



## I PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE TO MUST: New Office Bearers Vow To Serve The University Council



On October 6, 2023, some of the new council members elected into power, joined other members of the 8th council of Mbarara University of Science and Technology, by taking the oaths before attending any meeting. These took the oath of allegiance and the oath of Secrecy. The event was presided over by her honor, Zulaika Nanteza, the Deputy Registrar of Mbarara High Court. These included:

- Dr. Bitekyero Medard (Representative of the University Convocation)
- Dr. Henry Mwebesa (Representative from the Government)
- H.E. Musa Kiyemba (35th Guild President of MUST)
- Arinda Daisy (Vice Guild President of MUST)

Zulaika said, the oath of allegiance and secrecy is an important part of ensuring the council's integrity and commitment to the university's best interests. She emphasized the importance of the oath of allegiance and secrecy and explained the consequences of breaching them. Understanding the implications of breaching the oath serves as a reminder of the council members' responsibility and seriousness of their position.



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**The other members who took the oaths were the heads of council committee.**

Eng. Denis Galabuzi Ssekandi: Chair of the Estate and works Committee.

Ms. Agatha Achom Mutenyo: Chair of the Finance Planning and Development Committee.

Mr. Muzamil Mukwatampora Chair of the Students welfare and disciplinary committee.





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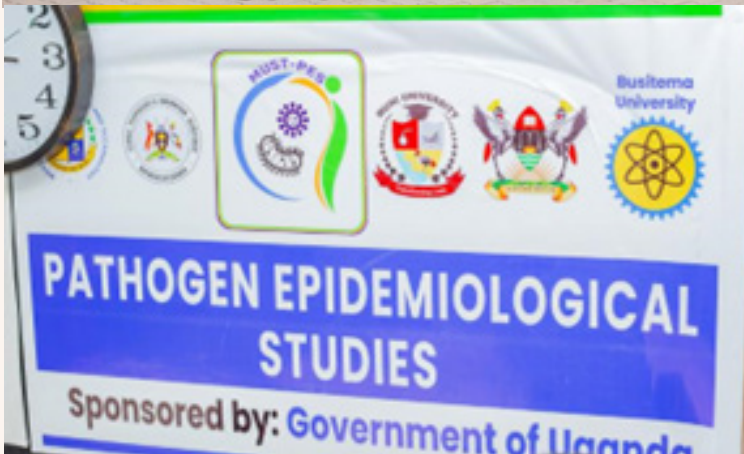
Mr. Muzamil Mukwatampora Chair of the Students welfare and disciplinary committee.



# Promoting Science technology and innovation at MUST Prof. Bazira sets standards



October 14, 2023 the Parliamentary Committee on science, Technology and Innovation (STI) team visited MUST to be updated about the progress, achievements, future expectations of the Government of Uganda funded project entitled- AMR Surveillance, Modeling and PCR tests Development Project( MUSTPES ).



This started with a tour guided by Assoc. Prof. Joel Bazira; the Principal Investigator of the project. He led the tour of the Genomics Translational Laboratory and Mycology Laboratory in the department of Microbiology located in the pathology building, which has been equipped through this funding.

This was followed by a project progress meeting held at the Institute of Maternal Newborn Child Health board room.





In his opening remarks; the Vice-Chancellor Prof. Celestino Obua welcomed and thanked the Parliamentary Committee on Science, Technology and Innovation for making time for MUST and appreciated their love as this was their second visit to MUST this year. He appreciated their guidance and lobbying given to support Science and Technology.



The Vice Chancellor Professor Celestino Obua addressing the congregation.

Prof. Obua further elaborated on the challenges that MUST faces in terms of infrastructure, staff recruitment and promotions.

There followed a presentation by the Assoc. Prof Joel Bazira who begun by thanking the Government and Parliament of Uganda for funding Research and Innovations.



