



SEPTEMBER 2010

VarsityFocus

A NEWSLETTER OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

**University of Nairobi shines
in performance contracting**



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.



In this Issue

VarsityFocus

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5. TOP U.S. LEADERS INTERACT WITH STUDENTS AND STAFF

Former US Secretary of State and former Senate Majority Leader, discuss democracy and legislative reforms.

Editorial

This edition of the Varsity Focus highlights activities that have taken place in the recent past. The University of Nairobi (UoN) is basking in the victory of performance contracting after the results of 2009/2010 were announced by the head of state in April 2010. UoN was the second best performing State Corporation and the best in the higher learning category. At the same time the international web ranking placed UoN ahead of all local Universities. It is number three in East Africa and 26 in Africa. Kudos to all members of staff and students for their hard work which has propelled UoN to these great heights.

The University also hosted top leaders who held discussions with students and staff on pertinent issues affecting reforms. The talks featured IMF Managing Director, Dominique Strauss-Kahn, Prime Minister the Rt. Hon. Raila Odinga, Dr. Madeleine Albright, former US Secretary of State and Thomas Daschle, former Senate Majority leader and currently Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the National Democratic Institute (NDI) respectively. These interactions not only improved the corporate image of the University but also positioned UoN as a focal point of academic discourse and a critical player in the reform process in the country.

The University also increased its outreach programmes through participation in the

Commission for Higher Education (CHE) exhibition, selected ASK shows, corporate launches, and other activities. This increased visibility of our academic programmes through more exposure to the public. Other units such as School of Computing and Informatics were more ingenious and hosted their own open days to showcase their student projects to the public.

International links on the other hand have increased our international profile with ties being strengthened with universities worldwide. Great interest has been expressed from universities in Iran, Korea and China to start links with UoN and at the same time an active campaign to strengthen links with leading UK, US and S.A. universities is in the pipeline.

Our scholars have been at the forefront in flying the UoN flag high. Varsity Focus congratulates Prof. Shem Wandiga and Prof. Jacob Midiwo for being admitted as Fellows of the Royal Society of Chemistry, (UK) and putting the UoN in international limelight.

These and other stories constitute the highlight of the September edition of the Varsity Focus.

Enjoy reading and remember to give us your feedback.

Charles E. Sikulu
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Vice-Chancellor's word



Prof. George A. O. Magoha
Vice-Chancellor

The University of Nairobi has a proud record of academic excellence having trained the highest number of professionals who continue to serve the country in virtually all the key sectors of the economy. Indeed, with a student population of 50,000, we remain the largest institution of higher learning in the region. The rapid growth in student numbers occasioned by the ever increasing demand for university education was made possible by the introduction of Module II programmes

about a decade ago.

The above expansion notwithstanding, our academic programmes still remain of the highest quality. According to the web ranking of World Universities, we are the top university in Kenya and 26th in Africa. Our position as the premier University was confirmed by our performance during the 2008/2009 contract year in which we were ranked number one among institutions of higher learning and second overall in the State Corporations category.

The University of Nairobi with its large pool of highly qualified academic staff, many of whom are of international repute, excellent physical infrastructure, a broad curriculum that is reviewed regularly to ensure relevance and an ideal location at the heart of East Africa's largest metropolis offers an ideal environment for learning and research. The graduands of the 43rd congregation are well prepared for the future having been taught and mentored by some of the

best scholars available.

In keeping with our tradition as an institution which cherishes free intellectual debate, the University of Nairobi has continued to host prominent international personalities in what Americans refer to as "Town Hall" meetings which provide a forum for discussion of various issues of interest.

The reason why they all choose to come to the University of Nairobi is because of our reputation as centre of academic excellence. We are proud to be associated with this most important national institution of higher learning whose contribution to national development is comparable to none.

I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate all the graduands for completing your various courses successfully. After you receive the power to read and do all that appertains to your degrees, you will join thousands of our proud alumni who have continued to excel wherever they go.

I would like to thank the Government of Kenya and other stakeholders for their support without which the 43rd Graduation Ceremony would not have been possible. We assured you that the University of Nairobi will not relent in its endeavour to become one of the best institutions of learning in this region and beyond.

The University of Nairobi has been scored as the best performing public university among the state corporations that were on performance contract in 2009/2010. The University was also number two nationally, among 139 state corporations with the first slot going to Nyayo Tea Zones Development Corporation.

The University, which has been on annual performance contract with the government since 2005/2006, has seen its composite score improve from 2.1209 in 2005/2006 to 1.8558 in 2009/2010.

No other Public University featured in the top ten corporations in 2009/2010 the second university having been scored at number 14.

The results were released by His Excellency President Mwai Kibaki together with The Rt. Hon. Prime Minister Raila Odinga, at a ceremony held at KICC on March 15, 2010. UoN's trophy was collected on behalf of the University by Prof. Crispus Kiamba, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology.

The introduction of performance contracts as the national management accountability framework in

University of Nairobi shines in performance contracting



The prize won by UoN during the 2009/2010 performance contract year

Kenya has led to re-definition of performance to mean greater focus on outputs and outcomes, rather than inputs, processes or preoccupation with activities. The idea has been to rationalize governance and ensure that public institutions work better with less costs.

A key objective of performance contracting is to free public sector managers from unproductive and uncoordinated activities, and ensure they focus on what really matters, by making the results oriented culture an organic part of every day life. This in turn helps to stem the erosion of public confidence in government institutions, by fulfilling the heightened expectations of the public with regard to attaining better performance standards in service delivery.

Some of the identifiable new systems that came with performance contracting are: the introduction of service delivery charters, ISO certification, enhanced appropriations-in-aid, strict measures on cost reduction/savings and insistence on an improved working environment; features which are very visible at the University of Nairobi. Other cross-sectoral targets have to do with addressing corruption, issues of HIV/AIDS, gender and disability mainstreaming. The University has prepared policies on managing these issues, and where necessary, established offices. One reason why



Higher Education Permanent Secretary, Prof. Crispus Kiamba with Chairman of Council, Mr. John Simba and Vice-chancellor, Prof. George Magoha, after signing the 2010/2011 performance contract. Prof. Peter Mbithi, DVC (A&F) is in the background.

The idea has been to rationalize governance and ensure that public institutions work better with less costs.

the University has performed well is due to greater ownership of the process on account of the fact that the performance contract process is cascaded downstream. Faculties and teaching departments have therefore been put on performance contract by respective colleges, which are also on contract with the University Management Board. It means that targets are able to be

“cut” and distributed to specific units, including central departments. When they report their actual performance based on targets, the total is consolidated to form the University’s quarterly and annual performance contract reports. The colleges, which are also evaluated and ranked, take this process very seriously.

Meanwhile, the Performance Contract Department under the Office of the Prime Minister has issued new Sector Performance Standards (SPS) to guide the performance contract process. The SPS seeks to properly link the performance contracting process to Vision 2030, the governments long term strategy for achieving global competitiveness and prosperity. One key objective is to

link results - based management and performance contracting to the implementation of the Vision goals, making it easier to reward public servants for merit and performance.

The SPS also seeks to address concerns from stakeholders, including the public about service delivery in government institutions, and the inconsistency between perceived performance and actual ratings. The SPS identifies and develops sector standards (indicators and targets) for each broad sector in accordance with best international practices.

Public Universities, which fall under the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology have been put under the Research, Innovation and Technology (RIT) sector, with two key result areas of developing a culture of scientific innovation, and global competitiveness of higher education. New targets largely addressing science, technology, innovation and competitiveness have therefore been developed and issued to Universities.

These new targets feature in the newly negotiated University of Nairobi Performance Contract for 2010/2011 and have been cascaded to the colleges and units.

In this era of performance contracts, the University is set to continue improving and enhancing service delivery to its clients, customers, stakeholders and the public at large.



University Management during one of the review meetings held in Nakuru, Merica Hotel

It is now official; the University of Nairobi (UoN) is the best performing institution of higher learning in the country. UoN beat six other public universities to emerge first in the 2008/2009 contract year. The results were announced in a colorful ceremony presided over by H.E. President Mwai Kibaki and the Prime Minister Rt. Hon. Raila Odinga at KICC on April, 26, 2010.

In the State Corporations category with 139 entries, UoN was second overall. The nearest competitor among public universities was Kenyatta University in position 14, followed by Jomo Kenyatta University of Science and Technology at 22, Moi University at 36, Maseno University at 46, Masinde Muliro University of Science

UoN leads in performance contracting and Web ranking

and Technology at 50 and Egerton University at 83.

This performance is a great improvement on previous performance of 2006/2007 where UoN emerged second in the University category.

In terms of composite scoring, the University of Nairobi earned 1.85 which was higher than the leading

government ministry/department – State Law Office – which scored 2.1. The Performance Evaluation Report, which was officially unveiled by the President, noted visible improvement in the overall performance of institutions. The performance contract is normally signed between the University Council and the government for a period of one year. cont. next page

In a related development, UoN is now ranked first among local Universities and 26 in Africa in the current web ranking of universities. It is followed by Strathmore University. at 31, Moi at 74, Kenyatta University at 80 and Egerton at 97. University of Cape still retains position one.

In East Africa, UoN is ranked 3rd slightly behind Makerere and Dar es Salaam universities who are in positions 13 and 22 respectively in Africa. In Sub-Saharan Africa, UoN is ranked position 19.

