University prepares for Kenyan electoral contest

By Dan Muchai

The university will remain closed on Friday, October 20 to commemorate the Kenyan national holiday – Mashujaa Day. This was announced by the Vice Chancellor Prof. Paul Zeleza, in an email message to the entire university community, in which he also indicated that the university will close from Tuesday, October 24 to Sunday, October 29. This, he states, will afford an opportunity to Kenyan members of the university community, to participate in the repeat Kenyan Presidential Election slated for Thursday, October 26. Similarly, classes that were scheduled from Friday October 20 to Saturday, October 28, are cancelled.

In his message, Prof. Zeleza underlined the values of "peaceful coexistence as well as respect for the rights and property of others in speech and action" that all members of the university community share, adding his observation that these values were already practiced in our learning and working environment. Since the repeat presidential election was ordered by the Supreme Court of Kenya on September 1, the country has experienced a rapidly deteriorating political environment that has led to calls for boycott and a withdrawal from the elections by the incumbent President's main rival, Mr. Raila Odinga. Mr. Odinga, a former Prime Minister of Kenya, was the keynote speaker during the 37th Commencement Ceremony in August 2015.

Prof. Zeleza urged students, staff and faculty to "continue to be that shining light of goodwill and tolerance that Kenya needs so desperately at this time". Drawing inspiration from his experience as a historian, the Vice Chancellor reminded the community of their responsibility to write "a heroic chapter of integrity, leadership and service", which he noted was "our gift to the future".

While the university is closed, essential services will still be provided to campus residents. Contacts details for the security team, which remains on standby, are available on our website.
OUR NEW EMPLOYEES

Dr. Miriam Balungi Sensalire,
Assistant Professor of Telecommunications & Networks

Stanley Githinji,
Lecturer of Information Security

Dickens Aggrey Ondigo,
Senior Laboratory Technologist

Ms. Wanjiku Mbugua,
Lecturer of Chinese

Dr. Aleksi Yvlen Erick,
Associate Professor of International Relations

Dr. Were Lincoln Munyendo,
Assistant Professor of Pharmaceutics

Dr. Eliab Some,
Assistant Professor of Epidemiology and Biostatistics

Alex Mutuku,
Principal Institutional Research Officer

Mary Ngure,
Digital Repository Librarian

Hezron Muindi,
Senior Laboratory Technologist

Eunice Moriasi,
Senior Internal Auditor

Bryon Amanya,
Senior Internal Auditor
**Library targets increased awareness of resources**

By Charles Wanjala, Rodney Malesi and Dan Muchai

The Library and Information Center has introduced a New Books display desk at its entrance to increase readership and visibility of newly-acquired titles. Given that seventy-two of the eighty-five titles on display were checked-out with the first week of roll-out, the new feature turning out to be immensely popular and points at the large gap in awareness that previously existed. Indeed, the desk is part of a drive to increase awareness of the almost 200,000 physical volumes currently stocked in the library. Many of these volumes have been suggested by users – a feature that has placed the library in a class of its own.

In fact, in addition to the numerous national and international awards the library has garnered in its ten-year history, it recently collected another accolade; Best User Institution prize of R2000 at the 5th Emerald Knowledge Ambassadors Workshop and Competition.

Thus as the library continually updates its learning resources and facilities, it also encourages users to register for training sessions, in order to learn how to make the best use of every resource available. Through an in-depth library training program, users are taught how to navigate the various sections of the library ranging from short loan borrowing, to the thousands of electronic titles, all available from anywhere in the world.

The library also trains users on how to undertake scholarly work such as literature reviews, APA citations and referencing and other aspects of scholarly communication and publishing. Members of staff are also welcomed to learn how to find resources they may require to aid in professional development.

**Film explores notions of masculinity**

By Antonio Longangi

The HeForShe club screened *The Mask You Live In* on Wednesday, October 11 at the Freida Brown Student Center. The 2015 award-winning documentary film was written, directed, and produced by Jennifer Siebel Newsom, to discuss identity based on gender and in particular, masculinity.

In the documentary, boys and young men struggle to stay true to themselves while negotiating the narrow definition of masculinity. Though the film explores what Ms. Newsom perceived to be harmful notions of masculinity in the American culture, “There are many similarities available in our African societies,” noted HeForShe Club Secretary Miss Joy Nyokabi.

According to Ms. Nyokabi, the club’s agenda is to hold discussions around movies and documentaries related to gender and depicting real life situations as experienced by men and women in African society.

