



# THE OASIS NEWSLETTER

A Publication from the Office of the Vice-Chancellor



*The University Vice Chancellor, Prof. Emily Achieng Akuno addressing staff members*

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## EFFICIENCY AND PROFESSIONALISM IT IS! VC CHALLENGES STAFF



*DVC. PAF Prof. Aggrey Thuo makes his remarks during the meeting*

**T**he Assembly Hall was full to capacity in the afternoon of February 26<sup>th</sup> 2024. Occasional chit chat and laughter, albeit in hushed tones, dotted the almost still air. Anxiety was pasted on the faces of the staff waiting for the highly publicized consultative meeting with the Vice Chancellor. The VC was sandwiched between her two deputies, Prof. Aggrey Thuo (PAF) to the right and Prof. Denis Ochuodho (ASAR) to the left with the Registrar (ASA), Dr. Walter Akuno closing the

top four. Immediately behind the high table were Prof. Francis Ang'awa, Prof. Omollo Ongati, CPA George Aduda and Mr. Benard Ohanga. Even the union leadership who addressed the gathering were all male namely Dr. Francis Odundo, Mr. George Konditi, Mr. Allan Chelule, and Mr. Daniel Okaka. Mr. Godfrey Binaisha did well as the master of ceremony.

When her time to consult with the staff came, save for the initial technical mishap with the echoes produced

by the speakers, Prof. Emily Akuno's speech, delivered in a well measured even tone, revolved around her dream identity of and vision for JOOUST. She equated JOOUST to an adolescent, neither too young nor too old. The analogy presupposes a rather jumpy institution which coincidentally holds a lot of promise. Indeed, the thrust of the VC's speech was on self reflection and discovery. "You are the most valuable asset to this university, you are the wealth of this great institution."

the Vice Chancellor challenged the staff during her first official meeting with all staff gathered in the university's Assembly Hall.

During the auspicious occasion, Prof. Akuno invited the staff to consider their worth and live up-to the expected standards. While invoking the university's vision statement which is a "Beacon of Excellence", the VC passionately rallied the staff to be efficient and professional in their service delivery. "We will never attain excellence status if we are not efficient and professional in our service delivery," stamped the Vice Chancellor as she advised members of staff to shun engaging negative energy and mediocrity at the work place.

It is said that a smile is happiness you will find right under your nose. The gem from Gem had it all through her speech though there were moments in her speech when one would have been forgiven for misconstruing it for a sneer or snide especially



*Ag. DVC ASAR, Prof. Denis Ochuodho makes his remarks during the staff meeting with the Vice Chancellor*

in her response to issues around witch hunt in staff redeployment or the now famous appreciations. In the same vein, Prof. Thuo reiterated that such allegations were baseless since the top management are all new and would have serious trouble even picking the said victims from a crowd.

Adding their voices to the Vice Chancellor's speech, the Deputy Vice Chancellors, Prof. Thuo and Prof. Ochuodho pleaded with staff to be more proactive and faithful to their work. Prof. Thuo asked the staff to be conscious of time as they deliver services to their clients. Prof. Ochuodho literally requested academic staff to do justice to the students by attending to

their lessons as required and to honestly fulfill all the teaching processes.

Speaking on behalf of their constituents, union officials applauded the move by the Vice Chancellor to have a discussion with the members of staff in such a manner, terming it an excellent way of giving opportunity for staff to have a direct interaction with the management. They encouraged the VC and the entire management to hold such kind of meetings more regularly, if possible quarterly. They requested for better treatment of staff including paying the 13th salary. The VC, however, tossed the ball back to the professors whom she reminded had the cardinal duty of attracting

research funds which will improve the cash flow into the university and in turn enable her fix the 13<sup>th</sup> salary.

Prof. Akuno has also assured the staff of the management's commitment to improving the working environment for better performance solely geared towards excellence. In spelling out her administration style, Prof. Akuno intimated that hers will be a synthesis of Prof. George Eshiwani's human faced leadership and Prof. Francis Aduol's committees approach having been a keen student of both the magnificent professors.



