

# CBPS NEWS

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## A CLOSEUP WITH ROSE: THE WORKING OF A PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE

A look into her eyes, no one would think that the lady seated behind the desk is well into retirement age. Her skin has escaped the folds of age, her calmness and soft voice draws you to desire to spend just one more minute with her.

She is filled with wisdom and a sense of inner joy as she talks about her 36 years of working at the University of Nairobi.

Rose Birgen is a lady who loves her job. She has served as a secretary for the past three decades.

Rose grew up in the highlands of Eldoret town, Kipkabus. As she woke up early to milk cows and prepare her siblings, before walking barefoot to Waunifor Full Primary School, Rose never thought that she would one day work at the prestigious University of Nairobi.

After completion of her secondary education at St. Brigid's



Rose with her good friend Gladwell Gikonyo in earlier days

Girls High School in 1975, Rose came to Nairobi and enrolled for a secretarial course at Kianda College in 1977. Here, she gained skills in secretarial work which she would later use to apply for a

vacant secretarial position at the University.

On January 9<sup>th</sup> 1979, Rose was employed at the College of Biological and Physical Sciences. She worked in Bio-

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## SIR DAVID KING VISITS CHIROMO CAMPUS



The Institute for Climate Change and Adaptation hosted Sir David King, The UK Permanent Special Representative for Climate Change on the 16<sup>th</sup> of February 2015.

The United Kingdom's Foreign Secretary appointed Sir David King as his new permanent

Special Representative for Climate Change in September 2013. Sir David was previously the British Government's Chief Scientific Advisor from 2000 - 2007, during which time he raised awareness of the need for governments to act on climate change and was instrumental

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## ROSE :THE WORKING OF A PRINCIPAL’S OFFICE

chemistry and Botany Departments where she was a secretary to three chairs of departments, Prof. John Kokwaro, Prof. Titus Mukiyama and Prof. Jenesio Kinyamario. She then moved to the Principal’s office

can easily get into a comfort zone and you cease to be productive,” says Rose .

However, this has not been the case on her part. She confesses that she loves her job immensely, and enjoys meeting and welcoming visitors. She is in charge of dispatch of letters and managing the Principal’s diary and email.

Her work is not always rosy though. Much as she is soft-spoken, at times she comes across difficult visitors and students who are harsh in their interactions.

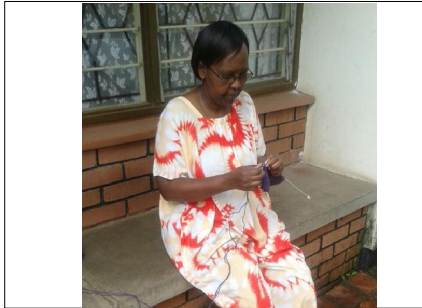
“While working with people with strong characters, you have to maintain your cool and do your best to understand the other person,” she advises.

When she is not working, Rose enjoys cooking pilau and preparing the famous Kalenjin drink, *mursik*. This, she says is easy to prepare and very tasty for both children and adults. She also knits and sews, a skill she gained in high school during her needlework studies.

Rose takes pride in her family and celebrates the success of her children.

“I came in the University as a small girl. I got married in 1982 and we have been blessed with five children,” she says. She has attained the title of a grandmother, a title she is delighted to be called.

As her journey in employment is coming to an end, Rose looks forward to be a farmer, work which her mother and her late father have been involved in since she was a child. She is excited to complete her term in employment and sees this as the beginning of an exciting chapter in her life. I still have energy and after completing the remaining two years, I would like to put this energy in the farm,” she says with a chuckle.



During her free time Rose enjoys Knitting and

where she diligently served two Principals in the College, Prof. Richard Mibey, currently Vice-Chancellor, Moi University and Prof. Lucy Irungu, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research Production and Extension at UoN. Rose is currently the secretary to the Principal of the College, Prof. Bernard Aduda.

“When you are in the same workplace for many years, you

*Rose has been Serving the College of Biological and Physical Sciences from 1979 to 2015, a total of 36 years*

### Campus Life by Naaman Agengo



Students interacting at Chiromo campus

It is often whispered in high schools across the country that life at the University is paradise. The effects of this saying can never be underestimated since students from high schools believe these words and work hard to get to this place where ‘heaven’

is promised. Most of the students have it at the back of their mind that life at the university is enjoyable and there is not much to study. They believe that whatever they did in high school is behind them as soon as they set foot in the University. Another myth about the University is that classes are not mandatory and that anyone can avoid the lectures as long as you have signed the attendance sheet to prove that you were truly in class. Some also believe that University students are entitled to a salary from the government via the higher education loans board (HELB), which is dedicated to seeing

that it supports all under graduates and post graduates in raising some money for the payment of their University fees. Are these allegations true? Maybe yes maybe not. It is time to find out exactly how life is like at the University.

