



# MMUST NEWS

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## Post

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## FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS REPORT ON CAMPUS FOR REGISTRATION AND ORIENTATION



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## Editor's Pen

Dear **MMUST Community,**

On this issue, we cover the Vice Chancellors Virtual Welcoming address to staff and students, who were away for a long period of time due to COVID-19. This is part of the phased resumption of face-to-face learning activities in the University.

Also highlighted, is the on-campus admission of the 2020/2021 cohort of First -Year students into the University, in strict adherence to the Ministry of Health Guidelines on management of COVID-19.

Finally, we take you through deliberations during the Workshop for development and negotiation of cost centre performance contracts FY 2020/2021 held at Bishop Stam.

We hope you enjoy this read. Feel free to send us your stories and feedback.

Let us walk this exciting journey together!



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*Workshop participants pose for a group photo at Bishop Nicholas Stam.*

## **MMUST NOTES IMPROVEMENT IN PERFORMANCE CONTRACTING AT STAFF PC DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP**

**By Awuor Sandra Dorcas** [[sdorcas@mmust.ac.ke](mailto:sdorcas@mmust.ac.ke)]

The Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (PME) Unit at Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology (MMUST) conducted training on development and negotiation of Cost Centre Performance Contracts for 2020/2021 on Monday 19th October at Bishop Nicholas Stam, Kakamega.

Prof. Solomon Shibairo, the MMUST Ag. Vice Chancellor spoke on implementation of Performance Contract in the University. In his opening remarks, Prof. Shibairo emphasized on development of a Master Plan for MMUST for a period of up to 50 years aligned to the University's Strategic Plan, Big 4 Agenda and the Vision 2030. He encouraged staff members to put in targets for their respective work stations and work towards achieving them.

Prof. Shibairo also spoke extensively on research, laying emphasis on the need for a research policy that advises researchers on reputable journals to publish in and reward them for their accomplishments in research. He also added that it was time for female scholars to be given more support in order to increase the number of female professors in the University.

Speaking on milestones by the University, Prof. Shibairo commended the improvement in webometrics. In addition, he said that the construction of a perimeter wall and installation of a lift at the University's Administration Block is underway. He said that post -COVID-19 recovery plan initiatives such as setting up more water points, are also ongoing.

“MMUST is a great University. We have made strides in webometrics; however, we can do even better by ensuring that we are academically connected to the right people.

This can be done through back links with top institutions in the world like Ball State University, which already has a running MOU with MMUST,” he explained.

He challenged academic sections of the University to strive towards getting at least one back link through their interactions with other reputable institutions.

In his final remarks, Prof. Shibairo noted other areas targeted in the Performance Contract such as increasing the number of students pursuing STEM courses, resolution of serious public complaints, intensifying fight against alcohol and substance abuse among others. He advised Departments to nominate Performance Contracting champions to help with filing evidence.



*Prof. Solomon Shibairo giving his remarks.*

Prof. J.S.K Achoka, Ag. DVC in charge of Planning, Research and Innovation, said that MMUST is on a commendable path because Performance Contracting is the corner stone of an organization in the 21st Century and a key element for achievement of goals.

“Our work ethics shall grow through Performance Contracts. You cannot manage what you cannot measure and

what gets measured, gets done, “she said.

She urged members of staff to work together to ensure that MMUST becomes a world class student-centered University.

Also speaking during the Workshop was MMUST Ag. DVC in charge of Finance and Administration, Prof. Charles Mutai, who said that there has been a lot of debate on the effectiveness of Performance Contracting. He acknowledged that Performance Contracting has its shortcomings such as lack of adequate skills and that is why the training workshop was very important. Nonetheless, Prof. Mutai commended staff for milestone in Performance Contracting, citing continuous improvement since 2017/2018 Financial Year to date.

“We can go higher than the current score. We should have the same score card for the individual employees from Departments and Cost Centres,” said Prof. Mutai.

Prof. Peter Odera, Ag. DVC in charge of Academics and Students Affairs, also laid emphasis on the need for evaluation and monitoring of targets set by Cost Centres. He said that the Performance Contract is a reform tool initiated by the Government to monitor performance of government employees, therefore, it was upon staff to supervise their performance as required.

The Director, Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (PME), Mr. Henry N. Wati, said that the Workshop provided an opportunity for interacting with supervisors in order to ensure that the Performance Contracts for the period 1st July 2020 to 30th June 2021 were in order. While addressing contentious issues among staff concerning development of Performance Contracts, Mr. Wati said that 50% of Cost Centres do not absorb their budget. He added that targets should have finances allocated to them as well as a budget.

On the other hand, he lauded the improvement in corruption control and service delivery at the University.

