

CAMPUS THIS WEEK

UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY-AFRICA NEWSLETTER

11 - 17 FEBRUARY 2017

She believed she could: Women urged to pursue STEM careers



Ms. Anar Simpson (Special Advisor - Women, Girls and Technology Initiative, Mozilla) speaks during the Tech Women Conference held in the auditorium on Friday, February 10. Looking on (from left): Dr. Joy Kiano (Principal - Nova Academy), Ms. Anar Simpson, Ambassador Prof. Ruthie Rono (DVC- Academic and Student Affairs) and Ms. Eunice Kariuki (Director of Innovation, Strategy and Partnership, Kenya ICT Authority)
PHOTO: Steve Wachira

On Friday February 10, USIU-Africa Alumni Association collaborated with the She Goes Tech initiative to host a conference themed "She believed she could, so she did STEM" at the USIU-Africa auditorium on Friday, February 10. The conference, which brought together high school pupils and teachers, college students and faculty, as well as private and public sector STEM industry employers in Kenya, aimed at encouraging more women to pursue STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) careers.

In his opening remarks, Vice Chancellor Prof. Paul Zeleza underlined the value of industry partnerships noting that, "To ensure that women excel in

STEM-related careers, universities should partner with industry leaders to understand their expectations of STEM graduates and prepare students to meet them."

He also announced USIU-Africa's plans to introduce seven new STEM programs namely; Data Analytics and Business Intelligence, Applied Mathematics, Data Mining, Computer Gaming, Software Engineering, Epidemiology and Biostatistics, and Bio Technology in Analytical Chemistry.

A key outcome of the conference was the need for deliberate focus by educators and employers on programs and initiatives that encourage girls to

engage and grow in STEM in order for Kenya to realize its critical human resource base – A base that will support the sustainable achievement of Vision 2030 – Kenya's national development blueprint.

The conference was a partnership between She Goes Tech (an initiative founded by Kenyan TechWomen fellow, Ms. Kendi Ntwiga) and the TechWomen program - a six-year old initiative of the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, formed to encourage and support young women to pursue STEM careers and become community role models for women and girls in Africa, Central and South Asia, and the Middle East.

Call for papers for Criminal Justice Conference issued

Call for papers issued for Criminal Justice Conference The Criminal Justice Studies (CJS) program in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences in partnership with the Kenya Professional Society of Criminology (KEPSOC) and the office of Academic Research has issued a call for papers to be presented during the first ever Criminology and Criminal Justice Conference in the East Africa region, to be held from June 15-16 on campus.

The conference themed *“Challenges in the Administration of Justice and Emerging Crimes in East Africa”* will bring together academics and practitioners in criminal justice to discuss challenging issues pertaining to the response of the criminal justice system and professionals to emerging crimes in the region, such as money laundering, organized crime, human trafficking and terrorism. Further details are available at the university website.

The deadline for submission is on Sunday April 30, through email cjconference@usiu.ac.ke. Conference Chair Dr. Simeon Sungi (Associate Professor of Criminal Justice) is also available on email (ssungi@usiu.ac.ke) for any further clarification.

German foundation donates books to Journalism Program

Non-profit German political foundation - Konrad Adenauer Stiftung - has donated 48 copies of a new book in media law to USIU-Africa's Journalism Program.

Dr. Kioko Ileri (Assistant Professor of Journalism and Mass Communication) received the donation of Media Law Handbook for Eastern Africa during the book's launch on Friday, February 3 at Aga Khan Graduate School of Media and Communications in Nairobi, from Mr. Christian Echle, the Foundation's Director for Media Programs in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Speaking on receiving the books from Dr. Ileri on Wednesday, February 15, University Librarian Dr. Sylvia Ogola announced the books will be available to undergraduate journalism and graduate communication studies in the Short Loan, References, Africana, and Circulation sections of the library.

The book is written by Justine Limptilaw, a visiting adjunct professor with the LINK Center at the University of the Witwatersrand, specializing in media, broadcasting, telecommunications, and space and satellite law. It explores various facets of media laws in Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Eritrea and Ethiopia.



