



UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

DECEMBER 2024

VarsityFocus

A magazine of the University of Nairobi



**Chancellor's
Big 5
Kicks Off**



UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

Our Vision

A globally competitive university transforming society.

Our Mission

To provide quality university education that embodies the aspirations of the Kenyan people and the global community through teaching, research, innovation, and community service.

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- Integrity, accountability, and good governance
- Care
- Freedom of thought and expression
- Inclusivity
- Innovativeness
- Professionalism
- Sustainability

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Cover Photo:

President William Samoei Ruto with UoN Chancellor, Prof. Patrick Verkooijen at State House Nairobi on 25 November 2024. The President launched the UoN Silicon Savanna Innovation Park.

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Editor's MESSAGE

Dear Esteemed Reader,

It is with great pleasure that we extend our warmest congratulations to Prof. Dr. Patrick Verkooijen who was installed as the sixth chancellor of the University of Nairobi last September during the 71st graduation ceremony. Prof. Verkooijen has a wealth of experience and profound dedication to global climate adaptation issues. During the new chancellor's tenure, the university will be seeking to leverage his expertise and position itself for greater impact through expanded networks, enhanced resource mobilisation capability, and successful implementation of the initiatives under his "Big 5 Agenda".

Prof. Verkooijen takes over from Dr. Vijoo Rattansi, a great friend of the university, whose distinguished service and commitment to integrity and good governance will be remembered and cherished for many years. The outgoing chancellor is also well-known as a beacon of philanthropy who offered her unwavering support to the underprivileged students of our university.

In this issue of the *Varsity Focus*, we showcase the University of Nairobi's outstanding achievements in research, innovation, and student initiatives. We also highlight some of our partnerships and collaborations as well as the accomplishments of our alumni. These highlights signify that the University of Nairobi continues to soar to greater heights in the quest for excellence.

We hope that you will enjoy reading this issue and that you will also find inspiration in the stories and achievements shared within its pages.

I wish you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Sincerely,

John Anthony Onyango Orindi, MCIPR
Editor/ Director of Corporate Affairs.



JOHN A.O.ORINDI, mCIPR
Director Corporate Affairs

“

Prof. Verkooijen has a wealth of experience and profound dedication to global climate adaptation issues.”



**A globally competitive
University transforming society.**



Vice-Chancellor's NOTE

I send you warm greetings!

As we close the year 2024, I reflect on our journey with immense pride and gratitude. Despite the challenges, our collective dedication, resilience, and teamwork have propelled us to surpass the expectations. I extend my heartfelt appreciation to the entire university community, and our esteemed friends and partners for their unwavering commitment.

This year, we welcomed Prof. Patrick Verkooijen as our sixth Chancellor, whose installation took place during the 71st Graduation Ceremony in September. The Chancellor hit the ground running and is implementing his transformative *Big 5 Agenda*. This agenda, focusing on innovation, academic excellence, sustainability, strategic partnerships, and community engagement, is set to revolutionise the university's pursuit of world-class excellence. I reaffirm my support—and that of the entire university community—for the Chancellor's vision. Furthermore, the launch of the university's new strategic plan for 2023–27 strengthens the foundation for our growth in the 21st century.

In August, we welcomed approximately 10,000 new students into our various programmes. As they embark on their journey to realize their dreams, I urge them to exploit the myriad opportunities available at our institution - whether through our Innovation Hub, mentorship programmes, or research initiatives. More importantly, I wish to remind them that their families, communities, and the world at large, look up to them as transformative leaders, researchers, innovators, and entrepreneurs. We are committed to preparing them for these roles during their time at the university.

This year's Nairobi Innovation Week in May and the 8th Annual Research Week in October demonstrated our commitment to sustainable development, solving societal challenges, advancing knowledge, and fostering meaningful partnerships. I commend the organisers and encourage our researchers to actively pursue numerous funding opportunities, particularly by leveraging relevant research alliances.



PROF. JESANG HUTCHINSON (PhD)
*Vice-Chancellor (Ag.) &
Professor of Horticulture*

Strategic partnerships remain a cornerstone of our university's growth. I wish to acknowledge our successful engagements with key partners, such as Mastercard Foundation, Gates Foundation, and the French Development Agency for the Engineering and Science Complex. These collaborations position the university not only as a leader in academia but also a pivotal player in shaping global solutions.

As we prepare to celebrate the 72nd Graduation Ceremony on 13 December 2024, I extend my warmest congratulations to our graduands. This milestone is a testament to their hard work and resilience, as well as the dedication of their lecturers and mentors. As they step out into the world, I am confident that they will truly transform society.

Finally, as we approach the festive season, I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. As we look to 2025, let us continue this transformative journey together, shaping the future of our institution and the world.

God bless you all.

Prof. Jesang Hutchinson (PhD)
Vice-Chancellor (Ag.) & Professor of Horticulture



UON WELCOMES NEW

Chancellor

Prof. Dr. Patrick V. Verkooijen Chancellor of the University of Nairobi



Prof. Patrick Verkooijen is the 6th Chancellor of the University of Nairobi. He was appointed on 12th January 2024 by H.E President William Ruto. Patrick is the CEO of the Global Center on Adaptation (GCA), the foremost international organisation dedicated to the challenge of adapting our world to the global climate emergency.

As the founding CEO of the GCA, Prof. Verkooijen has built a global organization supporting active adaptation projects in over 30 countries. Together with African Development Bank President Dr. Akinwumi Adesina he is the architect of the world's largest adaptation program, the \$25 billion dollar Africa Adaptation Acceleration

Program, which has already shaped over \$6 billion of resilient investments on the world's most climate-vulnerable continent since its inception in 2021. Working with heads of state and government from Africa, Asia, Europe and the Americas, Prof. Verkooijen organized more than half a dozen summits of world leaders aimed at elevating the cause of climate adaptation, including as co-convenor of the Global Commission on Adaptation.

He has served as the Distinguished Chair of the Wangari Maathai Institute at the University of Nairobi and also as the Ban Ki-moon Chair on Climate Adaptation Governance at the University of Groningen. A Dutch national, Prof. Verkooijen holds a PhD from Wageningen University, an MPA from Harvard, a Master's in philosophy from the University of Amsterdam, and an environmental engineering degree from the University of Utrecht Applied Sciences. In 2022, Prof. Verkooijen was awarded Doctor Science Degree (Honoris Causa) of the University of Nairobi in recognition of his championing of climate resilience for Africa.

“ Prof. Patrick Verkooijen has built a global organization supporting active adaptation projects in over 30 countries. ”



UoN Silicon Savannah Innovation Park Launched



On 25 November 2024, at State House Nairobi, His Excellency, President William Samoei Ruto, launched the University of Nairobi Silicon Savannah Innovation Park. The launch ceremony was attended by France's Minister of State for Francophonie and International Partnerships, Hon. Thani Mohamed Soilihi, on behalf of President Emmanuel Macron.

This new Innovation Park is initiated with a state-of-the-art Engineering and Science Complex (ESC), marking a new era in higher-education, research, and innovation in Kenya and across Africa. This €35 million initiative, France's largest higher education investment in Sub-Saharan Africa, is a pivotal component of UoN's transformative Big 5 Agenda, as spearheaded by the University's Chancellor, Prof. Patrick V. Verkooijen, enhancing the university's global leadership in science, technology, engineering, and sustainability.

Situated at the Chiromo Campus in Nairobi, the ESC serves as the cornerstone launching initiative of the Silicon Savannah Innovation Park, aligning with Kenya's Vision 2030 for the bottom-up transformation of the nation into a newly industrialising middle-income country. This strategic initiative is made possible through a partnership between the University of Nairobi, the Government of Kenya, and the French government, facilitated by the Agence Française de Développement, in cooperation with six renowned French higher-education institutions –CentraleSupélec, Université Paris-Saclay, ParisTech group with AgroParisTech, Chimie ParisTech - PSL, Mines Paris – PSL, Ecole des Ponts ParisTech. The new UoN Innovation Park will serve as a critical transmission belt to bring solutions to the market in partnership with industry as a part of the national technological "Silicon Savannah" ecosystem, which includes the Konza Technopolis.



Chancellor's BIG 5 KICKS OFF

Speakers at the event lauded the significance of Kenya's Silicon Savanna and its transformative potential.

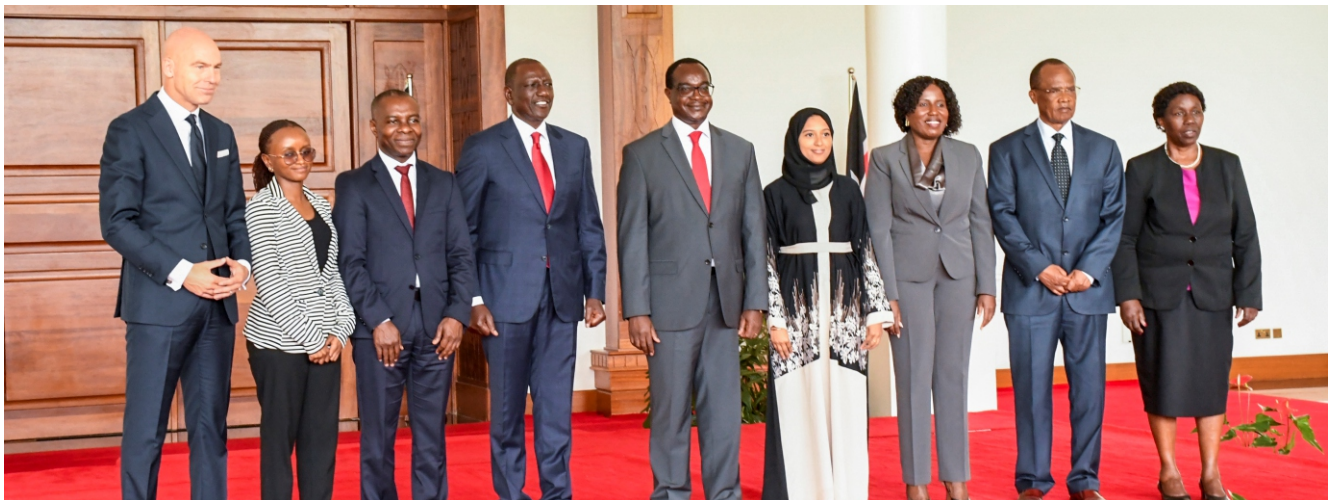
President Ruto: "I am encouraged by the ambition of the Big 5 initiatives, spearheaded by the visionary leadership of Professor Patrick Verkooijen, Chancellor of the University of Nairobi. I have full confidence in his leadership and want to make it clear that my administration is fully behind and empowering the Chancellor to lead a total transformation of this nation's greatest higher learning institution, leveraging on all the research, assets, and partnerships of the University of Nairobi to bring it on a sustainable footing as a world class tertiary actor".