He introduced the team implementing the project including the grants office that manages the funds. He also introduced the scholars who have been sponsored by this project in the fields of Microbiology, Pharmaceutical Analysis, Medical Laboratory Sciences, Health Information Technology and Information Systems. The Co-Investigators on this project include; Prof Lubbobi Livingstone (MUK), Assoc Prof Lawrence Mugisha- (MUK), Dr. Karisa Henry – (MUK), Dr. Jacobs Iramiot – (BU), Dr. Jonans Tusimiire- (MUST), Dr Kawuma Simon- (MUST), Mr. Oloro Joseph- (MUST), Mr. Hope Derick- (MU)



## Key points in the presentation by Associate. Professor Joel Bazira

The Project aims to tackle the antimicrobial resistance challenge which is a silent epidemic slowly killing many people annually especially in the developing countries and slowly taking us back to the pre-antibiotic era; and if nothing is done, more than 10 million people will be dying every year from drug resistant infection, 80% of these will be in the developing countries like Uganda

Despite this big challenge there are very minimal effort to discover new drugs that treat these infections world over. Literally the drug development for infectious diseases is dry.

Therefore, this project was funded to design predictive models for antimicrobial resistance and prediction of which drugs (antibiotics) will still be useful by 2030, develop drugs from Ugandan plants and bacteria that live in Uganda soils and formulate a PCR kit that can diagnose drug resistant infections.



### Products in production and the purpose

So far, the project has succeeded in equipping the Genomics and Mycology Laboratories in the department of Microbiology with crucial equipment like the State of the Real Time PCR machine – Quantistudio 5, Genetic Analyzer- Seqstudio, Carbondioxide incubators, -80 freezer, Gel documentation system, a shaking incubator etc

Parliamentary secretariat Members.

“We designed a machine AMR Predictive Model, Machine Learning Virtual Screening platforms established and designed several prototypes from Uganda plants - drugs in the making to treat Fungal skin infections, Gynae and Wound infections; including an ant-candida pessary, a vaginal gel, antifungal cream, and chewable antifungal tablet. We are also working on a wound spray and cream to treat wound infections.

To search for drugs produced by bacteria living in the soil, we have collected 77 soil samples from forest soils, mining sites, volcanic soils, sewage treatment sites, hot springs, dump sites, and slaughterhouses.

We have Isolated 150 Streptomyces isolates which are undergoing screening

We are optimizing a multiplex PCR Kit for rapid diagnosis of Drug resistant infections. To further capacity building we have seven scholars pursuing masters’ degrees and also involved 21 undergraduate students as interns to further their knowledge and skills in prototype formulation for 3 months and retained 3 for the final phase. These interns were student of Pharmacy, Pharmaceutical Sciences and Engineering.”

### Challenges of the project

Renovation of the pathology building that lasted 5 months limiting our accessibility to continue working.

Power issues in the pathology building that include, very frequent power cuts, lack of connectivity to the University generator and Low power rating.

Some of the equipment especially in the pharmaceutical analysis laboratory are quite old and break down very frequently.





## Reactions by the Parliamentary committee on science, technology and innovation



Some of the Members of Parliament

On the whole, the Committee was very impressed by the progress of the project and thanked MUST and Assoc. Prof. Joel Bazira for properly utilizing the Government funds given to them and wished to see the products soon on the market. They promised to engage the Secretariat of Science and Technology -Office of the President to see if more funds can be disbursed to continue supporting this project.

We congratulate Associate Professor Joel Bazira and the team upon the achievements by far. Thank you for upholding the name of the University. We wish you the best of luck in remaining part of the project.



MUST team at the meeting

Mbarara University of Science and Technology's Department of Pediatrics and Child Health, Uganda Heart Institute (UHI) together with Mbarara Regional Referral Hospital (MRRH) carried out the first-ever close heart surgery. The medical camp lasted a week where seven children benefited. The surgery focused on closing Patent ductus Arterious (PDAs) which is a congenital heart defect that affects the growth, development and well-being of the children. According to Dr. Dorah Nampijja the Paediatric cardiologist said the event was a cooperate social responsibility for the community and a first step toward establishing future cardiac surgery at a regional level.



# GIVING HOPE: MUST, MRRH, And UHI Conduct the First-Ever closed Heart Surgery for Children

Mbarara University of Science and Technology's Department of Pediatrics and Child Health, Uganda Heart Institute (UHI) together with Mbarara Regional Referral Hospital (MRRH) carried out the first-ever closed heart surgery. The medical camp lasted a week where seven children benefited. The surgery focused on closed-Patent ductus Arterious (PDAs) which is a congenital heart defect that affects the growth, development and well-being of the children. According to Dr. Dorah Nampijja the Paediatric cardiologist said the event was a cooperate social responsibility for the community and a first step toward establishing future cardiac surgery at a regional level.



