



# Juvarsity



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## In this issue:

Low Risk of COVID-19 Infection at the University	1
Academic Freedom and Societal Values	2
School of Mathematics hosts Mathematics Competition	3
Donation of Lab Coats	3
Launch of COVID-19 Report	4
Obituaries	4

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## Low Risk of COVID-19 Infection at the University



As the country faces an upsurge in COVID-19 spread, the government has boosted the implementation of COVID-19 preventive measures across the country. It set up a COVID-19 Audit Committee to visit premises of institutions to assess implementation of preventive measures. On 19 February, the Committee visited the University of Juba, where it was welcomed by top administrators and briefed on steps the University had taken including: scaling down of employees working on the same day; placing thermometers at gates to take temperatures; establishing wash stations at visible areas for easy access by students, staff and others; mandating use of hand sanitizers; requiring hand washing before entry to campuses; staggering examinations over a longer time to reduce overcrowding; requiring students to wear masks at all times; demanding observance of social distancing.

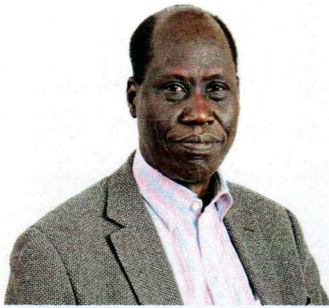
After concluding the assessment, the Audit Committee stated that the University scored 27 percent out of 33 percent on a checklist for auditing workplace safety and compliance with COVID-19 preventive measures and that it meant the risk of infection on University campuses was low.

The Audit Committee however urged the University to improve on making people wear face masks at all times, maintaining a safe water system, and building more toilets and keeping them clean. The University accepted to work on these recommendations.





## The Focus: Academic Freedom and Societal Values



by Prof John A. Akec

Universities have been described in the *Uses of University as Cities of Intellect* by Clark Kerr, the former president of University of California, Berkeley. The dwellers of these cities are professors and students who have devoted their lives to teaching, research, and production of new knowledge. By mid-twentieth century, universities have increasingly assisted the state and served communities around them in some meaningful ways, through the application of knowledge to solve economic and social problems.

In the words of Alfred North Whitehead, "the justification for a university is that it preserves connection between knowledge and the zest of life, by uniting the young and the old in an imaginative consideration of learning." That over the last six centuries, universities have trained the pioneers of human civilization. Especially "the priests, the lawyers, the statesmen, the doctors, the men of science, and the men of letters." And that the universities have been homes of those ideals which cause men and women to confront the challenges of their times.

These ideals have been preserved over the centuries by granting 'academic freedom' that included but not limited to freedom of thought and speech for the professor within the walls of university city. Derek Bok, former president of Harvard University, has argued forcefully in *Beyond Ivory Tower* that the right to speak and write as one chooses is fundamental to individual liberty and is essential in contributing to a stimulating life. And without such liberty, no academic can participate fully in an intellectual exchange that helps in developing one's own values and outlook of the world, and to exercise the mental faculties of imagination that are uniquely human. That human progress over the centuries has been made possible by major discoveries and advances in knowledge that appeared, at first sight, as unsettling and distasteful to prevailing order. And that only few individuals have the intelligence and imagination, and courage to openly communicate these discoveries.

By guarding against the erosion of academic freedom for the professor, universities can ensure an environment in which academics and students can be creative and most productive in expanding the frontiers and increasing the stock of human knowledge.

However, academic freedom has constantly come under attack from multiple fronts, chiefly because of the emergence of multiversity in the mid twentieth century that extended the function of university as an institution for teaching and research to include service to community. As a result of this extended function of the university to serve as "an arm of the state" and an instrument for societal service, professors have assisted their countries in war efforts, in designing economic policies, and in solving social problems.

That in turn led to the loss of detachment often associated with the academic output. The involvement of professors with society's affairs has raised serious moral questions when scientists assisted in the development of atomic bomb that was used to attack Hiroshima, as well as in planning of the fire raids on Tokyo and Dresden in the Second World War.

