USIU-Africa hosts Academic Symposium to celebrate 50 years of academic excellence

By CBCC team

On October 31, the USIU-Africa community took part in an Academic Symposium which celebrated 50 years of Academic Excellence at USIU-Africa.

Chaired by School of Humanities and Social Sciences Dean, Prof. Martin Njoroge, the Symposium theme was “USIU-Africa@50: What Future Prospects”. The Academic Symposium achieved the objectives of not only celebrating the excellence that characterizes USIU-Africa’s teaching, creative work, research and scholarship journey, but also gave us an opportunity to project on the future of USIU-Africa.

Those in attendance were welcomed and edified by both Vice Chancellor, Prof. Paul Tiyambe Zeleza and Deputy Vice Chancellor, Amb. Prof. Ruthie C. Rono as they shared their uniquely insightful views regarding USIU-Africa’s 50-year anniversary, current status and future plans.

Guests also learned about the impressive legacy of research and creative work that has been accomplished over the years through a school by school summary of achievements. In addition to the compelling presentations from the schools, there were substantive and inspiring virtual remarks from members of the Board of Trustees and University Council (Prof. Alondra Nelson, Prof. Ben Vinson III, and Prof. Salah M. Hassan) and from Alumni from the Diaspora (Dr. Paul Asunda and Prof. Jane Okech).

The guest speaker was Prof. David Some (Professor of Agricultural Engineering and immediate former CEO/Commission Secretary of the Commission for University Education). The title of his keynote was “Kenya’s Higher Education in the Past 50 years: Trends, Challenges and Forecasts”.

Prof. Some began his talk with a historical summary of Higher Education policies in Kenya. He continued by encouraging us to look to the future as we consider key areas concerning financing models, on-line/distance learning, technology, and the need to align what we do in Higher Education with the new Competency Based Curriculum (CBC) recently launched by the Ministry of Education (interestingly, students starting the CBC now will form the graduating class of 2027). Lastly, Prof. Some stressed the importance of aligning ourselves with the University Standards and Guidelines (2014) published by the Commission for University Education to ensure that the high-quality expected of a world-class university such as ours is achieved and exceeded.

Among the day’s most important outcomes were that we are one exceptional university with six discreet and excellent schools all of which can boast of fine accomplishments. Continuing to build on individual initiatives as well as collaborating meaningfully across units will further strengthen the already vibrant environment of scholarship, creative work and learning, currently in evidence.

As various presenters advised during the symposium, for USIU-Africa to continue on its trajectory of excellence in all areas, research/creative work must be at the center of every decision made, policies formulated, curriculum drafted and mounted, and in the development and implementation of the University’s Strategic Plan.

The main event was supported by a week-long exhibition curated by Senior Librarian Mary W. Ngure in the library lobby which culminated in an afternoon of scholarship, poetry and music by School of Pharmacy faculty member Dr. Calvin Andeve, student poet Eliseus Bamporineza, and Visiting Lecturer, ‘cellist Nancy Jo Snider. The presenters were surrounded by 117 published physical books (authored by USIU-Africa faculty), several manuals, working papers, hundreds of journal articles, medals, art works, trophies and other artifacts, showcasing the diversity, abundance and richness of USIU-Africa’s intellectual, athletic and creative output.

Special recognition and profound thanks must be given to USIU-Africa School of Graduate Studies, Research and Extension Dean, Prof. Amos Njuguna who, in addition to his eloquent remarks concerning research, support and exciting initiatives for both, generously supported this event, truly putting the School’s resources and mission together in an extraordinary celebration of what, beyond all else, this fine institution stands for.
Criminal Justice Club hosts charity drive for Kamiti Primary School

By the Criminal Justice Club Team

The Criminal Justice Club held a 3-day charity drive aimed at raising funds for buying stationery for Kamiti Prison Academy. During the drive, donations were collected from students, staff and faculty, who contributed in kind or in cash.

The total amount raised during the charity drive was Kes. 32,050. The total monetary contribution was Kshs. 21,450, with the sale of 20 branded t-shirts bringing in Kes. 10,600. The money collected was used to buy more stationery and toiletries.

The presentation of donations to Kamiti Prison Academy took place late last month and was carried out by 7 members of the Criminal Justice Club and its patron.

USIU- Africa participates in global Open Access Week

By By Azenath Ateka

USIU-Africa was part of the institutions that came together worldwide in the celebration of Open Access (OA). Open access is the free, immediate, online availability of research articles coupled with the rights to use these articles fully in the digital environment. Proponents of open access argue that research provides the foundation for modern society and that since research leads to breakthroughs, communicating research results is what allows us to turn breakthroughs into better lives.

Themed ‘Open for Whom? Equity in Open Knowledge’, the Open Access week conversations revolved around equity,
inclusion and openness. Exploring this theme Nick Shockey in his blog post asks these important questions: Whose interests are being prioritized in the actions we take and in the platforms that we support? Whose voices are excluded? Are underrepresented groups included as full partners from the beginning? As open becomes the default, and as work towards a future where knowledge is not just open but where participation is open for all, all stakeholders must be intentional about designing these new, open systems to ensure that they are inclusive, equitable, and truly serve the needs of a diverse global community.

