



MUST NEWS LETTER

January 2024

The month that was!

VOLUME 33

**Congratulations to
Dr. Wendo Mlahagwa Olema ,
the New Dean Faculty
of Interdisciplinary
Studies**



In the MUST Mirror



Cyberschool Technologies & Mastercard Foundation enhance MUST eLearning Capacity



Workshop on The Antimicrobial Stewardship in Critical Care Project



ENT department for a collaborative training

Succeed we must



COMMUNICATIONS CREW

Welcome to the MUST Mirror, Mbarara University of Science and Technology's monthly newsletter. This year, we're excited to unveil a fresh look and feel for the MUST Mirror. We remain committed to keeping you informed about the latest news, stories, and happenings within our vibrant community. Ladies and Gentlemen. The MUST Mirror serves a dual purpose :

Community Connection: It informs you about the exciting developments, achievements, and initiatives taking place both within MUST and in the wider community we serve and;

Institutional Visibility: It acts as a spotlight on the diverse services we offer, ensuring you're aware of how MUST can support you.

We encourage you to share Your Events for proper events Planning. Kindly submit details through the events form or directly contact the Public Relations Officer or the International Relations officer respectively, **at least a week** before the event date.

Utilize Our Communication Services: : Need help with photography, social media promotion, or event program coordination? Simply reach out to our Offices. By working together, we can ensure the MUST Mirror effectively brands and markets MUST, showcasing our excellence to the world.

We look forward to receiving your contributions and feedback!

Angella Nakato Musingo
Public Relations officer
Office of the Vice Chancellor

MUST Social Media Team



Mr. Bernard Mubiru



Ms. Sumaiya Nalukwago



Ms. Adong Christine



Mr. Collins Olowo



Mr. Dickens Muhwezi
Writer



Mr. John Mukundane
Photographer



Igga Deusdedit
Graphics Designer

The Sixth Annual ENT Collaborative Training @MUST



On January 17, 2024, the Department of ENT at Mbarara University of Science and Technology (MUST) hosted the sixth annual training session in collaboration with the University of British Columbia (UBC), Vancouver, Canada, and Massachusetts Eye and Ear (MEEI), Harvard Medical School, USA. This enduring partnership, established in 2016, focuses on mentoring and upskilling ENT residents at MUST, equipping them with valuable surgical knowledge and practical skills.

The partnership has blossomed into a vital exchange of expertise, dedication, and resources. Dr. Doreen Nakku, Head of the ENT Department at MUST, emphasizes the positive impact: "It has enhanced the residents' skills and gives them insights into real surgeries. I appreciate the partners' commitment to always come to MUST. They have always given us their time, skills, and equipment. I could never ask for more."

She further pointed out that the training program goes beyond traditional theoretical lectures, incorporating essential hands-on elements. Residents participate in a meticulous temporal bone dissection course, replicating real surgical procedures in a controlled environment. This valuable simulation allows them to hone their skills and build confidence before entering the operating room.

"While this year marks the sixth training session, it would have been the eighth time had the pandemic not necessitated a two-year pause. This demonstrates the resilience and unwavering commitment of all partners involved. Even amidst challenging circumstances", said Dr. Doreen





The Dean Associate Professor Joseph Ngonzi thanked the visiting team for the commitment.

“The dedication and expertise shared through this partnership have already borne significant fruit. Our residents are acquiring advanced surgical skills, from the best mentors, gaining invaluable insights into real-world practices, and preparing to become the next generation of leading ENT specialists. As the collaboration continues to flourish, the future of ENT training at MUST shines brightly, promising continued excellence and positive impact on patient care”.

He thanked Dr. Doreen, the HoD and her colleagues for making ends meet for the visitors’ conveniences, despite all odds.

The mentors of the 6th Annual ENT mentorship

The mentors of otology at MUST represent a collaborative force dedicated to sharing knowledge, refining surgical skills, and shaping the future of ENT specialists at MUST. Their combined expertise and commitment to international collaboration are paving the way for improved patient care and advancements in the field.

The collaborative approach shared by these mentors, emphasizing the interconnectivity of knowledge and expertise. Here's a brief overview of some key figures: From UBC:

Dr. Brian Westerberg: A clinical professor and renowned figure in otology neurotology, known for his contributions to research, education, and clinical care.