Similarly, students and professors at Columbia University opposed the appointment of Dr Henry Kissinger as special chair in international relations in 1977 for his role, as the US Secretary of State, in the bombing of Hanoi, invasion of Cambodia, and lengthening of the Vietnam War. Dr Henry Kissinger decided not to take up the appointment after all, despite the willingness of Columbia University administration to effect it on the principle that Kissinger's scholarly contribution had nothing to do with his role as a political decision maker. Another case involving moral dilemmas in relation to academic freedom was the decision of City College of New York to bar the English philosopher and mathematician, Bertrand Russell, lecturing there citing his views deemed immoral as they were perceived to condone extra-marital relations.

To close, in author's view, while universities will continue to protect academic freedom as the pillar of intellectual creativity, we must also bear in mind that as long as universities continue to get involved with societal affairs, academic freedom will come under fire from multiple fronts; not only for political reasons, but also for moral standards the society expects of the academics.

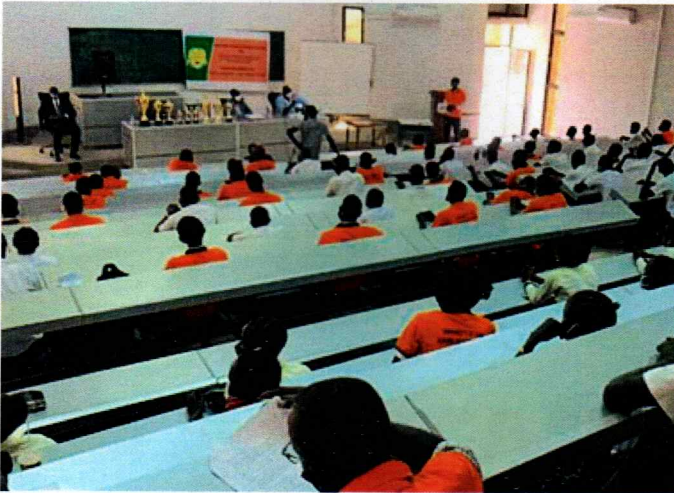
*Prof John A. Akec is the Vice Chancellor, Univeristy of Juba.*





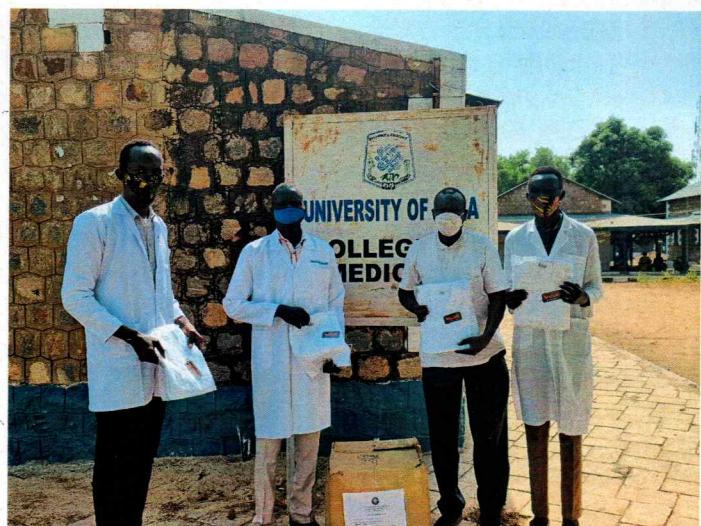
## School of Mathematics hosts Mathematics Competition

On Saturday, 6 March 2021, the School of Mathematics hosted a mathematics competition for students from a number of secondary schools in Juba. The best three schools were Darling Wisdom Academy (30.5%), Venus Star High (12.4%), and Bright Boma Star High (11.9%). The best three boys were Emmanuel Galdino (46%), Ladu Beden Wani (40%) and Manyang Majer Kuol (39%) and the best three girls were Nyandeng Kuol Gak (34%), Ayol Mayen Achiek (28%), and Mary Modong Kaya Sworo (16%). The best performers received prizes which were presented by Vice Chancellor John A. Akec. The annual event is aimed at improving mathematics learning in the country.