Dr. Dorah said the camp changed the lives of 8 families. The children who received surgery were children who had been identified through our paediatric cardiac clinic and under our care from various parts of Ankole and Kigezi sub regions. She added that the surgery was successfully under the team lead of Dr. Michael Oketcho of Uganda Heart Institute and a specialist in Paediatric Cardiothoracic Surgery and his team of cardiologist intensivists, critical care specialists, cardiac nurses. The other members from UHI on the team included: Dr. Muhoozi Rwakaryebe a Consultant paediatric cardiac surgeon, Dr. Ayupo Nodrine consultant anesthesiologist Dr. Miriam Nalule critical care specialist, Dr. Namuyonga Judith, a consultant paediatric cardiologist and Dr. Setabi Michael a cardiothoracic surgery fellow.

This surgical camp did not only benefit the patients but also the paediatrics, surgical and anesthesia post graduate students through training sessions and tutorials. A total of 7 children of ages ranging from 18 months to 17 years (including 2 little girls 3 years and eight, siblings from the same family) completed the surgery

successfully and were discharged from hospital. The assembled team blended well and showcased their unwavering commitment to saving lives.

The Head of Department, Dr. Elias Kumbakumba said the event symbolizes the epitome of collaboration and compassion, illustrating the transformative impact that can be achieved when the medical community unites in the pursuit of healing and saving lives. He added that MUST remains committed to pushing boundaries and making a difference in pediatric healthcare with the theme "Reaching every Child"

Special recognition goes to the team from UHI who not only traveled a long distance but also brought state of the art equipment to support the camp, the Mbarara Regional Referral Hospital theatre, paediatric surgery that offered the conducive working environment and theatre space, manpower for this camp and Mbarara Paediatrics ward that supported the patients with meals, medication continued support after the surgery by reviewing the patients.







## DR. Omagino Director of Uganda Heart Institute pays a courtesy call to the Vice Chancellor

Dr. Omagino's courtesy call with the Vice Chancellor on October 4, 2023, focused on the future of the Uganda Heart Institute and its collaboration with Mbarara University of Science and Technology (MUST). They talked about:

Joint research projects within the two institutions. Prof. Obua said these would bring a combination of expertise from both institutions. "This can lead to groundbreaking research in cardiovascular health, particularly in areas relevant to Uganda's specific needs we could focus on areas like: Investigating the prevalence and risk factors of heart disease in Uganda".

They discussed the student exchange programs which was allowing medical students from MUST to gain practical experience at the Uganda Heart Institute and vice versa could benefit both institutions. This could involve: Rotations and Research opportunities

They further discussed the Faculty development initiatives which involved sharing knowledge and expertise between faculty members to enhance the quality of education and research at both institutions. (Guest lectures and workshops, collaborative research projects between faculty members from both institutions).

Prof. Obua thanked Dr. Omagino for his time despite the busy schedule, he thanked him for leading the cardiologists for the heart surgery camp at MRRH.



## URA VITA Training at MUST

On the vibrant day of October 24, 2023, the Uganda Revenue Authority's Tax Education Division team, led by Mr. Isaac Gyagenda, Mr. Samuel Kanakulya, and Mr. Anthony Kalulu, graced our institution with a wealth of insights. Their visit unfolded as a tale of enlightenment, empowerment, and learning.



Mr. Gyagenda, a beacon of tax expertise, illuminated the principles driving the art of taxation—equity, convenience, flexibility, diversity, elasticity, economy, productivity, and certainty. These principles, he emphasized, serve as the cornerstone of a fair and efficient tax system.

Founded in 1991 through an act of Parliament, the Uganda Revenue Authority plays a pivotal role in shaping the financial landscape of Uganda. Assessing, collecting, and accounting for taxes, advising the government on tax policy, and enforcing tax laws are facets of its multifaceted mission.

### Principles I: Equity in the Ugandan Tax System

The Uganda Revenue Authority (URA) defines equity in taxation as the principle that different taxpayers should contribute to the public finances in a fair and just manner, according to their ability to pay. This implies that those with greater financial resources should bear a larger share of the tax burden compared to those with less.



