



MMUST NEWS

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VARSITY ON COMBATING SICKLE CELL DISEASE IN WESTERN KENYA



**Inside; Feature Story on
MMUST Female Tech Student**

CAREER FAIR 2020

Date: To be communicated
Main Campus(Multipurpose Hall)

**UPCOMING
EVENTS**



MMUST NewsPost



Editor's Pen

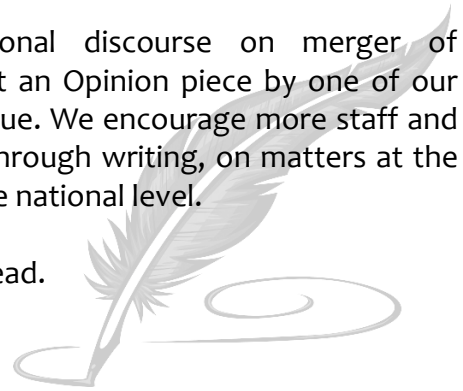
Dear MMUST Community,

In the recent past, we have had a beehive of activities at the University. Several Governmental agencies have been at the University for inspection of our various programmes, facilities, faculty and many other aspects. We commend all the sections which have been recently inspected for posting positive findings.

In this Edition, we highlight several activities which have taken place at the University. Most particularly, we are proud of one of our female tech student who is flying the flag of the University high.

With the current national discourse on merger of universities, we also post an Opinion piece by one of our staff members on this issue. We encourage more staff and students to contribute, through writing, on matters at the University and even at the national level.

We hope you enjoy this read.



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VARSITY SPEARHEADS EFFORT TO COMBAT SICKLE CELL DISEASE IN WESTERN KENYA

By Albert Induli

Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology (MMUST) scholars are set to tour Ball State University in the United States of America on 4th of April 2020 on a benchmarking mission in the care of Sickle Cell disease. The team will be accompanied by Western region counties executives.



Seated from right: Vihiga County Deputy Governor- Dr. Patrick Saisi, Ag. Vice Chancellor MMUST- Prof. Asenath Sigot, Kakamega County First Lady, Mrs. Priscillah Oparanya and the Ag. Deputy Vice Chancellor (Planning, Research and Innovation) Prof. Charles Mutai.

During a Travel preparation meeting held at the University on 3rd of March 2020, the Acting Vice Chancellor, Prof. Asenath Sigot, acknowledged

the efforts and willingness of the stakeholders in combating Sickle Cell Disease which is a serious concern in Kakamega County and western region at large. Prof. Sigot observed that there is need to put minds together in order to come up with a better solution for those suffering from the deadly disease. Her sentiments were echoed by the Deputy Governor of Vihiga County, Dr. Patrick Saisi who is also in charge of Sports, Youth, Gender and Social Services. Dr. Saisi reiterated that it was important to partner with institutions that would help in research and give leeway to affordable treatment for many people suffering from the disease around the region and the country at large.

Sickle Cell Disease is a group of blood disorders typically inherited from parents; the common one being Sickle Cell Anemia. According to analysis by these scholars, there are many affected families in Western region. At Ball State University, the team will learn about Sickle Cell Disease, evidence- based practices and the best practices in the School of Nursing applicable to Kakamega County' situation. This is envisaged to benefit patients with SCD, the community and the whole country. MMUST has been on the fore front in advocating and making the community aware of SCD as well as addressing the condition in Western region.

