



June 2011

# Varsity**Focus**

A Newsletter of the UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

*Beauty and Brains* ❖

*Academic Linkages* ❖

**Appointments** ❖



***Michelle Wanjiku Ngure  
& Briston Obano***



## 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.

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VarsityFocus



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# 2011 highlights

The appointments were necessitated by creation of two new dockets of Student Affairs and Research and Extension to give attention to the twin aspects that are at the centre of the University's business focus.

We welcome you to the first edition of the 2011 Varsity Focus. This edition brings you highlights of the year and many other activities that the University has been involved in.

First, kudos to our students for holding their union elections without any incidents, this is a mark of maturity and the realization that unnecessary chaos was soiling our reputation. Congratulations to our students, we hope that you uphold this spirit in your activities.

The University Council also made top management appointments that saw the elevation of Prof. Lucy Irungu from the Principal, College of Biological and Physical Sciences to Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research, Production and Extension and Prof. Isaac Mbeche from Principal, College of Humanities and Social Sciences to Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Student Affairs), Prof. Bernard Aduda has since been appointed Principal, CBPS and Prof. Enos Njeru appointed to the position of Principal, CHSS, Prof. Peter K'Obonyo was confirmed on his position as Deputy Principal, CHSS. The appointments were necessitated by the creation of two new dockets of Student Affairs, and Research and Extension to give attention to the twin aspects that are at the centre of the University's business focus. Varsity Focus wishes them successful stints in their respective dockets.

On the outreach front, the University successfully held its 3rd annual Open Day presided over by the Chancellor, Dr. Joseph Wanjui and the Chairman of Council, Mr. John Simba. The University also reached out to the public through an exhibition in Kakamega, organized by the Commission for Higher Education.

The University has increased linkages with leading universities and organizations. Private companies have volunteered to offer scholarships while others have donated books and given indications for engaging in collaborative research.

On the human interest angle, we bring you insights of some of our students, focusing on their interests, performance and even style.

We hope that you will enjoy reading this edition. Please do not hesitate to give us feedback on [pr@uonbi.ac.ke](mailto:pr@uonbi.ac.ke)

Charles E. Sikulu

# Strengthening governance and research structures

This first half of 2011 has been busy with activities and events that demonstrate our commitment to discharge the mandate of academic excellence.

As part of strengthening our governance and research structures, the University Council appointed two new deputy Vice-Chancellors to be in charge of students affairs, and research, production and extension. These appointees are charged with the responsibility of mainstreaming research and student affairs. Also appointed were two principals and a deputy principal.

The University has developed new infrastructure including modern laboratories at the Kenya Science Campus to boost science learning. Further, we have constructed a new, modern and spacious facility for the Department of Human Anatomy.

We are grateful to our government and other stakeholders who have continued to support our activities. With these resources, we have increased our collaboration in the three pillars of teaching, research and consultancy. The Universities of Helsinki, Washington and Maryland initiated collaboration for joint research, thus adding value to our tradition of activities with scholars from reputable international universities. With more support we can increase output in the three pillars.

We have made strides in internationalising our brand as an institution of higher learning in the region. For instance, the University of Nairobi is offering graduate study in business management to students from Liberia to assist that country in



**George A.O. Magoha, Vice-Chancellor UoN**

rebuilding its economy. Closer home, the University of Nairobi initiated links with the private sector for training, scholarships, and staff and student exchange. In this regard Total Kenya became one of the latest supporters of the University.

UoN has continued to be the first choice university in the region for intellectual discourse. We take pride in the recent interaction with Mr. Li Changchun, Member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC, Central Committee. We look forward to more interactions with international VIPs.

In terms of outreach, the University participated in the CHE exhibition in Kakamega and held its third Open

Day. These activities showcased the quality of our programmes, facilities and conducive environment available for learning, research, interaction and mentoring from some of the best scholars in the region.

I wish to take this opportunity to commend our students for holding peaceful union elections. They conducted themselves honourably and with discipline. The University looks forward to a time when more of the student body can discard irresponsible behaviour and embrace dialogue to improve our corporate image. Staff has also contributed to the good name of the University by performing their duties with dedication and professionalism.



# 4500 graduate in lively celebrations

There was pomp and colour as the University of Nairobi marked the 44th Graduation on Friday 3rd December, 2010 in a ceremony that was aired live on Citizen Television.

The ceremony climaxed with the award of diplomas and conferment of degrees to more than 4,561 graduands drawn mainly from the Colleges of Health Sciences and Humanities and Social Sciences. A few students from the remaining four colleges who could not graduate in September were also included. The highest number of graduates came from the School of Business and the Faculty of Arts, who contributed more than half of the students.

The ceremony was addressed by among others the Chancellor, Dr. Joseph Wanjui, Vice-Chancellor, Prof. George Magoha and the Chairman of Council, Mr. John Simba. Others included a representative of the Ministry of Higher Education Science and Technology Dr. Salome Gachura and Valedictorian of the congregation, Mr Hemed El Busaidy , a graduate of human anatomy.

The Chancellor urged UoN students to maintain discipline and improve the corporate image of the University. The Vice-Chancellor on his part appealed for more capitation from the government to help the University in meeting rising costs particularly the payroll. He also thanked the media, and in particular, Citizen.TV for live transmission of graduation ceremonies for the last eight years.

# IBM to recruit UoN graduates

Mr. Oliver Fortuin, in early 2009 committed IBM to the recruitment of top performers, and promised greater collaboration between the two organizations.

In December, 2010, IBM director of university relations Sean Mclean revealed that 10 University of Nairobi graduates were to benefit from the company's recruitment programme.

Mclean said this when he visited

the University noting that the programme was part of an MoU signed by the two organizations which among other things offered top final year students opportunities to pursue a career with IBM.

In response, The Vice-Chancellor, Prof. George Magoha, thanked IBM for honoring the offer made by IBM General Manager, Mr. Oliver Fortuin, early 2009 to recruit top performers, and promised greater collaboration between the two organizations.

Among those who attended the meeting were the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic Affairs, Prof. Jacob Kaimenyi and the Director School of Computing and Informatics, Prof. Okello Odongo.



IBM director of university relations, Sean Mclean (second left), with UoN managers

# Launch of the capacity development partnership

## The University of Nairobi (UoN) continues to receive recognition for the quality of its programmes.

The latest recognition was from the Ministry of Public Service, which in March 2011 signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the University that would enable the Kenya Institute of Administration (KIA) to offer a masters programme in public administration.

The MoU was formally launched at a well-attended ceremony at Harambee House officiated by the Assistant Minister for Public Service, Hon. Aden Ahmed Sugow, who said that the course will help in addressing the training needs of public servants and assist in building capacity in the civil service.

Prof. Isaac Mbeche, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Student Affairs, who represented the Vice-Chancellor, said that the MoU signals the move towards implementation of the programme and a pointer that UoN has the capacity and commitment to bring the initiative to fruition. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research, Production and Extension, Prof. Lucy Irungu, gave the assurance that research will be part of the new programmes with strict adherence to quality assurance mechanisms that ensure worldwide recognition of the programme.

The programme, will be based at KIA which has a long tradition of training civil servants in public administration. Its first intake of 30 students in September 2011 will be fully sponsored by the government. According to the Permanent Secretary, Public Service, Mr. Titus Ndambuki, the programme will initially target public

sector employees but will eventually be offered to other sectors. Other programmes that have been planned by the Ministry are M.A. in public policy and public affairs.

The Principal, KIA, Dr. Margaret Kobia, noted that the course is unique to the public service which had longed for an advanced degree that is rich in public service content.

Those present included Prof. Enos Njeru, Principal, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Prof. Makumi Mwangiru, Director, Institute of Diplomacy and International Studies, Prof. Mohammed Jama, Director, Institute for Development Studies, Prof. Preston Chitere, Dean, Faculty of Arts and top Ministry and KIA officials.



Dr. Margaret Kobia, Mr. Titus Ndambuki, Hon. Aden Sugow, Prof. Isaac Mbeche and Prof. Lucy Irungu, shortly after signing of the MoU.



# IDS receives a grant of US \$ 350,000

The questions that the study will seek to answer include: has the current civil society neglected important allies such as academics and the general intelligentsia?