Hon. Julius Migos Ogamba, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Education

This innovation park will seek to consolidate the University of Nairobi's place as a leading innovator and a hub of entrepreneurship. The Big 5 pillars that the Chancellor is spearheading will transform the University into a fit for purpose institution for a resilient and sustainable future".

Hon. Thani Mohamed Soilihi, French Minister of State for Francophonie and International Partnerships: "France is proud to stand alongside Kenya in this bold initiative, supported by President Macron, to advance higher-education, innovation, and sustainability. The Engineering and Science Complex is a testament to our shared vision for a future driven by knowledge, collaboration, and excellence in the Silicon Savannah".

Professor Patrick V. Verkooijen, Chancellor of the University of Nairobi: "Through the integration of the Silicon Savannah Innovation Park and the Nairobi School of AI, we are creating an ecosystem where cutting-edge research meets entrepreneurship, where global partnerships drive local solutions, and where the next generation of African leaders is equipped to shape a sustainable, equitable future. The Silicon Savannah Innovation Park is more than just buildings; it is the heart of a movement to unlock Africa's potential through knowledge, technology, and collaboration".



H.E. President William Samoei Ruto, at Statehouse Nairobi, with Mr. Thani Mohamed, French Minister of State for Francophonie and International Partnerships (immediate left); Mr. Julius Ogamba, Cabinet Secretary of the Ministry of Education (immediate right); Dr Beatrice Inyangala, Principal Secretary, Ministry of Education (third right); and the University of Nairobi leadership led by the Chancellor, Prof. Patrick Verkooijen (far left), Chair of Council, Prof. Amukowa Anangwe (second right), and Acting Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Margaret Jesang Hutchinson (far left). President Ruto officially launched the university's Engineering and Science Complex, which is also part of the Chancellor's Silicon Savanna Project. The ESC is sponsored by the French government.

5th Chancellor Rattansi exits UoN

Dr Vijoo Rattansi made history as the first female chancellor of the country's oldest university.

Dr Rattansi was installed as the fifth chancellor during the university's fiftieth graduation ceremony held on 6 December 2013. The landmark fiftieth graduation ceremony also took place amidst celebrations to mark 50 years of Kenya's independence. Throughout her ten-year tenure, Dr Rattansi persistently reminded the new graduates to take up their role in national development as the university had prepared them to do.

Prior to her appointment as chancellor, Dr Rattansi was no stranger to the University of Nairobi. She was the chairperson of the family-owned Rattansi Educational Trust dedicated to supporting bright, but needy, Kenyan students to access higher education in the country's institutions. The University of Nairobi was one of the biggest beneficiaries of student support by the 1956 Rattansi Educational Trust. Dr Rattansi was recognised for her efforts in supporting the education of young people in Kenya, and by extension the country's development, by being awarded the government's Order of the Grand Warrior (OGW) in 2006. The University of Nairobi also awarded an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters (Honoris Causa) degree to Chancellor Rattansi during its 52nd graduation ceremony held on 5 December 2014 for her dedication to charity and philanthropic endeavours.

Chancellor Rattansi was at the helm when the University of Nairobi celebrated its fiftieth anniversary commonly known as UoN@50. It was also during her tenure that the university successfully navigated the disruptive period of the COVID-19 pandemic. The university swiftly enhanced the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in the delivery of its programmes and services. Transfer of the traditional physical graduation ceremony to the virtual space made it possible to uphold the university's graduation schedules with the first such event (63rd Graduation Ceremony) happening on 22 September 2020. The



chancellor's concern for the welfare of students saw her work closely with the Dean of Students even as her family trust continued to channel bursaries to support the needy students. The former chancellor supported infrastructural development at the university, expanded the university's network of partners, and forged even closer ties with the University of Nairobi Alumni Association. Significantly, Chancellor Rattansi was instrumental in the establishment of the University of Nairobi Foundation, launched in June 2022, of which she is the chairperson of the Board of Trustees. The UoN Foundation is a vehicle for resource mobilisation in support of the university's mission of teaching and learning, research, and community outreach.

Chancellor Rattansi bid farewell to the university fraternity during the 69th graduation ceremony held on 22 September 2023 in which 3983 students were celebrated. Dr Rattansi capped her tenure of service to the University of Nairobi by stating as follows: "It is a duty I have discharged, without fail, since I was appointed chancellor. I am therefore most pleased to be at the service of today's graduating cohort to whom I am morally indebted".

Asante Sana, Chancellor Rattansi!

Tribute: UoN's 4th Chancellor Passes on



Dr Joseph Barrage Wanjui, the fourth chancellor of the University of Nairobi, passed away on 3 July 2024 aged 87. He will be remembered as the first civilian chancellor of the University of Nairobi, having been appointed in 2003 by the late former President Mwai Kibaki. Hitherto, the country's president automatically assumed the role of chancellor and titular head of all public universities. Dr Wanjui served a continuous ten-year term that ended in 2013.

Dr Wanjui was widely known as an astute businessman, investor, and entrepreneur; an influential presidential advisor; and a generous philanthropist. He drew from his vast experience as CEO in the private sector to set the pace for the university's transformation, leaving behind a rich legacy of improvement at the country's premier institution of higher education. Dr Wanjui is specifically credited for introducing a new way of doing business at the university in a determined departure from the lethargy that characterised public institutions at the time. His 7a.m. meetings with university management would stand out as an enduring practice of the no-nonsense chancellor.

"Dr Wanjui was very clear in his mind that he

wanted the university to be run as a business and had absolutely no time for public service bureaucracies", recalls former Vice-Chancellor the late Prof. George Magoha in his 2017 memoirs "Tower of Transformational Leadership". In 2004, Dr Wanjui was awarded an honorary Doctor of Science (Honoris Causa) degree by the University of Nairobi because of his "outstanding contribution to industrial development, business leadership, and the development of institutional management in Kenya and Africa".

The fourth chancellor presided over 18 graduation ceremonies in which over 70,000 students were conferred with degrees and awarded diplomas. A significant change that Dr Wanjui introduced at the university was the competitive recruitment of the vice-chancellor, which culminated in the appointment of the late Prof. George Magoha as UoN's sixth vice-chancellor in January 2005. It was also during Dr Wanjui's tenure that the first ever University of Nairobi Strategic Plan (2005-2010) was developed, this being a testament to the chancellor's strong belief in sound management principles that the university would adopt wholeheartedly.

The concerted efforts of Dr Wanjui working alongside the University Council and management placed the university firmly on the path to transformation on many fronts as one of Africa's best. Significant infrastructural developments also took place during his time. The chancellor himself presided over the ground breaking of one of the most modern structures in the university: the University of Nairobi Towers, in 2013. As a philanthropist, Dr Wanjui, through the Joe B. Wanjui Education sponsored over 500 bright but needy female students to pursue their university education in science courses in Kenya.

He authored two books under the imprint of the University of Nairobi Press, namely *My Native Roots: A Family Story* published in 2009 and *The Native Son: Experiences of a Kenyan Entrepreneur* published in 2014.

Inside UoN's Ambitious Strategic Plan

The University of Nairobi has developed a new strategic plan for the next five years. The University of Nairobi Strategic Plan 2023-2027 outlines an ambitious programme whose successful implementation will see the university realise its new vision of becoming “A globally competitive university transforming society”.

The university's new strategic plan is a roadmap for achieving its goals and objectives, which include providing quality education and training, and advancing knowledge. The plan has been developed in light of the university's numerous achievements over its more than 50 years of existence. It outlines the university's intention to continue progressing towards global recognition by promoting an adaptive,

responsive, and socially entrepreneurial approach through impactful research and strategic partnerships. The university also aims to effectively equip students for an ever-changing world, serve the community, and address societal problems.

The plan is anchored by several legal and policy frameworks to ensure that the University of Nairobi positions itself appropriately for its new mission, which is “To provide quality university education that embodies the aspirations of the Kenyan people and the global community through teaching, research, innovation, and community service”. Specifically, the strategic plan is carefully crafted to ensure conformity to the provisions of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010; the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal No. 4 on quality education; African Union Agenda 2063; East African Community Vision 2050; Kenya Vision 2030; the Fourth Medium-Term Plan (MTP IV) 2023-2027; the Kenya Government's Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA); and relevant government policies, circulars, and guidelines.

The strategic plan was developed through an extensive process in consultation with stakeholders, drawing upon past lessons, and seeking to align the university with the projected trends in the global higher education sector. The committee, which was chaired by Prof. John Demesi Mande (Dean of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine) was comprised of members of the University Executive Board, deans of faculties, representative chairpersons of academic departments, heads of central departments, management of the University of Nairobi Enterprises and Services Limited (UNES), representatives of the students' community, and the secretariat (Planning Department).