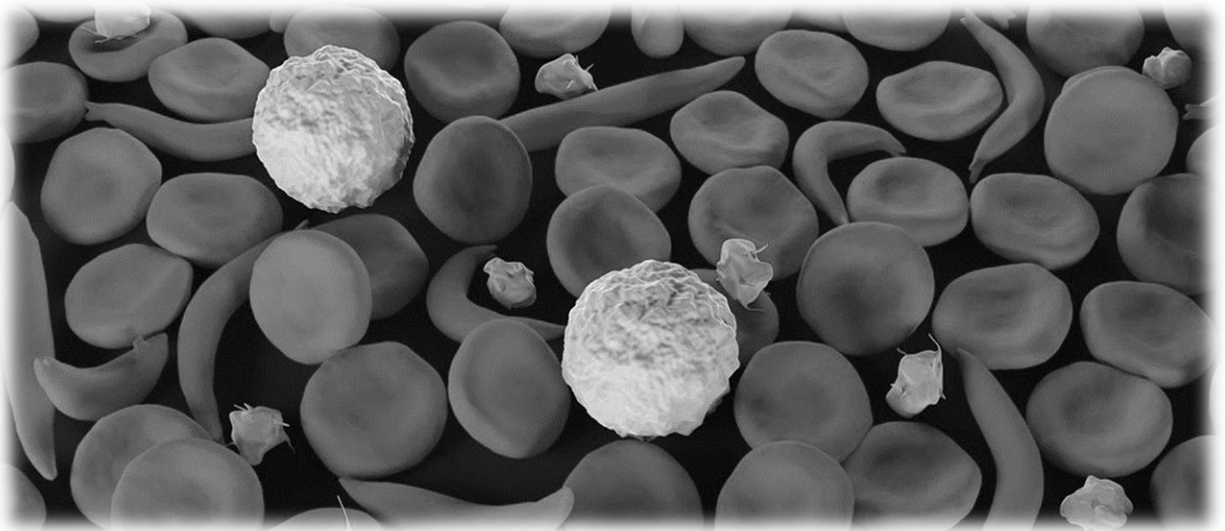


MMUST Representatives led, by Ag. Vice Chancellor, Prof. Asenath Sigot, with stakeholders in a meeting over travel plans to Ball State University

Objectively, other areas of focus will include;

- ✓ Exploring the possibility of exchange program between Ball State University and MMUST to enhance capacity and transfer of knowledge.
- ✓ Collaborate in research activities to improve quality of health care provided to patients diagnosed with Sickle Cell Disease.
- ✓ Partner in establishing a Centre of Excellence for SCD at MMUST or Kakamega County General Hospital to improve quality of health care.
- ✓ Explore other collaborative areas of mutual benefit and interests.

The partnership between Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology and Ball State University was established in 2007 and renewed for the second time in 2017, July 2018 and June 2019. After a meeting to discuss the continued collaboration of Sickle Cell Disease project in 2019. The two partners are set to actualize a Sickle Cell Disease Centre in MMUST with other outlets in other western region counties.



MIE DEPARTMENT HOLDS SECOND LECTURE ON FINITE ELEMENT ANALYSIS (FEA)

By Awuor Sandra Dorcas

The School of Engineering and the Built Environment (SEBE) at Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology (MMUST), through the Department of Mechanical and Industrial Engineering (MIE), played host to a one-week Lecture on Finite Element Analysis (FEA) from 1st to 8th March, 2020. The Lecture was facilitated by Prof. Dr.-Ing. Christian-Toralf Weber from Germany as part of a fruitful 2-year-long collaboration between MMUST and Brandenburg Universities dubbed *ProUniEdu-Wek* (Practice-Oriented University Education in Western Kenya).



Photo; Courtesy

Prof. Dr.-Ing. Christian-Toralf Weber.

The Lecture tackled topics such as Static-mechanical Calculation, Loads and Boundary Conditions among others, imparting more knowledge on application of Finite Element Analysis (FEA) for advanced teaching and quality research in modelling and simulation.

Dr. Peter Cherop the Chairperson of Department, MIE, said that the collaboration has immensely advanced the Department in terms of capacity building and teaching resources such as an experimental Computer Numerically Controlled (CNC) Milling Machine. The Department is also expecting a robot manipulator from Magdeburg University of Applied Sciences.

The collaboration has an ongoing student exchange program, with a batch of students from MMUST expected to travel to Germany. The School of Engineering and Built Environment (SEBE) is also expecting an exchange student pursuing business engineering.

This is the second workshop lecture by the Flying Faculty from Germany, attended by students in the Mechanical and Industrial Engineering department and MIE staff members.



MIE students at MMUST, keenly following the lecture on FEA



MMUST REVIEWS ITS SHORT COURSES TO SATISFY CBC MARKET

By Albert Induli

Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology's (MMUST) School of Open Learning and Continuing Education held a three-day workshop on restructuring of its Short Courses programme to suit needs in the current Competency Based learning environment. The Seminar, which kicked off on Wednesday 4th and ended on Friday 6th of March 2020 at Bishop Stams Pastoral Centre in Kakamega, saw a unique Short Course from the School of Medicine 'Mortuary Science and Practice' which addresses professionalism in mortuary operations.