The Institute for Development Studies (IDS), University of Nairobi, has received a grant of US \$ 350,000 from the Ford Foundation Office for East Africa to conduct a study on "Rethinking Social Movements in East Africa: The Rise and Expiry of (un)Civil Societies and Their Transformative Lessons to Current Civil Society". The study, whose work began in January this year, is expected to take two years - up to December 2012. The study, coordinated by Professors Njuguna Ng'ethe, and Karuti Kanyinga, is premised on the observation that the quality of civil society seems to be shrinking when the quantity is expanding.

The questions that the study will seek to answer include: Has the current civil society neglected important allies such as academics and the general intelligentsia? Is the civil society ahistorical in its thinking and, therefore, has neglected the lessons of the past social movements? Have the lessons been collated for learning purposes? Could it be that the current civil society is too preoccupied with the logic of the log frame at the expense of transformative social action? Could it be that the logic of developmentalism, that is now common in most civil societies,

has worked against transformative thinking and action?

The above questions invite a series of other questions which will also be explained in the attempt to diagnose what ails the current civil society in Kenya. Such questions as: Why do some members of society choose the exit option as opposed to the loyalty option; and, what retards or facilitates their growth; will be addressed. The promulgation of the new Constitution in Kenya is a good example of one result of a social movement at its best in the region, but it is not clear under what circumstances social movements form, nor is it clear under what circumstances civil societies can be transformed or transform themselves into social movements.

There has been the suggestion that civil societies need to engage in deliberate decay of their sometimes inhibiting structures before they can successfully transform themselves into social movements. Again, how social movements interrelate with each other forming alliances and who is in control of these alliances is a critical question. One would want to understand why social movements do not transform into political parties or organizations for

mobilization of politics and what happens to the lives of those that transform into political organizations. In other words, the study will look into the "black box" of how movements happen, how they expire and generally how they exit the space of engagement.

The study will publicize its findings in the form of both academic and advocacy materials. The purpose of these publications will be two fold: to add to the knowledge on social movements and to produce ideas on how to sustain social movements.

For the last six years, IDS has offered research degrees at both Masters and PhD in development studies, targeting scholars and practitioners in development. In line with this, the study will seek to mentor young and upcoming scholars in the field of development studies, through including young scholars, especially new PhDs, with a view to mentoring them on research. Therefore, one of the expected outputs of the study is a publication from each member of the research team which includes Dr. Musambayi Katumanga, Dr. Joshua Kivuva, Dr. George Michuki, and Mr. Geoffrey Njeru.

# Student body offers a platform for exposure



AIESEC, the world's largest youth-run organization has over 50,000 members and is spread in over 110 countries. AIESEC focuses on providing a platform for youth leadership development. AIESEC offers young people the opportunity to participate in international internships, experience leadership and participate in a global learning environment.

Since 1970, AIESEC Kenya has provided students at the University of Nairobi with opportunities to become leaders and positive change agents.

This is done through providing members with a global mindset and training to explore their emotional, intellectual, social responsibility, and to be active learners and entrepreneurs.

AIESEC has been engaging the students of the University of Nairobi, through various community projects in slums in Nairobi, and also encouraging networking with business and corporate leaders in our society. Its success in developing people, is evident from the number of business leaders who are AIESEC alumni, including Frank Ireri of Housing Finance Company of Kenya, Isaac Awuondo, Commercial Bank of Africa and Alvin Mbugua, Kenya Airways. AIESEC has created and sustained partnerships with various companies including Kenya Commercial Bank, Text Book Centre, Wananchi Group, Alpine Coolers, Dry Associates, and Standard Chartered Bank Ltd.

Events that AIESEC has run in the past year include the embassy day,

with the former U.S ambassador Michael Ranneberger as the guest speaker, the Pintwise campaign, whose aim was to create awareness on responsible drinking habits. This year, the Youth Leadership Forum was held in May and the youth and different leaders engaged in social economic issues affecting Kenya. AIESEC ran the Pay-it Forward walk and forum with the Entrepreneurship and Leadership Foundation.

This brought together business leaders and youth from various walks of life who are interested in entrepreneurship, and provided mentorship and support.

AIESEC is set to host the AIESEC International congress, which is the largest conference in the global organization, this year in Kenya. Over 700 delegates from all over the world are expected to participate in this forum.

Membership has grown to over 100, and we facilitated 80 internships in Kenya, from all over the world. AIESEC has also sent 20 students of the University of Nairobi to various countries of the world including Uganda, Tanzania, Germany, Turkey, Belgium, and Ghana in the past year. We are looking forward to growing our numbers, and encouraging more people to have these life-altering experiences. AIESEC has received support from the University of Nairobi through provision of venues, attendance at functions and financial support.

# Beauty and brains together

The frequently asked question is why men and women persistently enter beauty pageants. This question is answered by student models Michelle Wanjiku Ngure and Bristol Obano - the 2010 Mr. and Miss UoN.

A beauty pageant is a competition based mainly on the physical beauty of its contestants, although such contests often incorporate personality, talent and the answers to questions by the judges as criteria for winning the coveted title. The phrase beauty pageant almost invariably refers to contests for women; similar events for men are called by other names and are more likely to be body building contests.

The question on your mind by now is, then why should men and women persistently enter beauty pageants, what sort of person takes part in such

events, of course the skeptics in a University setting would really be asking what is the point of this story? Well, the students of this august institution have taken part in our own Mr.

and Miss University of Nairobi sponsored by NOKIA.

I met Michelle Wanjiku Ngure and Bristol Obano who are the reigning Mr and Miss University of Nairobi 2010, and highlight their achievement, as well as their experience.

## MICHELLE WANJIKU NGURE

Michelle Ngure was born in 1990 here in Nairobi; she grew up in Buru Buru and later Lavington. The second child in a family of two, Michelle attended Consolata Primary and Kianda High school.

In 2009, Michelle joined the University of Nairobi and is now in her second year in



the Bachelor of Science in Electrical and Electronics Engineering course. Michelle has always enjoyed physics and mathematics; at home she always wanted to know how things work and therefore liked changing light bulbs, fiddling with the television to see how it works among other domestic duties. Again, she liked the circuits lab while in high school, albeit the course at university level is now more difficult.

Michelle, is the quintessential “queen” so it’s surprising that the study of law and business has never appealed to her “so many notes and things to cram, I guess I prefer mathematics and solid state products”. Michelle had always wanted to model, but had never known how to go about it. So the Miss University pageant presented itself as a good platform for her to learn modeling, fashion and the catwalk. As she says “in August 2010, I was invited to participate in a program called “fashion show” on Citizen T.V., the fact that I had the Miss University of Nairobi title certainly helped to make my name sell.

The University Pageant is more about showing the best of the University, what drove Michelle to enter the competition was a desire to find out if she could be any good at it. “I believe in bringing something to the table”. The entry form details age, gender, course of study, height, weight, a section on tell us about yourself and a photograph. “So I was okay with entry especially after being convinced that the Miss University of Nairobi was more than just being a human hanger”. 31 men and women entered the 2010 competition and “believe you me, says Michelle, it was hard work. I had to learn how to balance on

high heeled shoes, I had to learn how to walk, and present myself in the best way.”

The value of a beauty pageant says Michelle is that “it benefits the participant; you learn how to walk, dress, talk, acquire poise and confidence. The makeup use is minimal and wonder of wonders; they do not set to make you look mzungu”. Away from the competition however, Michelle says that she has learnt to understand people and human nature. The modeling business is rife with conmen. Michelle is clear that the competition organizers organized some con games, for instance, people did not get the prize money listed in the newspapers. “I worked so hard and yet at the end I was left with disquiet perhaps it shaped my perspectives, perhaps it was a wakeup call that the world can be brutish and nasty. It is not the worst that has ever happened to me but it certainly got to me”.

It is ironic that while a beauty pageant is more than a human hanger, the Miss University of Nairobi Pageant which should be more on showcasing the best in the industry, has proved so hollow, Michelle observed that “the title should not just be a face, it should also be the voice of a real person, with issues that make sense for others to listen to and relevant in Kenya. Miss UoN does not move beyond the University, it needs follow-up so that it moves to a different level where the title holder becomes an ambassador for human/society development a real legacy”.

