In partnership with Intel and Carnegie African Diaspora Fellowship Program (CADFP), USIU-Africa hosted the HPC for Research and Innovation Forum on Friday, December 1, 2017, in the auditorium. The forum brought together over 200 participants drawn from academia, industry and government agencies, to share insights on how HPCs can deliver gains through research and innovation to Africa.

High Performance Computing (HPC) is the concentration of computing resources to achieve higher rates of output in a manner that is fast, consistent and reliable and at scale. HPCs work on computational problems that are either too large for standard computers or would otherwise take too long to solve.

The Chancellor Dr. Manu Chandaria in his opening remarks noted the dire need for cooperation among stakeholders to achieve developmental goals, “HPCs when employed in Africa through the partnership of governments, private and public entities will see us use big data for research and innovation that will reduce disease epidemics, food crisis, growth in industries and in overall improve the continent’s GDP”.

His remarks were echoed by the Vice Chancellor Prof. Paul Zeleza who underlined the University’s commitment through its investment in robust STEM programs such as Applied Computer Technology, Information Systems and Technology and the new undergraduate program in Epidemiology and Biostatics, to “solve existing and emerging social, environmental, political, business and economic challenges facing Kenya, other developing nations and the world at large.”

The Keynote address was delivered by the Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Information, Communication and Technology Hon. Joseph Mucheru, who underlined the government’s commitment to HPC stating that “the government is extremely committed in transforming Kenya to a...” (Continued on next page >>)
digital economy that will aid improve food security, health, increase jobs and this can be done once we demystify the capabilities of HPC to all stakeholders.”

Three panel discussions took place throughout the day. The first dwelt on applying the HPC concept to development priority areas in Africa, and was moderated by Dr. Faye Briggs (President and CEO of Niminq, Inc - a Data Center & Big Data Solution Company - and Adjunct Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering at Rice University). During the session, Mr. Edward Rakate from the Center for High Performance Computing in Cape Town, South Africa elaborated on his nation’s investment in High Performance Computing and the pivotal collaborative relationship between the South African Government, which runs the Center, and universities which partner and plug into the Center to access its shared resources.

Dr. Paul Okanda (ICT Director) moderated a mid-morning session on “Role of HPC in Advancing Research, Teaching and Innovation” where universities’ role in spreading the use of HPCs in other continents, and their need to develop academic programs that build on high performance computing power was reiterated.

Dr. Briggs also moderated the afternoon session that dwelt on “Big Data, Research and Development” where it was agreed that universities need to cooperate, and together with government lead the adoption of high performance computing, in order to use the large volume of data being generated, and to develop home-grown data-driven solutions to the continent’s problems.

The forum concluded with awards to three students with the best projects that featured HPC applications. The Air Quality Monitoring Unit team comprising Max Musau (MBA), Bob Aftwa (APT Junior), Vishaal Ravalia (APT Junior) and Advait Joshi (APT Junior), used a sensor to sample air in order to determine the level of pollutants in that sample. The large volume of data collected would then be processed through a high performance computing device.

Training held to boost media reporting on transparency
By Carren Jumba and Diana Meso

The School of Science and Technology (SST) in partnership with Transparency International Kenya and Code Africa hosted 45 USIU-Africa journalism students, mainstream media and freelance journalists and bloggers for a three-day training themed “Action for Transparency (A4T)”, at the Freida Brown Student Center, from Wednesday, November 29 to Friday, December 1.

Conducted by several experts including Assistant Professor of Journalism Dr. Maria Canudo, and Journalism Lecturer Isaiah Cherutich, and their colleagues from Kenya, South Africa, Germany and Spain, the training aimed at empowering participants with skills to investigate cases of suspected corruption or mismanagement of public funds and analyze financial or budgetary information relating to the health and education sectors.

The Action for Transparency Project is a collaboration with the Swedish-based Fojo Media Institute and Transparency International Kenya to use technology, aided by an empowered citizenry, to strengthen democratic accountability and transparency in Kenya through citizen monitoring of government expenditure.

The training was also expected to add value to the School of Science and Technology’s Journalism program, by teaching aspiring journalists how to authoritatively question and verify information from their sources in order to produce credible news stories.

In her brief remarks the Dean of the School of Science and Technology Prof. Valerie Adema, noted that the training came at an opportune time, as the University is planning to separate Journalism and Communication Studies programs from her School to form the proposed School of Communication, Cinematics and Creatives Arts. The new School will from Summer 2018 also host an additional two undergraduate programs; the Bachelor of Arts in Animation and the Bachelor of Science in Film Production and Directing.

