a chance to sell their services and products to the residents of Nakuru and its environs. The exhibition also provided an opportunity to interact with various stakeholders. Our attractive display and response to queries earned our stand many visitors.

This year's exhibition was officially opened by the Director of Higher Education Mrs. Agnes Silla and closed by the Assistant Minister for Education Prof. Ayiecho-Olweny, a former UoN Don.

The University's top management were led by the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. George Magoha; Deputy Vice-Chancellor (A&F), Prof Peter Mbithi and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (AA), Prof. Jacob Kaimenyi; College Principals, Deans and Directors.

This was the 7th Exhibition organized by CHE and the third to be held outside Nairobi. The previous two exhibitions were successfully held in Mombasa and Kisumu in 2008 and 2007 respectively. 



High school students follow proceedings at one of the UoN stands.



Winnie Sambu (right) with participants during the student leadership mentorship programme in the US.

## Student leader benefits from mentorship

**W**INNIE SAMBU, THE immediate former SONU Vive-chairperson, Academic Affairs was in the United States for a student leadership mentorship program. She shares her experiences with *Varsity Focus*.

"I left for the United States on 28th June 2009. I had applied and was selected as one of the six student leaders from Kenya. The program involved a five-week study of the United States Institutes and the civil rights movement. The programme was sponsored by the US Department

of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, and was administered by the Academy for Educational Development (AED).

The programme involved 120 participants drawn from Africa, Middle East and Asia divided into six groups of 26 students each. Each group went to a different University and state. There were 40 students from Africa drawn from Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa. We were taken to the state of Arkansas, and hosted by University of Arkansas in the city of Fayetteville.


The first three weeks of the

programme involved an intensive study of American history and the Civil Rights Movement. We also had the opportunity to interact with the residents of the city of Fayetteville and participated in community development programmes and activities. We also studied the effects of the media on the society, peace and conflict resolution. In general, the study involved 175 hours of academic instruction, workshops, regional travel, community work and leadership training. We also attended numerous additional hours of cross-cultural experiences and social activities.

After three weeks of intensive learning we started out on a one week bus trip through the American South and East. Some of the states we visited include Tennessee where we relived the very last moments of Martin Luther King Jr.

We also went to Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina and North Carolina where we were able to visit some of the civil rights monuments. The trip was very emotional for many of us since it revealed how much African Americans suffered in their struggle for equality.

Back in Washington, we held a two-day conference and discussed various aspects we had learned in the course of the trip. We spent our last day touring the beautiful city of Washington and visiting various memorials and tourist sites.

The study of the American Institutes for Student leaders was a great experience for me. It was educative and informative and gave me a lot of exposure. It also gave me an opportunity to see things from a different perspective." 

# Varsity ICT broadband

**T**HE UNIVERSITY IS KEEN TO mainstream the use of technology to drive University business processes in order to consolidate data, reduce the cost of operations and improve on efficiency. The foundation for running integrated information and communication technology centre (ICTC) services is a reliable and fast network infrastructure.

The University has made significant investments in developing its own internal networks, with a large network presence on all the seven campuses running on optic fibre backbone.

This notwithstanding, the University has over the years been grappling with very poor Inter-campus connections (Wide Area Network, WAN) and sluggish Internet access speeds.

One major reason for this was that the WAN connections were largely run on a third party network that used radio technology, and which was prone to frequent failures arising from interferences from changing weather patterns and from other radio signals. It also suffered from other technology restrictions such as the maximum radius of reach and limits on data carrying capacities.

This meant certain critical demands of the University could not be met, for example bandwidth upgrades and networking of distant campuses.

It should be noted that the period until year 2007 was characterized by a generally poor state of ICTC



**Manager, communication services, Elija Tenai explains to Director, ICT, Dr. Elija Omwenga how the new communication equipment works.**

infrastructure development in the country, with very few credible players offering viable alternatives for wide area network service provision in the market. Though establishing private WAN network was a potential option for the University, it portended not only exorbitantly high costs but serious logistical challenges. Thus the University had little choice but to stick with the functioning network, despite the inadequacies on its quality and related problems.

With the emergence of new players in the market, opportunities arose for the University to upgrade its inter-campus links. From November 2008, therefore the University, through the ICT Center, has engaged

a new contractor to upgrade its inter-campus infrastructure into fibre.

Following the successful completion of the project, the University has recently commissioned 12 fiber links to various sites, including links to all the satellite campuses within Nairobi. Work is ongoing to connect the various University Points of Presence (POPs) in major urban centers such as Mombasa, Kisumu, and Nyeri on fiber.

The new links on Fiber carry several advantages such as better link quality, more bandwidth, stability, resistance to interference, ease of expansion and overall better



# internet upgraded

economics in the long haul. All the links are connected at bandwidths of 10 Mbps. The connected sites are already enjoying a tremendous improvement on their access speeds. Some were upgraded from the old radio links that could mostly do a maximum of 1Mbps per link; others had no links at all. The upgrades from old radio links comes at no additional cost on recurrent expenditure for the University.


At the same period that the Intercampus links upgrades were being carried out, there was another project to expand Internet bandwidth. From January 2009, the University has enjoyed a major upgrade of its Internet access bandwidth from the previous aggregate of 15 Mbps at the end of 2008 to the current 43 Mbps (10 Mbps uplink, 33 Mbps downlink). This connection has been made possible through Kenya Education

Network Trust (KENET), a National Research and Education Network (NREN) that promotes the use of ICT in higher education institutions in Kenya, the University of Nairobi being a founding member.

KENET, and by extension the University, benefited from a project by GoK/World Bank (KTCPIP) that funded infrastructural linkages of educational institutions in the country and financed a significant subsidy on the cost of international bandwidth for the institutions.

The considerably improved access speeds for global Internet has already gone a long way in aiding easier and faster access of online services and resources by University staff and students, including access to University subscribed electronic journals and the various local and international electronic exchanges to share and collaborate in the diverse learning, teaching, research and administrative endeavors.

It is worth noting that a number of online based systems have recently been rolled-out, including the online leave application systems, online course registration tool for students, online CV submission tool to the University website for staff, official students e-mail account self provisioning tool, among others.

These are extensions to already established and matured systems such as the Human Resources Management System (HRMIS) and the Student Management Information System (SMIS). 