**Michelle Nguire a second year student, BSc. in Electrical and Electronics Engineering.**



## BRISTON OBANO

This view, interestingly, is also echoed by Briston Obano the 2010 Mr. University of Nairobi. A final year student, Briston is working on his own campaign to assist people, the focus of this campaign is leprosy, a disease which is largely ignored but it has had debilitating effects in communities in Kwale district.

Briston Obano was born in Mombasa, 25 years ago, he is the second born child in a family of four, he was brought up in Ganjoni, and after primary school, joined Sunshine Secondary School in Nairobi, “ in high school I enjoyed physics, chemistry and math.

Briston, joined the University of Nairobi in 2006, to pursue Civil Engineering. According to Briston, the Mr. University of Nairobi competition is supposed to represent the social life of a student. It is a challenging quest as it is expected naturally that Mr. University should do something compelling once crowned. This is far from the reality, our title only benefits us and its relevance ultimately is removed.

The Mr. University Pageant is about mental framework, smart presentation of self, attitude and character and a little bit of male beauty – tall, dark, smiling looks. “We were taught how to walk, how to present ourselves on stage for two weeks”.

On the day of the final judging, in the creative phase, “I wore a polythene bag top, trousers, and manila sandals. My outfit and sandals were clearly papers and plastic including a plastic belt”. For the talent spot, I played the piano, selecting a soft song.” My heart will go on by Celine Dion. I jazzed it up to a faster pitch and sang myself hoarse for the three minutes it took”. Briston learnt how to play the piano,

in high school, he took lessons from other classmates for free.

Briston’s main extra curricula hobby is modeling. I am amazed to hear this and he closes my gaping mouth with the statement “ In 2008, I took part in the Mr. & Mrs. Maisha show, the show taught me that it is the responsibility that I take, that makes me a man; responsibility is what defines me as a man, and not other attributes including male beauty. Modeling he says, does not take up more time, you schedule it, it’s not easy but you must make time, you cannot be in books all the time, you need to relax and do something which will not make you tense. For some men it is rugby, others live soccer, I Briston, like modeling.

In terms of value addition, people think that modeling is negatively useless, but modeling makes you stand out, who does not want to meet well groomed, muscle toned, individuals? Must men always look frumpy and fat? Was the event worth it? I won a laptop, Kshs 5,000 worth of credit, and Kshs 10,000 donated by a local MP.

Modeling and beauty pageants are not necessarily negative as so many of us believe. Mr. and Mrs. University of Nairobi have appreciated the positive side that has made them stand out. They have a vision to make others realize and do what they have always wanted to do. “But do not forget your studies” they both quipped.

**Mr. Obano, a fifth year student, BSc. in Civil Engineering.**





**Dr. Joseph Wanjui, Chancellor, University of Nairobi, when he visited the School of Business**

# School of Business challenged to compete internationally

**T**he Chancellor of the University of Nairobi, Dr. Joseph B. Wanjui, has challenged the School of Business to re-engineer itself and attain world class status to rival its peers in developed countries. He said this in March, 2011, during a tour of the facilities at the School of Business, Lower Kabete Campus.

In view of the competition emerging from other business schools in the region, the Chancellor challenged the School of Business to be proactive and ensure that it maintains an edge over its competitors through introduction of courses targeting different interest groups in the market.

The School of Business remains the largest in the region and the most popular through its twin programmes of Bachelor of Commerce (B.Com) and the Master in Business Administration (MBA). It has enrolled over 6,000 students in the two programmes and has campuses in Kisumu and Mombasa. It also has a number of international students including 30 MBA students sponsored by the government of Liberia.

The School recently introduced a day-time programme to cater for self-sponsored students at its Lower Kabete campus.

In 2010, Barclays Bank of Kenya endowed a chair in the Department of Finance and Accounting which enabled the recruitment of Prof. Erasmus Kajjage, a world renowned scholar.

On arrival, Dr. Wanjui was received by top University management led by the Chairman of Council, Mr. John Simba and the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. George Magoha, Deputy Vice-Chancellors, and the College Management team led by the Principal, Prof. Enos Njeru, Deputy Principal, Prof. Peter K'Obonyo and Dean, School of Business, Mr. Stephen Nzube among others.

# A strong partnership with a major Oil Company

Total Kenya, a major oil company, will donate scholarships, facilitate student and staff exchange and offer internships to the University of Nairobi (UoN) as part of its programme to support education and research.

This was revealed by the head of Total, Paris, Ms. Varescon Florence when she paid a courtesy on the Vice Chancellor. Ms Florence stated that a major part of this support is internships to UoN students with the possibility of recruiting some on permanent basis. Total has over 16000 outlets worldwide with Africa leading with 33 percent.

According to Ms Florence, the objective of the Total scholarship program is to develop education through university-industry collaboration, students' exchange, and development of educational facilities. These are part of the company's corporate social responsibility that is consistent with their business objectives.

The partnership will provide

opportunities for students and staff to network with colleagues from countries other than France. Total has already built networks in Africa including with the University of Witwatersrand in South Africa and is now keen on starting new relations with universities in Kenya and Sierra Leone.

Prof. Peter Mbithi, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Finance and



**Alexis Vovk, Managing Director, Total Kenya with Prof. Lucy Irungu, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, RPE, and Prof. Simeon Mitema, Director, Centre for International Programmes and Links.**

Administration chaired the meeting and welcomed the link by reiterating UoN's keenness to collaborate, and increase networks with industry and other like-minded organizations. He added that the new development will not only increase available opportunities for staff and students, but will also internationalize the University through opportunities

accorded to staff and students. It was agreed that a Memorandum of Understanding be signed soon to formalize this partnership.

Ms. Florence was accompanied by Alexis Vovk, Managing Director, Total Kenya and other senior officials. The UoN team present included Prof. Lucy Irungu, Deputy Vice-Chancellor,

Research, Production and Extension, Prof. Henry Mutoro, Principal, College of Education and External Studies, Dr. Christopher Nyamai Chairman, Department of Geology, and Prof. Simeon Mitema, Director, Centre for International Programmes and Links. The team also toured some UoN facilities.



**Head of Total, Paris, Ms. Varescon Florence receives a gift from Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Administration and Finance, Prof. Peter Mbithi.**



# Prospects of **studying** in **Canada**

**University of Nairobi students are set to gain from increased exchanges with their counterparts in Canada.**

This was revealed by the Canadian High Commissioner to Kenya H.E. David Collins when he paid a courtesy call to the Vice-Chancellor on April 21, 2011.

The High Commissioner Collins encouraged Kenyan students to apply for graduate education in Canada, because students are allowed to engage in part time employment to defray their tuition costs. They also get opportunities to gain postgraduate work experience of up to three years. Canadian universities, according to Collins are also cheaper than universities in the US and U.K.

The High Commissioner donated seven publications to the University of Nairobi, among them: *Compass* by Signal Editions, *Le afford* by Sophie Violet, *Cats night out* by Cardin Stetson, *Cultivating Canada – reconciliation through the lens of cultural diversity* percept by Paid Piquet, *Shake hands with the devil: The failure of humanity in Rwanda* by Romeo Dallative, and, *Effleuris de lumiere* by Danielle Fourview.

Prof. Isaac Mbeche, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Student Affairs received the book donation on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor and thanked the Canadian Embassy for their



**Canadian High Commissioner to Kenya, H.E. David Collins with one of the books he donated to UoN.**

kind gesture. Prof. Mbeche noted that Canada has strong links with the University of Nairobi through the University of Manitoba which resulted in the construction and equipping of level three laboratories, joint researches, student exchanges among other joint activities. Other links are with the University of Colombia, University of Western

Ontario etc.

Present during the occasion were Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs), Prof. Jacob Kaimenyi, Principal, College of Health Sciences, Prof. Isaac Kibwage, Director, Centre for International Programmes and Links, Prof. Simeon Mitema and the University Librarian, Mrs. Salome Munavu.



Vice-Chancellor, Prof. George Magoha when he hosted a PEPFAR delegation comprising of three US universities led by Letitia Robinson of the National Institutes of Health.