Taking an example of the University of Nairobi, from the perspective of an outsider, it appears a very cool place where the intellectual giants of this country are bred. As an outsider I would view the University with longing and wish to be in this great Institution. Now, I am an insider, not as a staff ..cont’d on page 11

## NATIONAL OIL IN LABORATORY PLEDGE TO DEPARTMENT OF GEOLOGY



Vice - Chancellor Prof. P.M.F. Mbithi with NOCK CEO Sumeiya Hassan-

The National Oil Corporation of Kenya (NOCK) has pledged to set up a National Oil Geochemical and Petrophysical Laboratory and a core storage facility at the University of Nairobi Chiromo Campus. According to the NOCK CEO, Sumeiya Hassan-Athmani. The laboratory will provide the University access to modern equipment for Geochemical and petrophysical analyses relevant to the oil and gas industry.

In a further contribution that will boost the University's learning facilities, the National Oil will also donate equipment worth USD 1 million to be routinely used for geochemical analysis. UoN students will

utilize the equipment to develop new skills in some of the typical geochemical analyses required to support oil and gas exploration activities in the country. Athmani also expressed willingness to give internships to final year students to enable them gain industrial experience.

Welcoming the development, the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Peter Mbithi said that partnership with the National Oil will be key in building capacity in the area of exploration, build staff capacity and promote experiential learning among students, increase joint research activities and ultimately assist the country in achieving the

Vision 2030.

The University of Nairobi would provide land for the construction of the facilities and the parties are now looking forward to signing the memorandum of agreement (MOA) with NOCK. The collaboration will plant the pioneering seeds for building centres of excellence in oil and gas education that will also have a robust research and development facility. The facility will be housed in the Department of Geology and will also benefit other programmes such as the Bachelor degree in Petroleum whose first intake is slated for May 2015.

*“Ms. Athmani also expressed willingness to give internships to final year students to enable them gain industrial experience”*

### SIR DAVID KING Continued

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in creating the Energy Technologies Institute. He also served as the Founding Director of the Smith School of Enterprise and Environment at Oxford; Sir David has published over 500 papers on science and policy, for which he has received numerous awards, and holds 22 Honorary Degrees from universities around the world. Elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1991, a Foreign

Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2002 and knighted in 2003, Sir David was also made an Officer of the French Legion d'Honneur in 2009, for work which has contributed to responding to the climate and energy challenge. Sir David emphasized on the need for the adoption of new technology to fight the challenge that is Climate Change. In his talk, he showcased Innovative environmentally friendly technology for transportation by air and road.

## NANCY MUTHUI: CERTIFIED GLASS BLOWER

Meet the ever bubbly lady in charge of the Science Workshop, the only Science Workshop at the University of Nairobi which is situated in Chiromo.

Nancy is currently the Acting Principal Technologist. I got up close and candid with her and this is what she had to share.

Q: When were you first employed?

Nancy: I was first employed as Trainee Technologist in 1990 before rising through the ranks as a Technologist, Senior Technologist then Chief Technologist and eventually as the Acting Principal Technologist.

Q: You are a certified Glass blower, a rare title it is. First of all tell us what glass blowing is and where you acquired these skills from.

Nancy: It is a technique that involves inflating molten glass into a bubble with the aid of a blowpipe or blow tube. As luck would have it, in 1996 I got a scholarship with the World Bank to go and study the technique of Glassblowing in (Salford University) Britain for a year.

Q: Kindly take us through what goes on at the Science Workshop.

Nancy: At the Science Workshop we have various sections;



Nancy Muthui; Ag. Principal Technologist Science Workshop

First of all we have the Glassware Laboratory where we fabricate or repair or modify glassware to suit the research at hand. Secondly we have the Electronic section where we repair electronic equipment. Thirdly we have the Carpentry section where we make office furniture, engrave, put up sign posts and any carpentry work required by the University. Lastly we have the metal work section. All these sections are used to support the University of Nairobi in research work.