Dr. Kevan Lu: A rising clinical fellow with promising research acumen and a commitment to collaboration, focusing on novel diagnostic tools and neurophysiological investigations.

From MEEI:

Dr. Ronald De Vencia: A clinical professor, compassionate clinician, and research pioneer specializing in cochlear implantation and hearing loss treatment.

Dr. Doreen Nakku, Head of the ENT Department at MUST, also plays a critical role as a local champion for the collaboration, highlighting its impact on resident skill development.

These included:

The mentors of this training are :



Dr. Ronald De Vencia, Clinical Professor at MEEI

Dr. Ronald De Vencia is a Clinical Professor at the Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary (MEEI) and a leading figure in the field of otolaryngology-head and neck surgery. He is a highly respected educator and clinician, with a passion for improving the lives of patients with hearing loss and other ear disorders.

A Commitment to Education:

Dr. De Vencia is a dedicated educator, with a strong commitment to training the next generation of otolaryngologists. He is a Clinical Professor at MEEI, where he teaches medical students, residents, and fellows. He also serves as the Director of the MEEI's Temporal Bone Dissection Program, which provides hands-on training in the surgical anatomy of the ear.

A Compassionate Clinician:

Dr. De Vencia is a compassionate clinician, with a deep understanding of the impact that hearing loss can have on patients' lives. He is a leading expert in cochlear implantation, a surgical procedure that can restore hearing to people with severe hearing loss. He also specializes in other surgical procedures for hearing loss, such as stapedectomy and middle ear reconstruction.



A Pioneer in Research:

Dr. De Vencia is also a pioneer in research, with a focus on developing new treatments for hearing loss. He is the principal investigator of several research projects, including a study of a new cochlear implant electrode that could improve hearing quality. He is also a member of the FDA's cochlear implant advisory panel, where he provides guidance on the safety and effectiveness of new cochlear implant devices.

Awards and Honors:

Dr. De Vencia has received numerous awards and honors for his work, including:

The American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery's Senior Resident Teaching Award
The Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary's Harvey Cushing Award
The American Cochlear Implant Alliance's Distinguished Service Award



Dr. Brian Westerberg, a Clinical Professor at the University of British Columbia. Ontology neurotology

He is a renowned figure in Ontology Neurotology, a highly respected Clinical Professor at the University of British Columbia (UBC) and a leading figure in the field of ontology neurotology. His expertise lies in the intricate world of the ear and its connection to the nervous system, a specialized area known as neurotology.

Contributions to the Field:

Dr. Westerberg's career is marked by significant contributions to the advancement of ontology neurotology. He has:

Authored and co-authored numerous research articles published in prestigious medical journals, expanding the knowledge base in this field.

Developed a comprehensive ontology for the ear, nose, and throat (ENT) domain, providing a standardized framework for organizing and sharing knowledge related to these specialties.

Led various research initiatives focused on improving the diagnosis and treatment of neurological disorders, such as dizziness, tinnitus, and hearing loss.

Mentored and trained countless medical students and residents in the field of neurotology, shaping the next generation of specialists.

A Passionate Educator:

Beyond his research endeavors, Dr. Westerberg is a dedicated educator. He holds a Clinical Professorship at UBC, where he:

Teaches medical students and residents about the complexities of the ear and its connection to the nervous system.

Supervises postgraduate fellows in neurotology, guiding them in their research and clinical training.

Shares his expertise through workshops and presentations at national and international conferences, fostering knowledge exchange and collaboration within the medical community.



A Committed Clinician:

Dr. Westerberg's clinical practice is based at St. Paul's Hospital in Vancouver, where he:

- Provides specialized care for patients with a wide range of neurological disorders.

- Employs innovative diagnostic and treatment techniques, ensuring his patients receive the most effective care available.

- Collaborates with other healthcare professionals to provide comprehensive care for patients with complex conditions.

Dr. Westerberg is a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada. He has served in various leadership positions within the Canadian Society of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery. He is actively involved in global health initiatives, providing mentorship and support to ENT programs in developing countries.