“UoN leads local Universities in web ranking”

Established in 2004, Webometric ranking is published twice in a year and covers over 20,000 Higher institutions worldwide. Their intention is to have a web performance that reflect accurately, their activities. It targets 12,000 universities in the world. Web indicator based ranking reflects the whole picture as many

Learn French language for international competitiveness

The University of Nairobi should enhance teaching of French language to enable Kenyans to be competitive for international jobs. This call came from Kenya’s newly appointed Ambassador to France, Ambassador Salma Ahmed when she paid a courtesy call on the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic Affairs Prof. Jacob Kaimenyi. Ambassador Ahmed challenged Kenyans to learn French and take advantage of many international jobs. She noted that Rwanda and other French-speaking countries in Africa had a competitive edge over other African countries due to their fluency in French.

The University of Nairobi, she added, was a regional leader and therefore should retain its position in academic excellence. She advised the University to liaise with the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with a view to working towards establishing links and collaborations.

She promised to assist the University to establish links and collaborations with institutions

in France - where she is the Ambassador- and in Portugal and Serbia where she is accredited. Ambassador Salma Ahmed was a part-time lecturer at University of Nairobi before her appointment as Ambassador.

On his part, Prof. Jacob T Kaimenyi congratulated Ambassador Ahmed on her appointment. He also commended her for taking the initiative to call on the University of Nairobi and her willingness to facilitate collaboration between the University and institutions in France.

He assured her that the University would work towards enhancing the teaching of French and explore ways of establishing collaborations with French institutions.

Among those present during the courtesy call were Prof. E.H.N. Njeru, Dean, Faculty of Arts and Dr. Bilha M. Mwenesi, Ag. Chairman, Sub-Department of French.

Varsity Focus joins the rest of the University community in congratulating Ambassador Salma Ahmed on her appointment.

IMF Boss leads discourse on Africa's economic transformation

The University of Nairobi hosted a high level discussion on “Africa’s Economic Transformation” led by the International Monetary Managing Director (IMF) Dominique Strauss-Kahn. The discussion was part of a strategy engaged by the IMF to assist Africa in solving its social, economic and political problems. The MD while addressing the gathering said “with recovery underway, Africa should address longer term challenges to the continent’s future, including governance issues and climate change, in order to press ahead with the region’s economic transformation.”

The discussion at Taifa Hall in March 2012 featured other panelists among them; the Prime Minister, the Rt. Honourable, Raila Odinga; the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Hon Uhuru Kenyatta; and prominent environmentalist, Wangari Maathai. Others were Bob Geldolf a musician and philanthropist Mr. Akere Muna. The Prime Minister and his deputy underscored the Kenya government’s commitment to addressing the problems affecting the nation.

Others who addressed the well attended interaction included the

Minister for Higher Education Science and Technology, Dr. Sally Kosgey, University of Nairobi, Chancellor, Dr. Joseph Wanjui, and the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. George Magoha. More discussions were slated for Zambia and South Africa. Other participants in the discussion included students, diplomats, top civil servants and members of the civil society among others.

After the discussion, Mr. Strauss-Kahn and Rt. Hon Odinga planted commemorative trees at the open grounds next to the administration block.



IMF Boss, Dominique Strauss-Kahn, plants a commemorative tree at Main Campus grounds. Above: At Taifa Hall with top government officials in a town hall meeting with students and staff.



Prime Minister's talk with students

The Rt. Hon. Prime Minister, Raila Odinga reiterated the Government's commitment to the realization of Vision 2030. He made the statement at a gathering at the Taifa Hall, in March, 2010. The gathering which had been organised to engage the PM on the future of Kenya's economy. Participants comprised of graduate students from the Sloan School of Management of Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), USA and students from local universities led by University of Nairobi students.

The purpose of the Forum was to provide an opportunity for

young students to interact with their peers from the USA and to engage the Prime Minister on Kenya's development challenges. The Forum was structured with two panels –one for the Kenyan university students and the other for the visiting MIT students. The talk centred on governance, social cohesion, education, infrastructure and access to financing. The students raised various issues affecting their livelihood at their institutions among them, funding to upgrade and expand infrastructure and improved staff remuneration.

The purpose of the Forum was to engage the youth on the future of Kenya's economy



Prime Minister, Rt Hon Raila Odinga waters a commemorative tree at the Main Campus

The PM arrived at the University at 4.00 pm for the two-hour discussion and was met by top management led by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Administration and Finance, Prof. Peter Mbithi, who also represented the Vice-Chancellor. Prof. Mbithi welcomed the PM and thanked him for visiting and engaging the University community twice in less than two weeks. A week earlier the PM was at the University with the IMF Managing Director Mr. Dominique Strauss Kahn, when the latter led a discussion on "Africa's Economic Transformation". While thanking Management for organizing a successful interaction, the PM expressed optimism that such activities would be held frequently at the University.

Launch of Corruption Prevention Committees

The University of Nairobi (UoN) launched the Corruption Prevention Committee (CPC) in a colourful ceremony held at the Central Catering Unit (CCU). The function was presided over by the Kenya Anti Corruption Commission (KACC). Dr. Arborgust Akidiva, the then Acting Assistant Director, Preventive Services, represented the Director.

In his presentation to top management, Integrity officers and students, Dr. Akidiva commended UoN for restructuring its operations to ensure accountability saying that the University was on the right track to prevent corruption. He revealed that KACC has trained over 299 integrity officers in the public sector and sensitized over 25,000 public servants on governance, ethics and corruption. The Assistant Director further announced plans to undertake compliance testing – verify an organization’s professional integrity objectives, focus on identifying culprits, recommending officers with high integrity to man sensitive areas and focus on operational areas that nurture corruption.

The Vice-Chancellor, Prof. George Magoha in his remarks stated that CPCs shall include integrity officers who will advise the committee on integrity issues. Also supporting

the CPCs, will be corruption reporting offices, which shall be established and spread throughout the whole University to assist in expediting information gathering from all stakeholders. Graft prevention at the University shall be waged at the central administration and in all the Colleges. The central CPC is headed by the Vice-Chancellor and comprises the Deputy Vice-Chancellors and Principals of Colleges. This structure cascades to the college level where the CPC’s comprise Deans, Directors and other heads of departments and they are chaired by the Principals

UoN formally began the journey towards good governance and best practices six years ago, when the first 25 integrity assurance officers were recruited and trained to coordinate corruption prevention within the



Dr. Arborgust Akidiva, the then Acting Assistant Director, Preventive Services, KACC

University. This initial groundwork made it easier for management to constitute the CPCs on time.

The coordination of the work of CPCs is domiciled in UMB under the legal office. Among those who attended the presentation include Dr. Betty Gikonyo, member, University of Nairobi Council, Deputy Vice-Chancellors, Principals, Deans and Directors, members of staff and students. The launch of the CPCs is also a target in the current performance contract.

The School of Computing and Informatics held its annual ICT Open Day on Friday, 23rd July 2010 with the theme "ICT Innovations for a better future". The best of student projects and research activities were showcased to industry, employers and prospective students. The event, presented a wide range of highly innovative application systems that use a variety of technologies such as mobile phones and the internet to provide access to information. The open day was also an occasion for students to interact with prospective employers and entrepreneurs in the ICT sector.

The Chief Guest, Professor Sherrilyne Fuller, Director, Centre for Public Health Informatics, University of Washington, commended the projects saying that their quality was of international standard. One of the projects that was on display included a mobile phone based applications with a sound driven interfaces that allowed visually impaired persons to use their mobile phones. This project was developed by Fredrick Omondi

Another project was an application aimed at eliminating the traditional way of data sales collection and identification of the trends and patterns within the data. The project was done in four modules, web, mobile, desktop-client and the web-map and was developed by Linnet Kwamboka. Another project was the SMS-based mobile questionnaire for conducting surveys. The system generates questionnaire questions which are handed out to respondents or posted at central locations where

they can be read. The application was developed by Chris Wangai.

An interesting innovation was the development of the malaria drugs data collection and consumption prediction system which focuses on the supply of drugs to various stations i.e. dispensaries, clinics and hospitals. The developer of this system, Wambui Muiru, says this will address the problem of inefficient drug procurement and management that always leads to over-supply in some areas and under-supply in others.

A project on the performance of cloud computing on the problem of the travelling salesman demonstrated a classical mathematical problem concerned with finding the shortest distance travelled between a number of cities-starting in one city visiting all the other cities once before returning to the starting point. "This is a computationally intensive problem with a number of different algorithms being formulated to come up with an optimal result", said Janet Ngugi, the developer.

Computer Science students Open Day



Computer Science students showcase projects during the annual open day held at the School of Computing and Informatics.

The Open, Distance and E-learning Centre (ODEL) was launched at the College of Education and External Studies (CEES) in July. The facility which is sponsored by the African Virtual University (AVU) and African Development Bank (ADB) boasts state of the art ICT equipment and training facilities.

The chief guest, Dr. Bakary Diallo, Rector AVU underscored the importance of the Centre and its role as a



The Open Distance and E-Learning Centre at Kikuyu Campus.