Dr. Marie Nelson (Lecturer, University of Nairobi) was part of the panel of speakers during the Black History Month Pan African Symposium held on Tuesday, February 14 at the auditorium. Looking on is Dr. Duncan Ojwang (Law Lecturer, University of Nairobi), Ms. Muthoni Wanyeki (Executive Director, Amnesty International for East African and the Great Lakes) and Prof. Macharia Munene (Professor of History and International Relations)



Dr. Kioko Ileri (Assistant Professor of Journalism and Mass Communication) hands over 48 copies of Media Law Handbook for Eastern Africa to Dr. Sylvia Ogola (University Librarian) on Tuesday, February 14. Looking on is Mr. Daniel Okumu (Principal Librarian - Acquisitions).

Dr. Brown discusses Cognitive Lab research at IBM research facility



Dr. Dana Basnight Brown (Associate Professor of Psychology and Research Scientist)

Dr. Dana Basnight-Brown (Associate Professor of Psychology and Research Scientist) made a presentation on "An Overview of Cognitive Science: Key Themes and Methodologies" to members of the scientific community at the IBM Research – Africa research facility's IBM Think Lab, at the Catholic University of Eastern Africa, on Monday February 13.

Speaking to an audience drawn from healthcare, finance and education arms of the center, Dr. Brown also highlighted the Cognitive Lab she runs on campus, as well as research findings from current projects the Lab is handling this semester, and previous projects the Lab has undertaken in the past year.

Dr. Mwambari speaks on social cohesion at UNESCO forum



Dr. David Mwambari (Assistant Professor of International Relations) delivers brief remarks during the Consultative Meeting on Identity, Violence and Social Cohesion in Kenya at the InterContinental Nairobi on Monday, February 13. Looking on are (from third left): Dr. Pierre Sane (USIU-Africa University Council member), Mr. Siddharth Chatterjee (UN Resident Coordinator) and Prof. Peter Kagwanja (African Policy Information Center, University of Nairobi).

Dr. David Mwambari (Assistant Professor of International Relations) spoke at the **Consultative Meeting on Identity, Violence and Social Cohesion** in Kenya at the InterContinental Nairobi organized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) at the Intercontinental Nairobi on Monday, February 13.

In his remarks, Dr. Mwambari decried the use of ethnic identities as a political mobilization tool, instead noting that cultural diversity can reap dividends for social and economic progress, in East Africa and elsewhere in the world. He also pointed out that though the media (including social media) is still a tool *used by "conflict*

entrepreneurs" to fan ethnic hatred, it can be harnessed as a force for good, when it creates platforms for dialogue among political rivals and stakeholders.

Finally, quoting from the Yvonne Owuor's novel "Dust" he encouraged universities and scholars to invest effort into research on the root causes of identity-based violence, emphasizing the responsibility of scholars to find creative avenues beyond library shelves, to educate and share their research findings with policy makers and the general public.



Residents of the university hostels made a trip to the Hell's Gate National Park on Sunday, February 12. The Park, which managed by the Kenya Wildlife Service, lies north west of Nairobi, is named after a narrow break in the cliffs, through which a prehistoric lake's tributary once surged. It is known for its "spectacular scenery, stark rock towers, scrub clad volcanoes and belching plumes of geothermal steam". Fitness Instructor Dominic Oreme chaperoned the trip.

The Language Support Unit to host Writing Clinic



Professor Munyae Mulinge (Professor of Sociology) takes a class of graduate and doctoral students through the steps of proposal and dissertation writing on Friday, February 17.

The USIU-Africa Language Support Unit hosted for this year's first Writing Clinic on Friday, February 17 from 10 am in the Chandaria School of Business. The clinic was organized around two simultaneous sessions for undergraduate and post-graduate students.

Prof. Kang'ethe Iraki (Professor of French) and Prof. Munyae Mulinge (Professor of Sociology) addressed graduate and doctoral students on the "Nature of Scientific Knowledge" and "Proposal/dissertation Writing" respectively. Lecturers of English Mr. Peter Mbugua and Ms. Zuhra Magut handled the topics, "Writing Process" and "Writing a Term Paper" respectively, during the undergraduate session.

