USIU-Africa awarded grant to scale up agri-business training for youth in 24 counties

USIU-Africa has won a competitive grant to upscale its training in agri-business. Using an inventive model dubbed The Metro-Agribusiness Living Lab, the University will combine experiential agri-business training with action research to determine factors that impact most on youth training. Beginning this month, the 24-month project will target 300 young people from 24 counties in Kenya, and have a strong focus on gender inclusivity, sustainable agri-business and ethical behaviour, given that the majority of those engaged in agriculture are aged between 50 and 65 years, and practice unsustainable subsistence farming.

Funded by the International Development Research Center (IDRC), the project exposes participants to cutting edge agri-business practices, provides business coaching and connects participants to financial sources. The project head Prof. Francis Wambalaba (Professor of Economics) described the program as “...the most comprehensive measure to close loopholes experienced by other entrepreneurial trainings.” He expressed optimism that the project will in addition to impacting 300 youths directly, will also affect an additional 15,000 through network marketing, indirect employment and access to over KES 25 million in business funding.

The project will be implemented at the USIU-Africa’s Global Agri-business Management Enterprise (GAME) Center where the initial idea was conceptualized and piloted in 2016 under the leadership of the Project Manager Ms. Salome Asena. Stressing the success of the pilot project, Ms. Asena disclosed that 90% of the youths who were trained launched their personal businesses; 60% of them being female entrepreneurs implying that the model has the potential to enhance business startups, and that women can outperform men if provided with equal opportunity.

Dean of the School of Graduate Studies, Research and Extension and Professor of Finance Prof. Amos Njuguna, hailed the project as the second innovative model developed by the GAME Center, after the initial partner-agent model saw 39 USIU-Africa students support agri-business entrepreneurs in Nyandarua County, to...
Vice-Chancellor Prof. Paul Zeleza led the University in marking USIU-Africa’s 40th Commencement Ceremony last Saturday, September 29, where 1316 graduands were conferred with doctoral, graduate and undergraduate degrees.

While congratulating the graduating class, the guest of honor Prof. Collette Suda (Chief Administrative and Principal Secretary, State Department for University Education and Research, Ministry of Education) applauded the University for maintaining high standards in providing quality education to produce skilled and competent graduates.

She noted with appreciation the role played by the Placement and Career Services Department in preparing the graduands for the job market, lauding USIU-Africa’s pioneering role in ensuring students are also prepared and mentored on developing entrepreneurial skills that will enable them create jobs upon graduation.

In line with that observation, Prof. Suda also emphasized the connection between skills learned in campus and the demands of the current job market, adding that it is paramount that students get hands on experience before fully transitioning into the formal job sector.

University Council Chair Dr. Lola Odubekun called on the graduates to be ethical and effective ambassadors for USIU-Africa. She reiterated the need to continuously grow the University as an institution of academic excellence by using indicators to measure performance in order to improve the quality of education.

The University has continued to make great strides as a premier institute of academic excellence over the years. The proportion of faculty with PHDs rose from 64 percent to 71 percent, which is the highest in the country, according to Ministry of Education statistics that place the current national average at 34 percent.

In his remarks the Vice Chancellor Prof. Paul Zeleza noted that the University has increased its research kitty over the last few academic years, which had translated into remarkable growth of external research grants in the 2017-18 academic year.

The recent partnership with the Africa Development Bank partnership to equip African youth with employability skills he said, is an example that is setting the University apart. In addition, Prof. Zeleza announced the University will train over 34000 youths across the country under the Kenya Youth Employment Opportunities project that is spearheaded by the International Development Agency together with the Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs. These initiatives, he said, are set to launch Kenyan youth into the job market with ready skills appropriate to the modern workplace and economy.

The event marked the launch of USIU-Africa @50 activities and events that will (Continued on page 4)
DVC paints bright future during convocation address

Following the launch of the four new academic programs during the 2017-18 academic year, she announced the development of 2 programs at graduate and one at undergraduate level in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences; two undergraduate programs in the School of Pharmacy and Health Sciences; two programs at undergraduate and one at graduate level in the Chandaria School of Business, and finally two programs at undergraduate and one at doctoral level in the School of Science and Technology.

Dwelling on the research activities undertaken in the last academic year, Prof. Rono announced that 13 proposals qualified for funding in 2017/18, the number of publications rose by 14%, while external research grants almost tripled.

On the matter of improving the employability of students, the University has embarked on building relationships with industry such as the establishing a partnership with Microsoft which led to the launch of the AppFactory in March, as well as skills training sponsored by Devki Steel Mills.