According to Dr. Eglay Tsuma, the Coordinator, Short Courses, MMUST has the potential to grow through offering these short programmes that may seem otherwise looked down-upon. She added that many young people in the community need practical first knowledge to offer services and survive affordably.

"It is through enrolling for a Short course that a learner gets the urge to advance and the zeal to pursue a career in a given field of interest", she said.

Her sentiments were echoed by Dr. Beatrice Barasa, Senior Assistant Registrar coordinating MMUST programmes, stating that Short courses should be able to address the unique needs of the students. She also cited the importance of understanding the needs of the community and even beyond as preparation of the program is done. Dr. Barasa encouraged participants to think beyond the usual catchment areas when packaging programmes.

During the Training which brought together participants from various Schools in MMUST affiliated with Short programmes, there was expanded exposure to several aspects pertaining to Short programmes including; developing Short programmes in collaboration with the industry, Admissions criteria to a Short programme, the relevance of Short programmes in the Labour market, progress on development of Short programmes in the School of Business and Economics among other short Programme development experiences in different Schools at MMUST.

It is worth noting that SOLACE, with current student population of over one thousand five hundred (1500), has the mandate of increasing access to learning opportunities for both professional and academic learners. In the same regard, it is committed to the creation of new programmes while enhancing the existing ones to ensure preservation of academic freedom and extension of higher education through flexible tuition hours (regular, evening, and weekend classes).

Further, the introduction of the Centre for Training and Development of Short Courses as a division under SOLACE has further enhanced the presence of the School as one offering a variety of affordable capacity building and learning opportunities for professionals and organizations keen to remaining relevant in the dynamic business scene.



According to the Commission for University Education regulations, MMUST is set to adopt the reviewed Short Programmes by coding and crediting the Programme developers hence owning them as an institution.

4TH YEAR FEMALE STUDENT MAKING GREAT STRIDES IN TECH



Glorious Vuyanzi Musaviri, Developer Students Club Lead representing MMUST at the Women Techmakers (WTM)/SSA Community Summit 2019 organized by Google in Accra, Ghana.

By Awuor Sandra Dorcas

Glorious Vuyanzi Musaviri, a 21-year old student at Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology (MMUST) began her journey into tech with self-motivation and the quest to make a difference in the community. Glorious is currently a 4th Year student pursuing Computer Science. She is the Developer Students Club lead at the institution.

The Developer Student Clubs were initiated by Google as avenues for students in different institutions of higher learning to teach themselves programming. According to the witty and young tech enthusiast, her Club is working on three (3) different technologies, namely Web Development, Android Development and Data Science. Glorious, together with a co-team, continue to share knowledge with other peers during

Meet-ups at the University which they hold weekly or monthly. The Meet-ups are closely monitored online by Google Developers.

Being passionate about giving back to the society and getting other young women into tech, Glorious mentored girls from high schools under the Technovation Challenge by Safaricom last year. Technovation Challenge is a 12-week App Development and Mentorship program aimed at cultivating interest in Science, Technology and Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) courses. She says that the best part about such opportunities is that she gets to learn even more in the process and interact with other mentors as well.

Continues on page 7;

“Each group of girls from different high schools in the country were assigned a number of mentors. **It was really inspiring that the girls we were mentoring made it to the regional and national competitions,**” said a beaming Glorious.

Together with a male counterpart, Glorious is currently working on an App to deal with mental health issues such as depression. The App will enable users to sign in anonymously and get access to help from qualified psychiatrists. She hopes to build more and provide more solutions to health-related issues in the country.

She attributes her strides in the tech industry to her lecturers at Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology (MMUST) and the immense facilities and resources available adding that the administration is also very responsive especially when it comes to approving venues for her Developers Club Meet-ups.

Her relentless motivation and determination also stems from the positive attitude of more women towards tech and the availability of women-exclusive platforms such as SheHacks Kenya that continue to provide more opportunities for women in tech. She says that more of such initiatives will make even greater impact when it comes to finding solutions to most problems.



Glorious, together with other student leads from other Universities, during DSC Summit 2019 in Accra Ghana

Women Tech Makers (WTM) in Accra Ghana



PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAMME RECEIVES ACCLAIM



Prof. Asenath Sigot- acting VC MMUST, Prof. Charles Mutai- Ag DVC Planning Research and Innovation, Chair of the inspecting team from Public Health officers and Technicians council Mr. William Kitagwa, Mr. Daniel Okwara and Dr.S. Kimani with other inspectors at the VC's office when they paid a courtesy call on Tuesday 10th of March.