E-learning Centre launched

physical hub for the creation, organization and sharing of knowledge and the development of ODeL programmes at UoN. The Centre will offer a training facility for staff on the use of ICT in the development, delivery and management of open and distance E-learning. It will be a delivery point for future programmes as well as a research station. It is envisaged that its long term sustainability can be guaranteed by enabling the University to generate more revenue. The AVU programme is being implemented in nine other countries to unlock the potential of ICTs to increase access to higher quality education.

According to the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between AVU and UoN, the latter will provide physical space and

facilities, direct student support services, provide a pool of local facilitators, maintain all the equipment and facilities associated with the ODeL programmes running at the centre and ensure the daily delivery and operations of the programmes. The Vice-Chancellor, in a speech read on

The AVU programme is being implemented in nine other countries to unlock the potential of ICTs to increase access to higher quality education.

his behalf by the Principal, College of Health Sciences, Prof. Isaac Kibwage, thanked AVU and ADB

for their support and commitment in ensuring that the Centre was fully operational. The centre received furniture, 30 computers, Local Area Network (LAN), Audio Video equipment, power back up, software bandwidth, a two-way VSAT connectivity with a minimum of 640 kbps paid for by AVU.

According to the Director of ODeL, Dr. Harriet Kidombo, the Centre will serve as the locus for e-learning functions of the University and its timely completion will contribute to the realization of the University's plan.

The Principal, Prof. Henry Mutoro appreciated AVU's contribution through the supply of equipment while the Dean, School of Continuing and Distance Education, Dr. Guantai Mboroki noted that the Centre will benefit the Bachelor of Education Science programme through increased enrolment and improved quality by availing more references online.

Participation in Nyeri Expo

The University of Nairobi (UoN) was among 42 institutions of higher learning that participated in the eighth Commission for Higher Learning Educational Fair that took place at the Nyeri Green

Hills Hotel, between 25th and 27th April, 2010.

The six colleges and supporting departments took up 20 stands and for the three-day period targeted prospective students

from Central Province and its neighbourhood. In previous years, CHE has organized exhibitions in Kisumu, Mombasa and Nakuru on a rotational basis in order to improve access to information on higher education. Prior to the rotation rule, the exhibition was confined to Nairobi. The response in Nyeri was good though not as overwhelming as the previous ones in the other regions – perhaps due to poor timing as it was held close to the end of first term when examinations are held.

Among the top ranking officials who visited the UoN stand included the Chairperson of the UoN Alumni Association, Dr. Betty Gikonyo and the Principal, College of Education and External Studies, Prof. Henry Mutoro among others. The exhibition was officially closed by Prof. Raphael Munavu, Chairman, Kenya National Examinations Council, also Chairman of Council, South Eastern University College and a Professor of Chemistry, University of Nairobi.

Mwangi Kiige, Assistant Registrar, attends to students. Above: Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Mabel Imbuga at the UoN Pharmacy stand.





An ECOSA member receives a certificate from the Principal College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Prof. Isaac Mbeche.

Economics Students hold a **successful** exhibition

For the second year running, the School of Economics organized a successful career exhibition at the Great Court. The event was organized by the Economics Students Association (ECOSA) and the Placement Office with overwhelming response from students. The two-day event attracted over 2000 visitors comprising mainly students who visited various stands and accessed information on careers and other issues from various organizations,

other students got opportunities to file their resumes with some organizations for internship and other working opportunities.

The aim of the exhibition held in February this year, was to create a conducive environment for students to interact with their potential employers. The time when employers used to directly recruit students upon completion of their studies is long gone and students have devised ways of engaging future employers. Among the companies that took part in

the exhibition included: British American Tobacco (BAT), PKF, Housing Finance, Kenya Accounts and Secretaries National Examining Board (KASNEB), Equity Bank, Bamburi Cement, CFC – Stanbic, National Social and Security Fund, Price Waterhouse Coopers (PWC), Deloitte & Touch, Family Bank and KPMG.

Speaking to 'Varsity Focus', one of the exhibitors noted that career days organized by the Dean of Students' Office are a good initiative; the challenge is for the University to organize more platforms for students to engage prospective employers. Further, universities must take urgent measures that will help in marketing their students as is the practice in the western countries.

University of Tehran to **open** **ties**



Iran Ambassador to Kenya, Dr. Seyed Ali Sharifi with Vice-Chancellor, Prof. George Magoha.

The government of Iran is keen to develop educational ties with the University of Nairobi (UoN). This was revealed by the Iranian Ambassador to Kenya, Dr. Seyed Ali Sharifi when he paid a courtesy call on the Vice-Chancellor Prof. George Magoha in April, 2010.

Ambassador Sharifi said that Iran was keen on developing links between the University of Tehran and UoN: for the two institutions to excel as academic centers. For a start, the Embassy will set up an Iranian Centre at UoN and explore staff and student exchange

programmes, the Centre will also lay ground for the teaching of the Persian language. Prof. Magoha welcomed the new partnership with the government of Iran and termed the impending collaboration as a benefit that will strengthen ties not only between the two universities but also the countries.

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Egyptian Embassy donates computers

The Egyptian Embassy recently donated computers and books to the University of Nairobi. The donation which was made to the Department of Linguistics and Languages is aimed at facilitating the teaching of the Arabic Language in the Department.

The donation of two computers and reading materials was made by the Deputy Ambassador, Mr. Ahmed Hares who represented the Ambassador. In brief remarks, Mr. Ahmed said that “the donation apart from strengthening the teaching of Arabic also marked the formal beginnings of cooperation between Egypt and the University of Nairobi”.

The Director, Centre for International Programmes and Links, Prof. Mitema who received the donations on behalf of the University thanked the Embassy for their donation. The Department of Linguistics and Languages runs both postgraduate and undergraduate programmes in Arabic. Currently, 80 students have enrolled for the Arabic language course according to the Chairman, Dr. Andrew Mbatia. The Department admitted its first batch of M.A. Arabic language students this academic year.

Collaboration with U.S Science Foundation

The University of Nairobi (UoN) is working on a joint venture with the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) to establish a long term collaborative effort in materials research and education among African countries and the USA. This was revealed by Dr. Zakya Kafafi, Division Director, NSF, during a courtesy call to the Vice-Chancellor. Dr. Kafafi is part of a three-member team that is on a familiarization and fact finding mission at the University of Nairobi.

UoN was picked by the government to host the material science institute

According to Dr. Kafafi, the other countries to be included in this venture include Ethiopia, Tanzania and Uganda.

Material science engineering is mainly concerned with the design, manufacture and use of all classes of materials. In coming to Kenya, the team is assessing the state of UoN facilities that would help in concretizing the proposal for the establishment of a materials institute which will rely heavily on student and staff exchanges

with the University of Michigan, University of Columbia and California Institute of Technology.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic Affairs, Prof. Jacob Kaimenyi while chairing the meeting on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor, thanked Dr. Kafafi for choosing UoN to partner with NSF in the area of materials science noting that this would benefit many other departments in the University; materials science is taught in the physical sciences, health sciences, engineering and architecture departments within the University. UoN was picked by the government to host the material science institute and it is envisaged that the benefits will be shared with other institutions. The School of Engineering is already part of

an engineering network involving five universities in Africa in materials science.

The team from UoN that has been working on mainstreaming materials science as a discipline, including Prof. John Onyari, Prof. Paul Shiundu, Prof. Raphael Munavu (Dept. of Chemistry) Prof. Bernard Aduda (Dept. of Physics) were present at the meeting. Others who attended included Prof. Bernard Njoroge, Principal, College of Architecture and Engineering, Dr. Jamin Were, Director, School of Mathematics and Prof. George Rading, Dept. of Mechanical Engineering.



Dr. Zakya Kafafi, Division Director, NSF.



Students in a massive tree planting exercise in MAU Forest

“over 600 students and members of the local community participated in the exercise in which over 25 acres of indigenous trees were planted in the forest”

University of Nairobi Students belonging to the Youth Agency for Development of Science Technology and Innovation (YADSTI) planted over 11,000 tree seedlings in Kiptunga, Mau Forest. The over 600 students and members of the local community participated in the exercise in which over 25 acres of indigenous trees were planted in the forest.

The initiative comes in the wake of sustained efforts by the government, the international community and other stakeholders keen on improving forest cover in one of the most important ecological zones of the region. Indeed, forest cover in Kenya has reduced drastically due to human encroachment and related activities. In Mau Forest Complex alone, more than 97,000 hectares of forest cover has been cleared over the last 15 years. This is catastrophic to the environment considering the fact that forest cover nationally has reduced to 1.7

percent against the recommended 10 percent, hence, the efforts by YADSTI and other stakeholders to join hands in conservation.

Earlier, YADSTI held its sixth Annual Science conference on the theme “Effects of Climate Change in Africa and Environmental Conservation for Sustainable Development in Kenya.” The two-day conference began with an indoor workshop that took place at the UNEP Complex, Gigiri on 9th April 2010.

Over the years, YADSTI has maintained an impressive record in enhancing the scientific quality of undergraduate students in the University and producing holistic individuals able to handle life beyond campus.

YADSTI is a leading science-based students’ organization founded in 2004 with the objective of enhancing a science culture among its members.

CARTA Supports PhDs to Boost Scholarship

The University of Nairobi (UoN) is set to benefit from the Consortium for Advanced Research Training in Africa (CARTA) support for institutional capacity to conduct high quality research, and doctoral training to enhance the local production of well trained researchers and scholars.

