Final year Public Relations and Marketing major Nimah N’zani Kassim is the youngest participant from Kenya out of 40 who were selected to represent Kenya in the United States at the Mandela Washington Fellowship 2019, sponsored by IREX, YALI NETWORK and the US State Government. The Mandela Washington Fellowship is an initiative that empowers young people through academic coursework, leadership training and networking.

Each year, 700 outstanding leaders are selected after a series of very competitive applications and interviews held in the US embassies in their respective countries. Fellows selected for this program should have established a record of accomplishment in promoting innovation and positive impact in their organizations, communities and countries. They represent a diverse group of leaders from 48 countries across sub-Saharan Africa.

Nima was selected due to her mentorship program called The Hijabi mentorship program— an initiative aimed at creating a transformative social change through the use of Global Citizenship Education (GCED) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) outlined by the UN, mainly focusing on SDG1 (no poverty), SDG3 (good health and wellbeing), SDG4 (quality education), SDG5 (gender equality), SDG8 (decent work and economic growth) and SDG 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions).

Her platform is focused on sex education, gender-based violence, violent extremism and economic empowerment. The Hijabi mentorship program focuses on women, youth and teens, with its activities including mentorship sessions, trainings, workshops, advocacy campaigns and charity events.

Early this year she was one of the youngest contestants who participated in the Ms President Show 2019 on KTN, a reality show aimed at highlighting on female leadership in the country, where she had an opportunity to represent Kwale County. After the reality show, she was selected as one of the 20 young change makers to participate in the 2019 Change Summit on Gender Justice in Ethiopia.

N’zani is currently receiving training at Indiana University (Purdue and Bloomington).
USIU-Africa takes home top awards at the 7 Day Film Festival

By Brenda Odhiambo and Dr. Rachael Diang’a

Two productions by USIU-Africa’s Cinematic Arts’ Department have won the top prizes during this year’s edition of the 7 Day Film Festival. Trauma, written and directed by Kevin Osoo won the Best Inspiring Short Film, Best Cinematography and Best Student Short Film, while Warped by Michelle Donde won the Judges’ Award. The win by Trauma made it the second time that USIU-Africa had won an award at the festival.

Both films tackled mental health awareness, with the theme derived from a surprise phrase that was shared with this year’s entrants. This year’s phrase was ‘it gets better with time’.

“The entire reason we made these films was to pass across the message of mental health and its impact to as many people as possible, and winning four awards from our 6 nominations means that we were able to achieve our objective,” said Kevin and Michelle.

Trauma was the most nominated film at the festival, with nominations across 6 categories and wins in 3, which also made it the best performing film at the event.

The 7 Day Film Festival is a timed film competition which gives Kenyan filmmakers a platform to unlock their potential by pushing their limits to create a story within 7 days. Filmmakers are given a surprise brief and waived filming locations in Nakuru County.

The festival aims to develop the production of creative quality Kenyan local content in short films, music videos and documentaries.

Two Faculty members from the School of Journalism present their research at Communication Conference in Spain

By Kioko Ireri

Two faculty members in the Department of Journalism and Corporate Communication have presented research papers at the International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR).

Dr. Joseph Nyanoti presented a paper titled “Patriarchal Ideology in Kenya’s Editorial Cartoons: A Cultural Studies Approach”. The research investigated how Daily Nation editorial cartoonists represented the male and female genders in their comic graphics.

Findings indicate that the examined publication’s cartoons were laden with patriarchal ideologies. This supports the work of cultural studies scholars who believe that all media texts carry ideological nuances of the dominant group in society (they support status quo).

As such, men were given positive representation compared with women. Relatedly, women were not only
underrepresented but they were also represented negatively in stereotypical roles as mothers, nurturers and appendages to men. The women were also represented as too weak to take up men’s roles like leadership in national offices.

The research data was collected using a combination of content analysis and semiotic analysis. The former generated data on the representation of men and women, while the latter revealed the hidden meaning (ideologies) in the portrayal of both genders.

Nyanoti’s colleague, Robi Koki examined the nature, types and trends of online violence that professional journalist women in Kenya face in digital media spaces. Her paper was titled “An Exploration of Gender-based Violence Perpetuated in Online Print Stories against Prominent and Professional Women in Kenya”.

The explanatory study extrapolated findings of the “Media Monitoring of Online Violence of Women Journalists in Kenya” commissioned by the Association of Media Women in Kenya (AMWIK), ARTICLE 19 and Deutsche Welle Akademie. The study gathered attitudes, behaviors, opinions or perceptions that culminated into acts of online violence meted out on top of women journalists and media personalities.