*Chairman KUSU, Mr. George Konditi making his remarks*

She further challenged the staff to do their honest part to see JOOUST registered on the world map. In her parting shot, the VC said, "I am very ready to interact, share, listen and or discuss with you at any time. I have been

able to visit with some of you at your various work stations and I'm still going to come to transport, finance....., please prepare for my visit"



*JOOUST staff members during the VC's address to staff*

## THE TREND SETTING JOOUST!



*(from right to left) Ag. DVC ASAR, Prof. Denis Ochuodho, DVC PAF Prof. Aggrey Thuo, Ms. Norah Ndege from ACTS and Prof. Julius Manyala during the benchmarking activity*

**J**OOST is among the first few Universities in Kenya to successfully develop a Commercialization Master plan. On 15<sup>th</sup> February 2024, the University hosted a team of representatives from Kenya National Innovation Agency (KeNIA), Victoria Ventures, Meru University of Science and Technology, Dedan Kimathi University, and Daystar University. The three Universities came to benchmark and learn how JOOST has achieved this enviable fete so as to be able to develop their own

Commercialization Master plans.

The JOOST Commercialization Master Plan is anchored in one of the key University strategic pillars, research, innovation and extension. The Master Plan is a progressive roadmap that complements other University plans and activities, specifically designed to strengthen the University's research output and concurrently generate wealth through the commercialization of research products.

The Commercialization Master Plan seeks to play a critical role in ensuring that Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology transforms into a self-sustaining institution against the backdrop of financial limitations and grants. It also seeks to detach research from the general perception and practice that measures publications as the desirable end product therefore addressing key concerns that can accelerate the commercialization process.



*Dr. Elijah Museve, presents the JOOUST Commercialization Masterplan*

In his opening remarks during the benchmarking exercise, the Deputy Vice Chancellor in charge of Planning and Finance (PAF), Prof. Aggrey Thuo, who was representing the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Emily Akuno, warmly welcomed the visitors to the Institution for the benchmarking activity and noted that when we learn from each other, we are able to know what the others are doing under the constraining environments of the modern world.

“This event is coming after a successful innovation week where students, staff and members of the public participated and we are looking at how we can impact the communities in the immediate environment, for our mandate is teaching,

research and extension,” said Prof. Thuo. “Today is for you to come, observe what we are doing, learn and advise on how we can improve on it and in doing that, move forward together. You learn from us, and we learn from you,” he added.

The Acting Deputy Vice Chancellor in charge of

Academic, Student Affairs and Research (ASAR), Prof. Denis Ochuodho, who was also present during the occasion, thanked KeNIA, UK Aid and African Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS) for putting the activity together, and enumerated the benefits the initiative has accorded JOOUST. “Because of you we are known out there. We are looking forward to more activities particularly scaling up and impacting the community through the different projects that we have,” voiced Prof. Ochuodho.

Previously, JOOUST has proudly participated in the Accelerated Research to Commercialization program, a collaborative initiative of Victoria Ventures



*Attendees listen to a presentation on JOOUST Commercialization Masterplan*

and the Kenya National Innovation Agency. This program spanned from May to November 2023, providing a platform for groundbreaking projects to transition from research ideas to viable commercial ventures, which are available in the institution today.

After the presentations, the guests had an opportunity of carrying out an excursion to the various inventions within the Campus with the aim of developing their own commercialization master plans.



*Visitors tour the various JOOUST projects*



*Dr. Richard Magwanga explains to the visitors the benefits of a mulberry plant*



*The visitors pose for a group photo in front of the Administration block with the University Management*

## THE BLOSSOMING OF JOOUST STUDENT CLUBS

**S**tudent Clubs often provide students with a myriad of avenues to develop leadership skills, pursue personal interests, and engage in community service as well as form a network of friends and contacts both on and off campus. Furthermore, through these organizations, students are able to participate in professionally related events, exchange programmes with students in other countries, attend international conferences and meetings and generally develop their social life skills which are beneficial to them after graduation.