Q: Most people do not know the difference between The Science workshop and the Maintenance Department. Is there a differ-

ence?

Nancy: Oooh, theres a difference. Maintenance Department maintains the physical facilities of Chiromo Campus while The Science Workshop supports the research work of the University.

Q: Any challenges?

Nancy: Of course... the mentality that a woman cannot do some manual jobs. Eventually people get to acknowledge what you are doing. I am also glad that that mentality is slowly changing. My co workers have also been supportive.

*I was first employed as Trainee Technologist in 1990 before rising through the ranks as a Technologist, Senior Technologist then Chief Technologist and eventually as the Acting Principal*

## CBPS AT THE SARIT CENTER & MACHAKOS

This annual Nairobi International Education Fair took place at the above mentioned venue from 12<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> March 2015. Exhibitors from diverse parts of the world participated in the event. The education fair was organized by Express Communications Limited, Nairobi in collaboration with The Sarit Centre and the Standard Media Group. The University of Nairobi was in attendance and its composition included the six constituent colleges and UNES. The College of Biological and Physical Sciences (Brochures for all the academic programmes in the CBPS were exhibited. CBPS) was represented by the following members of Academic members of staff who are also members of the college Exhibitions Committee: Mr Godfrey Wafula (CBPS Exhibitions Coordinator) and Mr Cromwel Lukorito (Department of Meteorology).



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## CBPS AT THE SARIT CENTER -CONTINUED

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Programmes that are offered in this college especially BSc in Actuarial Science, BED Science, BSc in Physics, Bsc in Meteorology, undergraduate programmes in Biological Sciences, and undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in Computer Science and Chemistry attracted significant attention. The fact that this university is currently the best ranked in the region was evident.

Judging of the stands was carried out by the Marketing Society of Kenya. There were various categories of competition. The University of Nairobi won in the Local public Universities

and was also Overall Second Runner Up. The CBPS Exhibitions Coordinator, Godfrey Wafula, received the winning trophy and certificates on behalf of the University of Nairobi, during the official closing ceremony on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2015.



DVC/RPE with guests at the Sarit Centre stand

## PROF. WANDIGA AWARDED UNESCO MEDAL



Prof Wandiga (far left) poses with other Laureates after receiving his award

The Kenya National Commission for UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) awarded Prof. Shem O. Wandiga, (Acting Director of Institute for Climate Change and Adaptation) a medal for his contribution to the development of nanosciences and nanotechnologies.

The award ceremony took place in April 10, 2015, at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, France on April 10, 2015. The ceremony was led by UNESCO's Director General Mrs. Irina Bokova.

Prof. Wandiga has distinctively represented Kenya at UNESCO's Executive Board (1995-1999) as well as in other additional UNESCO committees, projects and research work.

Prof. Wandiga was among eight laureates who received awards in Paris. He is also a founder member and former chair of the Kenya National Academy of Sciences. He has contributed immensely in sciences and development in various sectors.

The other Laureates were:

Mr. Valentin Bukhtoyarov (Russian Federation) :

Academician of the Russian Academy of Mining Science

Ms. Constance Chang-Hashnain (United States) : John R. Whinnery Chair Professor at the University of California, Berkeley

Ms. Soodabeh Davaran (Iran): Professor of Medicinal Chemistry at Tabriz University

Mr. Vladimir Fortov (Russian Federation): President of the Russian Academy of Sciences

Mr. Mikhail Kovalchuk (Russian Federation): Founder of the Kurchatov Nano-Bio -Info-Kogno Centre and Head of the Editorial Board of the journal Russian Nanotechnologies

Ms. Tebello Nyokong (South Africa): Professor of Medicinal Chemistry and Nanotechnology and Distinguished Professor of Chemistry at Rhodes University

Mr. Mikhail Selyanin (Russian Federation) : President of the International Research and Development Centre for Innovation Technologies

Prof Wandiga is also the Chancellor of Egerton University.

*“Prof. Wandiga has distinctively represented Kenya at UNESCO's Executive Board (1995-1999) ”*

## A STUDENTS PERSPECTIVE ON THE INSTITUTE FOR CLIMATE CHANGE AND ADAPTATION

*The sky is the limit. It gives me joy that I am student at the ICCA because my dreams are valid.*



Peter Oluoch MCCA 2013/2014

The signs of global climate change are all around us. Rain patterns are changing, the sea level is

rising, and snow and ice are melting, droughts are being experienced in higher frequency than before among others. As global temperatures continue to rise, we will see more changes in our climate and our environment. These changes will affect people, animals, and ecosystems in many ways. In order to cope, the global community needs to prepare and plan for the changes we know are coming, for this is what the adaptation is all about.

