



FIRST DOCTORS, DENTISTS ENTER WORKFORCE

● Joy as UCU sends pioneer medical students into practice



Uganda Christian University (UCU) Vice Chancellor Assoc. Prof. Aaron Mushengyezi (left) congratulates graduands of Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery, and Bachelor of Dental Surgery after their commissioning ceremony on July 27, 2023. The following day, UCU graduated 45 students from its School of Medicine and nine students from the School of Dentistry. They were part of the 1,006 students who received academic awards on July 28, 2023. The medical professionals are the first batch since the schools started in 2018. The Uganda Medical Internship Committee under the Ministry of Health selects and places medical interns. SPECIAL COVERAGE OF THE STORIES FROM SoM AND SoD ON PAGES 15-20

Photo by Irene Best Nyapendi

BREAKING BARRIERS



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Uganda's
first female
neurosurgeon**

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TALES OF NEW BISHOPS

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Pictured are Ebenezer team members (front row, left to right) Pauline Luba, Patty Huston-Holm, Dorothy Tushemereirwe; (second row, left to right) Irene Best Nyapendi, Constantine Odongo, Kefas Ssenoga; and (top row, left to right) Kenneth Nsiko, Jimmy Siyasa and Timothy Murungi. Missing from the photo are Edwin Byarugaba, an IT consultant; Peggy Noll, the wife of UCU's first Vice Chancellor Prof. Stephen Noll and the final copy editor for Ebenezer; and current and former student contributors, including Olum Douglas, Emma Ilungole and Muchwa Christopher Mogal.



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Behind the Ebenezer publication

By definition and in Hebrew, *Ebenezer* means “stone of help.” The application is from 1 Samuel 7:12 where a stone is set up in commemoration of God’s help to the Israelites in their victory over the Philistines at Mizpah.

Uganda Partners, a Pennsylvania, USA, based non-profit supporting Uganda Christian University (UCU) for more than two decades, chose *Ebenezer* as the title for its printed publication in 2022. That *Ebenezer*, like this one in 2023, was a snapshot of the more than 150 stories the NGO publishes as e-versions in a year’s time and on its Web pages at <https://www.ugandapartners.org>.

This 2023 *Ebenezer* features the historic occasion of UCU’s first graduation of doctors and dentists.

Led by the Uganda Partners volunteer communications director, Patty Huston-Holm (Ohio, USA), *Ebenezer* 2023 contains photos and stories produced by a team of Ugandan professionals and UCU interns.

The *Ebenezer* team’s objective with this publication is to provide information about some of UCU’s many successes within 11 UCU faculties and schools. The praise for the product goes to God. To Him, go the honour and glory. Amen.

School of Journalism unveils first PhD program

By John Semakula

A journey of a thousand miles starts with one step.

This is true for Uganda Christian University's (UCU) School of Journalism, Media and Communication (JMC), whose journey of 22 years has led to the launch of its first PhD program.

The National Council for Higher Education (NCHE), a body charged with regulating higher education in Uganda, accredited the advanced degree program on August 21, 2023.

The School of JMC then launched the PhD in September. The launch meant advertising, admitting new students and JMC professors initiating a high-quality curriculum.

In 2001, when the UCU Department of Mass Communication started with only one undergraduate degree program, it was not easy to envisage this level of transformation. At that time, 21 years ago, the department had no academic staff with a PhD.

But today the School of JMC prides itself in having several renowned communication scholars with doctoral degrees. These include Prof. Monica Chibita and Prof. James Kiwanuka Tondo. The PhD accreditation required a detailed consultative needs assessment, which involved industry practitioners, academics, current and prospective students.

"The assessment established that indeed there was demand for PhD training in communication in Uganda, where only Makerere University was offering a PhD in the field by research," the School of JMC statement read.

Prof. Chibita, the Dean of the School, affirmed the need for the introduction of the PhD.

"The PhD program seeks to fill a gap in teaching, research and supervision at institutions of higher education in the East African region, using contextual curricular and innovative methods of delivery," she said.

She noted that the program is aligned with the University's strategic vision of growing research,



Team from Norway, Uganda, Rwanda and South Africa, strategizing for the projects under the NORHED (Norwegian Programme for Capacity Development in Higher Education and Research for Development) II funds, which include starting the UCU School of Journalism, Media and Communications PhD program

About the program

PhD candidates will undertake coursework, proposal writing and research. They will be encouraged to conduct collaborative research with faculty members and partner universities.

The program

Full-time students will be expected to complete within three to four years while part-time students in five to six years. The programme will accept at least 10 students for the start.

innovations and partnerships. "The University aims to promote rigorous focused research that leads to

improved understanding and innovations to solve specific challenges in Uganda and abroad," Chibita said, also

emphasizing that the PhD will contribute to the University's goal of recruiting and retaining staff with excellence in teaching and research.

According to the School, the program started off with an 11-strong faculty, comprising four professors, two associate professors, and five senior lecturers drawn from the UCU School of JMC; the University of KwaZulu-Natal (South Africa); University of Rwanda; and NLA University College in Norway.

Chibita said, "The faculty composition reflects strong collaboration between the partner universities, and continued support for capacity development in higher education and research for development by the Norwegian Programme for Capacity Development in Higher Education and Research for Development (NORHED)."

The program covers four broad areas: media democracy

and development in Africa; media, gender, identity and participation; media and crisis; and health and science communication.

There will be a strong emphasis placed on innovative teaching and research methods and on the need to decolonise communication theory, method and curricula. PhD candidates will undertake coursework, proposal writing and research.

They will be encouraged to conduct collaborative research with faculty members and partner universities.

Full-time students will be expected to complete the program within three to four years while part-time students in five to six years. The programme will accept at least 10 doctoral students for the start.

Edited from a version published at www.ugandapartners.org on September 29, 2023



Artist adds touch to business hub

Artist Joshua Kabitanya seated by mural next to the UCU School of Business hub.

By Patty Huston-Holm

On an August morning and with a student whistling “Jesus paid it all” from Uganda Christian University’s (UCU) nearby business incubation center, Joshua Kabitanya talks about the significance of stickers inside chewing gum wrappers, why a misshapen tree is more interesting than a symmetrical one and details of a mural project on the UCU Mukono campus.

Kabitanya is an artist. Some of his talent is visibly adjacent to what the School of Business (SoB) calls an incubation hub – named because it encourages entrepreneurial ideas.

Sitting at the base of the painting that covers a once-gray cylindrical water tank, Kabitanya’s all black attire and subdued demeanor contrast with the bold colors, messages and images on the mural. The resident of the village outside UCU’s gates admits his introversion with people and extroversion with his craft.

“I hear music, I sense nature, I feel God,” Kabitanya said of his artistic process.

On this day, as sunshine envelops Kabitanya, he points to a misshapen, asymmetrical tree.

“It’s the tree that isn’t uniform that’s interesting,” he said.

The mural, sandwiched between student dorms and up a hill from the library and Noll buildings, was the idea of American Mary Chowenhill, a UCU School of Business lecturer and missionary with the Society of Anglican Missionaries and Senders (SAMS). She was supported by American Jack Klenk, a long-time UCU supporter and a member of the board for the UCU Partners NGO, based in Pennsylvania, USA. Both had previously acquired Kabitanya’s works.

Kabitanya was the mural’s lead artist with contributions from various others, mostly non-artists.

Components of the artistic story include six rays of light reflective of the work of God and people, omitting the seventh (day of rest); a rendition of the UCU Bishop Tucker building; and Alpha and Omega reminders that God remains from the beginning to the end of time.

Kabitanya’s earliest recollection of others noticing his talent for art was when he was in Primary 3. He took to copying images of sports stars on stickers packaged with chewing gum. Other children and teachers were watching.

“I became the one who teachers would ask to draw things on the board during lessons,” he recalled.

While certain of a destiny to art, Kabitanya was engaged in other work, making bricks and collecting stones for cement to pay for his clothing and school needs. In his mid-20s and with a diploma in electrical engineering from Kyambogo University, he decided to get serious with his artistic passion. Things were moving along, albeit slowly, before Covid hit.

That’s when Chowenhill, Klenk and the leadership at the UCU SoB stepped in, helping Kabitanya with a business plan as is part of what the incubator does. Klenk and others secured funding.

The mural at the SoB hub was unveiled in a May 24, 2022, ceremony and continues as a reminder of the importance of creation and application of learning to real-world needs and desires.

Edited from a longer version published at www.ugandapartners.org on September 16, 2022

Nantongo’s journey to Social Work PhD

By Patty Huston-Holm

Molly Nantongo has come a long way from the 10-year-old “dancing girl with the gap in her teeth.”

A 2015 Uganda Christian University (UCU) alum with a Bachelor of Social Work and Social Administration, she received a Masters in Social Work from the University of California in Berkeley in 2023. Her achievement there landed her a full scholarship for a PhD in social work at Arizona State University. On Aug. 17, she started studies on the Tempe, Ariz., campus.

“I am aware it will be a challenging journey,” she typed into an email from Uganda prior to heading back to the United States. “However, I am prepared for the difficulties and believe that with God’s grace, I will persevere.”

For Molly, her journey into social work started with dance.

In 2002, Molly was one of four children living with a single

mother, a former Hutu in Rwanda, in the Kampala slum suburb of Kirombe. Missing school and food on the table were an accepted way of life. One such day, she jumped gleefully onto a political campaign truck filled with music blaring from loudspeakers. From there, she danced, oblivious to anyone watching, before jumping off.

Because of her dancing, she was noticed on the truck. Because of the gap in her front teeth, she was found by an NGO.

That organization, now known as Undugu Society of Kenya, helped Molly finish primary school. Another organization, Empower African Children, got her to the United States as a member of the Spirit of Uganda Various Art-



UCU alum, Molly Nantongo, with a Masters of Social Work from the University of California before heading to Arizona State University on a full doctoral scholarship.

dance performances with a troupe at Uganda’s Ndere Cultural Arts Center. She pieced together earnings from dancing and teaching undergraduate students in the university’s foundation courses.

Alas, as for many, Covid was a hardship. A degree meant little without a place to teach, and dancing meant little without an audience. Molly started a fruit business to support herself and her mom. A year into being a street seller, a friend suggested she apply for a scholarship through the American Embassy. Without much optimism as one of 60 candidates for one slot, she participated and was chosen.

Once in California, she applied for a \$10,000 “Davis Project for Peace” grant – one designed to help Ugandan youth (ages 14-20) who are victims of Covid shutdown impacts, including pregnant-out-of-wedlock girls. The 15-week project,

entitled Ntongo Skills4Peace, took place through mid-August 2022 with assistance to several thousand youth.

“If we don’t do something now, these girls will end up in prostitution,” Molly, turning age 31 in October 2023, said. “I used the grant here to focus on vocational skills like catering and tailoring, hair dressing and welding for these vulnerable youth.”

As Molly continues her education in the USA, she has her sights on working someday for USAID, UNICEF, United Nations or World Bank, with her forever passion to help those in poverty as she once was.

Edited from a longer version published at www.ugandapartners.org on August 18, 2023

Mentoring children

“I want to start mentoring sessions for children who have been born and raised in the slums to give them hope and connect them to different resources,” she said, smiling to show the gap in her teeth.

She doesn’t intend to plug that opening. And she doesn’t plan to stop dancing.

ists – Spirit of Uganda: 2008 Tour Album Reviews, Songs & More | AllMusic.

Molly never took her support and opportunities for granted. She worked hard, always seeking how she could help others. She got a meager salary from

UCU alum bishops share similar challenges in path to ministry

By Pauline Luba

The Rt. Rev. Enos Kitto Kagodo and the Rt. Rev. Onesimus Asiimwe have a lot in common. They are both Uganda Christian University (UCU) alumni, both rose to prominence in the Anglican Church, and both encountered youthful missteps.

“Peer pressure got me into a life full of drinking,” Bishop Kagodo, of the Mukono Diocese, said. “We would sneak out of Bishop West Senior – my secondary school – and go drinking.”

At 19, Kagodo befriended another boy whose mother sold local brew. What started as a drinking one-off became a hab-

it, leading Kagodo to alcoholism and juvenile delinquency.

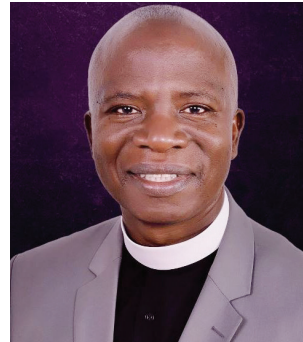
Bishop Asiimwe, of the North Kigezi Diocese, also took to youthful drinking alcohol and smoking cigarettes. However, after one night of heavy drinking, Bishop Asiimwe said he heard the voice of the Lord say to him: “Onesimus, do you not know that your body is the Temple of God?”

Both bishops hit points in their lives where they desired change. While still in secondary school, Kagodo would attend church every Sunday. One day, the church hosted a preacher whose gospel was especially connected with Kagodo. He felt the need to know God more and, in order to do



Mukono Diocese Bishop, Enos Kitto Kagodo (left), and Bishop Onesimus Asiimwe, newly consecrated as bishop of the Anglican Diocese of North Kigezi, both overcame juvenile missteps in their journey to Christ.

that, he would have to get rid of his worldly pleasure. When he did, God, indeed, made him discover a new life.



But change, seldom a welcome idea in people's lives, didn't happen readily. For Kagodo, quitting alcohol meant

losing his alcohol-drinking friends and figuring out how to spend the time when he wasn't drinking.

According to information from the Church of Uganda, Bishop Asiimwe as a youth “threw away the cigarette that was dangling between his fingers and called on Jesus for salvation.” The day was January 8, 1988.