# UoN meets with US collaborators **to improve medical care**

The University of Nairobi in conjunction with three American Universities – Baltimore, Maryland, Washington and the St. John’s Medical College, Bangalore – under the US Presidential Emergency Programme and Fund for Aids Relief (PEPFAR), have launched a health initiative whose objectives include the improvement of medical education, increased training outside Nairobi and increased research opportunities and accreditation of health institutions among others. Some of the Universities like Washington and Maryland have vast experience in decentralization

of medical education to other sites, while St. Johns Medical College has a functional research unit that took off over ten years ago and currently is very successful.

Under the grant, the universities are also expected to share electronic resources through online linkages. According to the Principal

Investigator, Dr. James Kiarie, who is also a senior lecturer, Department of obstetrics and gynaecology, the University of Nairobi will build a skills laboratory and explore innovative ways for the expanded horizon of the relationship to include sharing of electronic materials in areas other than medicine. Other key

**Other key plans of the initiative are to stimulate research and offer opportunities for staff to compete for career development grants.**

plans of the initiative are to stimulate research and offer opportunities for staff to compete for career development grants.

The Vice-Chancellor Prof. George Magoha proposed that all staff in the College of Health Sciences should be trained in proposal writing to compete for more research grants. He also revealed that the University has established a fully-fledged research, production and extension division headed by a Deputy Vice-Chancellor – Prof. Lucy Irungu, has since been appointed – to spearhead this core function of the University.

The University top management was invited to tour the institutions in the three collaborating institutions in the United States of America.

The team was led by Letitia Robinson of the National Institutes of Health, MEPI partnerships and included Dr. Swarna Rikha Bhat, St. Johns Medical College, India, Sarah Dominiz University of Maryland, Sylvia Ojoo, University of Maryland, Dr. Chaffy Farquhar, University of Washington and Robert Redfield, University of Maryland. Others in the University of Nairobi team included Principal, College of Health Sciences, Prof. Isaac Kibwage, the Deans and Directors among others.

# 10 pharmacy students benefit from scholarships



**Diane Loise displays her award certificate. With her are Nicholas Folliot, Servier International, and College Principal, Prof. Isaac Kibwage.**

Servier International, a French Pharmaceutical company with headquarters at Neully Sur Cedex in France, and subsidiaries worldwide, has awarded ten University of Nairobi students, from the School of Pharmacy with scholarships awards worth Kshs.1 million.

The Company, which has been sponsoring third year, needy and brilliant students at the School of Pharmacy for the last three years, made the presentation during a function presided over by Nicholas Folliot, Deputy Regional Operations Manager for Africa. Among the 10 beneficiaries was Diana Loise now in her fourth year, who was the best ranked student. Also present during the occasion was the Principal, Prof. Isaac Kibwage.

# A successful Open Day fete

*The University of Nairobi held its third Open Day on 1st and 2nd April 2011. The Open Day was held at the Great Court with the theme "An opportunity to invest in your future".*

The genesis to the Open Day can be traced back to three years ago, when the University found it prudent to open up to prospective students, parents and other stakeholders. Through this forum, prospective students and the public at large are able to interact with faculty staff to learn more about university programmes and other activities.

The 3rd Open Day was attended by 4,000 prospective

students, high school students, parents, staff, students and other stakeholders, who are keen to assess the strides made by the University over the years. Stakeholders ascertained for themselves that the University had grown both in size and stature – currently the University has a student population of over 52,000 enrolled in different programmes and a staff complement of 6,000. It offers courses at diploma, undergraduate

and postgraduate levels.

During the Open Day, experienced staff comprising of professors and other senior staff from all departments were on hand to receive visitors at the stands and to respond to queries relating to courses offered. Visitors were encouraged to engage these members of staff to assist them in making informed choices about their higher chosen careers.

Other departments that exhibited during the Open Day are those that play a supportive role in the achievement of the core objectives of the University. They included those that deal with academic affairs such as admissions, library, bookshop, and welfare departments such as the dean of students, health services, accommodation, sports and games among others – all of which play an important role in moulding students at the University.

During a short opening ceremony, the Barclays Bank Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Mohammed Adan, who was the chief guest, challenged students to protect the brand. He said "it takes close to 100 years to build a brand, but it takes a single incident to destroy it. Adan



Dr. Joseph Wanjui signs the visitor's book at UoN Press stand as Barclays CEO, Mr. Mohammed Aden and top administrator's look on.



**Visitors during the 3rd University of Nairobi Open Day.**

challenged students of the University of Nairobi to be mature in resolving conflicts with the administration. Adan, an alumnus of the University, paid tribute to UoN for producing outstanding graduates who are serving in key positions in various sectors worldwide.

His sentiments were echoed by the Chancellor of the University, Dr. Joe Wanjui who criticised a section of the student community for bringing the name of the University into disrepute. The Chancellor congratulated the University for successfully conducting a free

education clinic for members of the public and providing a chance for them to audit the activities of the University.

During the Open Day, the performance of various stands was ranked with Science Workshop/ Geology Kits emerging first followed by the School of Medicine and the Student Welfare Authority in third position. All corporate exhibitors were presented with certificates of participation.

Up to 12 exhibition booths were taken up by corporate bodies

that included the Higher Education Loans Board, Post Bank, Kenya Commercial Bank, Cooperative Bank, Barclays Bank of Kenya, Riley Security Services, and telecom giants Safaricom and Airtel, KASNEB and Kenya Revenue Authority.

Speaking to Varsity Focus, the Chairman of the University Exhibitions Committee, Dr. Fred Otieno said he was happy with the public response to the programmes offered as witnessed by visitors from as far as Nakuru, Kisumu, Kapenguria and Mulot in Turkana.

The special guest at the Open Day, Josephine Nyaga, who was recently featured in the daily newspapers after attaining a B- as an adult learner, stated that she was keen to join a programme at the University of Nairobi. Ms. Nyaga, who had travelled from Nakuru, is eligible to join the B.Ed science course, and with support and financial assistance will be joining the University in October, 2011.

*During the Open Day, the performance of various stands was ranked with Science Workshop/ Geology Kits emerging first followed by the School of Medicine and the Student Welfare Authority in third position. All corporate exhibitors were presented with certificates of participation.*



*✍ Dr. John Kirkland, Deputy Secretary, Association of Commonwealth Universities, when he paid a courtesy call on the Vice-chancellor.*



*✍ Prof. Madara Ogot, Managing Director, University of Nairobi Enterprises and Services, presents a gift to representatives of the winning stand ( Science Workshops) during the 3rd Annual Open Day*



*✍ Senior Chinese leader, H.E. Li Changchun joins the University choir during his recent visit to the institution.*



*✍ Dr. Joseph Wanjui (third left) with top UoN and SEUCO managers during an inspection tour of development projects in the latter.*



*✍ Top Kenya and Chinese government officials with UoN managers at the Chinese Photo exhibition held in honour of Li Changchun a senior Chinese leader.*



*✍ Vice-Chancellor University of Namibia receives a gift from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Student Affairs, Prof. Isaac Mbeche. The former had visited UoN on a benchmarking mission.*

# Appointment of two deputy vice-chancellors



Prof. Isaac M. Mbeche  
Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Student  
Affairs.



Prof. Lucy W. Irungu  
Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research,  
Production and Extension.



Prof. Bernard Aduda  
Principal, College of Biological  
and Physical Sciences.

**The University of Nairobi Council appointed Prof. Lucy W. Irungu as the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research, Production and Extension and Prof. Isaac Mbeche as Deputy Vice-chancellor, Student Affairs.**

The duties of the DVC (RPE) include: planning, organizing and managing research infrastructure development and appropriate policy planning; coordinating administrative and logistical support for research at all levels; coordinating the sourcing of libraries and archives. Other duties include research branding, quality control and capacity building.

Prof. Irungu is the immediate former Principal, College of Biological and Physical Sciences – a position

she held for seven years. Her high points include successful implementation of reforms in the College; twice she led in performance contracting in the University's internal ranking. Prof. Irungu is a Professor of Entomology and has published 37 scientific publications, supervised nine Ph.D. and 32 Master of Science candidates among others. She is an alumnus of the University of Nairobi and University of Liverpool, School of Medicine, where she undertook her master's and Ph.D. Prof. Irungu has won many local and international prizes for outstanding academic achievements. She becomes the second woman in the history of the University to hold the position of Deputy Vice-Chancellor after Prof. Florida Karani who was in charge of academic affairs for 10 years.