The new blueprint has highlighted six strategic issues which will be addressed for the development of the university. These issues include:

1. Make the university vibrant through a digital transformation programme of all processes, activities, and services
2. Strengthen research systems and infrastructure and enhance community engagement and outreach programmes
3. Provide solutions through the conversion of innovations into market-ready products and services that will meet the needs of society and industry
4. Recognise stakeholders' diversity and ensure that services are people-centric
5. Ensure organisational sustainability in all areas of business operations
6. Provide competitive, innovative, and compliant curricula whose results will be

globally competitive students and products

The performance of plan implementation will be determined on the basis of annual outcome indicators, which are highlighted under six key result areas as follows:

1. KRA 1: Digitalisation
2. KRA 2: Research and Community Service
3. KRA 3: Innovation and Commercialisation Ecosystem
4. KRA 4: People Focus
5. KRA 5: Sustainability
6. KRA 6: Teaching, Learning, and Creative Works

The full implementation of the University of Nairobi Strategic Plan 2023-2027 is estimated to cost about KES 108 billion. The plan contains comprehensive resource mobilisation and management strategies with emphasis on obtaining value for money.



UoN's 8th Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Stephen Kiama, with Prof. John Demesi Mande(second left) and Prof. Ogola during the launch of the Corporate Strategic Plan on 24 June 2024 at the Confucius Institute.

Uon Hosts Nairobi Innovation Week 2024



Former Education Cabinet Secretary, Hon. Ezekiel Machogu, during the official opening of the Nairobi Innovation Week 2024 on 8 May 2024 at Taifa Hall.

The eighth edition of the Nairobi Innovation Week (NIW) took place on 8-10 May 2024 during which staff and students were joined by other stakeholders in appreciating the work of innovators drawn mainly from the University of Nairobi. The event was organised by the Research, Innovation, and Enterprise (RIE) Division under the theme, “Strengthening the innovation ecosystem in higher education institutions through academia-industry-government-community linkages for sustainable development”. The programme of the three-day event was carefully crafted to

maximise faculty-directed activities and the innovators' exhibition which took place simultaneously.

The NIW 2024 attracted numerous invited guests including two cabinet secretaries, top government officials, private sector representatives, local and international collaborators, and members of the public. During the event's opening ceremony on 8 May 2024 at the university's Taifa Hall, the Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Education Hon. Ezekiel Machogu and Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Investments, Trade and Industry, Hon. Rebecca

Miano underscored the crucial role of innovation in delivering the mandates of their respective ministries and the overall government development agenda. They also affirmed their commitment to support the vibrant innovation ecosystem in the country.

Hon. Machogu, who was the chief guest at the fanfare-filled function, lauded the contribution of the University of Nairobi and other universities in the country to advancing the global (SDG 9) and national development agendas (BETA and Vision 2030) through their research, innovation, and technology development activities. The CS outlined the government's plans to spur local innovation, while challenging local universities to benchmark with the world's best in such areas as artificial intelligence (AI) and robotics innovations but also remain grounded to offer home-made solutions to local socio-economic problems. "We look up to universities to foster

these innovative solutions, incubate them, and commercialise them. This will create jobs and grow the economy", he said.

Cabinet Secretary Rebecca Miano observed that the NIW 2024 was timely especially because her ministry was relying on innovation to accomplish its ambitious targets. "This event takes place at an opportune moment when we as a country need to support and accelerate innovation, incubation, startups, spinoffs, and entrepreneurship ecosystem in consonance with the twenty-first century demands of tertiary education and excellence in industry", she said.

The opening ceremony was also attended by top officials from various government agencies aligned to research and innovation including the Chief Executive Officer of the National Research Fund (NRF), Prof. Dickson Andalo, and the Chief Executive Officer of the Kenya National Innovation Agency (KENIA), Dr Tonny Omwansa among others. The Inter-University Council for



Hon. Ezekiel Machogu (centre) flanked by former Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Investments, Trade and Industry, Hon. Rebecca Miano (on Hon. Machogu's right) during the official opening of the Nairobi Innovation Week 2024.

East Africa (IUCEA) was represented by Dr. Salome Guchu, Principal Innovation and Outreach Officer. Also present were representatives of key private sector partners of the university including Elgon Kenya, Absa Bank, and the Kenya Commercial Bank (KCB), whose generous support made the NIW 2024 a reality. Dr Bimal Kantaria, Managing Director of Elgon Kenya Ltd, spoke about the firm's close ties with the university, which had yielded a successful internship programme for students from the Faculty of Agriculture and the Elgon Kenya sponsored Kantaria Agricultural and Technology & Innovation Centre (KATIC) at the university's Upper Kabete Campus aimed at narrowing the academia-industry gap. The Managing Director and CEO of ABSA Bank Kenya PLC, Dr Abdi Mohamed, promised to continue working with the university for the mutual benefit of the two organisations. The NIW 2024 was also attended by the university's international collaborators and

partners from City University, London; University of Helsinki, Finland; Chinese Embassy; Morocco; and USA and among others. The main sponsors of NIW 2024 were Elgon Kenya, Absa Bank, Kenya Commercial Bank, and Booth International School supported by a host of other private, public, and non-governmental organisations.

The 8th Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Stephen Kiama, reiterated the university's commitment to promoting innovation in line with the new strategic plan (2023-27) that envisages a globally competitive university, which is also intent on serving the needs of the society. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Research, Innovation and Enterprise, Prof. Margaret Hutchinson announced that over 100 exhibitors, most of them UoN students, would be participating in the event. "We are hoping that the private sector will be very keen to see whether there are any innovations that they can pick up for startups", she stated.



NIW 2024 was a Game Changer



Prof. Mary Kinoti

One of the highlights of the Nairobi Innovation Week (NIW) 2024 is that “we began a process that will see innovation and entrepreneurship become part of the everyday conversation among students and faculty members all across the university”, says Prof. Mary Kinoti, Director, Intellectual Property Management Office (IPMO) under whose docket the event was organised within the Research, Innovation & Enterprise (RIE) Division.

Reflecting on the activities of the landmark annual event by the University of Nairobi, which took place on 8-10 May 2024, Prof. Kinoti was convinced that the NIW 2024 successfully positioned innovation and entrepreneurship in their rightful place at the faculty level where the actual activities take place. “In addition to teaching and learning, students can be in a position to use their time to innovate and open

themselves up to the opportunities in this area”, she said.

The university's professor of marketing further explained that, “Human resource policies are shifting because conventional jobs are shrinking and new jobs are emerging”. The university is starkly aware that the global South must be prepared for these changes. “It cannot be business as usual. Innovation and entrepreneurship are the unexplored greenfields, and hence it is important to have serious conversations around these topics”, she said.

The NIW 2024 was buttressed in three main activities that not only mobilised the faculties to hop on board, but also ensured their participation and leadership. The focus on the faculties was aimed at reaching as many young people as possible to influence a change in their mindset towards appreciating the importance of innovation in the current global circumstances. It was also meant to raise awareness about the importance of innovation in problem solving right from the undergraduate level. Students and faculty expressed their appreciation of the learning experience.

“Stories of innovation have caught fire among the students”, observed Prof. Kinoti. They are alert for opportunities to take part in hackathons even outside the university because the winners received good prizes. A number of intellectual properties are also being registered from the hackathon competition. Two innovations from the Faculty of Engineering and Faculty of Agriculture attracted investors.

UoN Launches Summer School on Climate

The Institute for Climate Change and Adaptation (ICCA) and the University Advancement & Institutional Development have opened the first edition of the **African Summer School on Climate Change Adaptation** for undergraduate/Bachelor's students in Science, Technology, and Engineering, who have completed a minimum of two (2) years. The school will run from 1-12 July 2024 at the Chiromo Campus, University of Nairobi (Kenya).

The Summer School offers introductory courses in Nature-based Solutions and Climate Adaptation Pathways in Africa. It also includes project teamwork, several high-level conferences, and field visits. East Africa History and a Kiswahili course will introduce the foreign students to the regional culture. The programme targets students from Kenya, Africa, and the rest of the world. The ICCA

Director, Prof. Daniel Olago, is encouraging eligible students to apply and join the programme.

"The aim of the school is to raise (the) awareness of young students from around the world of the Sustainable Development Goal No. 13 on Climate Action in the African context (especially Kenya/East Africa), to demonstrate the potential and capacities of African universities to address the challenges and to drive impactful and international research, and to raise the visibility and attractiveness of UoN in the international landscape and for potential future studies", says Prof. Olago.

At the end of the summer school, students are awarded a certificate from the UoN with their transcript/equivalence in credits (total equivalent to 2 ECTS in the European system).



UoN don Heads Global Federation

Dr Anne Kihara, a senior lecturer at the University of Nairobi (UoN) Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology is the president of the International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics (FIGO). Dr. Kihara beat two other candidates from Ethiopia and Lebanon to win the seat thus making history as the first African woman president of FIGO and the organisation's youngest leader since 1954.

“When I received the news on the voting screen, the first thing I did was pray and ask God for guidance. I am very strong on women's advocacy locally and internationally. But now I have a global platform, which I hope to use to enhance education and capacity building in research and advocacy”, Dr. Kihara said in an interview following her election.

Prior to becoming the FIGO president, Dr. Kihara led the African Federation of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists since 2021. She also served as the president of the Kenya Obstetrical and Gynaecological Society (2013–2017) and provided assistance on the First Lady's Beyond Zero Campaign. Dr Kihara is involved in women's health advocacy up to the international level. She provides technical assistance by contributing to bills, policy, strategic direction, and guidelines in sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Dr. Kihara's vision for her two-year term as FIGO president focuses on tackling the problem of maternal deaths worldwide, promoting adolescence sexual reproductive health and rights, and harnessing the

power of technology to advance the field of obstetrics and gynaecology.

“As the first FIGO president from sub-Saharan Africa, I feel a great sense of responsibility weighing heavily on me, but I am also incredibly excited. I feel that I am coming at the right time to bring fresh perspectives and accelerate our crucial work to empower women and girls, ensure their well-being at all stages of life, and make a lasting impact worldwide”, Dr Kihara said.

Her work as FIGO president is to push for the practice of obstetrics and gynaecology to give more focus on adolescents and youth health.



