



September 2011

Varsity **Focus**

A Magazine of the UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

- Council Reconstituted
- Strengthening Research
- Profiles

**Dr. Joseph Wanjui: THE
TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP
CHAMPION**



OUR VISION

A WORLD-CLASS UNIVERSITY COMMITTED TO SCHOLARLY EXCELLENCE.

OUR MISSION

TO PROVIDE QUALITY UNIVERSITY EDUCATION AND TRAINING AND TO EMBODY THE ASPIRATIONS OF THE KENYAN PEOPLE AND THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY THROUGH CREATION, PRESERVATION, INTEGRATION, TRANSMISSION AND UTILIZATION OF KNOWLEDGE.

OUR CORE VALUES

- FREEDOM OF THOUGHT AND EXPRESSION;
- INNOVATIVENESS AND CREATIVITY;
- GOOD CORPORATE GOVERNANCE;
- TEAM SPIRIT AND TEAMWORK;
- PROFESSIONALISM;
- QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE;
- RESPONSIBLE CORPORATE CITIZENSHIP AND STRONG SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY;
- RESPECT FOR AND CONSERVATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT.



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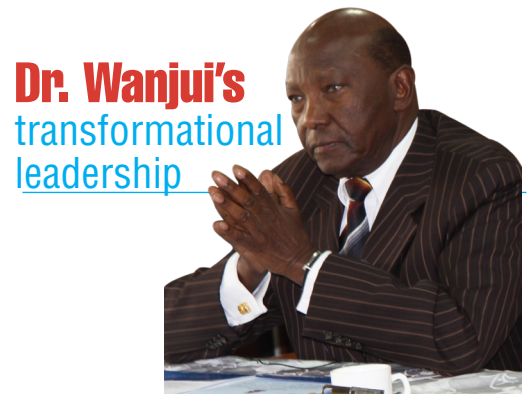
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Editorial



I welcome you to the September Edition of the Varsity Focus which brings to you highlights of the last three months.

September is normally a busy month at UoN with the admission of first year students (freshers) at undergraduate and graduate levels and at the same time, it is the period through which the University graduates students from the Colleges of: Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences, Architecture and Engineering, Biological and Physical Sciences and Education and External Studies. Those graduating will be at bachelors and postgraduate levels. Varsity Focus congratulates them for this major achievement.

This Edition looks at the recent activities of the University. The University's sterling performance in public sector reforms is highlighted together with the relaunched Revised 2008-2013 Strategic Plan.

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It was during the same period that the University, hosted the German Chancellor, in a lively interaction with the University community. Other activities included increased ties with local and international stakeholders to boost scholarship and research activities.

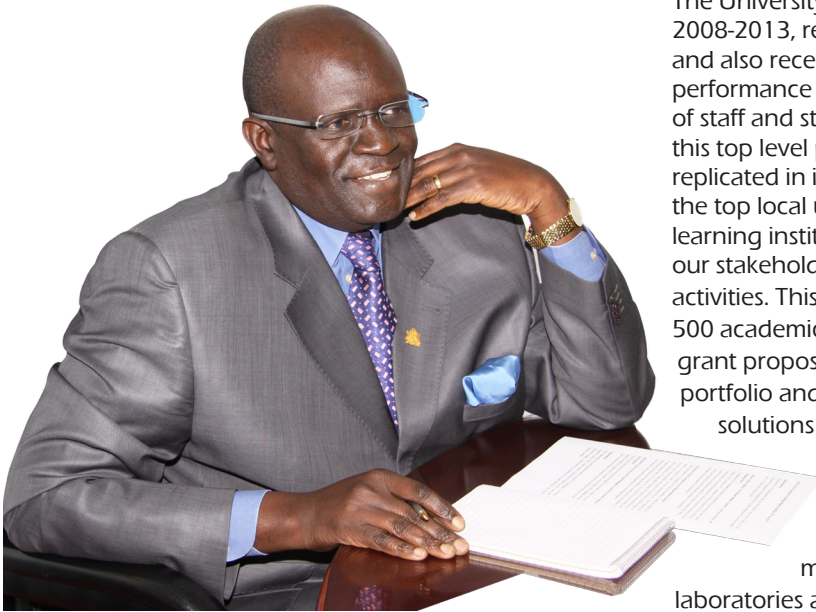
This Edition also highlights the profile of the Chancellor, as one of the lead players, who have transformed the fortunes of the University in the last eight years. Also featured is the profile of the Principal, College of Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences, Prof. Agnes Mwang'ombe. Her profile, marks the start of featuring bios of top administrators, in subsequent editions.

We have featured the Ph.D programme on dryland management, which is set to graduate 15 students of different nationalities and a testimony from one of the graduands, Ms. Tasokwa Vida Musa Kakota from Malawi. Also featured are student activities among them WOSWA and the legal awareness campaign by students from the School of Law.

Enjoy your reading.

Charles E. Sikulu

Effective service delivery



George A.O. Magoha, Vice-Chancellor.

The second half of 2011 has been active with events that demonstrate the University's mandate in effective service delivery. In August, we inaugurated our new Council, which has the mandate and responsibility to ensure that the University grows to become a strong, robust and excellent institution.

The University Council has on numerous times expressed concern about the challenge of funding and its impact on service delivery and yet, with increasing demand for government funding in other sectors, it is not likely that the government will increase funding to the University to meet its needs in the immediate future. The onus is on this team to find innovative ways of raising revenue to run the University and meet its statutory obligations.

The performance of the University of Nairobi judging from the trophies, accolades, open house and public forums it has received indicate that, despite the shortage of finances, we have a firm commitment to forge ahead and take this great institution to the next level of development. I wish to thank the Chancellor, Dr. Joseph Wanjui, and the Chairman of Council, Mr John Simba for their guidance and availability to work as part of a team that is committed to excellence in service delivery.

The University launched its Reviewed Strategic Plan, 2008-2013, received its ISO 9000:2008 recertification, and also received a floating trophy for its position in performance contracting. I wish to thank members of staff and students for their hard work that ensured this top level performance. This performance has been replicated in international rankings where we remain the top local university and among the leading higher learning institutions in the region. We are grateful that our stakeholders continue to support our research activities. This year, through an audacious plan to train 500 academic and technical staff in writing winning grant proposals, we are expect to raise our research portfolio and thus contribute greatly in providing solutions to problems affecting our society and in knowledge creation.

To ensure that our learning environment remains world class, the University has maintained its infrastructure which includes laboratories and lecture theatres. We have completed a new, modern and spacious facility for the department of human anatomy at Chiromo to accommodate increased demand for our services and increase learning capacity for human anatomists and also finished the science laboratories at Kenya Science Campus. It has not been in doubt that our brand as a leading institution of higher

“I wish to thank members of staff and students for their hard work that ensured this top level performance”.

learning has received visibility worldwide. In July, we hosted the German Chancellor, Dr, Angela Merkel in a lively interaction with the University community and the general public on political and economic reforms in the country and region. This is a testimony that our institution is an

attractive destination in the country for intellectual discourse by great leaders.

I wish to take this opportunity to commend students for upholding discipline and conducting themselves with dignity. Not to be forgotten are members of staff to whom I am grateful for being diligent and professional in discharging their responsibilities. We shall nurture this spirit as we grapple with challenges in building this great institution.

A new Council inaugurated

In June, 2011, the Chancellor of the University of Nairobi, Dr. Joseph Barrage Wanjui inaugurated the new Council of the University of Nairobi.

Speaking during the ceremony, the Chancellor congratulated the members on their appointment noting that, they have been carefully selected from a diverse professional background, which no doubt was meant to improve the management of the University.

Dr. Wanjui observed that the members would be serving on the Council of the largest, oldest, most diverse and prestigious University in the region, a premier institution in the country looked up to, for leadership in every regard. This perception was corroborated by outstanding performance in the government performance contracting in which the University remained among the top performers. The duty and responsibility of the Council therefore is to ensure that the University grows to become a strong, robust and excellent institution. The University of Nairobi is facing challenges that include declining funding from the exchequer. The University Council has on numerous times expressed concern about this

challenge and its impact on service delivery. The onus is on this team to find innovative ways of raising revenue to run the University and meet its statutory obligations.

The Chancellor noted recent developments on university/ industry linkages with institutions such as Barclays Bank endowing a chair at the School of Business that has resulted in the recruitment of a professor in business finance and appealed to more organizations to embrace the spirit of endowment at universities. The practice worldwide, is that most university departmental chairs have been endowed by the private sector. Other organizations that have maintained their generous hand to this university include Gandhi Smarak Nidhi Trustee Fund which supports postgraduate education and the Rattansi Foundation which has continued to support needy undergraduate students. He urged Council members to take advantage of their diverse

- Chairman : Mr John P.N Simba,
- Vice Chairperson : Dr. Betty Gikonyo
- Hon Treasurer : Mr Philip Kinisu

MEMBERS:

- P.S. Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
- P.S. Ministry of Finance
- P.S Ministry of State for Public Service
- Dr. Susan Mboya
- Dr. Kitili Mbathi
- Ms Sheila M'mbijwe
- Mrs. Eunice Mathu
- Mr. Sammy Langat
- Dr. Ekuru Aukot
- Dr. Philip Parklea
- Dr. Idle Farah
- Dr. Manu Chandaria
- Mr. Barrack Muluka
- Mr. Isaac Awuondo
- Senate Reps

Ex OFFICIO:

- The Vice Chancellor
- Deputy Vice Chancellors
- All College Principals
- Principals of Constituent colleges

IN ATTENDANCE:

- Registrars
- Finance officer

Members of the Council



The duty and responsibility of the council therefore is to ensure that the university grows to become a strong, robust and excellent institution.

backgrounds to cultivate links and raise friends as one way of widening the financial base of the University.