JOOUST has over 20 registered Student Clubs reflecting a wide range of interests, including academic, cultural, social, religious and political activities. These clubs, registered at the Office of the Dean of Students allow students to enjoy co-curricular activities that significantly complement their academic life on campus. For instance, our students have been able to participate in community activities, professionally related events, sports, talent shows, Mr and Miss University shows, exchange visits with students in other

universities/colleges among others.

One of the leading student clubs is the JOOUST Enactus Club which is recognized internationally in matters innovation and has scooped various awards in the recent past. On 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> February 2024 the Club represented JOOUST at the Enactus Kenya student leadership forum held in Kabarak University. All the university students under the umbrella of Enactus Kenya converged for a two day workshop of brainstorming on various ideas. The workshop was officially opened by the vice chancellor of Kabarak University, Prof. Henry Kiplangat.

The member students of Enactus had enriching and inspiring encounters as they actively participated in workshops, panel discussions, and networking sessions, immersing themselves in discussions on leadership, creating awareness on effects of carbon emission on society, entrepreneurship, and social impact. While engaging with leaders from various sectors, they gained valuable insights and practical skills to drive positive change in their communities.

On Saturday, 24<sup>th</sup> February they had a full learning session on Artificial intelligence and Big Data from Enactus Taita Taveta University faculty advisor



*A section of ENACTUS JOOUST members with President of Kabarak university Mr. Kokeyo Forester*



Dr. Nashon Adero. The forum provided a platform for collaboration and idea sharing among Enactus chapters across Kenya, fostering a sense of unity and purpose among the member students as they embark on their projects in readiness for the National Expo scheduled for July 2024. ENACTUS Kenya head, Mr. Shikwati James, could not hide his happiness for hosting the largest number of students since the Covid era. He insisted on Enactus partnership with Electric Schneider programme that students should apply and be part of.

As this was happening, representatives of the Business and Economics Students Association (BESA) of JOOUST led by their patron Dr. Nyagol, had an exhilarating and enlightening day at Mount Kenya University during the Tech and Innovation Summit. The event was organized by the Economics Students Association of Kenya (KESA) in partnership with companies like TIE Events, DownToEarth Technologies (DTE) consultancy and Artecs among others. They enthusiastically participated in a wide range of



*Dr. Nyagol patron BESA and Dean emeritus school of Business JOOUST receiving his gift after the summit as a recognition of work well done*

workshops, presentations, and interactive sessions, immersing themselves in the latest advancements in technology and innovation. Engaging with industry experts and fellow students, they exchanged ideas, networked, and explored potential avenues for collaboration ranging from exploring cutting-edge technologies to discussing innovative business strategies and how to actualize their business ideas.

The summit provided a platform for the students to expand their knowledge, hone their skills, and gain inspiration to drive positive

change in their academic and professional pursuits. Overall, the experience left the members of the association energized, motivated, and eager to apply their newfound insights in their studies and future endeavors. JOOUST was also awarded for being the newest member of KESA



*BESA members on stage showing their tech prowess on stage*



*Charity Club members donate food items to River Jordan Ministry Children's home*

with the best AgriTech innovation in Sericulture. Meanwhile, over the same weekend, a team of 60 JOOUST Charity club members accompanied by one staff member, visited River Jordan Ministry Children's home in Bungoma County, with the aim of giving back to the society. The team, led by the Club's chairperson, Mr. Innocent Mbeche, SAJOOUST president Mr. Allan Luo Humwa and SAJOOUST Deputy President Ms. Diana Nekesa brought with them food items, clothing, beddings, and personal effects including sanitary pads and tissue papers which they presented to the persons in charge of the facility.