Prof. Migai Akech Delivers Inaugural Lecture

The University of Nairobi hosted an inaugural lecture to celebrate the outstanding achievements of Professor Akech Migai of the Faculty of Law and also recognise the don's commitment to advancing legal scholarship. The lecture, whose title was "Taming the Tyranny of the Barons: Administrative Law and the Regulation of Power" was delivered on 26 April, 2024 at the university's Taifa Hall. Prof. Akech drew upon over 25 years of research to illustrate the importance of administrative law for accountability and participatory governance. He also discussed the advantages, as well as feasibility, of applying algorithms or machine-based tools to enhance decision making in the practice of administrative law.

Prof. Akech joined the University of Nairobi in 1999 as an Assistant Lecturer and became a full professor in 2023. He has dedicated the better part of his academic career to "studying, researching, and writing about power,

democracy, and law". He revealed that his research interests were driven by the burning desire to understand how we can apply democracy and Administrative Law not only to prevent tyranny by those in power but also safeguard individual liberties and livelihoods. While acknowledging the existence of some grey areas in knowledge, Prof. Akech is optimistic that machine-based decision-making can potentially remove the human biases that prevent achievement of the much-needed universalism in governance.

Prof. Migai Akech attained a First-Class Honours degree in Law at the University of Nairobi. He then pursued further studies at Cambridge University in the United Kingdom and the New York University's School of Law in the United States of America. He has consulted widely in his areas of expertise in fields of law and policy development for numerous local and international bodies.



Prof. Ambuko Delivers UoN's 50th Inaugural Lecture

A professorial inaugural lecture is an occasion for the University of Nairobi (UoN) to acknowledge the appointment or promotion of full professors and introduce them to the academic and non-academic community of the university and to other audiences beyond the university.

The UoN's first ever inaugural lecture was delivered by Prof. H.W. Alexander in 1966 in the days of the University of East Africa. Since then, the count for professorial inaugural lectures has reached 50. The latest professorial inaugural lecture was delivered by Prof. Jane Ambuko. Hers was the second such lecture from the Faculty of Agriculture, coming 20 years after the first one in 2004, which was delivered by Prof. Ratemo Michieka.

The timing of Prof. Ambuko's inaugural lecture on 27 September 2024 was carefully selected to coincide with the activities to mark the United Nation's International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste (IDAFLW). The IDAFLW is an annual event observed on 29 September as part of advocacy and awareness creation on food loss and waste. Similarly, the title of the

inaugural lecture, 'From the Lab to the Land: Solutions for Food Loss & Waste Reduction for the People and the Planet', was curated to align with the global theme of IDAFLW.

Prof. Ambuko described food loss and waste (FLW) as a significant challenge to global food security and environmental sustainability. Globally, 14% of food produced for human consumption is **lost** between harvest and retail, and an additional 17% is **wasted** from retail to consumption. She emphasized that the wasted food represents not just a loss of the edible food, but also the squandered resources used in its production, including water, land, energy, labour, and capital.

The inaugural lecture was deliberately prepared as an advocacy message to raise awareness about food loss and waste and the importance for the people and the planet. In the call to action, Prof. Ambuko emphasised the critical need for collective effort by agri-food sector stakeholders including practitioners, policymakers, researchers, development partners, and civil society to tackle FLW for the benefit of both people and the planet. Her research initiatives towards the reduction of FLW

reflect a commitment to translating scientific research into practical solutions and scaling them – 'from the Lab to the land'.

Prof. Ambuko shared her personal and academic journey to professorship, invoking the importance of focus, determination, and the support of friends, family, and colleagues. She encouraged her colleagues, or 'professors in the making', to aspire to deliver inaugural lectures when they ascend to the coveted position of full professor.



SAVE THE DATE

Inaugural LECTURE

Topic: **Navigating the Nexus:** Exploring a Multifaceted Discourse on International and Domestic Economic Justice by Humanising Fiscal Law and Policy by **Attiya Waris**

Prof of Fiscal Law and Policy, Member of the Committee on Fiscal Studies
UN Independent Expert on Foreign Debt and Human Rights.
Commissioner, Lancet-O'Neil Commission on Racism and Structural Discrimination in Health
Supervisory Board Chair, Capabuild Foundation

Date: 14 February 2025

In my forthcoming inaugural lecture, I will share twenty years of research to explain the pertinent issues like fiscal legitimacy and why the idea of principles guiding decision making are necessary to reduce inequalities affecting use of our planetary resources. I will explain the importance of humanising fiscal law and policy and the link to the attainment of peaceful states. I will sketch out a future research agenda and examine the future work in the field from a global, principled, and evidence-based approach that I intend to pursue.



Join us for the next Inaugural Lecture of the University of Nairobi, which will be presented by **Peter Anyanga Wasamba**, Professor of Literature and Law Scholar (BA Lit, MA Lit, PhD Lit (Nairobi), LLB, LLM (Nairobi), Dip. Law (KSL)).

Topic: **WE ARE NOT MAD:** Deconstructing the "Mad Genius" Trope in Literature

Date: 28 February 2025

This lecture will challenge our perceptions of creativity and mental health in the literary world.

In my presentation, I will challenge the notion that exceptionally talented creatives are invariably mentally disturbed. We are not inherently mental; this is a misunderstanding.

Let us meet for this discourse.



We'll See You Again, Njeri Muhoro!



Staff from the Directorate of Corporate Affairs led by the Director, Mr. John Orindi (centre), bid farewell to Ms. Njeri Muhoro (cutting cake) on 11 October 2024.

Njeri Muhoro spent most of her active adult life at the University of Nairobi until her retirement last September. Njeri, as she was fondly referred to by those who knew her, summarized her time at the University of Nairobi in a rather formal goodbye message to her colleagues in the Directorate of Corporate Affairs (DCA).

After 36 years of association with the University of Nairobi, I can honestly look back with appreciation for the opportunity I had here to grow in my career and be a part of the communication team.

I first joined the university as a student in 1984. I was recruited into the University as an administrator in charge of publications in 1991. My work then was to develop the University Calendar and Annual Report. In 2002, I was promoted and deployed in the office of the vice-chancellor. Ironically, I continued serving in the Planning Division, with the proviso that I also work closely with the PA/PR officer in the Vice-Chancellor's Office. In 2006, a decision was made to deploy me to Kikuyu campus, and I worked there up to 2009. In this period, my colleagues in the PR/PA office ensured that I continued to work with them on the *Varsity Focus* magazine, speech writing, and ad hoc publications of the university.

In 2009 up to 2020, I served as a social science editor at the University of Nairobi Press. I was thus part of a team of communication specialists at "the Press", and regularly in the VC's office. I have been part of the university community and gained many experiences

extending to grant writing, public relations, conferences and town hall meetings, infomercials, documentaries, and research among others. I cannot forget the experiences I had working here!

I am ready to start the next stage of my career, but I thank you all for giving me the skills and the courage to be the best I can be. Sayonara! I will miss the support I have received from many in the university system, and DCA, which has been my home for four years. I wish you all luck in your future endeavours. I look forward to staying connected and hearing updates about the team's achievements. As I wish you all great success, I remind you of the need to continue being such a supportive group. Each one of you has contributed so much to the team's achievements. This directorate has set such a positive example during my time here. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions and thank you all again for everything you've taught me. I have stood on the shoulders of everyone here, and this standing and collaboration has been integral to my success as an employee. Obviously, I hope to take some of those talents with me to my next employer.

I will miss our interactions with clients and how we achieved our wins together. I've learned a lot from you all, and I'll stay in contact. "I'll miss our Mbuji breaks that helped us all unwind and get to know each other. I'll stay in contact with you all to see where your careers take you."

Be sure to hold onto your support for each other. It's the team's greatest strength. Finally, take counsel in God, and in the words of the *Desiderata*

The African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA)



Dr. Fred Bukachi, Director
ARUA CoE for NCDs &
Co-lead CoRE in NCDS & MM

The African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA) is a Pan-African network of sixteen leading African universities with diverse historical backgrounds, united by a common vision. Inaugurated in Dakar, Senegal, in March 2015, ARUA fosters collaboration among African institutions to address the continent's development challenges. It aims to enhance research quality and develop local research excellence by establishing Centres of Excellence (CoEs) at member universities and supporting initiatives like the ARUA and the Africa-Europe Clusters of Research Excellence (CoREs). The CoREs initiative involves 120 institutions across 42 countries working to address themes such as Green Transition (4 CoREs), Innovation & Technology (5 CoREs), and Capacities for Science (3 CoREs). Participation extends beyond ARUA and the Guild networks.

The ARUA Centre of Excellence for Non-Communicable Diseases

The African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA) Centre of Excellence for Non-Communicable Diseases (ARUA CoE for NCDs) is one of thirteen ARUA centres of excellence. Established at the University of Nairobi in 2019, the centre operates on a Hub-and-Spoke model. The University of Nairobi serves as the hub, collaborating with six high research-intensive African universities (spokes), namely Makerere University (Uganda), University of Ghana, University of the Witwatersrand (South Africa), University of Ibadan, and University of Lagos (Nigeria). Additionally, the centre partners with the University of Glasgow and the University of Leicester in the UK, and actively engages with an international network of researchers across Africa and Europe. The centre is guided by an independent International Advisory Board, chaired by Prof. Margaret Hutchinson, Acting Vice-Chancellor of the University of Nairobi. Dr Fred Bukachi is the centre Director, while Dr Anne Kamau of IDS is the Deputy Director.

The centre focuses on building research capacity and providing training within two thematic areas of prevention and early detection and control of NCDs - cardiovascular diseases, cancers, and chronic respiratory diseases. Its six sub-thematic areas include prevention of multi-morbidity, disease mechanisms, bio-banking, population and big data analysis, and models of care.