Moving on to the priorities for the current academic year, Prof. Rono confirmed the University will continue its focus on the establishment and strengthening of new programs in Science, Technology, Engineering & Maths (STEM); health sciences; and communication, cinematic and creative arts; as well as the establishment of institutes and centers. In particular the proposed East African Research Center will provide academic support services to international researchers in Kenya and East Africa. Other institutes and centers to be established include the Institute for Higher Education Leadership Development, Institute for Diaspora and Migration Studies, Network for Impact Evaluation Researchers in Africa (funded by Hewlett Packard), and the Coding for Employment Center of Excellence (funded by the African Development Bank).

Prof. Rono also indicated that the University will continue its expansion of short courses and programs, as well as implement strategies aimed at enhancing student recruitment, retention, service support and success.

The DVC concluded by reminding her audience of the University’s commitment to building additional academic facilities such as the new home for the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, the student hostels and the completion of the construction of the Kenya Women’s and Children’s Wellness Center. The University will also be exploring the construction of a new facility to house the new School of Communication, Cinematic & Creative Arts.

Silver anniversary honor for alumni class

The Alumni Relations Office organized a silver recognition program to celebrate alumni who graduated 25 years ago during the 40th Commencement Ceremony held on September 29, 2018.

Ms. Alome Kasera-Achayo (Business Administration, ’92), Ms. Jacqueline Chokwe (International Relations, ’93) and Ms. Mary Gatheca (International Relations, ’91) were recognized during the ceremony and awarded recognition plaques by the former Chair of the Alumni Association Dr. Jacob Ogolla.

The three alumni alongside other alumni, staff and faculty were later hosted by the Vice Chancellor Prof. Paul Zeleza, for a luncheon at the Freida Brown Student Center training restaurant, where they shared their experiences, crediting the university for the significant impact it has had on their lives in the last quarter of a century.

Director of University Advancement Mr. James Ogolla encouraged the gathered alumni to stay engaged and connected with their alma mater as well as encourage their erstwhile college mates, to connect with the university.

This view was echoed by Prof. Zeleza, who reiterated the need for alumni to continuously engage with - including making regular visits to - their alma mater and support its activities since they are the custodians of the University. He also highlighted some of the key projects that the university is undertaking in terms of academic and infrastructural developments.

Moving forward, the Office of Alumni Relations will strive to continue building a mutually beneficial relationship between USIU-Africa alumni and their alma mater.
USIU-Africa marks Freida Brown Day at Korogocho school

By Diana Meso

On Friday, September 21, the University celebrated the annual Freida Brown Day at Ngunyumu Primary School in Korogocho - one of Nairobi’s informal settlements. The event brought together over 300 staff, students, faculty and friends of USIU-Africa to give back to the community, in line with the University’s mission; community service and development.

Founded in 1986, Ngunyumu Primary School, now hosts a population of 815 students and a teaching staff of 14, in dire need of additional facilities to support teaching and learning.

Led by the Vice Chancellor Prof. Paul Zeleza participants engaged in various activities including; tree planting, fence trimming, slashing, cleaning of classroom and washrooms, litter collection and much more.

Speaking during the event, Prof. Zeleza announced a donation of writing pad chairs to enable the pupils to have their meals in the dining room without need for desks, while a cheque of KES 100,000 would contribute towards the purchase of dry maize and beans to support the school’s pupil food program.

He emphasized the university’s commitment to positively impacting the society through community service did not end with an annual observance, but was a requirement for all undergraduates as part of the quality, liberal education offered at USIU-Africa.

University financial aid programs, he said, had already assisted 1200 students continue their college education, while the University’s participation in the Kasarani Neighborhood Association (KNA) program had greatly facilitated full annual scholarships to identified Kenya Certificate of Primary Education candidates who topped their class, but could not afford their high school of choice.

USIU-Africa marks 40th Commencement Ceremony

(Continued from page 2)

be taking place this academic year, marking the University’s golden anniversary.

Towards the conclusion of the ceremony, university recognizes specific members of the graduating class who have made outstanding contributions to the university community. This year, Mr Mathew Ndolo (International Relations, Cum Laude) Ms. Naushad Begum Khan (Psychology) and Ms. Elham Soni (International Relations) each received community service awards.

Mr. Ndolo was recognized for the role he played as a member of the Constitutional Review Committee and the Electoral Commission, as well as member of the Young Diplomats Forum winning team

USIU-Africa wins IDRC grant to scale up agribusiness training

(Continued from page 1)

design and implement financial systems and connect them to markets and suppliers of high quality farm inputs.