Also present at the event was Transparency International’s Project Coordinator Mr. Abraham Marita, who urged to use their new skills to facilitate accountability in the budgetary processes of the public service delivery sectors.
Citizen Science announces formation of African Chapter

Citizen Science Associations of United States, Europe, Australia and Asia pledged support to establish Africa’s first Citizen Science Association in a meeting held at USIU-Africa on Monday December 4 as part their activities marking the 3rd UN Environmental Assembly (UNEA). A technical committee was appointed to assemble key stakeholders, develop policy and guide formation of the association.

Speaking at the meeting, Vice Chancellor Prof. Paul Zeleza hailed “emergence of the democratization of research heralded by Citizen Science which will now be accelerated as part of the University’s drive to emphasize and promote use of High Performance Computing to provide solutions to challenges faced by the continent”.

“Citizen Science will catalyze research and innovation by citizens and utilize the High Performance Computing (HPC) to be established at USIU-Africa, to process existing research data gathered by ordinary citizens to produce solutions for problems facing Africa. Some key themes identified for citizen engagement are air quality monitoring, marine, freshwater, chemical, land and soil, and waste pollution.

“The University will spearhead High Performance Computing and Citizen Science Association for Africa, as part of our mission to promote the discovery and application of knowledge” he added.

During the HPC for Research and Innovation Forum held at the auditorium on Friday, December 1, 2017, the need to harness available large volumes of data, to solve African problems was underlined.

High Performance Computing is the practice of aggregating computing power in a way that delivers much higher performance than one could get out of a typical desktop computer or workstation in order to solve large problems in science, engineering or business.

HRM classes showcase culinary and catering skills

By Antonio Longangi

The Advanced Food Production and Catering Management classes in the Hotel and Restaurant Management (HRM) program hosted senior university officials for a five-star lunch experience as part of a class practical demonstration on Friday, November 17 at the Training Restaurant in the Freida Brown Student Center.

Guests were served a three-course meal featuring international delicacies, served in a buffet style. The food was prepared in the new state of the art training kitchen by the Advanced Food Production Class, which familiarizes students with international cuisine, different menu types, kitchen knowledge and an introduction to hospitality. The Catering Management class which undertook the food service component, trains students to create an exquisite customer experience including setup, food and beverage services, and from Spring 2018, coffee-making. The classes simulate a real-world restaurants every Friday and Saturday in order to prepare students to own and manage professional culinary establishments.

Speaking on behalf of the Vice Chancellor, the Deputy Vice Chancellor - Academic and Student Affairs Amb. Prof. Ruthie Rono, congratulated members of the two classes, while appreciating the good use of the training facilities by both students and faculty.

Members of the two classes expressed their appreciation for the guests they served that day, for the self-confidence they gained. They also hoped other members of the university community will opt to join them at such future sessions.
**Chinese club hosts cultural exchange forum**

By Wanjiku Mbugua

The Chinese Club in collaboration with other USIU-Africa students currently learning Chinese hosted the Director of the Confucius Institute at the University of Nairobi Prof. Guo Hong, and several of her students on Wednesday, November 29 at the auditorium.

The Cultural Exchange was aimed at sensitizing the community and invited guests on the rich Chinese culture taught in class, while exposing them to Chinese calligraphy (书法), Chinese Operas face painting (脸谱), paper cutting (剪纸), use of chopsticks (夹豆子), martial arts (太极) among others.

During the event, USIU-Africa students presented two songs “月亮代表我的心 – The moon represents my heart” and “茉莉花 – Jasmine flower, as well as two poems, presented a Chinese dance and a Taiji performance.

It is expected that such cultural exchanges will go a long way in popularizing the learning of the Chinese language at USIU-Africa.

**Journalism alumni reignite old friendships at reunion dinner**

By Diana Meso

On Friday, November 24, the Journalism program in the School of Science and Technology, partnered with the Office of Alumni Relations to host faculty and alumni of the Journalism program for a reunion dinner at Freida Brown Student Center.

The reunion presented an opportunity for alumni reignite old friendships, reminisce about shared experiences and learn more about new initiatives from the School.

Present at the event was the Journalism and Communication Studies Programs Director Dr. Stephen Kimotho, who echoed the importance of such sessions in linking industry with class experience, adding that the input of Journalism alumni has been critical in developing the curriculum of existing and proposed programs in Journalism and Communication Studies. Journalism lecturer Ms. Robi Koki emphasized the role such reconnections continue to play in strengthening and expanding the existing alumni network.