Dr Wanjui underscored the University's role in capacity building, training and opening up access to higher education in the country. In 1998 The University of Nairobi, pioneered the introduction of module II programs that have now been embraced by the other public universities and appealed to the Council to uphold quality and play a supervisory role to ensure that the management maintains high standards in the programs on offer.

Turning to the trend of increased competition for students and also for members of staff, leading

to poaching of senior staff who are critical to the survival of the Universities, the Chancellor challenged the Council to retain and ring fence members of staff and create an environment to attract quality staff, even though there is the perennial risk that staff will look for greener pastures elsewhere.

He reminded the Council that it has the responsibility of ensuring that there is industrial peace, noting that as the employer, they need to cultivate good industrial relations with the Unions – UASU, UNTENSU, and KUDHIEA – which is critical in ensuring that staff are highly motivated. The formula is that staff welfare including reward and compensation will lead

to employees “we feeling” as opposed to “them”.

He challenged student leaders to provide leadership to ensure high moral standards and conduct themselves in a manner that befits the status of an intellectual.

Dr Wanjui expressed his satisfaction with the performance of the University of Nairobi, pointing out the, the trophies, accolades, open house and public forums it had received which indicated that despite the environmental challenge of finance, the University continues to forge ahead. He assured the Council that he was available to work as part of the team, and thanked Mr. John Simba and his team for the good job that they had performed in the past five years. We must all pledge commitment and greater determination as symbolized in the University's motto “Unitate et Labore” he concluded.



Launch of strategic plan and celebration of excellence

The University of Nairobi celebrated excellence in public sector reforms in July, in a key ceremony that was marked by various activities.

The event also marked the official launch of the Reviewed 2008-2013 Strategic Plan, award of ISO 9001:2008 recertification, good ranking in performance contracting and long service awards.

The celebrations, followed excellent performance by the University during the 2009-2010 performance contract years, in which it emerged third overall in the state corporation's category and first in the higher education subsector. Presiding over the celebrations, the chief guest, Prof. Hellen Sambili, acting Minister for Higher Education, Science and Technology, lauded the University for launching its reviewed strategic



Vice-Chancellor, Prof. George Magoha, Former Minister for Higher Education, Hon, Sambili, and Chairman of Council, Mr. John Simba, display the ISO certificate. Facing page: Prof. Magoha and Mr. Simba with the performance contract trophy.

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plan as a road map to quality service delivery. She promised that her ministry would support UoN in its entirety, to ensure that it achieves its strategic objectives of offering quality higher education to Kenyans and the rest of the world.

The Chairman of Council, Mr. John Simba, while handing over the trophy to management, emphasized that the ISO recertification of the University was confirmation that the institution has remained on track in line with the certification requirements as issued in 2008, when it was certified. He challenged management to improve the performance in the next academic year.

According to the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. George Magoha, the improved performance of the University in the last six years was linked to the fact that the University had fully embraced the public sector reforms

initiated by the government; he particularly congratulated staff for walking along with management to ensure quality service provision despite financial constraints.

The day, also marked the award of long serving employees led by Prof. Florida Karani, Professor of Education, and Chancellor, Maseno University who has given 42 years of continuous and distinguished service. Also awarded for long service, were George Amolo, 41 years, Mr. Francis Ndule 41, and Mr. John Kinyuru, 40.

Among those who graced the occasion were representatives from, Kenya Bureau of Standards, Council members, ministries and other government departments. The event organization was coordinated by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Administration and Finance, Prof. Peter Mbithi.

WOSWA HIGHLIGHTS

When a woman grows, the nation grows....

Michelle Osok,
WOSWA Chairperson



*Another objective
in mind is the
establishment of a
strong mentorship
programme that will
link female students to
women of high moral
and professional status
in society.*

The WOSWA year began on a high note, with an increase in the number of persons coming forward to support and grow with the Association. There was an upsurge in our publicity, activity level and interaction with members, or rather the entire female student fraternity of the University of Nairobi, comprising 20,000 students.

In the 2011 period, WOSWA embarked on its mission with two major objectives in mind. First, we look forward to sharing our gains with other universities in Kenya. We have hosted a series of events where we have opened the University of Nairobi doors to female students from all other universities in Kenya. For instance, during the launch of the Eve Sisters campus edition, we received a participant from Maseno University, sharing our day with role models including, KISS FM's Caroline Mutoko .

During the annual reproductive health week, in July, 2011, there was an impressive turn out of male and female students, some from other universities. It is this event that triggered

the thought of expanding the activities of WOSWA. This year therefore, WOSWA will explore the launch of women students' welfare associations in other universities, a challenge that we have taken seriously, and with support from the Standard Group/Eve Magazines, which has requested WOSWA to partner in organizing the Eve Sisters Campus Edition in all universities in Kenya, we can realize the dream. In the next seven months therefore, WOSWA will be visiting various universities and launching WOSWA.

Another objective in mind is the establishment of a strong mentorship programme that will link female students to women of high, moral and professional status in society. This mentorship will be time based and will be monitored and evaluated annually. WOSWA is so passionate about mentorship because of a worrying trend in the decline of moral values among the youth. There is need for female students to team up with mothers and elder sisters who can teach,

motivate and guide them on the journey to success. The official launch of the mentorship programme, will be in September 2011, during a white party, at the University of Nairobi's, Great Court.

WOSWA has a renewed spirit, inspired by the concept that when a woman grows, the nation grows. We are ready to lead and at the same time be servants to our members. Our motto for WOSWA 2011/2012 is 'Make a difference, leave a legacy.' Wherever we shall go, whatever we shall do, our aim is to have the Midas effect as there is nothing as beautiful as working with ones heart, which WOSWA is synonymous with.

"The mind is the first battlefield you need to conquer before you can stand before the crowd. Your thought manifests itself in your life. If you are defeated in your mind, then you are defeated in life."

Caroline Mutoko, a UoN alumni, shares her experiences with WOSWA members during the 'Sista to Sista' event held at the 8.4.4. lecture theatre recently.





Science and Technology Park

The University of Nairobi Science park has revealed the planning behind, current status of and future plans for, Kenya's first Science and Technology Park (STP), here at the University of Nairobi.

At present, the activities of the STP are conducted from a rapid-prototyping laboratory in the Engineering Building, Main Campus, which forms the core of the Technology Business Incubator (TBI). This rapid-prototyping facility, called a Fab Lab (fabrication or "fabulous" lab), is part of the international MIT Fab Lab network, which now boasts of over 100 labs worldwide. It was purchased by the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology in response to a proposal from UoN. The Fab Lab is ideal for innovative activity in a wide range of technical fields, and with the start of activities here, the TBI, and hence the UoN STP, is effectively operational.

The key achievements to date can be listed as follows:

- The STP has about 15 companies at varying stages of development, in what is best described

as virtual incubation. Some of these are companies that have nothing to do with UoN in their inception, but have been engaged in mutually beneficial arrangements.

- The FabLab serves as a center of innovation and learning, and represents a cutting edge experiment on inter-disciplinary engineering pedagogy, with a strong emphasis on hands-on exposure. At present, several inter-disciplinary and innovative student projects are underway, including the impressive UoN Robotics Team that performed admirably in last year's National Robotics Competition; an automated, solar-powered water extraction system, a 3D printing device for circuit fabrication, a modified CNC oxyacetylene cutter, a remote control helicopter; a bicycle-powered mobile phone charger; a wind-turbine, etc. In addition an outreach program targeting high school students



has been launched using a special kit designed to introduce robotics, we partnered with Kuweni Serious in a three-month outreach project in Kibera (funded by the Nike Foundation).

- International linkages are implicit in the Fab Lab network, including the founding Fab Lab at MIT, and opens opportunities for high-caliber collaboration. At present, preparations for collaboration with MIT on designing and building digital fabrication machines are at an advanced level. The achievements conspire to provide the beginning of a STP, both the aspects of incubation and the creation of an innovation platform and rapid-prototyping facility. The remaining phases, will in short be about building on this arrangement, both physically and in terms of organizational structures, in addition to interfacing with all the departments at the University which directly deal with the sciences and engineering, and all others which together help to optimize the commercialization of technologies for national development. This is an interactive process that is both vertically-integrated and horizontally networked, and only works when a culture of

sharing and openness, with due consideration to IP protection, prevails. The strategy being employed is to fully launch the UoN-STP in four phases: the immediate, short, medium and long terms.