The screening was followed by a brief discussion facilitated by Associate Professor of Philosophy Dr. Ngure Wa Mwachofi and basketball coach Harrison Kaudia, which explored masculinity in Africa in relation to gender roles, careers, sports as well as emotional intelligence.

The audience mainly composed of male students and members of the rugby team, exchanged perspectives informed by their individual experiences connected with the concept of masculinity. Such examples as “Man up! You throw like a girl! Be a man and stop those tears!” were provided as evidence of the increased pressure on boys and young men in our societies, to hide their emotions, “grab a mask” and ultimately distort their true identity.

Initiated by UN Women in September 2014, HeForShe is a 1.5 million-member movement that invites “people around the world to stand together to create a bold, visible force for gender equality.”
Peer educators club hosts personal branding and etiquette expert

By Antonio Longangi & Andrew Kalongo

The Peer Educators and Counseling Club played host to renowned personal branding and etiquette expert Mr. Mwenesi Musalia, on Friday, October 13 in the Peer Counselling Room at the Freida Brown Student Center. He was invited to speak to members on how essential personal branding and etiquette are, as crucial elements on the path to a fulfilling personal and professional life.

Mr. Musalia is the Managing Partner at House of Major - a strategy and communications firms based in Nairobi - and a certified trainer licensed by Protocol School of Washington; a global leader in business etiquette, image and international protocol training, based in the U.S. capital, Washington D.C.

The talk drew from Mr. Musalia's wide experience to explain how students can begin creating their personal brands, followed by how to develop the brand to achieve life goals.

“Consistency over time makes a brand substantial, otherwise it is all fake and a fraud,” he emphasized. He encouraged his audience to, “…anchor your brand on qualities you are willing to discover within you over a period of time.”

He urged his audience to maintain a certain level of flexibility that would grant them access to the people and things they need in achieving their life objectives. According to Mr. Mwenesi, understanding the interests of people who are crucial to attaining one’s objectives, provides one with insight that is necessary to expanding one’s sphere of influence.

Concluding Mr. Musalia invited the attendees to pair academic training and natural talent with clear, simple and defined objectives in life.

Mr. Mwenesi Musalia speaks to members of the Peer Educators and Counseling Club on Friday, October 13 at the Freida Brown Student Center.

Photo: Antonio Longangi

NEVA and XD Academy conduct design thinking training

By Victor Mshindi

The New Economic Venture Accelerator (NEVA) has organized Design Thinking for Business Innovation training for NEVA members, to equip them with practical design thinking skills.

The training is conducted by Mr. Stanley Gichobi and Mr. Caesar Tuva, both of whom are co-founders of XD academy - an organization focused on training the next generation of social entrepreneurs and product developers by helping them understand the framework, logic and art behind user experience.

Each training session involves an introduction of different design thinking principles, which is followed by group discussions, focused on applying those principles to each group member’s enterprise.

The sessions, began on Thursday, October 5, and will run every Thursday at the Innovation & Incubation Center’s Research Lab. The objective of the training is to equip entrepreneurs with practical design thinking skills, design thinking is human-centered approach used in learning, collaboration and problem solving.

During each training entrepreneurs are taken through different design thinking principles, after which they are divided into groups. These groups provide an environment for the participants to discuss application of those principles to their enterprises. Group members are then expected to apply the solutions they discussed, then present the benefits and challenges they faced in the next session.

NEVA is the university’s venture accelerator, which was formed with the purpose of assisting students and alumni who have existing businesses or harboring business ideas, to solve current challenges or develop their ideas to fruition. Entrepreneurs are also provided with a working space at the Innovation and Incubation Center, on the third floor of the Freida Brown Student Center. Here, they can host business meetings as well as connect with other entrepreneurs.
Career readiness defined

Two weeks ago, we wrote about technical and soft skills and how those can be developed. As a follow-up to that article, we wish to further discuss core competencies that enable graduates to transition successfully into the workplace. In my opinion, these competencies are also key in enabling current employees to thrive.

USIU-Africa, through the Career Services Department, is a member of the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) - a community focused on the employment of new college graduates. NACE classifies these type of competencies as Career Readiness, which it defines as the attainment and demonstration of requisite competencies that broadly prepare college graduates for a successful transition into the workplace.

In accordance with its mission, NACE, through extensive research and a task force comprised of representatives from both the higher education and corporate sides, has developed a definition and identified competencies associated with career readiness for the new college graduate. (Details about the research are available here.)