The team also engaged with the kids in various activities, including washing clothes and utensils, cooking, playing, as well as mentorship talks with the children who were keen and eager to learn from



*Charity club member interacts with the children*



*Charity Club members doing cleaning*

them. "Engaging with the children was a humbling and enriching experience. Their eagerness to share their stories, dreams and aspirations was both touching and enlightening" Miss Laurine Apiyo, one of the Charity Club members,



*Charity Club members serve lunch to the children*

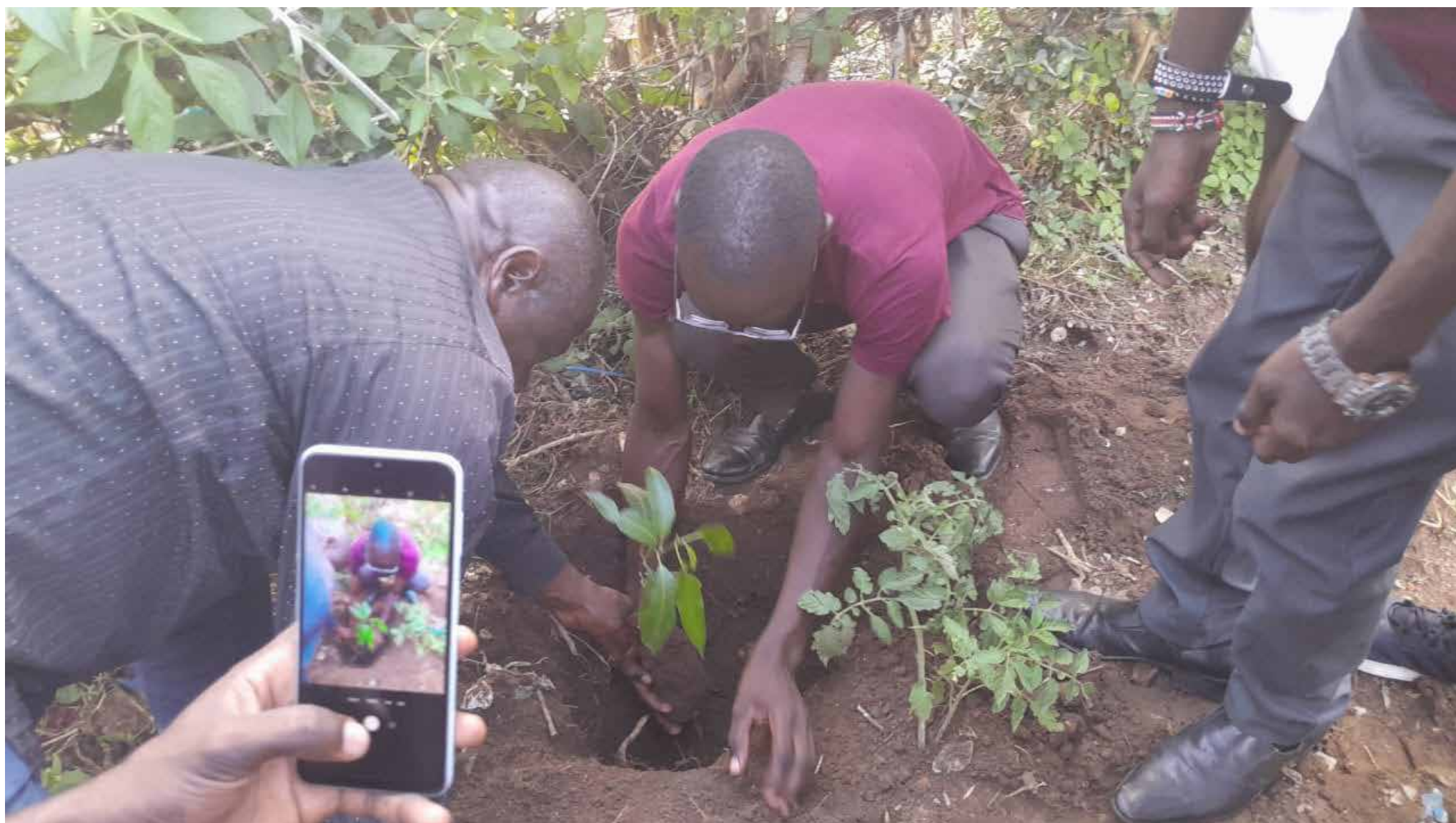
later reiterated.