CARTA will engage in institutional support to enhance research management

This was said by Prof. Okoth Alubo during the launch of the CARTA program at UoN. According to Prof. Alubo, part of CARTA's mission is to enhance training capacity to replace retiring academic staff in many African Universities. To achieve the goal of sustained growth of intellectuals, CARTA will engage in institutional support to enhance research management and productivity and inter-disciplinary, multi-country, and cross-institutional Ph.D programmes. At UoN, this will be done through a multi disciplinary

Ph.D. training and supervisory program in population and public health.

Nine universities from Africa and three research institutions are CARTA's current members. Among them are : African Population and Health Research Centre (APHRC), Agincourt Health and Population Unit, South Africa, Ifakara Health Institute, Tanzania and KEMRI Wellcome Trust Research Programme, Kenya. The northern partners include: WHO Special Programme for Training in Research in Tropical Diseases (TDR), Swiss Tropical Institute, Switzerland, University of Colorado, USA,

University of Warwick, UK, Canadian Coalition for Global Health Research, and Monash University, Australia. They bring on board experience in running Ph.D. programmes, mentorship and supervision of Ph.D. students, and skills in building institutional research and training capacity.

The programme is domiciled in the Population Studies Research Institute (PSRI) and was officially launched on June 28, 2010 by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic Affairs, Prof. Jacob Kaimenyi, in a ceremony attended by academicians and students from related disciplines.



Prof. Jacob Kaimenyi with Prof Okoth Alubo during the launch of the CARTA Programme.

The University of Nairobi (UoN) will soon start a master's programme in peace, security and development. The new programme, a joint venture between UoN and the Kings College London (KCL) is meant to boost capacity and knowledge of peace and security studies in the region. This was revealed by the Kings College, Vice-Principal, Keith Hoggart when he led a delegation of scholars to pay a courtesy call on the Vice-Chancellor.

The collaboration between KCL and UoN's Institute for Development Studies (IDS) according to Prof. Hoggart, is anticipated to not only



The delegation from Kings College led by Vice-Principal, Prof. Keith Hoggart (Right).

Postgraduate course **out of** partnership with Kings College

further knowledge in the area of peace, security and development but also include a component of student and staff exchange.

Hoggart welcomed the link between UoN and KCL and clarified that “ultimately, the MoU will set up a leadership centre, targeting the youth with a focus on proper mentoring and high expectations on a trickle-down effect meant to benefit universities, the country and the entire continent.” Thus, UoN was identified as the institution to drive change in Africa through a programme that focuses on knowledge transfer.

The collaboration will target regional blocks to support the programme in spreading the gospel of peace and security in Africa – a continent where war is a permanent feature on the United Nations Security Council's agenda.

“The choice of Kenya by KCL is because of its strategic

location and role in peace and conflict resolution within the region” said Funmi Olonisakin, Director, African Leadership Centre, who was part of the KCL delegation.

Prof. Jacob Kaimenyi, who represented the Vice-Chancellor (Prof. Magoha, Prof. George welcomed the new initiative on capacity building in peace and conflict and cautioned that “the strength of this collaboration will be tested on the basis of effect through enlarged peace and reduction of conflicts in the region”.

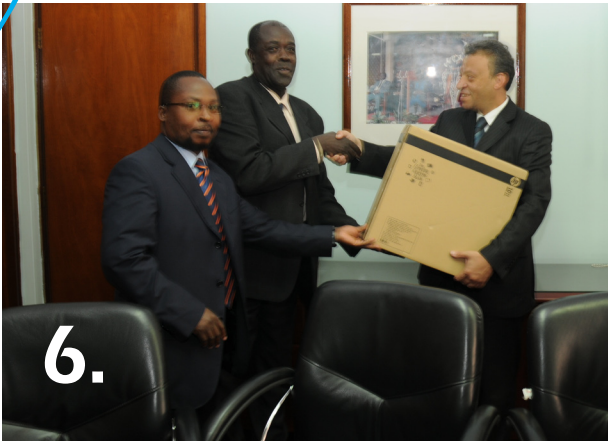
Also in the KCL delegation were Ms Jackie Philips and Mr. Godwin Murunga of the African leadership Centre which initiated contacts between IDS and KCL. Others present at the meeting included, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Administration and Finance, Prof. Peter Mbithi, Principal, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Prof. Isaac Mbeche, and the Acting Director, Centre for International Programmes and Links Prof. Seth Macligeyo.

picture



1. Vice-Chancellor Prof. George Magoha with visiting scholars from the University of Sydney.
2. Trophies for the interuniversity championships.
3. Eng. Joseph K. Njoroge CEO, Kenya Power and Lighting Company hands over a cheque to Prof. Isaac Mbeche, Principal, College of Humanities and Social Sciences to sponsor the AIBUMA 2010 Conference.
4. One of the graduate recruitment agencies which gave career tips to students and collected CVs for placement.
5. Finance Officer, Michael Karue, opens the customer care office for finance.

speak



6. Mr. Ahmed Hares, Deputy, Egyptian Ambassador hands over a computer to the Chairman of Linguistics and Languages, Dr. Andrew M. Mbatia.



7. UNES Board of Directors after the company was ISO certified. UNES is wholly owned by the University of Nairobi.



8. Justice Minister, Mutula Kilonzo with stakeholders in an awareness campaign at Taifa Hall.

9. Representatives from UoN, AVU and ADB shortly after the launch of the ODEL centre.





Vice-Chancellor of UCT, Dr. Max Price (Right) and Deputy Vice-Chancellor Prof. Thandabantu Nhlapo.

UoN strengthens ties with UCT

The University of Cape Town (UCT) is working towards strengthening its ties with the University of Nairobi. This was revealed by the Vice-Chancellor of UCT, Dr. Max Price when he paid a courtesy call on the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. George Magoha. The call was part of a two-day visit meant to revitalize links between the two institutions. Dr. Price was accompanied by his Deputy Prof. Thandabantu Nhlapo .

The talks focused on strengthening links in various programmes of the two institutions

through student and staff exchanges among other activities. Dr. Price said that “part of the reason for the visit was to establish relationships with universities in the North through USHEPiA” (University’s Science Humanities and Engineering Partnerships in Africa) – a forum that promotes collaboration among universities in Eastern and Southern Africa.

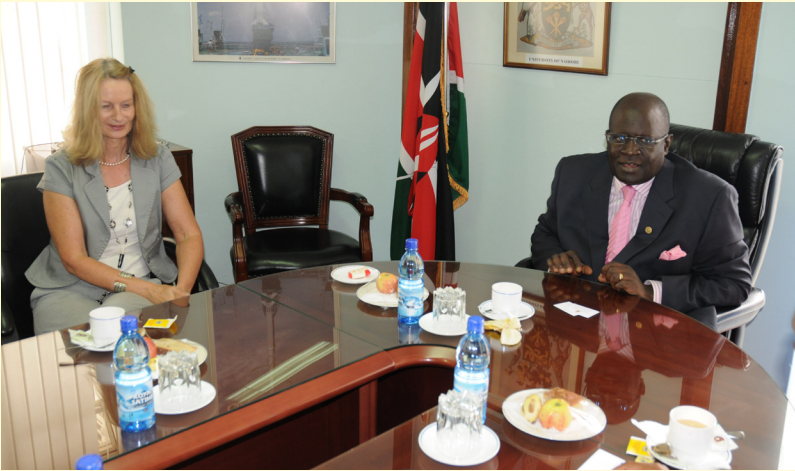
Among the disciplines identified for collaboration were business

(UCT’s school of business standing at 75 in the latest webmetric ranking is among the best schools in the world), bioinformatics and agriculture among others. During the meeting, Prof. George Magoha vouched for a joint resources centre that will be beneficial to the Universities. The delegation also visited the University of Nairobi’s Institute of Tropical and Infectious Diseases (UNITID).

In a separate development, an international student convention is being organized for all student leaders in the continent.

UCT’s school of business standing at 75 in the latest webmetric ranking is among the best schools in the world

DAAD representative leaves after five years



The DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service) Country Director, Gabriele Von Fircks with Vice-Chancellor, Prof. George Magoha, in April.

“The German government has had a long standing relationship with the University of Nairobi which has benefited many”

The DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service) Country Director, Gabriele Von Fircks left the country after a successful five-year stint. She said this in a special farewell meeting with the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. George Magoha, in April.

Fircks recollected her memories of the UoN where she helped create a solid foundation between the two organizations among other activities in the country. Prof. Magoha praised DAAD on its consistent

funding for UoN postgraduate programmes.

According to Prof. Eunice Mutito, Director, Board of Postgraduate Studies, the University got eight DAAD postgraduate scholarships among them three PhDs during the last academic year. The scholarships normally carry an attractive stipend as compared to many others and are processed fast.

Most DAAD scholarship beneficiaries have been able to

keep local appointments; the high return rate is anchored in the policy of the scholarships that restricts beneficiaries from remaining in Germany. Fircks assured the Vice-Chancellor that her replacement Mr. Christoff Hansert, will foster the good relationship that she developed.

The German government has had a long standing relationship with the University of Nairobi which has benefited many students to further their studies, and, scholars to undertake research.