To join the program, participants will have to be aged 18-35, be Kenyan citizens, fluent in English and have at least O-level certification. 60% of the participants will also have to be female entrepreneurs.

Other USIU-Africa staff who contributed to the development of the project included: Prof. Njuguna (as finance expert), Assistant Professor of Project Management and Implementation Dr. Paul Wachana (a technical advisor) and Professor of Management and Entrepreneurship Dr. Damary Sikalieh (as gender specialist).

Student Council organizes dinner for the class of 2018

(Continued from page 2)

Ms. Elham Soni (International Relations, ‘18) who with her friends founded the Educate Your Own student initiative offered brief remarks regarding the internal motivation that drove her to launch the initiative in 2015. “We had friends struggling and dropping out for financial reasons. Connecting that to our personal experiences and the importance of education, led us to take action,” she recalled.

DVC - Academic and Student Affairs, Amb. Prof. Ruthie Rono, led the toast to the graduating class of 2018 before tokens of appreciation were presented by the current Student Council to their predecessors - the then Student Affairs Council.
Public Speaking Club members excel at scholars festival
By Sharon Wairimu

USIU-Africa’s Public Speaking Club achieved moderately remarkable success, when they competed at the Scholars Festival held at Kenyatta University from September 28-29. The festival was organized by the Kenya National Debate Council to evaluate how the youth and the private and public sectors can foster the implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

The festival, which featured debates, public speaking contests and a quiz challenge, attracted representatives from approximately twenty universities from Kenya and one from Uganda.

The club’s three teams advanced to the semi-finals of the debates, while two of the club’s members made it to the public speaking finals.

The Public Speaking Club provides a platform for students to learn, enhance and practise expression through writing, speech and debate. The event provided a competitive space for them, beyond the club activities within campus, to challenge their communication, debating and public speaking skills.

Moving forward, the club has indicated it will seek out further opportunities for its members beyond the national level including participating in the upcoming Pan-African Universities Debate Championships 2018 to be held in Tanzania this December.

Student leaders receive peer education and counseling training
By Veronica Wanyee & Antonio Longangi

Under the supervision of the Counseling Center, the Peer Educators and Counselors Club (PECC) concluded its annual Peer Counseling Training on Saturday, September 22 at the Freida Brown Student Center.

The training held from September 14, covered the basics of peer education and counseling aiming at introducing students to peer education and counseling as an international standard of psychosocial support within an organization.

Through various theoretical and illustrative activities, participants were equipped with basic knowledge and skills necessary to offer guidance, health information and recognize problems among their peers. Activities focused on self-assessment, basic counseling and interpersonal skills; sexual based gender violence; and a discussion on the USIU-Africa Sexual Harassment Policy.

This training was open to all students and recommended for student leaders; Resident Assistants, members of the Dean’s Residents Advisory Board, Mr. & Miss USIU-Africa finalists, Student Council and club officials, as well as school academic representatives.

Such training sessions have become even more important given the necessity for peer education and counseling as a psychosocial support system. The training sessions allow for high impact learning among psychology majors or students taking an elective as it exposes them to actual counseling situations; and facilitates an interdisciplinary experience for students in other fields.

The training has also been designed to increase student leadership skills, not only by acquiring knowledge but also by improving their interpersonal skills.

Students who participated in all sessions of the training were required to attend individual and group supervision sessions as well as sign up for one of the several outreach programs offered by PECC. “This was a pragmatic way of getting them to impart and practice the skills learnt,” commented Ms. Lydia Winda (VCT Counselor and Club Patron).
Ms. Sadiqa Janmohammed (Psychology, Summa Cum Laude) delivers her valedictory during the 40th Commencement Ceremony held on Saturday, September 29, 2018.

Ms. Alome Achayo (Business Administration, ’92) holds aloft a silver anniversary plaque presented by the Alumni Association during the 40th Commencement Ceremony on Saturday, September 29. Looking is Ms. Jacqueline Chokwe (International Relations, ’93).

Principal Academic Advisor Ms. Ruth Njeri Mwai is led to the podium to receive her Doctor of Business Administration Degree from University Council Chair Dr. Lola Odubekun, during the 40th Commencement Ceremony.

University Council Chair Dr. Lola Odubekun (left) and Vice Chancellor Prof. Paul Zeleza (right) address the congregation of the United States International University -Africa during its 40th Commencement Ceremony on Saturday, September 29.