The clinic is coordinated by Dr. Martin Mburu (Assistant Professor of English) and is aimed at improving academic writing skills across all programs on campus. It involves a mix of presentations, workshops as well as Question and Answer sessions.



A student signs up to be registered to vote in the Kenyan General Election at the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission registration center outside the cafeteria on Tuesday, February 14. A large number of Kenyan students, staff and faculty also took advantage the opportunity to update their voting details during the exercise, which is expected to conclude on Sunday, February 19.



Karl Heinz CEO of JuaKali Box demonstrates the workings of a 3D printer during a demonstration show held at the Freida Brown Student Center on Thursday, February 16. The show was organized by the Innovation and Incubation Center to explore the opportunities presented by 3D printing in rapid prototyping.

FEATURE:

The Engine that Powers Creativity and Innovation

In 2005, LEGO, the Danish toy maker, took the technology community by surprise when they cheered the hacking of its 3D modelling platform called LEGO Factory. Executives initially fancied the idea of legal action as an archetypal corporate reaction especially since the company still struggled to recuperate from near bankruptcy. Yet, upon a closer look, it turned out that the hackers were part of a well-coordinated colony of dexterous LEGO aficionados. Discovering inefficiencies in the system brought out through the intrusion, the hackers sought to create a database that would optimize the number of exact bricks a consumer needed. The action would minimize the amount customers would spend, contrary to the original version of the software developed by LEGO whereby one had to purchase a whole bag with far more bricks than one required. Fleshing out the problem, LEGO put itself into the shoes of its ardent consumers. Instead of filing a law suit as originally intended, it switched gears and engaged the hackers.

Tormod Askildsen, LEGO's Head of Community Development at the time was quoted saying *"our lawyers were ready to go after these consumers and say, "you cannot do that." But we also realized that there was a lot of talent and a lot of very great skills out there in the community. Yes, they are tinkering with our product, but they are improving it. So what happened was that we basically let consumers hack this, and that is the amazing thing. If you trust your consumers, then they may do something that is actually a benefit. The LEGO brand is not owned by us. It's owned by the consumers. We own the trademark, yes, but the brand lives in the minds of the consumers."* What happened at LEGO was a classical performance of cognitive empathy in a corporate environment.

The 18th century British philosopher David Hume once remarked that *"the minds of men are mirrors to one another"*. In the early 1990's, Italian researchers at Parma University made a riveting discovery. Through a series of experiments done on monkeys, they figured out that certain sets of neurons within the premotor cortex fired both when the monkey grabbed an object and also when it observed another primate grab the same object. These neurons were also recently found in human beings. They came to be known as mirror

neurons. As such, they form the basis for understanding other individuals' actions. The particular neurons facilitate empathy in that one experiences understanding of another person's mental and emotional condition from their perspective. Thus human beings are naturally wired to empathize. Question is, why then should empathy take center stage in an organization's efforts to turbocharge its performance?

Creativity and innovation have become the lifeblood of first-rate organizations like LEGO. Empathy serves as the engine of creativity and innovation. Business people often mistakenly think that empathy exists as a mere soft skill not taken seriously. However, empathy positively correlates with high performance. The Center for Creative Leadership analyzed data from 6,731 managers across 38 countries and found that empathy positively related to job performance. How does empathy specifically also promote creativity and innovation?

Researchers categorized empathy into cognitive and emotional empathy. Emotional empathy involves vicarious experiencing of another's emotional state. Meanwhile, cognitive empathy entails the ability to accurately imagine another person's feelings or thinking and even predict their subsequent behaviors. In the *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln*, Doris Kearns Goodwin describes Lincoln as a leader who possessed incredible levels of empathy. He held the gift or curse of putting himself in the place of another to experience what they were feeling. It allowed him to discern their motives and desires. A contemporary of the day, Hellen Nicolay, observed directly that Lincoln's consummate gift for *"political diagnosis"* that arose from his empathic nature gave him *"the power to forecast with uncanny accuracy what his opponents were likely to do."* Inasmuch, it is quite evident that Abraham Lincoln's empathic capacity gave him a competitive edge when appraising situations and people. It was a source of insights that culminated into fireballs of political and military strategy, hence his competence.