The University Council also appointed Prof. Isaac Meroka Mbeche as Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Student Affairs (SA). The

appointment of Prof. Mbeche was effective from February 1, 2010.

The duties of the DVC (SA) include: to take charge of all student affairs such as planning, organizing and managing work-study programmes, sports and games, catering and accommodation, community service, recreation, health, and the security of students. The DVC is also expected to develop and implement, programmes such as leadership and training that support students' educational experience and wholesome life.

Prof. Mbeche is the past Principal, College of Humanities and Social Sciences – a position he held for nine years. He is an Associate Professor in the Department of Management Science. Prof. Mbeche studied at UoN for his bachelors and masters degrees before proceeding to the University of Lancaster for his doctoral studies. He has 25 publications and has supervised many students among them three





Prof. Enos H.N.  
Principal, College of Humanities  
and Social Sciences.



Prof. Peter K'Obonyo  
Deputy Principal, College of  
Humanities Social Sciences.

Ph.D. students, 15 MBA's and 15 MSc in management. Prof. Mbeche is also a member of various organizations especially in operations research.

The University Council also appointed Prof. Enos Njeru as the Principal College of Humanities and Social Sciences. Prof. Njeru is the former Dean, Faculty of Arts.

Prof. Bernard Aduda was appointed Principal, College of Biological Sciences. Prof. Aduda is the immediate former Associate Dean, Kenya Science, while Prof. Peter K'Obonyo was appointed the Deputy Principal, College of Humanities and Social Sciences. He is based at Lower Kabete Campus.

*Varsity Focus* wishes them success in their new appointments.

# NEWS

The Vice-chancellor, University of Nairobi, Prof. George A.O Magoha, was recently elected the President of the Association of African Universities (AAU) during the Annual General Meeting of the Executive Board in Accra, Ghana in June 2011.

Prof Magoha, first joined the Executive Board of AAU in February, 2005 during the Boards meeting in Cape Town, South Africa. In 2009, Prof Magoha was elected first Vice President of the AAU, representing the larger Eastern Africa region during the Boards meeting in Abuja, Nigeria.

Prof Magoha has served as Consultant Surgeon and Urologist at Kenyatta National Hospital, Agakhan Hospital and Nairobi Hospital. He is currently the chairman of the Kenya Medical Practitioners and Dentists Board, as well as the chairman of the KENET Board since 2009, and chairman of the Kenya Association of Urological Surgeons (KAUS).

Apart from being a scholar and academician, Prof Magoha is a member of numerous professional bodies and is actively involved in research on male erectile dysfunction, prostate, testicular and penile cancers, male circumcision and HIV/AIDS.

**IN A SEPARATE DEVELOPMENT**, a group of researchers headed by Prof. Shem Wandiga, FRCS, has been awarded a first phase grant of US\$ 157,198 by the Open Society Foundations, to undertake studies leading to the establishment of The African Climate Change Adaptation Research Institute of the University of Nairobi.

Speaking to *Varsity Focus*, Prof Wandiga said that the grant which will be administered by UNES will enable the proposed Institute to offer unique inter and multi-disciplinary programmes as follows: Build the human capacity needed to address climate change adaptations that meet African societies unique needs by offering University-based curricula for conventional degrees and short training courses for a wide range of professionals from all sectors of society; Encourage action-oriented research activities, including research into climate adaptation technologies that will help to improve the climate adaptation capacity of the African peoples; Provide a framework for national and regional policy assessments and advice to governments and other public and private sector actors; and Include the grassroots and various communities within the African region in its programmes execution and implementation of research findings. Prospective researchers can contact :wandigas@uonbi.ac.ke; sowandiga@iconnect.co.ke

# H.M. El Busaidy, 44th class Valedictorian



*“I see myself as a research based doctor, focusing on practice, research and publications, never therefore underwrite the enormous potential in you”.*

**T**his is the vision of Hemed Mohammed El Busaidy, the December class Valedictorian.

Hemed was born on the eve of Valentine’s Day, 1988, in Malindi. He first attended Central Primary School. This was a government facility and it was dilapidated, -there were no doors and no windows. Hemed says that he was not interested in education, he simply viewed school as a place to pass time, it was therefore no surprise that I scored 288/500 marks in my KCPE, the marks did not bother him so much, it was what his mother said when he came back from a trip abroad that got to him, my mother said that the family had expected me to do better “we had high expectations that you would do well, even your father was on a high, but your marks really disappointed him”.

Hemed was admitted to the Kenya Muslim Academy where he did his first and second form, in form three Hemed was admitted to Nakuru High school, “I began to appreciate that hard work and consistency are the hall marks of a good performance. So I did not give up, I had faith in God so by the time I was in form three, I began also to appear on the merit list, gaining recognition as I would also be called out in the assembly hall. For the first time, I who had always watched others shine, also began to shine”

After completing my O level, which I passed with a score of A-, I applied to do medicine at the University of Nairobi. Biology was my favorite subject, followed by mathematics. "If I had not been taken into the medicine class then I would have pursued accounting. I was not immediately taken to do medicine because I had not met the points of 43; I had 42 points, however in 2007/2008, when I again applied, I managed to join because the pass mark had been reduced to 41.

"My first year at the School of Medicine was hard, I was new to the environment, there was great competition and because I had come in alone from my high school, I had no friends and thus felt a bit isolated". Hemed had to make friends as well as to constantly work hard, so that by the time it was the middle of the year, he had done well and was selected to pursue B.sc Anatomy which is a prestigious course. "It is a restricted intake, only four of us were taken in my year. After completing my Bachelors course, I returned back to the School of Medicine where I am now in third year of the MBChB course"

The daily life of a medical student is a long grinding, back breaking stint with eight hours of class work. In third year, we spend up to eight hours daily with patients, with a few breaks for lectures, Hemed is also in the class soccer team where he plays the striker position, "we practice at least three days a week, go to sleep between 10.30 and 1.00pm after a normal weekday of group discussions which is also critical for medical students".

Hemed observes that the B.Sc. course in Anatomy had a great impact on his career. "I see myself more into research; medicine cannot advance if there is no

research. I have a new interest and training in research methods, academic proposal writing and fieldwork". Hemed is hoping to join the Surgical Society of Kenya which works to relieve suffering by carrying out minor surgical operations and free medical service, he is also a member of the Muslim Students Association of the University of Nairobi and during the Easter breaks will be part of a team going to Machakos to carry out free medical treatment.

Hemed says that he has learnt the value of consultation, consistent hardwork and dedication. Focus is pivotal in the life of a person, with focus and a positive attitude one can make it. "If you remember, I had suffered when I disappointed my parents so much and again, when I was in Nakuru, I suffered a bout of stomach ulcers, I was so stressed that I had to recollect myself, focus on what was at stake and believe in myself. Everyone of us has potential to excel, if you look at my background, you will note that I learnt not to give up and to have faith in God."

Hemed draws inspiration from first his grandfather Prof. Ghafour El Busaidy, who has always involved himself in charity

work. "My grandfather lives a life of helping others, instead of looking for recognition and accolades, this simple act that so many ignore, but which is the core function of life is what my grandfather stands for". Prof. Busaidy has raised the goals for Hemed, who believes that just like his grandfather sponsors other people, he must also sponsor others so that they realize their academic profile.

In terms of his professional life, Hemed singles out Prof. Said, who is so interested in research and to whom Hemed owes so much. But perhaps the one person whom Hemed believes exemplifies a life worth emulating is prophet Mohammed (PBUS) who is the best example of humankind that has ever lived.

Hemed remains intrigued by heart research, "I have done anatomical studies on the heart and now I want to do the clinicals. His motto is "I leave home a student, return home a physician". He sums up this motto succinctly as: work hard, be consistent, never give up no matter the circumstance, and lastly have faith in God. In the next four years, we can only look forward to engaging this quintessential scholar as our physician.



El Busaidy in a practical session with fellow students.

