By Diana Meso

USIU-Africa in partnership with the United States Embassy in Kenya hosted members of the fourth estate for a discussion on “Fake News” at the Incubation and Innovation Center on Wednesday, March 14.

The roundtable was part of a year-long media literacy campaign #StopReflectVerify launched on the same day by U.S. Ambassador to Kenya H.E. Robert F. Godec.

Fake news has come to refer to deliberate misinformation or hoaxes created to deceive and thus influence views, push agendas or cause confusion. In “The Reality of Fake News in Kenya” - a study by Portland and Geopoll based on the 2017 Kenyan General Elections, it was revealed that 90% of Kenyans were exposed to fake news concerning the elections, while 87% reported instances of deliberate fake news.

During the media roundtable, participants drawn from the Nation Media Group and the Bloggers Association of Kenya (BAKE) were shown how to detect fake news, examples of common channels used to spread fake news, tools to use to curb fake news, and the legal implications on spreading fake news.

Dr. Maria Canudo (Assistant Professor of Journalism) encouraged participants to stop, reflect and verify before sharing any information on social media. She pointed out the need to consider the possible negative impact the misuse of the power of information can have on the ordinary person’s life, as well as the unnecessary confusion and hardship it can cause.

Mr. Eric Mugendi, Managing Editor at PesaCheck - East Africa’s first public finance fact-checking initiative – previewed the services and products PesaCheck offered, that can assist individuals or groups to identify and analyze claims made by the public about financial organizations. Mr. Vincent Ng’ethe, an Editor with AfricaCheck Kenya, spoke about how AfricaCheck’s role in sorting out fact from fiction, protected democracy by holding public figures accountable regarding what they say and do.

Also, present at the event was the Vice Chancellor Prof. Paul Zeleza, Ms. Kristin Kneedler (Cultural Affairs Officer, U.S. Embassy), Dr. Stephen Kimotho (Program Director, Journalism and Communication Studies), among others.

(Continued on next page...)
The Cabinet Secretary for Education Ambassador (Dr.) Amina Mohamed EGH (center) accompanied by the DVC - Academic & Student Affairs Amb. Prof. Ruthie Rono (left) walks to the auditorium to preside over the East African Conference on Inclusive Education 2018, hosted by the Kenya Institute of Special Education (KISE) on Thursday, March 22. PHOTO: VICTOR MSHINDI

New date for Commencement 2018

In an email to the University community, on March 19, the Associate DVC-Academic Affairs Prof. Munyae Mulinge announced a change of date for the 40th Commencement Ceremony.

Following a resolution of the University Senate, beginning 2018, the annual commencement ceremony will be held on the last Saturday of September - which this year, will be September 29.

Applications have thus been invited for those completing their degree requirements by end of the Spring and Summer semesters to apply for graduation by Monday, April 16 either through email (lawino@usi.ac.ke) or by visiting the Office of the Registrar, on the first floor of the Freida Brown Student Center.

Film lecturer moderates inaugural film festival seminar

By Kelvin Baiyu, Rachael Diang’a & Diana Meso

On Thursday, March 15, Dr. Rachael Diang’a (Assistant Professor of Film) accompanied by several journalism students, joined film directors, faculty and students for a seminar themed “A Strong Tourism Industry: A strength in development of a vibrant film industry in East Africa” at the Safaricom Michael Joseph Centre in Nairobi.

The event aimed to recruit interested students, lecturers and experts in the film industry, to plan and participate in the Elsa Film Festival, and provide a platform for participants to network and learn from each other. The Elsa Film Festival, which derives its name from the legendary lioness featured in the classic movie - Born Free (1966) - is a flagship project of the WESTLANDS FILM DISTRICT designed to promote film-induced tourism concept in the East African region, expected to take place later this year.

USIU-Africa’s attendance was against the backdrop of the ongoing recruitment of the inaugural class of the Bachelor of Arts in Film Production and Editing, and the Bachelor of Arts in Animation, to be offered by the School of Communication, Cinematic and Creative Arts.

The Harvard National Model United Nations (HNMUN) is the “largest, oldest, and most prestigious conference of its kind”, bringing together over 3,000 students and faculty together from colleges and universities around the world to simulate the activities of the United Nations.

The delegation represented Norway, Indonesia, Bangladesh and Ghana as well as UN Special Agencies at the conference, where one of three entries in USIU-Africa’s very first participation in the Conference’s social venture competition, made it to the finals.

