

The Anvil

SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM, UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

Monday, May 10, 1999

Vol. 24 No. 165

Price 10/-

New housing rule for varsity staff

By Gilbert Mogire and
Faith Njeri

Varsity staff members residing at Jericho quarters, Upper Kabete campus, are up in arms following a new rule that requires them to pay their electricity bills, *The Anvil* has learnt.

A memo dated January 4, 1999, signed by the Estates Manager, Mr. C.K. Riungu, stated the need to decentralise electricity accounts to various consuming units within the university. This will contain the escalation of power bills and sustain reasonable consumption rates.

The memo stated that the university had undertaken measures to ensure that the bills were paid by the respective users. The staff are to make arrangements to settle their bills from January.

In a rejoinder, the residents through their chairman, Charles Oyugi, requested the university through the Estates Manager to clear the outstanding bill amounting to Kshs160m before effecting the changes. Despite the request, the Estates Manager in another memorandum dated March 16 demands that the residents clear the outstanding bill or face power disconnection.

A member of staff confided that Jericho units which number 65 are occupied mostly by unionisable members. He further stated that the allocation was done on the under-



University workers stage demo demanding salary increase. Will the staffers join the bandwagon?

standing that they forfeit their house allowances and in turn, the university carry out maintenance, provide power and water supply in all the units. The same fate, *The Anvil* has learnt, may befall other staff members.

The residents feel that the university is being unfair by passing the responsibility to them.

When contacted, Mr. Riungu said, "It is only natural that some-

body pays for any utilities consumed. The staffers are being unrealistic if they expect free accommodation and paid bills."

Mr. Riungu noted that the junior staff had taken advantage of a serious omission on the provisions of house allowances. The provisions were silent on who was meant to settle recurrent expenses like water and electricity bills.

He pointed out that it was not

only the residents of Jericho who are affected. "All the 168 units in the university are affected," he said. He further clarified that the university does not owe KP&LC any money as all arrears were now cleared. "This is why we felt individual consumers should henceforth directly pay to the power company."

As the row continues, the university maintains that the residents should meet the costs of the power they consume.

Bookshop owed over KShs. 4.7m

By Tom Amoro and
Udoto Nyongesa

The University of Nairobi Bookshop is owed Ksh 4.7 million for supplies to the various departments and campus libraries. *The Anvil* has established.

Consequently, the bookshop has suspended supply of daily newspapers and magazines to the libraries whose debts have accumulated to Ksh 1.8 million.

The Bookshop manager, Mrs Margaret Muriuki confirmed that newspaper supplies to the libraries had been suspended pending settlement of the dues. However, other departments will continue receiving their provisions, save for newspapers, she said.

Newspapers and other provisions to the seven campuses of the university are channelled through the main library, Jomo Kenyatta Memorial Library (JKML) for onward transmission. It is only the School of Journalism, which gets complimentary issues direct from the Media houses.

A senior librarian in charge of periodicals, Mr Peter Matanji said that the library had resorted to a stop gap measure by buying papers directly from vendors. He added that the library management was working on modalities of solving the problem.

A circular signed by Mrs Muriuki dated April, 23 and copied to all departments of the university, read in part: "This (move) has been necessitated by financial constraints." The suspension was effected on May 1.

Regretting that the move had affected those departments that honour their commitments, Mrs Muriuki said, "My office runs as a commercial enterprise. I can no longer supply newspapers without being paid because the bookshop will run down."

Campus library goes hi-tech

By Evan Mwangi

The Jomo Kenyatta Memorial Library has installed Information Technology (IT) facilities for students' use, the management has revealed.

As academic institutions the world over move full throttle into the information super-highway, University of Nairobi students are no longer at ease with old methods of research, says Ms Salome Mathangani, the university librarian.

Posters on the main door of the library say that the university is now

connected to universities, libraries, information centres, and publishers world-wide. There are Internet and e-mail facilities at a fee and CD-ROM services for free. "Take advantage of our affordable charges to browse the net and access the vast quantity of information in the global village cheaply," the notice says in part.

However, Ms Mathangani admits the university is experiencing teething problems. It is not generating enough income and the room is not enough. "With only one surfer, the project can only meet telephone costs

and part of the subscription fees," she adds.

Nevertheless, Ms Jacinta Were, a senior librarian in charge of the computer department, says that e-mail facilities are shipshape. The department is also offering word-processing (the computer patois for typing). According to the administration, the data bases in the library have a network from many universities across the world. In a few minutes, the library is able to compile a bibliography of the studies carried out in a certain field, the computer department says.

But what about Internet? The library management says that the facility has been suspended so that the library can gather momentum to provide the service in full force. Ms Were, told *The Anvil* in an interview that plans are underway to bring in more surfers so that many students can surf at once.

The facility is very popular with students, necessitating suspension to enable the management acquire more computers as surfing terminals, she said.

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