Since its establishment, the centre has secured notable research and capacity-building grants. In 2020, it received KES 100 million three-year UKRI-GCRF Capacity Building Grant to lay its foundation. In 2024, it received another KES 30 million three-year grant from IDRC-Canada and Global Affairs Canada under the *Scaling Care Innovations in Africa Initiative*. This new grant supports the project 'Caring for Caregivers: Developing a National Policy for NCD Caregivers in Kenya,' implemented in partnership with the Light-A-Candle Counselling Services and the NCD Alliance of Kenya; as well as Murang'a, Vihiga, and Kisii counties.

The Africa-Europe Cluster of Research Excellence in NCDs and multi-morbidity

In June 2023, the University of Nairobi was awarded the Africa-Europe Cluster of Research Excellence in Non-Communicable Diseases and Multimorbidity (CoRE in NCDs and MM). This cluster is one of 21 Africa-Europe Clusters of Research Excellence and one of nine dedicated to the area of Public Health. The cluster aims to address the growing burden of NCDs and their co-morbidities in Africa, enhancing

health and well-being across the lifespan while contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals. Its mission is to develop innovative, context-specific solutions for the study, prevention, and management of NCDs in low- and middle-income countries.

To achieve its goals, the CoRE focuses on building research capacity through postgraduate training and conducting innovative research to tackle NCD challenges in Africa. It promotes the translation and dissemination of knowledge within the global scientific community while fostering student and staff exchanges to deepen understanding of the complexities of NCDs, their burden and mechanisms. The CoRE's initiative promotes multidisciplinary, collaborative, and participatory approaches, emphasising equitable partnerships and active community engagement.

The CoRE's Collaborative 1000 PhD Programme

The Africa-Europe Clusters of Research Excellence (CoREs) will launch a ten-year annual 1,000-PhD programme in 2025, supported by the Mastercard Foundation. This programme targets young researchers under 35 years old, with 70% of positions reserved for women.

The CoRE in NCDs and MM is part of this initiative and will implement a collaborative PhD programme in Applied Health Research in Non-Communicable Diseases and Multimorbidity. The programme will be delivered through a partnership of African universities, including the University of Nairobi, University of the Witwatersrand, University of Ibadan, University of Ghana, Makerere University, University of Lagos, Cheikh Anta Diop University (Senegal), and Kamuzu University of Health Sciences (Malawi). The European partners include the University of Glasgow (UK), the University of Paris Cité (France), Jagiellonian University in Krakow (Poland), and the University of Bern (Switzerland).

The ten-year multidisciplinary programme will integrate existing training programmes from partner institutions and collaborate with universities and research institutions beyond the CoREs partnership. Designed as a structured four-year initiative, the programme will offer options for a taught PhD, a research PhD, or dual-degree pathways. These will include coursework, a student mobility component across partner universities, and opportunities for thesis-based research. Study areas will span health sciences and clinical research, social science and health, health systems and policy, technology and data science, and population health including epidemiology. This approach aims to equip students and researchers with diverse skills and expertise to effectively tackle the challenges of NCDs.



UoN Celebrates 71st Graduation Ceremony



Prof. Patrick Verkooijen being robed for installation as the 6th Chancellor of the University of Nairobi on 20 September 2024.

The University of Nairobi held its 71st graduation ceremony on Friday 20 September 2024 during which over 4,000 students were honoured. This was the first graduation to be presided over by the sixth chancellor, Prof. Patrick Verkooijen, soon after his installation at the start of the ceremony. Chancellor Verkooijen, in his inaugural speech, elaborated on his Big 5 Agenda for the University of Nairobi during his five-year term. 'Today, we stand at a crossroads where education, innovation, and leadership converge. The University of Nairobi's Big 5 initiatives are our answer to the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century. We are committed to driving change not just within Kenya but across the African continent', he told the congregation.

The 71st graduation ceremony was also the first one for the newly appointed Cabinet Secretary for Education, Hon. Julius Migos as well as the Acting Vice-Chancellor Prof. Margaret Hutchinson, Ag. Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic Affairs, Prof. Ayub Gitau; and Ag. Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research, Innovation & Enterprise Prof. Francis Mulaa in their current capacities.

The Cabinet Secretary for Education, Hon. Julius Migos congratulated the graduands and acknowledged the dynamic workforce and the future of work, 'As we look toward the future, it is clear that the nature of work is changing. The digital economy presents both opportunities and challenges, and it is essential that we prepare our graduates to excel in this new environment. Remote jobs and digital careers are now

Graduation

becoming central to the global workforce, and Kenya is well-positioned to lead in this space', he said.

Prof. Amukowa Anangwe, Chairperson of the University of Nairobi Council, congratulated Prof. Verkooijen on his inauguration and pledged the council's support for the Big 5 transformative initiatives. Prof. Anangwe announced the Council's plans to refurbish the students' hostels and increase the bed capacity, 'To our dear students and their guardians, we have heard your concerns regarding the state of the halls of residence. Efforts are underway to refurbish them, and I commit that the Council will set aside 30 percent of the university's revenue towards the restoration of hostels over the next three years. Additionally, we are at an advanced stage in discussions with the Ministries

of Education and National Treasury to add 4,000 bed spaces on top of our current capacity of 9,856'.

The Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Margaret Jesang Hutchinson, announced her three key strategic areas of focus, 'My primary focus will center around three key strategic priorities: securing the long-term sustainability of our university, creating an environment that nurtures and cultivates talent, and expanding our influence in the fields of research and innovation'.

Prof. Hutchinson also lauded the Chancellor for introducing the Big 5 initiatives. 'These programmes will not only enhance the University of Nairobi's reputation but also contribute significantly to Kenya's Vision 2030 and the African Union's Agenda 2063. We are excited about the partnerships and opportunities that lie ahead'.

Mr. Isaac Awuondo, Chair of University of Nairobi Alumni Association, welcomed the graduates to register with the Alumni Association by emphasizing that, 'Our society needs graduates who can provide solutions to the myriad problems we face, especially in the area of health, education, food, environment, safety, peace and conflicts, and other challenges facing our society, using the tools and exposure gained from spending their time at the University of Nairobi'.

The graduation ceremony, which was themed, 'Transforming Society with innovative and adaptive graduates awarded 117 PhDs, 552 master's, and 3,716 Bachelor's degrees among others. The valedictorian, John Odoyo, from Faculty of the Built Environment and Design spoke on behalf of the graduating class of 2024. He congratulated his fellow graduands and thanked the faculty, friends, and guardians for the support offered during his studies.





71st Graduation Ceremony:

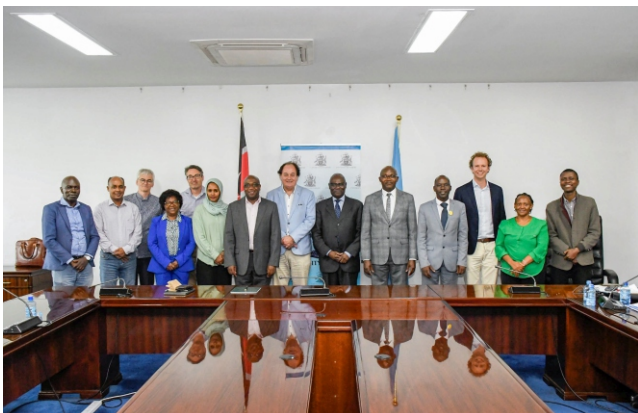
Prof. Patrick Verkooijen (second right) soon after receiving the Oath of Office as the 6th Chancellor of the University of Nairobi on 20 September 2024. He is flanked by Cabinet Secretary for Education, Hon. Julius Migos (left), Chairman of Council Prof. Amukowa Anangwe (far left) and the Vice-Chancellor (Ag.) Prof. Jesang Hutchinson (right).



World Antimicrobial Week 2024:

Members of the National Antimicrobial Stewardship Committee at Kenyatta National Hospital take a group photo during the launch of National Antimicrobial Use guidelines and National Antimicrobial Resistance report 2024.

From left: Prof. Margaret Oluka, Dr. Dorothy Aywak, Dr. Loice Ombajo, Dr. Christine Ngacha, Dr. Morris Buliva, Dr. Marybeth Maritime, Susan Githii



Laiden-Delft-Eramus Delegation visits UoN:

Ag. Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Francis Mulaa (in black suit with tie) when he received the LDE delegation on 26 November 2024 at the Council Chambers UoN Towers. The delegation was led by the Dean, Prof. Wim Van Den Doel.



Local Universities Fair:
Ag. Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Jesang Hutchinson during the Local Universities Fair at the Aga Khan Pavilion on 16 November 2024. Prof. Hutchinson was the Chief Guest and Keynote Speaker at the fair organised by United Asian Network.



Kenya Innovation Week 2024:
Ag. Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Jesang Hutchinson (left) and other CEOs sign an MoU that will pave the way for stronger collaboration in driving innovation and venture funding. Dr. Tony Omwansa, CEO of Kenya National Innovation Agency (centre) and Ms. Christine Maina, CEO East Africa Venture Capital Association (EAVCA).



Marking 60 Years of Diplomacy in Kenya:
Prime Cabinet Secretary and Cabinet Secretary for Foreign and Diaspora Affairs, Hon. Musalia Mudavadi (centre); Permanent Secretary, Dr. Korir Sing'oei, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (3rd from right); and Prof. Francis Mulaa, Ag. Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research, Innovation and Enterprise (extreme left) with panelists at the Conference on the Commemoration of the 60th Anniversary of Kenya's Diplomatic Journey held on 5 December 2024.

Launch of UoN Wellness Centre

Story by Naomi Nyaboga & Arnold M. Nyamweya



The Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Stephen Kiama Gitahi, outlined the university's commitment to providing round-the-clock counseling services and investing in the well-being of students and staff during the official launch of the centre on 1 December 2023. He also stated that the centre will optimise its operations by utilising ICT services for appointment bookings in addition to providing telecounseling services.

The University of Nairobi Wellness Centre, situated on the 2nd Floor of the University of Nairobi Towers, was born out of the need to address the mental health and general wellness needs of students and staff. The centre was established under the O3 Plus project, which is funded by UNESCO in partnership with the University of Nairobi.