## UoN website wins award

THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI website has won the 2008 best entry award from the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU).

The website emerged the best amongst several competitors. According to the judges, the web site was chosen because of its extremely clean and professional design, clear navigation, dynamic content, interesting graphics, consistency, light weight and creative graphics.

"This is a very professional, fresh looking site which addresses its audience well. By and large, the architecture of the site is intuitive and effective", said the judges.

According to Dr Elijah Omwenga, the Director of the University's ICT Centre, which manages the web site, this achievement is a

culmination of an effort geared towards making this resource a one-stop portal for information, reference and learning. He quips that the website is a gateway to our rich heritage as a university and an embodiment of our vision for best practice.

The University of Nairobi is committed to remain a world class centre of scholarly excellence through innovative use of new information and communication technologies for research, learning, and sharing of knowledge.

The website was judged by a panel of international reviewers between 17 January 2009 and 28 February 2009. In the latest Webometrics ranking of universities, the University of Nairobi was placed 22nd in Africa and 2nd in Kenya.



1



2



3



4

1. Vice-President Kalonzo Musyoka signing into the University of Nairobi Social Network Forum [www.uonbicomunity.com](http://www.uonbicomunity.com) during the class 2009 elders night and Alumni in June at KICC.
2. Signing collective bargaining agreement between management and UNTENSU officials.
3. Tanzania's Minister for Education Jumanne Maghembe signs the visitors' book at the UoN stand in an exhibition held in Dar-es-Salaam.
4. UASU officials sign a collective bargaining agreement with representatives of IPPCU from various universities.
5. Students follow a presentation during this year's open day.



5



6

6. Dr. Anne Tibajuka delivers a Gandhi Memorial lecture on urbanisation.



7

7. Students in a campaign against jiggers in Kandara Division, Murang'a District.



8

8. Director, CIPL, Prof. Simon Mitema with officials from Letour New University.

9. Upper Kabete Campus Students take part in the annual tree planting exercise at the campus.

10. Vice-Chancellor, Prof. George Magoha and Kasarani MP Elizabeth Ongoro view students' project on-renewable energy at the Institute of Nuclear Science.

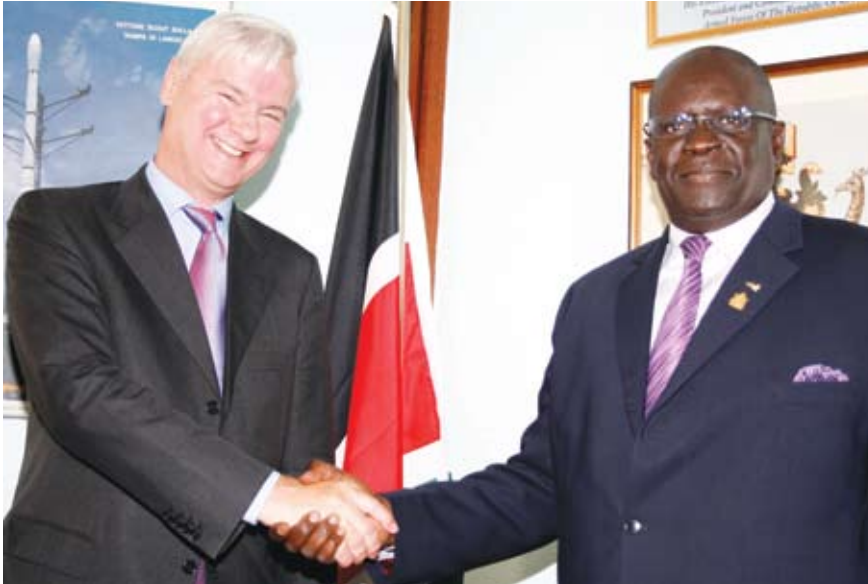


9



10

# Barclays endows school of business



Senior member of staff with Barclays Bank MD, Adan Mohammed (2nd left).  
Above : Barclays Bank PLC, Chief Executive Officer, Global Retail and Commercial Banking, Mr. Frits Seegers with Vice Chancellor, Prof. George Magoha.

**B**ARCLAYS BANK LTD became the first bank to endow the School of Business to the tune of Kshs.12 million for three years. This was disclosed by the Barclays Bank PLC, Chief Executive Officer Global Retail and Commercial Banking, Mr. Frits Seegers when he paid a courtesy call on the Vice-Chancellor on August 12, 2009. Details of the endowment shall be finalized between the School and the bank.

Mr. Seegers was accompanied by top Barclays Kenya management led by Adan Mohammed, the Barclays Bank Kenya CEO.

He revealed that Barclays will start mentorship programmes targeting students in local universities. Seegers later gave a lecture on "Impact of financial Crisis on the Global Economy and Creating Global Leaders for the future" to students and members of staff at the Education Theatre II. Mr. Seegers also paid a visit to the Barclays University Branch.

The Vice-Chancellor, Prof. George Magoha welcomed Barclays offer and assured the Bank of UoN's collaboration to further the interests of both brands.

The two organizations have enjoyed warm working relations for more than 50 years, indeed Barclays was the first bank to open a branch at UoN.

Present was also Prof. Peter Mbithi, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Administration & Finance, Prof. Isaac Mbeche Principal, College of Humanities and Social Sciences and Dr. Stephen Nzuve Dean, School of Business.



The Department of Architecture & Building Science effects a program of close collaboration with the professional bodies in the profession of architecture in Kenya and on the international scene. This year has witnessed several occasions where these relations have been cemented and advanced to new levels.

The profession on its part, has continued to regard the academia as a key part of their work and mutual respect exists between the two sides. In the recent past, key members of the profession have had occasion to visit the Department and interact with staff and students. The most prominent of these was the president of the International Union of Architects (IUA) Louise Cox who was received in the Department by members of staff and students. The IUA is a key organization which –together with UNESCO – developed the global Charter for Architectural Education which is a critical guide in our curriculum development efforts.