Speaking at the event, Principal Alumni Relations Officer Mr. Uvyu Mbole pledged the support of his office and that of the Alumni Association, in setting up the Journalism Chapter of the Association in due course.

Dr. Kimotho was accompanied by Assistant Professor of Journalism Dr. Dorothy Njoroge, Associate Professor of Journalism and Mass Communication Dr. Kioko Ireri and long-serving Journalism Lecturer Mr. Isaiah Cherutich.

In his concluding remarks University Advancement Director Mr. James Ogolla, congratulated the guests for joining hands with the University to strengthen the bonds of alumni and their alma mater.
Counseling Center marks disability awareness week
By Antonio Longangi

Based on the theme “Transformation towards sustainable and resilient society for all” activities from Tuesday, November 21 to Thursday, November 23, were aimed at increasing the university community’s awareness on disability matters.

Kenya Community Centre for Learning, Action Network for the Disabled (ANDY), Compassionate Hands for the Disabled Foundation, and Deaf Haven International partnered with students living with disability to conduct a wheel chair race, crutches walk, sign language training, and blind folding games. Tents set up behind the cafeteria, provided students with an opportunity to have their questions answered regarding the experiences of people with disability.

The final day featured a panel discussion at the auditorium where Ms. Freidah Mona (MA Counseling Psychology), Miss Regina Mugure (IR, sophomore), and Ms. Whitney Ngigi (Psychology, sophomore), shared their experience as students living with disability. The discussion touched on the soon-to-be-launched Policy on Quality Access of People with Disabilities and Special Needs, as the university strives to maintain a disability-friendly environment.

Norwegian students visit campus
By Michael Kihara, Ph.D

USIU-Africa had the pleasure of hosting 35 students and 3 professors from the NLA campus in Kristiansand, Norway from October 20-31, 2017. The students interacted with USIU-Africa students during class sessions facilitated by Associate Professor of Psychology Dr. Josephine Arasa and Principal Counselor Mrs. Lucy Kungu who spoke on “Adolescent sexuality in a cross-cultural context”, while Lecturer of International Relations Mr Moses Oyango gave a talk on “The complexity of multiculturalism and violent extremism in the global age”. Mr William Mwangi spoke on “Cross-cultural communication in an African context” while Ms. Robi Koki gave a talk on “Media issues in Africa”. Thereafter, Mr. David Jourdan the Political Counselor at the Norwegian Embassy gave a talk on “Kenya-Norway Relations”.

USIU-Africa has a longstanding relationship with the NLA University in Norway which was initiated by a retired faculty member, Joe Kadhi. For the past 6 years, NLA campuses in Burgen and Kristiansand have sent students to Kenya on exchange programs. This is the second visit this year by NLA after sending 16 students and 2 professors from the Burgen campus in March 2017.

In the Spring 2018 semester, the university will host four NLA students in the BA Journalism program for a whole semester, while a further two students will join the MA Communication Studies program for a semester in Summer 2018.

Media Mentions
Compiled by Diana Meso

6 December: USIU-Africa was mentioned by Sustainable Brands website in an article titled “Trending: Harnessing Big Data, IoT for Enhanced Supply Chain, ESG Performance.”

4 December: The Daily Nation mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled “Western Jaguars disrupt Police rhythm in men’s title race.”

4 December: USIU-Africa was mentioned by the Daily Nation in an article titled “IMF names Nancy Onyango as head of key audit unit.”

4 December: The Standard newspaper mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled “United States International University in Africa to put up data centre.”

4 December: USIU-Africa was mentioned by TandaaBiashara online magazine in an article titled “Universities, NGOs, private sector & govt agencies asked to collaborate to harness Big Data, IoT for service delivery.”

4 December: The Daily Nation mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled “Western Jaguars disrupt Police rhythm in men’s title race.”

3 December: USIU-Africa was mentioned by the Daily Nation in an article titled “Butali keep title hopes alive.”

3 December: The Daily Nation mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled “KPA teams fire warning shots.”

2 December: The Daily Nation mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled “Pan-Africanism can be revived by opening African borders.”

2 December: The Daily Nation mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled “Kenya Police’s unbeaten streak ends in Kakamega.”

1 December: The Daily Nation mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled “Mixed reactions to Uhuru’s open borders directive.”