Evidently, most of the clubs are doing amazing work in their respective fields. With the support from University Management, these students clubs have immensely enhanced the JOOUST's visibility. Through them, JOOUST has become a force to reckon with. For the student members, their involvement with the various clubs has enabled them to not only work on group projects, but also plan events and participate in various

campus activities. It has equally accorded them the opportunity to develop their leadership, teamwork and communication skills which are necessary in accomplishing common objectives.

The import of student involvement in extracurricular activities cannot be gainsaid. It has the potential of contributing to a variety of valued University outcomes including: self-determination, competence and enjoyment through their club involvement. Furthermore, students are

able make a difference in the success of their clubs, academic programmes, colleagues and the larger community through club activities. More importantly, they are able to develop important interpersonal and professional skills, as well as enjoyment of their academic program and the creation of meaningful memories. By carefully selecting clubs that align with their interests and goals, students can unlock a world of opportunities, enriching their college journey and preparing them for future success.



*Tree planting exercise during the visit to River Jordan Children's home in Bungoma County*

## JOOUST USAID BORESHA JAMII SUPPORTS MATERNITY OPEN DAY IN KISUMU

**U**SAID Boresha Jamii by JOOUST remains steadfast in their commitment to increase access to quality Reproductive maternal, newborn, child, and adolescent health (RMNCAH) services in Kisumu County. Subsequently, the program recently supported a maternity open day at Migosi Sub-County Hospital in Kisumu County. The event saw an active participation of 145 expectant mothers thereby marking a crucial step towards empowering and educating mothers-to-be on essential practices in maternal and neonatal health.

The team was sensitized on, among other issues, the



*Cake cutting ceremony, courtesy of Cooperative Bank*

danger signs in pregnancy, birth plan, and the importance of Antenatal care. The session was handled by Mr. Bosire, the Kisumu Central sub-county child health coordinator, who was representing the Medical Officer of Health Kisumu Central, Dr. Abiero. The expectant

mothers also had a chance to engage the facilitators to get clarification on various matters, including the challenges that bar them from being delivered of their babies at the facility.

The area MCA, Ms. Pamela Awour, encouraged mothers to embrace hospital/skilled deliveries. She commended the hospital staff for the laudable job and encouraged the mothers to utilize the resources in the facility. She went on to express her optimism about the hospital being upgraded to a level 5 facility. Ms. Awour acknowledged the male partners who had accompanied their spouses, encouraging them to be champions in the



*A presenter speaking to a section of mothers present*

community.

The event was crowned by a cake-cutting ceremony courtesy of Cooperative Bank of Kenya. Additionally, Mothers embarked on a guided tour of the hospital's maternity wing. Sincere gratitude to TINADA Youth Organization, Co-operative Bank, and Ogra Foundation for supporting this!



*Presentations ongoing during the maternity open day in Kisumu*

USAID Boresha Jamii aims at providing interlinked activities to achieve the Kenya Health Partnerships for Quality Services (KHPQS) goal and objectives. It builds on USAID's investment in HIV service delivery and supports the Ministry of Health in achieving the journey to self-reliance (J2SR) in Cluster 5 Counties of Western Kenya region. Its focus is to increase the use of Quality County led health and social services in family planning, reproductive health, HIV care and treatment, maternal, neonatal, Child and Adolescent Health and Nutrition (FP/RHMNCAH), Water and Sanitation (WASH), and to mitigate social determinants that affect Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC), Key and Priority Population

(KP/PP) and Voluntary Medical Male Circumcision (VMMC).

This program is a five-year (2021-2025) project implemented by Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology as its prime awardee with PATH Kenya and SCORE Kenya as its Sub Awardees

in Kisumu, Vihiga Nyamira and Kakamega counties, with funding from the United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).



*Attendees during the maternity open day*

# *The Oasis*

A Newsletter of Jaramogi Oginga Odinga  
University of Science and Technology

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