A Driving Force in Neurotology:

Dr. Westerberg's dedication and expertise have made him a leading figure in the field of otology neurotology. His contributions to research, education, and clinical care have significantly improved the lives of countless patients and continue to pave the way for future advancements in this vital field.

Dr. Kevan Lu, Clinical Fellow at the University of British Columbia, Ontology neurotology

A Rising Star in Ontology Neurotology

Dr. Kevan Lu is a budding clinician and researcher at the University of British Columbia, carving his path in the fascinating niche of otology neurotology. This discipline delves into the intricate relationship between the ear and the nervous system, unlocking secrets of hearing, balance, and other crucial functions.



A Promising Clinician:

Dr. Lu currently holds a Clinical Fellow position at UBC, honing his skills under the guidance of experienced mentors. He actively participates in patient care, applying his knowledge of neurological mechanisms to diagnose and treat various disorders like: Dizziness, Tinnitus, Hearing loss, Facial nerve palsy, Meniere's disease. Dr. Kevan Lu embodies the future of otology neurotology. His clinical acumen, research dedication, and collaborative spirit set him on a path towards making significant contributions to this evolving field. As he continues to learn, grow, and innovate, his work holds the promise of improving the lives

Dr. Lu obtained his medical degree from UBC and is pursuing further specialization in otolaryngology-head and neck surgery.

He is involved in several professional organizations, including the Canadian Society of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery and the American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery.



Dr. Doreen Nakku, the HoD ENT at MUST local mentor and the coordinator of the training.



Dr. Nakku's contribution extends far beyond being the Head of the ENT Department at MUST. She is a passionate advocate for the collaboration, playing a vital role in its success and highlighting its impact on resident development. She does the following:

Spearheading the Partnership: Dr. Nakku was instrumental in initiating and maintaining the ongoing collaboration with UBC and MEEI. Her vision and commitment paved the way for this invaluable exchange of knowledge and expertise.

Championing Resident Growth: Dr. Nakku consistently emphasizes the positive impact of the program on resident development. She recognizes the crucial role of hands-on training, simulation, and exposure to real-world practices in shaping skilled and confident ENT specialists.

Facilitating Collaboration and Communication: Dr. Nakku acts as a bridge between the various stakeholders involved. She ensures smooth communication, logistical arrangements, and effective collaboration during the training sessions.



Dr. Doreen Nakku is not just a mentor in the traditional sense; she is a leader, collaborator, and champion for the success of this partnership. Her dedication and enthusiasm have been instrumental in empowering residents at MUST, fostering international collaboration, and ultimately contributing to improved ENT care for patients in Uganda.

The ongoing partnership between MUST, UBC, and MEEI exemplifies the power of international collaboration in fostering medical education and advancing surgical practices. By sharing knowledge, expertise, and resources, this initiative empowers ENT residents at MUST to reach their full potential, ultimately benefiting countless patients in need of specialized care

FIS welcomes the new Dean.



Dr. Bariyo has served as Dean of the Faculty of Interdisciplinary Studies at Mbarara University of Science and Technology since January 6, 2020. Today January 11, 2024 the faculty and staff witnessed the handover event.

Dr. Rogers Bariyo handed over instruments of power, to the new Dean Dr. Wendo Mlahagwa Olema.

Dr. Bariyo congratulated the new dean upon having been elected the Dean, Faculty of Interdisciplinary Studies (FIS), Mbarara University of science and Technology (MUST). He said this was in accordance with section 53 of the Universities and other Tertiary Institutions Act 2001 as amended 2006. (Please refer to section 48 of the same act on the roles and mandate of the Dean.)

In his hand over speech, Dr. Bariyo appreciated the team he has worked with that was so supportive during his team of office. He pointed out the P/S Winnie Twikirize the administrator, Madam Betty okumu, the Faculty administrator, Mr. Frank Mutungi, the records officer, Ms. Nafula Cathy, the finance officer Kabonesa Edridah office attendant and Mr. Kizza Alex Karemiri. These colleagues supported me especially as we sailed through the tough times of the Covid-19 pandemic.