Findings indicate that the journalists faced online violence because the public has a sense of entitlement based on their expectations of the professional and public appearance of the women in media. More so, women in media are expected to modify their appearance for sex appeal than they are for journalistic work.

The research employed qualitative content analysis to assess extractions of various online print stories of 40 prominent and professional women in Kenya. The IAMCR conference was held from 7-11 July at Universidad Complutense Madrid in Madrid, Spain. The conference’s theme was “Communication, Technology and Human Dignity: Disputed Rights, Contested Truths”.

USIU-Africa launches first official alumni chapter in The United Republic of Tanzania

On July 20, 2019, Alumni Relations Department staff, Mr. Michael Kisilu and Ms. Joanne Alividza, together with University Council Member, Prof. Rwakaza Mukandala, Vice Chancellor, Prof. Paul Zeleza, Chair of Sociology and Criminal Justice Department, Prof. Simeon Sungi and Kenya’s High Commissioner to Tanzania, Amb. Dan Kazungu joined USIU-Africa’s Tanzania alumni and their networks in launching the University’s first official chapter in Dar es Salaam.

The event, dubbed USIU-Africa Tanzania Alumni Networking, Chapter Launch and Fundraising Dinner brought together 120 individuals drawn from USIU-Africa’s Tanzania’s alumni, their parents, government representatives, the business and corporate community, and the diplomatic corps.
SCCCA hopeful of hosting IAMCR Conference in 2021

By Kioko Ireri

The School of Communication, Cinematic and Creative Arts (SCCCA) is hopeful of hosting the 2021 edition of the International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR).

This is after Dr. Kioko Ireri, Chair Department of Journalism and Corporate Communication held successful talks with the IAMCR Executive Board members during this year’s conference held in Madrid, Spain, from 7-11 July. He was accompanied by Dr. Joseph Nyanoti, a faculty member in the department. They held a two-hour talk with Janet Wasko (President and from School of Journalism University of Oregon), Bruce Girard (CEO), Gerald Goggin (Secretary General), and Elske van de Fliert (treasurer). Earlier, the Executive Board had unanimously accepted a concept paper to host the conference submitted in January 2019 by the department.

After the Madrid talks, the Journalism Department will submit a full proposal by end of October. The Executive Board is expected to do a site visit in April 2020, ahead of the conference. IAMCR held its first conference in 1957 in Paris, France. Nairobi will be the second African city to host the conference after Durban, who hosted it in 2012. The conference attracts an average of 1,500 participants.
Students showcase their different talents at the USIU Got Talent event

By Sarah Masila and Diana Meso

A total of Ksh.51,000 was raised from the 2019 USIU Got Talent competition organized by the Student Affairs Council in partnership with USIU Radio and Mr. and Miss USIU-Africa beauty pageant at the auditorium on Thursday, July 18.

The event aimed to grow and celebrate all artistic disciplines within the USIU-Africa community, and provide artistes with a platform to showcase and nurture their talents. It was attended by over 300 participants who were entertained through singing, dancing, comedy, magic, juggling, stunts and other variety genres.

Ms. Lynne Aswani (International Relations, Major) who performed a South African song won the competition followed by Mr. Massanga Marcelin (MBA) who performed a rap and dance and Mr. Baraka Munene (International Business Administration, Major) who sang a self-composed song.

All the proceeds from this event will be channeled to Educate Your Own (EYO) student initiative to ensure zero dropouts among continuing USIU-Africa students due to financial constraints.

USIU-Africa hosts 27 fellows from the Network of Impact Evaluation Researchers in Africa

By Taigu Muchiri

USIU-Africa was proud to host a team from the East Africa Social Science Translation (EASST), Center for Effective Global Action (CEGA) and the Network of Impact Evaluation Researchers in Africa (NIERA) members across Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Ethiopia and Rwanda on July 24. NIERA is an independent network of East African scholars that conduct rigorous evaluations of social and economic development programs to improve people’s wellbeing and is hosted at USIU-Africa.

The Vice Chancellor Prof. Paul Zeleza welcomed the team mentioning that it was an important event that brings together technical experts from academia, private sector, development organizations and think tanks to discuss development issues facing Africa and how African scholars can effectively address them. “As such I am proud to be a partner to this network and challenge fellows to take research for development seriously; specifically research conducted by Africans for Africa”, said the Vice Chancellor. He appreciated the 27 fellows who are fundamental to the network and most importantly the Hewlett Foundation, whose unwavering support cannot go unnoticed.