Since that day, Bishop Asiimwe says he developed a passion for preaching to youth, especially those facing social challenges such as alcoholism.

Bishop Asiimwe, who has been the chaplain of the Anglican community at Makerere University in Uganda, thanked the retired Archbishop of

Uganda Henry Luke Orombi for being “a great mentor” in his life during his consecration ceremony on March 12, 2023, at Emmanuel Cathedral Kinyansano in Rukungiri district, western Uganda.

Rev. Kagodo, on the other hand, became Bishop of the Mukono Diocese on February 26, 2023, at a consecration ceremony at the St. Philip's and St. Andrew's Cathedral in Mukono. “Whatever the outcome, I would have praised the Lord,” Bishop Kagodo said.

Edited from a longer version published at www.ugandapartners.org on April 19, 2023 (Asiimwe) and March 21, 2023 (Kagodo)

Law student finds calling with nodding syndrome victims

By Douglas Olum

Gloria Laker, a fourth-year Bachelor of Laws student at Uganda Christian University (UCU), met her first nodding syndrome patient when visiting an ailing grandfather in November 2019 at Gulu Regional Referral Hospital in northern Uganda.

As she walked past the women's ward, Laker saw a teenage patient with severe burns on much of her upper body.

The girl, lying alone on the bare floor, was jerking and breathing heavily with sticky saliva flowing profusely out of her mouth. She appeared malnourished with a protruding belly.

Concerned about the girl's condition, Laker made inquiries and learned the girl was in a seizure from a debilitating neurological disease called nodding syndrome. Laker's subsequent research revealed the tragic helplessness of many children suffering from the condition in northern Uganda.

As of December 2022, the Uganda Ministry of Health reported at least 1,700 children from northern Uganda's Pader, Amuru, Gulu, Kitgum and Omoro districts have been diagnosed.

“Nothing about this girl was pleasing,” Laker said. “I promised myself that if I can only help one person in such a situation, if I can only help 10 percent of those victims, if I can only help a few and instill in them hope and help them carry forward, I would be fulfilled.”

Laker's compassionate exploration has led her into the lives of several children and families affected by this mysterious, sparsely researched disease.

In 2023, Laker, 22, is leading the non-profit Atwero Child Foundation alongside four colleagues, to support the nodding syndrome-affected children and their families. Through the initiative, she has fed and clothed many victims.

In June 2022, the foundation conducted a run dubbed “Don't Touch Me,” to bring to light the plight of females victimized by nodding syndrome and sexual abuse.



The stats

As of December 2022, the Uganda Ministry of Health reported at least 1,700 children from northern Uganda's Pader, Amuru, Gulu, Kitgum and Omoro districts have been diagnosed.

Gloria Laker, a fourth-year Bachelor of Laws student at Uganda Christian University, serves food to a mother of a nodding syndrome victim during a community outreach in northern Uganda

In November 2022, the organization spearheaded a stakeholder engagement that attracted politicians, cultural and religious leaders and others to learn about and connect with the nodding syndrome victims and their families. In De-

cember 2022, Atwero collected used clothing and food, distributed to the victims and families, feeding over 1,000 people in what was dubbed the “Christmas Love Giveaway.”

Atwero also conducted a legal support outreach in which around 90 law students from UCU and other

About the disease

Nodding Syndrome is a debilitating neurological disease that manifests in children and youth ages 3 to 18.

The disease, occurring in clusters in sub-Saharan Africa, manifests through severe symptoms, such as periodic head nodding and violent epileptic seizures, dizziness, excessive sleepiness, stunted physical growth, loss of attention, delayed puberty and depression. It is not curable but treatable.

In northern Uganda, children have been identified as affected by the disease over the last 20 years.

Many have succumbed to it due to lack of proper treatment.

universities counseled victims and families on how they could seek legal redress, especially for the sexually abused.

“Sometimes I get overwhelmed and I feel like I should give up,” Laker said. “But quitting now will be letting the helpless children and families down.”

Edited from a longer version published at www.ugandapartners.org on June 16, 2023

Text by Patty Huston-Holm, visuals by Irene Best Nyapendi

Daphine Oitamong talks about Sophie, who walked to school two kilometers (1.3 miles) barefooted with rat bites on her heels. Nannyanga Restetuta talks about Dora, who went from “jolly and active” to being withdrawn after her parents left her in the care of a sexually abusive uncle. Nancy Ongom, who mentions the name Jafa, grapples to pick just one.

There are so many.

Daphine, Nancy and Restetuta, who prefers the name Resty, are Uganda primary school teachers with over 100 students per class. While they barely know each other and work in different schools, the young women share the distinction of being Teach for Uganda fellows, having Uganda Christian University (UCU) degrees and owning a passion to serve “the least of these,” as they know from Matthew 25:40.

The three UCU alum are among 226 men and women engaged in two-year fellowships helping the poorest of the poor ages 4 to 10 in Uganda’s Kayunga, Mayuge, Namutumba, Mukono, Buikwe, Namayingo and Bugiri districts, according to Decimon Wandera, who serves as a coach for the fellows.

Charlotte Iraguha, co-founder and managing director for the seven-year-old Teach for Uganda NGO, says there are 40,000 students in 151 public schools where fellows are assigned. Uganda has nearly nine million elementary school children.

Charlotte, a former teacher, explained that her organization’s model has government teachers working alongside fellows to build a “full child – not just focusing on grades.” Fellows with degrees in various programs teach children and, as time permits, engage with parents.

“When I first came here, I thought I had arrived in another country,” Daphine said of the primitive, rural Namutumba area of the Kamudooke Primary School where she teaches. “I grew up in Kampala and never traveled here.”

Namutumba is more than four hours from Uganda’s capital city as well as four hours from where Resty and Nancy teach in Mayuge district. The often-rugged roads leading to all three schools are lined with brick and mud-and-wattle homes, children carrying jerry cans of water from bore holes and fields of bananas, maize,

Their hearts beat for Uganda’s young learners



Resty during one of her lessons at Kigandaalo Primary School

The value of helping others

For Daphine, Resty and Nancy, the three UCU teaching alums, the work doesn’t end with a school day among small children.

Their afternoon hours may find them seated with a child’s custodial parent, helping the secondary girls make and understand how to re-use sanitary pads, preparing lessons for the next day and fundraising. Using their UCU alum network, they have raised money for food and clothing for their neediest schoolchildren.

“I learned the value of helping others through UCU’s Save the Buddy program,” Daphine said. “At UCU, we would be looking around, especially at exam time, to see if we had extra money to help classmates pay fees so they can sit for exams.” According to Daphine, Nancy and Resty, living amongst latrines, filth and dust and the challenged home lives of the children seated before them contains many life lessons and reminders of how Jesus might have lived.

Like Jesus, Daphine feels she is going deep and “testing my strength.”

cassava and sugarcane.

According to Decimon, 70 percent of the fellows stick it out despite the fact that most didn’t grow up the way the schools’ students do.

Resty, 26, and Daphine, 29, who graduated with UCU Bachelor of Arts in Education degrees in 2021; and Nancy, 29, who got her UCU degree in law in 2017, stayed. For them,

what started out as sh550,00 (\$150) per month for a job vs. no job at all has become a mission for positive change and a reminder of the biblical lessons from UCU.

Quoting Luke 6:38 “give and it shall be given unto you,” Nancy said she interprets that verse to include love, compassion and skill that could break the cycle of poverty she sees



Daphine (center) with student and local leader

every day.

She entered her teaching post at Kaluuba Primary School with no formalized pedagogical training but a drive to “go deep in humanitarian action,” to challenge herself and to learn what she could from trained government teachers.

Resty and Daphine applaud

the teacher training that came with their undergraduate degrees, citing the value of psychology, discipline and teaching methods they gleaned from the classroom. At the same time, they point out practical experience gaps – especially when working with children in high-poverty, rural areas.

These children come to school dirty and hungry or not at all as they are needed at home to plant and harvest food. One frequently absent student explained that her belly is full if she climbs a tree to eat mangos near her home but empty as she sits at a desk at school.

“The school provides porridge as the main food for children during lunch but only for those whose parents can afford to bring some maize so we still have a lot who go the whole day without a meal,” Nancy said. “It breaks my heart.”

Resty and other teachers at Kigandaalo Primary School start each day with a 7:45 a.m. hair, teeth, body, clothing, and cleanliness check. Discovery of lice means the child goes home.

“Many days, it helps to remember the servanthood, diligence and Christ-centeredness that was part of our UCU character building because that is what we do,” Resty said. “At the same time, I see that our university life was soft. We weren’t prepared for work this hard.”

Hard means understanding a non-native language from children and parents with little to no knowledge of English in a country with as many as 70 different dialects. Resty and Daphine have Luganda as their mother tongue in schools with children speaking Lusoga and Ateso, respectively. Nancy, who speaks Acholi from her native Gulu, is surrounded daily by indigenous Lusoga speakers.

Dr. James Taabu Busimba, Head of the Department of Literature and Languages, UCU School of Education, agreed with the value of academic application in real-world contexts.

“Knowledge gained is as useless as pride if filed away and never applied,” he said, repeating a quote attributed to several writers and politicians.

On one day in July, Resty was using phonics and memorization to teach English while Nancy was teaching numbers and how to add them together. Crammed at desks in the two school locations, children were sounding out the words “poison” and “chicken” for Resty and adding the numbers three and four to equal seven for Nancy.

Resty believes that the work in the schools, no matter how difficult, is preparing them for other opportunities. From Nancy: “If God gave his only son, we can give this.”

Edited from a longer version published at www.ugandapartners.org on July 31, 2023

UCU researchers develop 3 new nakati varieties

Uganda Christian University (UCU) has a reputation for research excellence. Examples include pioneering research in vegetables and solar energy, supported by funding from the European Union. The university also has been at the forefront of biomass and climate change research, receiving funding from the Fund for Innovation in Development (FID). This story focuses on nakati, also known as the African eggplant.

By Jimmy Siyasa

Renowned for its commitment to research excellence, the Uganda Christian University Faculty of Agricultural Sciences, previously led by Prof. Elizabeth Kizito, proudly presents three extraordinary varieties of *Solanum aethiopicum* shum, commonly known as nakati – the beloved African eggplant.

Introduced as the UCU-Nakati 1, UCU Nakati-2, and UCU Nakati-3, these innovative nakati varieties mark a significant milestone in Uganda and Africa.

The varieties offer farmers a reliable and easily accessible source of African nakati seed. Previously, nakati farmers relied on saved seeds from previous seasons or obtained them from neighbors, friends, and relatives, leading to limited availability and inconsistent quality. One will no longer need to rely on uncertain or unreliable sources as UCU's nakati varieties ensure consistent quality and ample supply for farming needs.

The development of these nakati varieties involved making crosses over multiple generations, meticulous selection, and ensuring distinctiveness, and uniformity for improved yield and desirable plant characteristics.

Each variety has been carefully tailored to meet the expectations of farmers and consumers, incorporating valuable feedback from end-users and thorough market surveys.

These varieties have received certification by the National Variety Release Committee: A Committee of the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry, and Fisheries, ensuring the highest standards of excellence.

Characteristics of the Nakati varieties

Each of the varieties has unique characteristics.

Practical applications, real-world scenarios

With over 200 tons of nakati traded weekly in major markets, this crop plays a crucial role in Uganda's urban and peri-urban areas, surpassing even the country's main cash crop – coffee. The popularity of nakati extends beyond Uganda, reaching Cameroon, Burkina Faso, and Nigeria. Its nutritional and economic value makes it an indispensable part of traditional dishes and a means of livelihood for poor and unemployed women and youth.



The three new varieties



Variety 1: E11



Variety 2: E15



Variety 3: E16

UCU-Nakati 1:

UCU-Nakati 1 is green-stemmed, has green leaves and leaf veins, and the leaf margins (the boundary area of the leaf that is extending along the edge of the leaf) are generally whole. Nakati 1 is not drought tolerant.

It was found in sensory evaluations with consumers and market vendors to be relatively bitter. Its average yield per acre is 982.4 kg/acre.

UCU-Nakati 2:

UCU-Nakati 2 has green-purple stems and green leaf blades. The leaf margins are moderately serrated. Nakati-2 has green-purple stems and green leaf blades. The mean fresh leaf yield at harvest is 936.9 kg/acre.

Nakati 2 was identified as a drought-tolerant genotype. In sensory evaluations with consumers and market vendors, products had a generally appealing aroma, appearance, and flavour.

UCU-Nakati 3:

UCU-Nakati 3, on the other hand, is purple-stemmed, has



Liz Kizito, the Directorate of Research, Partnerships and Innovation at UCU

green leaves with green-purple leaf veins, and has a deeper serrated leaf margin. The leaf yield at harvest maturity, about 8 weeks after planting, is 976.3 kg/acre.

Nakati 3 is moderately drought tolerant and has a generally appealing aroma, appearance and flavour in sensory evaluations with consumers and market vendors.

Implications and applications:

nakati.

This intervention will not only offer farmers quality-assured varieties of AIVs but also set standards for subsequent variety evaluation for distinctiveness, uniformity, and stability (DUS) as well as value for cultivation and use.

Releasing these varieties brings to the fore, especially for Africans, the availability of quality seed to meet their nutritional and income security needs because these can now be potentially accessed in agoshops or stores, something that was impossible until recently.

AIVs such as the UCU nakati varieties hold immense practical applications and can address real-world challenges in achieving sustainable development goals (SDGs).

These vegetables have the potential to alleviate hidden hunger (SDG 2 - End hunger) and poverty (SDG 1 - Zero poverty), particularly among vulnerable groups like women and children under five.