**Prof. George Magoha with academic and health industry stakeholders during the launch of the School of Public Health.**



# School of Public Health launched

*In March, 2011, the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. George Magoha formally launched the School of Public Health and its Strategic Plan for 2011-2013.*

The ceremony, which was held at the College of Health Sciences, was attended by government representatives, donors, academicians and medical practitioners.

The School, which was carved out of the School of Medicine, Department of Community Health, is now a distinct entity, with an expanded mandate to deal with

high demands for training on public health issues. As a School, it will have more autonomy and can fundraise and expand its contribution to public health, research, training and community health development.

The School's three-year strategic plan emphasizes visibility and greater impact on policy development and enhanced

external partnerships. It plans to mobilize resources through an increased donor base.

According to the School's Director, Dr. Dismas Ongore, the School shall offer postgraduate training in Public Health and will also introduce degrees and diplomas in environmental sciences, occupational health sciences and community health. Masters programmes will include epidemiology and biostatistics, disease prevention, control and health promotion, public health nutrition and public health economics.

The launch of the School brings to six the number of Schools and Institutes at the College of Health Sciences.



**...and the Baby is launched**

# Introduction of the Centre **for human rights and peace**

*These units provide the CHRP with a rich, balanced, well-qualified and diverse teaching fraternity, which ensures that human rights education is delivered in a multi-disciplinary approach.*



**Participants of a recent workshop for documentalists from human rights organisations in Kenya.**

The University of Nairobi Centre for Human Rights and Peace (CHRP) was founded in August 2008 with the aim of coordinating human rights and peace research, training, teaching, documentation and outreach programmes at the University. The main goal of the CHRP is to contribute to the understanding, appreciation, internalization, practice and realization of human rights and peace in Kenya in particular, and in the Eastern African region in general.

The Centre's approach is multi-disciplinary. Thus, it brings together the following academic units: Faculty of Arts and its constituent departments; School of Law; School of Journalism and Mass Communication; Institute of Anthropology, Gender and African Studies; Institute of Diplomacy and International Studies; and School of Economics.

These units, provide the CHRP with a rich, balanced, well-qualified and diverse teaching fraternity, which ensures that human rights education is

delivered in a multi-disciplinary approach. This approach is useful and pertinent since it provides a deeper and broader appreciation of human rights and peace.

The CHRP is founded on the premise that human rights education is widely considered to be an integral part of education at all levels of learning. This approach is aimed at repudiating the traditional way of teaching human rights in universities. In the traditional way, human rights education is largely taught to a few students who are pursuing courses such as law, international studies, and political science, gender and women studies, among others.

However, other organizations such as the World Conference on Human Rights, for example, consider human rights education as essential for the promotion and achievement of stable and harmonious relations among communities, and for fostering mutual understanding, tolerance and peace. Indeed, it is undeniable that human rights education will help to foster an understanding of the common responsibility of each individual in promoting human rights. In this respect, human rights education contributes to the long-term prevention of human rights abuses, promotes peace and sustainable development.

Nevertheless, human rights and peace education cannot continue to be considered a luxury. That is why the centrality of universities in promoting human rights education cannot be overemphasized. Since the adoption of the Vienna Declaration and the Program of Action in 1993, universities around the world have featured human rights education prominently in their curricular.

The University of Nairobi is

pursuing this route. Kenya, for example, has in the era of multiparty politics held four general elections most of them characterized by bloody ethnic violence. In the ensuing chaos precipitated by political instability, human rights abuses have been committed on a large scale.

In the neighbouring countries of Somalia and Sudan, there exist conflict situations leading to human rights abuses and the disruption of peace. They have created an opportunity for the acquisition of illegal weapons commonly used by criminal gangs to terrorize citizens. Indeed, crime levels have substantially increased in Kenya due to instability in the region. The criminal environment has bred gangs and militia types masquerading as vigilante groups on the pretext of maintaining security. The operations of these militia types are rife with human rights abuses and violation. Although the conflict situations may be viewed as the consequence of failing economies, it is also a reflection of the paucity of human rights and peace education. Even where human rights and peace education exists, it is an exercise mostly associated with NGOs, faith-based organizations and other civil society organizations whose main approach is human rights and peace advocacy. The University of Nairobi through the CHRP seeks to change this state of affairs by contributing to human rights education at various levels.

To do this, the newly established CHRP proposed five (5) broad programmes:

### Education and Training

It consists of degree programmes (undergraduate, graduate), higher and ordinary diploma, as well as short targeted courses aimed at NGOs, security agencies,

government officials and private sector operatives, among others. The Centre seeks to organize public lecture series, seminars and community outreach sessions.

### Research and Publication

The CHRP seeks to engage in research whose findings will be published in occasional papers, policy briefs, journals and e-journals and books. In addition, it seeks to support senior and junior research.

### Documentation

This programme focuses on establishing a resource and archival centre in human rights and peace for use by lecturers, students, researchers and human rights organizations. Through the assistance of RWI, the CHRP has already refurbished a small but fairly equipped library at the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, UoN.

### Links, Exchange and Attachment

This entails establishing links and partnership with academic and non-academic institutions working in the field of human rights and peace. It is meant to provide opportunity for exchange of students and lecturers from the CHRP with other HR&P institutions. The programme is meant to expose both students and lecturers to new ideas and experiences for the purposes of improving their knowledge so as to be more effective human rights educators.

### Outreach

This entails reaching out and educating communities on human rights and peace. Such communities include schools, slums, women organizations, mosques and churches. This programme aims at enhancing the knowledge base of communities on human rights and peace.



**IGAD, Executive Secretary General, Mahboub Maalim hands over a gift to the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. George Magoha.**

# Collaboration with IGAD to empower the region

The University of Nairobi is collaborating with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to improve the economic opportunities in the region. This was said by the IGAD Executive Secretary General, Mahboub Maalim when he visited the University.

According to Mr. Maalim, IGAD now has a new mode of operation that seeks to empower the region economically through exploitation of existing opportunities; the University of Nairobi can undertake a fact finding mission on the work of the organization in order to determine where they fit in.

The Executive Director appealed to UoN management to assist in

provision of expertise citing the existing water project dubbed “Mawari Water Project” involving scholars from UoN, Ethiopia, Kenya and Djibouti” as an example of such expertise.

The meeting agreed that the two organizations could expand their collaboration to other strong areas that affect the livelihood of the people in the region, such as breeding of camels which are drought resistant.

Present during the meeting was the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research Production & Extension, Prof. Lucy Irungu, Prof. Isaac Mbeche, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Student Affairs, Principal, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Prof. Enos Njeru and Prof. Simeon Mitema, Director, Centre for International Programmes and Links.

This meeting has since been followed up by a fact finding mission to IGAD headquarters in Djibouti by Prof. Irungu and Prof. Mitema on possible areas of collaboration.

*The two organizations could expand their collaboration to other strong areas that affect the livelihood of the people in the region, such as breeding of camels which are drought resistant.*

# Kenya Model United Nations

*In the last four months, the Kenya Model United Nations (KMUN ) has been quite busy with activities that have raised its profile.*





On the 5th of December 2010, KMUN together with the Rotaract club organized a Christmas party for the children of the Kenyatta National Hospital cancer ward. The ward has about 80 children suffering from cancer, many in the late stages.

Treatment for cancer is very expensive and debilitating. Therefore, KMUN and Rotaract could not think of anything more to brighten the faces of the children than to plan and hold an early Christmas party for them. Ismael Bett, the President of Rotaract, while officiating at the event, urged members of the two clubs to continue with the philanthropy and challenged them to make the party an annual event.

On the 11th of December the two clubs extended the same gesture to the children at Christ Chapel Children's home in Huruma. The two clubs have organized a visit to the home every end month to assist in chores, play, as well as interact with the children. In 2011, the two clubs plan to put in place a mentorship programme that will see the children tutored and mentored by the members. The home has 40 children.

In a separate development, KMUN University of Nairobi Main Campus Chapter in conjunction with the Blood Link Foundation (BLF) held a blood donor drive on the 7th and 8th of March 2011. Speaking to Varsity Focus, Fiona Imbali, Undersecretary General, said that the blood drive was amongst many that the club has successfully organized in the recent past as part of its corporate social responsibility. During the two-day exercise, 144 members of the university community donated blood. Many people were turned away due to their low Body Mass Index (BMI).