The Department supports the broader goals of the profession in Kenya. The annual end-of-year exhibition of student work, for example, has now become a significant fixture in the cultural calendar of the City of Nairobi and stands out as the only regular exhibition of architectural works in the eastern Africa region and probably beyond. The exhibition – which this year ran between 15th and 31st July – continues to attract huge numbers of visitors ranging from school students to city business people to tourists. In this event, the Department plays its part in popularizing the discipline and knowledge of architecture and thus raises its appreciation within the

## Cultivating positive links with the profession



Mr. and Mrs James Kimathi admiring some of the work on display during an exhibition of Mr. Kimathi's work at the Department of Architecture & Building Science.


general public. For the profession, the exhibition is a vital forum for stimulating new ideas and picking new recruits from the graduating classes. Students take full advantage to showcase their talents and there is real competition to secure a place among the exhibitors.

A variation of the exhibition format, and in furtherance of this desire to interact fully with the profession, the Department devoted time early this year on an exhibition of the works of one prominent architect, Mr. James Kimathi. The displayed works included

the new parliament building in Dodoma, Tanzania and the winning entry into the competition to revamp the Kenya parliament. The display was curated by a team of students led by Kevin Matembo of 4th Year.

A high point in our relations with the profession was the visit by the Board of Registration of Architects and Quantity Surveyors led by their chairman, Mr. Philip Sika (also the Permanent Secretary for the Nairobi

Metropolitan Ministry).

The team was received on campus by the Principal, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Prof. Isaac Mbeche, on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor and later preceded for meetings at the School of the Built Environment. Members of the Board also had an interactive session with final year students at the School. In each of these meetings, ways to further enhance interaction between the academia and the profession were explored. 

# SONU Celebrates 10th Anniversary



Hon. Asman Kamama, Assistant Minister for Higher Education, Science and Technology.



David Osiany, SONU Chairman.



Dan Mwangi, immediate former SONU Chairman.

**S**TUDENTS ORGANIZATION OF NAIROBI University (SONU) is the largest student organization in East and Central Africa. Its membership comprise about 46,000 students of the University of Nairobi.

Since its inception in the 1970s, SONU has undergone many changes. Then and later on in the 80s and part of the 90s, its participation in national and international issues often led to its disbandment – many times student leaders become victims of suspensions and expulsion and on most occasions studies at the University were disrupted. The current SONU 98 rose from the ashes of this history in 1998, to champion students’ rights in a radically changed environment that seeks consensus more than the unnecessary confrontation that was

the hallmark of yesteryears.

To reminisce the history of the student union, immediate former SONU 98 officials, led by the immediate former Chairman, Dan Mwangi, organized a party to mark the 10th anniversary of SONU.

January 30 2009 marked a major milestone for SONU 98, student leaders together with the University managers, government representatives, members of the corporate world, past SONU leaders, alumni and other distinguished guests congregated over dinner at the Central Catering Unit (CCU) to commemorate the anniversary along the theme: “Good Governance and Democracy: Role of Student Organizations”.

The event was graced by the Assistant Minister for Higher Education, Mr. Asman Kamama, top UoN management led by the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. George Magoha, present and past SONU officials and students. Hon. Asman Kamama spoke on the role of students’ organizations in healing the nation after the 2007 post election violence. He revealed that his passion for student activities stems from his past as a student leader in Egerton University.

During the event, Mr. Mwangi disclosed that SONU 98 has set aside an annual bursary fund of Kshs 2 million to support over 400 students from disadvantaged backgrounds in all colleges. Mr. Mwangi emphasized that the student body shall

not relent from its original mandate of championing students' interests.

Prof. Magoha lauded SONU for the transformation it had undergone and appreciated the union's embracement of dialogue as a panacea to resolving issues rather than the confrontation that was prevalent a few years ago.

This in the long run, he added, "has made the University to complete its programmes as scheduled and improve its corporate image." SONU's synergy with the administration in improving student welfare is best captured in its representation in all decision making organs of the University – from the Strategic Management Units (SMU's) to the University Council. SONU also works closely with campus based organizations and affiliated professional clubs.

The Dean of Students, Dr. Dominic Wamugunda challenged SONU to build on the achievements and improve service delivery to students while corporate sector representatives who included Mr. Jonathan Ciano, C.E.O. Uchumi Supermarkets and Mr. Charles Njoroge, Commissioner-General CCK expressed joy at being invited to participate in the celebrations. Dr. Frank Njenga, a renowned psychiatrist and member of the University Council, gave a humorous account of how the student body operated in the 70s.

SONU has often organized events and activities which include sports days, mentorship programs, career talks, first year orientation activities among others. Recently, a successful sports day was held at Chiromo Campus with a University wide representation.



**Winnie Sambu, immediate former SONU Vice-chairperson, Academic Affairs.**



**Current SONU officials in a group photograph with the Chancellor and UoN management.**

# Course on emergencies launched

**T**HE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI in conjunction with the International Rescue Committee (IRC) has launched a course in Education in Emergencies. The launch of the course is in recognition of the increased demand for and professionalization of education responses in and after emergencies.

UoN's School of Education and IRC are partnering to establish an accredited Education in Emergencies programme that will seek to develop the human resource capacity among enrolled students and education practitioners in order to prepare them to provide vital education programming in emergencies. The partnership commenced this year and will run for three years.

While launching the programme, the Vice-Chancellor, in a speech read on his behalf by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor in charge of Academic Affairs, Prof. Jacob Kaimenyi, underscored the importance of the programme. "The centre comes as a blessing not only to our nation but also the entire East African region

and the rest of the continent. UoN is now in a strategic position to develop capacity, generate research and play an active role in providing solutions affecting society".

The University management pledged its support to ensure that the programme is successfully rolled out to achieve its objectives in mitigating emergencies.

Dr. Mary Mendenhall, IRC/UoN, Education in Emergencies consultant, was upbeat that the programme will succeed and worked tirelessly in conjunction with the School of Education to ensure its successful launch on May 21, 2009 in Education Lecture Theatre II.

The grim statistics on emergencies warrant the launch of this course. For instance, the number of reported national disasters have increased six fold in the last 30 years while in the next decade, according to Save the Children UK, 2007, more than 175 million children will be affected by disasters. Of the 75 million children out of school worldwide, almost 40 million live in situations affected by conflict or fragility. In conflict zones, about 22 million girls are out of school and worldwide girls account for only 30 percent of the refugees enrolled in secondary school. There could be no better justification for the need of this course.