## Achieving Equity in the Ugandan System:

The URA implements various measures to promote equity in the tax system:

- **Progressive Taxation:** Certain taxes, like income tax, are designed to be progressive. This means the tax rate increases as the taxable income increases. For example, in Uganda, individuals with higher incomes pay a higher percentage of their income in taxes compared to those with lower incomes. This aligns with the principle of equity, as those with more resources contribute proportionally more to public finances.
- **Exemptions and Reliefs:** The URA provides **tax exemptions and reliefs** for specific groups or activities deemed worthy of support. This could include, for example, exemptions for basic necessities like food and medicine, or tax breaks for businesses operating in economically disadvantaged areas. These exemptions and reliefs aim to alleviate the tax burden on vulnerable groups or encourage activities beneficial to society.
- **Minimum Tax Threshold:** The URA also enforces a **minimum tax threshold**, meaning individuals or businesses whose income falls below a certain level are not liable to pay income tax. This ensures that low-income earners are not disproportionately burdened by the tax system.
- **Tax Compliance Strategies:** The URA emphasizes fair and consistent application of tax laws, while also promoting voluntary compliance through taxpayer education and awareness campaigns. This helps ensure that everyone contributes their fair share, which contributes to equitable distribution of the tax burden.

## Presence of Progressive, Proportional, and Regressive Taxes:

The Ugandan tax system includes a mix of progressive, proportional, and regressive taxes:

- **Progressive Taxes:** As mentioned earlier, income tax is a progressive tax in Uganda, with higher earners paying a greater proportion of their income.
- **Proportional Taxes:** Some taxes, like Value Added Tax (VAT), are proportional. This means everyone pays the same tax rate as a percentage of the taxable amount, regardless of their income level. While considered proportional, VAT can have regressive effects on low-income earners as they spend a larger portion of their income on basic necessities taxed at the same rate as those with higher incomes.
- **Regressive Taxes:** Certain taxes, like **fuel excise duty**, can be considered **regressive**. This means everyone pays the same tax amount regardless of their income level. As low-income earners typically spend a larger portion of their income on fuel than high-income earners, the burden of such taxes falls disproportionately on them.

Mr. Isaac Gyagenda emphasized that the URA strives to balance the use of these different tax types to achieve an overall equitable tax system, where the overall distribution of the tax burden aligns with the principle of those with greater ability to pay contributing more.

## Principles II: Convenience:

The Uganda Revenue Authority (URA) recognizes the importance of convenience in encouraging tax compliance and making the process less of a hassle for taxpayers. They have implemented several initiatives to achieve this:

### Online Filing Options:

- **E-Tax Platform:** The URA provides a comprehensive online platform called eTax, where taxpayers can:
  - o File tax returns for various taxes, including income tax, VAT, excise duty, and withholding tax.
  - o Make payments securely through various electronic channels like mobile money, online banking, and RTGS.

**Mobile App:** The URA also offers a mobile app called **U-RASTA**, which allows taxpayers to:

- o Submit tax returns for certain tax types.
- o Make payments through mobile money.
- o Check tax balances and due dates.
- o Access essential tax information



## Simplified Reporting Procedures:

- **Pre-filled Tax Returns:** For individuals earning income solely from employment, URA pre-fills their tax returns based on information received from employers. This simplifies the process and minimizes errors.
- **Tax Clearance Certificates Online:** Businesses can now apply for and receive Tax Clearance Certificates electronically through the eTax platform, removing the need for physical visits to URA offices.
- **Simplified Tax Regimes:** For small businesses and informal sector operators, URA offers simplified tax regimes with lower administrative burdens and reporting requirements. These regimes make tax compliance easier and more accessible for these groups

**Principle III: Flexibility:** The Ugandan Revenue Authority (URA) recognizes that economic conditions and individual circumstances can change, and their tax system incorporates some flexibility to adapt to these situations. Here are some ways this plays out:

## Adapting to Changing Economic Conditions:

- **Tax Policy Adjustments:** URA can adjust tax rates, exemptions, and other tax policies in response to economic fluctuations. For example, during economic downturns, they might reduce tax rates or offer temporary tax breaks to stimulate economic activity. Conversely, during periods of high growth, they might increase certain taxes to generate additional revenue for public services.
- **Tax Administration Measures:** URA can also implement administrative measures to provide flexibility during economic challenges. This could involve extending deadlines for tax payments, offering installment plans, or providing tax relief for businesses facing financial hardship.  
Accommodating Individual Circumstances:
- **Tax Exemptions and Reliefs:** URA offers various tax exemptions and reliefs for specific groups or situations. This could include exemptions for low-income earners, people with disabilities, or businesses operating in disadvantaged areas. Additionally, they might offer tax breaks for specific activities deemed beneficial to society, such as research and development or environmental protection.
- **Tax Appeals Process:** Taxpayers have the right to appeal tax assessments they believe are unfair or inaccurate. This provides them with a mechanism to adjust their tax liabilities based on their individual circumstances