In Uganda, a country with high levels of undernutrition, where 3 in 10 children under five are stunted and about 3.5% body wasting, the nutritional value of nakati is significant.

It is rich in fiber, minerals, carotene, proteins, fats, ash, crude fiber, carbohydrates, calcium, magnesium, iron, and phytochemicals with therapeutic properties, making it essential in preventing nutrient deficiency diseases and non-communicable diseases.

By improving crop varieties and enhancing productivity and incomes for farmers, poverty reduction and improved food security can be achieved, as farmers who cultivate improved varieties often earn more and enjoy better livelihoods.

Expert reviews

Dr. Ssebuliba James, agronomist and former head of the Department of Crop Production at Makerere University College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences: "This is a great addition to knowledge. Research plays a crucial role in the addition of new knowledge, which ultimately advances our understanding of the world and contributes to various areas

of daily life. When new knowledge is curated and put in the right hands, it has the power to bring about high-value change in society."

Dr. Godfrey Asea, Director of Research, National Crops Resources Research Institute, Namulonge: "This is a good opportunity as a starting point to harness the indigenous vegetable resources."

Dr. Flavia Kabeere, Seed Technologist and Consultant: "These varieties will guarantee quality for consumers."

Collaborations and funding

The UCU community, leadership, and researchers (Prof. Elizabeth Kizito, Dr. Sseremba Godfrey, Mildred Nakanwagi, and Pamel Kabod) expressed appreciation to the European Union, PAEPARD (Platform for African-European Partnership in Agricultural Research for Development), and The World Academy of Sciences (TWAS) for their valuable support.

Funding from the EU through PAEPARD initiated this research, while TWAS contributed to basic research and the selection of drought-tolerant varieties.

Call to action

Others are invited to delve deeper into this groundbreaking research and its potential applications. Seed companies or other stakeholders interested in the multiplication of seeds are invited to place their orders.

For more information, visit the Directorate of Research, Partnerships and Innovation website (<https://grants.ucu.ac.ug>) or directly contact grants@ucu.ac.ug.

A recap

UCU researchers develop three Nakati varieties UCU-Nakati 1; UCU-Nakati 2; UCU-Nakati 3); with immense promise for enhancing food security, reducing poverty, and promoting better health in Uganda and Africa.

Nakati is considered an African Indigenous Vegetable.

Nakati is one of the most important local vegetable species in terms of providing income and food in urban and peri-urban areas of Uganda.

Edited from a longer version published as an advertorial in Daily Monitor on July 21, 2023



(Left to Right) Peter Mutesasira, the Dean UCU Faculty of Law, and Jemimah Jehopio, Emmanuel Okia and Shamira Kitimbo celebrate. Jehopio scored a CGPA of 4.70 and captured the three awards at LDC – the Director's Award, Agaba Muhairwe Prize and the Inspector General of Government accolade.

UCU celebrates law alumni excellence

By Irene Best Nyapendi

Work, dedication and discipline paid off for the Uganda Christian University (UCU) School of Law class of 2020/2021 as these graduates topped the list at the 50th Law Development Center (LDC) graduation. Ten UCU alumni were among the top 20 first-class graduates at the LDC graduation in June of 2023.

Before anyone can practice law in Uganda, they must have a Post-Graduate Diploma in Legal Practice (one academic year) from LDC on top of a degree from a recognized university.

In appreciation of their achievement, UCU held a thanksgiving ceremony to honor these distinguished alumni on July 11 at Nkoyoyo Hall.

This followed the recently concluded LDC graduations at LDC campuses in Uganda. Assoc. Prof. Aaron Mushengyezi, the UCU Vice Chancellor, commended the School of Law staff for their roles in graduates' success and encouraged alumni to consider working at UCU.

"This has been possible because we have a God we serve, a mighty God, and so we shall be a mighty university," Mushengyezi said.

Dr. Peter Mutesasira, Dean of the UCU School of Law, said the accomplishment wasn't easy but is a reflection of the rigor at UCU.

The Vice Chancellor presented distinguished graduates with awards, acknowledging their remarkable achievements. Emmanuel Okia, who achieved a Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) of 4.90 of 5.0, stood as the best performer at LDC. Similarly, Shamira Kitimbo, with a CGPA of 4.80, secured her position as the best female student at LDC, while Reagan Ahumuza excelled as the

top student at Kampala campus with a CGPA of 4.75.

Okia's academic journey took a unique turn. Despite studying Biology, Chemistry, and Mathematics at A-level in Uganda, Okia knew his heart was in a different field.

His transformative moment occurred during a career presentation by Ugandan lawyer Mathias Sekatawa at St. Mary's College, Kisubi.

"Sekatawa's speech is what convinced me to go for a career in law," Okia said.

The 24-year-old has just completed clerkship in Sekatawa's law firm, MMAKS Advocates.

Okia's dedication was supported by UCU's effective lecturer-tutor teaching format, which provided comprehensive understanding. Jemimah Jehopio, with a CGPA of 4.70, clinched three prestigious awards at LDC: the Director's Award, Agaba Muhairwe Prize (presented to the best student in corporate and commercial practice on the postgraduate bar course), and the Inspector General of Government accolade (honoring the outstanding student in trial advocacy).

Jehopio expressed her gratitude, seeing these awards as the realization of her dreams and an acknowledgment of her dedication. LDC became her gateway to unraveling the intricacies of the law, transforming her into a true legal professional.

"At LDC, I applied the theories I acquired during my undergraduate studies through seminar sessions, court visits, and interactions with government agencies, enabling me to witness firsthand how the law operates," explained Jehopio.

Edited from a longer version published at www.ugandapartners.org on May 8, 2023

'If you are hungry, you cannot learn'

By Patty Huston-Holm

"You'll do anything for a soda," the Rev. Richard Mulindwa, coordinator of the Uganda Christian University (UCU) Church Relations office, said. "Prayer is important, but if you're hungry, you can't listen, and you can't learn."

The World Health Organization Global Hunger Index ranks Uganda at 41.4%, which means that more than 4 of 10 people living in the country are not able to meet minimum calorie requirements. They are in need of prayer, Mulindwa agrees, but they need more.

Mulindwa's UCU Church Relations job includes teaching other pastors about delivering God's message through technology, about understanding land issues and about food – the lack of it. Among many biblical reminders of the value of proper nutrition is Matthew 25:35-40 that says, in part, "For I was hungry... You gave me something to eat."

Mulindwa's undergraduate degree in development studies is from Kyambogo University. He has master's degrees in public health and leadership (Faculty of Public Health, Nursing and Midwifery/Save the Mothers) and divinity (Bishop Tucker School of Divinity and Theology) from UCU. He's finishing his PhD in religious studies from the University



The Rev. Mulindwa

of Pretoria, South Africa.

For Mulindwa, his passion in the Save the Mothers program connects to how his mom died from pregnancy preeclampsia (blood pressure condition), robbing him of a mother and a sibling.

"Sixteen mothers die each day in Uganda from maternal-related issues," he said. "These are preventable."

While recognizing multiple needs, Mulindwa, a married father of four, circles everything back to food.

For a half dozen years, Mulindwa, now an Anglican priest, has been practicing what he preaches. It started with a few visits carrying porridge for empty stomachs followed by an officially established Community-Based Organization

(CBO) focused on bringing seeds to help people grow their own food. The CBO, with registration now lapsed, was named Tessa Community Development Initiative.

Feminine hygiene, an increasingly common focus on teaching adolescent girls how to replace the rags and old newspapers they use with reusable pads during their menstrual cycles, is part of the initiative.

"There are seven girls in one location I visit now who are HIV positive and need special diets," Mulindwa said in July 2023. "That's food insecurity."

The bigger umbrella is what Mulindwa calls "famine hygiene" impacting men, women and children of all ages. Famine can result in starvation, malnutrition, disease and even death.

Mulindwa, an orphan whose parents died when he was 12 and who lived on the streets for some time when an aging grandmother was unable to support him, has first-hand experience with food deprivation and how he was pulled out of it at age 17. Two priests supported Mulindwa in his late teens to early 20s.

"God spared my life," he said. "I was determined to give back."

Edited from a longer version published at www.ugandapartners.org on August 4, 2023



Some girls helped locally with food security

New Mbale Guild President overcomes handicapped stigma

By Kefa Senoga

Daniel Kunya has no power to change the perception people may have about his abilities because of a disfigured right leg. His power is in his reaction to that judgment.

Kunya, born with a significantly shorter right leg, says his parents prepared him well for a world of ridicule, where some people cast doubt on ability for those with disabilities.

He says he has been mocked by contemporaries throughout his life. In November last year, as he campaigned to be the Uganda Christian University (UCU) Mbale Campus Guild President, a competitor took jabs at Kunya's uncommon gait. "One of the candidates in the race told students not to allow a man with a disability to lead them," Kunya says, adding: "However, the students chose me."

According to the 30-year-old, the counseling and support he got from his parents enabled him to develop a thicker skin to persevere through bullying to become a student leader throughout his education. He

is the second of four children of Kunya Fred and Mukimba Rose of Namutumba district in eastern Uganda.

He attended St. Henry's School Wakiso for his primary education, where he served as the pupils' leader in charge of sanitation. At Kawala College School, where he attended O'level, Kunya was the student leader in charge of the dining hall; he jumped back into leadership when running for the apex student position of Guild President, which he got.

At the same time, Kunya, a UCU year-two student of Bachelor of Social Work and Social

Student, farmer

Kunya also is actively engaged in growing rice and onions, dispelling perceptions that this physical work is beyond the grasp of a person with special needs.



Kunya in his garden of onions

Administration, is leading and working in finance and farming.

Through his work as a Social Banking Officer with Opportunity Bank, a financial institution in Uganda, Kunya has been responsible for formal banking clients.

As a community-based trainer, he has been able to train more than 1,000 youths in Village Savings and Loans Association, as well as in financial literacy.

He also is actively engaged in farming, dispelling perceptions that this physical work is beyond the grasp of a person with special needs.

"This season, I harvested five acres of rice in Namutumba and last season, I had an onion farm in Namisindwa," Kunya says. Both Namutumba and Namisindwa are districts in eastern Uganda.

Seeing the challenges that people living with disabilities often face in communities, Kunya appeals for a society that is more tolerant and appreciative of their unique physical challenges. He says although he stays purpose-focused, especially when he is mocked, there are days when the psychological torture that he encounters overwhelms him, sometimes reducing him to tears. He has a message to those who invoke psychological torture to those living with disabilities.

"All of us are candidates for disability because you can be moving around and you get involved in an accident," said Kunya.

Edited from a longer version published at www.ugandapartners.org on June 2, 2023



Prof. Peter Nyende

Theological journey of Prof. Nyende

By Pauline Luba

The first love of Uganda Christian University's (UCU) Assoc. Prof. Peter Nyende was football. He represented Kenya's Jamhuri High School on the national team in a football competition in the 1980s. Despite wanting to continue at a professional level, his father thought he should pursue a "more serious career."

Upon starting his A Levels at Jamhuri, his interest shifted to economics while he was pulled to church service. By 19 years, Nyende was fully committed to serving God and was an active member of the church and the Christian Union.

"I felt a deep sense of God's call in my life," Nyende said. "That made me abandon the other ambitions I once had."

Today, the 53-year-old is an Associate Professor of Biblical Studies at the Bishop Tucker School of Divinity and Theology of UCU. He also is a canon in the Anglican Church and a commissioned evangelist with the Church Army Society of Africa. Nyende has interests in biblical theology and the interpretation of the Bible in African contexts.

"The Word of God must make sense in the context of the hearers," said Nyende. He has to date published 12 research articles and 2 book chapters. This year, he hit another milestone, with his latest publication of a book published by the UK-based Langham Publishing, titled, *The Restoration of God's Dwelling and Kingdom*. Nyende says he began writing the book in 2019 and completed it by December 2022.

Earlier, he was told that he was "too young and too bright" to immediately venture into priesthood upon application to theological school. He was advised to first study something else.

Nyende majored in Bible studies at Daystar University in Kenya for his undergraduate degree. He then undertook training at an Anglican college in Nairobi and was ordained in 1998. Thereafter, Nyende obtained a Master of Pastoral Studies from Ridley Hall in Cambridge and a Masters in Theology in the New Testament from Edinburgh University.

Born in Butere town Western Kenya on June 15, 1969, in a family of 10, Nyende's academic journey got rocky when his father retired just before he began his university education. Nyende made money teaching English privately to students and by raising some funds from friends and the church.

Nyende has been married to Josephine Njoki Marete for 17 years. They have two children – 13-year-old Brodie, a student at Vienna College, and six-year-old Arabel, a pupil at Seeta Junior Primary School.

Edited from a longer version published at www.ugandapartners.org on April 24, 2023

Irene Best Nyapendi

Four students from Uganda Christian University (UCU) had a unique opportunity to gain practical insights into renewable energy during a one-month internship in Spain and Italy.

They were selected from a class of 10 UCU Post Graduate Diploma in Sustainable Business and Renewable Energy students and sponsored by the Erasmus+ Program of the European Union.

The students visited Sapienza University in Rome, Italy, from January 16-27, and the University of Cadiz, Spain, from January 30 to February 10, before returning to Uganda on February 12, 2023.

The focus of the program was on exposing the students to advancements in renewable energy, helping them prepare for their future roles in Uganda's renewable energy sector.

One student, Amosi Mangeni, was impressed by the technologies and contacts he made during the program, foreseeing potential collaborations for future projects.

"This means a lot to me," he said. "It was an opportunity to interact with different people from different fields and experiences, new software and machines."