A critical step in the implementation of the immediate term is the completion of funding of the first five incubated companies (whose products are biogas digesters, wireless mesh networks, set top boxes for digital TV and a fleet management system), and formalizing the arrangement with a fifth (which provides integrated smartcard systems). Also of immediate urgency is the establishment of a Seed Fund under the management of the STP, so that the monetary needs of the incubated companies can be met with the speed that is vital for commercial competitiveness.

International linkages are implicit in the Fab Lab network, including the founding Fab Lab at MIT, and opens opportunities for high-caliber collaboration

Grant for studies in climate change

The University of Nairobi is among several universities in the region that will benefit from a grant of 2.3 million EUR for Transdisciplinary Training for Resource Efficiency and Climate Change Adaptation in Africa (TRECCAfrica).



The project will provide doctoral and master's training to 72 postgraduate students in Africa at six leading African Universities (Stellenbosch University, University of Ghana, Mekelle University, The University of Nigeria, Nsukka, University of Nairobi and the University of Dar es Salaam) to provide the next generation of academics and professionals who will be able to address an interlocking set of real challenges for Africa's future development: climate change and resource depletion.

Africa's position in this complex requires unique, transdisciplinary skills and competencies. It is a continent dominated by poverty, contributes relatively little to total greenhouse gasses and in recent years has become the focus of a new global scramble for primary resources as new players like China have entered the game. It is generally accepted that Africa might well experience the most severe impacts of climate change and is the continent that is least prepared to

handle these impacts.

To be truly sustainable, Africa will need to ensure that it uses its rich resource endowment responsibly to fund investments in human capacity and knowledge infrastructure that will sustain development after the primary resources have been depleted. This, in turn, will establish for Africa the kind of funding base needed to finance adaptations to climate change.

The skills and competencies in transdisciplinary research methodologies that TRECCAfrica students will acquire and the research network that they will comprise will be able to generate policy-relevant research that tracks resource flows, prices, the use of these resources and flows of resource rents. Such a network will incorporate the various research environments from the six partners involved into a sustainable partnership for climate change and resource efficiency, as co-supervision and staff mobility form part of the project.

The grant is given to fund activities at the University of Nairobi under the directorship of Professor Shem O. Wandiga and co-partners: Dr. Margaret Opondo, Mr. Dan Olago, Mr. Gilbert Ouma.

Architectural Design **for the Wangari Maathai** Institute

Dubbed the Institute for Peace and Environmental Studies at the University of Nairobi, an initiative of the Noble Peace Laureate, Prof Wangari Maathai, the Green Campus will be built at Upper Kabete Campus. DHK is a consortium whose partners include Land Use Consultants of the UK, Turner Townsend and the WSP Group.

The winning design was unveiled by Dr Achim Steiner, Executive Director of UNEP, and Dr Reuben Mutiso, chairman of the panel of international jurors, during the awards ceremony held at the Louis Leakey Auditorium, National Museums of Kenya, recently. The Jurors noted that at the heart of the DHK design is the welcoming and dignified democratic space, sheltered by a tensile canopy roof, supported on tripod 'tree-like' columns that evoke the work of tree planting and conservation of the environment that, Prof Wangari Maathai has spent her life crusading about.

Once completed, the design is expected to meet stringent carbon foot prints. The Institute will be self sufficient in terms of lighting, energy, waste management and water requirements as much as is practically possible. In addition to the physical facilities, it is also envisioned that in the building there will be a natural landscaped amphitheatre with a seating capacity of 2000 and

A Cape Town based firm of architects, DHK, is the winner of a competition to design the Wagari Maathai Institute.

demonstration plots covering different aspects of environmental restoration, protection and conservation.

The genesis of the competition was endorsed by the Architectural Association of Kenya (AAK) and the Board of Registration of Architects of Quantity Surveyors (BORAQS) who took an active part in the final selection.



The University of Nairobi has commenced a program to sharpen the skills of academic members of staff on grant and research proposal writing. Speaking during the first research and project grant training on proposal writing workshop at the University of Nairobi, on 18th August, 2011, the Deputy Vice Chancellor, Research, Production and Extension (RPE) Prof. Lucy Irungu noted that one of the outcomes of the workshop was to train 500 members of staff to conduct research in their area of specializations

Prof. Irungu challenged workshop participants to conduct research and update their knowledge on similar research being conducted elsewhere, if they were to remain a step ahead of their students who are accessing information from various sources including the internet.

Noting that in 2010/2011, the University had a budget of seven billion, out of which approximately two billion was the contribution of funding brought in by researchers, Prof. Irungu stated that a growth in funding was essential, this percentage she said should increase to 30-40 per cent of the entire budget. The aim behind the grant writing workshops therefore, is that through training, staff will write winning proposals and increase the grant funding to at least 25-30 per cent this financial year. She encouraged participants to join the network of researchers from other countries and to participate in interdisciplinary research as one way of enriching their research activities.

one of the outcomes of the workshop is to train 500 members of staff to conduct research in their areas of specialization

Observing that the University of Washington, Seattle, raises over USD 500 million a year through grants, Prof. Irungu alluded to the need for members of staff to be committed to continuously ensuring that they respond to calls for funding and to write proposals for grants.

RPE has put in place mechanisms for tracking calls for funding in various disciplines and is putting together teams to respond to these calls for proposals.

Sharpening skills on research and grant proposal writing



Prof. Lucy Irungu, DVC, RPE (Centre) listens to a member of staff during a workshop at the School of Computing & Informatics.

Prof. Irungu drew the attention of participants to a recent article in the Daily Nation, in which research was described as the missing link in Africa's development. Indeed, statistics from UNESCO indicate that all is not well in the African academy, as the entire continent is home to only 2.3 per cent of the world's researchers. It is important, she said for the University to rekindle passion in conducting research that will address the countries development needs and benefit the University, in terms of international rankings.

In June, 2011, the Medical Education Program Initiative (MEPI) team from the University of Nairobi and the collaborating institutions - University of Maryland and the George Washington University - paid a courtesy call on the Vice-chancellor, represented by Prof Lucy Irungu, Deputy Vice chancellor (RPE).

In welcoming the team, Prof. Irungu lauded the efforts of the initiative which is providing continuing education to medical personnel within the ministry of health system. The MEPI initiative which is aimed at improving the quality of medical education and to extend the reach of medical training outside Nairobi, is in tandem with the mandate of the University of Nairobi, and her division, RPE, to extend research findings to communities in the urban and rural areas.

The visiting team which included Seble Frehyot, Hudah Ayas, Yianna Vovides, Jehu Iputo, Melissa Ward, and Letitia Robinson, was introduced to the DVC by Prof Isaac Kibwage, Principal of the College of Health Sciences.

Prof Irungu commended the MEPI team for their efforts in building and strengthening the clinical and

research capacity in the College of Health Sciences, adding that this would contribute to increasing the retention of UON faculty and providing opportunities for postgraduates and faculty to pursue research.

Prof. Irungu pledged the support of the University in providing research oversight and administration to increase efficiency of operations and management. As a start, Prof. Irungu stated that the University procurement and HR recruitment systems are being reengineered to respond to timely facilitation and execution of research and

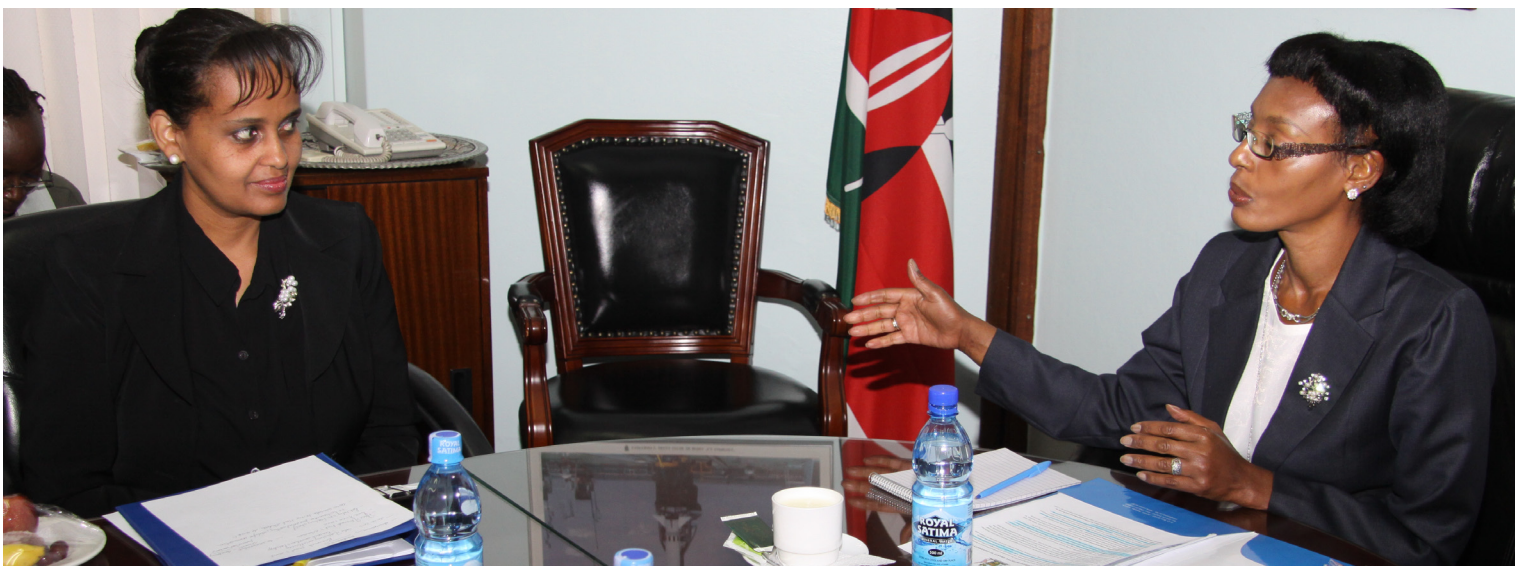
collaboration programmes.