The course coordinator at the School of Education is Dr. Loise Gichuhi. IRC and UoN are eager to expand the partnership to include other organizations in all phases of the project.

The programme will utilize various teaching aids including coursework, fieldwork and shall impart essential skills and competencies required to work in the education sector and in mitigating, responding to and rebuilding after complex emergencies.



---

Participants during the launch of the course on emergencies in Education Theatre II, Main Campus.







Mr. Titus Ndambuki  
PS, Ministry of  
State for Public  
Service with Deputy  
Vice-Chancellor,  
Administration and  
Finance, Prof. Peter  
Mbithi.

# New collaboration with KIA

The University of Nairobi and the Ministry of State for Public Service is working on a partnership and collaboration to reposition the Kenya Institute of Administration (KIA) to enable it contribute more effectively to the enhancement of existing skills and competencies and assist in developing leaders in the public service.

This was revealed in a meeting between ministry officials led by the Permanent Secretary (PS) Mr. Titus Ndambuki and the University top management led by the Vice-Chancellor Prof. George Magoha. During the meeting held in the Vice-Chancellor's Committee Room, Hon. Ndambuki underscored the need to partner with UoN in areas of research, training and partnership in order to transfer skills to the public


service and improve service delivery. Human resource training has been identified as among the key drivers in the attainment of the Vision 2030.

The partnership between the Ministry and the University is likely to lead to academic staff offering training in government institutions such as KIA and the four Government Training Institutes (GTI's) in Embu, Baringo, Mombasa and Matuga.

According to the PS, public universities are expected to assist in research on some pertinent service issues such as training, research and consultancy. Other areas will include; career advancement of serving scholars in Institutions, joint research with public service training needs, pay determination and other issues that interest scholars.

The Vice-Chancellor, Prof. George Magoha, assured the PS that the University of Nairobi is willing to partner with the Government to enable it achieve its objectives.

As a way forward, a team comprising of Prof. Enos Njeru, Dean, Faculty of Arts, Dr Margaret Kobia, Principal, KIA, Dr. Philip Nyinguro, Chairman, Dept. of Political Science, Njoki Kahiga, Nelson Marigari (Ministry of Public Service) and Dr. Maurice Khayota, Embu GTI were mandated to steer the process and submit a report within a month.

Others present included Deputy Vice-Chancellor (A&F) Prof. Peter Mbithi, Principal, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Prof. Isaac Mbeche, and Director, Institute of Diplomacy and International Studies Prof. Makumi Mwangiru. 

# Students get funding to study in Germany

**T**HE BEGINNING OF ACADEMIC collaboration between Kenya and Germany dates back as far as the Kenyan independence in 1963. Both governments together with institutions such as the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation (AHS) have established frameworks for joint projects in fields including medicine, water management, agriculture and geography. One major goal of these programmes has been the exchange of distinguished experts and the support of PhD candidates in pursuit of their research.

The idea underlying these

programmes is that young talented Kenyan scholars, at the very beginning of their careers, should be introduced to and get enthused by German culture, academic life and language, to establish ties that will later on serve as the foundation of relationships for the benefit of both countries.

This year, the German-Kenyan academic collaboration has benefited 10 students of German Studies and Geography from the University of Nairobi and Kenyatta University. The students have been sponsored by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), the Catholic Academic Exchange Service (KAAD) and the University of Trier and will spend one to three months working on their Master's projects or participating in language courses. The other benefit not included in the "official" curriculum will be the many opportunities to meet German people in their everyday environments and to experience the many facets the country has to offer.

Students and faculty members were present during the official award ceremony held at the University of Nairobi College of Humanities and Social Sciences in May this year.

Among those present during the award ceremony included Mr. Benjamin Wilhelm, German Embassy and Ms. Anja Bengelstorff, DAAD Office, East Africa. The University of Nairobi was represented by Prof. Enos Njeru, Dean Faculty of Arts and Dr. Mwenda Mbatiah, Chairman, Department of Linguistics and Languages. Also present was Prof. Oluoch Obura, Dean, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, and Dr. Calvine Kayi both from Kenyatta University.

Prof. Njeru hailed the German partners for their support of academic excellence in the country. He pointed out that national as well as international collaboration is indispensable for reaching academic competitiveness in the global academic market.

Prof. Obura, a DAAD alumnus, revealed that he is a beneficiary of a successful partnership between the two countries.

Benjamin Wilhelm, representing the German Embassy, observed that Kenya has long been considered and certainly will remain a prime partner of Germany in many areas of collaboration in research and science.

Anja Bengelstorff, DAAD programme officer for Sub-Saharan Africa, provided a brief overview of the many areas the German Academic Exchange Service, is collaborating with Kenyan partners. She highlighted DAAD activities ranging from scholarship schemes, exchange and alumni programmes to internet platforms and projects on academic quality assurance.

The beneficiaries of research stays and German language classes were Carolyn Gimei, Evalyne Mungai, Felista Wangari and Benedict Kevondo. These students are the winners of a German essay contest on Föderalismus und Majimbo (Federalism and Majimbo) jointly conducted by the German Programmes of the University of Nairobi and Kenyatta University. In addition, Andrew Oduor from Geography Department was awarded a one-year stipend by the University of Trier, Department of Geology, which for many years has maintained a joint research programme with its counterpart at Kenyatta University.



# Kwazulu Natal extends opportunities to UoN

**T**HE UNIVERSITY OF KWA ZULU NATAL (KNU) is accelerating its collaboration with other international universities by offering an initiative to exempt tuition fees on postgraduate programmes – Ph D and masters programmes. This was disclosed by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Prof. John C. Mubangizi, Deputy Vice-chancellor and head College of Law and Management Studies, when he paid a courtesy call on the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic Affairs, Prof. Jacob Kaimenyi.

Prof. Mubangizi said that KNU wants to promote the internationalization of higher education and forge close partnerships with other universities worldwide. It has over 250 links with universities worldwide half of them active none of which is from Africa. It is on the basis of this inactivity in the region that KNU wants to renew its

collaboration with the UoN. This reactivation will accord UoN staff opportunities to advance in higher studies through the recently introduced fees remission programme.


KNU prides itself on a strong research portfolio and is ranked third in Africa and among the top 500 worldwide. Most of its international students are from the US and Europe and are now targeting recruitment of more students within the continent. It targets an international student population of 10 percent.

