



MMUST NEWS

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Post

TEAM PSL SWEEP TO VICTORY IN UASU-MMUST CHAPTER UNPRECEDENTED ELECTIONS





Editor's Pen

Dear MMUST Community,

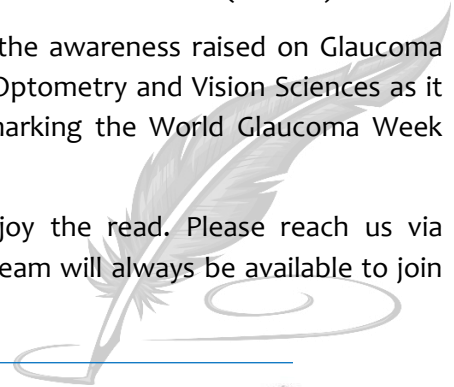
In this Issue, we bring you a detailed coverage of the recent highly contested UASU MMUST Chapter elections between 'Team Achievers', and 'Progressive and Servant Leadership' (Team PSL).

We also highlight efforts to rid the University off the issue of delayed exam results by the Office of the Ag. Registrar (Academic Affairs).

We are also pleased to inform you about the commissioning of the Computational Physics Laboratory by the Computational and Theoretical Physics group (CTheP), housed in the Schools of Natural Sciences (SONAS).

Finally, find out about the awareness raised on Glaucoma by the Department of Optometry and Vision Sciences as it led the University in marking the World Glaucoma Week (WGW).

We hope that you enjoy the read. Please reach us via pr@mmust.ac.ke, our team will always be available to join you.



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TEAM PSL SWEEP TO VICTORY IN UASU-MMUST CHAPTER UNPRECEDENTED ELECTIONS



A section of Team PSL sing 'Solidarity Forever' after being declared winners of UASU-MMUST Chapter elections.

By Awuor Sandra Dorcas [sdorcas@mmust.ac.ke]

The Universities Academic Staff Union (UASU) at Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology voted in new leaders in an atypical election process that saw the unseating of a majority of the old office holders. The high-spirited UASU-MMUST Chapter members peacefully cast their votes on Tuesday, 23rd March, 2021 at the Graduation Square, Main Campus in accordance with the Registrar of Trade Union's directive, after a long electioneering period.

The elections were highly contested by the 'Team Achievers' and the 'Progressive and Servant Leadership' (Team PSL) resulting in the latter walking away with all the sought-after top seats.

The Returning Officer, Mr. Swaleh Abdalla, officially announced the election results for the vied seats and declared the unopposed contestants, winners of the respective seats. Mr. Swaleh also assured the contestants that all votes were accounted for and were a representation of the voters' decision.

"Be sure that what is in the ballot boxes is what the voters decided," he said.

Dr. Benard Omogo was declared the new Secretary General of the UASU-MMUST Chapter after 144 votes lead against his challenger, Mr. Robinson Oduma, who garnered 91 votes.

Mr. Robinson Oduma previously served as Chairman in the Union's old office. However, Dr. Jairus Odawa took over as the newly elected Chairman of the Union after he garnered 153 votes against Ms. Agatha Mbakaya's 83 votes.

Dr. Jairus Odawa, the incoming Union Chairman, extended an olive branch to the outgoing office bearers urging a move from a leadership of conflict. Dr. Odawa assured members that he will deliver what he outlined in his manifesto such as ensuring that the top University Management positions are adequately filled and a new CBA signed as soon as possible.

The newly elected Secretary General, Dr. Benard Omogo, who previously served the Union as a Trustee, gave affirmation that the newly elected leaders are up to the task of delivering to the Union Members, through Unity.

“A lot is expected of us. We are ready to face the challenges and work with other MMUST Unions such as KUSU and KUDHEIHA to drive MMUST forward,” said Dr. Omogo.