“Appropriation in Aid is the course of the Cost Centre to generate finances for the University. Our target was 1.2 billion but we raised 1.3 billion worth in Appropriation in Aid by the end of June 2020. We need to review consultancy in Departments and Schools and come up with a policy to generate money. We must drive our University to the level of sustainability,” he said.



*The Director, Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (PME), Mr. Henry N. Wati, presenting at the workshop.*

The Director in charge of Research and Postgraduate Support, Prof. Peter Bukhala, reiterated Mr. Wati’s remarks adding that staff should be encouraged to lobby for money through consultancy. He also said that his Directorate will be able to fund twenty-five (25) proposals and that two journals should be revived so that students can publish therein.

Prof. Bukhala also added that MMUST can constitute an editorial board of already existing journals and make it an internationally recognized one. In his closing remarks, he said that the workshop was successful because staff members acquired skills and knowledge in Performance Contracting. He thanked the Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (PME) Unit for organizing the Workshop and staff members for embracing Performance Contracting.

The Workshop was held in preparation for the forthcoming signing of cascaded Performance Contracts for the year 2020/2021.



### 2020/2021 FIRST YEAR STUDENTS REPORT ON CAMPUS FOR FACE TO FACE REGISTRATION AND ORIENTATION

By Wangari Wambugu [[mwangari@mmust.ac.ke](mailto:mwangari@mmust.ac.ke)]

Following the directive from the Ministry of Education on re-opening of schools and Universities, Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology (MMUST), on Wednesday, 21st October, 2020, allowed 2020/2021 First-year students to report on Campus for registration and orientation. Strict COVID-19 transmission and protective measures were highly observed at the gates and around the compound, whereby guests were required to wear masks and maintain social distance. The MMUST COVID-19 Response Team, which was working hand in hand with the Security Department, ensured that every individual's temperature was taken by use of a thermal gun and at the same time sanitizing their hands. With the team was a screening checklist which was supposed to be filled in the

event that there was a suspected case. If any, the person in question would be taken to an isolation unit, a waiting bay for the clinical response. Later, assessments would be conducted before proceeding further.

On Thursday, 22nd October, 2020, Acting Vice Chancellor, Prof. Solomon Shibairo, together with Acting Deputy Vice Chancellors, addressed the fresh students at the Graduation Square. Prof. Shibairo recognized the fact that the students had joined MMUST at a very challenging time. He said that the University had attempted to register First years online but had only achieved 55% success.

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“Yesterday, we registered about three thousand five hundred (3500) students which adds up to approximately five thousand (5000) students including those that had registered online.” In addition, he pointed out the various measures that MMUST has put in place for COVID-19 prevention.

The Acting Vice Chancellor further said that students will engage in a blended mode of learning and urged them to make efforts towards purchasing laptops, tablets, computers, smartphones or any other electronic gadgets to aid in e-learning.

“HELB is working on a programme that will help University students buy laptops. We hope that it will soon come to fruition,” he stated.

Moreover, he advised students to be careful with their interpersonal relationships, to plan their lives and manage their finances.

The acting Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic and Student Affairs), Prof. Peter Odera, appreciated the First year students and reminded them that they are the main stakeholders of MMUST.

“There are three focal areas in institutions of higher learning. Firstly, we have the students, without whom, teaching and learning cannot go on. Secondly, the learning environment

*First-year students during the registration process.*

including lecturers and infrastructure that would be useless without students and thirdly, the learning process which depends on how students are going to be involved in academic activities,” he said.

Further, he talked about the academic structure of MMUST, right from the Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic Affairs), the Office of the Registrar (Academic Affairs), Deans, Heads of Departments, lecturers to class representatives. He also mentioned about the Office of the Dean of Students which, he said, is a very central Office in handling students’ welfare at the University.

“Inasmuch as you are acquiring knowledge in this place, make sure that you develop moral values, positive attitudes and become an individual that is a responsible citizen. Look after yourself, refrain from anti-social behavior patterns, work hard and achieve high grades,” said Prof. Odera, adding that MMUST nurtures talents and offers scholarships for those who excel in extracurricular activities.

Subsequently, he said that the first-year students were going to stay on Campus for a short period then go back home with the exception of those in technical programmes.



Prof. Judith Achoka, the acting Deputy Vice Chancellor (Planning Research and Innovation), began her speech by quoting Nora Roberts, 'If you don't go after what you want, you'll never have it. If you don't ask, the answer is always no. If you don't step forward, you're always in the same place.'

Prof. Achoka stated that the First year students have gone after what they want and that is why they are in MMUST. She urged them to keep stepping forward until they graduate. She also mentioned about the significance of research in the life of a University student where she said that the experience and knowledge acquired through research makes a student to stand out.