The University of Nairobi (UoN) has become the first institution in the region to start programmes in Korean studies and language. This achievement was realized after the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. George Magoha and the Academy of Korean Studies (AKS) President Kim Jung Bae signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in a ceremony attended by the AKS visiting delegation and their UoN counterparts in early June, 2010.

The scope of the MoU includes cooperation in research, exchange of academic materials, publications, and other scientific materials as well as staff and students exchange programme. "The MoU shall last five years and is renewable after every three years". Jung, was delighted that AKS is cooperating with UoN to develop Korean studies, and noted that this would extend exchange opportunities to students and staff for capacity building purposes.

Prof. Magoha on his part commended the Academy for supporting UoN to launch the programme and the capacity building initiative through staff and students' exchange. The programme will be housed in the Department of Literature which has already benefited by receiving two full postgraduate scholarships tenable at AKS with effect from September 2010.

Present during the signing of the MoU was the Principal, College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHSS), Prof. Isaac Mbeche, Prof.

University of Nairobi to start Korean Studies

Enos Njeru, Dean, Faculty of Arts, Dr. Peter Wasamba, Chairman, Dept. of Literature, Prof. Seth Macligeyo, Acting Director, Centre for International Programmes and Links and Ms. Rebecca Ng'ondo, the Chief Legal Officer. Those accompanying the President included Lee Sang Hoon, Director, Centre for International Affairs, Kown Hee Young, Director, Strategic Initiative for Korean Studies, and Choi Moon Hyoung, Researcher, Division of Understanding Korea Project.



Academy of Korean Studies (AKS) President Kim Jung Bae and Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Magoha after the signing of the MOU between the two institutions.

How the halls of Residence are named

The African traditional system was rich in names/symbolism. Each child was appropriately named, as part of a gesture/ritual to ensure that they grew up with values embodied in the name. At the University of Nairobi we have our own names for various halls of residence, but slothfully we have forgotten the names and refer to the halls by

number, almost as if denigrating our history, our tradition.

My editor challenged me to go out and dig deeper into the names of the halls, and to come up with a journeying story, so here goes:

In 1956, following the completion and intake of students of the Royal College, Halls 1-3 for men and phase one block for women was completed. These halls were to stay

without “christening” until 1964 when the college council approved that Hall One be named Mitchell, after Sir Philip Mitchell, the then governor of the Kenya Protectorate, who laid the foundation stone in 1954.

Hall two was named Radhakrisnan after the then Vice president of India. Hall three was named Rogers after Sir Philip Rogers, who had served as chairman of the Council of the Royal College, Nairobi. In late 1965, Hall four which had been completed in 1964 was named Nyerere. This was apt because following the transformation of the Royal College Nairobi into the inter-territorial University of East Africa; Julius K. Nyerere was the first Chancellor of the University of East Africa.

One of the women’s halls was named after Lady Sidney Farrar who had given notable and devoted service in the college council for many years. Creativity seemed to have ended

In 1956, following the completion and intake of students of the Royal College, Halls 1-3 for men and phase one block for women was completed





Hall 13 (Kwame Nkurumah), which house ladies. Opposite page is Hall 11 (Jamhuri) for senior male students.

Hall 13 was named after Kwame Nkurumah, an African Statesman and first president of the Republic of Ghana

because between 1967 and 1969, Hall 5 was named Elgon while the conglomeration of halls now known as 6, 7, and 8 were named Nile, University, and Africa, respectively.

Creativity and African zeal for intellectualism resurfaced in 1969 with the naming of Hall nine-Mboya after Joseph Tom Mboya – a former minister for planning and national development who was assassinated in 1969. In 1972, a new hall now known as Hall 12 was named for Ronald Ngala, while Halls 10, 11 and 13 were named for Dag Hammarskjold, Jamhuri or the Republic of Kenya, and Kwame Nkurumah respectively. Dag Hammarskjold, secretary general of the United Nations, died when

his plane was shot down, while Nkurumah is remembered as an African Statesman and first president of the Republic of Ghana.

Hall 14, also known as Afro Unity was not a university owned hall in that sense. It was, simply put a bar on Muindi Mbingu Street, the door of which many a student cannot recall ever seeing closed, save for three days in 1982 during the aborted coup. Sadly, this Hall was finally closed in the early 2000's, it is now a market stalls.

Between 1972 and 1991, no more halls of residence were constructed on main campus. Instead, through acquisition, the University purchased the former Government Secretarial College

renamed Lower Statehouse. In true tradition, the University again followed up the Government and again acquired the Parklands campus, then the Government Secretarial College. In 1977, the University acquired Mary's Hall-now Stella Awinja. In 1991, the University completed the now Mamlaka Halls, -Mamlaka is a translation of Protectorate, which is the name of the road that runs adjacent to the halls.

Students have evolved interesting names for their halls of residence, for instance, those at Kenyatta named their block SOWETO, maybe as an indication that these halls were crowded. The name, SOWETO again was borrowed by students of Upper Kabete for another of their halls, Kabete students, perhaps to immortalise their discipline of agriculture, had Halls such as Wakulima, Tana River etc. they also have halls that can be linked to the struggle for independence, land and development hence Mugabe and Mandela halls. At Kikuyu, the first halls put up when the College acquired university status were known as Pioneer, then when the University put up a new stately and modern hall, the students named it Kimberly, there was the suggestion that this new hall had been mined, it was golden and perhaps since it accommodated both male and female students, it made the 'rush for gold' much easier. Lower Kabete was acquired from the Government, once a training institute for district administrators it is not surprising that the halls are named after districts and regions eg Narok, Malindi etc.

Royal Society of Chemistry honours UoN scholars

Prof. Shem Oyoo Wandiga was recently admitted as a fellow of the Royal Society of Chemistry, (UK). Prof. Wandiga has now been allowed to use the initial FRSC after his name. This was contained in a communication from Dr. David W. Barr, Membership and Business Qualifications Manager, Royal Society of Chemistry.

The honour, according to Prof. Wandiga, is shared between the University of Nairobi, his family and all his former students whose research has highlighted achievements in chemistry. His name alongside that of his colleague in the department, Prof. Jacob Midiwo,



Prof. Shem Wandiga

appeared in the Times of London.

Prof. Wandiga is a professor in the Department of Chemistry and also Chairman of Council, Bondo

University College. He once served as the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Administration and Finance at the University of Nairobi.

Prof. Wandiga has authored several papers, reports, conference presentations and books. A veritable scholar, he has attended public lectures and international conferences. He has served as consultant for government and other bodies. Born 70 years ago, Prof. Wandiga attended Howard University, University of Maryland and Case Western Reserve University for his bachelors, masters and Ph.D. respectively between 1967 and 1972. Congratulations Prof. Wandiga.

Prof. Jacob Ogweno Midiwo was honored by being admitted as a fellow of the Royal Society of Chemistry, UK. Prof. Midiwo is a professor of Chemistry and the Director, Board of Common Undergraduate Studies. This information also contained in a letter signed by Dr. David W. Barr, membership and qualifications manager, Royal Society of Chemistry and also published in the Times of London. Prof. Midiwo graduated from the University of Nairobi in 1976 before proceeding for a Ph.D. in organic Chemistry at the University of Maryland, USA.

Prof. Midiwo, has an impeccable scholarship record, he has published widely in local and international arenas and supervised many postgraduate students. He has also worked as an external examiner in many universities in Africa. He has a wealth of experience from serving in various organizations including being elected to the position of secretary, the Kenya Chemical Society, and also the Natural Products Network for East and Central African among others.

Also honoured with Prof. Midiwo was Prof. Shem Oyoo Wandiga also a Professor in the Department of Chemistry.



Prof. Jacob Ogweno Midiwo.

Varsity Focus takes this opportunity to congratulate Prof. Midiwo on his admission as a Fellow of the Royal Society of Chemistry.

Top U.S. leaders interact with students and staff

Former US State Secretary and former Senate Majority Leader, discuss democracy and legislative reforms

The University of Nairobi was again privileged to host a 'town hall' discussion by famous personalities.