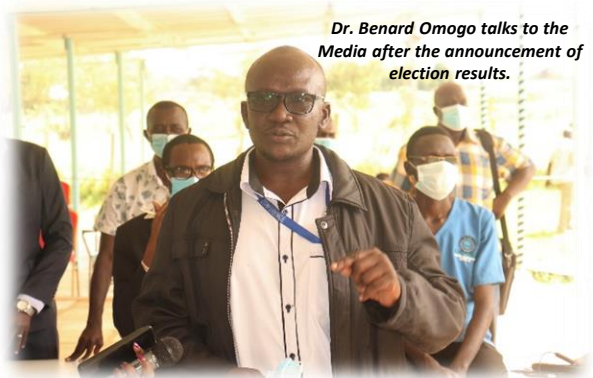
He said that he will endeavor to ensure that members are updated periodically on the state of the Union and its activities.

Mr. Robinson Oduma, the Union's previous Chairperson, congratulated the new team as they begin their work. He said that it was time for the new leaders to deliver and work for the good of its members. He said that his team delivered their mandate during their tenure.

A majority of the Union's members voted in Ms. Consolata Lusweti as their Vice Chairperson with 148 votes against Dr. Atichi Alati's 86 votes. The position of Assistant Secretary General recorded the highest votes during the election in favor of Dr. Humphrey Agevi, who got 182 votes against Mr. Henry Lianda's 56 votes. Dr. Angeline Savala was declared the Treasurer, having garnered 155 votes against Dr. Rose Opiyo's 85 votes.

Speaking to Mr. Phillip Amuyunzu, the Union's incoming Organizing Secretary, he said that the new leadership is particularly concerned with the members' welfare. “We will bring members aboard through mobilization,” he said.

Mr. Amuyunzu said that the Union should come up with a Benevolence Fund which will greatly benefit its members.



Dr. Benard Omogo talks to the Media after the announcement of election results.

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UASU-MMUST CHAPTER ELECTIONS

Prof. Samuel Kubasu Kwashe went unopposed for the position of Trustee and was the only old office bearer elected into the new Union leadership. Prof. Kubasu said that he will offer the new team guidance, having served as UASU-MMUST Chapter’s Secretary General since 2009.

The Delegate and Committee Member positions were also unopposed.

The following is the full list of the newly elected leaders;

TITLE	NAME
Chairman	Dr. Jairus Odawa
Secretary General	Dr. Benard Omogo
Assistant Secretary General	Dr. Humphrey Agevi
Vice Chairperson	Ms. Consolata Lusweti
Organizing Secretary	Mr. Philip Amuyunzu Mangare
Treasurer	Dr. Angeline Savala
Assistant Treasurer	Dr. Reuben Ruto
Trustee	Prof. Samuel Kubasu
Trustee	Mr. Shadrack Opunde
Trustee	Mr. Moses Adam Osiro
Committee Member	Dr. Evans Raballa
Committee Member	Dr. Joyce Kasili
Delegate	Dr. Christine Akinyi
Delegate	Dr. Isabella Kiprono



The newly elected UASU-MMUST Chapter leaders pose for a group photo.



VARSITY SETS OUT TO PUT AN END TO DELAYED RELEASE OF EXAM RESULTS

By Wangari Wambugu [mwangari@mmust.ac.ke]

In an attempt to resolve the issue of delayed exam results in MMUST, the Acting Registrar (Academic Affairs), Prof. Thomas Sakwa, held consultative meetings with Schools to find out the challenges faced by staff while interacting with the ERP system. It also sought to provide solutions where possible. Prof. Sakwa was accompanied by a team comprising of his Deputy, Mr. Zablon Obengo, the in charge of the Admissions Office, Ms. Pamela Inzai, the in charge of Nominal Rolls, Transcripts and Graduations (NTG), Rev. Jairus Owunza and Ms. Rita Shitemi.

“We want to identify the gaps regarding the use of ERP so that we can roll out an elaborate training especially to lecturers. This report will also help us advise our vendor-ABNO Softwares- on customizing our system to suit our needs,” said Prof. Sakwa.

Earlier on, MMUST had appointed a group of individuals to benchmark in other institutions such as Kenyatta University, Mount Kenya University, Daystar University as well as Kisii University. It consisted of Mr. Zablon Obengo, the group leader, Ms. Janet Kundu and Mr. Geoffrey Ouma of ICT.