## Examples of Tax Breaks and Exemptions:

- **Individuals:** Low-income earners are exempt from paying income tax, and there are specific deductions and allowances available for individuals with dependents or disabilities.
- **Businesses:** Businesses operating in certain industries, like agriculture or manufacturing, might be eligible for tax breaks or exemptions on specific imports or equipment.
- **Investments:** Tax incentives are offered to encourage investment in specific sectors, such as tourism or renewable energy.

## Principle IV Diversity:

The Ugandan tax system relies on a **combination of different types of taxes** to generate revenue and distribute the tax burden fairly across different sectors and individuals. Here's a breakdown of the main types:



## Direct Taxes:

- **Income Tax:** This is levied on income earned by individuals and businesses from various sources, like salaries, wages, business profits, rental income, and agricultural income. Progressive tax rates are applied, meaning individuals with higher incomes pay a larger share of their income in taxes.
- **Withholding Tax:** This is a pre-payment of income tax deducted at source by employers, banks, and other entities paying income to taxpayers. It simplifies tax collection and ensures timely payment.

## Indirect Taxes:

- **Value Added Tax (VAT):** This is a consumption tax levied on the sale of most goods and services at a standard rate of 18%. VAT is paid by consumers when they purchase taxable goods and services, while businesses collect and remit it to the URA.
- **Excise Duty:** This is a tax levied on specific goods, such as alcohol, tobacco, fuel, and luxury items. The tax rate varies depending on the type of good.
- **Import Duty:** This is a tax levied on goods imported into Uganda. The tax rate varies depending on the type of good and its origin.

## Property Taxes:

- **Land Rent:** This is an annual tax levied on the ownership of land, based on its location and value.
- **Property Tax:** This is a tax levied on buildings and other structures.

Other Taxes:

- **Stamp Duty:** This is a tax levied on certain legal documents, such as contracts, conveyances, and loan agreements.
- **Registration Fees:** Businesses are required to pay registration fees when they register with the URA

## Principle V: Elasticity

The Ugandan tax system exhibits elasticity, meaning its tax revenues **respond to changes in economic activity**. This means that tax revenues tend to **rise with economic growth** and fall during recessions. However, the degree of elasticity varies depending on the type of tax.

Here's a breakdown of how different taxes react to economic fluctuations:

- **Income taxes:** These tend to be highly elastic. During economic growth, as individuals and businesses earn more, their taxable income increases, leading to higher tax revenues. Conversely, during recessions, income falls, reducing tax revenue.
- **VAT:** This tax is also elastic but to a lesser extent than income tax. As economic activity increases, consumer spending rises, leading to higher VAT collections. However, VAT can also be regressive, meaning it can disproportionately impact low-income earners during economic downturns.
- **Excise duties and import duties:** These taxes can be inelastic or even negative. During recessions, people tend to reduce consumption of goods taxed under these categories, leading to lower revenue. Additionally, import duties may fall due to decreased imports during economic slowdown.
- **Property taxes:** These are typically inelastic, meaning they remain relatively constant regardless of economic fluctuations

## Principle VI: Minimizing the Cost of Tax Collection in Uganda: URA's Efficiency Efforts

The Uganda Revenue Authority (URA) recognizes the importance of minimizing the cost of tax collection while maximizing revenue generation. They implement various measures to achieve this balance, focusing on **efficient administrative procedures and technological advancements**.

## Efficient Administrative Procedures:

- **Simplified Tax Regimes:** URA offers simplified tax regimes for small businesses and informal sector operators, requiring less paperwork and administrative overhead for both taxpayers and the URA

## PRINCIPLE VII: Productivity

### URA Productivity: Incentivizing Economic Activity and Investment

The Uganda Revenue Authority (URA) recognizes that an efficient tax system should not only collect revenue but also **encourage economic activity and investment**. To achieve this, the URA implements various incentives through tax breaks and exemptions aimed at specific sectors and activities.



## PRINCIPLE VIII: Certainty

Ensuring certainty for taxpayers is a crucial objective for the Uganda Revenue Authority (URA). They employ various measures to make tax obligations clear and consistent, helping taxpayers understand their responsibilities and comply with the system with confidence.