He shared the major Achievements during his term of office that included;

During my term of office as Dean, I have contributed to a number of developments at both the Faculty and Institutional levels as presented below:

1. **Teaching and Learning** – I spearheaded the review and (re-)accreditation 03 undergraduate programs i.e. Bachelor of Science in Gender and Applied Women Health, Bachelor of Science in Planning and Community Development, Bachelor of Science in Agriculture and Livelihoods, Post graduate Diploma in Criminology and three MA programmes (hard and soft copies in Dean's Office and HoD/Units).



Dr. Primrose Nakazibwe Led the prayer

2. **Research and collaboration** – the Faculty is experiencing a growing research and grant profile. Members of academic staff have attracted prestigious grants and collaborations from a wide range of local and international academic institutions. In addition, staff are increasingly engaged in academic writing which has resulted in a number of peer reviewed publications.

3. **Student's enrolment** has now increased both at Undergraduate (more especially for Bachelor of Science in Agriculture and Livelihoods) and Postgraduate levels.



4. **Farm Improvement.** With the support of the Donors (especially SNV), Projects (such as EARNED) and Government of Uganda, a number of achievements have been registered at the farm such as paddocking, pasture improvement, irrigation unit (refer to Farm monthly reports).

5. **New donations:**

(a). The Faculty has received a Tractor from the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries Under project Improving and use of Agricultural machinery for agricultural mechanization in Uganda”. The Dean, should ensure that Registration number and cards are acquired from MAAIF. Mr. Alex Kiiza Karemiri, a certified operator will assist in this aspect. Lastly, the Faculty should design operation and maintenance guidelines in consultation with University Top Management and in line with MoU with MAAIF.

(b). An Espresso (coffee) machine was donated by Uganda Coffee Development Authority (UCDA). Students were trained on its operation. However, UCDA will send the signed MoU. Students Coffee Club, under the assistance of their Patron, Mr. Hannington Odongo will draft guidelines and submit them to Faculty Management on how the machine will be managed. In consultation with University Management, Coffee club will be guided accordingly.



(c). Through the Earned Project Coordinated by Hannington Odongo, the Faculty received an LG UHD TV Screen, a projector and Projection Screen. A suitable place should be identified for these facilities.

6. Community engagement – the Faculty has a growing rich community outreach training agenda where students engage and serve the community for their practical learning experiences. The Faculty continues to engage in community –based training and during the last two academic years, the Faculty has been working with Mbarara City to implement the community –based training activities under student-community Twinning Project (STP). Under the STP, we have realized a wide range of community-based development initiatives that include wine making, piggery, backyard vegetable, gardening, compost manure, apiary, fish farming, craft making, soap and book making, pottery and weaving among others. The Faculty is running memorandum of understanding with progressive farms for its farm attachment course for the agriculture science students. These include IBO mixed farm, AGDI, Kyera Agricultural Training College.



Dr. Rogers Was accompanied by the daughter to hand over office

7. **Staff development** – a number of academic staff have completed their PhD training and others are progressing well and are yet to complete their studies. As the in-coming Dean, your support to those on training will be of value to them individually and to the Faculty as a whole. In addition, a few staff have been promoted in academics and others recommended for promotion but still await for the required resources at the institutional level.

8. **MoU.** Over 5 MoUs have been signed with different organizations. The Dean needs to keep them active and complete the pending ones such as one with Uganda Red Cross Society and Eduserve Education Agency (that deals with placement of Agricultural students in Europe).

To the new Dean, Dr. Bariyo also presented the major Challenges and proposals to consider so as to address the challenges. These were:

1. The Faculty is experiencing reduced Government funding for its operations which is affecting performance on a number of activities (attached is a copy of the current financial stand),

2. The Department of Environment, Livelihood and Support System lacks essential full time staff to handle courses such as Mechanisation and Food Science and Technology. Over relying of part-time/contract staff is not a durable solution. Efforts should be made to recruit full time teaching staff,

3. Much as Agricultural Students are increasing, there are not sufficient facilities such as laboratories to support learning.

4. Low PhD completion rate. A number of students register for doctoral studies, how many of them get “lost” along the way. There is a need for the Faculty to work with other units such as DRGT and address this perennial challenge,

5. Negative attitude against some programmes run by FIS. There has been constant question about the relevancy and existence of FIS in a university of science and Technology. Secondly, some programmes currently run, are perceived to be misplaced! The Faculty leadership has to make deliberate efforts to demonstrate the relevancy of FIS and secondly review/re-think the programmes perceived as misplaced.