He elaborated on his experi-



UCU students learn about green energy

UCU students pose for a photo at the main building of Sapienza University (Rome, Italy). Pictured are Bonny Abuka (left), a student from Uganda Martyrs University, with UCU students Sharon Longora, Amosi Mangeni, Ronald Mayanja and Agatha Ankunda

ence, "I visited a 100kw Solar PV grid-connected plant at the University of Cadiz faculty of business in (Andalusia) Spain. This PV plant supplies energy to the faculty and the surplus is connected to the grid for sale, especially during the day."

The four UCU students got a chance to install a 0.6kw PV grid-connected system at the University of Cadiz's faculty of

engineering.

"It was an opportunity not only to learn more about renewable energy, but to network with experts for future collaborations on renewable energy projects to advance the energy transition," student Agatha Ankunda said.

She commended the University of Cadiz for giving them access to their laboratories where they did practical ex-

periments on the application of technologies.

"I was also intrigued by their enforcement of sustainability approaches whereby most businesses were using recyclable bags and wooden cutlery for restaurants," Ankunda said. "Wood is environmentally friendly because it can decompose."

One of the highlights for students Ankunda and Sha-

ron Longora was a visit to a privately-owned hydropower plant in Ascoli, Italy. Ankunda shared her observations,

"This hydropower plant is also used for irrigation. They channel water from the river; it is pumped and sent to the farm."

For student Ronald Mayanja, gaining added knowledge on how to set up a solar system was valuable. "I am for-

ever grateful to God for the answered prayer to be included on the list to go to Italy," he said.

He adds that such systems could be implemented in Uganda's off-grid communities.

Edited from a longer version published at www.ugandapartners.org on March 9, 2023

UCU students clean well, providing safe water for community

Irene Best Nyapendi

Ndayambaje Elidaphonse's family in Kabale district, western Uganda, has access to clean and safe water for use after Uganda Christian University (UCU) students removed silt and sediment from their water source.

The well near Bishop Barham University College (BBUC) serves over 300 households in the areas of Bugongi, Kibikuura, and Rwakaraba, which are near Kabale town.

Elidaphonse, a father of three, said students showed that they "care and mind about people getting clean water."

He added: "I am happy because the bush around the well was cleared. Water that had stagnated is now flowing. We use the water for cooking and drinking."

The water scarcity challenge

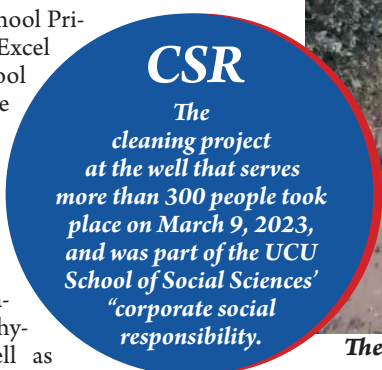
in Uganda is dire, with 38 million out of 45 million people lacking dependable water sources, and seven million without improved sanitation solutions.

This data, sourced from the 2022 Ministry of Health report, underscores the significance of initiatives like UCU's.

The cleaning project took place on March 9, 2023, as part of the UCU School of Social Sciences' "corporate social responsibility."

Pupils and students of Kigezi High School Primary and Excel High School also drink the water and use it for washing.

According to UNICEF, in Uganda, poor sanitation and hygiene as well as



The students cleaning a community well

unequal access to safe drinking water, make thousands of children very sick and at risk of death.

Catherine Atukunda Masiko, head of the Department of Social Sciences at BBUC, noted, "I identified a well near the university that was in a very bad state; it had not been cleaned in months and the drainage system was blocked with waste."

Equipped with shovels, hoes, masks, and gloves, more than 50 students actively participated in the effort. They entered the trench, removing debris and unclogging the drainage system to restore clean water flow.

The initiative also coincided with preparations for World Social Work Day on March 21, highlighting contributions to society and improving lives through social justice.

Amos Nomwesigwa, a participating student, shared, "It feels so good to help. I feel

humbled to deliver a service that will be enjoyed by the majority."

Previous initiatives included hospital visits, town cleanups, and support for individuals with disabilities.

The university provides funds to facilitate volunteerism. Simon Turyakira, the BBUC public relations officer, said the program enables students to be exemplary to the community so that they can learn to clean on their own.

"We did this because we want something to be done in the community," Turyakira said.

"We need to give them direction by doing it first. The students wanted to make the well clean so that people can start doing it as a routine."

Edited from a longer version published at www.ugandapartners.org on March 17, 2023

University project produces insect feed from food waste

Irene Best Nyapendi

The Uganda Christian University (UCU) Faculty of Agricultural Sciences has teamed up with crickets – the insect, not the sport – in a successfully piloted food chain project that alleviates hunger and malnutrition. The “Food Waste-2-Cricket Feed” enterprise produces cricket feed from food waste and then turns the insects into a nutritious food supplement.

The team, led by Geoffrey Ssepuuya, a senior lecturer, established that there is a daily production of 768 metric tons of food waste in Kampala.

The project aimed to develop a processing protocol for converting food waste into a safe, stable cricket feed. It was funded by Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST).

Florence Agwang, the grants officer at UNCST, emphasizes that the project is viable because the country has long struggled with waste management. “If this project succeeds and is



Geoffrey Ssepuuya and a team from the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology look at dried food waste that may become powder for use as an ingredient in feed for crickets.

able to get support from the government, we shall be able to greatly reduce the problem of waste in Uganda,” Agwang says.

The project involves collecting food waste from the UCU university dining hall and remains from restaurants, hotels, and markets.

Collected food waste like rice undergoes heat treatment, drying, grinding into powder, and mixing based on predetermined

formulation ratios for cricket feed.

In a bid to ensure sustainable cricket production, the project is working towards continued production and distribution of this low cost “protein and micro-nutrient rich cricket feed.”

With formulated feeds, crickets mature in 8 – 10 weeks, compared to local feeds taking about 12 weeks.

Ssepuuya explains, “Communities can supplement their diets with crick-

ets, which are 50 – 65% rich in proteins, instead of consuming low-protein foods like cassava bread.”

The project promotes accessibility to protein sources like crickets, richer in protein than meat, milk, and chicken, which are often unaffordable for many Ugandans.

Dr. John Livingstone Mutyaba, Head of Agriculture (Postgraduate), highlights crickets' potential as a new income source for farmers through rearing and selling. Crickets (Acheta

domesticus) lay numerous eggs, facilitating rapid multiplication.

Mutyaba adds that the key challenge is providing adequate feed, managing heat and humidity.

Dried crickets are preferable for consumption. The project supports research by students like Derrick Kizito Okettayot, a fourth-year Food Science and Technology student. To him, crickets are a delicacy.

“In my youth, we picked crickets from under the grass, roasted, and ate them,” Okettayot reminisces. “Now that I can rear crickets, I can enjoy them in larger quantities.”

“This is a win-win solution when we use food waste to feed the crickets and later feed on the crickets, so the food waste comes back to us in a different format to benefit us and the insects,” says Dr. Rose Mary Bulyaba, the dean of the Faculty of Agricultural Science.

Edited from a longer version published at www.ugandapartners.org on May 15, 2023



Dartmouth's Anna Hugney and UCU's Okot Innocent splitting a piece of wood at the site.

Second Dartmouth team enhances UCU solar-powered water system

By Kefa Senoga

In the summer of 2022, a team of three students from Dartmouth College, New Hampshire, USA, were in Mukono, home of the main campus of Uganda Christian University (UCU), to actualize a solar water heater project designed to help the users save money, improve the health of the kitchen staff and reduce the amount of carbon output to the environment.

The three students, with their team leader, Stephen Doig, an expert in mini-grid development and energy efficiency, were joined by a team of UCU faculty and students to set up the water heating system at the UCU kitchen.

Again, in the summer of 2023, the Dartmouth team, this time composed of five students, and again with Doig as their leader, was back in Mukono. The team that was at UCU from mid-June to mid-July, did maintenance work on the system they set up last year, as well as doubled its capacity and made refinements.

Benefits

Zachariah Owino, the Head Chef at the UCU dining hall, said the system has helped them save on time and the energy required to heat water to boiling point, especially while preparing breakfast. He said they also now save more than three tons of firewood per semester, meaning that sh450,000 (about \$123) worth of firewood is saved. With the system installed, a reduction of over eight metric tons of firewood and 1.2 metric tons of carbon dioxide emitted into the atmosphere is expected to be realized.

Anna Hugney led fellow students Emily Liu, Jack McMahon, Rujuta Pandit and Avery Widen. At UCU, they were joined by Okot Innocent, a UCU final-year student of engineering, to offer domestic expertise.

According to Hugney, they

were mainly involved in maintenance of the system.

“Upon arriving at UCU, we realized that the PPR (polypropylene random copolymer plastic) piping at the system was beginning to deteriorate because of the intense sun and heat, and could become dangerous for users and consumers,” Hugney said.

To solve this challenge, the 20-year-old noted that they swapped the PPR in the system with copper piping, which is far more resistant to hot temperatures and can last up to 20 years.

A data log-in system that was put in place to monitor temperatures and had broken down was also fixed.

Hugney's colleagues – McMahon and Widen – uploaded the new code to the system designed to monitor the temperature of the water in the tanks and the system performance before returning to the United States.

Edited from a longer version published at www.ugandapartners.org on July 19, 2023

Warm greetings in Christ from Uganda Christian University (UCU)

Management; UCU Community; my wife, Mama Patience; and the entire family. I welcome you to the 24th graduation ceremony. Congratulations to you all, our graduating students! This is a special day for you, your parents, guardians, and sponsors.

UCU also welcomes back Bishop Dunstan Kopoliano Bukenya, one of the “historicals” that pioneered the vision to transform the former Bishop Tucker Theological College (BTTC) into UCU in 1997. In fact, he is renowned for planting the first signage for UCU, for being the first University Secretary, and for spearheading the establishment of the now famous UCU Law School by unilaterally writing its first draft law curriculum. Bishop Bukenya, UCU honours you for your contribution, and we are proud of you.

Today, 1,006 students are graduating, 562 females (56%) and 444 males (44%). Of these, 29 have obtained First Class degrees (18 females and 11 males). Eyob Yohana Ghebrekristos of Bachelor of Dental Surgery is the overall best student; she scored a CGPA of 4.71.

She also is the best female student and the best student in Sciences. The best male student is Wilson Wanyama of Bachelor of Development and Social Entrepreneurship with a CGPA of 4.64, and he is the best Arts student as well.

Graduation of pioneer students of Medicine and Dentistry

This is a special ceremony for UCU because 44 of our pioneer students of Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery and 9 of Bachelor of Dental Surgery are graduating. This is exciting news for us as we send out our first crop of doctors into the medical field.

We congratulate them and their parents/guardians and sponsors. In a special way, we honour Dr. Edward Kanyesigye for the great work he did as the pioneer Dean of the UCU School of Medicine, and the team of dedicated doctors who worked with him.

We also thank Dr. Rose Mutumba, the Medical Director of Mengo Hospital (our medical training partners) together with her hospital administrators and specialists who have supported the two Schools from the very beginning. Special thanks to Uganda Partners (USA) for mobilizing funds and equipment for the two Schools and the former UCU Council and administration for starting this vision.

We also salute the current Deans, Dr. Gerald Tumusiime and Dr. James Magara, and their teams of medical and dental specialists for nurturing



Appreciation,

By Prof. Aaron Mushengyezi

Vice Chancellor
Uganda Christian University

This speech is a slightly edited text from the July 2023 graduation remarks by the Vice Chancellor



Prof. Aaron Mushengyezi (front, center) with UCU Partners Board members, including the first UCU Vice Chancellor, the Rev. Dr. Stephen Noll (front, right), in Ambridge, Pennsylvania.

these Schools into formidable centres of excellence in medical training. We honour all those who have helped to make this dream a reality.

UCU staff accolades and promotions

We congratulate our members of staff for the following achievements:

1. The Vice Chancellor of UCU was elected to the International Board of Directors of the Hanseatic League of Universities (HLU) at its Third Annual Conference held at Florida Gulf Coast University in the USA May 15-17. He also was elected to the Governing Council of the national Federation of Uganda Employers (FUE).
2. The Deputy Vice Chancellor

for Academic Affairs was elected Chairperson of the Research and Education Network for Uganda (RENU). RENU is a key Internet service provider for universities in Uganda.

3. The Dean of the School of Education, Rev. Canon Assoc. Prof. Olivia Banja, was appointed Vice Chancellor of Ndejje University.
4. Assoc. Prof. Martin Mwanje Lwanga, former Dean of the UCU School of Business, was appointed Director General of Eastern and Southern African Management Institute (ESAMI) in Arusha, Tanzania.
5. Assoc. Prof. Peter Nyende of Bishop Tucker School of Divinity and Theology has published a book titled,

The Restoration of God's Dwelling and Kingdom (Langham 2023).

6. Prof. Monica Balya Chibita, Dean of the School of Journalism, Media and Communication, was recognized by the Uganda Media Women's Association for her contribution to the field of media and communication in Uganda.

7. Rev. Canon Assoc. Prof. Edison Muhindo Kalengyo was promoted to full Professor of New Testament in Bishop Tucker School of Divinity and Theology.

8. Rev. Dr. Andrew David Omona, Dean of the School of Social Sciences, was promoted to Associate Professor of Ethics and International Relations.

9. Dr. Erisa Kigenyi Mazaki was appointed Principal of Mbale University College.

10. The Director of Student Affairs at UCU, Mrs. Bridget Mugasira Mugume, was appointed Dean of Students at Kyambogo University.

11. The University Chaplain, Rev. Canon Eng. Paul Wasswa Ssembiro, has won a scholarship from Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky, USA, to do a Doctor of Ministry degree effective August 2023.