In the corporate world, cognitive empathy aids both organizational and individual competence through

integration of knowledge. It helps to explain why LEGO's executives chose to see the problem from the hacker's well-intentioned perspective which, of course, involved suspending their own initial security and legal concerns to become open to new knowledge that enhanced LEGO's innovation. Individuals like Steve Jobs intuitively understood the importance of empathy so much so that he suggested a single set of bathrooms in the central atrium of Pixar's building to force more interaction amongst animators, computer scientists and creative directors, paving the way for integration of knowledge. Through cognitive empathy, cross-fertilization of knowledge took place between professionals of seemingly unrelated fields resulting in cascades of juicy innovative ideas within an organization.

Emotional empathy, on the other hand, provides fertile ground for trust to flourish amongst employees. Communication between individuals who understand each other at a visceral level is spontaneous in character. Consequently, individuals share ideas without fear of being judged or ridiculed thus encouraging creativity in solving problems. A study conducted, in a manufacturing firm, by the neuro-economist Paul Zak, found that those in the top quartile of colleague closeness were 22% better at solving a difficult problem with others. They also enjoyed working on the problem 10% more than those in the lowest quartile of closeness. Ostensibly, such closeness can only occur when an individual emotionally empathizes and therefore results in spontaneity and in turn creative problem solving.

From the Danish toy company to the Oval Office, empathy is undoubtedly an engine that powers creativity and innovation. It would help executives and businessmen in Kenya to rethink the role of empathy in their innovative endeavors.

Shariff Rashid writes on organizational psychology and may be reached on rashid_shariff@yahoo.com.

Sports update

Kenya Universities Sports Association (KUSA) League

Basketball

Intense competition was witnessed last weekend when our men's basketball team thrashed Kenyatta University's Ruiru Campus and Daystar University 61-42 and 42-26 respectively, while their female counterparts walked over Mount Kenya University with a 20-0 win. The men however, lost to their subsequent match against Kenyatta University 38-25.



They will next meet Mount Kenya University and Kenyatta University at Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT), this Saturday, February 18, while the ladies basketball team will take on Kenyatta University's Ruiru Campus at the same venue. The next day, the ladies' team will meet JKUAT on our basketball court.

Soccer

The soccer men and ladies lost to Zetech University and Kenyatta University 0-2 in the Universities and Colleges Federation League (UCFL). The soccer men will meet the National Youth Service (NYS) team this coming weekend at the University of Nairobi.

Rugby

Our men's rugby team lost narrowly to Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA) 10-12 in the ongoing Kenya Rugby Union (KRU) Championship that took place at our rugby pitch last weekend. The team will seek to avenge their defeat to CUEA when they travel to JKUAT this Saturday, February 18, for the thirteenth round of the Kenya Rugby Union Championship League.

Upcoming events

Sports

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 18

Basketball

Men: USIU-Africa vs Mount Kenya University @ JKUAT
Ladies: USIU-Africa vs Kenyatta University (Ruiru Campus) @ JKUAT

Volleyball

Ladies: USIU-Africa vs Mount Kenya University @JKUAT

Rugby

Men: USIU-Africa vs JKUAT @JKUAT

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 19

Basketball

Men: USIU-Africa vs Kenyatta University @ JKUAT
Ladies: USIU-Africa vs JKUAT @USIU-Africa

Soccer

USIU-Africa men vs National Youth Service @ University of Nairobi

Media Mentions



February 17: The Star newspaper mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled "Naise to juggle between two sports disciplines."

<http://www.usiu.ac.ke/on-campus/news/media-mentions/652-the-star-naise-to-juggle-between-two-sports-disciplines>

February 17: The Guardian newspaper mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled "Ambode, others to attend The Guardian's cyber security conference."