Measures for Tax Certainty:

- **Clear and Accessible Legislation:** The URA strives to maintain clear and well-organized tax laws. These are readily available on their website and published in easily understandable language for the public.
- **Tax Guides and FAQs:** The URA website provides comprehensive tax guides and FAQs covering various tax types, exemptions, and procedures. These resources offer detailed explanations and answer common questions, simplifying understanding for taxpayers.
- **Tax Rulings and Interpretations:** The URA issues official tax rulings and interpretations on specific laws and scenarios. These clarifications provide binding guidance for taxpayers and ensure consistent application of the regulations.
- **Tax Education and Awareness:** The URA actively conducts tax education campaigns through workshops, seminars, and media outreach. These efforts equip individuals and businesses with the knowledge and skills to navigate the tax system and accurately calculate their obligations.
- **Taxpayer Assistance:** The URA offers various channels for taxpayers to seek assistance and clarification on their tax affairs. This includes a toll-free helpline, customer service centers, and online support through the eTax platform.
- **Independent Review Process:** Taxpayers have the right to appeal tax assessments they believe are inaccurate or unfair. This independent review process provides them with a mechanism to clarify their obligations and resolve any disputes with the URA.



During this enlightening session, Mr. Gyagenda underscored the significance of a Tax Identification Number (TIN) and elucidated the essential requirements for obtaining one. A TIN, he conveyed, is the key to tax compliance, symbolizing one's active contribution to the nation's growth.



# Well-wisher takes a step to support MUST, Pharmacy department



During the pharmacy dinner 2023, one of the invited guests was Dr. Musa Ssemanda a former treasurer of the Pharmaceutical society of Uganda. While at the dinner, the students shared their achievements for the past 20 years and the gaps. One challenge that stood out for Dr. Musa was the lack of enough learning materials to facilitate the lectures.

Dr. Musa took it upon himself to donate a projector to the department as a step to addressing the issue.



As promised during the annual pharmacy students' dinner, Dr. Musa Ssemanda handed over a projector to the department of pharmacy on October 4, 2023. This was received by the Head of department Assoc. Prof. Patrick Ogwang who thanked Musa for not only keeping his promise but also filling the gap to support learning at the department. He later presented the wrapped gift to the staff available.





Dr. Musa Ssemanda is a Makerere University trained pharmacist (B.Pharm) who has made a professional name in different pharmacy arenas— Hospital Pharmacy (Hospital Entebbe Hospital - 2011 to 2012), Community pharmacy (Pharmacy Manager - Ecopharm Pharmacy; 2011 to 2015), Importation and Distribution (General Manager - Wide Spectrum Enterprises, 2011 to date), and Professional Leadership (Treasurer - PSU 2019-2022)

He is also has an MBA from UMI. His outstanding business credit is working with and developing the business skills of young pharmacy professionals. He started a Pharma Business Training and Mentorship Program with Wide Spectrum Enterprises that is in its fifth year now and has impacted over one hundred (100) pharmacy graduates

He also serves on the Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) Committee of the PSU which is charged with raising awareness of AMR and fostering research on AMR.

## Enhancing skills in Mental health Education in the Department of Psychiatry



The partnership between Mbarara University of Science and Technology (MUST) and McMaster University fondly referred to as McMUST continues to blossom for a decade now. Assoc. Prof. Sheila Harms, a Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist led a team of faculty and postgraduate students to the Department of Psychiatry at MUST from 25th September to 6th October 2023. Coordinated and led by Dr. Geoffrey Zari Rukundo from MUST, the purpose of the visit was to participate in the ongoing global mental health education. The team had members from McMaster University, University of Calgary (UoC) and Catholic University of Health and Allied Sciences (CUHAS) in Tanzania.



From McMaster University the team hosted; Prof. Sheila Harms and Dr. Angela Li, a Junior Psychiatry Resident. From University of Calgary; Dr. Megan Howlett, a Psychiatry Fellow, Junior Faculty, Dr. Elisabeth Merner, Senior Psychiatry Resident, Dr. Deborah Adesegun, Junior Psychiatry Resident Faculty of Health Sciences Michael and, G. DeGroot School of Medicine Department of Psychiatry and Behavioural Neurosciences. From Catholic University of Health and Allied Sciences (CUHAS); Dr. Mwita Matiko, Psychiatrist, Faculty Lead and Dr. Gema Simbee, Psychiatrist, Faculty.