Prof. Irungu noted that MEPI has a strong committed US partner relationship existing, backed with years of experience. The partners have involved local staff as well as medical graduates of UoN to capitalize on local talent. She emphasized that there has been good planning in the use of MEPI funds, such that the funds are being used to build capital infrastructure at UoN as well as at decentralized training sites that will help in sustainability of the program. Further, the programmes has a good generational as well as gender leadership mix.

One of the outcomes of the MEPI

Initiative is the proposal that through a linked grant on neonatal child and maternal health, the UoN will establish a Collaborative Center of Excellence in Maternal, Newborn, and Child Health (MNCH) at the UoN which will: Build implementation science capacity in MNCH; launch implementation of scientific research; and enhance MNCH leadership capacity.

MEPI to strengthen clinical and research capacity



School of Engineering benefits from Huawei



Information and Communication Permanent Secretary, Dr. Bitange Ndemo during the signing of the MoU.

Mr. Herman confirmed this during the signing ceremony held at Hilton Hotel, Nairobi and attended by representatives of the Kenya and Chinese governments, universities and Safaricom. The company, which started in Kenya in 2008, has been offering internships to more than 10 UoN students annually,

development, terming it the right step to stimulate the realization of the Kenya Vision 2030 through research to drive the development agenda of the country, enhance collaborative research and assist in equipping universities.

The Secretary for Higher Education, Prof. Harry Kaane who represented the Minister, pledged the government's commitment in the realization of the Kenya Vision 2030 through a two-pronged approach: increasing the number of engineers from the current 6,000 to 80,000; and bridging relevance and quality of the outcomes of universities. He also hailed the critical role the partnership will play in helping the country in the attainment of its

and also donated

Right step to stimulate the realization of the Kenya Vision 2030 through research to drive the development agenda of the country.

development goals.

Others who attended the colourful ceremony and witnessed the signing of the MoU were the Chinese Ambassador to Kenya, H.E. Liu Guangyuan , Huawei CEO

The School of Engineering is set to benefit from a collaborative venture with Huawei Telecommunications Company in research, student internship and material support. The collaboration will also benefit Moi University and Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology

This is contained in a memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed between Huawei and the universities on June 6, 2011.

According to the MOU, Huawei will offer 80 training opportunities for both staff and students at its offices situated along Mombasa road. Huawei's managing director,

equipment to the School of Computing and Informatics.

Permanent Secretary, Information and Communication, Dr. Bitange Ndemo, commended the collaboration and assured participants of government support in promotion of universities, private sector and government partnerships in finding solutions to problems affecting the country.

In supporting the initiative, the Vice-Chancellor, represented by the Principal, College of Architecture and Engineering, Prof. Bernard Njoroge, hailed the

for East and Central Africa Region, Mr. Joe Deng, Dean, School of Engineering, Prof. Patts M. Odira, and the heads of department of Civil and Construction Engineering, and , Electrical and Information Engineering.



Deputy Vice-Chancellor, A&F, Prof. Peter Mbithi, with Prof. Henry Mutoro, Principal, CEES and Course Coordinator, Dr. Joyce Mbwesa during the launch of the course.

M.A in peace education

In recent years, there has been a growing, world-wide recognition of the central role played by education in meeting the complex demands of peacemaking and peace building. Often lacking, however, are individuals prepared with the knowledge and skills to act as leaders for educational reform to support sustainable peace processes. It is envisaged that the course will go a long way in ensuring that meaningful conflict prevention strategies are identified and actually pursued in other situations of latent conflict

The launch of the course has its roots in the endeavor by the University of Nairobi to respond to societal needs, an achievement that was made possible through the PEHS project, which is a partnership of the University of Nairobi, Makerere and Coventry University in the UK.

This initiative could not have come at a better time; the world is facing many conflicts including humanitarian crises and political deadlocks which call for the attention of educators. Indeed, one of the key goals of peace education is to encourage preventive action in the early stage of conflict. Preventive action is not only necessary but is also quite possible, there

are many valuable initiatives in the world today taken by individuals who, would like to prevent violence, resolve conflict and to reconcile warring parties. For instance, churches, women's organizations, the media and other non-state actors have all demonstrated their potential for building peace. However, education is probably an even more powerful tool that can be used for bringing about sustainable peace.

The MA in Peace Education is designed to build the capacity of educators to contribute to educational, social, and cultural change through peace education. It is designed to enable participants to effectively engage in peace education at all levels, from the design of educational policy to the development of effective and culturally relevant peace education program, to the actual skills of teaching peace both in and out of the classroom. The general focus of the course is to inculcate values and positive attitudes in the promotion of peace in the society.

The expected target group for this program include teachers and teacher educators, Government officials, NGOs working in the area of peace and security and security agencies among others. The course will be offered through face to face and distance learning modes.



1. German Ambassador Ms. Helwitt Margit-Boate when she paid a courtesy call on the Vice-chancellor, Prof. George Magoha.

2. Former acting Minister for Higher Education, Prof. Hellen Sambili with Chinese education officials during a Chinese universities' exhibition held at UoN.

3. Delegates during the Science conference held at College of Health Sciences, in June 2011.

4. Deputy Chief Justice, Ms. Nancy Barasa during the launch of the African Women Centre.



6. Law students legal clinic in Mathare, an example of outreach and corporate social responsibility.

5. Chancellor of JKUAT, Prof. Francis Gichaga taken through a project by a student of the School of Computing and Informatics.

IMF representative talks to students and staff



The International Monetary Fund (IMF) Dr. Ragnar Gudmundsson

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) Resident Representative to Kenya: Dr. Ragnar Gudmundsson delivered a public lecture at the UON on 28th July 2011. The lecture, organized by the School of Economics was very well attended by staff and students of the School and other members of the university fraternity.

The lecture was based on the recently launched Regional Economic Outlook for Sub-Saharan Africa: Recovery and New Risks. Ragnar noted that the global economy is expected to continue recovering and that following the global crisis, emerging market economies are the main drivers of

global growth. He further noted that while some upside risks such as growth in emerging markets and strong corporate profits and balance sheets in advanced economies could have beneficial effects, some that are likely to adversely affect growth include the recent sharp increase in commodity prices, and particularly oil prices, which are expected to remain high.

Ragner indicated that in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), recovery is under way in most of the region's oil exporters and low-income countries, and emphasized the strong impact of the crisis on South Africa. Eastern Africa countries have fared very well and growth is recovering to above 5 percent in Mozambique, Tanzania, Uganda, Malawi, Zambia and in some oil exporters such as Nigeria and Republic of Congo. He was clear that surprisingly, resilience is evident throughout SSA, mainly because of much improved policies prior to the global recession. Risks, however, now come from rising government debt levels in some countries and the current food and fuel price shock, which adversely affect poverty, fiscal and external balances and inflation.

According to Ragner, policies in the EAC have fostered high growth and therefore, apart from some refinements, no major adjustments are needed.

The regional economic outlook prescribes three key policy priorities for high, sustained growth: stronger capacity to respond to macroeconomic fluctuations; deeper regional integration; and, support for high-value exports. At the macro level, the priority is to develop the capacity to handle new shocks, taking into account changes in type of vulnerabilities resulting from rising private capital inflows and declining share of overseas development assistance. On integration, deeper regional integration is necessary to develop economies of scale and allow the region to compete more efficiently in the global economy. On support for high value exports, there is need to avoid the resource trap and also to implement regional, targeted policies to raise productivity. In particular, there is need for policies and strategies: for better educated and skilled workforce; for regional infrastructure; to raise agricultural productivity and improve marketing; for technology absorptive capacity through foreign direct investments; and for a stronger business environment for non-commodity exports.

Those who attended the lecture included representatives of several high commissions, and representatives of development partner institutions: the World Bank, the IMF and JICA.