## Donation of Lab Coats

The University thanks the South Sudan National Security Service for donating 65 lab coats to the School of Medicine. The Administration of the School received the donation on 25 January 2021 on behalf of the leadership of the University. This donation will support the teaching of the future doctors of our country.



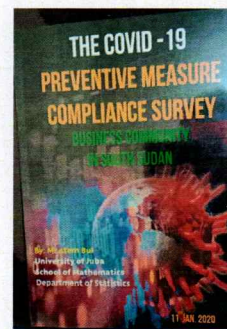
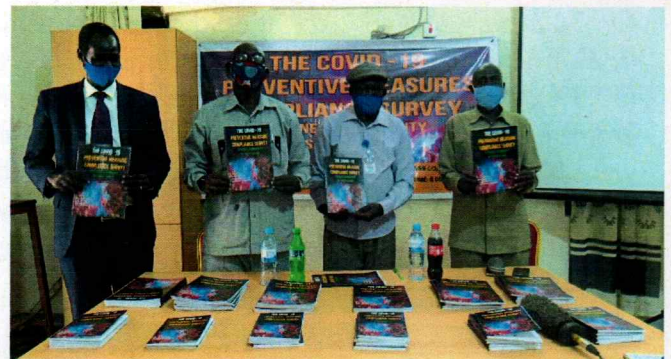




## University Launches COVID-19 Research Reports

The University of Juba launched a report on the results of a COVID-19 Preventive Measures Compliance Survey, which was led by Mr Atem Bul, a lecturer at the School of Mathematics. The survey was conducted in July 2020 and covered the ten state capitals in the country. It captured the perceptions of a sample of 200 business persons with an overall objective to determine the compliance of business people with COVID-19 preventive measures.

The study concluded that compliance with COVID-19 guidelines was low in the country. This did not change with increase in literacy and age. Compared to many countries, COVID-19 spread in the country was low. Also, the study illustrated that the public was well informed about COVID-19 via radio and media. Moreover, there was high trust in the public health system dealing with COVID-19 in the country.



The COVID-19 Preventive Measure Compliance Survey Business Community in South Sudan  
by Mr. Atem Bul

## Obituaries



**Professor Othow Onak Giel**  
01.01.1952 – 23.02.2021

Dr Othow Giel is a graduate of the University of Khartoum, where he obtained a Bachelor of Education in Mathematics (1979). Then, he obtained Masters of Mathematics (1983) from the University of Manitoba, Canada, and a PhD in Mathematics Education (1992) from Seoul National University, South Korea.

Dr Othow Giel took up employment with the University of Juba as a Teaching Assistant in Mathematics, the then College of Education, in 1985. He subsequently served in other positions. He most notably served as the Dean of the School of Computer Science and Information Technology, and Head of the Department of Mathematics, School of Education. He also taught, during years in exile, at a number of universities and institutions in Libya and Australia, before relocating to South Sudan in 2011. He will be dearly missed by his colleagues and students alike.



**Professor Edward Yakobo Momo**  
01.01.1956 – 16.02.2021

Dr Edward Momo was, at the time of his untimely death, the Dean, School of Education, University of Juba. He graduated from the then College of Education, University of Juba with a Bachelor of Education (Arts), Division One, in 1986. He joined the University of Juba as a Teaching Assistant in 1987. He holds an MPhil in Literature (Modernism) from the University of Glasgow (1992), and a PhD in Educational Studies from the Faculty of Education, the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow (1997).

Dr Edward Momo held, with distinction, various positions within the University of Juba, including being Head, Department of English Language and Literature, School of Education. He also taught at various institutions of higher learning in Scotland, before relocating to South Sudan in 2012. He will be dearly missed by his colleagues and students alike.

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