Students urged to be vigilant on mental health issues during campus forum

By Taigu Muchiri

The students, faculty, and invited mental health specialists held a discussion on November 13 to discuss mental health and its impact on their lives.

The event was organized by Daizy Wanzala media in partnership with Blaze and USIU-Africa. Associate DVC - Student affairs Prof. Wangari Mwai opened the gathering that was attended by over 250 students. She mentioned that mental health was an issue that can affect anyone and needs to be handled by professionals.

She emphasized that the University has put in place measures to assist students, staff and faculty cope with issues relating to mental health and the forum was organized to come up with solutions as to how best to address this problem.

Mental illness is related to chemical imbalances in the chemical components of the brain which leads to symptoms related to mental illness. According to the World Health Organization, mental health can be as a result of several factors. Multiple social, psychological, and biological factors determine the level of mental health of a person at any point.

The world health body also recognizes that poor mental health is also associated with rapid social change, stressful work conditions, gender discrimination, social exclusion, unhealthy lifestyle, physical ill-health and human rights violations. Biological risks such as genetic factors increase the chances of an individual being diagnosed with mental illness. The American Psychiatric Association estimates that half of mental illnesses begin by the age of fourteen and in most cases, go undetected and untreated.

The meeting discussed some of the easy-to-detect basic symptoms of someone suffering from mental illness. They include loss of interest in certain activities, disengaging from close social circles, poor performance in class, and lack of sleep or oversleeping among others.

The students were urged to be vigilant especially on behalf of their friends and detect these symptoms early enough. The panelists pointed out that parents, guardians, care givers, faculty should be able to point these out as soon as they notice them to be able to detect the problem much earlier before it becomes a crisis. The panelists informed the students to seek help when they need it through the services provided on campus.

Treatment and diagnosis

A majority of individuals facing mental health do not have access to affordable treatment options. In Kenya, a private session with a mental health professional costs between KES 1,500 to KES 8,000 per hour. For a mental health specialist to engage effectively with a patient and enroll

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Campus forum explores mental health issues

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them through a treatment plan, a patient would need an average of 3 hours. This is a steep cost especially for middle to low income households in Kenya.

Another major challenge facing the youth who seek treatment for mental illness is misdiagnosis. USIU-Africa’s Principal Medical Officer Dr. Tasneem Yamani mentioned that most people are given wrong diagnosis and subsequently put on a wrong treatment plan. She further added that in many cases, most patients will self-diagnose a condition they think they have and then end up using over-the-counter medication that has not been prescribed by a medical doctor. She warned the audience to ensure that all medication relating to mental illness should be prescribed by a doctor after careful analysis and diagnosis.

The treatment therapy thus prescribed, is designed to be whole and complete. A combination of medication with psychotherapy or sometimes either medication or psychotherapy is effective, even though a mental health professional is expected to provide the options which provide the right care for the right condition.

Senior University Counselor Mr. Patrick Obel, added that mental health issues are not detected in isolation but are treated together with general health. The casualty doctor does not carry out screen tests to identify if the patient is suffering from a mental illness. He proposed that health care professionals be trained to detect mental illness and thereafter refer the issue to a psychologist.

Ms. Kuki Magana and Ms. Muthoni Wangari shared their experience during the diagnosis and treatment process. They recalled how they were misdiagnosed for the first time they sought medical attention and that this is a common occurrence while treating mental illness. They encouraged the students to seek medical attention from professionals who understands their condition and able to take them through an effective treatment plan which will determine the success of treatment.

Work Integrated Learning Conference coming up

By Dan Muchai

USIU-Africa has partnered with several organizations to host a conference on Work Integrated Learning (WIL) from November 21-22, supported by the Ministry of Education’s State Department of Vocational and Technical Training (TVET).

