



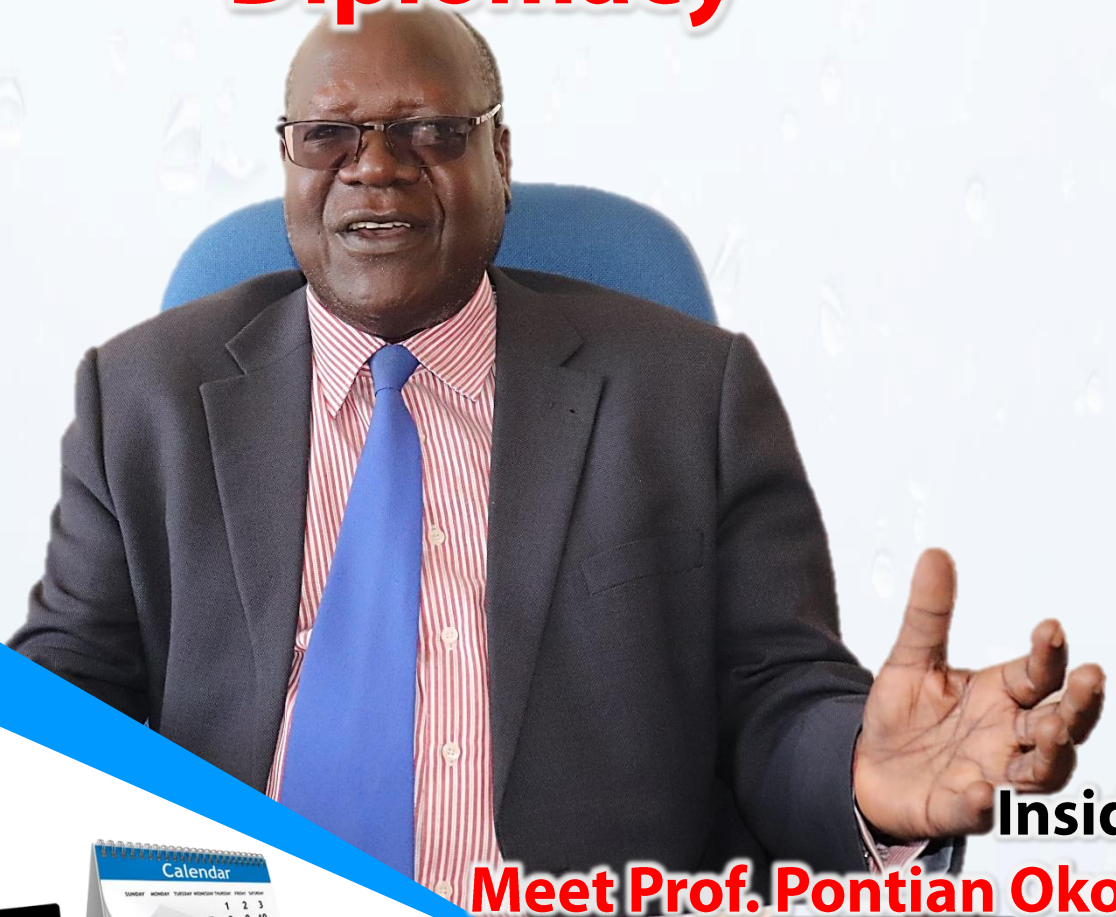
# MMUST NEWS

*Post*

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## Meet an Icon of International Relations & Diplomacy



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**UPCOMING**



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## Editor's Pen

Greetings MMUST Community.

Welcome to the seventh issue of the MMUST NewsPost. In this edition, we interview Prof. Pontian Okoth; a Professor of History and International Relations. Find out why a book has been written in his honor.

We also bring you a feature interview on the newly opened gymnasium and how it stands to benefit you as an individual. Read about other activities that have been taking place at the University as well.

We wish to thank you, our readers, for your continuous support, constructive critique and constant feedback. We wish to reiterate our commitment to bringing you quality stories and coverage of University events and personalities. We note that our audience is diverse with varied tastes and preferences. We endeavor to take care of your preferences while putting into consideration each of the different cadres of our audience.

Together, let us tell us stories.



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# Meet Prof. Pontian Okoth

## Our Icon in International Relations and Diplomacy

### Interview by

Sandra Dorcas Awuor,  
Mike Omukuba and Nashilluh Brendah Kabindio

### Q: Please tell us about yourself.

My name is Prof. Pontian Godfrey Okoth. I am a professor of History and International Relations at Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology (MMUST), School of Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance-Department of Peace and Conflict Studies.