Prof. Susan Vinnicombe

Ms. Ruth Kwalanda

CIAR partners with School of Business

The University of Nairobi recently benefited from the sponsorship of 20 women members of staff to attend the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research CIAR Executive Management Training for Leaders held in July, 2011 at the KICC. The sponsorship came after the CIAR Africa, Chief Executive, Ms. Ruth Kwalanda paid a courtesy call on the Vice chancellor, accompanied by Prof. Susan Vinnicombe, of the Cranfield School of Management USA.

Prof. Vinnicombe outlined several areas which her university could collaborate with the UoN's School of Business. She revealed that, Barclays Bank International, sponsors the research carried out at Cranfield. Barclays, within its social corporate responsibility profile, is looking to Africa as one of the places in which spearheading research on women in leadership is critical. The University therefore is in a position to tap into the initiative and collaborate with Cranfield, especially in its high priority areas.

Prof. Vinnicombe noted that there is the possibility for students of the School of Business being supervised at Cranfield. The University which has an international MBA programme, can facilitate the students to travel to different countries and sharpen their skills by learning new approaches. The Cranfield Management department runs an open executive programme which envisions partnerships with clients and is a growing area for business management schools, which UoN can tap from.

The other areas of collaboration include the traditional PhD program, staff and student exchanges, visiting fellow's programme and a global executive programme.

Those present during the courtesy call included Prof, Enos Njeru, Principal, College of Humanities and Social Sciences; Prof. Simeon Mitema, Director, Centre for International Programmes and Links; Prof Evans Aosa, Coordinator, PhD Programmes at the School of Business, and Dr. C.N Kariuki, the Acting Dean, School of Business.

Dr. Merkel interacts with staff and students



This time, it was Dr. Angela Merkel who visited the University of Nairobi on July 12, 2011, and delivered a lecture on political and economic partnerships.

Dr. Merkel spoke on the need to appreciate that the politics requires understanding and reconciliation at two dimensions – at local and international level. “The African continent – as you know so much better than I – has experienced far too many conflicts. Many of the lingering problems have their roots in colonial times. Even today, they frequently stand in the way of the goal of African unity. However, we are also experiencing times of radical political change in Africa, for example in North Africa – starting with Tunisia and Egypt. The communities there are striving for more democracy and the greater rule of law. They want to lead a better life and to see human rights upheld”. This quote was the thrust of her presentation.

Dr. Merkel alluded to the events of the negotiations to form the grand coalition government, for example, where Kenya learned a lot from Germany’s own experience of building a grand coalition which effectively ended the 2007/08 post election violence. She congratulated the country for putting in place mechanisms to ensure that we do not end up with another similar scenario. She cited examples of Europe where, after centuries of conflict, Germany and France learned to live together in peace and harmony.

She lauded Kenya’s effort in passing the new constitution through a peaceful referendum, noting that “The pictures of the long queues of Kenyan citizens

waiting to cast their vote have also left a strong impression in Germany. They moved us. Everyone who waited was aware that his or her vote counted and that the country’s future depended on each and every vote. The result of the referendum indicated that an overwhelming majority in favour of the new constitution”

Dr. Merkel asked all countries to cooperate in tackling the challenges associated with the

“Dr. Merkel asked all countries to cooperate in tackling the challenges associated with the climate change”.

climate change though she conceded that industrialized countries have been more responsible for climate change

Dr. Merkel later held talks with the President, the Prime Minister and the Speaker of the Kenyan Parliament, where she laid emphasis on her country’s support to Kenya which stretches back to 1963 when Germany was the first country to recognize the country’s independence.

The lecture was part of her visit to African countries. The Chancellor was met by top university officials and the Minister for Higher Education, Prof. Hellen Sambili, who escorted her to Taifa Hall. Proceedings of the lecture were streamed live by some media houses. . Dr Merkel, a Ph D holder in Physics, is the first woman and first East German to head the Federal Republic of Germany.



Dr. Angela Merkel signs the visitor’s book at UoN. Opposite page with top UoN and government officials.

On June 17th 2003, the President, H.E, Mwai Kibaki appointed Dr. Joseph Barrage Wanjui, Chancellor of the University of Nairobi.

This was an important step in that for the first time in the history of the University, the chancellorship had been removed from the presidency with the ramification that the Chancellor was now closer to the staff and the students.

During his first visit to the University on 19th June, 2003, Dr. Wanjui met the top management of the University, the Council

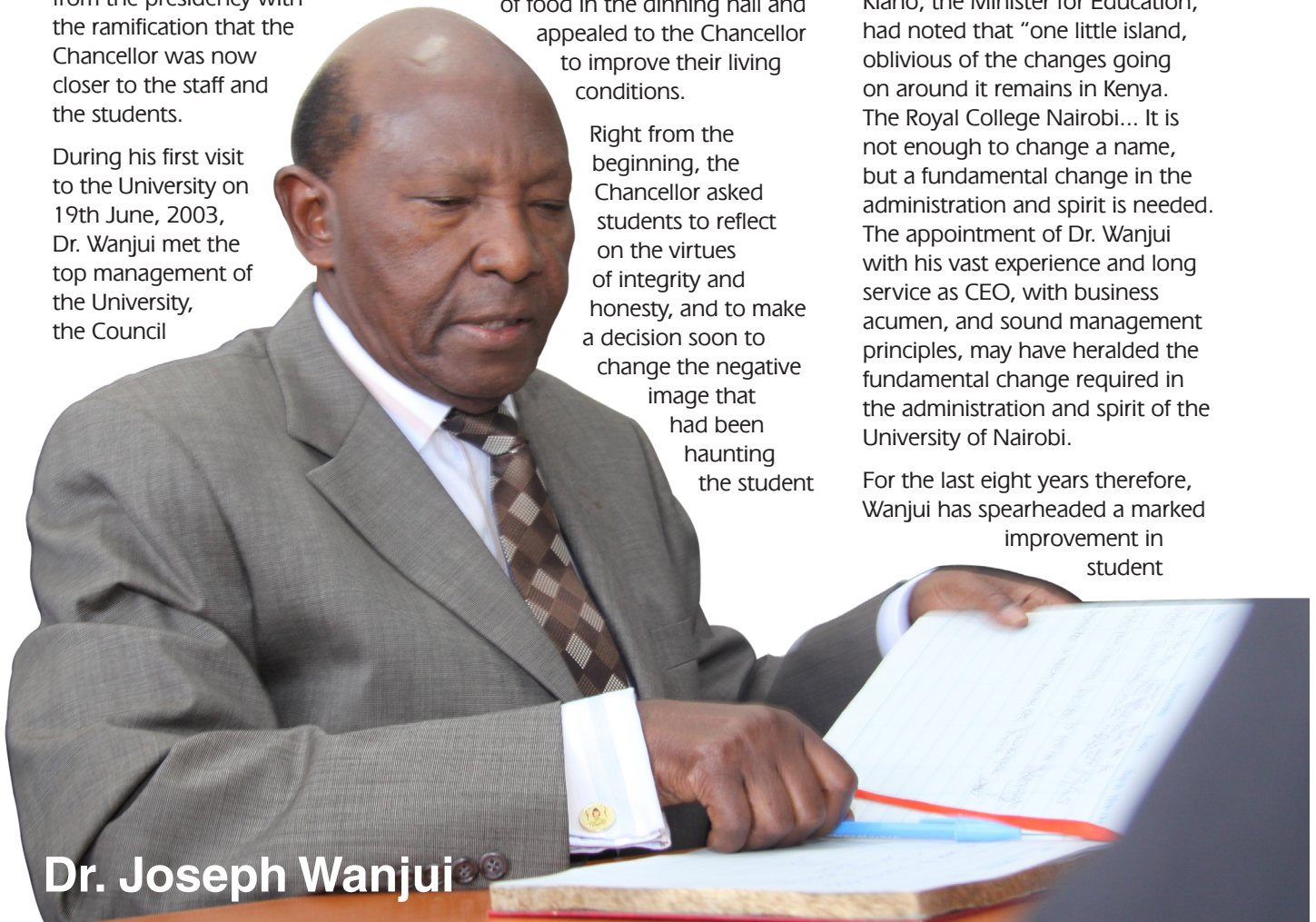
Salute Dr. Wanjui

and Senate, and for the next three weeks toured every campus to assess the physical infrastructure which at the time consisted of incomplete residential halls and lecture theatres. He, at the same time, raised the issue about students purchasing food from unhygienically prepared sources. In turn, students cited the high costs of food in the dinning hall and appealed to the Chancellor to improve their living conditions.

Right from the beginning, the Chancellor asked students to reflect on the virtues of integrity and honesty, and to make a decision soon to change the negative image that had been haunting the student

community. Dr. Wanjui has stated over time that he is ready to bring his vast experience from industry and to add value to the University. He has indicated that the University has diverse resources that should help to keep its lead as a centre of excellence. This echoes a sentiment voiced in 1964, when Dr. Julius Gikonyo Kiano, the Minister for Education, had noted that "one little island, oblivious of the changes going on around it remains in Kenya. The Royal College Nairobi... It is not enough to change a name, but a fundamental change in the administration and spirit is needed. The appointment of Dr. Wanjui with his vast experience and long service as CEO, with business acumen, and sound management principles, may have heralded the fundamental change required in the administration and spirit of the University of Nairobi.