“Our McMUST partnership has had almost a decade of experience, we have had many successes including formal scholarship outcomes and program evaluations, and we believe that our collaboration is an exemplar of an ethical and effective global educational partnership in mental health” Prof Harms noted. Collaborating with UoC, CUHAS hopes to open a postgraduate psychiatry-training program in Mwanza and this was a benchmarking visit to be able to benefit from the lessons learned with the McMUST work. The four partners continue to work together to improve mental health education.



## Developing University Partnerships: MUST participates in the prestigious International Visitor Leadership Program in USA





In pursuit of strengthening international collaborations and partnerships, the Mbarara University of Science and Technology (MUST) International Relations Officer Mrs. Sheila Niinye Twinamatsiko participated in the prestigious International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) in USA from 14th October to 4th November 2023. She was part of a nine-member delegation from eight countries in Africa.

The countries that participated were; Uganda, Ethiopia, Somalia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Ivory Coast and Mali. The delegation was from University of Lubumbashi, Free University of the Great Lakes Countries, International University of Grand Bassam, Hawassa University, University of Letters and Human Sciences, Pen Resource University, Bar amo Baro Project, University of Zimbabwe and Mbarara University of Science and Technology. The visiting team interacted with agencies, organizations and Universities from four different states of; Washington DC, Atlanta-Georgia, Sacramento-California and Philadelphia-Pennsylvania.



Launched 84 years ago, the IVLP is the premier programme of the US Department of State and the only one where participants are nominated by the US Embassies. The programme fosters strengthened US connections with countries across the globe by enabling current and emerging leaders to meet counterparts through short visits to the USA. Even though the IVLP has existed since 1940, it was the first time to undertake the programme under the theme of developing University partnerships while connect-

ing African Universities with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).

The five objectives of the programme were to; explore administration best practices at U.S. Universities, colleges, and community colleges; understand how U.S. Universities and colleges develop and maintain sustainable international partnerships; explore public-private partnerships, with an emphasis on commercialization, technology transfer and job creation; review University and colleges best practices for monetizing research and; explore how Universities and colleges support faculty collaboration and international research. "The program exposed me to the in-depth culture of the US, I learnt in detail how Universities facilitate and sustain international partnerships. The opportunity to meet different US Department officials and University professionals was very enlightening and enabled me to develop relationships to advance internationalisation at MUST" Mrs. Twinamatsiko said.

During the visit, the delegation had meetings to discuss the program objectives and identify relevant partners that offer opportunities for international cooperation in higher education. The meetings were held with; the Association of International Educators (NAFSA), US Department of State, Institute of International Education (IIE), US Department of Education and National Science Foundation (NSF). Universities visited were; Howard University, Clark Atlanta University, California State University, University of the Pacific, University of California Davis (UC Davis), Georgia State University, Lincoln University and Cheyney University. Other notable organisations and colleges were; Improve Your Tomorrow, KB Foundation, The Atlanta University Centre Consortium, Morehouse College, Morris Brown College, Bryn Mawr College and Los Rios Community College District made up of American River College, Cosumnes River College, Folsom Lake College, and Sacramento City College.





