On Friday, April 7, 2017 the Division of University Advancement officially launched the marketing plan at an event themed, “B. Different. Inspire.” in the auditorium. The plan envisages greater internal collaboration amongst the USIU-Africa community at all touch points, and was designed to mobilize university employees to support student recruitment goals.

Chief Manager – Marketing & Communications Ms. Jane Muriithi-Thomas provided the background and objectives to the university’s marketing efforts, before presenting an highlights of the department’s strategies and tactics in recruiting students using broadcast, print, online media, including social media.

She also laid out the various avenues of engagement that the university community can participate in.

Director of University Advancement Mr. James Ogolla, reported how individual employees are already making concrete fruitful efforts to recruit students.

“Charity begins at home and you all have a significant part to play in this process,” said Mr. Ogolla.

He requested assembled staff and faculty to use all tools at their disposal take the USIU-Africa story to potential parents out there.

In this respect, he introduced the Z-Card – a foldable pocket book that explains everything about USIU-Africa, from its programs, to its costs, achievements, alumni and especially what makes USIU-Africa great.

He also requested his audience to fill out a pledge card, committing to participate in university initiatives geared towards increasing student enrollment. This, he said would assist the university engage employees based on their preferences.

Speaking on behalf on the Vice Chancellor Professor Paul Zeleza, Ambassador Professor Ruthie Rono (DVC – Academic & Student Affairs) urged faculty and staff to take pride in USIU-Africa and hence share the university’s unique selling points with friends, family and others in their circles of influence.

“USIU-Africa can only flourish if we are our own ambassadors. By sharing our values, vision and programs we offer and speak about the excellent academic pedigree we possess, we will attract potential students, parents and various stakeholders,” she concluded.

Faculty and staff empowered to participate in recruitment efforts

By Jackie Chirchir and Dan Muchai
International Workshop on EU-Africa-China Relations set for this Wednesday

By Dan Muchai

The Freida Brown Student Center will host the Jean Monnet Network’s First International Workshop on ‘The European Union, Africa and China in the Global Age – Sustainable Development through Tripartite Cooperation and Regional Integration: The Case of the East African Community (EU-EAC)’, on Wednesday, April 12 from 9am. Vice Chancellor Prof. Paul Zeleza will open the open consultative workshop designed to give academics and doctoral students an opportunity to develop concept notes for future conferences and publications.

The Jean Monnet Network has been funded for three years by the European Commission to study with a comparative perspective the regional economic integration in the East African Community (EAC), the relations between the European Union and Africa, with particular emphasis on the East African Community, as well as EU-Africa-China relations with emphasis on developmental economics and mutual trade and development partnerships. This workshop is thus part of a larger research and training project, whose goal is to bring together academic partners and institutions from five East Africa Community countries, the UK, Greece, and China, to improve EU-Africa cooperation and contributing to building sustainable societies in coordination with China.

The project is coordinated in the East African Community by Moses Onyango, who is the Director of the Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs (IPPIA) in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences.

Prof. Macharia Munene (Professor of History and International Relations) will speak on ‘The East African Community (EAC): Historical Perspective, Impact and Challenges’ during the first session, while Prof. Francis Wambalaba (Professor of Economics) will speak during the third session on ‘The African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP) and the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA)’.

The workshop will be preceded by an internal consultative workshop at the same venue, to plan for training, workshops, conferences and publications in different countries (including all the EAC countries), and events in Addis Ababa, Brussels and China in the next three years.
The Young Alumni Network (YAN), a 10-month old interest group for USIU-Africa Alumni Association members aged 30 years and below held their first event this Friday, April 7 in the auditorium. The event dubbed ‘Beyond Campus: Expectations Meet Reality’ was organized to address the expectations that graduates have when they are leaving campus versus the reality in the job industry. Relating their own experiences, panelists provided insight into the career journeys awaiting those about to or have recently joined alumni ranks.

On Wednesday April 5, representatives from the Republic of the Sudan’s diplomatic mission to Kenya were hosted by the School of Humanities and Social Sciences for a Sudan Cultural Festival at the Chandaria School of Business Lecture Theater II.

Led by the Sudanese Ambassador to Kenya H.E. Elsadig Abdalla Elias, the delegation danced and spoke about various aspects of Sudanese culture, dwelling its historical role in African development, and thus the necessity of viewing Sudan as a part of Africa. H.E. Ambassador Elias also announced an increase in the number of scholarships offered to Kenyan citizens, to study in Sudanese universities, pointing out the importance laid on education for women in his country, as evidenced by the dedication of an entire university to education for women.

The event was organized by the Program Director and Associate Professor of International Relations Dr. Fatuma Ali, and graced by the presence of School of Humanities and Social Sciences Dean Dr. Tom Onditi.

Ms. Catherine Gicheru, Director of Code for Kenya and Ms. Florence Sipalla, member of the Code for Kenya team, gave a talk on data journalism and the projects run by Code for Kenya, to the students of New Media Production on Thursday, 23 March.

The journalists urged students to include data in their stories in order to provide accurate information to their fellow citizens. Moreover, they presented projects developed by Code for Kenya, and encouraged the students to participate in some of them.

The class is part of the undergraduate Journalism program, and is taught by Assistant Professor of Journalism and Mass Communication Dr. Maria Canudo.

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Interviews represent a hallmark encompassing the very essence of management. Supervisors must get the right talent in the door and weed out incompetent or incompatible workers upfront in order to avoid months and years of organizational pain and conflict in the future. When asking employers which attribute they most desire in an employee, a myriad of traits gush out like punctual, fun, smart, timely, patient, outgoing, kind, nurturing, aggressive, motivated, and on and on and on. The daunting list represents a cacophony of qualities that blur a more specific picture of a perfect candidate.

