By Beatrice Munyiva

The Office of Alumni Relations hosted over 400 alumni from various classes for a barbecue themed The Past, The Present and The Future held on February 24, on the lawn behind the library. Alumni from as far back as the Class of 1993, took time to reacquaint themselves with a campus that is rapidly changing both in physical and academic infrastructure.

While welcoming the alumni community back on campus, University Advancement Director Mr. James Ogolla emphasized the need for his audience to remain engaged with the University. This point was picked up by the Vice Chancellor Prof. Paul Zeleza, who detailed the university’s development plans, and urged the gathered alumni to participate in campus activities, and remain “torchbearers and ambassadors for their alma mater.”

Dr. Jacob Ogola (DBA ’16) and Ms. Damaris Ndegwa-Mwai (IBA ’13) both shared how USIU-Africa’s financial aid had made a difference in their lives. Ms. Ndegwa Mwai who is currently a Procurement and Logistics Specialist for USAID/DFID’s Agile and Harmonized Assistance for Devolved Institutions (AHADI) Project narrated how USIU-Africa’s Vice Chancellor’s Grant saw her through a time of deep personal loss. Dr. Ogolla’s shared his experience as a transfer student from Moi University and a recipient of the Jomo Kenyatta Memorial Scholarship. His call to fellow alumni to make financial aid sustainable was echoed by Alumni Association Chairperson Ms. Dorothy Sagwe, who urged alumni to come back to their alma mater and build their university.

The Office of Alumni Relations also announced the beginning of ticket sales for the Annual Alumni Fundraising Dinner scheduled for June 23, where a KES 500 million Alumni Endowment Fund will be launched. The Fund’s purpose will be to provide opportunities for promising but financial disadvantaged students to pursue a world-class education at USIU-Africa.
Mr. Payne Omari (Information Systems and Technology Junior) holds the trophy he won during an International Relations Symposium hosted by Riara University as part of their Aspiring Innovator Inter-Varsity Competition, on Friday, February 23.

PHOTO: DAN MUCHAI

By Dan Muchai

Mr. Payne Omari (Information Systems and Technology Junior) emerged winner of an International Relations Symposium hosted by Riara University as part of their Aspiring Innovator Inter-Varsity Competition, on Friday, February 23.

During the competition, teams were given 15 minutes each to make presentations based on the guiding theme of ‘How technology can be used to spearhead international relations and diplomacy’. Mr. Omari’s presentation entitled ‘Cyberwarfare: The impact of technology on International Relations’, carried the day ahead of Strathmore University.

The presentation offered a multidisciplinary approach to the subject matter, where both Information Technology and International Relations approaches were leveraged to draw an understanding towards one of the least understood and diplomatically problematic subject of cyber war.

Given the rapid and expansive development of information and communication technologies, their use on social media platforms for disinformation campaigns, have prompted governmental concern in Washington D.C., London and recently in Barcelona.

Mr. Omari’s drew attention to how social media can be potentially “weaponized, resulting in an environment of permanent unrest and conflict within victim states”.

Other key highlights from his presentation included the reported instances of the Ukrainian electric power outage, Stuxnet (a computer virus designed to attack Iran’s nuclear plants’ electromechanical processes), and the Distributed Denial of Service (DDOS) attacks in Estonia.

Since most countries’ infrastructure was becoming ever more dependent on computer systems than ever before, they were thus more vulnerable to attack.

Mr. Omari’s presentation concluded by urging more robust regulation and vigilance, so as to address such emerging cyberspace issues as Internet freedom, Internet governance, innovation, economic growth and other cyber security issues as militarization of the Internet.

Following his win, the IST major plans on splitting his time between using such platforms to emphasize the vulnerabilities existing in national cyber security infrastructure, and developing a voting system powered by blockchain technology.
Entrepreneurship training begins at innovation center

By Max Musau

The Incubation and Innovation Center (I²C) provides entrepreneurship training, mentoring, linkages, and work space for student and alumni-run ventures.

This week’s training dwelt on two key topics: Using ICT in Business, and Social Media Marketing, taught by Mr. Max Musau and Mr. Klinton Wodomal respectively.

Participants were able to learn the importance of creating value for their business, understanding business processes before implementing ICT techniques, and how to value the customer’s first impression of a business.

Participants in the 12-month incubation program engage in weekly coaching, monthly mentoring by alumni, targeted training using a brand-new curriculum (which incorporates more client surveys, product testing, and design thinking), guest speakers, visiting entrepreneurs in residence, networking sessions, investor pitches, hosted entrepreneurship conferences, expos, and field trips.

The program is divided into three phases, in which Phase II emphasizes more coaching, while Phase III emphasizes more mentorship and investor pitches. The Center, which can host up to 30 businesses at a time, also offers full use of office space with a new lock system to regulate people flows, conference rooms to host client meetings, and linkages to industry.

On a related matter, the Incubation and Innovation Center has just announced a new call for applications for the second cohort of incubatees for the Spring 2018 semester.

Those interested are requested to get in touch with the Center’s director, Dr. Scott Bellows at bscott@usiu.ac.ke and/or by filling in the application form at https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/3BPYVML.
Students launch peer telephone counseling

By Noel Khayanje

The Peer Educators and Counseling Club began offering a new telephone counseling service dubbed “Peer Support Call” on Thursday, March 1.

The service is aimed at assisting members of the university community who may be experiencing crises, are beset with questions to ask and/or who need to speak with a trained peer counselor while maintaining their anonymity.

The counselors can be reached from extensions 801 or 802 on campus, or through a direct line (Tel.no 0730116801/802), from Mondays to Saturdays, between 9am and 9 pm.