The fact that very little is coming out of Africa in terms of research and scholarly output cannot be overemphasized. We need to stop and think of how we can contribute to the world archive of knowledge as individuals and as an institution. This article suggests that one way we can start to contribute to openness and to the world archive is through an understanding of Open Educational Resources, using, sharing and participating in the creation of these education and knowledge-advancing resources. Is it possible that by not taking part in the use, sharing or creation of OERs we are excluding ourselves, our region, our communities, and our voices? What can we do to move out of the ‘underrepresented group’?

What are Open Education Resources?

Open Educational Resources (OERs) are teaching, learning and research materials in any medium – digital or otherwise – that reside in the public domain or have been released under an open license that permits no-cost access, use, adaptation and redistribution by others with no or limited restrictions. OERs range from textbooks to curricula, syllabi, pdf lecture notes, power point slides assignments, tests, projects, audio, video and animation.

The term Open Educational Resources (OERs) first emerged at UNESCO’s 2002 Forum, it has since increasingly gained recognition by the international community as an innovative tool for meeting the challenges of providing lifelong learning opportunities for learners from diverse levels and modes of education worldwide. A global community of OER producers has emerged and institutions are incorporating these resources into their teaching and learning strategies supported especially by the expanded technology-mediated approaches to deliver learning worldwide.

For further information on how to create an Open Education Resource, please visit the Library or contact Azenath Ateka on aateka@usiu.ac.ke

UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) awards USIU-Africa with prestigious grant

By Dr. Fatma Ali

UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) has awarded USIU-Africa with a grant following the successful presentation of a proposal to develop open, critical and interdisciplinary network on Gender and Responding to Violent Extremism (GARVE). The project will be funded by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC), a British Research Council that provides government funding for grants to undertake research.

USIU-Africa was awarded the grant under the category of the Global Challenge Research Fund (GCRF) Gender and Violent Extremism Network which is part of the UK’s Official Development Assistance (ODA) with the aim to support cutting-edge research that addresses challenges faced by developing countries. This grant is also meant to facilitate collaboration between universities, research centers and think tanks in the global North and global South. The grant will run for 2 years, from 2019-2021.

Under the grant funding by EPSRC, USIU-Africa is one of two universities from Kenya that have been awarded the prestigious grant. As a tripartite grant, USIU-Africa is the Lead Research Organization through the International Relations Department, led by Dr. Ali as the Principle Investigator in collaboration with Dr. Sahla Aroussi from Coventry University in the UK as the Co-Investigator and Ms. Pauline Skaper from the Rift Valley Institute (RVI) in Nairobi. The University’s status as a Lead Research Organization means that upon success of the grant, any School/Department/individual in USIU-Africa can apply for grants and have a higher chance of winning it.

For further information on the award, click here.
Empowered women empowering women: the women behind USIU–Africa Radio

By Michelle Nyaribari

Recent global statistics show that women are considered a minority, which as a result means that they are addressed less professionally in the workplace, in addition to facing macroaggressions in the mostly male-dominated work environment. However, two women at the helm of USIU Radio, Aruna Saidi and Cecilia Macharia are seeking to challenge this norm.

Aruna Saidi, a senior Hotel and Restaurant Management student at United States International University – Africa (USIU-A) began her journey at USIU Radio, as soon as she joined the university in the year 2016. She currently is serving as the Head of Radio, which involves being a link between the university’s faculty and the station.

Cecilia Macharia, on the other hand, joined the university in the year 2016 and is currently a senior International Business Administrations student. She joined the station in early 2018 and is now its Head of Public Relations. Through digital marketing on social media platforms, Cecilia is able to grow the listenership and connect the community to the radio station, linking her degree concentration in marketing, to her newfound passion of radio broadcasting.

The duo, alongside sophomore Journalism student Amina Ismail are presenters on The Sauce, which airs every Tuesday and Thursday from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. The show has a pan-African outlook, showcasing music, news and trending topics from across the continent.

When asked to describe herself, Miss Saidi said “I’d like to think of myself as confident, although I can be an introvert at times and I love all things food,” she said. “Outside of radio, I’m a MC and also a DJ – any excuse to be the life of the party.”

Cecilia, on the other hand notes that she is trying to find her footing in life, which she hopes to have found before she graduates next year. “For now, I just lend a helping hand here and there in the family business – hoping that practice will definitely make perfect and I will be ready for whatever the world throws at me,” she added.

With barely a few months left in their stay at the university, and by extension at USIU Radio, both Cecilia and Aruna have motivated and encouraged fellow ladies within the radio team to gain interest in taking up leadership roles. The two ladies are supportive team-players and inspiring leaders, with their efforts not going unnoticed in the USIU radio team, and for that we applaud them.