Together with Linking Industry With Academia (LIWA), Cresco Skills Development (CRESCO) and Southern African Society for Cooperative Education (SASCE), USIU-Africa will seek provide an effective approach to implementation of Work Integrated Learning and in the process, improve student employability aligned to the needs of industry and East Africa’s development plans.

Work Integrated Learning refers to a combination of academic and work-based activities such as placements, internships and work experience, which provide a practical application of what is learned in the classroom.

The two-day conference is expected to lead to the development of an effective approach in implementing the cooperative and work-integrated learning in Kenya and the East African region, and in the process improve student employability.

The conference will also include the sharing of WIL best practice, a number of research papers, receive input from employers and educational institutions, and finally produce a high-level draft framework for implementation of Cooperative and Work Integrated Education.
USIU-Africa hosts second Chinese Cultural Exchange Forum

By Wanjiku Mbugua

The Chinese Club hosted students of Chinese language from USIU-Africa and four other institutions during their 2nd annual Cultural Exchange Forum on Wednesday, November 7, at the auditorium. The four - Confucius Institute at Kenyatta University, Pioneer University, Discovery Chinese and Mahanaim, were invited to forum in order to facilitate students of Chinese to interact and learn from each other.

During this event, the students were exposed to Chinese knotting (中国结), Chinese calligraphy (书法), Chinese opera face painting (脸谱), use of chopsticks (夹豆子), Martial arts (太极), among others.

USIU-Africa students of the Chinese language performing on stage during the 2nd Annual Chinese Cultural Exchange Forum held at the auditorium on Wednesday, November 7. PHOTO: ANTONIO LONGANGI

USIU—Africa students presented two songs “朋友 – Friend” and “你怎么说 - What do you say” while their guests presented Chinese dances, songs, poems and a Taiji performance.

(Ms. Mbugua is a Lecturer of the Chinese Language in the Department of Languages and Literature, in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences. She is also the Patron of the Chinese Club.)

Journalism faculty present research papers at regional communication conference

Four faculty members in the Journalism and Corporate Communication Department of the School of Communication, Creative and Cinematic Arts have presented research papers at The Africa Regional Conference of the International Communication Association (ICA) held at the University of Ghana in Accra last week.

Journalism Lecturer Mr. Silvester Mutua, jointly with Professor Bala Musa of Azusa Pacific University (USA), presented a paper titled Digital Revolution and the Empowerment of Women in the African Movie Industry: Vistas from Nollywood and Riverwood. Their research investigated how the digital revolution has (dis)empowered women in the movie industry, with particular attention to Nigeria’s Nollywood and Kenya’s Riverwood.

Findings show that women in Nigeria and Kenya, just like their male counterparts, have over the last twenty years been empowered in education, finance, and skill development to become key players in the film industry. In Kenya, especially amongst the young generation, women filmmakers are more successful than their male counterparts. This has been attributed to women empowerment which has created more confidence about their abilities.

In disempowerment, sexual exploitation exists that tend to curtail women’s potential in the industry. Also objectivization of women in Nigerian and Kenyan films tends to reduce their self-worth in society.

The authors recommended the need to remove institutional and cultural barriers, and commitment to development goals that promote equality, egalitarianism, and inclusiveness for women, men, and children.

Focus discussion groups (FDGs) and in-depth interviews were used to collect the data.

Mr. Mutua who teaches film and broadcast media also presented a second paper titled Riverwood’s Dramatic Film Story: The Digital Revolution and Production Dynamics as a Potential Model for Kenya’s National Cinema. The study examined the impact of the digital revolution on Riverwood’s production dynamics and the resultant business model that has led to the creation of a successful national film industry.

Findings show that digital technology has been invasive, empowering and enabling due to its affordability, versatility, and adaptability. Two of the study’s recommendations are the need to scale up digital technology uptake in the most marginalized sectors of society and economy due to its multiplier effect.

Also, the government needs to tap into the natural ingenuity of even the most marginalized in society as a strategy to reduce poverty and dependency. Five focus discussion groups and 10 in-depth interviews were conducted in data collection.