12. The Assistant Chaplain of UCU, Rev. Dr. Lydia Nsaale Kalungi Kitayimbwa, was appointed Chaplain of St. Francis Chapel, Makerere University.

13. Rev. Dr. Samuel Opol who has been Senior Lecturer at the Bishop Tucker School of Divinity and Theology, was appointed Chaplain of Soroti University.

14. Dr. Jonathan Tumwebaze, Coordinator of Uganda Studies Programme, obtained a PhD in Public Policy from the University of Pretoria in South Africa.

15. Dr. Andrew Nalumenya graduated with a PhD in Systematic Theology from North-West University in South Africa.

16. Three of our academic staff at the School of Law (Winnie Kwagala, Isaac Mpirwe and Paul Kalondo) have been appointed as Grade One Magistrates.

Infrastructure developments

We continue to make strides in improving campus infrastructure.

1. Planned infrastructure projects - The University Council has approved new infrastructure projects to be constructed soon. These include new student residences at Mukono and Kampala campuses, as well as construction of Senate Building, the university's main administrative building. Management has concluded a space needs assessment plan for the buildings. Our architect has completed a project plan detailing the scope, feasibility, and estimated costs for Senate Building, and he is now working on the project plan for student residences. The Chapel Council also has contracted an architect to design the new University Chapel. We will consult key stakeholders when all the architectural designs are ready.
2. New Kampala Campus building - Construction of a new academic building at Kampala Campus is almost complete. The building will provide more teaching, learning and recreational space for students studying at Kampala Campus.
3. Construction of parking lots and walkways - We have paved parking lots at Kivengere and Kivebulaya buildings and completed paving pedestrian walkways around those areas. This has enhanced the ambiance of the Main Campus. We plan to pave the parking lot at Pilkington building and renovate several old buildings. Our vision is to turn UCU into one of the most beautiful, cleanest, and organised, green campuses in the region.

Scholarships for needy students

On June 15, 2022, the UCU Chancellor launched the “10K Campaign” with the slogan, “For Just 10K, Change a Life.” The objective is to raise scholarship funds to support UCU students with great financial need. The campaign has already raised sh113,000,000 (\$29,871) and it has supported 79 students. I encourage you to continue giving to enable needy students to achieve

accomplishments in the year



The Kampala campus building that is under construction

their dreams.

UCU E-Campus vision

We continue to pursue the plan to turn UCU into a digital campus embracing ICTs in all its operations. We are constantly updating our home-grown Alpha MIS and utilising it in all our university operations. Various student groups have also held successful virtual elections using our e-voting system, e-chagua. These include Students’ Guild, UCU Law Society and the Business Society.

New laptop scheme for UCU students

Every student at UCU is required to own a laptop. UCU, Equity Bank and CompConsult Technologies have rolled out a laptop loan product through which our students will be able to acquire a brand-new laptop directly from the manufacturer and pay for it over a period of 1-3 years. Students and their sponsors will pay in instalments agreed on with Equity Bank and CompConsult Technologies.

The laptop will have insurance coverage and a tracker to locate it in case of loss and a warranty of three years. This warranty covers all software and hardware defects. Interested students and parents can get more information on the laptop loan product from Equity Bank branches across the country, from the Directorate of Student Affairs, or contact CompConsult Technologies, the authorized partner for Dell, HP, Lenovo, and Acer computer brands.



The Deputy Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration, Mr. David Mugawe

Major successes from colleges, faculties and schools

UCU Colleges, Schools and Faculties continue to report successes. We have put emphasis on writing fundable research projects, establishing mutually beneficial partnerships and initiating innovations. Many scholars at UCU are winning research grants, publishing their research findings, and building national, regional, and international partnerships with reputable institutions. These efforts are boosting UCU’s profile internationally.

For instance, in its recent release, UniRank ranked UCU in Number 3 position among universities in Uganda. UniRank ranks universities based on regulatory status, sound

academic offerings, pedagogy and modes of delivery, and they rely on independent, valid, non-influenceable web data.

(a) School of Journalism, Media and Communication - The School is part of a consortium of six African universities (including Makerere University) that are implementing a project worth UGX 3.3 Billion (\$872,343) funded by the European Commission. The project, “Communicating Migration and Mobility E-Learning Programmes and Newsroom Applications for Sub-Sahara Africa,” is focusing on building capacity for reporting migration and mobility across borders in Sub-Sahara Africa.

(b) School of Education - The School of Education, in partnership

with Edify (a Christian organisation), has trained 600 headteachers and school proprietors from at least 10 districts of Uganda. They conducted the seminars in the areas of competence-based curriculum development, financial literacy, customer care and integration of ICTs in education.

(c) School of Law - At the Law Development Centre (LDC) graduation ceremony held in June, 20 UCU School of Law alumni graduated with First Class degrees. Of these, 10 appeared on the Director’s List and were recognized for their outstanding performance. The overall best performing student was a UCU alumnus, Emmanuel Okia. The top four First Class LDC graduates were all from UCU: Emmanuel Okia,

Shamira Kitimbo, Reagan Ahumuza, and Jemimah Jehopio.

(d) Faculty of Agricultural Sciences - A team led by Dr. Geoffrey Ssepunya from the Department of Food Science is developing a cricket feed product. The project is supported by the Directorate of Research, Partnerships and Innovation.

In 2022, the Faculty released three varieties of African eggplant (*nakati*). The Faculty has introduced three new programmes at post-graduate and undergraduate levels. These include a PhD in Agricultural Systems and Value Chain Management, and a blended three-year programme that targets professionals looking to address various challenges in the agricultural and food systems value chain. Other new programs include a Master of Science in Agricultural Economics, a blended two-year programme; and a Bachelor of Science in Human Nutrition and Dietetics, a blended four-year degree programme.

In November 2022, the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences won a grant of 749,000 Swedish Krona (\$68,669) in partnership with the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU) and the International Centre for Insect Physiology (ICIPE). The project will establish a regional network for training scientists in field experimentation for two years.

(e) Bishop Tucker School of Divinity and Theology

1. With support from our Australian partners (Local Leaders International) the School successfully conducted a three-day staff training on the integration of faith in learning and service. UCU managers, academic staff, Assistant Registrars and Administrators, benefited from this programme. The seminar equipped our staff with skills to seamlessly incorporate faith across various disciplines, course units, and extra- curricular activities.

2. BTSDT also conducted an online competence training for affiliate Colleges to enable co-teaching with academic staff at the Colleges. Each College will receive a smart screen and laptop to facilitate sharing of e- learning resources. Local Leaders International has provided an additional grant of UGX 194 million (\$51,283) to BTSDT to set up a smart classroom to augment e-learning efforts.

3. We received a donation of books worth UGX 22 million (\$5,815) from the Theological Book Network (TBN) to expand our theology library resources.

4. We are working on establishing a partnership with the GAFCON Anglican Diocese of New England in Boston, USA, through which theology students will periodically go for block placement and cross-cultural ministry exposure in the Diocese for three months, beginning in September 2024.

Engineering alum breaks gender, age barriers

By Patty Huston-Holm

When Linda Nanfuka got an offer to work in Uzbekistan, she had to Google it.

"I couldn't pronounce it, didn't know where it was," she said of the Central Asian nation located 5,499 kilometers (3,411 miles) from Uganda. For nine months in 2021, Nanfuka lived and worked as an engineer for what is now Uzbekistan's first large-scale solar power plant. Most of what she did was civil works (construction supervision, reporting) for METKA EGN, a company that focuses on green-energy networks.

A Uganda Christian University (UCU) alum, Nanfuka got recruited to live and work in Uzbekistan based on her leadership in helping to launch a solar station on land leased from the Busoga Kingdom in Uganda's Mayuge District. The Mayuge-area plant, also called Bufulubi because of its location in a village by that name, increases the power supply for the eastern region.



UCU engineering graduate, Linda Nanfuka, at her job in Uzbekistan

As a 2018 UCU graduate in Civil and Environmental Engineering, Nanfuka credits the university for much of the technical aspect of what she applies in her work. She also knows that she is employed in a career path traditionally dominated by men and people older than

her almost-28 years. She has encountered skepticism and bullying as well as respect.

"In African culture, we need to respect elders, and I do," she said. "If someone 20 years older than you is wrong, you don't disrespect but correct."

At the same time, Nanfuka

credits older peers and professionals at UCU for mentoring. She said Rodgers Tayebwa, head of department, engineering and environment, was especially helpful, "introducing me to students in the year ahead" and enabling her to have "balance and get back on track."

What next?

Nanfuka's next two aspirations are growing her own business while working on a master's degree in construction management.

"I've realized that what people really need here is help with planning and scheduling – project management," she said. "I am grateful for people who took a chance on me, and had faith in me."



While leading a Just in Time subcontracting team of 30-40 men who put a fence around what would be rows of solar panels in the Mayuge District, Nanfuka began spending her spare time in 2018 to mid-2019 learning about this growing, clean energy option. From

mid-2019, she transitioned into operational maintenance that she was part of until 2021.

In 2020, the Uganda Bureau of Statistics estimated that 38 percent of the population used solar energy in some form from some 300 solar companies.

When the fence around the Mayuge plant was in place, Nanfuka was made a junior civil engineer for METKA EGN.

In addition to applying her engineering technical and management skills, Nanfuka found enrichment in being embedded into the Uzbekistan culture from May to December in 2021.

The project called 131 MW Tutly Solar PV Plant had non-English-speaking workers that presented an added challenge in communications to complete tasks.

Nanfuka's business website is <https://www.lindasvirtualhub.com>

Edited from a longer version published at www.ugandapartners.org on July 28, 2023

UCU gets multimedia equipment through Norway partnership

By Kefa Senoga

The Norwegian Programme for Capacity Development in Higher Education and Research for Development (NORHED) has donated multimedia equipment worth over sh98 million (about \$24,000) to the School of Journalism, Media and Communication (SJMC) of Uganda Christian University (UCU).

The cooperation between UCU's SJMC and the Norwegian NLA University under the NORHED project is one of the partnership models that has played a role in the growth of UCU's School of JMC.

Among the equipment received in May 2023 were still and video cameras, laptops, projectors, and other assorted accessories. Because of the partnership, there has been a positive change at the school,

most especially in terms of equipment.

During the first phase of the \$1.3million NORHED project that was signed in 2013 as a collaboration between the Norwegian NLA University and the Department of Mass Communication at the time, the latter acquired equipment, such as 10 Handycam video cameras, more than 15 DSLR (digital single-lens reflex) cameras, with their accessories like tripods and a comprehensive journalism and communication book bank.

To build on the success registered in the first phase



Practice
The multimedia equipment that SJMC received in May is geared towards enhancing practical training in multimedia storytelling and production, a key emphasis for journalists today.

Francis Acaye (holding pen), the studio technician, checks out the donated equipment

of the project last year, UCU signed another partnership, NORHED II, which is intended to bring more equipment support and faculty development through training, to attain doctoral degrees up to 2026. The funds under NORHED II

helped start a PhD program in Journalism, Media Studies and Communication.

The multimedia equipment that SJMC received in May is geared towards enhancing practical training in multimedia storytelling and production, a key emphasis for journalists today.

The students produce a weekly TV news bulletin through the online channel The UCU Focus and multimedia stories on The Standard website, the university online newspaper.

Emmanuel Ilungole, a third-year student of Bachelor of Arts in Journalism and Com-

munication and the head of production at the UCU Focus TV, says the new equipment will improve the quality of their production.

Prof. Monica Chibita, the Dean of the School of JMC, affirmed that the support from the NORHED project has played a vital role in the school's capacity building since 2014.

The support has helped build the school's reputation as one of the top journalism, media, and communication institutions of higher learning in the region. The first phase of the NORHED program led to the training of five members of the faculty to acquire PhD, as well as sponsoring graduates for master's studies.

The graduates have since joined the school as members of the faculty.

Cumulatively, UCU also has procured equipment and books worth over sh800 million (\$214,500) for the school. This includes over 600 book titles and equipping of four training studios.

Edited from a longer version published at www.ugandapartners.org on June 12, 2023

Founding dean celebrates first doctor graduates

Irene Best Nyapendi

Dr. Edward Kanyesigye, (informally known as Dr. Ned), the founding dean of Uganda Christian University's (UCU) School of Medicine (SoM), in July 2023 celebrated the graduation of his pioneer students.

Getting the SoM up and running was a lifetime achievement, and it gave him great joy to see his first students graduate.

"For them it was graduation, for me it was a summation of all their pleasures," he said. "In my 44 years as a medical doctor, I have had several joys (and pains), but without a

doubt this was my most prestigious (joyous) moment. To God be the Glory."

When UCU envisioned a SoM, under former Vice Chancellor, the Rev. Canon Dr. John Senyonyi, they were confident Dr. Ned would help bring the dream to reality.

Impressed by UCU's nursing school, many had started asking whether the university also had a SoM.

"UCU is without a doubt one of Uganda's best private universities," Kanyesigye said, noting UCU's long-time reputation for being "very successful in health, with a masters in nursing and in public health, which started as a program."



Kanyesigye was the secretary of the committee that worked for about three years to birth the SoM. In February 2018, the National Council of Higher Education licensed it for the two programs – medicine and dentistry. Kanyesigye raced against the clock to find potential lecturers and students for the courses to

start later that year.

The school opened with 60 students – 50 in medicine and 10 in dentistry. On September 14, 2018, the SoM was launched with the School of Dentistry on its heels.

"He always told us to call him Ned, not even Dr. Ned," Robert Alinda, one of his students, recalls. Alinda de-

scribes Kanyesigye as a very social lecturer who always made them feel comfortable.