“When we went for benchmarking, we found out that these universities’ ERP systems were working perfectly despite the fact that they had experienced difficulties at first. Hence, paper work was limited because most of their activities were centralized,” stated Mr. Obengo.

“The ERP is a wonderful programme which if we knew how to operate well, our work would be made a lot easier. We want to make sure that all our results are uploaded to the system,” said Rev. Owunza, adding that some of the students that had already graduated were yet to receive their transcripts. Subsequently, he mentioned that the University has procured a special paper that will be used to print transcripts. Among other features, this paper will have a watermark to ensure security.

The issue of course registration was greatly emphasized. As stated by Rev. Owunza, Nominal Rolls will now be produced according to the courses registered.

The challenges discussed during the meeting include:

- Following up marks of students that have ‘disappeared’.
- Students being admitted at different times.
- Relying on one person to do everything.
- Getting marks from part-time lecturers.
- Uploading marks of students from Campuses.
- Poor communication among academic staff.
- Wrong/old course codes.
- The curriculum setup.
- Consolidating mark sheets.
- Poor internet connectivity.
- Lack of infrastructure. Some staff share computers hence the issues of (in) security.
- Configuration of the ERP system.
- Lack of training.



School of Arts and Social Sciences' consultative meeting with Ag. Registrar (Academic Affairs), Prof. Thomas Sakwa. Pictured is the Ag. Dean SASS (Right) together with some of the School's C.O.D.s.

It was noted that some academic staff have not interacted with the ERP system while new Chairpersons of Department are not aware of the rights they have as pertains to it. They were encouraged to interact with the system before the vendors come for training.

COMPUTATIONAL AND THEORETICAL PHYSICS GROUP (CTheP) WINS MAJOR GRANT



CTheP participants pose for a group photo in the company of Ag. DVC ASA, Prof. Peter Odera, Ag. Registrar AA, Prof. Thomas Sakwa, and Director Research and Postgraduate Support, Prof. Peter Bukhala, at SPD.

By Diana Nyatichi [dianyatichi@gmail.com]

Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology's Computational and Theoretical Physics group (CTheP) commissioned the Computational Physics laboratory on 11th March 2021. The group that is housed in the School of Natural Sciences (SONAS), Department of Physics, is at the forefront in promoting computational Physics as a bridge between Experimental and Theoretical Physics. The Research group led by Dr. George Manyali, the Dean, Faculty of Science at the Kaimosi Friends University College (KAFUCO), won the KENET Computational Modelling and Material Science (CMMS) Mini Grants 2018/2019 amounting to Kshs 1.5 Million for the project dubbed 'Study of Photovoltaic Absorbers and Thermoelectric Materials Using Density Functional Theory.'

Prof. Peter Odera, the Acting Deputy Vice Chancellor in charge of Academic and Students Affairs, motivated the students to strive into becoming problem solvers in the country.

“It is upon us to improve our position and that of the University. We should, therefore, get out of our shells and do something that is of importance. Research is a matter of doing something again. Hence, we should use the equipment at hand and make the most out of it.”

He also thanked the members for the roles they each played in the realization of the grants success.

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Prof. Peter Odera, Ag. DVC (Academic and Students Affairs), giving his remarks.

Prof. Peter Bukhala, the Director of Research and Postgraduate Support, congratulated the team on winning the grant.

“This should not stop at this point. I encourage you to do more research and make this a project you will be known for,” he advised.

The grant enabled the group to set up a Computational Physics laboratory with six high performance computers. The laboratory is also linked to the Center of

High- Performance Computing (CHPC) in South Africa that enables computation of heavy tasks.

The Principal Investigator, KENET Project Dr. George Manyali, on a virtual presentation, applauded the Chairperson of the Physics Department, Dr. Henry Barasa, for the good work done.

“This is a serious achievement for the Department and is a confirmation that we have the potential to go higher,” he said.

He further indicated that the grant had led to MMUST being recognized by various institutions thereby giving the group reason to work harder.

“We want to see more grants awarded to us. It is not easy but this is an able team. We should now do research at an international level,” he added.

