



Juvarsity



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Inventing the Future - Transforming Society

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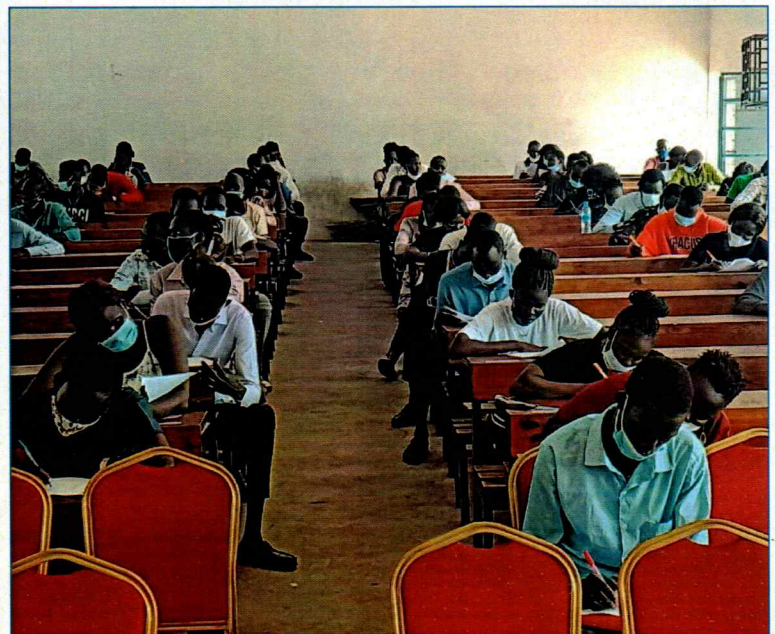
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Final Examinations kicked off

On Monday, 16 August 2021, the campuses of the University went quiet as students commenced their final examinations. This is significant, considering the myriad of challenges that higher education in our country has been facing. Congratulations to staff and students for continuing with education in the face of these challenges.

The University Administration urges all staff and students to adhere to COVID-19 rules of wearing masks, washing hands frequently, and social distancing to reduce the risk of the spread of the pandemic. Everyone should take the lead to protect himself or herself as well as others.

COVID-19 is real and no one should let down his or her guard!



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The Focus: On Our Unshaken Commitment to Educational Excellence



by Prof John A. Akec

The pursuit of excellence is the stepping stone to building great organisations. Think of Apple Inc., Samsung, Harvard, Oxford, Mayo Clinic in United States, McDonald's, Walt Disneyland, Makerere University, and countless other famous brands. These organisational brands share one thing in common – unabashed commitment to excellence in the products and services they provide to their clients. Excellence, for them, serves as a core value, and as strategy for dominating their markets.

From the founding of our University in 1975 to this very day, our emblem has carried two words: "excellence and relevance." From 2014, however, we have adopted a new line tag: "inventing the future and transforming society" in order to drive University of Juba's Vision 2030. Some of our stakeholders have expressed concerns about this shift in emphasis. And a few voices went as far as decrying the abandonment of the University's historical motto. Such concerns, though legitimate, are quite unfounded. And here is why.

For start, our mission statement describes our University as a "centre of excellence". I quote: "The University of Juba is a leading educational centre of excellence that is committed to national economic empowerment and social transformation through provision of quality education."

Moreover, the University of Juba's Vision 2030 aims to transform our institution into "a dynamic regional and world-class centre of excellence in teaching, research, innovation, and service to community by 2030." Our core values celebrate "scholarship, excellence, creativity, and initiative."

We must pause and ask ourselves why "excellence" was such a critical organisational value to our founding fathers. Plenty of reasons.

Tom Peters in *In Search for Excellence* (1982), and lately, *Excellence Dividend* (2018), describes excellence as "a state of mind, a way of being". That we recognize excellence when we see it. That excellence can be

practiced by everyone, everywhere, anytime; such as in saying "thank you" to a colleague for a small service received, in listening more attentively to workmates or customers, in shouldering responsibility and apologizing for our mistakes, in lending a hand to colleagues who have fallen behind with their tasks, in over-preparing for a three-minute presentation, and in taking great care when writing a short email.

Tom Peters contends that excellence is not necessarily a long-term goal that we strive for, or hope to arrive at some "sunny glorious day" in future, "but a way of life, a way of behaving with care and respect toward our fellow human beings, day in and day out, moment in and moment out." And that these human beings could be work colleagues, customers, students, alumni or members of the communities we serve.

A good case study for excellence in healthcare provision has been described by Leonard L. Berry and Kent D. Seltman in *Management Lessons from Mayo Clinic* (2008). Mayo Clinic is a top not-for-profit global healthcare provider founded in 1864 in Rochester, Minnesota, by Dr. William Mayo. Mayo Clinic is ranked in several independent evaluations and reports as "Medical Mecca", as "one of best 100 companies to work for", a place to go to when "really sick". And by its patients and co-patients as an "important national institution", and as a symbol of "what is best in American medicine."