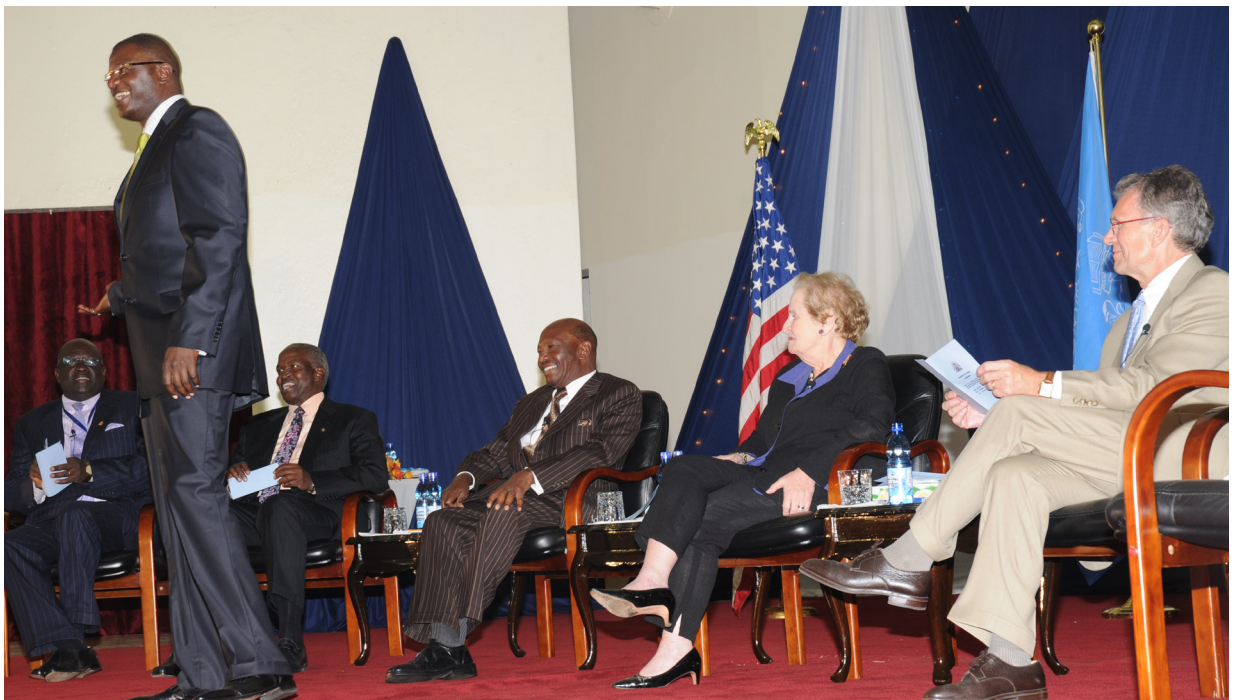
The discussion was held on Wednesday, September 8th 2010, at the Taifa Hall Dr. Madeleine Albright, chairman of the National Democratic Institution (NDI), and

former US Secretary of State; Senator Thomas Daschle, Senate Majority Leader; students, staff and the wider university community.

Dr. Albright's topic was "helping democracy deliver". According to Albright, democracy is not just theoretical-government of the people, by the people but it must

also deliver. "If you want to progress and you believe in democracy there must be tangible benefits to the people such as roads, hospitals and schools etc. Kenya is on the right path in that there is tangible proof of efforts towards social-economic benefits including infrastructural development, new education orientation and a health sector push for better hospital care.

Albright emphasized that women must support each other if they are to succeed, she alluded to the



Dr. Madeleine Albright and Senator, Thomas Daschle (second right and right respectively) with top UoN management during the town hall discussion at Taifa Hall.



Dr. Madeleine Albright

fact that while the US has a 200 year history of democracy, she was the first woman to trail the blaze for a top position in government; Condoleezza Rice and now Hillary Clinton are still facing the challenges of relentless, aggressive stance for women. "As women leaders we have had to push, it has not been easy".

Senator Daschle's topic was the role of the legislature in the implementation of reforms. This topic centered mainly on reforms in Kenya's new constitution. Daschle emphasized the importance of citizen participation in electing their leaders; perhaps one should remember that Daschle's election was ensured by his winning of 14 more electors.

Daschle emphasized that if Kenya was going to move forward, it will require the participation of youth. He urged the youth to not only be voters, but to also pressurize for the right people to hold positions. "This will help to kick out the negative elements in the leadership" he noted.

The background to the town hall series is perhaps the desire in the US and in the Obama administration to demonstrate their commitment and support to Kenya in its endeavor to be honest in the management of its public affairs and specifically to the rise to acceptable standards the conduct of external policy. This commitment was underscored by Obama, when as Senator of the state of Illinois, he addressed a forum in Taifa Hall,

where he stated clearly that Kenya must enact a new law in order to qualify for support.

Speaking to Varsity focus, one of the participants at the forum noted that while the forum was a fairly brief encounter, it never the less emphasized the need to strengthen democratic institutions as well as challenging citizens to force their leaders to meet their demands, "citizens must pester their leaders to deliver".

The September forum was the 4th in a series of forums hosted at the University of Nairobi. Past forums included-Hillary Clinton in 2009; Dominick Straus-Kahn of the IMF (with Bob Geldolf, Wangari Maathai, Raila Odinga, Uhuru Kenyatta) in 2010; Raila Odinga in May, 2010.

Also present at the forum was the Chancellor of the University of Nairobi, Dr. Joseph Wanjui, who paid tribute to the long standing relations between Kenya and the US. He alluded to the airlifts of the 1950's, which laid the foundation for the leadership that took over from the colonials in 1963. Also present was Mr. John Simba, Chairman of Council, Prof. Francis Gichaga, Chancellor JKUAT, Profs. Jacob Kaimenyi and Peter Mbithi (DVCS), chairmen of departments, staff and students.

Prior to the forum, Albright signed the visitors book and held private discussions with the UoN management. Albright is a professor of Law and has continued to lecture in various institutions in her home country.



Senator, Thomas Daschle

East African **Regional** **Workshop on** Architecture



Picture 1. and 2. some student models during an exhibition organized by the Department of Architecture.

The Department of Architecture and Building Science, of the University of Nairobi, recently hosted the first Inaugural regional workshop on architecture. The Workshop held between 25th and 26th August 2010, attracted over 160 scholars of architecture and practitioners from the Eastern Africa region. The delegates were drawn from Schools of Architecture from Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Rwanda.

The workshop whose theme was "Training and practice of architecture in contemporary times" discussed current academic

research work on architecture that has been conducted in the region. Further, participants took time to discuss the mechanisms that should be applied in the dissemination of research outcomes and application of the findings in policy formulation and decision making processes in the context of the 'Urban Growth and East African Common Market Protocol'.

Twelve academic and discussion papers were presented at the Workshop, including papers on : teaching methods for architects; merging indigenous and western knowledge systems; sustainable architecture and development;

regulatory frameworks for architectural practice; and research and development in training and practice of architecture and masters and undergraduate students work.

The Workshop was officially opened by the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Higher Education, Professor Crispus Kiamba, and officially closed by the

Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Housing, Mr. Tirop Koskei. The Vice-Chancellor Professor George Magoha, in a speech read on his behalf by the Principal of the College of Architecture and Engineering Professor Njoroge , emphasized the importance of academic research and called upon the Department of Architecture to rise to the occasion and demonstrate leadership as the pioneer department of architecture in the region.

In his Keynote address, Dr. Moses Rugatt, the Deputy Executive Secretary of the National Council for Science and Technology, commended the University for

organizing the workshop and called upon the School of the Built Environment to initiate the process of establishing partnership with the Council for research support. In his opening remarks the Chairman of the Department of Architecture and Building Science, Architect Erastus Abonyo said that apart from creating closer working relationships between partner schools of architecture and construction industry in the region, the Workshop was an important forum that should lead to the establishment of strong and sustainable links between the academia and practitioners; which has been lacking for a long time. The Dean of the School of the Built Environment Dr. Hezekiah Gichunge described the event as timely and called upon the organizers to expand the scope of future workshops to cover other disciplines such as planning,



The workshop's theme was "Training and practice of architecture in contemporary times"

design, real estate and building and construction. The Workshop was organized side by side with the annual students' exhibition in which students from the Department displayed their work for public viewing; the Basco Awards for Academic Excellence were also presented, with seventeen best performing final year students of the degrees of Bachelor of Architecture, Architectural Studies, Civil Engineering, Land Economics, and Building Economics receiving cash prizes and certificates.

The Workshop was organized by the Department of Architecture and Building Science, University of Nairobi and co-sponsored by the Ministry of Housing, the National Council for Science and Technology (NCST), Architectural Association of Kenya (AAK) and the Board of Registration of Architects and Quality Surveyors (BORAQS).



3. Winners with their prizes during the exhibition.

Successful conference held by School of Business



Minister for Planning, Hon Wycliffe Oparanya (right) with Principal, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Prof. Isaac Mbeche (left).

The School of Business successfully held its first inaugural conference on international business and management.

The Conference dubbed the 'African International Business and Management (AIBUMA) Conference' was held between 25th and 26th August 2010 at the KICC.

During the Conference over 80 papers were presented reflecting the theme of "Knowledge and Innovative Leadership for Competiveness". The Conference provided a perfect forum for scholars and business people from Africa, America, Europe, and Asia to show case their research activities, and to validate research

Prof Satyendra Sing offered to publish the best six papers discussed at the conference

findings through the corroboration and fusion of theory by the academicians, and practice from the wide range of business and industry practitioners. It attracted over 500 different participants from various backgrounds.

The chief guest, Honorable Wycliffe Oparanya, the Minister for State, National Development and Vision 2030, pleaded for better

innovation in local business and management practices. Further he noted that most countries were faced with challenges as a result of globalization which could easily be resolved through the exchange of ideas in such forums.

Prof Satyendra Sing, of the University of Winnipeg, Canada, who was among the key speakers, offered to publish the best six papers discussed at the conference in the International Journal of Business In Emerging Markets – a gesture that will enhance the visibility of African Scholars..

In his brief remarks, Prof Jacob Kaimenyi, Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic Affairs challenged those present to embrace globalization and forge a common working framework that encourages knowledge and innovative leadership to help the Africa counties achieve greater productivity and wealth, and ultimately ensure that the benefits of globalization are fairly shared in order to address extreme forms of poverty and wealth.