"He assigned the session of Tuesday afternoon for visiting external speakers to talk about their professional life journeys including those from the United Kingdom, who mentored us," he says.

"Dr. Ned always told us that

Endeavor to do right

To Kanyesigye, UCU students are young professionals with more integrity and commitment than those trained from a secular university.

"As a dean, I shared with my students the three Cs; I told them I wanted a graduate who is competent, conscientious and compassionate," he says. Kanyesigye is now retired, thankful that the university opened doors and entrusted him with much and is excited that the two schools have 291 current students.

For Ned, the only all-encompassing value he endeavors to live by is this: To do right.

we were not being trained to be doctors (because that's what every other institution was doing), but doctors with a difference," Zeddekia Ssekyonda, another student, says.

Edited from a longer version published at www.ugandapartners.org on April 11, 2023



New School of Medicine graduate, Candia Godwin Ivan, in operating room

Candia navigates medicine journey with resilience

By Jimmy Siyasa

In the bustling streets of the Kyebando suburb of Kampala, and under the nurturing gaze of his parents, Mr. Deruku Lujji and Mrs. Asumpta Peace, Candia Godwin Ivan's journey into the world of medicine began.

Born in Arua, Uganda, Candia's early experiences in life were marked by loss when, at age five, he tragically lost his younger sister to a febrile illness. This moment shaped his destiny in the field of medicine.

Today, Candia stands as a beacon of hope for the people of Arua. A ministerial Policy statement for the Financial Year 2022/23 cited failure "to attract and retain specialized doctors" as a major challenge facing hospitals in the district, namely the Arua Hospital.

One reason is that the district is over 300 miles from Kampala, where most professionals prefer to practice due to the vastness of opportunities and

Next step...

As he embarks on his medical internship and plans for the future, Candia is uncompromising in his commitment to serving his community. His next steps include gaining more experience through work and pursuing a master's degree in plastic and reconstructive surgery. He also aspires to collaborate with other healthcare workers to conduct extensive health education within his hometown of Arua.

This initiative aims to influence social habits, which are the primary contributors to disease and illness. Candia's ultimate goal is to roll out free or at least affordable community health services.

"If everything proceeds as planned, I intend to organize screening camps and eventually establish a nonprofit health facility to serve the Arua communities," Candia says.

Faith is an essential part of his life and work. As a Christian, he draws inspiration from the teachings of the Bible, where Jesus healed the sick and helped those in need. These teachings drive him, giving him a sense of purpose and meaning in his work.

also the comparative lucrativeness of the trade.

After graduating as part of the pioneer medicine class of Uganda Christian University

(UCU) School of Medicine in July, the medical doctor embarked on his Medical Internship at Mbarara Regional Referral Hospital.

For Candia, the loss of his sister instilled in him a belief that he should dedicate his life to saving others. In his early 20s, his fervor for leveraging social impact to enhance healthcare grew stronger. His passion for medicine was not only a personal calling but also a response to the pressing healthcare needs of his community.

His decision to pursue medicine also was influenced by his passion for science. He notes that part of the seed was planted in his high school days at St. Mary's College Kisubi "which had such a resourceful library."

Candia's pursuit for quality medical training brought him to UCU, where he embarked on a five-year journey filled with challenges and triumphs. The rigorous demands of the medical school curriculum meant immense mental energy. In the midst of the rigor, he remembers the weekend activities reserved for some adrenaline rush drawn from watching Premier League football in his hostel room.



UCU School of Medicine students (right to left) Alituha Constance, Melodie Munyakazi, and Kasule Steven engage in microscopic learning

How donated medical equipment has supported UCU

By Patty Huston-Holm with Photo by Vanessa Kyalimpa

Whether serving in his role as researcher, teacher or practicing doctor, Dr. Gerald Tumusiime epitomizes excellence in the field of medicine. The Uganda Christian University (UCU) Dean of the School of Medicine (SoM) has a passion for lifelong learning and elevating UCU SoM student knowledge and skill. Equipment, he says, plays a role in that, especially as it informs evidence-based patient care.

Some of the equipment in three different Mengo-hospital area buildings, including where the UCU School of Dentistry (SoD) is housed, was donated by MedShare and Mid-mark through the non-profit Uganda Partners organization.

“Biomedical equipment promotes holistic and evidence-based patient care,” Dr. Tumusiime said.

“While we teach that patient history and physical exams contribute over 80% to an accurate diagnosis, the equipment donated through the United States is extremely valuable in shaping our future doctors into evidence-based, health care practitioners.”

The donated equipment and consumables contributed to the accreditation and licensure of UCU’s SoM and SoD by the Ugandan regulators, as well as the continuity of teaching and learning during the peak of the

UCU equipment for the SoM, mostly donated in the past three years, and brief descriptions:

- Microscopes (providing the “Gold standard” for tissue diagnosis) – Magnify what the human eye can’t see, such as cells indicating diseases, such as sickle cell
- Centrifuge – Separate, purify and isolate cells, proteins and viruses for further observation
- Vortex mixer – Combine vials of liquid to study enzymes and DNA
- Incubator – Maintains temperature, humidity and gas content to grow or maintain cells
- Bunsen burner – Used for heating samples and sterilization
- Safety cabinets – Protect researchers and others from potentially infectious materials
- Medical waste bins – Add safety from biomedical waste and sharp instruments
- Medical refrigerator and freezer – Protect and extend shelf life of bio-specimens, reagents, drugs and vaccines
- Protective gear (aprons, face masks, face shields, goggles, gloves) – Support safety in teaching and learning, research and patient care
- Assorted clinical diagnostic equipment – Promote the quality of patient diagnosis and research

Covid-19 pandemic.

The equipment boosted the schools’ ability to be accredited by the Uganda National Council for Higher Education. Such tools supplement learning in the UCU biomedical laboratories in gross anatomy, biochemistry, physiology, pharmacology, histology and microbiology and immunology.

“There are many examples of how technology equips us to improve Uganda’s health care,” Dr. Tumusiime said.

“For instance, in dealing with malnutrition among children, we are able to help by analyzing blood samples to guide nutritional interventions and monitor progress. In all age groups, we screen and diagnose non-communicable diseases like sickle cell anaemia, cardiovascular diseases, cancers and metabolic disorders that are currently on the rise in Africa.”

Dr. Tumusiime said that the need for more laboratory tools is ongoing. Among those needs are a biological teaching microscope and analyzers for hematology and electrolytes.

“I appreciate that in a resource-limited setting, some of this equipment may not be readily available,” he said.

“But it’s critical to the profession that they know they exist and know how to use them.”

Edited from a longer version published at www.ugandapartners.org on August 1, 2022

Q&A

Dr. James Magara said the students have been trained with technical and soft skills to enable them to deliver quality service



UCU School of Dentistry trains head, heart, hands

The Dean of the School of Dentistry, Dr. James Magara, recently responded to our questions on a wide range of issues concerning dental health hygiene, practice and training for a dental degree at UCU. Below, we produce the excerpts.

What are the main dental needs/challenges in Uganda?

The main dental challenges in Uganda are:

1. Inadequate number of qualified dental professionals for the total population. While the World Health Organization recommends a ratio of 1 dentist to 7,500 patients, Uganda’s dentist population ratio is 1:122,000.
2. Expensive, imported dental equipment and materials. This affects the costs of all things dental, from the training of dental professionals to dental treatment offered to patients.
3. Attitude and knowledge of the population to dental disease. The majority of dental patients seek treatment when the disease is advanced.
4. Lack of recent national oral health survey data and deficiency of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) through appropriate oral health management information systems. Dental diseases are of public health importance. However, the most recent national survey was conducted in 2015. Therefore, we are informed by compositing individual studies from different localities and clinic experience to come up with a profile of different oral disease burdens.

Q. What are dental wellness practices that could stave off problems?

The most common dental diseases of dental decay and periodontal disease can be prevented by education on proper diet and hygiene practices. This can be favorably promoted within other non-communicable disease (NCD) health promotion programs. Dental professionals can work with NCD colleagues in a collaborative way to improve access for our growing population. An investment needs to be made in the ability to identify disease and refer for proper management to qualified dental health practitioners in good time.

Q. What promise do you see with the Uganda Christian University (UCU) 2023 pioneer dental graduates?

Their training has equipped them with technical and soft skills that we trust will enable them to deliver good quality care in an empathetic way. Further we expect that they will be continual learners with an eagerness to update their skills.

What is an advantage with getting a dental degree from UCU?

UCU School of Dentistry emphasizes the training of the head (knowledge), the heart (attitude and empathy), and the hands (skill). We aim at producing graduates that are well rounded in the three. The school has a good environment with well qualified faculty possessing extensive experience in clinical practice.

'They have given me the knowledge I need'

By Irene Best Nyapendi

Richard Ogwal is confident that the training and skills he got at Uganda Christian University (UCU) will make him a highly successful dental practitioner.

A pioneer graduate at the School of Dentistry (SoD), Ogwal is looking forward to the professional practice.

"I can proudly say UCU has done its part in making me ready for the workplace through its fully trained lecturers," he said. "They have given me the knowledge I need, and it is now a matter of me going to apply it."

In 2018, Ogwal joined UCU's SoD that is near Mengo Hospital in Kampala. He graduated in July 2023 during the 24th graduation at the Mukono main campus. He had already studied clinical medicine and community health. Due to his hard work, he was put in charge of two health center III's in Agago district. He relished the challenges of work, which soon became the motivation to upgrade to a degree.

"The district health officer (DHO) used to give me a



Motivating their dad

Ogwal's two daughters, in Primary One and nursery, were a great source of motivation. Whenever he called to speak to them, they always encouraged him to study hard.

load of assignments, some of which were beyond my level of study," he said. "These used to challenge me a lot and in order to manage them, I would consult with other people. Then, I decided that it would be very helpful for me to get back to school to upgrade."

Joining UCU meant he had to stay away from his young family — wife and two children — to concentrate on his studies. "We would meet at home during holidays," he said. "Balancing family life with my course was quite difficult."

Ogwal was granted a study leave and scholarship by his employer, Agago district local government. He was required back to work during the Covid-19 pandemic when all district health workers returned to their work stations to boost the workforce in han-

dling the challenge of many patients in the community and at the health centers.

And as the pandemic forced governments to lockdown and close schools, UCU started online learning. Those semesters were particularly challenging because he had to deal with poor network connectivity, hindering his ability to participate in online exams.

Ogwal is grateful to his wife, who stood by his side and offered him invaluable support including financially.

"I had a challenge of not having enough finances to manage my family and study at the same time, so I maneuvered by getting a salary loan. I also sold some of my animals to bridge the gap," he said.

"Amidst all that I went through I saw that God was on my side," he added.

To excel in medical school, he advised students to actively participate in discussion groups, consult lecturers and avoid too much relaxation. Ogwal credited UCU for instilling in him valuable skills, including punctuality and excellent customer care, which he believes will be vital in his future endeavors.

Richard Ogwal, one of the nine pioneer graduates from Uganda Christian University's School of Dentistry

Nalwanga: Uganda's first female neurosurgeon

By Pauline Luba

As a child, Juliet Sekabunga Nalwanga saw herself working in a bank based on the bundles of cash the tellers held. However, as she got older, she realized that the money was not actually theirs. That's when she started feeling the pull to save human lives, opting for a career in medicine.

In 2018, Nalwanga became a neurosurgeon, a specialist treating conditions impacting the brain and spinal cord. She is Uganda's first female neurosurgeon, a feat earning her global recognition in a field where specialists are rare. She also was the first woman in Uganda to obtain a Masters of Medicine in Surgery from Mbarara University of Science and Technology.

Nalwanga has taught

Family...

The last born of 10 siblings, Dr. Nalwanga says she had inspiration within her family for the career choice. Her maternal aunt, who greatly encouraged her and at one time paid her school fees, was a physician.

Nalwanga's father, Prof. Sekabunga, was a respected academic and a well-known pediatric surgeon at Uganda's national referral facility, Mulago Hospital, in the 1970s and 1980s.

On days when either work has not gone well, or Nalwanga has met stressful conditions, she finds solace in spending time with her 13-year-old son, Majwega Paul Isaiah. "He calms me down," she said.

When she isn't working, Nalwanga is driving, roller-skating outside or exploring nature. Her life goal is to invent things that can aid with neurological challenges and enable people to lead normal lives.

medical students in four universities in Uganda, including Uganda Christian University (UCU), where she is currently a faculty member at the university's School of Medicine.

She knows that the 13 neurosurgeons that were serving Uganda's more than 40 million people by 2021 are inadequate. The World Health Organization

recommends one neurosurgeon for every 100,000 people.

The 40-year-old Nalwanga also possesses a Fellowship in Neurosurgery of the College of Surgeons East, Central and Southern Africa and in Pediatric Neurosurgery from The Hospital for Sick Children - a part of University of Toronto's Faculty of Medicine, where she spent a

year-long training.

Nalwanga advises future professionals to prioritize training in their countries and only seek opportunities of fellowship from abroad. The main reason for few women in neurosurgery in Uganda is culture, according to Nalwanga.

She noted that a woman's biological clock may make it difficult to go after what she desires but that, "there is a point, though, when one can get courage to be different and go after what they want."

Neurosurgery frequently involves emergencies with challenges such as a shortage of resources and cost. Affordability of the services is an obstacle that many patients face.

The women and men in society who have made significant sacrifices to make the lives of other people better are Nalwanga's true heroes.