UoN had links with KNU way back in 2006 through efforts by the Centre for International Programmes and Links (CIPL). The collaboration was based on student and staff exchanges, joint research among others but remained inactive. If well managed this time, the




**Prof. John Mubangizi, exchange documents with deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic Affairs, Prof. Jacob Kaimenyi.**

new initiative between the Universities will improve the relationship between the two institutions and foster academic exchanges.

Prof. Kaimenyi welcomed the new initiative from the South African University and assured his counterpart that UoN will activate the link for mutual benefit of the two institutions. In attendance were, Prof. Peter K'obonyo, Deputy Principal, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Prof. Francis Mwegu, Director, School of Economics, Prof. Simon Mitema, Director, CIPL and Dean, School of Law, Dr. Bernard Sihanya. 

## Rwandese hold genocide anniversary lecture

THE RWANDESE EMBASSY in Nairobi organized a public lecture to mark the 15th Anniversary of the genocide that occurred in Rwanda in 1994. The commemorative lecture was given by Ambassador Bethwel Kiplagat at Education Lecture theatre II. H.E. George Kayonga Rwandese Ambassador

accompanied by Ambassador Kiplagat had earlier on paid a courtesy call on the Vice-Chancellor. They were received by Prof. Bernard Njoroge, Principal, College of Architecture and Engineering on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor. 

SINCE THE DIAGNOSIS of the first HIV/AIDS case in Kenya in 1984, prevalence rates, which are an indicator of the percentage of the population that is infected with HIV, have grown at an alarming rate. AIDS has since been declared “a national disaster” in the country.

In the same year, however, Kenya took its first step toward the search for a vaccine that could end the AIDS epidemic once and for all. With support from international partners, the Kenya AIDS vaccine Initiative (KAVI) was formed at the University of Nairobi’s School of Medicine. KAVI was the first organization in the country dedicated to AIDS vaccine research.

KAVI is now a thriving research centre, with partners throughout the world. Since its founding in 1999, KAVI has conducted five clinical trials of AIDS vaccine candidates, including the first ever such trial to be conducted in the country, and several other non-clinical studies. This research has yielded important data that has helped inform the direction of HIV research and development, and brought the country international recognition as

# Thriving research centre for HIV/Aids

an important player in the global AIDS vaccine development effort.

In this period KAVI’s staff has grown from 3 to 54, working out of two fully equipped clinics and laboratories.

Although a vaccine against AIDS still eludes the world, Kenya is proud to claim an important place in helping to advance AIDS vaccine research efforts to date. KAVI will continue to be fully involved in the design, development and testing of the next generation of AIDS vaccine candidates.


As KAVI celebrates 10 years, it is actively conducting several basic epidemiology studies that will help to inform the design of more promising vaccine candidates. For example, the initiative is conducting studies on the body’s initial response to HIV so that a

way can be found to contain the virus before it finds a permanent home in the body’s cells.

The initiative is also actively working to find individuals who possess broadly neutralizing antibodies against HIV. By identifying and studying these antibodies, the goal is to design a vaccine that can stimulate their production and block HIV infection completely.

HIV today infects an estimated 33 million people globally, 22 million of them in sub-Saharan Africa. Kenya’s current prevalence of 7.4 percent, or 1.4 million persons aged 15-64 living with HIV, is still unacceptably high, and the disease continues to impoverish individuals, families and the society in general.

As KAVI turns ten, we re-affirm our belief, supported by scientific evidence, that an AIDS vaccine is possible. Important progress has been made toward its development, but there are still many challenges to overcome.

We call on the government to strengthen its support and funding for clinical research in Kenya. In particular, the training of young scientists, who must pick up where the current generation of researchers leaves off, is critical to ensuring Kenya’s involvement in future research. 

*Written by Omu Anzala and Walter Jaoko, Program Director and Deputy Program Director, KAVI.*





# Old lofty fig comes down

**T**HE OLD FIG TREE THAT stood at the corner of the administration block, in the small court known as Kongi Square is no more. Witnesses tell Varsity Focus that the tree, which had started rotting from the roots fell down one Thursday evening. Fortunately there was nobody nearby otherwise there would have been casualties.

The old fig belonged to the specimen *ficus altissima*, a legacy from the 1960's. Few remember its history, in fact nobody could tell Varsity Focus who had planted the tree. This is so uncharacteristic of the archives of the University, indeed there is a history of who and when the other trees dotting the university's landscape were planted, but for ficus, nobody knew.


The old fig has been a cover for students especially the evening classes who often enjoyed a cup of tea and a biscuit while ensconced on the Alumni benches near and under the shade of ficus. It was interesting to observe last Friday, a day after ficus came down, covering students engaged in a fight for survival with the hawks and even cats. One student spilt his tea after a hawk swooped and grabbed his cake, right from his hand. An enlightened friend responded by covering his cake, but there was no cover from which to eat it.

Ficus was obviously a tree, but he served the purpose

as a cover from the elements of sun, wind, rain and even hawks. With his cover gone students will now engage in a struggle of co-existence. Ficus was in the prime of life so to speak, it is a pity that this old tree had to come down, and in such a freaky way. The nearby alumni benches are cracked, and the cement around the stump of this once proud tree is evidence of the crash, but it barely reflects the plummet in the spirit of students whose old friend is no more.

Hopefully the University will see it fit to plant another tree, and nurture it so that it serves another generation, to watch over them, its big wavy arms, shielding them away from the elements. Maybe this time the ficus species will be a woman, a friend; to protect us from all sorts of danger, so that nobody and nothing will take away the food from our mouths, nobody will taunt us nor frighten us.

Ficus was a practicing vegetarian; his remains were carted away in big containers, making excellent ash wood. We are hoping that Koffi, a member of staff who resembles a world peace broker, will see it fit to preserve the before and after pictures of ficus, they make an excellent epitaph.

Ficus, fare thee well, you did well. Good bye Ficus *altissima*. 