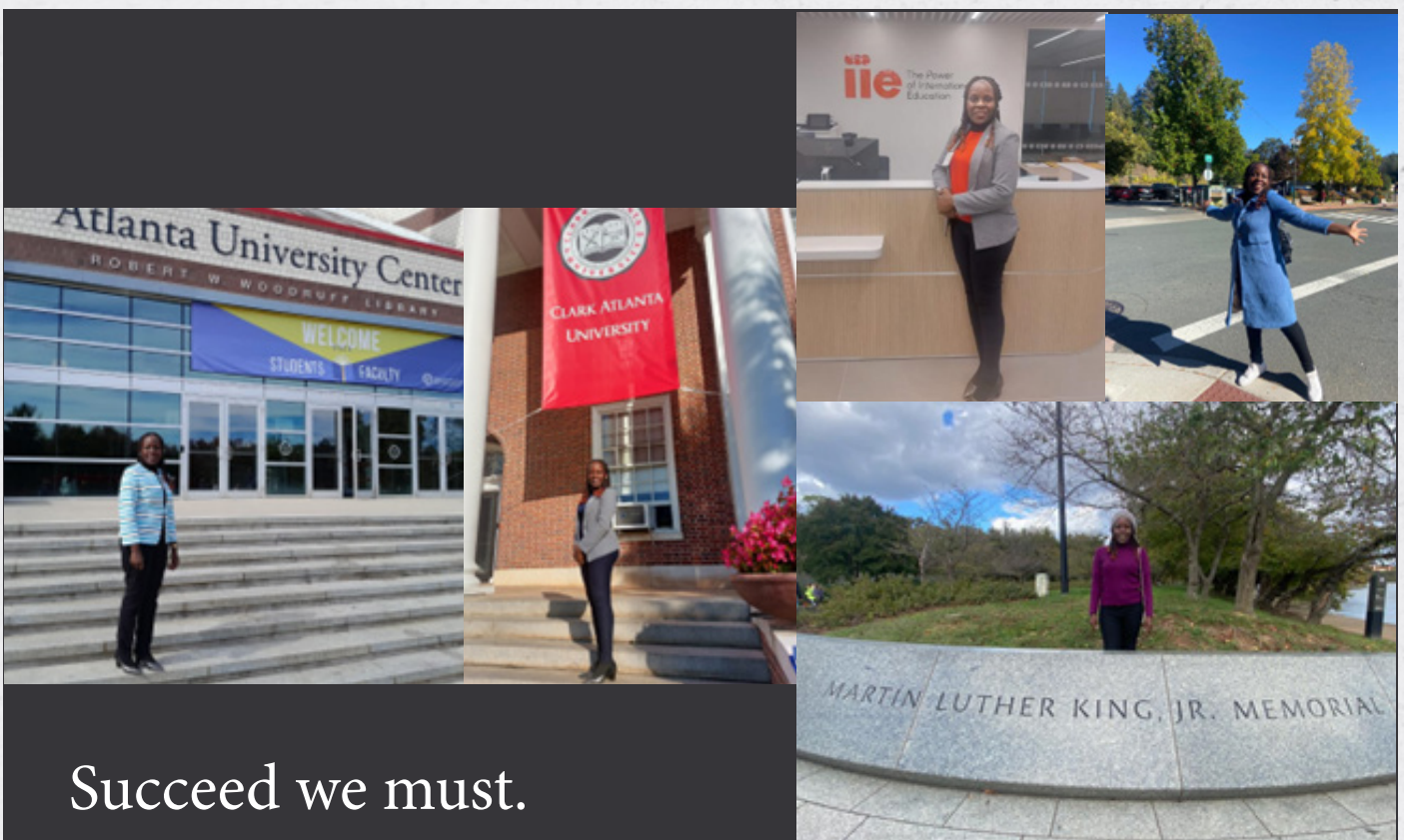
The delegation met with enthusiastic leaders who were ready to steer the advancement of the USA-Africa internationalisation agenda. Dr. Charlene D. Gilbert, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, Clark Atlanta University emphasised the need to appreciate their roots as HBCUs and work towards their development. Mr. Blake Bergen, the Program Officer, Africa Branch, Office of International Visitors in the US Department of State highlighted the significance of identifying and intentionally developing partnerships. He noted that each of the selected institutions had been purposely included in the programme because of their relevance and desire to advance partnerships. He echoed that each individual selected to participate

in the IVLP had been nominated because of their niche and contribution in the field of internationalisation and therefore hoped to have fruitful engagements.

It is imperative to note from the IVLP engagement that it is important to invest in a holistic student life that attracts and increases the diverse student population; create an enabling environment for researchers and innovators and; strengthen the alumni network with homecoming events to interest them to support the University. In addition, each institution needs to focus on its own strength to distinguish itself from others. Importantly, focusing on strategically aligned partners is worthwhile, it is not about how many partners an institution has but the strong relevant ties it builds. Building partnerships with businesses and organisations for student internships like Howard University enhances the University capability. It was evident that innovations are the way to go. Focusing on growing businesses from the developed innovations and technology transfer like the University California Davis venture catalyst enhances University impact and ranking.

As an IVLP alumnus, the IRO appreciates MUST, the US Embassy in Uganda and the US Department of State for the opportunity to identify and strengthen ties with notable US Universities and organisations.

### The IRO during the International visit in USA



Succeed we must.



# EDITOR



**Mr. Dickens Muhwezi**