In addition to the wellness centre, the university's collaboration with UNESCO through the O3 Plus project developed three crucial health policies on mental health, sexual reproductive health rights, and HIV/AIDs with the overarching goal of fostering a safe and healthy environment for the university community. The project has also supported the development of a Students' Information Package and Life Skills Curriculum by the Dean of Students Office. The curriculum will see students learn extra soft and practical skills alongside their academic training.

The facility has a dedicated team of professionals from the Dean of Students Office. The services offered by the centre include counseling, counselor supervision, peer counselors' training, and personal therapy among others. The staff at the centre also handle issues ranging from stress and anxiety to academic challenges, family conflicts, and sexual health matters. Since its establishment one year ago, the centre has attended to over 1600 individuals offering services that include counselling, sensitisation, and guidance on general matters.



Career Mentorship for First-Year Students

Story by
Naomi Nyaboga & Arnold M. Nyamweya



The Office of Career Services (OCS) concluded a successful career mentorship programme targeting the first-year students from all the 10 faculties and 13 campuses of the university including Mombasa and Kisumu. Over 1600 students took part in this important activity.

The career mentorship series took place under the theme, *“Understanding the evolving job market and the skills and competencies students should acquire to make them marketable in the evolving job market”*. The

aim of the programme was to demystify the evolving job market and enlighten students on the vital skills and competencies needed to bolster their marketability after they graduate. The activity was also designed to create awareness about the future of work, and especially the importance of leveraging technology in today's job market.

The activities covered panel discussions with industry practitioners and experts from different sectors including agriculture, law, architecture, business, science and technology, medicine, education, and engineering among others. They took the opportunity to interact freely with seasoned professionals and gain new insights outside the realms of academia. The various speakers emphasised the indispensable role of social capital and discipline in navigating the competitive jobs landscape. The students also acquired a deeper understanding of the ethical principles required to excel in the job market.

The attendees were greatly inspired by the mentorship activities whose impact is expected to influence their careers paths. The mentorship programme contributed immensely to fostering the growth of a generation of problem solvers and professionals who are ready to face the challenges of the future of work.



A Students' experience in Czech Republic

There is Swahili saying that goes like this, "Atembeleaye ndugu ajua ukoo", which translates roughly to, "One who visits a brother knows the clan". The saying is used to encourage an individual to travel and open one's heart to accommodate other people beyond their close circle.

It came as a pleasant surprise when I heard about the possibility of visiting the Czech Republic. Like my fellow country people would do under similar circumstances, my first task was to find out how to pronounce "Czech". This is because here at home we are more familiar with words or sentences that contain more consonants than vowels.

My initial research also assured me that the Czech Republic was one of the safest countries in the world, in spite of the challenge of a different language. As a student in the humanities, I would also remind myself that although there was a great distance between Kenya and the Czech Republic, the people of both countries belonged to the same family, the human family. The visit was, therefore, an opportunity for me to know my own clan better.

The public transport system in the Czech Republic is top-notch. There is an announcement at every stop to inform the passengers what the next station is. One has the options of buying a ticket in advance, paying by cash during the journey, or using an application software.

The lecturers and staff of UHK were awesome and had an open-door

policy. I believe that I have learned a lot both in class and informally. My special thanks to all of them for the exciting experience of interacting with them.

As Kenyans we are afraid of the cold weather and temperatures below 0 degrees are simply unheard of here. Most of us would prefer a hot/warm drink and friendly weather. Oh! The excitement of seeing snow for the first time and interacting with it was unbelievable! One more thing to note is that the mobility programme may not be as smooth as you perhaps anticipate it to be but your 'ingenuity' will increase with time and the experience. "Panapo shida maarifa huongezeka" (a calm sea doesn't produce skilled sailors).

I have enjoyed the most pleasant experience here and met with people of different ages and backgrounds. As I go back home, the Czech Republic will always have a special place in my heart. They say that food is the way to the heart. I had the opportunity to experiment on new delicacies from the main dishes to side dishes.

The advice I would give to my fellow students comes from the saying, "asiye safiri taa haing'ai". Take a leap of faith and travel to the Czech Republic.

This story was told by Tabitha Wamucii, a Bachelor of Arts student in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences





UoN's Tree Planting Initiatives



In this interview with Varsity Focus, Prof. John Kamenju of the Department of Plant Science and Crop Protection of the Faculty of Agriculture highlights the university's tree planting initiatives in 2024. The University of Nairobi has joined the National Tree Growing Restoration Campaign to towards achievement of the government's target of 15 billion trees planted across Kenya by 2032.

1. Why is the university engaged in these intense tree planting activities?

Trees are important servants of mankind. They are a source of food. They have plenty of environmental benefits including climate change mitigation and adaptation. Trees hold the soil in place, conserve water, and are a source of wealth. Forests are centres of biodiversity. For these reasons and more, all of us should be in a hurry to plant our next tree.

2. How well is the university doing in its tree planting programme?

The target is to plant and propagate about 130,000 trees during the 2023/24 financial year. I am happy to report that during the rainy season between March and May 2024, we planted about 50,000 tree seedlings with the support of partners and friends of the university. On the National Tree Growing Day alone on 10 May 2024, we planted 6,000 seedlings at the Upper Kabete Campus and 1000 more at the Vet Farm. I want to emphasise that tree planting is a continuous undertaking and I am optimistic that we shall meet and exceed our target.

3. When shall we begin to reap the benefits from the trees already planted?

We begin to see the benefits of the trees as soon as the seedlings are established. This should happen within six months of planting if the conditions are favourable. The young trees will begin to hold the soil in place (to prevent erosion) and conserve water. The benefits increase as the trees mature and accommodate even greater biodiversity.

4. Which tree species are being planted under the university programme?

We have gone for multiple species but majorly indigenous trees. The idea is to establish forests with mixed tree species where there will be stability through competition and complementarity. However, we are careful to select trees that are suitable in the environments where they are being planted to enhance their survival.

5. Does the university have adequate land to accommodate the large number of trees that you have mentioned as a target?

The University of Nairobi has plenty of land for these activities. We have not exhausted the available land in the earmarked locations. We have covered only six acres at the Upper Kabete Campus, two acres at Kibwezi, and two acres at the Vet Farm. The Kibwezi property alone can carry millions of trees on its 1000 acres.

6. What should we do to maximise the impact of the tree-planting efforts being undertaken?

It is important to select our tree species carefully to match the environment where we are going to plant them. Let's not plant trees in unsuitable environments where they will struggle to survive. Timely planting is also key. The best time to plant tree seedlings is at the onset of the rains. We must also undertake deliberate post-planting care of the seedlings. After the mass planting events, I have been going back to the sites with a team of workers to ensure that all the seedlings were planted correctly and to replace those that have been damaged through poor handling and the attack by insects and rodents. We should set aside adequate financial resources to obtain manure, fertilisers, weedicides, and other materials needed for maintenance of the trees including use of in situ materials.

7. What lessons have we learned?

We can plant more trees through collaboration with others. Some of the partners that we have worked with include the Kenya Defence Forces (KDF), University of Nairobi Alumni Association (UONAA), and Kenya Export Promotion and Branding Agency (KEPROBA) among others. It will also help to appreciate the importance of trees so that we are able to plant and nurture them from the heart, instead of seeing this as an external target to fulfill. Whenever you plant a tree, go back to the site to confirm if it survived. Find out if the seedling is receiving

enough sunlight. Weed around the tree seedlings to remove the competition for nutrients with unwanted plants.

8. Which challenges have you encountered during the tree planting programme?

When we started, we made the assumption that every person knows how to plant a tree, but this was not the case. We noticed that there was poor handling of the seedlings during planting as a result of this problem. We shall need to build the capacity of members of the university community on the proper handling of tree seedlings, how to plant them, and how to care for them after planting. We have the technologies to enable us achieve a 75 percent survival rate if we get it right from the start.

What is your final word?

Let us plant trees and care for them. I have planted 500 tree seedlings so far against my target of at least 1000. I would want all of us to adopt the late Prof. Wangari Maathai's concept of the humming bird where even the little we are able to do will contribute to protecting and conserving our environment.



Reflections on my PhD Journey



I am extremely fortunate to pursue my PhD degree programme at the University of Nairobi. My doctoral research explores how global health diplomacy and foreign policy intersect to address Africa's health challenges with particular reference to Kenya. The University of Nairobi epitomises a sophisticated and multicultural hub for intellectual pursuits. Its location in Nairobi, Kenya's capital city, beneath the expansive blue sky, offers an exquisite haven of tranquility. This fact notwithstanding, postgraduate studies often come with significant financial and other demands and can be a tedious experience for many candidates.

One factor that makes the doctoral programme challenging is its research-based nature, which requires a high level of independence by the candidate while at the same time working under the guidance of the research supervisors. Such an arrangement calls for thorough preparation and an

understanding of the challenges that one is likely to encounter, and deal with, along the way. A PhD programme requires effective goal-setting and strategic planning to optimise scarce resources. Meticulous time management is also key. Adherence to this approach will ensure the realisation of set objectives within the stipulated timeframe.

My experiences as a postgraduate student of International Relations has taught me to appreciate a wide range of global perspectives and paradigms of critical thinking in a globalising world. I can only equate my PhD journey to the story of the incredible underdogs who rise up against insurmountable odds to become legends. This is a story of resilience and hope against adversity. It is a story of determination; hard work; and testing the limits of strength, all of which call for unwavering dedication.

Inside the corridors that define our specialised studies are the fascinating light-hearted jokes that we like to share among ourselves as students of International Studies (Diplomacy and International Relations). Delightful moments are created away from the pressure of our academic pursuits and witty remarks shared about what diplomacy is or isn't. Together, we demystify the misguided notions about our field. As we reminisce about issues of diplomacy and foreign policy, humour is a cherished stimulus and an integral part of our academic journey. I am persuaded that, at the highest peak of enlightenment, emancipation beckons.