In addition to skills needed in a profession, human resources experts recommend hiring managers to look at outward expressions of one’s personality. Many professionals know the famous Myers Briggs personality test developed by the mother-daughter psychologists in 1943. It avoids negative versus positive constructs and focuses instead on personal preferences. The Myers Briggs approach proves useful in team functioning. But a different type of personality approach yields better hiring decisions. Do not force applicants to take personality tests. Such forced tests prove unethical and also could be gamed by the recruits. Instead notice attributes of the big five personality traits.

Dr. Gregg Henriques delineates the broad big five personality dimensions. First, extraversion encompasses the degree of sociability, willingness to approach others, and overall positivity.Introverts represent the opposite with quiet, reflective, and listening behaviour. Second, agreeableness includes one’s propensity toward interpersonal warmth, sympathy, understanding, and getting along with others. Those without agreeableness demonstrate paranoid hostility.

Third, openness covers the degree to which one desires new feelings, new locations, learning new things, and interacting with novel objects. The opposite of an open person is a closed-minded individual. Fourth, neuroticism denotes emotionally reactive, avoidance, negative people. Calm and relaxed individuals represent stark opposites to neurotic staff. Fifth, conscientiousness refers to achievement motivation, organization, planning, and responsibility. Disorganized workers score low on conscientiousness.

Which of all personality traits most leads to better employees? Notice the clear contrast between positive versus negative traits as opposed to the Myers Briggs concepts. Unfortunately, dozens of social scientists in eleven high-end studies over the past twenty years narrowed down the biggest single personality determinant towards employee success in a workplace. In early 2017, researchers Shani Pindek, Stacey Kessler, and Paul Spector highlighted all the data across the studies. While in a marriage agreeableness levels can lead to happier romances, workplaces on the other hand require workers with high levels of conscientiousness, which correlates the most to job performance.

How might hiring managers search for conscientious employees? During interviews, ask questions such as “Please describe how you go about completing regular tasks”, “Please explain your ideal work environment”, and “Do you like standard expectations”? Also, in reference letters or background checks, watch out for certain buzz words. A candidate who acts on impulses or behaves erratically should serve as a warning flag. Responses or references featuring “act depending on the day”, “sometimes “, “can surprise you with his/her high productivity” all point to low conscientiousness.

In contrast, a prospective employee who follows established rules, demands high quality from themselves, and keeps a neat work environment encompasses the desired conscientious trait. An interviewee who asks about which rules exist, seeks to know quality standards, or values predictability likely scores high in conscientious. Search for such workers in order to boost performance.

Curious about your own big five personality score? Take a free assessment test at: https://www.outofservice.com/bigfive/ .

*This article originally appeared in the Business Daily edition of Thursday, April 6, 2017

Mr. Bellows is Assistant Professor of Management, and Director of the New Economy Venture Accelerator (NEVA). He is also Chair of the Faculty Council.
Rugby team sinks Pirates to reach semifinal

By Dan Muchai

The USIU-Africa men’s rugby team made club history on Saturday, April 1, when they thrashed the South Coast Pirates 63-7 in a one-sided quarterfinal played on the USIU-Africa rugby pitch. Teamwork was on display as six players - Lewa Lionel, Donald Omondi, Kimeli Kinei, Junior Onyango, Eliud Mulakoli and Godfrey Otieno - each scored a try, while Naison Chabayanzara and Jasper Otieno added two tries each. Together with Charles Kuka’s five conversions and a penalty, the win was enough for the team to sail into the semi-finals this Saturday, April 8 against Resolution Kisii Rugby Club at the Gusii Stadium in Kisii town.

Should the team emerge victorious this Saturday, they will automatically qualify for the Kenya Rugby Union’s premier rugby competition – the Kenya Cup.

Above: Members of the USIU-Africa rugby team battle it out with the South Coast Pirates during their Kenya Rugby Union Championship League Quarter-final match on Saturday, April 1.
Photos: Dan Muchai

Media Mentions

Compiled by Diana Meso

APRIL 4: USIU-Africa was mentioned by The Daily Nation in an article titled “Cases of varsity killings rise as toll hits five in six months.”

APRIL 3: The Standard newspaper mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled “USIU overcome Co-op Bank as Zetech beef up squad.”

APRIL 3: The Standard newspaper mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled “Hockey: Sikh Union return with vengeance as they hit USIU-A 5-0.”

APRIL 2: The Daily Nation mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled “Brave Parklands stand their ground against Gladiators.”

APRIL 1: USIU-Africa was mentioned by The Daily Nation in an article titled “Multimedia University cruise in hockey league.”

MARCH 31: The Daily Nation mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled “Wounded Gladiators tackle Parklands in hockey league.”

MARCH 31: USIU-Africa was mentioned by The Daily Nation in an article titled “KPA come calling in Nairobi.”

MARCH 30: USIU-Africa was mentioned by The Daily Nation in an article titled “TAKE 5: Alice Gitau.”

Upcoming Events

APRIL 8
RUGBY: CHAMPIONSHIP SEMI-FINAL
USIU-Africa (Men) vs Resolution Kisii @ Gusii Stadium
HOCKEY: USIU-Africa (Ladies) vs Sliders @ City Park
Basketball: USIU-Africa (Men) vs Thunder @ Nyayo Stadium

APRIL 9
Basketball: USIU-Africa men vs Zetech University @ Nyayo Stadium

APRIL 11-12
First International Workshop - Jean Monnet Network @Freida Brown Student Center

APRIL 13:
Final Spring 2017 Semester Exams end