Journalism Lecturer Ms. Robi Koki, presented a paper titled An Exploratory Study of Conversations on Sexual Reproductive and Health Rights (SRHRs) of Kenyan Women on Kilimani Mums and Dads Uncensored Facebook page.

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Faculty research presented at regional communication conference

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The study explored the prevalence and frequency of online interactions on 18 sexual reproductive and health rights issues on Kilimani Mums and Dads Uncensored Facebook page. Using qualitative content analysis, the research reviewed 512 posts selected using simple random sampling to categorize and tally frequency, likes, conversations and use of emoji’s about the online debate surrounding the SRHR topic.

Findings indicated that the Facebook group members engaged in conversations on seven SRHR issues revolving around three topics of governance and equality, empowerment for women and male-female child issues. Using the like button, the members approved eight SRHR issues touching on governance, gender and societal relationships – specifically gender roles, accountability of leaders and family relationship issues. Similarly, they used various emoji’s on 14 SRHR issues revolving around romantic relationships, ethnic stereotyping and sexuality.

Titled Taming the Village Shrew? Ideology and Vernacular Mobile Phone Video Drama Series in Kenya, Journalism Lecturer Dr. Joseph Nyanoti’s paper interrogated a Kisii language comedy series known as Nyagetiara that is distributed through the Viusasa subscription app.

Specifically, the study investigated various signifiers and their connotations within the Kisii cultural codes that brought out meanings of patriarchal hegemony in all the episodes. This is so because the Kisii ethnic community strongly believes in patriarchal practices, where women enjoy less privileges compared with men. The study is significant to media content producers, who must be sensitive to discourses surrounding media representation, as well as social-change actors, who would like to know how the media contribute to debates like gender equality among rural communities.

Findings indicate that the series, “Nyagetiara”, which translates as a “cantsankerous woman,” reminiscent of William Shakespeare’s character, Catherine, in the comedy The Taming of the Shrew, is characterized by misogynistic overtones. In most of the episodes, Nyagetiara and other women in the series bring out patriarchal hegemonic nuances of stereotyping, trivialization, marginalization and polarization.

The women in most episodes are cast in their narrow stereotypes as home keepers, nurturers, and sex objects. This is contrasted with men, who sit at home and are served by their wives; young men interchange girlfriends, depending on who is more charming at that time. The data for the research was collected using textual analysis - a qualitative data gathering technique.

Assistant Professor of Journalism Dr. Dorothy Njoroge’s study titled Mapping Citizen Engagement Strategies Used by a County Government in Kenya and the Role of Technology. The research examined communication process or techniques used for public participation in selected counties with a view of chronicling current practices and recommending a framework for workable mechanisms for public participation in the devolved governments.

Findings show that county governments use three main forms of communication: mass media, newspapers and radio for publicizing meetings. Mobile telephony was used in the form of SMS messages but was employed as a filtering system to invite selected people to meetings.

The study’s data was gathered using focus discussion groups (FDGs) in seven counties of Marsabit, Uasin Gichu, Nakuru, Nairobi, Makueni, Bungoma and Mombasa. A total of 89 participants were involved in the discussion groups.
On November 14, Prof. Stephen Nyambegera (Professor of Human Resource Management) presented the findings of his project titled “Factors Influencing Student Unrest in Kenya’s Secondary Schools: A Survey of Selected Counties”. The event was attended by faculty members and students.

Prof. Nyambegera explained that unrest in Kenyan secondary schools has contributed to great damage through wanton destruction of property, and has led to low performance, a factor that has had many parents, teachers, educationists, scholars and the Kenya government concerned.

Prof. Nyambegera therefore decided to investigate factors contributing to students’ unrest in Kenyan secondary schools with a specific focus on selected counties with a view of recommending possible solutions in dealing with this emerging phenomenon.