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Two UCU nursing PhDs share career journey

By Patty Huston-Holm

Dr. Elizabeth Namukombe Ekong and Dr. Faith Rosemary Sebuliba Kasumba have a lot in common. They each have three children with husbands who are doctors, both started out as midwives and both hold a half dozen each of nursing credentials including master's and doctoral degrees. They are the only nursing PhD holders under the Faculty of Public Health, Nursing and Midwifery at Uganda Christian University (UCU). But they would like to see more.

"At the bachelor's level, you are learning how you can improve yourself," Elizabeth said. "At the master's level, you enhance that while knowing more about policies and practices. With a PhD, you have

Why a PhD?

The difference among bachelor, masters and doctoral degrees is primarily critical thinking and problem solving, according to the two UCU nursing doctoral holders. Those with undergraduate degrees are primarily applying what they have been told while those with advanced degrees are more likely to keep questioning.

"Many times, people say the PhD is for the sake of self-actualization," Elizabeth said. "I see it as more help for the patient, better services, improved policies and processes."

They cite Dr. Karen Drake, emeritus professor of nursing, Bethel University (St. Paul, Minn.), and a nurse educator at UCU for more than a decade, as their mentor.

deeper questions to solve problems, improve health, and save more lives."

Acquisition of these capabilities is especially critical

for nurses and even more so for developing countries like Uganda. The World Health Organization reports that the 27.9 million nurses globally re-

flects a shortage of 13 million nurses. According to the World Bank, there are 1.6 nurses and midwives per 1,000 people in Uganda, compared to nearly 12 per 1,000 in the United States.

Faith and Elizabeth received their doctoral degrees from Texila American University (Guyana, South America) and the University of Central Nicaragua, respectively. UCU was where they attained their bachelor's and master's degrees.

For Faith, the start of her health care interest is pinpointed to an injured ear at age five when she lived in the Fort Portal, western Uganda region. Imitating how she saw adults cleaning their ears with match sticks, she went too deep and ended up in Mulago National Referral Hospital in Kampala for two months. Surrounded by caring, nurturing nurses, she decided she wanted to be one someday.

Elizabeth was likewise young and watching happenings

around a health facility in eastern Uganda's Kamuli district. As she watched "people go in sick and come out well," she decided she wanted a career "where I could do that."

While deepening their own health care knowledge over the years, Elizabeth and Faith are nurturing the next generation of nurses in a country that only educated nurses at the diploma level until 1993. As UCU lecturers, they share the academic and practical sides of nursing.

In addition to what their advanced degrees offer their students, Faith and Elizabeth are frequently at the table for policy and research discussions and conference presentations. Topics have included early postnatal care improvements, menstrual hygiene among adolescents and technology learning and application.

For them, the Christian walk reinforced at UCU is critical.

"It's a calling," Faith said. "I know who is my strength. God is my strong foundation."

Edited from a longer version published at www.ugandapartners.org on August 14, 2023



Dr. Elizabeth Namukombe Ekong and Dr. Faith Rosemary Sebuliba Kasumba are among UCU's teaching staff for nursing programs.

How UCU made Birungi a 'full package' doctor

By Irene Best Nyapendi

Studying a course for five years is not for the faint hearted. The 23-year-old Beatrice Birungi is one of the 45 tenacious students who pioneered the grueling Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery training at Uganda Christian University (UCU), completing it this year.

Birungi was overjoyed as she graduated at UCU Mukono campus on July 28.

Graduating as a doctor was a dream come true for Birungi. Since her childhood, she always thought doctors were "cool" and now, she was one.

However, being a doctor meant more to her as she grew up seeing her uncle save lives during the Ebola pandemic in Bundibugyo (2007-2008), western Uganda.

She then aspired to be like her uncle and work on the front line to save lives and make a difference.

When Birungi had just joined SoM in 2018, everything was new and complicated for her during the first



Beatrice Birungi (left), a pioneer UCU School of Medicine graduate, celebrates with Travor Wasswa, a friend who helped her a lot during discussions. Birungi said she will be "a healer not only for the physical, but the spiritual as well" because of UCU's School of Medicine unique training.

year. She was encouraged to join discussion groups to help her process the concepts with

her colleagues, which greatly helped her.

In 2020, Birungi lost her fa-

ther and a close aunt.

It was a very difficult time.

"My father was the bread-

winner. He catered for all my school fees, as well as upkeep," she said.

"There were struggles along the way after he died. It was hard getting over the loss of my father, but my classmates helped me to overcome it."

She remained focused on her studies. When she finally saw her name on the graduation list, she felt triumphant.

She scooped a first-class degree, with a cumulative grade point average (CGPA) of 4.64 of 5.0.

"I was given holistic education through some of the foundation studies such as Understanding World Views," she said.

"They made me a full package doctor - they not only gave me medical knowledge, but also knowledge about the real world and the spiritual aspect."

Birungi believes that by helping her patients know Christ, she will be having a

bigger impact on them because once they believe in Jesus, they will understand that He can heal them.

"I want to make an impact by bringing the spiritual side of medicine to the world," she said.

"I want to help others see Christ in the way I treat, talk and work with patients."

Birungi said the first thing she does when she receives a patient is talk to God.

"I say: 'God, I know I have a lot of knowledge in this brain, please help me organize it so that I can help this person. I know it's you who can actually heal them.' Then I start attending to the patient," she said.

Her memorable moments at the SoM include participating in the sports gala and community worship away from the busy hours in class.

"Special thanks to God, my family and my classmate Travor Wasswa, who always took time to discuss with me. This greatly boosted my academic performance," Birungi said.

Achiever
When Birungi finally saw her name on the graduation list, she felt triumphant. She scooped a first-class degree, with a cumulative grade point average (CGPA) of 4.64 of 5.0.



Yohana Eyob Ghebrekristos with parents and siblings at UCU after her graduation of July 28, 2023.

What next for Yohana after emerging UCU's best student?

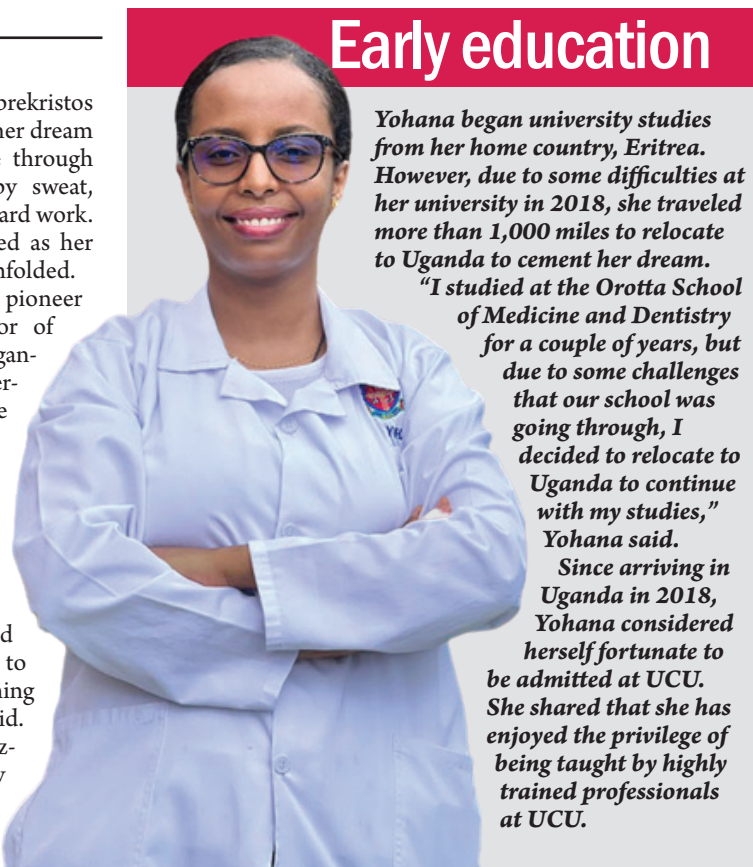
By Kefa Senoga

Yohana Eyob Ghebrekristos had the notion that her dream job wouldn't evolve through magic but rather by sweat, determination and hard work. That's what happened as her career in dentistry unfolded.

She is one of nine pioneer students of Bachelor of Dental Surgery at Uganda Christian University (UCU) where she emerged as the overall best student out of 1,006 students at the previous graduation. She had a CGPA of 4.71 of 5.0.

"I'm so excited and extremely honored to be the best performing student," Yohana said. "UCU has been amazing, and I was very fortunate to join this esteemed institution. Its reputation of producing well-rounded professionals really attracted me to UCU."

She appreciates the university for equipping her with both academic knowledge and spiritual values that she believes



Early education

Yohana began university studies from her home country, Eritrea. However, due to some difficulties at her university in 2018, she traveled more than 1,000 miles to relocate to Uganda to cement her dream.

"I studied at the Orotta School of Medicine and Dentistry for a couple of years, but due to some challenges that our school was going through, I decided to relocate to Uganda to continue with my studies," Yohana said.

Since arriving in Uganda in 2018, Yohana considered herself fortunate to be admitted at UCU. She shared that she has enjoyed the privilege of being taught by highly trained professionals at UCU.

will guide her as she ventures into the working world. Yohana says UCU has also provided an opportunity for her to grow in her faith.

As a dentist, Yohana notes that it is her role to identify a

gap in relation to oral health literacy in the community and then use every opportunity to educate the community about oral hygiene, noting that scholars have affirmed that good oral health leads to good

general health.

Looking ahead, Yohana aspires to specialize in orthodontics and dental surgery, with hope of opening up a dental clinic to serve underprivileged communities.

To her fellow students in the medical field, Yohana offered valuable advice, emphasizing that the medical profession requires unwavering hard work, determination, and sacrifice.

"Don't underestimate the course; it's a journey that demands your best effort. And in the end, the rewards will be worth it," she urged.

As Yohana eagerly awaits her internship, her father, Eyob Ghebrekristos, expressed immeasurable joy and excitement upon her accomplishment.

"We are so excited and proud of Yohana, and we all came from the United States to be here and celebrate Yohana's graduation," he said.

He believes this was possible because of Yohana's nature of hard work and discipline, together with support from the family.

Edited from a longer version published at www.ugandapartners.org on May 22, 2023

Like father, like son: Two Magaras at UCU's School of Dentistry

By Kefa Senoga

Uganda Christian University's (UCU) Dean of the School of Dentistry (SoD), James Magara, was among the 10 pioneer students getting a Bachelor of Dental Surgery at Makerere University in 1988. Thirty five years later, in July 2023, Magara's son, David Magara, was among the 9 pioneer students graduating with a Bachelor of Dental Surgery at UCU.

One might think David was always attracted to the course because he saw his father practice the profession. But that's not the case.

In fact, after David's final examinations to qualify for university admission, he says he was conflicted about a career. He was passionate about arts and had a love for music, but also was obsessed with sciences. Despite making up his mind to study dental surgery in 2015, David found himself at a crossroads when it was time to enroll in a university. Subsequently, he took a gap year to rediscover himself.

During that year, he worked at his father's dental clinic – Jubilee Dental Limited – as a receptionist. It was during that time at the dental clinic that David got the affirmation that dentistry was the profession for him.

"While at the dental facility, I observed how the dentists enjoyed their work, and also had time to pursue their other passions," he said. "I found that balance quite attractive, and it is what first interested me in the course."

David says after prayer and fasting about his future, he felt a strong peace about going into that field.

That same year, UCU was making arrangements to start a Bachelor of Dental Surgery course, which gave David the opportunity to also be a pioneer student in the course.

He says humility, confidence, great listening and communication skills are some of the attributes that a dentist should have.

"Having seen my father practice dentistry for many years, I am confident to say he embodies each of these principles," David says. Possibly these are some of the reasons UCU considered as they courted James Magara in 2020, to convince him to return to training Uganda's next generation of dental surgeons. The SoD dean had left university teaching in 2007.

David says he has had the rare opportunity of learning from celebrated practitioners in Uganda, such as Dr. Arabat Kasangaki, who is one of his lecturers at UCU; Dr. Aisha Sekalala, an experienced orthodontist; Dr. Francis Ochieng, a dental practitioner; and Dr. Nevis Nagirembabazi, a clinician of dental surgery.