Research programs at USIU-Africa are coordinated by the School of Graduate Studies, Research and Extension which provides a one stop shop for all graduate students’ needs and supports academic research in line with the University policy. In the 2018/2019 academic year, the university received Kshs. 12 million in internal grants and Kshs. 107, 444, 175 external grants. The research productivity of the university has also continued to grow with 378 publications and 51 conference papers presented. USIU-Africa is undertaking several initiatives in impact evaluation which include the International Centre for Evaluation and Development (ICED) that promotes the use of research and evaluation findings and evidence for effective policy making, action and practices.
The Metro-Agribusiness Living Lab is another impact evaluation program that seeks to expand opportunities for youth in agri-business and is currently funded by the Cultivate Africa’s Future Fund through International Development Research Center, IDRC and the Australian Center for International Agricultural Research. It bridges the gap between business innovation, action research and business training. It is currently in its second phase and has recruited 480 youth owned agribusinesses for training, mentorship and access to funds. The program is implemented in nine counties namely; Nyandarua, Nairobi, Kiambu, Kakamega, Bungoma, Kisumu, Siaya, Nakuru and Kericho.

The other research initiative is operated under the Kenya Youth Employment Opportunities (KYEOP) where the university is working in six counties namely; Nakuru, Kitui, Nairobi, Kiambu, Machakos and Nyandarua. KYEOP seeks to build capacity for over 35,000 youth by enabling them take responsibilities for their lives, actions, and change their mindset to be ready for technical skill (vocational) training and entrepreneurship and is a collaborative project in the Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs (MPYG) - Directorate of Youth Affairs (DYA) funded by the World Bank and will run from 2018-2021. To date, USIU-Africa has trained 3,561 youth across the country.

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The ICT Club hosts Blockchain Developers Workshop

By Paula Musuva and Diana Meso

On Friday, July 19, the ICT club hosted the Hyperledger Nairobi meetup at the Science Center to discuss blockchain technologies, where participants were introduced and assisted to develop and test blockchain applications on the open source Hyperledger environment.

Hyperledger is an open source collaborative effort created to advance cross-industry blockchain technologies. It is a global collaboration, hosted by The Linux Foundation, including leaders in finance, banking, Internet of Things, supply chains, manufacturing and Technology.

Blockchain applications are revolutionizing how businesses operate by protecting them from fraudulent transactions and costly middlemen and protecting customers’ data and tracking the authenticity of products they consume.

A blockchain is a data structure that provides a ledger for recording transactions that involve the exchange of assets. The ledger works like the books of accounts which...
record financial transactions in a business and it is distributed (not stored on one server) on a peer-to-peer network making it difficult to compromise it at one location.

Blockchain is unique because it is immutable, in that, once a transaction is validated by the participants and recorded on the blockchain it cannot be modified thereafter. Immutability of records, authenticity of participants and data protection enforced using strong cryptographic algorithms gives blockchain a high degree of trust and people believe that it is a true reflection of the history of assets and all valid transactions performed on the assets. Some of the industries that are being transformed by the use of blockchain-based applications include:

- Supply Chain Management: Businesses can trace produce from source, through the value-add chain, to the end product and even track how they are transported to the end consumer.
- Retail: Consumers can validate the authenticity of the products they consume to ensure they are truly manufactured by the vendor and are not counterfeit. A simple application running on their phone can scan the product and they can get a notification that truly verifies if the product is genuine or counterfeit.
- Healthcare: Benefits of using blockchain applications in healthcare come from protection of health-care records, addressing insurance fraud, identification of counterfeit products and also removal of middlemen and protection of the supply chain.
- Voting: During elections, votes can be cast onto a blockchain that prevents tampering and ensures that votes can be verified on a real-time basis giving transparency of the whole process.
- Real Estate: Various types of real estate assets such as parcels of land, houses or buildings can be digitized on a blockchain to capture their properties and verify their ownership before any transactions. Also, all historical transfers of the real estate can be verified to ensure transparency and prevent fraudulent exchange.

Hyperledger Nairobi will be hosting the next coding meetup on Saturday, July 27 at the IBM offices located on the 4th floor of The Atrium Building off Chaka Road. Interested candidates can sign up through https://www.meetup.com/Hyperledger-Nairobi/events/zrtqtqyzkbkc/

USIU-Africa participates in the 14th edition of the Tanzania Commission for Universities exhibition

The admissions team represented the university at the annual Tanzania Commission for Universities (TCU) exhibition on Higher Education, Science and Technology at Mnazi Mmoja grounds in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, from 15-20 July. This event is part of TCU’s mandate to promote cooperation and networking among universities within and outside the United Republic of Tanzania. The team drawn from the Admission and Marketing departments used this opportunity to promote the University, publicize our core functions, drive enrollment and foster collaboration, partnerships, networks and linkages.