For the last eight years therefore, Wanjui has spearheaded a marked improvement in student



Dr. Joseph Wanjui



Dr. Wanjui with Chairman of Council, Mr. John Simba, during the inauguration of the reconstituted University Council.

determination to achieve excellence. “A world class University is one that the society admires and emulates. Indeed, the University of Nairobi continues to be a think tank of what should be done” As challenged by the Chancellor, a few years ago, the University is setting standards, being a point of reference that is the pride not only of the City of Nairobi, but also the nation at large.

The anthem of the University, and the words of Dr. Wanjui, remind the University to shun being ivory towers, to come down from the pedestal. If this suggests that the University engage in programmes and processes that accelerate the socio-economic development if the nation, then so be it. The University therefore, continues to revitalize and engineer itself daily,

being audacious in its plans, goals and objectives.

Dr. Wanjui has reiterated over time on discipline

as the essence of success. While noting that the students have come to appreciate these, he has often commended them for improvement in the level of discipline, which has ensured that programmes run smoothly. Dr. Wanjui’s challenge to students has always been that of recognizing the difficulties and differences in the world of work. “A University experience prepares you for the world and the opportunities and training that you receive should enable you to find your niche and contribute to the development of the nation.

management relations, indeed there has been peaceful academic years. Wanjui believes that as we endeavor to transform the University, we have to be prepared to surmount the challenges associated with any change process. We must all be committed to continuous improvement in whatever we engage in. That way, we will remain focused in achieving our ultimate goal; to be a truly world class University. “The status quo is not an option, and therefore we must introduce change to the way we do things”.

Inspired by those words then, the University management has been persuaded to restructure the University, introduce performance contracting, performance appraisal systems, launch a service charter, intensive training for change management, ISO certification and a reviewed strategic plan.

“The status quo is not an option, and therefore we must introduce change to the way we do things”

Dr. Wanjui, remains proud of the University, which embarked on the road towards world class excellence, unfettered, the reforms introduced so far are a model for other public universities to learn from. Further, the University has reconstituted its Council, incorporating professionals, scholars, and top level managers, in a mix that will boost the performance of staff and students.

Dr. Wanjui, acknowledges that the University took a bold step to hire top management through a competitive process, a clear indication of an unshakable

'The hilly girl'

"When you are somewhere you must grow other people"



These are the words of Agnes Wakesho Mwang'ombe, Professor and Principle, of the College of Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences (CAVS). Curious and struck by the conviction behind the words, I ask Prof. to elaborate "You know, she tells me, our kids are under heavy, thorough, bombardment of the media, they need support, and it is the support that I believe I am growing and importing to my colleagues and to my students"

Agnes Wakesho was born on the 11th of April 1953, at Wesu district hospital. The hospital is built below a big rock, in a very cold, hilly area, perhaps an indicator of what Agnes Wakesho would be, the rock behind the success of others. From an early age, Prof Agnes Wakesho knew that she

loved agriculture. My happiest moment when I was growing up was to work with the field hand on the family farm. This passion continues to day. "I am always happy to be in my small shamba where I grow sugarcane, bananas, and tissue culture, fresh vegetables and green maize. So tell me, have you moved to genetically modify crops? I ask, oh no she says, I love the traditional agriculture best.

Agnes Wakesho attended Kungu Full Primary School, between 1960- 1967. The school, which still exists, set a record in her year, because so many of the class went on to high school. Agnes was admitted to Murray Girls School which is in the lower parts of Taita hills. Agnes's father had always had a plan for her, and there was no other option. The plan was simple, Agnes would join the Alliance Girls High School and then proceed to Makerere University. Although Agnes did not join Alliance immediately, she completed her studies at Murray Girls, with a first division and then was admitted to form five at Alliance Girls. After Alliance, Agnes was admitted to Makerere

Prof. Agnes Mwang'ombe, Principal, CAVS.



Prof. Mwang'ombe with Vice-Chancellor Prof. George Magoha during the signing of the performance contract of her college.

University and therefore followed the path that her father had mapped out.

At Makerere, Agnes read agriculture. This was my passion, growing things, and seeing the yield. "When I was going to form one, I left a very good crop of tomatoes in the field at home." But Agnes did not stay at Makerere for long. During her third year, there was an interruption of study for students from Kenyan, a Kenyan student disappeared under mysterious circumstances, so the Kenyan government ordered sponsored students to relocate to Nairobi. Agnes, with the ignorance and fire of youth would have remained in Uganda, but of course her father would not hear

of it. So in Nairobi she remained and completed her studies at Kabete. "My project was carried out in Embu. I love Embu, it is my adopted district." Let me tell you why I love Embu. It is because I have practiced real technology transfer in the drier parts of Embu/ Mbeere, Ukambani and parts of Makueni near Embu and I have traveled back and forth and seen the people in these harsh climates taking full advantage of the pea varieties that I have developed. It is a joy to see the differences that your work is making".

Prof. had always been certain that after passing her undergraduate exams, she would pursue a master's course in plant pathology and go on to PhD studies. When

the time came for her to take up a master's course, the option on offer was in agricultural economics, this was not her cup of tea. She therefore opted to take up a job with the Ministry of Agriculture while waiting for the next intake as persuaded by her mentor, Prof. Mukunya. Prof. worked at the National Plant Breeding Unit at Njoro, until when she was offered a place on a master's programme at Kabete. As a master's student, Prof. always felt that she would pursue PhD studies. At the time, scholarships were many and the Ministry, her employer, wanted her to pursue a course in Manitoba, a very cold place and with no clear prospects for PhD study, so she declined. On the home front, there was some slight pressure for her to marry; it seems that her father had been doing some research. He said to me "you can do masters and also get married" and this is what Prof. did, she married immediately after graduation.

As a married woman, Prof. was able to travel and pursue PhD studies at the University of London. Her husband, Nimrod Mwang'ombe obtained a Commonwealth scholarship to study neuro-surgery, he relocated to the University of London at Queensbury, while Prof. Agnes pursued studies at the Imperial College of Science and Medicine at South Kensington. "We were accommodated at the international studies house on the prestigious York terrace west street and later at the Common wealth students accommodation at William Goodnough, where we took advantage of being invited to high level functions such as choral recitations, to opera and chamber

This was my passion, growing things, and seeing the yield. "When I was going to form one, I left a very good crop of tomatoes in the field at home."

Profile

music by orchestras. "I did my PhD studies between 1984 – 1988 and graduated with a PhD and a little baby"

Prof. Mwang'ombe continued to keep in touch with a strong mentor, Prof Linda Mukunya, even when she went to London, she kept in touch with Mukunya, it was Mukunya who told me that I should not sit at home, with a full PhD under my belt, when the department was in need of lecturers. Prof. Mwang'ombe believes in assessing a situation and seizing the opportunity and moving. It is this belief that has characterized some of her experience. When she was doing her masters and after the one year of coursework, she was selected from a class of 15-20 students to take up an interview opportunity at the Coffee Research Foundation on coffee berry disease. But she was not interviewed because she had a ministry scholarship. However, the panel was so curious about her dismissal, that they said that the one that you have not interviewed is the one we want. Prof. therefore ended up changing her proposal from wheat to coffee berry diseases, and to get new sponsors and a new employer. The same thing happened at PhD level, when Prof. went to London, she had put in a proposal to work in her area of coffee as she was an employee of the coffee research foundation. But her supervisor changed the topic and area and told her that he wanted her to work on garden peas and bacteria. Her thesis title "Plant resistance to bacterial diseases" was tedious. But as her research supervisor told her "you might be good on paper, but nobody knows what you are made of. It is up to you to prove

your make up" After being cleared to full-fledged PhD in 6 months, Prof. also attended conference and presented papers. After 2 years Prof. was ready to start writing her thesis. "The supervisor mode abroad is lovely, one has access to the supervisor once a week, it is scheduled and all work discussed openly. Again, they are free to see you more to clarify on issues. Perhaps, it is this one aspect that Prof. continues to value and seek to add value to –mentoring.

Prof. Mwang'ombe has always remained passionate about research. Her most interesting research has been with Rockefeller, they have funded her several times on bean research work.

Prof Mwang'ombe has teamed up with plant breeders and researchers, and by late August 2010 had released eight bean variety lines to the market. The release was the product of many years of work on bean variety development and it has been exciting to see the joy of farmers when they buy the varieties now marketed by Simlaws.