### Q: You have held a number of administrative and teaching roles in various institutions of higher learning within and outside the country. Please walk us through your professional and academic journey.

I graduated from Makerere University, Kampala Uganda with a Bachelor and a concurrent Diploma in Education in 1978. I was retained at the Department of History because I did very well. I missed First Class by just a mark. In 1980, I went to the University of Waterloo in Ontario Canada where I got a Masters of Arts in History and returned to Makerere as a lecturer where I taught for 3 years. I, then, went for my Doctor in Philosophy (PhD) in Diplomatic History at the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) and returned to Makerere University again, where I was promoted to Senior Lecturer in History and appointed Chairman of the History Department in 1988.





In 1991, I was promoted to Associate professor of History, still as Chairman of the Department. In 1995, I decided to relocate to Maseno University and was promoted to a full Professor of History and International Relations in 1996. I taught, supervised Masters and PhD students. I was also made the pioneer Director of the Centre for the Study of Lake Victoria and its environs. In 2006, I relocated to Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology (MMUST) because they had just started the Centre for Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance (CDMHA). I taught various courses in Peace and Conflict, Disaster Management, Diplomacy, Diplomatic History, Foreign Policy among others. In 2008, I was requested to start a University in Kampala called Lugazi, and I became its first Vice Chancellor. Having set it, MMUST decided to recall me and I came back to the Department of Peace and Conflict studies in 2012 and I have been here since then. I have graduated over 70 Masters and PhD students.

**Q: As a Professor, what are your achievements so far?**

Perhaps the very first is being Chairman of Department, which is no mean achievement. I was also Dean of Faculty at Makerere University and Director of the Centre for the Study of Lake Victoria at Maseno. I was Chairman of the Department of Disaster Intervention and Humanitarian Assistance at CDMHA

before the name was changed to Department of Peace and Conflict Studies. I was Vice Chancellor of Lugazi University. I have been an external examiner for many universities in Africa including those in this great republic. Actually, next weekend I am going to the University of Nairobi Institute of Diplomacy and International Studies as an external examiner. I have also been an external examiner at Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology (JOOUST), Moi University, University of Dar es Salaam, University of Rwanda among others. At the moment, I have over one hundred and fifty (150) publications in form of books authored or edited by me and others including journal articles in peer reviewed international journals. I mentor both my students and other academics. I regard all these as achievements.

**Q: What are our current research interests as a Professor of History and International Relations?**

My research interests are based on issues that deal with diplomacy, foreign policy, international relations generally, peace and conflict studies, and security studies. It is because of these research activities that I managed to produce those publications over the years. I have been in academia for 41 years now.



I think that is one of my best journal articles but best book is called 'USA, India and Africa during and after the Cold War period'. I interrogate and investigate issues surrounding what constituted the intense rivalry between the USA and Soviet Union popularly, diplomatically and historically known as the Cold War period. I also examine issues of the post-cold war world order.

**Q: Researchers, and universities at large, are increasingly protecting their inventions. Have you ever considered patenting your work and why is it important to do so?**

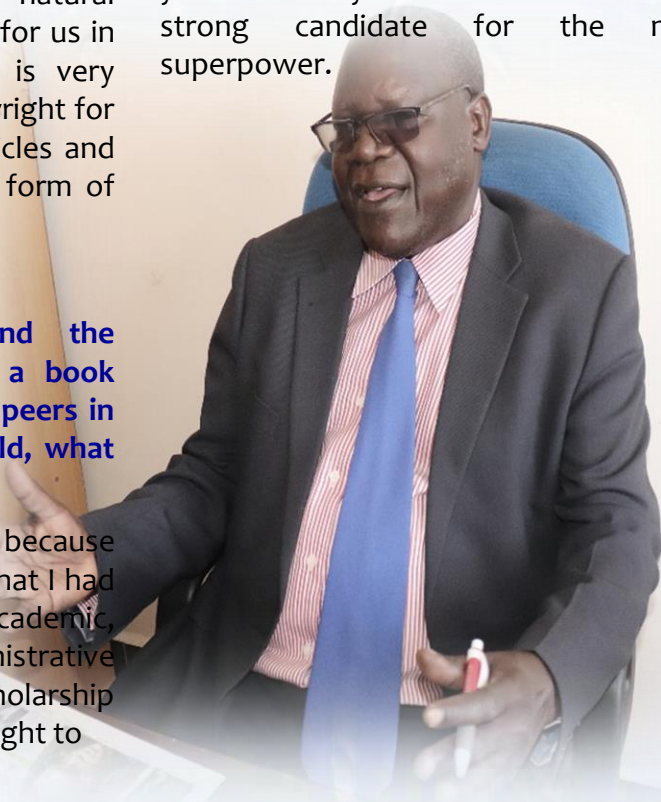
Patenting is very important in scholarship because if you do research and make important findings, you should own them. Otherwise, if you do not do that, your works or ideas will be stolen and essentially you will have worked for nothing. I cannot say I have patented any work. It depends on whether you are typical natural scientists or social scientist but for us in the social sciences, copyright is very important. You have to get copyright for a book you publish, journal articles and so, in a way, copyrighting is a form of patenting.