**KMUN officials with children at the Kenyatta National Hospital Cancer Ward after the Christmas party.**

### ***Blood drives have been organised successfully in the past as part of our corporate social responsibility***

They were however glad to learn from the exercise about the life styles and general health and nutrition habits that could enrich their lives.

Speaking at the event, Mr. Fredrick Obwanda, Programs Officer, BLF, expressed concern over the gradual depletion of blood banks because of the reluctance of people to donate blood unless someone close to them was in need. He was however happy that KMUN had taken the initiative to mobilize people for this cause. He appealed for more people to volunteer in donating blood.

In another activity, KMUN annual conference took place from the 21st to 25th of March 2011 at Gigiri. The theme of the annual conference was *Pan-Africanism and the consciousness of humanity in the youthful African spirit*. The chief guest during the event was Ambassador David Kikaya. He lauded the students for organizing KMUN conferences which accord them a platform to discuss various aspects and gain life enriching skills.

70 delegates from the UoN Main Campus Chapter attended the conference.

# Contributions to science

*When I first heard that the University of Nairobi has a Science Park, the words science and park drew my curiosity.*

I imagined that we had opened up a museum of sorts, with science imagined things such as fossils, old pottery, bones, face masks, shells, all arranged in cages, curtained boxes etc. I conjured images of old men, with spectacles, walking around in grey and white lab coats, looking very clever, speaking or rattling speech at decibels that lesser artsy types such as myself could not understand.

So last month, I was introduced to a young innovator, who was kind enough to explain what a science park is. Of course he upset my notions of a science park with his explanation that a science park is a technology park. So

where are the exhibits I asked, no he said, "a science park is actually the bridge between academia and industry; it is a lab where students are hosted by the university, immediately after they graduate". In the park they are allocated space and some resources to enable them to develop marketable products. As they begin to experience what industry is about, they interact with other innovators and may decide to move into manufacturing.

The Universities Science Park and Technology has originated its own Fab. Lab, a set of equipment that allows you to do almost anything. Basically, the Fab labs have rapid prototyping equipment that allows an innovator to develop and pilot test products. The concept which originated from MIT centers, is an interesting concept that was sold to over 10 governments and donors.

A science park is the lab and the market for products. It allows the students the opportunity to become independent. A key characteristic of a science park is that there must be collaboration between academia and the industry. The student becomes the innovator whose

Science Park collaborators with Kamau Gachigi of the University Fab. Labs



product is being developed for industry, the park helps the innovator to market the product to industry.

What happens in the science park is that an innovator is supplied with space in the form of a stall or cubicle, they are able to use some of the equipment available, they benefit from supervision, technical advice and support offered by the university. In turn, once the innovator has money from the sale of a product they can pay some small rent in form of a percentage from the sales. They stay on in the science park incubating their ideas and products and gaining experience until they are ready to go it alone.

Vincent Musau, one of the users of the science park, believes that for a country to develop, the technologies they grow must be indigenous as opposed to relying on imported technology and consultants. "It is important for this country to have its own people who can manufacture, specifically electronics, and make us self reliant". As a country we need to move to more knowledge based industries and use our students, to make the transition beyond the classroom, translating the theory learnt to practical things that can make sense and help the layman.

The Fab.Lab within the Science Park, comes in handy to serve as the intermediary between academia and industry and close the gap. This is why a science and technology park is so critical to our development.

*"In my village, wearing shoes was a problem, it was a problem because we could not afford shoes, it was a threat because even our teachers could not afford shoes."*

There were times in my life when I did not even have bus fare"

The words echo in my mind humbling me, to realize that I am privileged and my country is a developing world. The speaker of the words Vincent Musyoka Musau, was born in 1980, in Machakos, in a modest village environment that challenged the inhabitants. Vincent worked hard in primary school and joined the Machakos Boy's High School in 1996. He was the youngest school captain the school had ever had; he served for two years having been elected in Form 3. He was also the best student from Form 1-4.

Vincent always enjoyed "doing stuff like Physics and Chemistry" he entered the schools Science Congress and in 1999 won the trophy in Chemistry, Vincent has certificates and T-shirt which he refers to as souvenirs.

In 2001, Vincent joined the University of Nairobi where he was admitted to the Bsc Electrical and Electronics engineering course. He has always been passionate about sciences even in school, but like many other children from humble homes, he did not have exposure to make career choices, it is, thanks to his teachers, who selected what has proved to be his passion and his connection suiting his personality. At University, he came across students who had good scores and backgrounds of privilege, he set out in a struggle to do well and to get a comparative advantage, during his second year for instance, Vincent studied computing, programming and processors. These are not, strictly, part of the curriculum, but he believed that they would be a stepping stone in his academic and career progress.

In 2006, Vincent completed his course and was awarded First Class



## Vincent M. Musau

Honors. With excitement and passion, he attended two interviews that had been coordinated by the University. The first company, a bank, wanted to recruit him into a temporary position for four years, as an ICT security system technician, after which they would review his position. He was not tempted to take up the offer. The other company, a water engineering company, observed after the interview that he was overqualified. The C.V that he had supplied was rich and indicated a variety of experiences: for two consecutive years he was the best student in the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers in Africa competition, he won 250,000 when in 3rd year, while in 4th year, he won a desktop computer, a laptop and a few cartons of fruit juice. In the same vein, when he was in 2nd year, he programmed a student

information system package in a program layout called C++ and sold it for Kshs. 60,000. When he was in third year, at the request of a friend, he developed a short code based system for query online data bases. "So you see I was aware of 6969 the version or concept before 2008, when I invented it for another fellow" he says.

Vincent almost gave up, "I had a good degree, skills and attitude but no one was coming forward to offer me a job". In the nick of time, he remembered one lecturer who had told them "you do not have to always be employed, you can employ yourself" so he registered his own company, Tekno International Limited and started working in the industrial area. "When we begun it was just me and an office assistant, I purchased a motorcycle and I used to go and service different companies requiring ICT solutions. I used to reach up to six or more clients daily and they would pay me, so that worked out fine, today, I have more than 10 engineers and almost 10 other staff working for me, I am the MD".

Vincent joined the Msc program at his old school in 2010. He has been attached to the Fab labs. Fab is an abbreviation for Fabrication. The Fab labs are part of the UoN Science Park. Vincent participated in Fab lab training in Norway sponsored by GOK, "through interaction with MIT students, I was able to make things like radio transmitter panels, color sensors, towel sensors etc".

The most important products that Vincent has made have been those made possible by an incubation program that the UoN provides through the Science Park. One of the products Vincent celebrates was a gadget which he

used to revive several machines used by the military. This non military man has for some few years now been servicing machinery for the department of defense worth millions of shillings. "What I use the fab lab to do and the worth of the products that I develop is nowhere close"

I did not know it before, but the first version of the digital switch was developed by Vincent. The digital switch or (set top box) is a gadget that allows people to reuse their television set after 2012 when Kenya switches from analogue to digital. The version developed by Vincent was presented and demonstrated to the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Dr. Bitange Ndemo. The project, was in response to a request made to the University to develop the set top box. While further negotiation and development is going on, Vincent is proud that he has met the President (Mwai Kibaki) – I mean, who would not want to meet their president- especially if you and your lecturer (Dr. Kamau Gachigi) are being introduced as the people behind an innovative product?.

Vincent is also busy identifying the needs in industry. He has used the Fab lab to develop a solution to water loss/ wastage. This project was carried out on behalf of water companies which realized that they could only account for up to 49 per cent of for water pumped. In response, Vincent has developed a special water meter that replaces the meter we use, the meter operates with a Sim card; it can detect leakages and water theft and so has raised water accountability to 98 per cent. The meter ensures that the water given to the public is safe for consumption through a water

loop that determines that chlorine residue and turbidity are at the correct levels. But perhaps the one project for which Vincent is so proud of is the communication systems that he developed for KAF. I was able to visualize the project and to develop it. I am always so joyful that the product allowed me to interact with military top brass and the top men in DOD " Their respect for you and what you do, even the salutes that hail you as you walk into the office, the feeling of a comradeship is something else, its priceless and its truly valuable"

Vincent Musau derives inspiration from a desire to live and make a difference "I want to ensure that my community and family live in a changed county" he also has the desire to be the best, to be the one who knows what is hidden, and Bill Gates, with his background of "yes I can", is the linchpin for motivational talks which Vincent has been having with high school students.

