

VICE CHANCELLOR'S VIRTUAL ADDRESS ON 7TH AUGUST 2020

To all members of the University Community,

Staff and Students,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

During my last address a fortnight ago, I mentioned that Covid-19 is here with us and indeed the rate of infections has continued to escalate. I will therefore not tire from reminding all of us to continue observing the containment measures issued by the Ministry of Health from time to time

It is quiet sad that Covid-19 has robbed off the University brilliant and committed staff.

I convey my condolences to their families and friends and pray that God will grant them strength to overcome the pain.

Such sad news may sometimes create a lot of mental anxiety among staff. As a caring organization we will continue to provide counseling services to staff and students to address anxiety at work place. The University Health Services is providing counseling sessions for staff who need psychosocial support. The Chief Medical Officer is coordinating the services.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Our university has exhibited resilience in the face of COVID 19 and as expected performed strongly in various global varsity rankings.

We are currently ranked in top 10 Universities in Africa and the best in East African Region by the webometrics ranking report that was released in July 2020. This excellent performance is the outcome of your hard work and sacrifices. The Unity of purpose you continue to demonstrate is our strength. This will help us to navigate through the Covid crisis. Together we are stronger. This is in conformity with our motto- Unity and Work (*Unitate et Labore*)

I am optimistic that we shall bounce back strongly after the pandemic. I count on your hard work and commitment to deliver

quality education and to engage in impactful research that will contribute to the development of our society.

I am happy to note that covid-19 has not dampened your spirit. We are now in the final phase of the online exams.

The College of Humanities and Social Sciences is expected to finish their online exams by 14 August 2020 and the College of Health Sciences, will start their exams on 17th August 2020. This is not a mean achievement.

I want to encourage all staff to continue working hard and to be more and more innovative in service delivery.

The 21st century challenges require that we keep innovating to stay competitive. From time to time, I have witnessed very brilliant innovations from our staff and students.

One of these is the SOMA online system from the school of mathematics which is currently being used in teaching and examination of technical subjects like mathematics, physics and computer science. I recognize the contributions of Dr. Jared Ongaro from the school of mathematics for advancing the use of the program at the University

Further, I recognize and appreciate the university ICT team for the innovative and robust systems that has enabled the University to continue operating during this period of Covid-19. Without their support we would not have transitioned to online platforms smoothly as we have done.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The University of Nairobi will commence its new academic year on 31st August this year as scheduled. The Senate deliberated on this matter and decided that all students including the “Fresher’s” will start the 2020/2021 Academic year online.

Consequently, on 31st August 2020, the University shall be admitting 8,425 freshmen virtually to begin their first semester. Most of them were the best performers in 2019 KSCE exams.

The Academic registrar will be issuing various communication using various media platforms shortly.

During their First week - the students will be taken through – “Know your university orientation program”.

In the second week students will be trained on how to use online platforms for their classes, and on how to access library resources and other online services.

The orientation will be for all undergraduate and post-graduate students.

In the meantime, students are advised to use the following links and addresses to access critical services and information from the University:

Admissions matters:	admissions@uonbi.ac.ke
Inter-university transfer:	admissions@uonbi.ac.ke
Transcripts/verification/graduation:	examinations@uonbi.ac.ke
Deferments/withdrawals /HELB issues:	cost-sharing@uonbi.ac.ke
General enquiries on academic matters:	reg-academic@uonbi.ac.ke

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to recognize University of Nairobi staff who have been invited to offer their services in building our Institutions.

Recently, Prof. George Cheminingwa was appointed the Ag. Principal of Turkana University College. Prof. Cheming’wa was until his appointment the Dean of Agriculture at the College of Veterinary and Agricultural Sciences (CAVS).

Dr. Tonny Omwansa has also been appointed by the government to become the Director of Kenya National Innovation Agency. He was previously the Director of the Nairobi Innovation week and a lecturer at the School of Computing and Informatics.

I congratulate the two and wish them success in their tour of duty. The University of Nairobi Community will support them to succeed in their new positions

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Each year the University collaborates with a number of partners and sponsors to convene the annual Nairobi Innovation Week. The innovation week could not be held this year due to the rapidly evolving covid-19 pandemic and the attendant disruption of most activities. However, I am glad to inform you that it is now scheduled to take place on March 8-12, 2021.

Nairobi Innovation Week is a forum that seeks to support and accelerate the innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem in the region. The key highlights of the events will include the Nairobi Innovation Challenge, pitching competition for start-ups, the NIW Start up Summit, The innovation summit, and the Innovation Research Poster competition.

In my last address, I mentioned that we are currently implementing the CBA No.2017-2021 horizontally as approved by the SRA and recognized by Employment and Industrial Relations Court. The Implementation of this CBA has occasioned a huge budgetary deficit at University of Nairobi that must be contained moving forward. We must initiate urgent reforms to survive. The COVID 19 pandemic has only made matters worse.

It is also apparent that the current funding model of differentiated unit costs (DUC) is not sustainable because it is founded on wrong assumptions. There is need for the government to engage the stakeholders in reforming the method used and developing a more acceptable and realistic funding model for universities.

But as we continue to engage the government and other external stakeholders, I want to let you know that internally we have no choice but to initiate some drastic reforms to address the deficit through cost cutting measures. All members of staff should therefore prepare for hard times ahead. I have heard it said "No Pain no gain" This is unavoidable in the present circumstances.

Finally, I wish to draw your attention to two upcoming university events that are very important in the annual University calendar. They are:

Graduation ceremony which will be held on 25th September 2020 at the Great Court.

Secondly; Annual Research week 2020 on October 12-16, 2020 with 12(Twelve) International conferences.

The key thematic highlights of the research week will be:

- Conference on Project planning and management
- Architecture and Engineering
- Literature and Global world
- Forensic victimology and Victims support
- Open, Distance and E-learning
- Science for Sustainable development
- Status of African Women
- Finance Development
- Business management
- Research and Innovation on Education

I invite you all to register and participate. I encourage post-graduate students and staff to prepare and present their research papers in the conferences.

Let's keep working.

Thank you and God bless you!

PROF.S. G. KIAMA, PhD
VICE CHANCELLOR