He explained that the study was done by investigating the extent to which students’ socio-cultural background contributes to unrest in secondary schools in Kenya; the extent to which psychoactive substance use contributes to students’ unrest in secondary schools in Kenya; assessing the relationship between communication and students’ unrest in secondary schools in Kenya; establishing the extent to which abdication of parental responsibilities influence unrest in secondary school in Kenya, and determining the extent to which rules and regulations influence students’ unrest in secondary school in Kenya.

Prof. Nyambegera further explained that a random sample of 1,380 participants was sampled from schools that experienced student unrest in Kisii, Nyamira, Kericho, Uasin Gishu, Embu, and Nakuru Counties between March and August 2016 and more qualitative information was collected from School Principals by use of an interview guide.

Findings from the study revealed that student unrest and its disruptive consequences in Kenya’s secondary schools is significantly influenced by socio-cultural background, psychoactive substance abuse, communication, parental abdication of responsibilities, rules and regulations.

In his final remarks he added that the study provided several recommendations that may guide policy and practice for key stakeholders that help alleviate future student unrest in Kenya’s secondary schools.

The School of Graduate Studies, Research & Extension (SGSR&E) has organized colloquiums for the faculty members who received internal grants for the year 2016/2017 every Wednesday from 12:30pm-1:30pm in the Dean’s Boardroom at the Frieda Brown Student Center.
Applications for CISA certification training invited

Applications are invited for this year’s ISACA Inter-varsity Bootcamp to be held from November 26-30 at the City Center campus (JKUAT Towers) of the Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology.

The bootcamp, which has been organized by the Kenyan chapter of ISACA® - an nonprofit, independent association that advocates for professionals involved in information security, assurance, risk management and governance - will prepare students for the Certified Information Systems Auditor (CISA) program.

The certification is the global standard for professionals charged with monitoring, managing and protecting an organization’s, IT and business systems.

Members will only pay KES7000, while non-members will pay an additional KES3000.

Registration information is available from posters in the Lillian K. Beam Building.

14 contestants selected for annual pageant final

By Antonio Longangi

The Student Council on Thursday, November 1 at the auditorium, hosted the Mr. and Miss USIU-Africa Prejudging event.

The program started with an introductory walk by the contestants, to highlight their skill on the runway, followed by a ‘personality walk’ where each contestant expressed their unique style on the conventional runway walk. Contestants then paired up to perform a ‘couple walk’ and thereafter, each showcase their talents. In between the walks were performances by the dance club and the music club.

The ladies that secured their spot in the finale are Joyce Nazra (IR, freshman), Janade Noni (HRM, Junior), Anne Kiilu (IBA, Junior), Ricardina Joao (IBA, sophomore), Joy Kariuki (IR, Junior), Ashley Kamau (IR, Junior), and Peres Odumo (IR, sophomore).

The gentlemen who qualified for the final are Gerald Masimba (Accounting, sophomore), Clinton Odhiambo (Finance, sophomore), O’Brien Bloom (IST, sophomore), Ouma Casmir (Journalism, sophomore), Kinga Ngeene (IBA, sophomore), Tonny Bach (Marketing, Junior), Abdullahi Omar (IST, sophomore).

The final event for this year’s Mr. & Miss USIU-Africa Charity beauty pageant is scheduled for Thursday, November 22 at Garden City Mall, off Thika road. Proceedings from ticket sales will be directed to a charitable project to be undertaken by the winners of the pageant.

At the conclusion of the event, 14 students (7 gentlemen and 7 ladies) were selected for the final phase of the annual charity beauty pageant that aims at raising funds for a charitable cause that will be undertaken by the winners.

Photo pictorial available on page 7.
PICTORIAL: MR. & MISS USIU-AFRICA PREJUDGING
Kenya Hockey Union
In the Kenya Hockey Union (KHU) Premier League, the men’s team drew with Strathmore University 1 – 1 on Saturday, November 10 at the City Park Hockey Stadium.