The CTheP group prides itself of successfully graduating eight (8) Masters students and four PhD students. With plans to include undergraduate students in the group, and also have multi-disciplinary research with sister Departments in the School and other institutions, the promising group is sure set for greater heights.



SCHOOL OF EDUCATION HOLDS SCHOOL PRACTICE ADVISING WORKSHOP

By Ashiono Harriet

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The Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology School of Education, in coordination with the Curriculum and Instructional Technology Department (CIT), held a School Practice Advising Workshop on Tuesday, 16th March 2021 at the University's MEA 001 Hall. The purpose of the Workshop was to share experiences and knowledge on best practices in the assessment of students during school practice attachment. The Theme of the Workshop was 'Teacher Education for Quality Teaching and Learning'.



Workshop participants pose for a group photo.

The Workshop was officially opened by the Acting Deputy Vice Chancellor (Administration & Finance), Prof. Charles Mutai who, in his remarks, expressed gratitude to the School of Education for organizing the Workshop aimed at equipping the lecturers with what is expected of them as they assess teachers they have trained.

“I believe that our students- the teachers- have not only acquired requisite skills but also knowledge, values and attitudes that will make them function effectively as teachers in the society,” said Prof. Mutai.

Other officials present were the Acting Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic and Students Affairs) Prof. Peter Odera, the Acting Registrar (Academic Affairs) Prof. Thomas Sakwa, the Dean, School of Education, Prof. Moses Poipoi and the School Practice Coordinator Mrs. Karren Ongeti.

“Teaching has progressively been going through change. Therefore, the way we prepare teachers must also change and undergo a paradigm shift” said Prof. J. O. Shiundu, a renowned educationist and the Director, Institute of Indigenous Knowledge and Cultural Studies.

He outlined the elements in teaching which have shifted including adoption of foundational courses, practicles, specializations, practice internships and engaging in more activities beyond the classroom. He said that educating student teachers must be more in practical sessions than theory in order to broaden their minds, impact new knowledge, skills, values and prepare them not just for class but also to be teachers beyond class.

“You don't have to train a teacher. You educate a teacher,” added Prof. Shiundu.

WORLD GLAUCOMA WEEK



MMUST JOINS THE GLOBE IN MARKING WORLD GLAUCOMA WEEK

By Wangari Wambugu [mwangari@mmust.ac.ke]

“If you are 40 years and over, have short-sightedness, have a family member with Glaucoma and are of a black race, you are at a higher risk of contracting Glaucoma. Further, if you have perfect eye-sight and are exposed to these risk factors, you need regular eye-checks,” said Dr. Emmanuel E. Okenwa-Vincent of the Department of Optometry and Vision Sciences, during a Public Lecture he gave on Friday, 12th March, 2021 at the MMUST Graduation Square to mark World Glaucoma Week (WGW).

Glaucoma is a condition resulting from damage to the nerve connecting the eye to the brain, usually due to high eye pressure. It is considered by public eye health experts as the leading cause of irreversible blindness in the world and the third cause of preventable and/or treatable blindness.

“Glaucoma can affect anyone. It is asymptomatic and that is why it is often not detected. We never know much because we don’t check our eyes regularly. As eye-care practitioners, it is our obligation to raise awareness to the community and that is why the World Glaucoma Association (WGA) gives us such an opportunity,” said Dr. Okenwa.

Dr. Okenwa mentioned two (2) types of Glaucoma, that is, Chronic Glaucoma and Acute Glaucoma. According to him, Chronic Glaucoma, also known as Open-angle Glaucoma, is the most common type which develops slowly and is a lifelong painless condition. In the early stages, it has no obvious symptoms.

For Acute Glaucoma, also known as Closed-angle Glaucoma, the pressure in the eye rises rapidly. Its symptoms are; pain, redness of the eye, fast deterioration of sight, and some people may experience nausea and vomiting. In the early stage, one may notice misty colour rings around white lights (haloes).

Both types of Glaucoma can be treated by controlling the eye-pressure using drugs and in some cases, laser treatment and surgery.

Before the Public Lecture, Optometry students walked around the University compound sensitizing staff and students about the condition as they recited the words, ‘Our Sight Our Responsibility.’



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