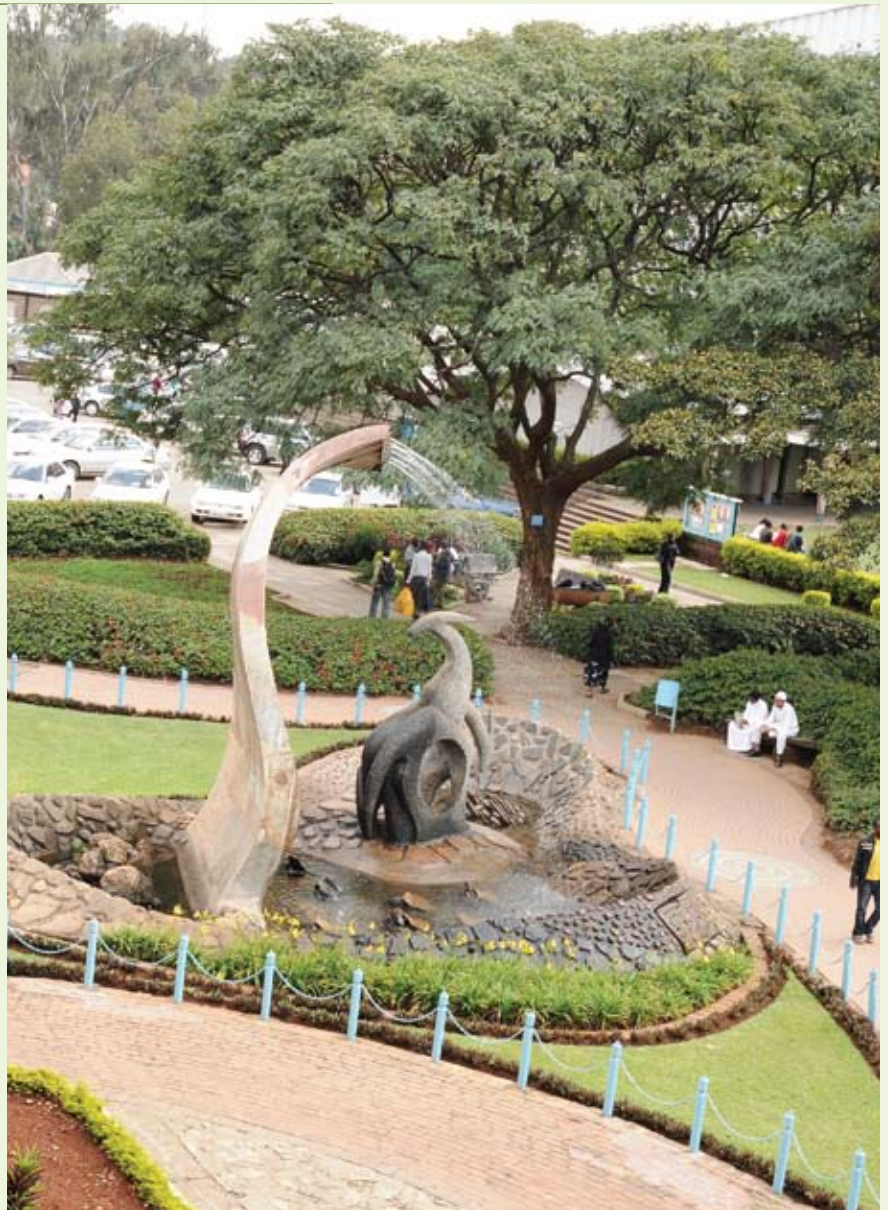
# The education safari

**A** LONG TIME AGO, while in school, I read a tedious piece called the pilgrim's progress. As you guessed right, school was a British affair, and the rules enforced were nothing short of officialdom- English high lord what and all).

School in those years was a rigid system of -behave yourself, learn, exercise, display discipline and good cheer, talk correctly, don't gesticulate all over the place, don't talk with your mouth full, elbows off the table, sit up straight, don't slouch, don't waddle.

They even told us: don't slither, use your handkerchief to blow your nose, don't pull snort, cover your mouth when coughing, don't put you mouth too close to my nose, what's that in your hands, have you said your prayers, what are you doing here, cat got your tongue?

Years later, colleagues are afraid of my tongue, they say that I shoot off too many questions, that I force them to be on the alert, soorry, this is part of my upbringing.



I look at my young cousins, and even the children of close relatives,- you have guessed right, school put me off marriage with just any bloke- and I wonder where are their manners'.

This globalised world is confusing, with deals being brokered and signed over formal meals, one is likely to get caught with their bad manners' and social ineptness.

It is painful to watch the high and mighty, the super rich, those we imagine to be of high society look like fish out of a pond, how many of the high and mighty don't know that its not top form to eat with your mouth open, making slurping sounds, flailing your knife and fork, laughing loudly, spitting out all your affairs for all and sundry to take in and you slouch into your chair thinking that you have amazed us, that our surprise and stupefaction have to do with holding you with awe, rather than disgust and disdain.

Ms Rose, young, horsy type that she was, I can't forget. Ms Rose belonged to a new generation that imbibed catch phrase, new words, and weird words. She taught English, including grammar and punctuation- now please don't read this piece too carefully, because you will discern that I was not a good student of Ms Rose- any way, Ms Rose came into class one morning with a parchment.

On the parchment was scrolled the words of a poem that I know today as the Desiderata. Ms Rose read the piece to us and emphasized one bit...always there will be greater or lesser persons than yourself. This bit stuck in my mind, years later I marvel at the rat race that the middle class is building up, keeping up with the Joneses, striving, so hard to fit into a little niche of yuppiness. We must

---

***Ms Rose read the piece to us and emphasized one bit...always there will be greater or lesser persons than yourself.***

---

all remember the caution..always there will be lesser or greater persons than yourself!!

Last week, I was in the normal position; I was soundly and roundly broke. My friend, invited me to lunch, and said I should choose the place, I was happy to decide and off we went, a slow walk in the cities bustle, to my chosen haunt.

We sat down and waited for service, it took a while coming so I engaged my mind on my favorite subject, creating a story on the foibles of the middleclass- the man seated on the next table was well dressed, but his finger nails, eeeck, they were blackened, his hair was combed back and greasy, he had a tooth pick in his mouth which he was using like a tooth brush, and horrible wretch, he kept wiping the stick on the back of his hand.

Feeling like retching, I requested my friend to move to another table. I thought to myself that this yokel would have benefited from going to a good school, all the nastiness would have been knocked off him, good suit, tie, shoes, socks, watch and all.