HANDOVER



Handing over of office

Dr. Bariyo challenged the new Dean to the following tasking:

Marketing and Visibility of the Faculty

In collaboration with Vice Chancellor's Office (Public Relations, International Relations) Academic Registrar and Computing Units, FIS management should intensify marketing efforts. The web-page needs to be periodically updated.

Research and Publications

You need to support and strengthen research teams that exist at the Faculty for improved outputs.

He advised the new dean to always execute her duties as Dean, referring to the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, Universities and Other Tertiaries Act (2006 as amended), MUST Human Resource Manuel 2023, MUST University Rules and Regulations among others. "Let your rational decision be informed by policy and regulation not feelings".



Word of wisdom from the former dean to the new Dean

Work with everyone. Consult as much as possible. Think deeply before you act. Confidentiality is key, keep people's secrets like they have entrusted you with them. Be frank and open. Empower units. Delegate but remember you will be held responsible.

He advised her to always entrust herself with God in all that she will do. He shared a bible verse of 1 kings 3-9. Dean Bariyo also shared his prayer that has guided him from the day he assumed office as the dean. "I am young and I do not know much about being a king. Make me wise and obedient, help me know the difference between right and wrong, help me lead your people well".

This was followed by the receiving of instruments (documentation, stamp office keys, car keys, fuel card, and other items)

The new dean took the oath of allegiance and Secrecy to serve with honor dedication and deliverance during her team of office



She was later en-robbed fully as a Dean.



The former Deans ushered and welcomed Dr. Bariyo into the former Deans league

In her acceptance speech, Dr. Wendo expressed gratitude to everyone who attended the event. She accepted to lead the Faculty and vowed to work with everyone and that she will be consulting and promote teamwork.

With the instruments of power, she will ensure that the student numbers keep high, and will make an effort to ensure that they look at alternative fund sources and ideas to deal with the constraint of reduced government funding.

FIS support team



Former Deans of FIS



Dean Bariyo being usher to the former deans bench

Who is Wendo, the new FIS Dean?



Dr. Wendo Mlahagwa holds a PhD in Development Studies (MUST), Master of Arts in Development Studies (MUST) and a Bachelor of Arts (Edu) from Dar. She has been teaching in the Faculty of Interdisciplinary Studies at Mbarara University of Science and Technology (MUST) Uganda for the last 20 years. She is currently teaching Development Studies which is a crosscutting in the University, taught to all undergraduate students and Community Development course in the Master of Arts in Development Studies program.

She was coordinator of a Development Studies service course (a crosscutting course offered to all undergraduate students at MUST) from 2011 to 2018 and the acting head of Gender and Women studies at MUST from 2013-2014



Her research interests are on forced migration, peace and conflict studies. Her further interests are on sexual and reproductive health among adolescents in both refugee and normal setting. Dr. Wendo is a contact person for EMMIR (European Master in Migration and Intercultural Relations) an African- an Erasmus Mundus Master course in migration studies jointly run by three African and European universities, facilitated by a wide network of partners.

Her task is to orient and guide EMMIR during the 3 week intensive phase in Oldenburg by giving them tutorials and orienting them during their internship in every 3rd semester in Refugee settlements in Uganda. She also led a team from 2022 September to July 2023 in carrying out interventions among the indigenous Batwa people of Uganda on integrating mutual aid groups and informal saving schemes to alleviate gender based among the Batwa in Kanungu district, funded by USAID.



Karibu Dean Wendo, kila la kheri katika ofisi yako

Workshop on the Antimicrobial Stewardship in Critical Care Project



Mbarara University of Science and Technology (MUST) recently held a workshop on "Antimicrobial Stewardship in Critical Care" at the Oxford Hotel, addressing the critical issue of antimicrobial resistance (AMR).



Pharmacists



Critical care Nurses team



Doctors' team



Laboratory Scientists' team

This initiative aimed to assess past practices of antibiotic use in intensive care units (ICUs) and develop strategies to prevent the spread of "superbugs" – bacteria resistant to multiple antibiotics.