The conference attracted many sponsors and will be an annual event. Sponsoring organizations included; The Kenya Power and Lighting Company, Kengen, G4S, Kenya ICT Board, The MBA Alumni Chapter, the Kenya Sugar Board, Brookside Dairy, Circuit Business Systems, Ketepa Tea, British American (Britak), First Assurance, Kenbright Insurance Brokers and the College of Humanities and Social Sciences.

Students of the University studying Chinese at the Confucius Institute are set to benefit from a donation of 100 scholarships.

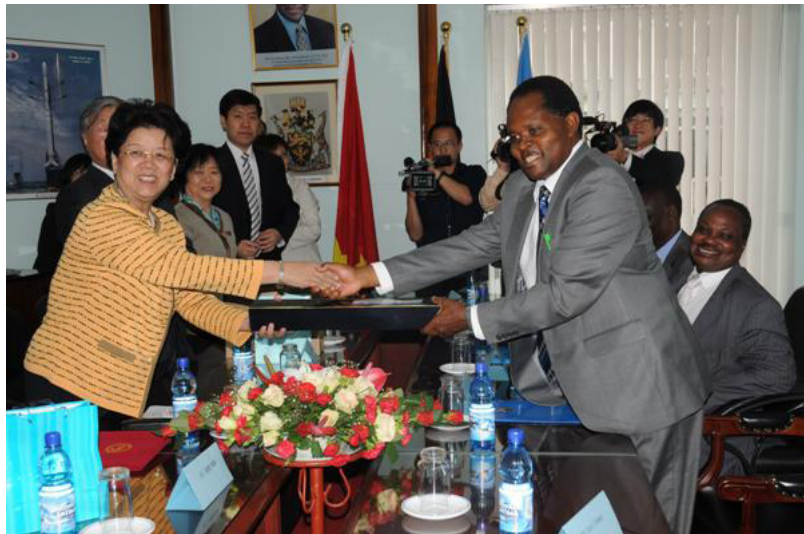
The donation was made by H.E. Mme Chen Zhili, the Vice-Chairperson of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC) of China, on 1st September, 2010, when she visited University of Nairobi (UoN) as part of a five-day tour of the country to promote Sino-Kenya relations.

Between 2006 and 2010, over 200 scholarships have been issued to students by the Institute.

Zhili congratulated the University for working hard to ensure the fast growth of the Confucius Institute, which is the largest in Africa and promised more support to the Institute. She officially opened the Chinese Cultural Centre located on the second floor of the Education Building. The institute has in the past received prominent Chinese personalities among them the Chinese President, H.E. Hu Jintao 2006 when he was on a state visit.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor,

Chen Zhili donates 100 scholarships to UoN



H.E. Mme Chen Zhili hands over a gift to Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Peter Mbithi.

Administration and Finance, Prof. Peter Mbithi who represented the Vice-Chancellor, thanked the Chinese government for the scholarships and the support they have lent to the Institute since its inception in 2005. In the last five years, 852 students have graduated from the Institute with certificate in Chinese language. The Institute also offers Chinese courses such as calligraphy and martial arts. There is also an active student and staff exchange programme between UoN and leading Chinese Universities

Between 2006 and 2010, over 200 scholarships have been issued by the Institute. The Vice-Chancellor, Prof. George Magoha represents Africa in the Council of Confucius Institutes.

A chat with Dr. Kidombo



Dr. Harriet Kidombo. Director, ODEL Centre.

This is no ordinary book, which you can turn the pages starting at the beginning and reading to the end. And yet, the life of Harriet Kidombo is actually told, a book whose pages you must keenly and with discernment turn, this book can be dismissed by some, they have never heard about it, and yet there are those to whom this

book is a must read.

Dr. Harriet Kidombo, currently, the Director of the Open and Distance e-Learning Centre (ODEL) was born some 50 odd years ago. It is not an accident that Harriet is an educator and motivator for distance education; her father, who once served in the Kenya African Rifles which saw active service during the Second World War, believed in

education and specifically that of girls and he was ready to see that all his children attend school. Harriet who is the last born remembers that her late sister attended Alliance Girls High school in the mid 60's.

Harriet joined class one in 1968, at Solian Primary School in Eldama Ravine. After seven years, she joined Baringo High School about 10kms away. Four years later, after her "O" levels, she joined Machakos Girls High school for "A" levels. Machakos is over 400 kms from Eldama Ravine, but Harriet was determined to complete her studies in economics, geography and Kiswahili, and she would not let the joining or the new social orientation deter her, "I wanted to explore Kenya, it was fashionable then to choose the furthest corner, I had wanted to go to Matuga girls, but they were not offering economics at A level and thus I selected Machakos"

Harriet was admitted to the University of Nairobi in 1981, her BA courses were economics, geography and sociology. After the first year, she majored in geography and economics, graduating in 1985. After two years as a graduate teacher, Harriet secured employment with the Kenya Farmers Association as a management trainee. After a probation and induction period of six months, Harriet was made the training manager. Harriet had always wanted to be a manager and her stint at KFA included challenges of working with people, getting people to do what you want them to do and managing people who are both senior and

junior to you. Harriet served as training manager for five years “I begun to note that while I was in charge of training, I lacked the continuous learning, indeed as training manager I was required to be continuously learning new things because I was managing both the training function and the learning”

In 1992, Harriet left her job as training manager to join the University of Nairobi. Harriet served as an administrative and senior administrative assistant at the Faculty of External Studies, Kikuyu, before she applied and was given a scholarship to pursue a master’s program in Human Resource Development at Manchester University. “When I joined the University of Nairobi, I took a cut back in salary and even status, indeed at the interview, they had wondered why on earth I was leaving a more senior position for a fairly junior one, but I was clear that what I wanted was an opportunity to further my education and experience-and two years after employment I did exactly that.” The work at the Faculty of External Studies proved to be challenging, in the sense that while in the private sector, there is structure, clear policy, rules and regulations, at the University, then, there was no induction, “I was simply shown an office to occupy and told to get to work”.

One of the most challenging tasks was to develop examination and entry records for distance study students. The pioneer class of external studies also needed to be processed in order to graduate;



Dr. Kidombo with students outside ODEL Centre.

Harriet was admitted to the University of Nairobi in 1981, her BA courses were economics, geography and sociology. After the first year, she majored in geography and economics, graduating in 1985.

a task which required close liaison with main campus. All this was done without the benefit of SMIS, and as those who understand records

management and processing for graduation can attest this was indeed a great task.

After her MA course, Harriet came back to Kenya; the Faculty of External Studies had advertised an academic position that required somebody with a background in economics and distance study. Given her background in economics, administrative training and human resource management, Harriet suited the position and she was appointed lecturer in 1996.

Harriet has a passion for HR. “it is as a trainer that I gained a passion, realizing that competence and skills are critical in employees and they must be oriented to that end” There is no contradiction here between HR and distance learning. Indeed Harriet encapsulates distance learning and HR is centered on competence development, in one sentence, “giving people a second chance is above all else”

Harriet looks back to growing up in Baringo, an exciting life because Baringo was a typically farming area where schools are quite a distance from homes, “obviously we walked to school bare foot, but everyone else was the same, but my family background was such that I grew up seeing my parents as mature and keen to develop others, and this is what distance learning is about, it took, I admit some of my experiences in HR to realize that the role of distance learning is to develop people. Distance learning is a mode of opening doors so that people achieve what they want to do”. Distance studies are convenient

for working people and the School of Continuing and Distance Studies is a pioneer in the area of open and distance learning.

Talking about giving opportunities is exciting, and taking advantage of opportunity, Harriet pursued PhD studies in the School of Business from 2001, graduating in 2007. Harriet is married with three children; while two of the children were studying for degrees in law and commerce, they shared the tribulations of being students, writing papers and seating course Work assessments. A truly university family is an apt description of her family given that the last child is in her third year of study at the University of Nairobi. Harriet has had opportunity and exposure to senior management roles, indeed, before her present appointment, she served as an examination officer for almost ten years, she also served as Associate Dean and in between as acting Chairman of the Department of Educational studies.

Harriet believes firmly that we must give opportunity and chance to people. The role of the University is to develop people so that they get the chance to realize their dreams. A university should not block anybody's opportunity, it should give space and choice, a chance that would allow people to improve themselves "at UoN, I was given the chance of joining academia" and she certainly has excelled, a look at her papers, presentations and discussion at international conferences attest to this. If only more administrators would seize the chance to cross over and achieve



Dr.Kidombo addressing guests during the launch of ODEL Centre.

their academic dreams, what a magnificent institution UoN would be!!

Harriet believes in hard work, "all of us must not just work hard, but also with an objective, a goal. It is hard to say what you want to achieve, but your goal must always be to succeed, not to be at the top, but to do what is in you to do, what you are supposed to do". Indeed, all of us are challenged to turn in good results, without complaining, whining and moaning. "I believe that in life, when you want something, you should not look at the outcome in terms of money, the goal is to do the work and money will follow, after all, promotion follows good work"

This book called Harriet Kidombo certainly requires discernment, in her parting shot, Harriet contends that all of us must be contented with what we are doing...have a passion..." my passion is in serving

students, I am always touched whenever I see a student who has come from Lokitung as a P1 teacher get admission and proceed to join, sometimes studying with problems. After 4 years of distance study..encountering the student and watching the change in him when he says ...I am now graduating is a joy, and more so when you can clearly see that the student has changed their perception, gaining from academia, this makes it worthwhile for me."