When we were eating our meal, toothpick kept us roundly disgusted as he answered calls on his mobile, shouted back loudly at this callers, discussed his business loudly, and used his fork to jab in the air, this was one sad bloke

But I guess that many of us do exactly like tooth pick and nobody tells us off.

I know I can make some money from being a life coach; these are the so called motivational speakers who are being invited to all sorts of sessions for executives. Sadly, none of the life skills mentioned included etiquette, and this is where we can come in with a module 4 program for training executives, diplomats, heads of department, a place were I can holler out to the beleaguered executives; walk straight, shoulders straight, hold your knife and fork properly, don't gibber, elbows off the table.





**Students take a break at the Main Campus. The University appreciates the value of higher education to more people.**

# Value of higher education

**T**he vision of the University of Nairobi is to be a world class university, committed to scholarly excellence. So what is so intriguing about this vision; it is writ large all over the campuses and if you ask any one what the mission of the University is they all retort academic excellence.

But how do you qualify academic and excellence without thinking of the lead role that the university plays in education, training and utilizing knowledge?

In June 1963, at the inauguration of the University of East Africa, Nairobi

college, Chancellor Julius Kabarage Nyerere emphasized the value that the university would play in building a federation and breaking down racial prejudice. In describing the university as a truly expensive venture, Nyerere said that the university had not been established purely for prestigious purposes, it had a definite role to play in developing east Africa "while drawing on ideas from outside, you must direct your energies particularly towards meeting the needs of East Africa" he said. Here in lay its value.

Our value is enshrined in the mission statement: we dream it, keep to it, or die: Create: this is one phrase within the

mission statement, but what is being created? What expenses are associated with creation?

The echoes from Nyerere were that colleges are not academic islands "East Africa cannot spend millions of pounds, cannot beg and borrow for the university, unless the university plays a full and active part in the urgent tasks of East Africa. Even if it were desirable, we are too poor in money and educated manpower to support an ivory tower existence for the intellectual elite" -so create space for yourselves, justify that space, and spend wisely in that space.

Preserve: a university must be the



centre of objective criticism and thinking and in its research and teaching be as objective as humanly possible " it is a hard and challenging task which the university has to accept. Its members must serve East Africa as menials, collecting and dissemination the fact we ought to want. At the same time, they must be torch bearers of our society and the protectors of the flame should we in our urgency endanger its brightness" – we do this everyday, illuminated by the fountain of knowledge.

Integration: special tribute has to be paid to the pioneering spirit and devotion of staff. Their far sighted work has made it possible for the university to take its full and proper space in the stage of world academia. The University of Nairobi has integrated into the life of the republic. "There has been no time for the mutual isolation of the University body and the executive centers of national design and decision." Indeed the University has made optimal use of resources within to secure the fruit of intellect and technology within the framework of Kenya's nationhood.

In order to do this, the University has established the value of self sacrifice abundantly justifying the hopes and sacrifices of the people of Kenya.

Transmission: a healthy university must govern more by freedom than by restraint. The University Act provides the greatest possible autonomy in terms of organization, teaching and research.


"If the mind of the nation is to flower through the university, the professors and lecturers must be free to teach their subjects, while students and research workers must feel free to pursue the truth and publish their findings without fear or favor"- this has been the mandate of the University Press, and

they have done it.

Utilization of knowledge: the university is at the apex of our education system. It is expected to be an institution dedicated not only to excellence, intellectual challenge and the search for truth, but also a source of leadership ensuring that the entire system of education is relevant to our needs, now and in the future. "The university should be known for the significant contribution that it makes in the development of the country"- it is no secret that if the many people whom the University of Nairobi has trained were to go on strike, the nation would come to a standstill.

The values of our University, 40years later after Nyereres' challenge, for the University, is a celebration of academic excellence, research and community service. We continue to think of the present and the future; problems cannot wait and have called for revolutionary ideas from the University.

Our role continues to be vital yet difficult, even after 40 years of prejudice, slovenly attitudes and yet impressive innovations, inventions and a wonderful pioneering spirit

That is our value!! 

## Call To Scholars

The UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI prides itself as the leading institution of higher learning, where men and women of letters know all that there is to know, read extensively and use great words that confound the rest of us. *Varsity Focus* challenges you to give the meanings of the following words. If you get ten rights, you deserve the standard.

*Jehu*  
*Logofascinated*  
*Meed*  
*Melomania*  
*Melulagnia*  
*Mungo*  
*Musculade*  
*Nosology*  
*Olid*

*Preterist*  
*Primpara*  
*Pseudothyrum*  
*Quadraliteralism*  
*Recension*  
*Rhinorrhea*  
*Schadenfreude*  
*Savate*

# Principal appointed

In accordance with the University of Nairobi Act, 1985, Section 13(i), the University of Nairobi Council in consultation with the Chancellor and the Government has appointed Prof. Bernard N.K. Njoroge, Principal, CAE for a period of five years with effect from January 22, 2009. He replaces Prof. Francis W. Aduol, who was appointed to head the Kenya Polytechnic University College.

Prof. Njoroge, 53, is an associate Professor of Engineering in the Department of Civil Engineering. He is widely published in his area of specialization. Prof. Njoroge has extensive experience in teaching and supervision of students at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. He has also attended many local

and international academic seminars and conferences. In addition, he is a member of several professional societies. Prof. Njoroge is a holder of Bachelor of Science, Civil Engineering (First Class Honours), Master of Science, Environmental Engineering, the University of Newcastle upon Tyne, United Kingdom and Doctor of Philosophy, (Ph.D) in Civil Engineering, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, USA.

Prof. Njoroge has long experience in administration having served as a member of various University committees, Chairman, Department of Civil and Construction Engineering and Ag. Dean, School of Engineering, CAE.



Prof. Bernard N.K. Njoroge, Principal  
College of Architecture and Engineering,



## Reappointments

This Excellency President Mwai Kibaki early this year reappointed Dr. Joseph Barrage Wanjui as Chancellor of the University of Nairobi for a further five years. Dr. Wanjui has successfully served as UoN's Chancellor since 2004. He is credited with the institutionalizing competitive hiring of top management staff – a system that has since gained currency in the recruitment of senior officials in the public sector.