By Albert Induli

Public Health Officers and Technicians Council spent their day at Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology on Tuesday, 10th March 2020 inspecting the quality and standards of the Bachelor of Science in Public Health course offered at the University.

Prior to the exercise, the team paid a Courtesy Call to the Vice Chancellor's Office where they were welcomed officially at the University by the management. During the session, Prof. Asenath Sigot, the Acting Vice Chancellor, appreciated their presence stating that MMUST was ready to work closely with the Council in order to improve and maintain its standards in service delivery. She observed the need to strengthen operations in institutions of higher learning by encouraging frequent checks of the systems and pointing out grey areas with evidence-based backgrounds.

The inspection focused on the following key areas of interest and which are fundamental to the training of personnel in the field of Public Health. Firstly, there was the Standards of Governance where the institution is expected to have a Human Resource Guideline elaborating on managing and developing human resource and career development.

Secondly, there was the Standards on Academic Staff where it is envisaged that the institution should have adequate faculty to cover the core pillars and disciplines of environmental health.

Thirdly, there was Standards of Admission in which the institution is expected to provide an Admission Policy that includes Criteria as per Public Health Officers' and Technician's Council.

“MMUST is ready to work closely with the Council in order to improve and maintain its standards in service delivery”

Other Standards concentrated on were; Technical staff supporting the Programme, Curriculum, Library resources, Infrastructural resources, Public health, Safety, Practicum and placement sites, Information, Communication and Technology, Programme evaluation, Quality Assurance and Standards on Research.

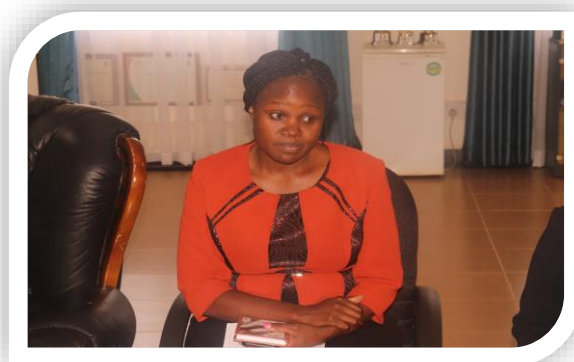
Bachelor of Science in Public Health at Masinde Muliro University is a fresh Programme with its first lot of students set to start their Industrial Attachment at the end of the 2020/2021 academic year. According to Mr. William Kitagwa, a veteran Public Health officer and Chair of the Inspecting team, their main aim as a Government agency is to find out omissions and deviations, fill the gaps and ensure training institutions meet the minimum criteria. Mr. Kitagwa, who is also a university lecturer adds that, part of their mandate is to regulate the training, ensure proper registration and follow up the practice of Public Health Officers across the country.

With document verification done, the team visited Microbiology and Entomology laboratories where students taking the Public Health course carry out practical studies in courses like Food Science, Food Chemistry, Food Microbiology, Molecular Epidemiology among other practical aspects in the

field. They also inspected the Drawing Room; a compartment that has standard drawing boards and other drawing equipment. The inspectors were also exposed to several modern, state of the art equipment in the Environmental Health Skills laboratory like Palintest Photometer; a gadget used to test soil alkalinity before heading to the University Library to confirm the relevant reading and e-resource materials for students undertaking the course in Public Health. Chaired by Dr. Maximila Wanzala, the Department of Public Health is set to build a very strong foundation in research by partnering with stakeholders within the country and globally. Spearheaded by the Department, MMUST has signed several Memoranda of Understanding with the County governments of Kakamega and Vihiga among other stakeholders. Being its first inspection from the relevant Government agency, the Department boasts of a highly favourable and positive Report.



The team at the Vice Chancellor's office before they began the inspection exercise.



Chair of the Public Health Department at Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology Dr. Maximila Wanzala during the meeting at the Vice Chancellor's office

**Dr. Oseno Ben, a Lecturer in the
School of Business and Economics**



GAP VALUE MAY HAUNT VARSITIES MERGER

The ratification of the amended universities regulations by the vice chancellors last week with merger clauses featuring has put the universities in a potential restructuring trajectory. Mergers and takeover are some of the strategic restructuring tools commonly applied in transforming business organizations.