I guess that I speak for all of us when I say that such thoughts have kept all of us at the university. It is not the money..average as the pay is, nor is it the visible things including promotions.. nay, it is the little things, the difference that we will make to someone who has no other way of getting academic training and you give them the chance, that is why like Harriet we stay at the University.

Down memory lane

Last week, I entered a conversation with friends, I cringe now but at the time I was quite sanctimonious holding out that when I was a university student I always maintained discipline, and respect, that I had not indulged in student frays and exploits. At some point, during the conversation, an old friend reminded me about the Aberdare's incident, which to my embarrassment incriminated me in a student exploit which I had conveniently forgotten.

Flash back to 1985, and as a member of the Wildlife club, we have travelled to Nyahururu headed for the Great Aberdare's gate. At some point along the long winding drive, the bus driver/mechanic requested us to allow him one hour to be with his family. Of course we understood his need, and so he parked the bus along the side of the Nyahururu road, and went off into the bushes to what we assumed was his home.

Three hours later, we were still by the side of the road, hot and thirsty. As the busload of students was getting irritable with mutterings of ... people.. how do they expect us to ...while they are off enjoying themselves..we also have needs., we club officials conferred on what to do. A solution was found amidst us, two of the students belonged to the transport families living along the coast, both had drivers licenses for heavy vehicles, they also, wonder of wonders, had motor vehicle mechanics certificates, good conduct certificates and the "icing on the cake" was that, they, during school holidays, supervised their family transport system.

Without hesitation, the young men wired the bus, it started and we were on the way. Surprisingly, we toured the Aberdare's for two days without incident, it was easy I suppose



Such happy moments on campus create fond memories years later.

"We took the officers around the bus and even into the bus for them to appreciate that the bus was neither damaged nor was the student body disorderly, rude or violent"

because the bus had been fuelled to capacity, we also had some contingency money in case we needed more fuel or oil, the students were not troublemakers and it was not easy to discern that our drivers/mechanics were actually students. On our way back, just before Nakuru, we were flagged down at a police road block. With the spirit of youth, we were not disturbed, we had permission to be away, the drivers had their licenses and the work ticket had been duly signed in Nairobi.

But the police were not after us, it transpired that our driver, had left his home six hours after the one hour that he had promised, expecting to find us waiting for him. Imagine his shock

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The University of Nairobi students' choir has come a long way. In 2010, it celebrates 43 years of exciting ups and downs.

The history of the Choir can be traced back to 1967, with the dream by Arthur Mudoga Kemoli, then a student at the University. After Kemoli left for further studies the Choir remained moribund, only to revive in 1988 when Kemoli, now PhD joined the Department of Literature, University of Nairobi, as a Senior Lecturer.

Kemoli was and has remained a prolific composer and arranger



University Choir in a past graduation ceremony.

UoN Choir **bags** success

of African music. The Choir has benefited from his expertise gaining exposure and skill in beautiful renditions that include the University Anthem also composed and arranged by Kemoli. The Choir is an all time favorite ; present at graduation ceremonies and other events within the University Calendar.

The Choir has, over the years, connected the University with the outside world, indeed at both internal and external functions, wherever the Choir has been invited, it has represented the University and the quest for excellence through some wonderful performances. With the support of the University management, students have been able to travel to Holland, Uganda, South Africa, Nigeria, Iran and South Korea, among others.

Perhaps one annual event in which the Choir has remained outstanding and unmatched in its choral performances is during the national Kenya Music Festivals, the University of Nairobi Choir is currently the leading University choir in the country with numerous trophies and awards. This may sound rather strange considering that the University of Nairobi does not offer a course in music while its other competitors do. But even without a course in music, dance and performance, during the just concluded national Kenya Music Festivals held in Kakamega in Western Province, the choir emerged in top positions in many of its presentations ranging from solo performances to choral and elocution.

The University Choir creates equal opportunities for students to build

their individual capacities in the field of music performance. It operates under the Dean of Students' office as a students' organization and has enjoyed immense support from the University management. It is run by a students' elected office under the guidance of the Music Director, Mr. Fred Atoh, lecturer, Department of Linguistics and Languages. Atoh, who also composes and arranges African music, took over from Dr. Kemoli upon the latter's retirement from University service. The Music Director is assisted by Chris Wekulo, a student at Chiromo Campus. Mr. Atoh joined the choir while an undergraduate student and has remained in the Choir even after graduating. In a similar way, many astute music lovers and trainers have been churned out through the Choir into schools and music clubs and societies across the country.

Updates on sporting activities

The University of Nairobi hosted the second edition of the National Inter-Universities Sports Championship in December 2009. The event attracted participation of 40 Universities. During these games, the University of Nairobi emerged 2nd overall with a margin of six points. The University of Nairobi scooped first position in the following sports: basketball, swimming, soccer and chess, while maintaining second and third positions respectively in most of the other sports.

University of Nairobi teams have participated in various national



University of Nairobi basketball team, Terrorists, in action during interuniversity championships.

leagues and tournaments, indeed in the last four months, our teams have participated in the following sport activities:-Athletics (men and women) - have participated in both provincial and national trials in track field and cross-country events.

In Soccer, teams participated in the on-going Nairobi super league of Kenya Football Limited, out of nine (9) matches played so far, University of Nairobi team has won seven (7) matches. In Basketball (tournaments) teams are participating in the on-going Nairobi Classic Basketball League, out of the six matches played, the University of Nairobi team has won 3 matches.

In Tennis, during the month of July 2010, our men and women teams participated in the Kenya Lawn Tennis Association Tournament at Parklands Sport Club and won in the men's singles, emerging 3rd overall in the women's doubles. In Hockey our teams are participating in the on-going Kenya Hockey Union's National League, out of 8 matches, University of Nairobi team has won four (4), drawn two (2) and lost one (1).

During the month of May-June 2010, the Volleyball team participated in the Ruiru open tournament and scooped the 1st position in the senior men's category. In Rugby, our team, Mean Machine participated in the Flood Light Tournament, the Chairman's cup and the Nakuru 7s tournaments with impressive performances.

Internally, the inter-halls, inter-classes, inter-faculties, Medical School Nursing Students Association Sports day, School of Business inter-banks and inter-campuses/colleges events have been held.

Other teams are now training in preparation for the forthcoming East Africa Inter-Universities Games at Kenyatta University in December, 2010.

Chinese Academy of Sciences to partner with UoN

The University of Nairobi (UoN) and the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) have agreed to speed up efforts to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that will set the stage for collaboration in natural sciences particularly botanical gardens and natural parks. This was revealed when a delegation of CAS led by the Director, Mian Heng Jiang, visited the University.

The team disclosed that the purpose of their visit was to establish links in biodiversity, information technology, and materials science among other areas.

Prof. Jacob Kaimenyi, the Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academic Affairs, who was standing in for the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Geroge Magoha, informed the delegation that UoN is a big institution with a strong student and staff component, offering diverse courses and thus

collaboration with CAS, would greatly benefit the two institutions.

The collaboration will initially start with the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies before expanding to other disciplines. The Director, Centre for International Programmes and Links (CIPL), Prof. Simon Mitema and Prof. Samson Odingo of the Dept. of Geography and Environmental Studies were mandated to come up with a letter of intent on the areas of collaboration.

The CAS delegation included representatives from various Chinese institutions linked to CAS and the United Nations. The delegation also toured sections of the University.

Down memory lane

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to find no bus, no report of students running amok. Frantically and in deep worry he had gone to the police station and tried to explain his case. In those two days he had indeed been a disturbed man. On our part, we explained to the police inspector what had happened. We took the officers around the bus and even into the bus for them to appreciate that the bus was neither damaged nor was the student body disorderly, rude or violent. We therefore told the police officers that we did not require a driver/mechanic as we already had one, after all had we not toured the Aberdare's, had they received a report of disorderly university students causing mayhem? The police inspector marvelled at our confidence and the would- be sincerity in our story. Now the driver became agitated, we were denying him his job, the police made a case for him, could we please let him do his job.

Student sense of injustice those days was warped, while we agreed with the police that he should drive

us, we also said that we would mete out discipline for his careless abandonment of his duty and responsibility, we observed that our drivers/mechanics had done a good job, we had carried ourselves with dignity and not once had we been challenged in any of the towns that we had visited.

We allowed our driver back into the bus, and we waved back at the police officers, but Mr. driver was shuttled to the back seat where wonder of wonders, our Indian colleagues made him sit in the corner and they pummelled him thoroughly.

At Westlands, we allowed him to take the wheel and drive us into university territory. We swore a code of silence that we students would not let the University know how shabby the driver was. On his part, he was to keep mum because if any sniffer reached the administration he would lose his job. That is how we dwelt with a discipline problem over twenty years ago. But were we right?



QUALITY POLICY STATEMENT

The University of Nairobi is committed to quality through teaching, research and creative works; fostering an intellectual culture that bridges theory with practice and producing holistic graduates prepared for a life of purpose, service and leadership.

The University is committed to good corporate governance, excellence and professionalism, freedom of thought in academic inquiry, responsible citizenship, creativity, innovativeness, teamwork and adaptation to change.

In order to realize this commitment, the University management will monitor and review its quality performance from time to time through the implementation of an effective Quality Management System based on ISO 9001 :2008 Standard.