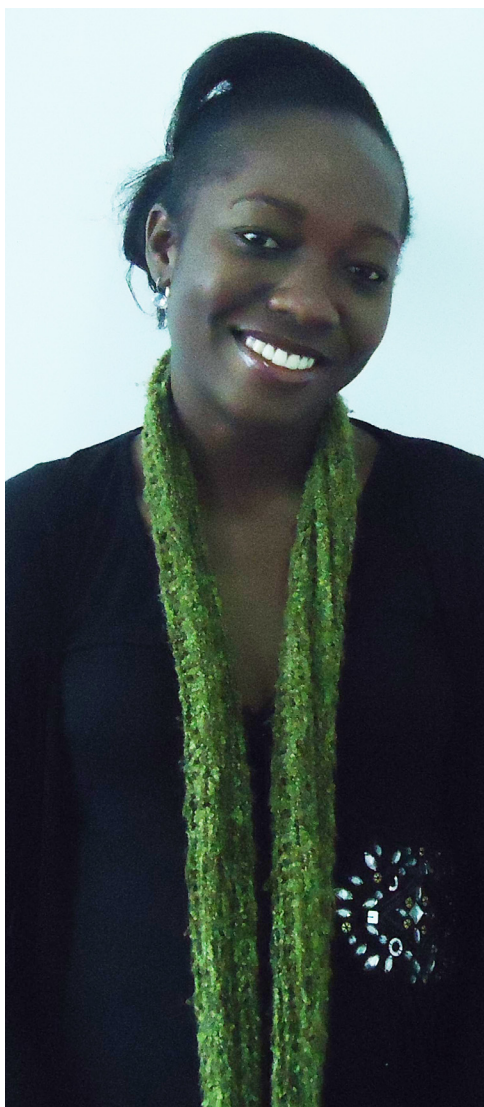
According to Prof. Mwang'ombe, her position in research has translated to looking for programs, merging grants with various

Prof. Mwang'ombe has teamed up with plant breeders and researchers, and by late August 2010 had released eight bean variety lines to the market.

partners as opposed to individual research. Among such partners are Simlaws Seeds, KARI, KEPHIS and Cimmyt of Zimbabwe who are involved in programs that not only provide diploma and masters level qualifications, but also give skills in seed production. Business people have been trained in business management and marketing models by the School of Business, which is an anchor for the partnership. The partnership has brought in 4.5 million dollars, $\frac{3}{4}$ of which has come directly to the University. "My strength as a researcher is good. Even as I get into administration I am clear that it is something that I have to carry on with". This realization has been crucial for Prof. Mwang'ombe's calling to help her colleagues get into research. Mwang'ombe concentrates on building winning teams, negotiating for PhD opportunities and of course mentoring. Prof. Mwang'ombe, is a founder member of the Kenya Association of Women in Agriculture, seeking to grow women in science. This program, which put in place a scholarship program for high school girls with brains, was able to "knock" on all doors, getting 160 scholarships from the US Embassy and even hosting ambassador Bushnell at the College.

As a top female manager, Prof. Mwang'ombe is driven by the challenge to make a difference or impact. "I have approached management from the perspective of contributing to change the attitudes of students and staff who, have forgotten what brought them to the University". Prof. Mwang'ombe remains the quintessential scholar and academician.

The life of a student



Fiona Imbali

Joining the University of Nairobi to pursue a bachelors program in journalism and mass communication, was one of the biggest highlights of my life, it was literally a dream come true, and it was contrary to popular belief that all or most of the Module II students come from well-to-do backgrounds.

My parents were civil servants and the fees required for the course I was pursuing was dear; although I loved the course, my experience in the University was one of ups and downs. But I am glad that the ups overshadowed the downs. When I joined first year I was a quiet girl. Despite being sanguine, I kept to myself and just observed and studied people. Some people said that I was “a snob who lived in Westlands”. Truth be told, I made few acquaintances in my class. I realized that despite studying journalism together, my interests were quite different from theirs. I guess I took life too seriously then.

I often got infuriated when people asked me what course I was studying at the University and when I told them Journalism they would go like aaa, eeh. I think they believed that this was the easiest course in university. People should understand that for one to be a successful journalist there is a lot of hard work that goes into the process. Although it is argued in some quarters that journalists are born, I

believe education plays a key role in moulding the ‘born’ journalists. The action by various media houses to employ ‘celebrities’ in the various stations has made a mockery of the profession as the “celebrities” think that they are worth more than those who have attended media school. I believe that the ‘celebrities’ have their challenges in regard to media ethics and law as much as they have a wider appeal.

I specialized in development communication, a tough choice. We had to develop behavior change campaigns and IEC programs, indeed it was not an easy feat. Writing good term papers also required us to spend



Fiona Imbali with her friends

sufficient time in the library and at times I would only leave the library when the bell for closing rang. I barely had time to engage in anything else, especially, in my third and fourth year.

This was a common phenomenon in Campus. I think people always assumed that because I always dressed neatly, I must come from a well-off background. Nothing is further from the truth, my father had retired a few years before I joined the University. My mother however, retired when I was in the third year of my studies, the period was tough, I and my younger sister were dependant on them and therefore had to move in with our oldest brother. Moving from the beautiful neighborhood in Upper Kabete where I grew up, to Eastlands was a joke. At first, we were in denial, considering that Upper Kabete had a serene

“I was broke most of my campus life. I did not want to bother my mother for money as she was now retired and she had sacrificed a lot for me to get educated.”

environment and we had our own compound, a beautiful garden where we could plant fresh vegetables. The sudden change of environment to Umoja was, to us, a comic story. I have to admit that during this particular period, I had many thoughts to battle with, I even toyed with the wisdom of getting a man who would pay my rent somewhere, far away from Eastlands. The problem is that I did not know how to go about it and I am glad that those thoughts remained just that. I was glad when, after 2 months, my brother decided to move us to Roysambu along Thika road. The move was necessitated partly because the noise

was too much and also because it was convenient for my younger sister, then a student, at USIU.

I was broke most of my campus life. I did not want to bother my mother for money as she was now retired and she had sacrificed a lot for me to get educated. We depended on our brother for everything. He would at times not give us money unless we asked him to. I have no idea where he thought we got money from. Mum would send money even without asking, but I tried not to bother her. Let us just say that I completed the ‘needs’ equation and had very little of the ‘wants’ category.

Another concern that weighed me down was the lack of a laptop. My old Dell computer had been damaged one night when the house flooded after we forgot to close down the taps, the damages were irreparable. With all the assignments that we got at The School, I used to wait to use my brothers lap top when one of my brother’s who works in Nyeri came home during the weekends.

Weekends for me were not a time of

socializing, but rather, times for finalizing on term papers. At times, I was forced write my research papers in the cyber café. "I often wished for someone to buy me a laptop," and there were times when I pondered what my life would be like if I got a rich boyfriend to take me away from the hard life.

One semester, I worked as a transcriber along Mombasa road. It was an evening job and I would leave class early, at around 8.00 pm, as I was required to report to work by 9p.m. I was paid 15,000 shillings a month, but it was a wearisome experience. I am glad that I managed to balance school and work. I would sleep during the day and wake up in the afternoon to do my school work before going to class. I recall reading for my exams during working hours at times. In my third year, Professor Paul Mbatia, the Kenya Model United Nations patron, gave I, and a few other students, some research work for the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, this earned me some money. In March, 2011, I, and a member of the Scout Rover Crew, was selected to represent the University, at the annual CHE Universities Exhibition at Kakamega. There were also a few other occasions when I engaged in some form of employment while on campus, this rightfully earned me some pocket money and good experience in networking and exposure to the world of work. Colleagues, and many friends in the University thought that I was a 'boring' person. You could never get me to sit in any bar or 'fun' places. I however recall that in my third year, after much

pressure, I went out partying till the wee hours of the morning. I am a teetotaler and while the others were dancing –of course after getting drunk- I looked at them and wondered what kind of fun they were having. That was the first and last time that I went partying while in campus. I knew of students who would party on weekdays and also weekends, but that was just not me. Rather than partying, I would occasionally go for poetry and spoken word readings, watch plays at the Alliance Francaise or the National theatre; that was my kind of fun while in campus.

I believe that some of the co-curricular activities I participated in helped me to keep away from the temptations in the university. In my first year I joined the Free Travelling Theatre (FTT) club. I loved poetry and theatre and I performed on on a number of occasions. I was also a dance student, we learnt salsa from Mr. Kimingichi Wabende the FTT Director. I searched for the Kenya Model United Nation's club and eventually learnt of their meetings outside Taifa Hall. My younger sister, who was in Statehouse Girls, was an active member of the club in high school, this necessitated my fervent search. When I joined the club towards the end of my second year, I hit the ground running. I was immediately appointed to the position of Internal Affairs Director. I helped the then Under Secretary General of the club, Sonia Muasa with various responsibilities. I then became the acting Deputy Under-Secretary General and eventually the Under Secretary General.

I have to say that it was not an

easy feat, I did not just sit pretty at the helm as some might assume. Being able to follow the required protocol of the University in order to successfully plan an event, the whole organization, the process of involving various stakeholders was pure hard work. I remember organizing the free breast cancer clinic was the hardest one of them all, I nearly had a heart attack, but I am glad it was successful, the fruits of hard work. Professor Paul Mbatia, the KMUN patron was very instrumental in ensuring the success of the events. We also got a lot of support from the Dean of Students, Fr. (Dr). Wamugunda. He was tough and would tell us off. These activities, while in campus I believe, helped me a lot in ensuring that most of the time my mind was preoccupied with developmental concerns.