<http://www.usiu.ac.ke/on-campus/news/media-mentions/653-the-guardian-ambode-others-to-attend-the-guardian-s-cyber-security-conference>

February 16: USIU-Africa was mentioned in an article by The Daily Nation titled "The door closed but a window opened."

<http://www.usiu.ac.ke/on-campus/news/media-mentions/643-daily-nation-the-door-closed-but-a-window-opened>

February 15: Fiba.com website mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled "Kenya look to bounce back at FIBA Women's AfroBasket 2017."

<http://www.usiu.ac.ke/on-campus/news/media-mentions/650-fiba-kenya-look-to-bounce-back-at-fiba-women-s-afrobasket-2017>

February 15: USIU-Africa was mentioned by Nairobi News website in an article titled "KALUA: How my son saved Uber driver after he collapsed behind the wheel."

<http://www.usiu.ac.ke/on-campus/news/media-mentions/651-nairobi-news-kalua-how-my-son-saved-uber-driver-after-he-collapsed-behind-the-wheel>

February 14: The Kenya Tech News website mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled "USIU-Africa Alumni Association Hosts TechWomen Conference."

<http://www.usiu.ac.ke/on-campus/news/media-mentions/649-kenya-tech-news-usiu-africa-alumni-association-hosts-techwomen-conference>

February 14: USIU-Africa was mentioned in an article by Capital Campus website "Women Overcome The Odds To Find Opportunities In Tech & Science."

<http://www.usiu.ac.ke/on-campus/news/media-mentions/648-capital-campus-women-overcome-the-odds-to-find-opportunities-in-tech-science>

February 14: The Daily Nation mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled "Equity Bank's title exploits have David Maina over the moon."

<http://www.usiu.ac.ke/on-campus/news/media-mentions/642-daily-nation-equity-bank-s-title-exploits-have-david-maina-over-the-moon>

February 13: The Business Daily published a feature by Max Musau titled "Will Trump policies hurt top Internet firms' innovation?"

<http://www.usiu.ac.ke/on-campus/news/media-mentions/641-business-daily-will-trump-policies-hurt-top-internet-firms-innovation>

February 13: The CIO East Africa online magazine mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled "Employers must focus on encouraging girls to engage in STEM."

<http://www.usiu.ac.ke/on-campus/news/media-mentions/647-cio-employers-must-focus-on-encouraging-girls-to-engage-in-stem>

February 13: The CIO East Africa online magazine mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled "USIU-Africa to introduce seven IT related programs to push uptake of STEM Careers."

<http://www.usiu.ac.ke/on-campus/news/media-mentions/646-cio-usiu-africa-to-introduce-seven-it-related-programs-to-push-uptake-of-stem-careers>

February 13: USIU-Africa was mentioned in an article by the People Daily titled "Kisii put Pirates to sword, Impala remain unbeaten."

<http://www.usiu.ac.ke/on-campus/news/media-mentions/645-people-daily-kisii-put-pirates-to-sword-impala-remain-unbeaten>

February 12: The Daily Nation mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled "KPA finish off Co-op to claim Kenyan league title."

<http://www.usiu.ac.ke/on-campus/news/media-mentions/640-daily-nation-kpa-finish-off-co-op-to-claim-kenyan-league-title>

February 12: USIU-Africa was mentioned in an article by The Daily Nation titled "Toljaard, Nyanchama, Irungu star in Nairobi level I meet."

<http://www.usiu.ac.ke/on-campus/news/media-mentions/639-daily-nation-toljaard-nyanchama-irungu-star-in-nairobi-level-i-meet>

February 10: USIU-Africa was mentioned by My Gov (www.My Gov.go.ke) in article titled "Women urged to embrace science and engineering courses."

<http://www.usiu.ac.ke/on-campus/news/media-mentions/644-my-gov-women-urged-to-embrace-science-and-engineering-courses>

February 8: The Star newspaper mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled "Behind the conflict in Laikipia that's costing lives, hitting tourism."

<http://www.usiu.ac.ke/on-campus/news/media-mentions/654-the-star-behind-the-conflict-in-laikipia-that-s-costing-lives-hitting-tourism>