The University of Nairobi reappointed three top management members of staff for a further five years. Prof. Jacob Thuraniira Kaimenyi has been reappointed the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs) for the

second and final term with effect from June 11, 2009. Born on 10th July 1952, Prof. Kaimenyi is a professor in the Department of Periodontology, Community and Preventive Dentistry in the Faculty of Dental Sciences. He previously served as the Chairman, Department of Periodontology, Community and Preventive Dentistry; Chairman, Department of Dental Surgery; and Dean, Faculty of Dental Sciences. Prof. Kaimenyi has published widely and serves in several professional and national organizations both locally and globally.

Prof. Henry Wangutusi Mutoro has been reappointed the Principal of the College of Education and External Studies for the second and final five-year

term with effect from June 11, 2009. Prof. Mutoro who was born on 22nd January 1950 is an Associate Professor in the Department of History, Faculty of Arts. He has previously served as the Dean, Faculty of Arts, and Chairman of the Department of History. Prof. Mutoro is widely published and holds senior positions in the national arena.

Prof. Lucy Wachuhi Irungu has been reappointed the Principal, College of Biological and Physical Sciences for the second and final-five year term with effect from April 29, 2009. Prof. Irungu is a professor in the Department of Zoology. She previously served as Chair, Department of Zoology. She is widely published and holds senior national positions.



# Celebrating academic giants

## Prof. Okoth-Ogendo

**P**rof. Ogendo first joined the University of Nairobi as a Tutorial Fellow in 1970 and for the next 39 years, served the University in different positions and rose through the ranks to become a Professor in the Department of Public Law – A position he held until his death. During his spell, he successfully mentored many professionals in the country and left an indelible mark in the legal profession.

Prof. Ogendo was an active scholar with overwhelming success in teaching and research. He was widely published and edited numerous articles and chapters especially on agrarian law and Constitutional politics. He was also an external examiner and visiting professor in numerous universities.

The late Prof. Ogendo's contribution was also felt in the management of the School of Law and the entire University. He once served as the Director, Population Studies and Research Institute, member of the University Council and member of the Board of Postgraduate Studies; Dean, Faculty of Law; Chairman, Department of Law among others. Even after his tenure, he was available for consultation on many aspects.

On the national front, he served as Vice-Chairman of the defunct Constitution of Kenya Review Commission (CKRC) 2000 – 2005, member, Board of Commission for Higher Education, member, National Standing Committee on Human Rights among others.

The demise of Prof. Ogendo has robbed the University of Nairobi of a great scholar who made selfless contribution to the institution, the country and the world at large. May God the Almighty rest his soul in eternal peace



**The late Prof. Okoth-Ogendo**

## Prof. Hannington Pamba

**T**he late Prof. Pamba was first associated with university education in 1958 when he proceeded to the United States and enrolled at the Tabor College, Hillsboro, Kansas, for a Bachelor of Arts degree in Zoology which he attained in 1962. He spent the next three years in the same college in various postgraduate programmes and obtained postgraduate diplomas in Parasitology and Medical Technology.

On returning to Kenya in 1965, he joined the Division of Vector-Borne Diseases in the Ministry of Health, and worked as a Scientist in Medical Parasitology and Entomology. He joined the University of Nairobi on October 1, 1969 as a Lecturer in the then Department of Medical Pathology and Microbiology. Between 1968 and 1969 he went to the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and graduated with Master of Science (M.Sc) in Medical Parasitology and Entomology. Prof. Pamba later attained his PhD degree in Medical Parasitology at the University of Nairobi in 1978.

While in the Department of Medical Microbiology, University of Nairobi, Prof. Pamba rose steadily from the position of Lecturer to Senior Lecturer, Associate Professor and finally Professor in 1994.

In 1981, the Department of Medical Microbiology was created from the larger department of Pathology and Prof. Pamba served as the second Chairman of the department (Head of Department). In 1987,

**CONT. PAGE 36**



**The late Prof. Hannington Pamba**

Professor Pamba became the Dean, Faculty of Medicine and served a full term of two years. He was re-elected Dean in 1996 and served for a further two-year term.

During his academic career, Prof. Pamba supervised seven (7) PhD students, forty three (43) M.Med students and nine (9) diploma students. He was a teacher and mentor to many undergraduate students who passed through the Department of Medical Microbiology.

Prof. Pamba also served as an external examiner in several universities and colleges including University of Dar-es-Salaam and Moi University. His academic career is well illustrated by the close to 200 scientific publications in peer-reviewed journals. To his earlier cohort of students, he was fondly referred to as "The Professor of Mwananchi" for two reasons. First he saw himself as a member of a community very interested in solving the public health problems of any community he served and secondly, he liked seeing his students as colleagues and used to refer to them as "wananchi". His colleagues and peers will remember him as an extremely jovial, hardworking, calm and humorous individual.

The School of Medicine, the University of Nairobi and the entire nation, have lost an illustrious academician whose contribution will be greatly missed by all.

May God the Almighty keep his soul in eternal peace.

### **Dr. Joyce O. Musandu**

The late Dr. Musandu's association with university education started in 1968 when she joined the University of Nairobi to successfully pursue a two-year diploma in Advanced Nursing. She returned to the University of Nairobi as a Lecturer in 1982, after a successful professional nursing career in the public service and completion of a Master of Science degree in Nursing Administration and Education from Boston University, on a World Health Organization (WHO) scholarship. Her relentless pursuit of higher education earned her a Ph.D. at the age of 66 from the American World University. For the last 26 years, Dr. Musandu taught Theory in Nursing Administration, supervised clinicals and teaching practice for diploma students.

Her experience and enthusiasm to confront challenges, caught the eye of top managers of the University who appointed her as Chairperson for the Department of Nursing Sciences – a position she held for 11 years. When the Department was upgraded to a School in 2005, Dr. Musandu was appointed the first Director of the School, despite serving on a post retirement contract.

Dr. Musandu was a serious scholar having taught and supervised many students at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. She is widely published and has presented many papers at seminars and workshops locally and internationally. She has also worked as a consultant for various projects.

The School of Nursing, the University of Nairobi and the entire nation has lost a progressive academician and

professional whose contribution will be greatly missed.

May God the Almighty keep her soul in eternal peace.



**The late Dr. Joyce O. Musandu**