This event provided a good platform for students who wished to join the university as they had the chance to acquire their admissions letter at the exhibition stand. The prospective students were impressed by our presence in Tanzania as it made their enrollment much easier than they expected and gained trust as a result of our recognition by the TCU.

At our stand we had the opportunity to host the Tanzanian Minister of Education Hon. Prof. Joyce Ndali chako who was received by our Vice Chancellor Prof. Paul Zeleza who used the occasion to give her a brief overview of the institution including the marking of 50 years in providing quality education. We were also honored to host the Kenyan Ambassador to Tanzania, Hon. Amb. Dan Kazungu who was hosted by the Chief Admissions Officer Dr. George Lumbasi.

The week-long event was graced by Tanzania’s top government officials including the Prime Minister Hon. Kassim Majaliwa who officially opened the exhibition. This year’s exhibition attracted universities and institutions of higher learning from Tanzania and other neighboring countries such as Kenya, Uganda and Botswana.
Placement and Career Services marks the annual career fair

By Saada Mutasa and Diana Meso

Over 15 local and international organizations took part in this year’s annual Career Fair organized by the Placement and Career Services offices from Monday July 22 to Thursday July 25 on campus. Themed “Anticipate, Create, Actualize career opportunities” the event provided a platform for participants to directly connect with their prospective employers and get insights on the work environment.

It further provided an opportunity for participants to align their skills, talents and experiences to the current job market requirements and get spot on chances to join represented organization.

The event featured an exhibition at the graduation square and seminars for all the schools; School of Humanities and Social Sciences, School of Science and Technology, School of Communication Cinematic and Creative Arts, School of Pharmacy and Health Sciences and Chandaria School of Business. The event also included a talk by Ms. Stela Atela (Human Resource Director- East & Central Africa - World Food Program) on how to be marketable in the outside world by being efficient, creative and a team player.

Ms. Stela Atela (Human Resource Director- East & Central Africa - World Food Program) addresses participants on Thursday, July 25 at the auditorium during the annual Career Fair

Media Mentions

Compiled by Diana Meso

July 26: USIU-Africa was mentioned by The Star in an article titled “Telkom reign supreme at Astroturf tourney.”
https://www.usiu.ac.ke/1299/star-telkom-reign-supreme-astroturf-tourney

July 25: The Daily Nation mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled “Telkom, Police stand in SAI’s path to glory.”

July 25: The Star mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled “Van Buuren unveils unchanged Simbas squad for Victoria Cup fixtures.”
https://www.usiu.ac.ke/1297/star-van-buuren-unveil-unchanged-simbas-squad-for-victoria-cup-fixtures

July 25: USIU-Africa was mentioned by The Star in an article titled “Delight must win four home matches to survive chop.”
https://www.usiu.ac.ke/1296/star-delight-must-win-four-home-matches-survive-chop

July 24: Citizen Digital mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled “Kenya Police thrash Arusha in hockey tourney.”

July 24: USIU-Africa was mentioned by The Standard in an article titled “SAI Ladies humble Oranje Leonas, USIU.”
https://www.usiu.ac.ke/1294/standard-sai-ladies-humble-oranje-leonas-usiu

July 24: The Standard mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled “What furniture taught me about failing forward.”
https://www.usiu.ac.ke/1293/standard-what-furniture-taught-me-about-failing-forward

July 23: USIU-Africa was mentioned by Capital FM in an article titled “Lower middle-income earners lead in social media usage – study.”
https://www.usiu.ac.ke/1292/capital-fm-lower-middle-income-earners-lead-in-social-media-usage-study

July 23: USIU-Africa was mentioned online in article titled “Nairobi Low-Income Earners Spend Most Time On Social Media – Survey.”
https://www.usiu.ac.ke/1291/online-nairobi-low-income-earners-spend-most-time-social-media-survey

July 23: USIU-Africa was mentioned by The Standard in an article titled “Kenya Police arrest Gladiators to leap to second place.”

July 23: The Standard mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled “With Kadenge’s death, time has come to reward sports legends.”
https://www.usiu.ac.ke/1289/standard-with-kadenges-death-time-has-come-reward-sports-legends

July 21: Citizen Digital mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled “Kenya overcomes Indian side in historic hockey friendly.”

July 21: USIU-Africa was mentioned by The Standard in an article titled “UoN leads as six varsities make it to Africa’s top 100.”
https://www.usiu.ac.ke/1287/standard-uoleads-as-six-varsities-make-africas-top-100

July 20: The Star mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled “Sharks’ Owaga eyes defensive discipline to overcome defending champs.”
https://www.usiu.ac.ke/1286/star-sharks-owaga-eyes-defensive-discipline-overcome-defending-champs