The acting Deputy Vice (Administration and Finance), Prof. Charles Mutai, congratulated the students and appreciated everyone who had played a role in their academic excellence. He pointed out that joining the University comes with a lot of freedom which may pose a danger if not controlled. He encouraged them to choose the right thing and avoid influence from friends. He also asked them to be all rounded, that is, engage in extracurricular activities as well as change the theoretical knowledge into practical knowledge.

**“We want to see you emerge as job creators and global leaders,” he said.**



***The academic procession headed to the graduation square for the Ag. Vice Chancellor's and Ag. Deputy Vice Chancellors' address to first years.***

# AG. VICE CHANCELLOR VIRTUALLY WELCOMES BACK STAFF AND STUDENTS AFTER COVID-19 BREAK

By Wangari Wambugu [[mwangari@mmust.ac.ke](mailto:mwangari@mmust.ac.ke)]

On Friday, 16th October, 2020, the acting Vice Chancellor, Prof. Solomon Shibairo, gave a virtual welcoming back address to staff and students who were away for a long period due to COVID-19.

“I am delighted to welcome back all our staff and students to the University after almost seven months of closure occasioned by the Coronavirus” he stated.

Since March 2020 when the University closed, there have been no activities, especially academic activities, taking place at the University.

“Coronavirus affected all University operations especially the most important which is academics. However, the University Senate met and decided that we needed to go on with studies through distance learning. The next thing that we did was to train both staff and students on how to go about e-learning,” he said, adding that the University has been able to run online classes as well as grade and mark exams especially for PhD and Masters students.

The Government gave permission for the resumption of face to face studies but only in phases. According to Prof. Shibairo, the University has been advised to allow students who are doing their final examinations with the objective of them graduating within the academic year.

“We are yet to firm up the graduation date but it is likely to be on the 18th of December this year,” he stated. Further, he said that first years are expected to report on Campus for registration and orientation but will not stay for the whole semester.

“They are only coming here to identify with the University and familiarize themselves with ODeL then go back home to do online learning.”

The acting Vice Chancellor reminded staff and students that the pandemic was not over yet and, as such, it was important for them to continue protecting themselves. “Avoid crowded places such as bars, restaurants and supermarkets, and only go there when it is necessary. Wear masks, sanitize, wash your hands frequently and maintain the required social distance,” he said. Additionally, he advised students not to exchange face masks and that soon MMUST will be giving out reusable masks.



He mentioned that the University Management was doing everything possible to ensure the safety of staff and students. “We have a COVID-19 Response team, our Chemistry Department is overseeing the production of sanitizers, we have thermos guns at the entry points and we have set an isolation unit that is fully equipped.”

He thanked staff and other stakeholders, particularly those who were at the University when the country was still on emergency mode for keeping the University going on. He pointed out that professors and lecturers did a good job because they kept on engaging students. He advised older staff to take special caution and urged them to work remotely. “You can still reach your students online. Nobody is going to take away your job. It is protected.”

The acting VC also addressed other vulnerable groups especially people with diabetes, blood pressure, pneumonia and any other sicknesses to try and get University services from remote places. Additionally, he urged staff and students to access health facilities in case they developed any flu-like symptoms.

# FIRST YEAR STUDENTS ADVISED ON PERSONAL FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

By **Awuor Sandra Dorcas** [[sdorcas@mmust.ac.ke](mailto:sdorcas@mmust.ac.ke)]

Newly admitted First year students at Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology (MMUST) were addressed on personal financial management and academic processes on Friday 23rd October 2020 at the Graduation Square.

The Senior Assistant Registrar in charge of academic Programmes at MMUST, Dr. Beatrice Barasa, tackled issues concerning examination irregularities and procedures to be followed by students who want to change their programmes.

“You must have met the entry requirements for the programme you want and there must be a vacancy. At the moment, programmes such as Clinical medicine, Medical Laboratory Sciences, Nursing and Medicine are fully packed,” she said.

Dr. Barasa advised the students to focus on their studies and avoid exam irregularities which could cause them their studies.

Speaking on matters finances, Dr. Ben Oseno, a lecturer in the School of Business and Economics (SOBE), encouraged the students to actively monitor their personal finances. He said that most of the problems encountered by students while in Campus are closely associated with financial matters.

“Make good use of your money to avoid being a burden to other students. If you have extra money, you can take other professional courses, save or pursue a business venture,” he advised.

Dr. Oseno encouraged the students to take advantage of programs set aside by the Dean of Students Office to cater for needy students through bursaries, talent scholarships and MMUST work- study programme.

Thereafter, the students proceeded to their respective Schools for face- to - face address by their Deans. This was part of the orientation and registration process that began on Wednesday, 22nd October 2020.



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