They are the embodiment of the words of former United States of America First Lady, Michelle Obama, “There is no limit as to what we, as women, can accomplish”.

Did you know: Fundraising at USIU–Africa

By Prof. Paul Zeleza

The Office of Fundraising within the Division of Advancement exists primarily to generate non-tuition revenue to support the University’s priority areas. The office works closely with the University’s different divisions and governance bodies to promote the diversification of revenue streams for the University. The work of the office is complemented by the income generating efforts undertaken by the academic schools and departments through faculty research and consultancies, as well as through grants and contacts.

The main sources of non-tuition revenues for the University include the following:

- Giving by the University’s internal constituencies (students, faculty, staff, administrators, and members of the University Council and Board of Trustees).
- Donations.
- Grants and contracts.
- Hosting conferences and workshops.
USIU-Africa alumni wins scholarship to prestigious Turkish University

By the International Relations Department

Mercy Rotino, an International Relations graduate has been awarded a Türkiye Bursları scholarship, on which she is pursuing her Masters in International Relations at Dokuz Eylul University, Izmir- Turkey. Prior to this Mercy worked at the Council of Governors where she worked under the arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs) committee. Her key achievements included planning of the inaugural ASAL conference in 2018, and being the point person at the Council providing linkage between the Kenyan 23 ASALs Counties to development partners, and the development of the ASAL Committee Work plan and budget for year 2017/2018 and 2018/2019.

Mercy graduated in 2017 with a major in International Relations, concentration in Development Studies and a Minor in Diplomacy and Foreign Policy. She also interned at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs where she worked under the Great Lakes region Directorate, participating in major conferences and meetings including an ‘Expert and Stakeholders meeting on Natural Resources and Good Governance’ which was held in July 2017, and an ‘Interactive and Reflection Forum on Mediation Capacities’ held in August, 2017.

Speaking on her experience while at USIU-Africa, Mercy noted that the academic environment at the University was what pushed her to achieve her dreams.

“United States International University- Africa gave me an opportunity to grow. I will cherish the willingness of the professors and students who helped me secure my goals and dreams. It is hard to think where I would be today without them. It truly is education to take you places. I am humbled to be an alumna.”

Media Mentions

Compiled by Diana Meso.

November 7: The Standard mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled “Lakers keen to bounce back after two losses.”
https://www.usiu.ac.ke/1490/standard-lakers-keen-bounce-back-after-two-losses

November 4: USIU-Africa was mentioned by The Star in an article titled “Otieno urges his side to be clinical after draw against Jaguars.”
https://www.usiu.ac.ke/1489/star-otieno-urges-his-side-be-clinical-after-draw-against-jaguars

November 4: The Standard mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled “Rugby: Masinde Muliro lecture USIU on how to win ties.”

November 3: The Daily Nation mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled “Mombasa stun KCA to open promotion race.”
https://www.usiu.ac.ke/1487/daily-nation-mombasa-stun-kca-open-promotion-race

November 2: The Star mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled “Strathmore seek redemption over Western Jaguars.”
https://www.usiu.ac.ke/1486/star-strathmore-seek-redemption-over-western-jaguars

November 1: USIU-Africa was mentioned by the Daily Nation in an article titled “Warriors, Eldonets look to close out quarter-final play-offs.”

November 1: The Daily Nation mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled “Strathmore out to ease relegation woes.”

November 1: USIU-Africa was mentioned by the Daily Nation in an article titled “Machine, Leos clash highlight of KRU Championship this weekend.”
https://www.usiu.ac.ke/1483/daily-nation-machine-leos-clash-highlight-kruchampionship-weekend
Sport Updates

By Ernest Mwanzi

Basketball
On Saturday, November 2, during the Kenya Basketball Federation (KBF) Premiere league matches played at Nyayo Gymnasium the ladies team lost to Strathmore University 39 – 52 and the next day recovered to beat Zetech University 40 – 38 at the same venue.

Swimming
The swimming team ‘Dolphins’ emerged overall winners during the Super Swimming league at Makini School on November 2.

Hockey
The Hockey men’s team played to a one all draw against Jaguars at City Park during the Kenya Hockey Union league matches on November 2.

Karate
In the Kenya Universities Sports Association Nairobi Conference (NAKUSA) Karate tournament played on November 2 at USIU-Africa, both the ladies and men’s team attained position two in Kata, while in Kumite the ladies got the second position and the men emerged fourth. The team attained position two overall.

Tae Kwon Do
Both the ladies and the men’s team emerged winners of the Budokan Open Karate Tournament played at Machakos on November 3. The men’s team got 2 gold medals, 2 silvers medals and 2 bronze medals while the ladies got 4 gold medals.

Rugby
On November 2, the Rugby team lost to Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology 15 – 3 at Kakamega during their Kenya Rugby Union league match.

Chess
The team commenced the NAKUSA Chess league by winning 5 out of their 6 games at Kenyatta University on November 3.