One might wonder how the Mayo Clinic achieved this stellar world-class results. Easy. As explained by Dr. William Mayo himself in 1975, it is a result of pursuit of ideal of service and non-profit, sincere care for welfare of each single patient, interest of each staff member in professional development of every other member, willingness to change in response to the changing needs of society, efforts to maintain excellence in everything they do; delivering the service with absolute integrity at all time (Berry and Seltman, 2008).

Finally, Jim Collins' masterpiece, *Good to Great* (2001), describes great organisations. He contends that it is not enough to be "good", but that, on the contrary, "good is the enemy of the great." He then argued in order to be outstanding organisations, companies must be led by humble leaders, resolve to recruit highly talented professionals, do well in their core business, have a culture of discipline, apply technology to improve the delivery of their core business, and commit to maintaining high standards over long periods of time.

Hence, excellence is more than fine words engraved on an institutional emblem or hanged on our office walls. Excellence, in practice, speaks louder than fine words.



Consultative Meeting of the Board Members of IGAD Council of Higher Education

The First Consultative Meeting of the Board Members of IGAD Council of Higher Education (ICHE) was hosted by the University of Khartoum from 26 to 27 July 2021. The Board is an advisory think tank on regional issues and priorities. The meeting was attended by Prof. Robert Deng on behalf of Vice Chancellor Prof. John Apuruot Akec.

The participants were from Djibouti University, Addis Ababa University, Jigjiga University, University of Nairobi, University of Juba, University of Khartoum, Makerere University, IGAD and Sudan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as Ministry of Higher Education & Scientific Research.

On the first day, the opening remarks were presented by Sudan's Minister of Higher Education & Scientific Research; Prof. Fadwa Taha, Vice Chancellor of the University of Khartoum; and Dr. Kebede Kassa, Senior IGAD Education Program Coordinator. Then, Prof. Fadwa Taha delivered a key note address.



In the morning of the second day, the members deliberated on membership and organizational structure of the ICHE and on clustering of IGAD Universities into thematic areas, Innovation Hubs and Centers of Excellence. In the afternoon, the discussion centered on Draft Action Plan of the Board for the next two years.

In closing, the Board agreed that the next Consultative Meeting would be hosted by the University of Juba, sometime in September or October 2021.

Pre-Summit Academia Dialogue

On 8 July 2021, the University of Juba organized a one-day Pre-Summit dialogue among the Academia and other actors in South Sudan, with the aim to feed the outcome of discussions into the UN Food Systems Summit 2021, which is scheduled to take place in October.

The Summit, under the theme "Transforming Food Systems is crucial for delivering all the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)," is expected to launch bold new actions, solutions, and strategies to deliver progress on all 17 SDGs, each of which relies on healthier, diversified, more sustainable, and more equitable food systems.

The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM), of which University of Juba is a member, has been designated as one of the champions to mobilize a diverse range of people in every region of the world into a broad and inclusive coalition for transformation of the World Food Systems through coordinated action before, during and after the summit.

New International Staff arrive

The University welcomes two international staff, whose brief profiles are as follows:



Dr Abubaker Omer Ismael

Joins School of Natural Resources and Environment Studies as Associate Professor. He received his PhD in Animal Production from University of Juba in 2009.



Professor Saifeldin Farajalla El Nagerabi

Joins School of Applied and Industrial Sciences as Professor. He received his PhD in Botany from Khartoum University in 1997.

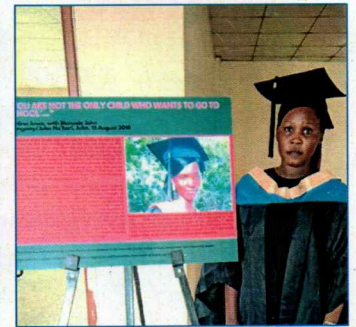


Oral History Exhibition

On 12 August 2021, University of Juba hosted an Oral History Exhibition for its graduates. The event was organized by the Rift Valley Institute (RVI). The exhibition was a result of training that was conducted in 2018 for students and faculty from the University of Juba, the Catholic University of South Sudan and the Upper Nile University.

The Academic Registrar, Professor Mairi J. Blackings, stated that it was an important event that allowed the University to learn about the educational journeys of its alumni. "It is true there is a story behind every face. We know you as our students, we know your names but we didn't know about your educational journeys stories and now we know your story", he added.

Alex Miskin, a Project Coordinator at the RVI, explained that the aim of the Oral History Project was to bring chiefs together from across the country to discuss how they could contribute to the political transition in the country.



Maintenance and construction works updates

The renovations in the Main Administration Building and School of Medicine premises are going on well. In particular, the third floor construction in the Main Administration Building is spectacularly taking shape and hence capturing the attention of staff, students and visitors.