Bringing Together a Diverse Team:

The workshop brought together a diverse group of healthcare professionals, including doctors, pharmacists, microbiologists, ICU nurses, laboratory personnel, administrators, and ICU support staff. This collaboration was crucial for creating a comprehensive approach to AMR control.

Project Leaders and Supporters:

The project's success was due in part to the dedication of Rose Dusabe (RN), Dr. Miriam Nakiwala Josephine, Martha Kulabako (Project Coordinator), and Christine Tumuhimbise (RN). Additionally, Dr. Daniel Chans Mwandah, the Project Investigator, provided unwavering support.

Combating Superbugs in Hospitals:

Dr. Jonans Tusiimire, the Co-PI and Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, emphasized the project's importance for Mbarara Regional Referral Hospital (MRRH) in preventing the spread of superbugs within the hospital setting. He highlighted the potential of implementing infection prevention and control (IPC) measures in ICUs with collaboration from all medical staff.

Group presentations



Fighting AMR Together:

The workshop underscored the importance of collaboration among healthcare workers in the fight against AMR. Hospital administrators stressed the need for increased resources to combat AMR, such as providing essential equipment and conducting regular training programs.

Combating Resistance through Responsible Use:

The workshop also emphasized the role of responsible antibiotic use in preventing the emergence of resistant bacteria. By following prescribed dosages and avoiding misuse, healthcare professionals played a vital role in this crucial battle.

This workshop marked a significant step forward for MUST and MRRH in their combined effort to tackle the growing threat of AMR. Through collaboration, responsible antibiotic use, and effective IPC practices, they can safeguard the health of patients and healthcare workers alike.



PI Dr. Chans Mwanda introducing the core team



Dr. Miriam Nakiwala presenting about the data collection tool to the participants .



CO PI and Deputy Dean Dr. Jonans



Associate Professor . Joel Bazira Chair DRGT giving closing remarks

Cyberschool Technologies & Mastercard Foundation enhance MUST eLearning Capacity



Mbarara University of Science and Technology received 10 laptops from Cyberschool Technology Solutions for support towards digital content creation for elearning at the institution. The handover ceremony took place on Tuesday, 6th February 2024 during an engagement between the Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academic Affairs -Prof. Nixon Kamukama and selected lecturers, from different Faculties, meant to spearhead the further implementation of eLearning and Distance Education at MUST.

This, under the ongoing Cyberschool Technologies- Mastercard Foundation eLearning initiative, aimed at improving the university's ability to enhance quality online education while increasing access to market –responsive education and training. The initiative is being implemented under the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor- Academic Affairs.



An Opportunity to address Teaching Challenges

During the engagement, Prof. Nixon Kamukama, the Deputy Vice Chancellor Academics Affairs challenged the academic staff to take advantage of online pedagogy and blended learning as a solution to the challenges of inadequate/congested physical lecture space at university.

Prof. Kamukama also expressed gratitude to Cyber-School Technologies and Mastercard foundation for the support which shall also see MUST become a regional centre of excellence in eLearning and digital pedagogy through the establishment of a Digital Content Support Hub/Studio at its Kihumuro Campus, enhancement of network connectivity and access, provision of affordable computing devices to staff and students, enhancement of the university's Learning Management System and improving academic staff's technical ability in delivering online education.



The Head ICT Services at MUST, Mr. Amos Baryashaba provided the meeting with a background of the university's journey and challenges of eLearning and expressed confidence that the initiative would go a long way in addressing the existing bottlenecks.

He also informed the meeting that the university was using the initiative to particularly target university courses with the largest student enrollments to be used as pilots.

Lecturer feedback and Plans for the Future

The meeting also reviewed experience of progress made in the just ended 1st Semester of the 2023/2024 Academic Year and agreed on a number of aspects meant to improve the roll-out of e-learning at MUST.