Edited from a longer version published at www.ugandapartners.org on Feb 28, 2023



David Magara

Graduates of Bachelor of Dental Surgery



Yohana Eyob
Ghebrekristos



Utamuriza
Joana Bideri



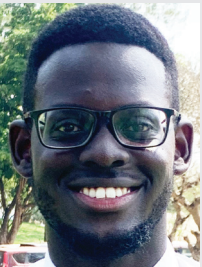
Ogwal Richard



Nabisere Ruth
Patricia



Kabuye Peter



David Magara



Basamu Bertram



Ayikoru Hilda
Diana



Andinda Jordan

Graduates of Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery



Alinda Robert



Ampumuza Davis



Anjagala
Mbabazi Joy



Basule Isaac
Ahamada



Bayiga Alexandria



Birungi Beatrice



Candia Godwin
Ivan



Eyotaru Dradrio
Grace



Kadama Rebecca
Lynette



Kanyunyuzi
Agatha Sandra



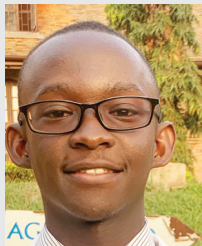
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Kiggundu Julius
Paul



Kioko Florence
Wamwene



Makumbi Ian
William



Mirembe Gabrielle
Pearl



Mirembe Stella
Ndimwibo



Mugoya
Emmanuel Joash



Mujuzi Patricia
Nalugemwa



Munyakazi
Melodie



Mwesigwa Ronnie



Nakato Angella
Nakiganda



Namitala Jane
Sylvia



Namulondo
Bridget Brittah



Ninsiima Prize



Okeke Gloria
Onzioma



Prisca
Namukombe



Sengooba Dennis
Nyanzi



Toolit Given
Ronald



Tushabe Elizabeth



Wabule Arlena



Wagonza Tracy
Jemima



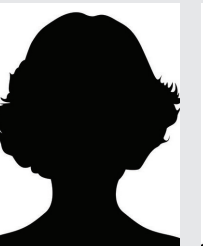
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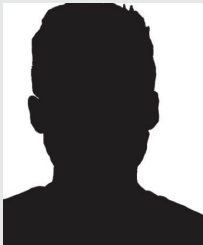
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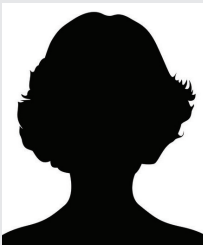
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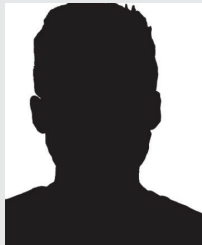
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Ocan Brian Ojuka



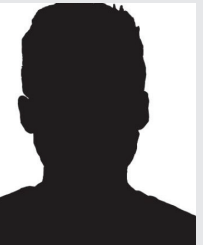
Nkwanzi
Heather Bless



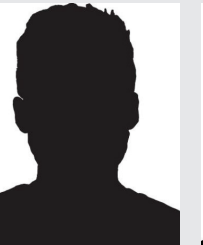
Mutagubya
Simon Peter



Ndibarema
Muhimbura



Kasule Steven



Kato Ssali
Emmanuel



Nanteza Angella
Josephine

Accident shattered Okoth's leg, but not his dreams



Joshua Okoth
in wheelchair

By Pauline Luba

For many who know Uganda Christian University (UCU) student Joshua Okoth, seeing him as a swimmer isn't surprising.

At that, proficiency in the sport is nothing short of a miracle. At eight years of age, his leg was amputated. To save his life after an accident, he had to have the leg removed. Despite the handicap, he learned how to swim in 2012. Eight years later, Okoth started competing.

Here's how it happened:

Okoth started swimming for recreation. He was 12 years old when he went into the water with some of his childhood friends in Entebbe, Uganda.

He was a student at Nabumali High School in eastern Uganda, when the school opened its swimming pool. He was part of the congregation at Nabumali when one of the coaches recognized him and asked if he would like to join the swimming team. It took a lot of convincing before he gave it a shot. It took him three weeks to overcome the phobia.

Okoth was assigned a special coach who guided him through the basics of competitive swimming. Now, at age 23, he is a proud swimmer.

"I don't think of anything when I get into the water," Okoth said, adding: "It's a game I enjoy."

He is constantly inspired by his parents whom he says he wants to make proud, as well as his friends, especially those in the U.S., who keep encouraging him in his pursuit. Okoth says he is who he is because of God's love.

"I want someone in my condition to know that everything is possible," said Okoth, a UCU year-one student pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Accounting and Finance. "I dream



Okoth: I don't think of anything else when I get into the water; it's a game I enjoy.



Okoth (left) and a friend. With the help of an artificial limb and crutches, Okoth goes about most of his duties.

about a world where the underprivileged are not discriminated against."

Many thought his life would

be confined to a wheelchair. But Okoth had other thoughts. With the help of an artificial limb, today he goes about most

of his duties. One of his goals is to see more support offered for people, and, indeed, athletes with disabilities.

Okoth had initially wanted to study to become a pilot, but he says the high fees for the course turned him away from his earlier dream. He now hopes to qualify as an accountant, so he can practice accountancy in the airlines sector.

While growing up, Okoth says he faced many challenges, given his physical disability. Getting to school in a wheelchair was especially hard, he said.

At the same time, his family was also in a state of financial instability. He is the third born of six children of Emmanuel Onyango, a commercial driver, and Aidah Nabulo, a housewife. In eastern Uganda, Okoth attended Vision Nursery and Primary School, Manjasi High School for O'level and Nabumali High School for A'level.

Okoth has become an advocate for schools to provide facilitation for students with physical challenges.

When Okoth was asked about his favorite swimming style, he stared into the sky and, without any hesitation, said: "Freestyle." He explained further, his choice: "It's for yourself."

Edited from a longer version published at www.ugandapartners.org on September 20, 2023



Watch
Okot
swim

To watch a video of Okot swimming, scan this code with your QR reader on the smartphone.

Ugandan athletes in World University games in China

By Kefa Senoga

When 33 student athletes from 10 Ugandan universities met in July 2023 to flag off participants to a global sports competition, one of the items on the agenda was to select the team captain.

The athletes were heading to China's Chengdu city to compete with students from more than 150 countries in the World University Games.

Santos Okabo, a Uganda Christian University (UCU) student in the School of Business, was chosen as team captain. Okabo, who had never been to a world competition, competed and guided others at the July 27-August 8 event in China.

Okabo says his duties as captain included representing the Ugandan team in meetings and other leadership engagements during the competition.

As expected, the second-year diploma student of business administration says one of the benefits he got as team captain was the opportunity to interact and share experiences with other team leaders from other countries.

At the games, Okabo participated in three races – sprint race of 100 meters and two relay races of 4x100 meters.

In the sprint race, where he emerged 6th out of 8, Okabo said he had hoped to perform better, but that two days before the race, he got sick, largely because he was not accustomed to the food being served in China.

He is, however, grateful that they were able to reach the finals in the 4x400 meter relay race, which he participated in with Chan-wengo Godfrey from Makerere University's

Business School, Akemkwene Peter from Ndejje University and Eyt Justine of Makerere University. In that race, the team broke the university national record for Uganda.

Okabo was not the only UCU student at the competition. Olipa Sharif competed in two races of 200 meters and the 4x100 meter relays. However, he and his relay teammates did not make it to the next round.

The third UCU student at the competition was Nyamahunge Jacent, who got eliminated in the semifinals.

In the preliminaries, Nyamahunge had emerged third in the 100 meter race for women.

During the Special Olympics World Games held in Abu Dhabi in 2019, Nyamahunge won Uganda its first gold medal in the 200 meters race.

The athletes said UCU supported them by financing their requirements while in the camp, including paying for their air tickets.

According to Timothy Kabuye, the coach of the student athletes and one of 20 officials who went to China with the Ugandan athletes, the team could have performed better.

"Nyamahunge Jacent made it to the semifinals in her category even with a foot injury, Okabo ran a personal best while Olipa ran the second fastest best time in the 200 meters that he participated in," Kabuye explained.

Edited from a longer version published at www.ugandapartners.org on September 4, 2023

Santos Okabo dressed in the Ugandan traditional wear of kanzu (tunic) and jacket at the opening ceremony of the games in China in July.



Vice Chancellor's speech continued from Page 13

(f) Faculty of Engineering, Design and Technology

1. The Department of Engineering and Environment and Dartmouth College of Engineering in the USA have implemented a joint student-led project which has resulted in installation of an 800-litre solar water heating system at our kitchen. This project has equipped students with skills in renewable energy and experience of working in a multi-cultural, professional working engagement.

2. Responding to the local and international need for professionals in the fields of data science, artificial intelligence, mechatronics and robotics, the Department of Computing and Technology has started a strategic programme in Data Science and Analytics at undergraduate and post-graduate levels. These programmes are unique in East and Central Africa. The Department also signed a partnership agreement with Uganda Industrial Research Institute (UIRI) to offer practical training, research, apprenticeships, and technology incubation of UCU students' innovations. The first cohort of students of Electronics completed training at UIRI's mechatronics laboratory. The second cohort of 15 Computer Science students is currently doing training at UIRI. We thank Prof. Charles Kwesiga, UIRI Executive Director, for supporting this research and innovation partnership with UCU.

3. The Department of Engineering and Environment in collaboration with Aksaray University in Turkey obtained an Erasmus+ grant of Euro 15,600 to support student and staff mobility for three years. The programme has supported two UCU students to undertake internship training at Aksaray University and four Engineering staff will be participating in an exchange programme with Aksaray University as well.

4. The Department and the Artefact Centre for Sustainable Development in Germany won a grant of Euro 30,000 (sh119,540,192; \$31,742) under the Bingo project, to support installation of a 12m3 biogas plant at Mukono Campus. The project is currently supporting research in managing organic waste

More achievements at UCU



Patience Rubabinda Mushengyezi, fondly known as “Mama Pesh” (short for Mother Patience), poses (front, third left) with some participants of her monthly sessions guiding UCU students on topics such as relationships, academic achievement and career goals.

streams generated from the university's facilities. The research project has demonstrated how renewable energy and organic fertilizer can be recovered through integrated approaches to managing waste. The university kitchen is using the biogas produced by the plant for cooking.

5. Under the DALILA project funded by the European Union, students in the School of Business and the Faculty of Engineering, Design and Technology successfully carried out a one-month internship training at Sapienza University in Italy and the University of Cadiz in Spain from January to February 2023. Five staff members also visited the University of Cadiz under the project.

(g) School of Social Sciences

The School had a successful exchange programme with Hanze University of Applied Sciences in The Netherlands, which benefited 10 students and two staff from the Dutch Institute and some UCU students. The School initiated partnerships with Cedarville University and Antwerp University to start joint

research programmes.

(h) Directorate of Postgraduate Studies

The Directorate has launched a new Centre for Research and Academic Writing Services (CRAWS) in collaboration with the Hamu Mukasa Library and University ICT Services. The Centre will train staff and graduate students to improve their research and academic writing skills, standardise the quality, branding and printing of UCU dissertations, and provide document editing and proofreading services to the UCU community and the public. CRAWS is developing an application that will be used to track the dissertation submission process from proposal to completion.

(i) Directorate of Student Affairs

UCU sports teams have maintained stellar performance in various games. The Men's Volleyball team was crowned champion in the volleyball category of the Eastern Africa University Games at Ndejje University. UCU won 20 medals: 8 Gold, 7 Silver, and 5 Bronze. Three UCU athletes and a tennis player qualified for

the World University Games in Chengdu, China. UCU is among few universities to participate in basketball, tennis, volleyball and soccer during the International University Sports Festival.

(j) Africa Policy Centre

UCU's Africa Policy Centre has initiated a partnership with the Church in policy research, formulation, review and evaluation. The partnership will support the Church as a key player in national development in its advocacy work, promoting evidence-based research and policy formulation. APC will work with the Church in areas such as training in research, joint mobilization of resources, promotion and uptake of data, utilisation of information and communications technologies, and sharing of research results and policy briefs with government and other development agencies.

(k) Mbale University College

The College's Innovation Hub has continued to support the community and young entrepreneurs through training. Out of 15 entrepreneurs from the Innovation Hub who

pitched their ideas during the NSSF Hi-Innovator women accelerator project in June 2023, 12 were successful. The winners received \$20,000 (sh75,298,300) each as seed funding to develop their businesses.

(l) Bishop Barham University College

BBUC will celebrate 100 years in 2024 and it has rolled out works to improve campus infrastructure, such as paving walkways. It also plans to construct more lecture rooms and renovate student housing. As part of the centennial celebrations, the College will launch a drive to raise UGX 500 million to support these infrastructural projects. Please support the fundraising drive.

(m) Arua Campus

Arua Campus plans to construct an academic building, the Bishop Orombi ICT Complex. It will house several facilities, including the Campus innovation hub, e-learning centre, lecture rooms, and conference hall.

Achievements by UCU students and alumni

Our UCU alumna, Joyce Nakayenga, earned a PhD in

Engineering at Hiroshima University in Japan, where she has been retained as a post-doctoral researcher. Her research earned her the “Hiroshima Excellent Student Award.”

Gloria Lynnette Kwagala, a UCU alumna who graduated with a degree in Procurement and Logistics Management in 2017, was awarded a scholarship to pursue a course in aviation at Uganda Aviation Academy. She secured a job at American Airlines, becoming the first female Ugandan to do so.

Jemimah Jehopio, a graduate of the UCU School of Law, was the most exceptional graduate at the 50th Law Development Centre (LDC) graduation ceremony held in June 2023. She scooped three top awards. Emmanuel Okia, another UCU Law School alumnus, excelled as the best Bar Course student with a CGPA of 4.90.

Two of our alumni, Emmanuel Apuun and Caroline Nyange Kihumuro, both graduates of Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA), were selected for the fourth cohort of the competitive scholarship programme by the Institute of Certified Public Accountants of Uganda (ICPAU).

An alumnus and former UCU lecturer, Isaac Christopher Lubogo, was recognized at the Africa Legal Tech Innovation Awards 2022 in Kenya with the “Best Legal Tech Researcher of the Year” award for his contribution to the field of Law. He has developed a platform dubbed “Suigeneris Law App” that is a handy digital research tool for students.

Conclusion

Our dear graduates, today marks a new journey in your lives. The knowledge, skills, competencies, attitudes, and values you have acquired at UCU will be important throughout your career. Please nurture them because they set you apart as a UCU graduate.

The world of work is beset with challenges, but we send you out as leaders with a difference, change-agents, and as conduits that God will use to transform people and communities.

UCU has prepared you to be an agent of positive change, so do not be part of the problem. Instead, be a problem-solver wherever you serve. Therefore, go forth into the world and aspire to achieve many more milestones beyond the university. God will make your dreams come true.



UCU School of Dentistry building, Kampala

About 16,000 students served via on-line learning and in-person at five locations

UCU Vice Chancellor Prof. Aaron Mushengyezi watering a plant at the UCU Arua Campus in August



The Bishop Tucker Building at the Main Campus in Mukono

UCU Mbale University College students in front of Bishop Samwiri Wabulakha Block



UCU leadership with students and staff at Bishop Barham University College, Kabale





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