Community Service Award recipient Mr. Mathew Ndolo arrives at the Graduation Yard during the processional of the 40th Commencement Ceremony held on Saturday, September 29.

Ms. Elham Soni (International Relations) poses with a Community Service Award plaque presented to her during the 40th Commencement Ceremony held on Saturday, September 29.
Current officials of the Student Council and their predecessors pose for a photo after exchanging tokens of appreciation during the 2018 Graduation Dinner on Thursday, September 27, 2018 at Radisson Blu Hotel, Nairobi.

Amb. Prof. Ruthie Rono (DVC - Academic & Student Affairs) leads the toast to the graduating Class of 2018 during the dinner held in their honor, on Thursday, September 27 at Radisson Blu Hotel, Nairobi.

Award-winning journalist Ms. Asha Mwilu (Journalism ’10) delivers the keynote remarks at the 2018 Graduation Dinner on Thursday, September 27 at the Radisson Blu Hotel, Nairobi.

Members of the International Relations graduating class of 2018 pose for a photo during the Graduation Dinner on Thursday, September 27 at Radisson Blu Hotel, Nairobi. From left to right: Kelvin Njagi, Abdullahi Mohammed, Kennedy Njenga, Mohamed Ahmed, Jimmy Lomuro and Sunday Loch.

The Vice Chancellor, Prof. Paul Zeleza places his best foot forward, while opening the dance floor during the 2018 Graduation Dinner held on Thursday, September 27 at Radisson Blu Hotel, Nairobi. Looking on are the MCs Klinton Kawinzi (left) and Ashley Kamau (center).
Ms. Kisanet Hagdu (Chairperson, Student Council) joins pupils of Ngunyumu Primary School in a dance performance during the annual Freida Brown Day on September 21 at Ngumunyu Primary School in the Korogosho area.

Members of staff clean a classroom block verandah during the annual Freida Brown Day on Friday, September 21 at Ngumunyu Primary School located in the Korogosho informal settlement in Nairobi.

Mr. Bruce Odhiambo helps store firewood during the annual Freida Brown Day on September 21 at Ngumunyu Primary School located in the Korogosho informal settlement in Nairobi.

The Vice Chancellor, Prof. Paul Zeleza waters a tree he planted during the annual Freida Brown Day held on Friday, September 21 at Ngumunyu Primary School located in the Korogosho informal settlement in Nairobi.

The Vice Chancellor Prof. Paul Zeleza (right) presents a cheque for KES 100,000 to the Headteacher Mr. John Rwigi (left). From left to right: Mr. Rwigi, Mr. John Abanga (Chairman, Board of Management - Ngunyumu Primary School), Ms. Kisanet Efrem (Chairperson, USIU-Africa Student Council), Mr. George Muriuki (Pupils’ President, Ngunyumu Primary School) and Prof. Zeleza.
A draw of 4 – 4 against Parklands Hockey Club concluded the single game USIU-Africa played on weekend of September 29 and 30. The game was played on Saturday, September 29 at the City Park Hockey Stadium as part of the ongoing Kenya Hockey Union (KHU) Premier League.

This weekend (September 6-7) will have various sports teams focus their training on minimizing tactical and technical flaws demonstrated in recent games.

Students participating in a basketball training session on Wednesday, October 3, 2018 at the basketball court.

PHOTO: ANTONIO LONGANGI

Media Mentions
 Compiled by Diana Meso

**October 5:** USIU-Africa was mentioned by The Star in an article titled “Helping women to grow businesses.”

**October 5:** The Daily Nation mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled “Thunder close in on top four finish.”

**October 4:** The Standard mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled “Champions KPA soldier on in Tanzania.”

**October 1:** USIU-Africa was mentioned by the Standard in an article titled “Award winning fashion blogger Lucia Musau, Sheila graduate with masters.”

**September 29:** USIU-Africa was mentioned online in an article titled “Kenyans showcase Chinese traditional costumes.”

**September 28:** The Daily Nation mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled “Ulinzi seek strong finish against World Hope.”

**September 28:** USIU-Africa was mentioned by the Daily Nation in an article titled “Sliders dare Telkom in hockey league Super Sunday.”

**September 29:** USIU-Africa was mentioned by Nairobi News in an article titled “Blogger Alai Blasts CS Amina for Skipping his Graduation Ceremony.”

**September 29:** The Star mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled “Champions Police seek to reduce gap with leaders Butaili.”