Stephen Nyaga is pursuing a PhD in the Department of Diplomacy and International Studies

I have seen it all!

Professor Henry Indangasi

He is known for saying what many others will not, even at the risk of being the only one holding a contrary view. This is a trait that has led to his being labelled as controversial. Professor Emeritus Henry Indangasi will gladly turn down a request to pen an opinion where the expectation is contrary to his principle of saying it as it is. He prefers to distinguish himself as someone who goes for the facts, challenging his critics that he not only does his homework, but also speaks from experience. The professor of Literature spent close to 50 years at the University of Nairobi.

“There is a lot of intellectual dishonesty in the literary world”, says the don to explain the apparent clash of opinion with his colleagues especially certain intellectual issues. He has often been lambasted for expressing his opinion about some of the most revered names in the

field of Literature. “Let’s just say that I know some things that many people don’t. I often challenge those with a contrary opinion to dig deeper for the facts”, he says. The don decries what he calls the “misrepresentation of facts” through acts of commission, omission, and even blatant lying for self-gain by some writers. The low capacity for critical thinking among the readers does not make matters any easier because it creates a culture of hero-worshipping the writers at the expense of examining their works. “In the academic world, we should question some of these things. Don’t just believe them”, says the don addressing an audience whose calling he understands better. Although some of his attempts to set the record straight have been misconstrued, he remains undeterred because of his belief in true scholarship. His pursuit for the truth is also inspired by his upbringing as a Quaker



combined with lessons from the value-laden Japanese culture, which he was privileged to experience in the course of his work.

Prof. Indangasi, distinguished himself as the longest serving Chairman of the Department of Literature for a record 15 years between 1984 and 1999. He began his career as an Assistant Lecturer in 1977 while still pursuing his Ph.D., attained full professorship in 1998, and became Professor Emeritus in 2022. He worked with the likes of Prof. Ngugi wa Thiong'o, who was his lecturer and later colleague; the late Prof. Micere Mugo; and the late Prof. Chris Wanjala among others. He set the pace and encouraged members of staff in the department to pursue their Ph.D. degrees, in an apparent break from the tradition. Some of those who attained their doctorates during this time include Wanjiku Kabira, Hellen Mwanzi, Evan Mwangi, and Peter Wasamba. Prof. Indangasi also promoted gender parity that saw more women lecturers join the department. He was also a member of Senate for 15 years and a representative of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences to the University Council for eight years.

Born in Vihiga County in 1947, Indangasi's childhood was dogged with poverty. He could have dropped out of school at an early age, but was rescued by fate. He joined the Department of Literature as an undergraduate student with the first batch of admissions into Kenya's first independent university in 1970. Finishing as a

Literature Major in 1973, and the best student in the Faculty of Arts with a First-Class Honours, he proceeded for his Ph.D. to the University of California, Santa Cruz, in 1977.

An avid reader, writer, and literary critic, the don appreciates the works of local writers like the late Margaret Ogola, the later works of David Maillu, and the late Yusuf Dawood. He has a rich collection of his own works including poems like "Death of my Father", research articles, and

numerous books including *Rethinking Literature: My Personal Essays on a Troubled Discipline* and *Value Creating Education in Kenya: Creating a humane Society*. His works have been published by the Kenya Literature Bureau and the University of Nairobi Press among other publishers. Being a beneficiary of various awards during his education inspired him to donate the Henry Indangasi Prize for Literature, which is awarded annually to the best students in Literature from Kikuyu

and the Main Campus.

According to Prof. Indangasi, "A major concern about today's student is the poor reading culture, which is also reflected in the poor writing skills". Prof. Indangasi suggests the establishment of a writing centre to improve the writing skills of students from all the disciplines. "This is especially crucial for the Ph.D. candidates who must demonstrate their personal ability and contribution to knowledge", he says as a parting shot.

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LINUS ANARI:

Winner of NASA's Pale Blue Dot Challenge



In a triumph that resonates far beyond the lecture halls of the University of Nairobi, Linus Anari, a Geospatial Engineering student at the Faculty of Engineering, has been named one of the winners of NASA's prestigious Pale Blue Dot Challenge. The competition,

which sought innovative solutions to pressing global issues like climate change, water scarcity, and food insecurity, drew over 1,600 participants from around the world.

Linus, a driven and passionate Engineering student, teamed up with geographer Eileen Mburu to develop a groundbreaking Geographic Information System (GIS) focused on tackling food security challenges in Northern Kenya. Their project, titled "Disaster-driven food insecurity risk mapping in Kenya (SDG 2: Zero Hunger)," is poised to transform how food security assessments are conducted in the country.

Inspired by the devastating impact of recurrent floods and droughts in Northern Kenya, particularly during the El Niño rains in the October-November-December season, the team took a unique approach. They integrated disaster data with spatial analyses to pinpoint food security hotspots in counties like Turkana and Marsabit, regions frequently at the crisis stage of food insecurity.

"Our GIS tool isn't just about mapping; it's about saving lives by ensuring resources are directed where they're needed most," Linus emphasized. Their innovation is designed to guide

targeted interventions, helping authorities and humanitarian organizations mitigate the impact of extreme weather events on food security in the region.

For their outstanding work, Linus and Eileen have been awarded an all-expenses-paid, 10-day space study program in the United States. Their achievement not only brings pride to Kenya but also sets a new benchmark for the role of technology in addressing real-world problems.

Currently serving as the Chairperson of the Geospatial Engineering Students' Association (2024/2025), Linus is well-known for his passion for leveraging spatial data for innovative solutions. His key skills include GIS modelling, remote sensing, cloud computing, GPS technology, and land surveying.

The University of Nairobi and the Faculty of Engineering extend their heartfelt congratulations to Linus Anari and Eileen Mburu for this extraordinary accomplishment. Their success is a testament to the potential of Kenyan students to make significant contributions on the global stage. This achievement not only honours our institution but also highlights Kenya's capacity to address global challenges through technology and innovation.



15 Kenyan Students flagged off to China on Scholarship

On the 29th of August 2024, the Confucius Institute at the University of Nairobi successfully held the flag off ceremony for the 2024 scholars who will be going to China for further studies. This year, a total of 15 outstanding students were awarded scholarships, including 13 International Chinese Language Teachers' Scholarships and 2 Tianjin Municipal Government Scholarships. All 15 scholars were recommended by the Confucius Institute at the University of Nairobi and will soon go to Tianjin Normal University to study for a semester, academic year or undergraduate degree. Below is the list of students and the type of scholarships they have received: 8 University of Nairobi students, 3 State House Girls' High School students, 1 Mount Kenya University student, 1 from Rowa Mixed Secondary and 1 Kabete Technical Student.

The ceremony took place at 10:00 am at the University of Nairobi main campus. Prof. Wang Shangxue, Director of the Confucius Institute,

together with the Naomi Nyaboga, Head of Career Section, Dean of Students Office, Mr. John Orindi, Director of Corporate Affairs, Prof. Jennifer Muchiri, Associate Dean of the Faculty of Arts and a representative from the Department of Linguistics and Languages of the University of Nairobi met the students who were about to embark on their studies in China. They inquired not only about the students' experiences in learning Chinese, but also about their future plans, congratulated them and wished them well in their studies in China. They urged the students to cherish the learning opportunity they had received, broaden their international horizons and contribute to enhancing cultural exchanges between China and Kenya. After the meeting, they flagged off the students in front of Taifa Hall. This was not only a recognition of the students' hard work, but also an expectation of their bright future and a motivation for other students.

The Confucius Institute at the University of Nairobi wishes the students all the best in their studies in China. May they not only succeed in their studies in China, but also become good ambassadors of cultural exchange between China and Kenya, contributing to the friendship and cooperation between the two countries.



Data Science Project to Empower Women

The ENGAGE project, ENabling Girls in AI and Growing Expertise in Data Science, spearheaded by the University of Nairobi (UoN) in partnership with the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF), is on a mission to empower adolescent girls and young women in Kenya. Through targeted training in data science, with a special focus on public health applications, the project, funded by Takeda Pharmaceuticals, seeks to equip participants with skills to harness the power of health data and foster equitable health policy decisions.

The project is housed at the University of Nairobi Institute of Tropical and Infectious Diseases (UNITID), under Prof. Julius Oyugi as the Principal Investigator (PI) and Director of UNITID, who also oversees the public health component. Dr Timothy Kamanu, the Co-PI and Head of the Division of Data Analytics and Scientific Computing Laboratory (DASCLAB) in the Department of Mathematics, leads the data science component. UCSF, represented by Dr. Koki Kinagwi, the Country Director, brings expertise in health data science, precision medicine, and computational biology.

The need for ENGAGE is particularly acute in Kenya, where health systems are increasingly reliant on data for decision-making. However, with few women in the data science field, models used to predict health outcomes often fail to adequately reflect the needs of women and girls. Addressing this issue is not just about technology—it's about social justice. Over its five-year course, ENGAGE will train 480 high school girls and 405 women in diploma programmes, creating a pipeline of leaders in health data science.

A defining feature of ENGAGE is its commitment to reaching young women in rural areas, where opportunities for advanced training in

data science are limited. By partnering with six regional universities—Dedan Kimathi University of Technology, Meru University of Science and Technology, South Eastern Kenya University, Kabarak University, Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology, and Pwani University—the project ensures equitable access to transformative education.

In July 2024, Prof. Oyugi and the ENGAGE team delivered computers and essential equipment to these universities. This investment in infrastructure marked a pivotal moment for the institutions, paving the way for impactful training programmes. In August 2024, ENGAGE launched its pilot phase, training 90 young women—45 from Tier 2 (TVET diploma programmes) and 45 from Tier 3 (university undergraduates).

Over the next five years, ENGAGE aims to transform the lives of its participants and the communities they serve. By equipping young women with data science expertise, the project envisions a future where diverse teams, many led by women trained through ENGAGE, develop models and policies that drive equitable health outcomes.