**Q: Contemporary Africa and the foreseeable World Order,' is a book written in your honor by your peers in academia from across the world, what is the story behind it?**

Yes. Well, I was elated by that because my peers in academia thought that I had made some recognizable academic, scholarly and administrative contributions to the world of scholarship and higher education. They thought to

honor me when I am still alive. Normally, that kind of honor is given when we are no longer alive. It is such a great honor for them to publish a world- wide book in my honor because of my contributions.

They called it an accolade and they called me an icon in International Relations and Diplomatic History. I was humbled by that. The book talks about issues surrounding Africa's dealings with the rest of the world in the post-Cold War period. In a world that is increasingly multipolar- because after the demise of the Soviet Union the world was unipolar –it was only one super power that was in vogue. But now, increasingly, there are other centres of power that are emerging and you know very well that China is a very strong candidate for the next superpower.





The literature around international relations suggests that by 2030, China will be the other new superpower and how does Africa relate with such emerging centres of power. There is a centre of power called the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) and they want to start their own bank to rival the World Bank-the International Monetary Fund. It is good to have new centres of power so that there is no one single power that dominates global affairs.

**Q: Which of your journal paper would you rate as your best and why?**

There are a number of them. It would be a tall order for me to identify the best. However, the most recent article published last year around November, called 'Looking East; Uganda's Emerging Economic Diplomacy with the Nations of the Pacific Region'. It was published in the Asian Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities and there I make a case for African countries to show that relations with the Asian countries is important now because it diversifies our diplomatic and economic relations with the new actors rather than keeping on relating with traditional powers of the West like the USA, India, Britain, Germany and France.

**Q: What are your views on the emerging focus on research productivity and collaborative research in Kenyan universities?**

We need collaborative research. You see, universities are engines of knowledge, they produce knowledge, and they are factories for 'manufacturing' graduates and knowledge is very important in this exercise. Personally, I am a team worker.

I want, especially, to get groups of young scholars as part of my nurturing exercise so that they get grounded into the exercise of doing research and not just research for its sake. Research that is going to be meaningful and positively transform Kenya and Africa at large.

In Kenya, right now, we are talking of the Big Four Agenda which cannot just be left for politicians. Universities must come in in a big way to do research and support the Big Agenda. There are projects like the millennial goals which need collaborative research. The more our universities collaborate in the research enterprise, the better for productivity, the economic sphere, enhancement of democracy in the political realm and the better for geopolitical considerations. And, as you are aware now, there is this new phenomenon of terrorism. Kenya alone cannot handle it that is why Kenya needs to collaborate with its neighbours and even those far including the USA. All these things require research, due insights, how to handle and counter terrorism, how to enhance food security, how to realize that industries work better and how to reduce corruption. Corruption is a big story, almost on a daily basis.

**Q: Do you think that the proposal by the Commission for University Education to establish a mechanism for accrediting academic journals will inhibit academic freedom?**

Not at all. It is a step in the right direction because some of these journals are 'street' journals.





Prof. Okoth (in grey suit) , with fellow Professors Frank Matanga, Fredrick Otieno and Kennedy Onkware , during the launch of the book titled “Peace, Security and Development in 21st Century Africa-Theory and Practice”

Anybody can just come up with a journal for money making and not for economic enhancement, therefore, any material of low quality can be published in such journals. There is need to actually accredit the journals for quality enhancement. I support it.

