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The Anvil

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Theft paralyses varsity depts

By EZEKIEL CHEPTUMO

Thieves broke into the School of Journalism, University of Nairobi early this year and made away with three computers, valued at Shs. 350,000.

The theft which took place on the night of February 16 paralysed activities at the school's computer laboratory and consequently delayed production of *The Anvil*, the student newspaper by more than two and a half months.

Nobody has been arrested in connection with the theft. The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Francis Gichaga blamed the theft on a well connected syndicate within the university.

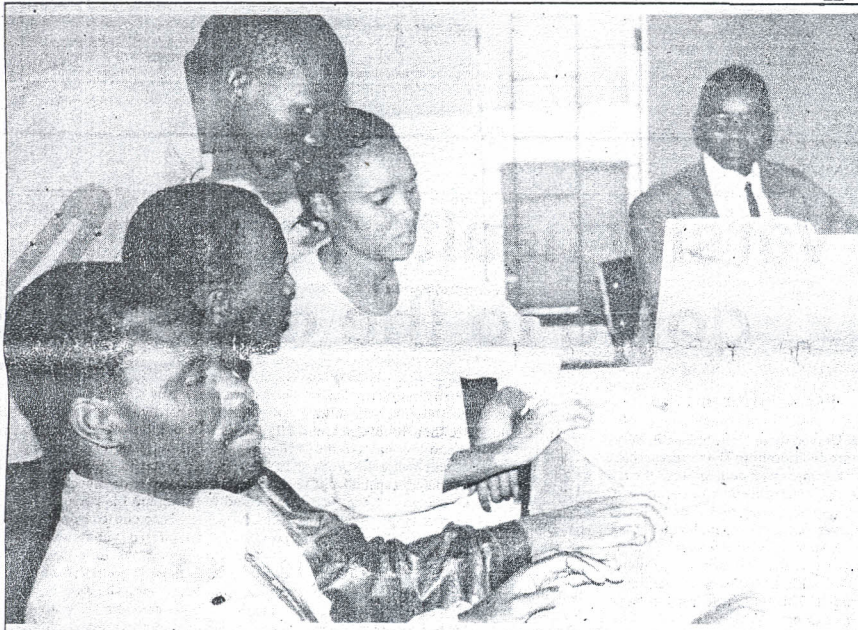
Addressing *The Anvil* reporters, Prof. Gichaga disclosed that the institution had lost property valued at millions shillings to thieves suspected to be collaborating with university employees.

Prof. Gichaga said that the thieves targeted at computers, television sets and electric type-writers. He lamented that the university security had been unable to crack the seemingly increasing thefts that have seen the institution lose property at alarming rates.

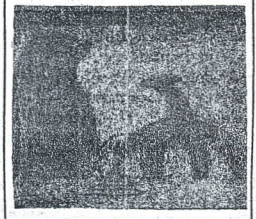
"It is very sad that such thefts are taking place in this university. I admit that this is a very serious problem in this institution, but we are doing everything possible to arrest the situation," Prof. Gichaga said.

When contacted, the Principal, College of Humanities and Social Sciences,

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Back in action: Journalism students using new computers recently donated by the Graduate School of Journalism, University of Western Ontario, Canada



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Faculty of Arts gets new Dean

By PETER WANYANDE

Professor Henry Mutoro has been elected the new dean of the Faculty of Arts. The Associate professor of history, beat his only opponent professor Robert Obudho of the *African urban Quarterly* by 128 votes to 90.

The elections which were presided over by the Registrar of Academic Affairs Mr. Mwangi Gachui brought to an end Prof. Danstan Obara's four-year deanship. Obara served his last two years by default as no elections were conducted to give him a fresh mandate.

At one point members disagreed over the eligibility of visiting scholars but Prof. Godfrey Muriuki of the Department of History, who is also the Undergraduate Students Advisor, informed the gathering that traditionally such scholars were allowed to vote.

He appealed to the members to allow Prof. Allan Winkler, a visiting Fulbright scholar in the Department of

History, to vote arguing that the regulations required that a voter be a full time teacher in the faculty, a condition he said Prof. Winkler met.

Some members asked if there were records confirming that the tradition existed but the registrar said that previous minutes were not available.

Earlier, several proxy votes were rejected on the grounds that they were signed by illegible voters. An attempt by a professor of gynaecology to vote by proxy was rejected by members who insisted that he neither taught nor supervised students in the faculty.

Various departmental committee chairmen were also elected during the peaceful elections. The new dean promised to adopt "administration by consultation" and revive the various faculty committees.

Prof. Obudho promised to cooperate with the new dean whom he described as a long time friend.

Housing: Lecturers get eviction order

By PETER MUTIE

Many University of Nairobi staff have been threatened with eviction from their residential houses following the University's inability to renew the leases at rates demanded by the landlords.

This was revealed by the lecturers who have been served with eviction orders. Speaking to *The Anvil*, two lecturers from the Department of Geography who requested anonymity expressed their disappointment over the move by the university.

The lecturers said that housing was the cardinal benefit they enjoyed as employees of the university.

"We are dismayed by this move because we might be pushed to estates that do not match our status," they said.

For the last few years, UON has taken measures to cut down on its high expenditure. One of the areas affected is housing.

In the past, the University used to

lease houses for lecturers and other senior officers in middle and high class estates such as South B and Hurlingham but rent charges in these estates have lately risen to unaffordable levels, according to the University administration. The increase in rents, coupled with the effects of Structural Adjustment Programmes that demand cuts in expenditure have forced the University to stop leasing such houses.

The lecturers, however, disputed the University's assertion that the houses were unaffordable. They said that if the University could afford to lease houses in posh areas such as New Muthaiga and Kileleshwa, then it could also afford other cheaper estates. They complained that the University was turning them into nomads by creating conditions "that necessitate movements from one estate to another."

When contacted, the Estates Manager was reluctant to confirm that the University had leased houses in prime areas.

About the housing problem, the Vice-

Chancellor, Professor Francis Gichaga, said that the University was financially handicapped. He said the lecturers will have to look for alternative housing because the university was unable to provide housing facilities it used to in the past.

Professor Gichaga advised the lecturers and other members of staff to utilise the University of Nairobi Special Staff Mortgage Scheme. This scheme is an arrangement between the University of Nairobi and the Housing Finance Company of Kenya (HFCK). It enables members of staff of the University to borrow money either for purchase or construction of houses at a concessionary rate.

Reliable sources informed *The Anvil* that the mortgage scheme carries an interest rate of 12% per annum. This is low compared to the normal mortgage arrangements that demand interest rates ranging between 24% and 28% per annum.

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