The Institute for Climate Change and Adaptation is a centre of budding scholars within the climate change community in which we are. The impact of the institute in Kenya is already a reality as recognized by the Climate Change Bill that outlines broad based measures to catalyze a low carbon development in the country. I owe much gratitude to Institute not just for its ability to nurture students but also for the high level of professionalism by the staff of the Institute. I continue to appreciate the ex-

ceptional networks of accomplished lecturer's, researchers, non- teaching members of staff: rich resources which has helped my contemporaries move a notch higher in the climate change field. In addition, we have been exposed to local and international speakers from all sectors linked to climate change debate. This adds to the world class insights relevant to us as we acquire this knowledge.

Be sure by the time a student graduates from ICCA, there is a lot that is inculcated in one's character. This includes respect for all disciplines, respect for society in which we learn from, academic excellence, appreciation of value of time among others. The trans-disciplinary approaches to problem solving which is so real, not easy, yet achievable, is an important mantra that our Institute strives to pass on to students with the hope that they shall adopt it when doing research and also while interacting with complex problem outside the university. By now I appreciate that we are all in the same climate change boat. Therefore everyone, whether a sweeper in the street or a farmer in that rural village, everyone from whatever class, profession, gender, race, religion, nation, tribe, ideologies, community in all corners of the earth is part and parcel in search of the solution.

Finally, In ICCA students are not only mentored to get a dissertation and secure better career prospects but also to change into simple greener, steps of our friends and families and multiply them by millions of people all over the world. The sky is the limit. It gives me joy that I am student at the ICCA because my dreams are valid.

## PROMOTIONS

The following staff were promoted after diligent service to the University

Dr Beth Ndunda	Lecturer	Chemistry	Female
Dr Marina Mukabi	Lecturer	Chemistry	Female
Fredrick Owino	Senior Technologist	Meteorology	Male
Rachael Sargutta	Tutorial Fellow	Sch. of Mathematics	Female
James Samoei	Snr. Technologist	Sch. of Biological Sciences	Male

# CBPS Pictorial

## COMMISSION FOR UNIVERSITY EDUCATION EXHIBITION AT MACHAKOS STADIUM



The Vice Chancellor Prof. P.M.F Mbithi greets staff members at the stand



The Vice Chancellor Interacts with Students

## Organization of Nairobi University Science Students (ONUSS) Election



ONUSS students practicing their democratic rights



# CBPS Pictorial

## ONUSU Officials sworn in



ONUSU Officials pay a courtesy call to the Principal and the Registrar after being sworn in. On the right – handover Ceremony by ONUSS officials



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## *Google Scholar Sensitization*



CBPS Academics being sensitized on Google Scholar



# CBPS Pictorial

## CBPS TEAM BUILDING



CBPS Team attend team building

## 10th ALUMNI Anniversary Celebrations



## Chiromo Campus Alumni Chapter Launch



# CBPS Pictorial

## CBPS BLOOD DONATION DRIVE



Chromo Campus Students and Blood Donation officials



Students Donating Blood

## SIR DAVID KING VISIT TO CBPS



Honored Guests attentively listening to the Lecture



Sir David's Lecture on Climate Change

## School of Computing and Informatics PhD Defense



CBPS Students in attendance at a PhD Defense





# CBPS Pictorial

## NUCOMSSA DINNER



Nairobi University Computer Science Students Association (NUCOMSSA) Members attend dinner at a Nairobi hotel

## Vice - Chancellor Visit to CBPS





# PROFILE OF THE NEW ONUSS CHAIRMAN

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*Creating the Environment for the Scientists of Tomorrow*



## JAPHETH GERALD ODERA CHAIRMAN ONUSS

Mr. Japheth Gerald Odera, born on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 1993 (age 21 years) and completing his third year in BSc. Industrial Chemistry. He is the current chairman of two organizations namely; Organization of Nairobi University Science Students (ONUSS) (after a tight race where he won with a landslide victory of 89%) and the Organization of Nairobi University Industrial Chemistry Students Association (UNICSA).

He is a humble, respectful and humorous young man who likes to maintain a smile all through the day. He values humanity and servant leadership and also believes in a growth mindset.