A merger is a combination of two firms with almost similar strengths and upon combining the two firms loses their original identity to form a completely new outfit. In a takeover, the firm being acquired loses identity while the acquiring firm maintains its identity. The acquiring firm is usually called the predator while the firm being acquired is called a target. Mergers can take different forms; horizontal, vertical and conglomerate mergers. The universities will definitely go for the horizontal merger which involves a merger between two firms in the same industry and at the same level of production forming a single entity in order to gain synergy, managerial efficiency, increased market share, asset backing, diversification as well as tax savings.

Why are the universities going for merger?

The universities view merger as a silver bullet to; benefit from managerial efficiency where the predator acquires the target in order to take over its efficient management team. Second, tap on operational synergy resulting from economies of scale, scope and complementary resources and third, financial synergy associated with low cost of teams and less volatile cash flows.

However, those reasons as they may be its also coming to the realization of the Ministry of Education that the public universities underfunding by the exchequer has exposed these institutions of higher learning now standing precariously on a cliff of dire financial need. Besides, over a decade, public universities were misguided by a focus on teaching fee revenue and geographical growth by opening campuses countrywide. For most of them fee income accounted for over 90 per cent of their revenue which is unsustainable. Quantity expansion which seems to have occurred at the expense of quality is aimed to be cured by merger strategy, which will result into fewer universities which could be funded adequately and appropriately regulated by Commission for University Education (CUE)



Is merger the only option?

The reluctance of vice chancellors in approving varsities merger plans is actually an indicator of resistance to change perhaps with good reasons and their concerns should not be swept under the carpet. The fact that the strategy has worked in Europe and even closer to home, its success in South African, Rwanda and Ghana does not automatically mean its dividends will be realized in Kenya. What prompted the merger plans in such countries may not be similar reasons in the Kenyan context. For example, in South African it was necessitated by the need to cure the sins of apartheid. The ideal number of the universities required and for what should be considered in executing these inevitable restructure reforms of the public universities. In the finance literature, very little if any empirical evidence showing that upon a merger move the new entity's performance improves. Finance managers have also had inconsistencies in arguing for and against merger strategy in explaining organizational performance. A case in the hand is the takeover of Equatorial Commercial Bank (ECB) by Mwalimu Sacco society, this strategic move has put the giant teachers Sacco society in serious financial constraints.

The question of value gaps arise. Value gaps in the corporate concept arises from the fact that market values of

firms acquired typically fall short of the value that potential or actual bidders would place on them. The phenomenon may befall the merged public universities because of a number of reasons; poor financial management associated with inadequate financing model and imprudent expenditure as witnessed across the entire public organizations if the Auditor General's reports are anything to go by. Second, over enthusiastic value attached to merger as the silver bullet to the public universities problems. What of the nepotism problem, political interference, non-observance of niche of each universities and concentration of growth in the specialization areas to minimize unnecessary competition, the proposed tenure track system of employment of academic staff and the unsustainable blotted wage bill of the non-teaching staff among others? Third, poor university parenting because some segments of the university from the target institutions may not bring the optimal possible contribution to the new entity as well as the risk of material negative working capital of some of these public universities may easily lead to poor corporate parenting value gap. In fact, some of the target universities with significant negative working capital may put the new university formed within two to three years as a target/ or candidate of merger.

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Why not use individual university based structural adjustment programmes?

The unique situation facing these universities ought to have been dealt with and domesticated at the level of each public university before a merger could have been initiated. The structural adjustment programmes model could have been sought by exploring the following grey areas;

conditioning the public universities to identify their niche in teaching, research and innovation, second, staff rationalization more especially the non-teaching staff which would amount to even staff retrenchment, third, merging of faculties, schools, departments and directorates to enhance operational efficiency on the basis of number of programmes as matched with the student numbers, fourth, the

government to reexamine its funding of the public universities particularly with the aim of increasing exchequer funding, fifth, doing away with programmes which do not attract students and match the market requirements with the programmes mounted, sixth, enhance management audits to check on management decisions taken and punish according to the laws management of the public universities whose decisions lead to gross inefficiencies, misuse and loss of the university resources and finally, closure of university campuses which do not make economic sense and compromise quality of service delivery.

**This Article first appeared in the Star Newspaper*

We encourage more staff and students to send their opinion pieces on matters at the University and even at the national level to

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Your Opinion Matters



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