

Nairobi University staff not underpaid, insists Munavu

BY DENNIS ONYANGO

The Deputy Vice-chancellor in charge of Administration and Finance, Professor Raphael Munavu, has denied reports that staff at the University of Nairobi earn lower salaries than their counterparts in other universities.

Talking to *The Anvil*, Prof. Munavu said public universities operate under the same salary scale for similar jobs because they get money from the same ex-chequer. He said talk of salary differences was a mere allegation and challenged the employees to prove that disparities exist.

Early this week, *The Anvil* reported that the medical staff were lamenting over low pay and attributed the laxity at the students health centre to lack of motivation.

He denied reports that Nairobi and Aga Khan hospitals have stopped treating university staff saying they still have accounts with the two institutions.

The hospitals, he said, offer services to senior academic and administrative staff who require specialised treatment, adding that they also allow any other member of staff who may have serious problems because "sickness does not discriminate."

Prof. Munavu said they do not have serious shortage of staff at the health centre because they have



Dons at one of the past graduation ceremonies. Are they getting what their colleagues get elsewhere?

continued to advertise and recruit to fill vacancies. However, he said, the medical staff are dynamic and the number is not constant as some retire or move to other institutions.

He reiterated that the university has the Development, Planning and Establishment Committee which makes recommendations on university departments including health services.

The academician said it was necessary to consider the ratio between clinical officers to that of

students and other members of staff before concluding that the health centre was understaffed. Such facts, he said, could only be made available by the Chief Medical Officer, Dr. B. M. Kilonzo, who was said to be out of office.

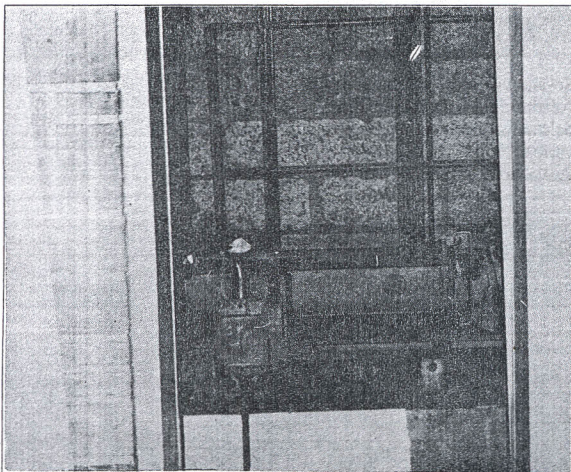
The Deputy Vice Chancellor reaffirmed his earlier announcement that the university health services will soon be open to the public as part of income generation plans. He, however, clarified that this will only take place when the university is

fully prepared to implement the plan which includes making the theatre fully operational.

However, he said they will continue giving priority to students and the staff of the university. "The students and staff are our most important clients and they will have to be satisfied first before we seek to satisfy any other person."

"We realize that health is vital in learning, that is why we take students' complaints very seriously," he said.

Broken down lifts: Disabled students' agony



One of the many stalled lifts at the Main Campus.

By JOSEPH NGURE

Disabled students and staff at the University of Nairobi are experiencing serious problems due to stalled elevators.

At the Jomo Kenyatta library, a 4th year physically handicapped Anthropology student, Mr Dan Ogolla said, even after reporting the matter to the librarian it has not been rectified. He added "This lift is the

worst. For a long time we have been climbing the stairs and nobody seem to care even after we reported the matter" When *The Anvil* contacted the library, Mrs Mary Kimani, the Chief Librarian had been out of the country for a long time and had just reported back on duty. She was not in a position to comment on the matter.

However, a physically handicapped librarian, Mrs Dorothy Njiraini, dispelled the claims saying the library elevators are always attended to whenever they broke down. On employment, she observed that the disabled must be accepted into the society and should not be treated as special or looked down upon.

Mr Njiraini said "The university cannot absorb all the disabled students, they should be treated like others and employed on merit. University should only give them recommendation letters."

Mr Ogolla told *The Anvil* that he experiences great difficulties climbing the stairs as he has to attend lectures at ED 213, on the second floor of the Education Building.

However, he complimented the university Transport Department for organising special transport for disabled students. He said the transport department offers transport to and from the halls of residence and lecture theatres for disabled students. The Transport Officer, Mr Thaiya, confirmed this saying students are transported daily on hourly basis.

The student wondered why something cannot be done about the elevators "The university should put special lifts for us," They emphasised. They appealed to the university administration to make special arrangements for disabled students to get jobs easily as job hunting is a traumatic experience for them.

A first year physically disabled student complained that the university facilities are only meant for the able. He told *The Anvil* that at the halls of residence, the raised toilet bowls give them problems because they cannot use them. They urged the university administration to reserve a toilet and bathroom for them, to put up lockers and issue duplicate keys to each of them.

Chiuri appointed UNES boss

By REBECCA GIKURU AND KEMUNTO OIRURIA

The University of Nairobi has formed a company to coordinate and oversee the functions of its income generating units.

The company, University of Nairobi Enterprise Services (UNES) recently appointed a Managing Director, Mr George K. Chiuri.

Currently, UNES has only a skeleton of employees to avoid any overheads on the young company. Most of the staff from existing income generating units have been seconded to the company for a period of one year, in which time, it will recruit appropriate staff.

Speaking to *The Anvil*, Mr Chiuri said they viewed profit making as a long-term process. He said a lot of groundwork has to be done to improve and increase the existing facilities to meet customer and market expectations.

"The company has already taken over some units", Mr Chiuri announced. Speaking of the cafeteria in the Main Campus, he guaranteed improved services. A spot check at the cafeteria confirmed that it was under new management.

The existing units fall short of market expectations because they were started for teaching purposes and commodities for in-house consumption. He gave Chiroto Mortuary as an example. It was initially started as a learning facility for students in the Department of Human Anatomy. Over the years it has turned into a small scale business enterprise.

Before the formation of the company, income from the units was utilised in the University Central Pool. Consequently, the units suffered from lack of maintenance. The staff also became demoralised because their salaries never improved. The company intends to solicit consultancy from the market and to employ professionals. Mr Chiuri revealed that incentives were part of the agenda for his company.

The Dean, Faculty of Commerce, Professor Peter K'Obonyo, said that UNES had a challenge to restructure existing units to operate more efficiently.

There are four main areas being studied by the company. In Agribusiness, the company has two farms, Kibwezi and Kabete and the company will soon maximize utility of their resources.

The university has a lot of unused and under utilised plots which the company wants to invest in real estate. In healthcare, there are plans to start a pharmacy practice centre, extend the Dental Unit and eventually, start a university teaching hospital.