If you’re a current student, check out the following competencies to gauge your career readiness and if you’re a current employee, ask a colleague, or even your supervisor, to rate you on each on a scale of 1-10, with one being the lowest and 10 the highest.

COMPETENCIES:

1. Critical Thinking/Problem Solving:
   Exercise sound reasoning to analyze issues, make decisions, and overcome problems. The individual is able to obtain, interpret, and use knowledge, facts, and data in this process, and may demonstrate originality and inventiveness.

2. Oral/Written Communications:
   Articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively in written and oral forms to persons inside and outside of the organization. The individual has public speaking skills; is able to express ideas to others; and can write/edit memos, letters, and complex technical reports clearly and effectively.

3. Teamwork/Collaboration:
   Build collaborative relationships with colleagues and customers representing diverse cultures, races, ages, genders, religions, lifestyles, and viewpoints. The individual is able to work within a team structure, and can negotiate and manage conflict.

4. Digital Technology:
   Leverage existing digital technologies ethically and efficiently to solve problems, complete tasks, and accomplish goals. The individual demonstrates effective adaptability to new and emerging technologies.

5. Leadership:
   Leverage the strengths of others to achieve common goals, and use interpersonal skills to coach and develop others. The individual is able to assess and manage his/her emotions and those of others; use empathetic skills to guide and motivate; and organize, prioritize, and delegate work.

6. Professionalism/Work Ethic:
   Demonstrate personal accountability and effective work habits, e.g., punctuality, working productively with others, and time workload management, and understand the impact of non-verbal communication on professional work image. The individual demonstrates integrity and ethical behavior, acts responsibly with the interests of the larger community in mind, and is able to learn from his/her mistakes.

7. Career Management:
   Identify and articulate one’s skills, strengths, knowledge, and experiences relevant to the position desired and career goals, and identify areas necessary for professional growth. The individual is able to navigate and explore job options, understands and can take the steps necessary to pursue opportunities, and understands how to self-advocate for opportunities in the workplace.

8. Global/Intercultural Fluency:
   Value, respect, and learn from diverse cultures, races, ages, genders, sexual orientations, and religions. The individual demonstrates openness, inclusiveness, sensitivity, and the ability to interact respectfully with all people and understand individuals’ differences.

   These competencies are a great place to start in self-assessments as they give a clear definition and criteria of what to look for in each.

If you have identified gaps in your career readiness or level of competency as a current employee, visit Career Services in the Freida Brown Student Center for an in-depth discussion on how to pursue growth in the specific areas. You can also email us at careeroffice@usi.ac.ke for any feedback.

Feature: Why your beard is making you bald

By Rahima Nur (B. Pharmacy Junior)
Reviewed by Dr. Were L. Munyendo (Assistant Professor of Pharmaceutics)

If you have been watching television lately, you have probably seen the latest trend of bearded men or women both locally and internationally. Many will argue that it enhances the facial features of an individual, but, could this be the reason you are going bald? According to research done in 1988 by Cabanac, bearded men retained more heat in their beard hence they grew more bald. The results obtained supported the hypothesis that the male baldness is a thermoregulatory compensation for growth of beard in male adults. The research involved both bearded and unbearded men and women whereby the area of the glabrous skin on the forehead, calvaria and that of the skin of lips, cheeks and neck was measured. During light hyperthermia, the evaporation rate in the bald scalp was 2-3 times higher than the hairy scalp. In women and unbearded men, the evaporation rate was equal while for bearded men, it was 40% less on the chin. The research also shows that men with higher beard lines have most receding hairlines.

As there are several factors that may influence male and women pattern baldness such as age, genetics and level of testosterone, the beard may not be solely responsible for baldness, as research is still ongoing. Thus, those growing beards may need to take heed to avoid premature baldness.
17 October: The Daily Nation mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled “Play-offs action starts November 4.”

16 October: UISU-Africa was mentioned in an article titled “MY HUSTLE: How I bounced back after losing my basketball dream.”

12 October: The Business Daily mentioned USIU-Africa in article title “Local Comedy Mirrors Kenya’s Political Drama.”

9 October: The Daily Nation mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled “Bounty Kenyan harvest from Fiba Zone 5 tourney.”

8 October: UISU-Africa was mentioned in an article titled “University of J’Burg retains Kings of Rugby 7s crown.”

8 October: The Daily Nation mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled “Echenje finally makes cut as Nations Cup teams are named.”