The late George Carlin, a social critic, actor, author and five time Grammy Award winner inspires profoundly. In his "Paradox of Our Time", he states: 'The paradox of our time in history is that we have wider freeways, but narrower viewpoints. We spend more, but have less, we buy more, but enjoy less. We have more degrees but less sense, more knowledge, but less judgment, more experts, yet more problems. We laugh too little, get too angry, read too little, watch TV too much, and pray too seldom. We write more, but learn less. We plan more, but accomplish less. Big men and small character'. My experiences at the University I know has nurtured my character. "Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away."

Foreign Ph.D graduands in dryland management

In October, 2008, the University of Nairobi commenced an audacious and innovative programme in dry land resource management. A majority of students of different nationalities are set to graduate this year. We bring you highlights of the programme and a testimony from one of the graduands: Tasokwa Vida Musa Kakota from Malawi.



Some of the international Ph.D students who will graduate this year.

The programme, which lasts 36 months, targets students from 24 Universities of East, Central and Southern Africa, under their umbrella organization, the Regional Universities Forum for

Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM)

Broadly, the programme aims at addressing the pressing regional need for sustainable development of drylands and improved

livelihoods through innovative interdisciplinary human capacity building that integrates natural sciences and social sciences. The primary goal of the programme is to train a critical mass of doctoral cadres of experts in dryland resource management for the region, which will subsequently be utilized to increase more capacity. The programme consists of two components: a coursework component taken during the first year and a research component taken during the second and third year.

Although the programme is hosted by the University of Nairobi, the trainers are drawn from any of the member universities. Qualified resource persons from both the private and public sector also participate in teaching and/or research supervision/mentoring, making the product of this training relevant to the prevailing development environment. A total of 37 applications from seven

countries were received during the initial call to the programme. Due to lack of sponsorship only 17 were able to join the programme with 15 being sponsored by Rockefeller Foundation through RUFORUM. A majority of students in this first cohort of 17 are concluding their three year programme and are on track to graduate by the end of the year. Out of this lot of 17 students, six have so far submitted their thesis and are expected to graduate during the 45th graduation ceremony. A further four students, are expected to graduate during December 2011.

We bring you the testimony of one student who has undergone the programme.



Tasokwa Vida Musa Kakota from Malawi

When I was enrolled in the drylands resource management PhD programme at the University of Nairobi and I was told that the duration was three years course work and research, I could not believe that anyone would complete the programme within that period. My fears were raised even more when I saw that most of the courses on the syllabus were new. Coming from a mathematics background, my questions were: where do I start from? Will I pass the course work or should I just go back home to apply for other programmes? I really worked very hard to

understand the new courses and to my delight, at the end of first year, I got A's and B's in all the courses. But little did I know that I will be among the first group to complete the PhD even before three years. But what contributed to my successful completion?

Ownership of the programme: I realized that at the end of the three years, the PhD will belong to me and not RUFORUM or University of Nairobi who were facilitating the training. Therefore, I made up my mind to work hard to get what belongs to me, in the shortest period of time possible. One of the things I did was to look for extra funds to facilitate my data collection process and I am glad to report that I got extra funding from the Association of African Universities and Agricultural Research for Development Programme (ARDEP) that enabled me to collect my data on time.

Capacity building training: RUFORUM exposed us to a number of trainings to build our capacity in proposal and scientific writing, data management and analysis, personal mastery and soft skills, journal publication among others.

Setting and meeting targets: I learnt that any successful person has a vision and goals are set to meet that vision. If you set goals you always work towards meeting those goals. This lesson helped me to focus on my work and set targets with deadlines.

Making sacrifices: In life, a lot of sacrifice should be made if one wants to achieve something. I sacrificed my social life, time that I was supposed to spend with my family, "good life", sleeping time and in some cases friends. These sacrifices enabled me to move ahead.

Relationship with supervisors: I constantly engaged my supervisors, and they were very accommodating and helpful, giving timely feedback, which I in turn responded to positively. Above all these efforts I owe my success to God for his grace and favor because I did not fall sick throughout my study period. I am also indebted to my supervisors, Professor Dickson Nyariki, Dr David Mkwambisi and Professor Wambui Makau. I am not the same person I was, when I was joining the programme.

It is possible to finish a PhD in less than three years however, it requires commitment, hard work, sacrifices, competence, responding to feedback positively and committed supervisors. There are always challenges but learn to manage them while utilizing opportunities.

Legal aid clinic by students

On 13th August 2011, students from the University of Nairobi, who are members of the Students Association for Legal Aid and Research, (SALAR) conducted a legal aid/public awareness campaign in Mathare slums at the Mcedo-Beijing Primary School.



Law students attend to Mathare residents during a free legal aid clinic in the area.

During the campaign, the students provided legal advice on a variety of issues including labour, criminal, land and human rights, targeting those in the community who have legal problems but cannot afford the services of a lawyer. They also held a public 'baraza' which was a sit down forum with youth groups and

members of the public to discuss the constitution and the legal issues affecting young people in general as well as the residents of Mathare in particular.

The students also carried out research in the area, on the challenges and hindrances facing the people as they try to access

justice. All the respondents indicated that they had been arrested at one time or another for various reasons including; illicit brews, loitering at odd hours of the night, being suspected as members of sects, and assault. Most of the respondents had not sought the services of an advocate and instead represented

themselves in court, and due to the fact that they did not understand judicial matters and prosecution, many of them were convicted and sentenced.

The respondents thus strongly felt that access to justice was a preserve for the rich or those who could afford to compromise law enforcement agencies and avoid the judicial process. Majority of the respondents were not informed on the Laws of Kenya and had not read the Constitution, while those who had read the Constitution, could only articulate some of the provisions of the Bill of Rights. Some of the respondents had also learnt about the Constitution by attending public forums where the

Constitution was being discussed.

A major focus in the legal aid clinic was to address children on their rights under the Children's Act and international conventions. The idea for a legal aid clinic for children was a spontaneous one that was generated on site for certain obvious reasons. Firstly, children were the majority at the Public Forum organized by SALAR. Secondly, there was forthrightness among children in telling their stories, devoid of the inherent suspicion and secrecy in adults and it was in telling us their stories that various legal issues emerged. Some were glaring, like the many illicit brewing dens that are in the open in full view of children. Such

exposure is pernicious and subtly harmful to children yet, they have a right to protection from harmful practices.

The children also told us about the toll of the post-election violence in their lives. Mathare is a highly polarized community. It is a way of life for them and they do not know any different. Even before that, their environment schools them on tribal groupings. In such surroundings, even where the basic rights to education, food and shelter are secured, the proper psychological, emotional and social development of children is nevertheless compromised.

Children's rights are often disregarded as being either insignificant in the general scheme of things or secondary to what is believed to be the more pressing needs of adults. Further, beyond the basics of food, shelter, clothing and education, children are not viewed as needing anything more than these for their proper development, a proposition that is far from the truth. Children need protection from harmful rites, torture, drugs, child labor and so on.

The Legal Aid desk offered advice to ten clients, with issues ranging from labour, criminal and family disputes especially on custody and maintenance.

The event on the whole was successful. The residents of Mathare requested for a return visit and highly appreciated the assistance. This was yet another opportunity that demonstrated that there is more to students from the University of Nairobi other than what is depicted in the media.



These children were among those who turned up at the legal aid clinic.

Inter-Campus games



The Games Department has released its schedule for Inter-Campus Games. According to the Director, Sports and Games, Mr Mbaabu Muriithi, the games have been organized to take place once a month, rotating from one Campus to the other. The games will include ball games, indoor and racket games.

The first rotation of the games is scheduled for 17th September at the main campus. The September games will involve colleges with year groups in session: College of Architecture and Engineering; College of Health Sciences; College of Humanities and Social Sciences; in the following disciplines: Soccer-men.; Basketball, Volleyball ; Badminton ; Handball ; Table

tennis; Scrabble ; Chess; and darts for men and women.

The second rotation of the games is scheduled for 8th October, at the main campus. The October games shall involve all campuses/colleges with year groups in session and the following disciplines shall be offered: Rugby-men; Soccer-women; Hockey; Karate; Tae Kwon Do; Tennis; and Swimming , for men and women.

The third rotation of the games is scheduled for 5th November, at the Kenya Science Campus. The November games will offer the following disciplines: Soccer-men; Basketball; Handball; Volleyball; Table tennis; and Chess, for men and women.

“The first rotation of the games is scheduled for 17th September 2011 at the main campus.”



QUALITY POLICY STATEMENT

The University of Nairobi is committed to quality as the guiding principle in its decision making and leadership in the provision of university education and related services to its customers.

To realise this, the University management shall regularly monitor and review its performance for continual improvement and suitability by implementing an effective quality management system based on ISO 9001 standard.



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