ENGAGE project team led by Prof. Julius Oyugi (R), Dr. Timothy Kamanu (L) from UoN and Dr. Peninah Masibo (M) from UCSF presenting computers at South Eastern Kenya University received by the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academics, Research & Innovation) Prof. Harrison Maithya (sitting).

UoN Researchers recognized at the Inaugural National Research Festival 2024

The University of Nairobi researchers and innovators participated in the just ended inaugural National Research Festival held at the Edge Convention from Monday, August 19- 23, 2024 themed, 'Research Partnerships and Collaborations for Socio-Economic Transformation. The objective of the week-long event was to showcase Kenya's dynamic research and innovation environment.

During the closing Ceremony, UoN researchers from different fields were recognized and honored for their contribution to their areas of specialization.

Professor David Musyimi Ndetei was awarded the outstanding Social Sciences Life Time Award for his pioneering work in psychiatry and mental health. His research and advocacy have significantly improved mental health services and policies in Kenya and globally. Prof Ndetei, a renowned scholar in psychiatry and mental health, has dedicated his career to improving mental health services in Kenya and worldwide. His research has significantly shaped national and international mental health policies, positively impacting countless lives. He has also played a pivotal role in mentoring the next

generation of mental health professionals and spearheading crucial research initiatives.

Professor Ruth Nduati was awarded with the outstanding Life Sciences Life Time Award for her contributions to pediatric and public health research. Her groundbreaking work in preventing mother-to-child transmission of HIV has set a global standard. Her research continues to improve healthcare outcomes for mothers and children. Professor Nduati's extensive body of work encompasses numerous peer-reviewed publications that inspire the global scientific community.

Socrates Majune from the Department of Economics was awarded the National Young Outstanding Researcher.

Speaking during the award ceremony, Prof. Jesang Hutchinson, the UoN Vice Chancellor (Ag), celebrated the awardees for their contribution to research over the years and for transforming society through their research solutions. She urged the researchers to continue flying the UoN flag higher.

The awards highlight the importance of research and innovation in driving Kenya's socio-economic development.



UoN and Tianjin Normal University enter into Partnership during 2024 FOCAC Summit



The UoN VC Prof. Jesang Hutchinson with the Confucius Institute Director, Prof. Wang ShangXue in China at the FOCAC 2024

The University of Nairobi and Tianjin Normal University entered into a collaboration to establish a 'China-Africa Cultural and Civilization Research Center', a center that is to serve all Africa. The Agreement that was signed in China during the 2024 Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) on September 3-6, 2024 that was attended by the UoN Vice Chancellor (Ag), Prof. Margaret Jesang Hutchinson.

Prof. Hutchinson, together with Mr. Hu Zhiping, Deputy Director-General of the Centre for Language Education and Cooperation (CLEC), and Prof. Gong Jinlong, President of Tianjin Normal University (TJNU), inaugurated the Research Center for China-Africa Dialogue among Civilisations. The Centre, under the Faculty of Arts at the University of Nairobi and the Confucius Institute at the University of Nairobi, will focus on research on the exchange and mutual appreciation of African and Chinese cultures and civilisations, the inheritance and dissemination of African and Chinese languages and cultures, and teacher training, to create a new generation of Chinese and African

cultural and educational exchange ambassadors, Chinese and African culture and civilisation inheritors, disseminators and defenders, to encourage more young people to understand the African and Chinese cultures, and to carry out research on African and Chinese cultural exchange, inheritance, dissemination and cooperation.

The establishment of the research centre is to make full use of the resource advantages of the University of Nairobi as a renowned institution in Africa, and the advantages of Tianjin Normal University in the first-class disciplines of world history, the northern city of China Academy of Ancient Books Conservation, the joint establishment of

the International Institute for the Development of Chinese Language Education by the Ministry and the University, and the approval of doctoral degrees in relevant disciplines. The Institute will serve to deepen China-Africa cultural mutual understanding, create an improved version of China-Africa cultural and civilisation exchange and cooperation research and practice, further strengthen China-Africa language and cultural education exchange and cooperation, promote China-Africa youth's language and culture learning, research, inheritance and innovative development, open up new and important cooperation and research and practice avenues of talent cultivation for China-Africa civilisation, It will also integrate the ancient and modern civilisations of China and Africa, Chinese modernisation and history and culture, and meet the growing demand of Chinese and African youth for language and culture learning, research and practice of civilisation exchange and mutual understanding.

The visit marked another milestone in the friendship and cooperation between the University of Nairobi, Centre for Language Education and Cooperation (CLEC) and Tianjin Normal University.

Journalism students Excel



Department of Journalism and Mass Communication students display awards received during the All Africa Media Excellence Award Ceremony held on 8 May 2024.

Students from the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication clinched the prestigious Wangari Maathai Young Journalists Award during the All Africa Media Leaders' Summit held in Nairobi on 8-10 May 2024. The meeting, whose discussions focused on the future of journalism in Africa, also witnessed the recognition of big names in the media industry during the All Africa Media Excellence Award Ceremony. Over 300 African media stakeholders from 48 countries attended the media summit coming after a ten-year break. They included media owners, government representatives, academics, corporate leaders, and development partners among others.

Hope Nabalayo was honoured for the adept use of digital platforms in youth-focused journalism. She highlighted the plight of a Kakamega mother who was grappling with post-partum depression amid societal stigma. For Hope, the award serves as validation for her efforts and compels her to continue spotlighting and dignifying critical topics such as mental health.

The winning item by Zachary Nyakweba drew attention to the challenges of navigating life with narcolepsy, a sleep disorder that tends to disrupt everyday tasks like cooking and cleaning with sudden bouts of sleepiness. He is dedicated to amplifying the voices of marginalised individuals whose struggles often remain unnoticed.

Kairu Karega adeptly covered an innovative alcohol rehabilitation initiative where addicts openly share their journeys and receive structured support. For him, the award signifies encouragement to persist in storytelling and underscores

the significance of recognising the contributions of budding journalists.

In a related activity the university hosted the Digizens' Circle where candid discussions were held with Africa's young people to identify media-related obstacles to their participation in the development of the continent. The theme of the event was, "What is the youth's place in African media".

This event stimulated the thinking of the youth on issues of access to African traditional media, inclusion, and how they can join the discussions to make meaningful contribution to the development of their countries and the continent. One of the key takeaways was the need accept the youth as partners rather than disruptors in African media patterns.

The Vice-Chancellor informed the participants that through its digitalisation programme, the university was already offering opportunities to young people through access and use of UNC-TV and UNC-Radio. The VC was represented by the Dean, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Prof. Jack Odhiambo.

UoN holds the 4th

Chartered Institute of Public Relations Graduation

17 Public Relations (PR) Professional Leaders from East Africa were on Saturday, August 3, 2024 recognized and celebrated through a Graduation Ceremony after receiving their UK Global Accreditation from the Chartered Institute of Public Relations. (CIPR) They have now joined over 11, 000 Globally Accredited PR professionals and can practice PR anywhere in the world with the skills sets gained from the qualification.

The ceremony which was characterized by pomp and colour, testimonials of resilience and perseverance shared across the room as the students narrated the sacrifice and hardwork that goes into completion of this qualification.

Industry Leaders, Mark Kaigwa and Sylvia Muyonga crowned the event. They each spoke on the importance of research and data that informs strategic communication.

'Listen, Learn and Lead,' was the rhythmic lesson that the CEO of Nendo, Mark Kaigwa left the graduates with. He urged them to always listen to what their stakeholders are saying, learn from what they are listening to and to lead.' He noted, 'These certificates are not just an end, but a beginning. It's the firing of a gun at

the start of a marathon.'

The Public Policy and Advocacy Manager at META, spoke on leveraging on Innovation and technological advancements to efficiently deliver on their mandates. She demystified AI and intrigued the audience on the latest innovations that the organization is working on to streamline and improve the services that they offer.

The CIPR Programme Lead and Director Corporate Affairs, Mr. John Orindi, was elated to physically meet the students on their graduation day. He congratulated them and urged them to put into practice all the good things that they have learnt.

Neema Mutemi, CIPR Course Lead, congratulated the students and challenged them to come back for more qualifications. She asked them to be CIPR-UoN brand ambassadors and urge other PR Professionals to join the programme.

Congratulations to the CIPR-UoN Class of 2024! Your achievements are a testament to your hard work and dedication, and we look forward to seeing the incredible contributions you will make in the future.



Faculty of Law Students Excel



In the dynamic arena of legal education and advocacy, the Faculty of Law has distinguished itself through stellar performances in moot court competitions, showcasing both expertise and dedication to the causes of social justice.

In the Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights Moot Court Competition held at the Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, a team from the law faculty clinched the coveted Golden Medal. Led by Ayaga Max and Barbra Ayimba, the team's triumph underscored their commitment to championing the rights of intersex individuals in Kenya. The victory, which earned the team

the recognition for Best Memorials and Oralist performances, was a testament of the thorough research and persuasive advocacy skills that went into the task.

Despite narrowly missing another championship, the law faculty's team secured the runner-up position in the fiercely competitive 2023 All African Moot Court Competition at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Ghana. This event brought together legal minds from across 17 African nations to tackle pressing issues such as illegal mining, climate change, and the rights of gender and sexual minorities.

The Faculty of Law has embraced a holistic approach to nurturing talent that will contribute to shaping a legal landscape where justice, equality, and human dignity prevail. Behind the trophies that the

teams bring home is the drive to instil a deep understanding of human rights and social justice issues. Through rigorous preparation and passionate advocacy, students like Ayaga Max, Barbra Ayimba, Njapit Ntikiya, and Trevor Kamau have emerged as good examples of legal excellence, inspiring the future generations of lawyers to use their knowledge for positive societal change.

The students' triumphs could serve as catalysts for change in the real-world by prompting governments to take tangible steps towards recognising and safeguarding the rights of marginalised communities.



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