“a man who can control his thought can have and do what he wishes to have and to do; everything is his for the asking”

He is a well rounded and dynamic leader with over 8 years experience and rising in his leadership skills:

High school (Hobunaka Sec. School)

2008; served as the school's soccer captain and a class prefect

2009; He was elected the assistant academic prefect

2010; He was elected the school's academic prefect

University (University of Nairobi)

2012-2013; Chiromo Campus Soccer team captain

2013-2014; 2<sup>ND</sup> year representative University of Nairobi Industrial Chemistry Students Association (UNICSA)

2014-2015; April-elected Organizing secretary of Organization of Nairobi University Science Students (ONUSS), September; elected Chairman of University of Nairobi Industrial Chemistry Students Association (UNICSA)

2015-2016; overwhelmingly elected Chairman of Organization of Nairobi University Science Students (ONUSS).

Mission for ONUSS

1. To ensure that the University breeds leaders who are visionary, non-tribal, flexible, respectful, vibrant with humanity and fair enough to be heads in the current technologically advancing society.

2. To enhance unity among all students associations within the College of Biological and Physical Sciences (CBPS) Chiromo campus thus ensuring their common set objectives are achieved.

3. To work hand in hand with the College's administration and lecturers to help achieve and uphold the university's mission and vision.

4. To increase the student's giving back to the society activities such as community outreaches

He likes playing soccer and watching motivational videos and technology movies/documentaries.

His Special thanks go to the Department of Chemistry Lecturers for their support and nurturing. To name but few; Prof. Amir Yusuf (Chairman Department of Chemistry) Dr Solomon Derese, Prof Helen Njenga, Prof. G.N Kamau, Prof D..N Kariuki, Dr Ndakala, Prof Bhatt

Without forgetting Dr Muhi-School of Biological Sciences and Mr A. Tuka -ICT.

## CAMPUS LIFE by Ageng'o Naaman

Continued from Pg 2

of the institution. I joined the comrades' league when I received an invitation letter to join my 'University of Choice.' At this point the reality of university life dawned on me. Initially I was selected for a course where my heart was truly not in. For others in my predicament, since they always wanted to be at the university, they decided to come and do the course because they believed it is awesome to be at the university. Luckily I was able to change to a course of my choice and I soon became one of the joyous ones. Soon after registration, the second problem sprung up. For the first time, I realized that I was now on my own and problems such as shelter, food, clothing and other monies for any upcoming expenses that may arise were now mine to solve. It is at this time that I somehow began to try and see how I could adapt to this new life at the university. At

first, my spirits were high and I was all smiles but as time lapsed and the realities start dawning, the mood was destroyed. Oh what a turn of events!

In campus, classes seem not to be compulsory but the bottom line of it is that everything is particularly tougher than high school. One is required to read wide and smart in order to grasp some knowledge that is required of them. Learning at the university cannot be compared to high school as it is more intensive. Surprisingly, a majority of students understand that they have various volumes of books to read but it's as if they don't bother to read them. They always wait until the time when the exams are about to begin then that is the time when they know how to spend sleepless nights going through books and trying to grasp all the information that was pumped into their heads during the

*You cant stop the waves but you can learn to surf— John Kabat*



Students reporting at the "Ever-green" Chiromo Campus

entire semester. Those that were failed to attend lectures also have the same task. Exams are considered as hell on earth because it is the very same exam that determines whether one will move on to the next year or do a supplementary exam or get discontinued from the university if they have failed for quite a number of times without really showing remarkable performance in their term papers. Always at the mention of exams, all comrades are deflated. It makes them read vigorously and so you remain wondering is this also a part of pleasure at the university.

Concerning cash, the truth is that university life teaches a lot of individuals how to manage their finances. For instance one may have a certain amount of cash at their disposal but the challenge is to see the best way to manage this finance without finishing it at the wrong time. The truth at the table is that when your

finances at the university are done with, that is the beginning of sailing on troubled waters. Many potential students get it all wrong when they believe that university students earn a good sum from the government. Whatever amount of money that one receives from the government is always insufficient. There are so many things that demand money forcing university students to tighten their belts in order to adapt to these hard economic times.

In conclusion it is evident that life at the university is not like the way a majority of the potential students take it to be. It is tough and it requires creative planning, critical thinking and above all common sense to prevail. Times are changing and so must all the comrades. Remember life is not easy but you can always make it easy by