The engagement concluded with the handover of 10 laptops meant to be used in content development of the pilot courses to undertake blended learning. The cross cutting courses, with an expected big enrollment of students include;

- Business Ethics
- Business Statistics
- Therapeutics & Toxicology
- Systemic Pharmacology
- Fundamentals of Epidemiology and Environmental Sanitation





Succeed we Must

Everyone Matters: MUST addresses PWDs' inclusion



Disability is a mind set: MUST hosted a meeting on Tuesday, January 30th, 2024, to discuss disability inclusion and support for staff and students. This was organized by the Dean of students (DoS) department under the crosscutting issues docket. Representing the Dean was Ms. Maureen Kahima, the deputy Dean who welcomed the participants and asked them to disseminate what they had learnt. The event was directed and moderated by the University counsellor, Mr. George Byabagambi

Facilitators

The Key facilitators included: Chairperson of the Technical Committee and Deputy Secretary Personnel Mr. Patrick Twesigye, Guild Representative (PWDs): Mr. James Nabyama, Focal Person (PWDs): Madam Angella Nakato, Legal Advisor Timothy Mugumya (Esq), Dean of Students Representative: Ms Maureen Kahima and the coordinator MUST PWDs as well as MUST Representative to council, Ms. Stella Dusabe Byarugaba.



Mr. James Nabyama,



Ms. Maureen Kahima



Mr. George Byabagambi



Ms. Angella Nakato



Timothy Mugumya (Esq)



Mr. Patrick Twesigye

Sensitization, support and training:

The meeting, led by Patrick Twesigye, aimed to raise awareness and provide training on handling people with disabilities within the university community. He said, we are all temporarily able and we shall need some of these services when challenged. He thanked the organizers for the training. He said some staff need to be recruited in the special needs unit, but we are not aware of their problem

Angella Nakato, the focal person of PWDs at (MUST), acknowledged the ongoing efforts to enhance accessibility for students and staff with disabilities (PWDs). She emphasized the collaborative initiative, sparked by the African Development Bank and fully supported by the University administration, aiming to create an inclusive learning environment.



She distinguished between "special needs" and "disabilities." Using the example of a student needing English language support, she explained that such challenges fall under special needs, whereas physical disabilities, hearing impairments, visual impairments, dyslexia and others represent true disabilities. Recognizing this distinction is crucial for effective communication and support.



Challenges Faced:

Ms Maureen Kahima, representing the Dean of Students, highlighted challenges such as outdated facilities lacking ramps, limited resources, and inadequate sensitization efforts. She also noted that the 2019 policy needs reviewing.

James Nabyama, the Guild Representative (PWDs), appreciated the progress made but identified areas like the Biochemistry lab and upper faculty buildings lacking easy accessibility. He called for a focal person for PWDs in each faculty.

Stella Dusabe Byarugaba emphasized the need for continuous sensitization, a dedicated wellness center with physiotherapy services, increased financial aid for government-sponsored students, and an external member on the technical committee.

Student Support:

Ms Kahima highlighted the Dean of Students' role in supporting students with disabilities and the importance of timely communication regarding needs.

Collaborations with institutions like Kyambogo University Cyber School were mentioned as valuable resources.

Staff Needs:

Mr. Twesigye urged staff to register their disabilities for support and highlighted limited awareness as a challenge. He called for a visible office with

dedicated staff and tools, addressing structural limitations like staff numbers and accessibility features, and considering provisions for interpreters.

Policy Review and Collaboration:

Reviewing the existing policy to address current needs, like extra time during examinations for PWDs as highlighted by Mr. Mugumya, was emphasized.

Stakeholders like Ms Byarugaba called for active collaboration with external members to bring about positive changes.

Appreciation and Moving Forward:

Nakato encouraged student representatives to act as advocates, urging students with disabilities to openly communicate their needs. This transparency, she emphasized, empowers staff and faculty to provide necessary support. "I trust our staff," she stated, "they are willing to help once made aware of the challenges." She highlighted specific examples of students with disabilities receiving extra support from dedicated lecturers and administrators due to their openness. She concluded by urging staff to be mindful of their language when interacting with individuals with disabilities, fostering a more inclusive and supportive campus environment.

This meeting provided a platform for open discussion and collaboration towards creating a more inclusive and supportive environment for everyone at MUST.



For any information about MUST please check our website: www.must.ac.ug
Check our social media page on:

 mbararauniversity  @MbararaUST  Mbarara University of Science and Technology  @Mbararaust

Succeed we Must.