On Saturday, November 17, the ladies’ team will meet Sliders in a KHU Premier League game at the City Park Hockey Stadium.

Kenya Universities Sports Association (Nairobi Chapter)

SOCCER: In the Nairobi Kenya Universities Sport Association (NAKUSA) League, the men’s soccer team defeated KCA University 2 – 0 on Saturday, November 10, while their female colleagues drew 0 – 0 against Daystar University on Sunday, November 11 at JKUAT.

This Saturday, the ladies’ team will take on Kenyatta University (Main campus), while their male colleagues will battle St. Paul’s University the following day, November 18 at Kenyatta University’s main campus.

BASKETBALL: The ladies’ team will play against Kenyatta University (City center campus) and Mount Kenya University (MKU) before meeting Kenya University (Ruiri campus) and JKUAT (Nairobi campus) on Sunday, November 18 and Saturday, November 17 at Kenyatta University, respectively.

The men’s team will battle Kenyatta University (City center campus) on Saturday, November 17 at the same venue.

Kenya Universities Sports Association

In the Kenya Universities Sports Association (KUSA) Hockey League, the ladies’ team won 2 – 0 against Gretsa University on Saturday, November 10 at JKUAT.

Basketball: Kenya Basketball Federation
The men’s team swept past Kenya Ports Authority (KPA) 63 – 52 in the Kenya Basketball Federation (KBF) Men’s Premier League held on Saturday November 10, in Mombasa, while at Nairobi’s Nyayo National Stadium basketball arena, the ladies’ team were soundly defeated Equity Bank 33 – 93 during the league playoffs.

UCFL: Universities and Colleges Football League
In the Universities and Colleges Football League, the men’s team lost 0 – 1 against Utalii College at the NYS soccer pitch.

Other upcoming games
On Saturday, November 17, USIU-Africa will take part in a Lawn Tennis championship to be held at Kenyatta University, and an Athletics championship at JKUAT.

Back on campus the university will host and participate in the KUSA Tae Kwon Do and KUSA Karate championships to be held on campus.

Media Mentions

November 16: USIU-Africa was mentioned by the Daily Nation in an article titled “No love lost as KPA, Blades face-off in play-off semis.”

November 15: The Standard mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled “Thunder strike Equity Bank, seal semis slot.”

November 14: USIU-Africa was mentioned by the Citizen Digital in an article titled “Payback time’: Storms plot KPA fall in basketball semis.”

November 14: Citizen Digital mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled “Upbeat Equity hopes for better performance in Maputo Championship.”

November 13: USIU-Africa was mentioned by the Citizen Digital in an article titled “Grudge match on the cards as KPA, Strathmore face off in semis.”

November 12: USIU-Africa was mentioned by the Business Daily in an article titled “Agribusiness enterprises to benefit from Sh57m grant.”

November 12: The Daily Nation mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled “Thunder hope to storm Equity Bank in Game Three.”

November 12: USIU-Africa was mentioned by the Daily Nation in an article titled “Ugandan player Zama to join KPA for Africa club tourney.”

November 12: Citizen Digital mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled “With the title sealed, Telkom shifts focus to Africa Club Championship.”

November 11: USIU-Africa was mentioned by the Daily Nation in an article titled “Equity, KPA ease to playoffs semis.”

November 11: The Daily Nation mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled “KBF lines up friendlies for national teams.”

November 11: USIU-Africa was mentioned by Citizen Digital in an article titled “USIU claims the bragging rights in hockey derby.”

November 10: The Daily Nation mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled “Ulinzi, Storms seal semi-final berths.”

November 9: USIU-Africa was mentioned by the Daily Nation in an article titled “Favourites eye semis as playoffs enter crucial stage.”

November 9: The Daily Nation mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled “Boost for KPA as US-based star jets in.”

Upcoming Events

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