The Conference, which is run by Harvard College undergraduates, is designed to provide insight into the workings of the United Nations by providing delegates with the opportunity to actively participate in the resolution of important global issues, through the simulation of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, regional bodies and specialized agencies of the United Nations.

The delegates accompanied by their Faculty Advisors (Assistant Professor of Psychology Dr. Oscar Githua and Associate Dean Dr. Margaret Mulinge), also made time to visit the United Nations headquarters in New York, where they interacted with staffers (including those from Kenya), and received sound career advice.

The team also travelled to the U.S. capital - Washington D.C. – where they participated in the 38th International Model African Union Conference, hosted by Howard University. Representing Rwanda, Somalia and Egypt, the team made history as the first time a university in Africa had presented a delegation at the Conference. This was a culmination of a two-year effort initiated by Dr. Githua to acquire delegate status.

According to Dr. Githua, the nine awards scooped by the delegates – the highest of any delegation – sent a statement to the world that, “The education offered in Africa, and especially at USIU-Africa, is as good as, and in many instances better than that offered in many foreign universities!”

He also attributed the overwhelming interest expressed by other universities represented at the Conference, in partnerships and exchange programs with USIU-Africa, as “…a true testament of the impact that we had during our assignment.”
Library hosts debates on library relevancy

By Azenath Ateka

Two teams taught by Ms. Sarah Ambiyo (Lecturer of English) and Dr. Martin Mburu (Assistant Professor of English), debated “With the advent of the Internet and the simplicity of Google, do you think the library is still necessary for the 21st century student?” on Friday, March 9 and Monday, March 12. The debates were hosted by the Library and Information Center, for students in the SUS1010 Strategies for Success classes, as part of a concerted push this semester, to develop a ‘library use culture’ among students, by making library presentations in classrooms, and hosting class visits at the Library.

Media Mentions

Compiled by Diana Meso

March 23: The Daily Nation mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled “Schools ill-equipped to support children with special needs: Report.”

March 23: USIU-Africa was mentioned by Citizen Digital in an article titled “Bulls, Mean Machine lock horns in KRU championship.”

March 22: USIU-Africa was mentioned by Nigeria Today in an article titled “Yoruba language as a tool for academic advancement.”

March 22: The Guardian mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled “Yoruba Language as a tool for academic advancement.”

March 21: USIU-Africa was mentioned by iAfrikan in an article titled “Creating and using local data for socioeconomic growth.”

March 20: YallAfrica mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled “U.S. Fights Fake News in Kenya.”

March 20: The Daily Nation mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled “US seeks to fight fake news in Kenya.”

March 20: USIU-Africa was mentioned by SciDevNet in an article titled “Create and use local data for socioeconomic growth.”

March 19: USIU-Africa was mentioned by the New Vision in an article titled “USIU Africa alumni urged to be supportive.”

March 16: Capital FM mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled “USIU holds an epic culture week concert.”

Sports updates

By Diana Meso

It was a victorious end for our various ladies’ sports teams who took part in the Kenya University Sports Association (KUSA) Women Championship. Our hockey team clinched gold, while the karate team won silver and the taekwondo, basketball and lawn tennis teams each brought back a bronze medal.

In other competitions, the men’s hockey team beat Jomo Kenyatta University of Science and Technology (JKUAT) 2-0 while their female counterparts were held to a goalless draw ay the JKUAT ladies team in the ongoing KUSA League on Saturday, March 17 at Kenyatta University. Both teams will travel to western town of Kitale, for the Nabungolo Peace Tournament this coming weekend.

The ladies’ basketball team triumphed over Mt. Kenya University and Daystar University on Saturday, March 17 in the KUSA League at Kenyatta University. Joined by their male counterparts, the team will participate in the Tom Munyama Tournament on Saturday, March 24 and Sunday, March 25 at Strathmore University.

The men’s rugby team will this weekend travel to Eldoret to play against Moi University in the ongoing Kenya Rugby Union (KRU) Championship. This follows the team’s goalless draw against Egerton University and defeat at the hands of Championship leaders - Menengai Oilers - on Saturday, March 11 in Nakuru.

Upcoming Events

March 24: SSTA Seminar 10am @ the Auditorium
Eric Shirley League Final 12pm @ the rugby pitch
USIU-Africa vs Moi University 4pm @ Moi University
Nabulongo Peace Tournament in Kitale
Tom Munyama Tournament Strathmore University