Employees urged to participate in engagement survey

By Ruth Thuku

University employees have been urged to complete a new survey developed by the Office of Institutional Research. The Employee Engagement Survey is designed to collect data on an individual understanding of one’s role in the University, and how the role fits in the organization’s purpose and objectives.

The Office of Institutional Research provides analytical services to University departments, to enable them transform data into usable and actionable information.

Even though participation is voluntary and entirely confidential, all employees have been requested to play their part in meeting university outcomes leading to operational and service excellence.

The survey can be accessed by clicking here.

Financial Aid Office convenes External Graduate Scholarships forum

By Dan Muchai

Financial Aid Office scheduled a briefing session for all financial aid beneficiaries on Friday, March 2, to present opportunities available for those seeking financial assistance to attend graduate school either in Kenya or abroad.

The meeting was addressed by alumnus Mr. Douglas Owino (Founder, Scholarship Academy – Africa), and Rhodes 2018 Scholar and International Relations alumna (Class of 2017) Ms. Ruth Nyakeriaro.

Mr. Owino urged his audience to pay attention to undergraduate grades and co-curricular activities given the weight they lend to scholarship applications.

Mr. Eannes Ongus (Principal Fundraising Officer) - himself a former financial aid recipient - also shared crucial information on funding choices available to a current or aspiring graduate student.
Intense competition was witnessed last weekend when our various sports teams emerged the best in different tournaments and leagues they took part in.

The Cricket team emerged the first in the Universities Cricket Tournament organized by the Nairobi Provincial Cricket Association (NCPA) at the Ruaraka Sports Club. Both the men’s and ladies’ hockey teams defeated Wananchi men and women from Uganda to win the Hope Sports Uganda Hockey Tournament in Lugogo, Uganda.

In addition, our men’s teakwood team scooped the 1st position while their female counterparts clinched the second position in the 2nd Kenya University Sports Association (KUSA) indoor championship at USIU-Africa.

The men’s rugby team thrashed Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA) 19-10 in the ongoing Kenya Rugby Union (KRU) Championship that took place at the rugby pitch. The team will host Egerton University this weekend.

The ladies basketball team crushed Daystar University 38-11 while the men’s team lost to Mt. Kenya University 34-42 in the second leg of KUSA League. The ladies will meet Jomo Kenyatta University of Science and Technology (JKUAT), Kenyatta University and Mt. Kenya University as the men battle out with Daystar University and JKUAT at JKUAT this weekend.

The men’s soccer team secured a 1-0 win against Mt. Kenya University while their female counterparts lost by a similar margin (0-1) against Daystar University in the KUSA League. The men are set to meet Mt. Kenya University and Daystar University on Saturday, March 3 and 4 respectively at JKUAT, while the ladies play against JKUAT and Mt. Kenya University at the same venue.

Still, in the KUSA League, the ladies volleyball team beat Daystar University 3-2 on Saturday, February 24 at Kenyatta University. The ladies will travel to JKUAT this weekend to play against Getsa University and Kenyatta University on Saturday, March 3 and Mt. Kenya University and St. Paul’s University on Sunday, March 4.

The Karate men emerged third in Kata and Kumite while the ladies clinched the second position in Kumite and third position in Kata in the 2nd KUSA Karate Indoor Championship at USIU-Africa. Both teams will compete in the 3rd KUSA Karate Indoor Championship playoffs and finals on March 17 and 18 at Kenyatta University and USIU-Africa respectively.

March 1: USIU-Africa was mentioned by Itechnologyupdates in an article titled “Kenya’s ‘blockchain taskforce’ and Uber’s exodus.”

February 28: USIU-Africa was mentioned by The Citizen in an article titled “‘Black Panther’ offers a neocolonial vision of Africa.”

February 28: The Star mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled “Chase blow as KHU expand competition: Sailors bid to feature in top flight hit hard as they are pushed to second tier.”

February 27: USIU-Africa was mentioned by Chicago Tribune in an article titled “Black Panther’ offers a regressive, neocolonial vision of Africa.”

February 26: Cetusnews mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled “ ‘Black Panther’ offers a regressive, neocolonial vision of Africa.”

February 26: The People Daily mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled “Coach Ojukwu leads charges to wrest throne from last year’s winners at Game Three.”

February 25: The Guardian mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled “Attitude of learning helps you become a better actor.”

February 24: USIU-Africa was mentioned by the Daily Monitor in an article titled “Hockey sides in pre-season HSHA tournament.”

February 23: USIU-Africa was mentioned by Faro De Vigo (online French Magazine) in an article titled “Seven graduates from Kenya and Uganda carry out teaching practices in Galicia.”

February 23: The Atlantico (online French Magazine) mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled “University students from Africa do internships in seven schools.”

February 22: USIU-Africa was mentioned by the Public (online French Magazine) in an article titled “UniRank publishes its ranking of the 200 best African universities.”

February 19: The Telecompaper mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled “Microsoft4Afrika works with USIU-Africa to launch AppFactory at I2C in Nairobi.”

February 19: The People Daily mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled “Garissa girl takes on illiteracy with zeal.”

February 18: USIU-Africa was mentioned by the HakiPensheni Monitor in an article titled “The Zuma saga and the postcolonial reckoning of South Africa.”

February 18: USIU-Africa mentioned the Daily Nation in an article titled “Police, Telkom crowned champions.”

February 17: The Star mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled “Coronation time.”

February 17: USIU-Africa was mentioned by the Standard Digital in an article titled “Teams roll up sleeves in race for promotion: Winners in today’s semis earn two slots in KHU league.”

February 16: The Balacing Act mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled “First Microsoft 4Afrika AppFactory launched in Kenya in Partnership with USIU-Africa.”