Along the way, Vincent has learnt a number of lessons" nothing comes easily, you must struggle and take the next step" he decries the complaining and whining that so many of us indulge in saying that instead we should be making use of what we have, how much have you done with the things around you? Your perception must be sharpened to face the challenges that exist in this world, as troubled as it is, there is always a solution, but you must be committed to finding it.

Vincent Musyoka Musau is happy to do his bit in a troubled world, " I am trying to encourage students because I believe the challenges we are facing in life are as simple as they are difficult, therefore, how we face them is really what matters".

# New SONU officials sworn in



Students Organization of Nairobi University (SONU) successfully elected the 2011/2012 officials in a peaceful election after a heated one month campaign.

According to official results released by the Supervisor of Elections, Prof. Mohammed Jama, those elected were, Babu Owino as chairman, Matere Alex Natembeya as Secretary and Caroline Njoki Ndiritu as Treasurer. Other positions contested included college, faculty, and congress representatives. In total, 145 electoral positions were filled.

The officials were sworn in a day later to start running their union activities. The swearing in ceremony was attended by top management led by Prof. Peter Mbithi who congratulated students for a peaceful election and urged them to embrace dialogue in resolving problems with the administration. Others who addressed the gathering were the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Student Affairs, Prof. Isaac Mbeche and the newly elected SONU Chairman, Mr. Babu Owino.

The new SONU team takes over from

POSITION	NAME
Chairman	Babu Owino
Vice Chair, (Admin And Finance)	Kigen Cheruiyot Vincent
Vice Chair, (Academic Affairs)	Murungi Mukiri Winfred
Secretary General	Matere Alex Natembeya
Treasurer	Ndiritu Njoki Caroline
Organizing Secretary	Njiru Humphrey
Secretary, Health, Catering and Accommodation	Ochola Ochieng Don Calvince
Secretary, Sports and Entertainment	Kemboi John Kennedy
Secretary, Legal Affairs	Salim Abdallah Busaidy
Secretary, Gender Affairs	Muthui Pamela

the caretaker committee which has been running SONU affairs since 2010. Kudos to all students and election officials for ensuring an incident free election.



# Providing graduate education to Liberia

*The University of Nairobi is educating the next generation of Liberia's technocrats and leaders.*



**Liberian Business Technocrats during the orientation at the School of Business.**

In January 2011, a group of 33 Liberian students enrolled in the MBA programme at the School of Business.

Speaking to Varsity Focus, Mr Janga Kowo, the Chief Financial Officer of the General Auditing Commission of the republic of Liberia, who accompanied the students said that they had been attracted to the University of Nairobi because of its high ranking. Most of the students are from the General Auditing Commission and the knowledge acquired will go a long way in enhancing the services provided by the commission.

The MBA office held an

orientation afternoon to welcome the new students and ensure that they settled as fast possible in their new environment. In admitting these students, the University of Nairobi is helping to rebuild Liberia after two civil wars. The students will provide a critical mass of new technocrats needed to rebuild the country.

In addition, such students will enrich the intellectual and cultural life at the University making it a truly global university. The Liberians are joining several other nationalities that have made the University of Nairobi their intellectual home. They include Uganda, Rwanda, Malawi,

Sudan and other nationalities. Mr. Kowo observed that more Liberians will be coming to join the highly ranked programs.

During the orientation, the Dean, School of Business, Mr. Stephen Nzube noted that admitting international students is the best evidence that the School has grown embraced globalization and is up to the task. He noted that students from other countries bring a different perspective, helping the School to evaluate its benchmarks, curriculum and best practices.

Bomo Whargar, one of the students noted that the UoN academic programs are challenging, despite the difference in accents which he is overcoming, he confessed that the rigour of the program has not given him any time to sample 'nyama choma'.

Internationalizing our programs through student diversity and curriculum reviews is one way to ensure that our flag ship programs such as the MBA will play their role in making University of Nairobi a truly global university, notes Dr. WN Iraki, the MBA program coordinator. Educating the next generation of Liberian technocrats and leaders is one way the University of Nairobi can play her role in making this small planet a better home for all of us.

Varsity Focus welcomes all our international students; feel at home.

# AERC board visits UoN

The African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) board paid a courtesy call on the Vice-Chancellor to brief him on the activities of the consortium and seek mutual support. The board was led by its current Chairman, Prof. Neil Rankin from the University of Witwatersrand in South Africa. The board also visited the School of Economics where it has sponsored 14 students, to review the implementation of its Ph.D. programme, assess facilities and meet students and staff. UoN is a key member of AERC according to the Board Chairman, Prof. Rankin. Rankin encouraged the School of Economics to utilize AERC's facilities which are located in Nairobi, especially the library facilities.

The collaborative Ph.D. programme (CPP) run by the consortium has already graduated two students while another 13 are scheduled to graduate next year. The CPP programme sponsors students in member universities thus boosting training of M.A. and Ph.Ds in economics, in Africa. Currently, 31 Ph.D. candidates are on the programme, 12 of whom are women. AERC was established in 1988 to undertake advanced policy research and training in economics. Present during the courtesy call was the Deputy Vice-



**AERC board members when they paid a courtesy call to the Vice-Chancellor.**

*The collaborative Ph.D. programme (CPP) run by the consortium has already graduated two students while another 13 are scheduled to graduate next year.*

Chancellor Student Affairs, Prof. Isaac Mbeche who represented the Vice-Chancellor. He thanked AERC for boosting the teaching of economics on the continent and assured the consortium of UoN's support. Others present included Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research, Production and Extension, Prof. Lucy Irungu, Director, School of Economics Dr. Jane Mariara and her Deputy Mr. Lawrence Awiti, and Dean, Faculty of Arts, Prof. Preston Chitere who represented the Principal, College of Humanities and Social Sciences.



# ISP to strengthen science ties

The University of Nairobi held discussions with the Principal consultant of the International Science Programme (ISP). ISP is an initiative of the Uppsala University, Sweden which endeavours to promote and propagate science research in the developing world. According to Prof. Lucy Irungu, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research, Production, and Extension who met ISP's Prof. Allan Pankhurst, UoN has been collaborating with ISP through the School of Mathematics, Department of Physics, and Institute of Nuclear Science and Technology for many years. This, according to Prof. Pankhurst led to the selection of UoN and Addis

Ababa Universities for evaluation of their projects countrywide. The consultant visited facilities of the aforementioned units between May 23 and 27, 2011. ISP has been sponsoring activities aimed at enhancing capacity building as well as initiating and strengthening research activities and postgraduate training in mathematics within the region. Among its achievements have been sponsoring three Ph.D. candidates on a full programme while five candidates are on a sandwich programme. Four M.Sc. students are on sponsorship and more than 12 M.Sc. in mathematics have graduated from the programme.

**Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research, Production, and Extension with ISP's Prof. Allan Pankhurst who was on an evaluation tour of UoN.**



# H.E. Mr. Li Changchun's Visit to UoN



**H.E. Mr. Li Changchun, a Member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, being introduced to University administrators.**

H.E. Mr. Li Changchun, a Member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee visited the University of Nairobi and addressed students and staff at Taifa Hall on "Strengthen China-Africa Friendship and Cooperation to Build a Better

Tomorrow."  
During his visit, Mr. Changchun officially opened an exhibition with the theme of "Cultural Focus on China 2011- China under the Pen of African Painters," co-sponsored by the Ministry of Culture of China and UoN. He also paid a visit to the

Confucius Institute of UoN where he presented the Statute of Confucius to the Institute.  
Mr. Li Changchun ranks fifth in the top leadership of China. He is in charge of Education, Culture, Media, Publicity and Information.



## QUALITY POLICY STATEMENT

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The University of Nairobi is committed to quality as the guiding principle in its decision making and leadership in the provision of university education and related services to its customers.

To realise this, the University management shall regularly monitor and review its performance for continual improvement and suitability by implementing an effective quality management system based on ISO 9001 standard.

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