**Q: Academics have, on occasions, been accused of doing research for the sake of research. What are your views on this matter?**

Research for the sake of it is not meaningful because, to me, the greatest objective of doing research is to transform society and the lives of *wananchi* by taking care of issues that will be meaningful for the country. It is not just doing research because I want a promotion. I think I have hit the ceiling because I no longer need a promotion because a Professor is the highest echelon of academic position. However, if I have reached that position that is the more reason I should engage in meaningful research so that now I mentor and nurture the younger scholars who will be replacing some of us. Some of us are about to retire although Professors normally do not retire really, they just maybe change their ways of doing things. But research for the sake of research is not good for any university. There must be meaningful researches done to change the lives of our people in Kenya, Africa and the world. We are now

interdependent and no country can stand on its own that is why we have Chinese building the superhighway. Hopefully, Kenyan engineers and other technocrats will be doing this themselves. But still, even the United States Of America (USA) which is a superpower is still depending on other countries for certain things such as gas and recycling of products. The Japanese, for example, do a lot of recycling of products for the USA. All these things need quality research whose products can be patented.

**Q: Have you ever thought of or measured the impact of your work on society both immediate and larger society? If yes what is it and if not why not?**

Yes. Many of my works have been used and referred to by other established scholars, graduate students and even at the undergraduate levels. If your publications are not referred to by your peers, then, that is something negative for you. It means perhaps you are just doing research for the sake of it which may be termed as useless research. Many of my publications have been referred to in the Research Gate, Google Scholar and you get feedback on the number of colleagues who refer to your publication and that is good.



Those research products in terms of publications have to make positive impact. If it happens that your findings or research are not being referred to then you have to rethink the way you conduct your research and how you make your topic and findings relevant. At MMUST, we have Professors Forum now and all full Professors are members of that Forum. We share ideas and impact each other. Therefore, your colleagues should be able to recognize your research output.

**Q: Research Gate and Google Scholar are fora that have brought scientists and researchers from different disciplines across the world under one roof. Do you think such fora are important in enhancing collaborative research?**

They are very important in this modern era because, as researchers and scholars, we have to network. During our time, when we were undergraduates, we were very traditional. These days we have gadgets like tablets, smartphones which are important vehicles for research. Your work is made accessible to everybody all over the world and this way plagiarism is reduced. Plagiarism is a serious academic crime.

**Q: You have been to more than ten states in the world. How has your vast travelling impacted your teaching of International Relations?**

It has impacted immensely because international relations by definition means interaction between or among countries. It is good to also know the

foreign policies of various countries so that they can borrow from one another, what I call positive borrowing. Visiting these countries, therefore, means you are meeting a diverse array of scholars who may have different ways of scholarship which you can learn from. Learning does not stop until one stops breathing. Let nobody cheat you that they have gotten a PhD, they are a full professor so they have nothing more to learn. Learning is a continuous process. These travels have not been just for the sake of travelling. They are not just academic tourism but you meet others, you interact and learn from them and they also learn from you. It is a kind of symbiotic relationship.

**Q: Apart from the great research award from Carnegie Corporation of New York, what other awards have you received?**

I just came back from the Holy Land (Jerusalem). Upon my return, I was honoured with the title of Jerusalem Pilgrim which nobody gets every day. I have been honoured with other awards such as the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, the Fulbright Scholarship among others.

**Q: Comment on the ongoing racism claims against Donald Trump and its effect on International relations.**

I wrote something about Donald Trump when he had just become the 45<sup>th</sup> President of USA. First of all, Trump's ascendance to Presidency was a kind of surprise for some people because they expected what you may call and establishment person like Hillary Clinton.





Indeed, Hillary Clinton won by popular votes but the Electoral College in the USA determines who wins the Presidency and, perhaps, Clinton did not do much of her own homework and Trump surprisingly won and was supported by the military industrial complex.

But you see, Trump was from the business world, he did not know much about international relations. He was in corporate real estate business and a billionaire but he was also a conservative person. He belongs to the right and was associated with racists. He belongs to the Anglo-Saxon race and does not regard other races like Latin Americans, Asians and he carries that to

the international fora which is not good for international relations. He has made so many blunders. He is very undiplomatic. All those are not good qualities of a Head of State like him. In a nutshell, in most quarters, he is regarded as a racist.

**Q:What is it that people do not know about you?**

I enforce discipline in whatever I do. Many of our students cannot pay fees, making them to drop out. So if I discover bright students, I assist them by paying their fees.

**Q:Describe yourself in 3 words.**

Strict. Disciplinarian. God loving.



# Department of Health Promotion and Sports Science holds Curriculum Review Stakeholders Workshop

By Sandra Dorcas Awuor

**M** Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology (MMUST), through the Department of Health Promotion and Sports Science, held a Stakeholders' Workshop on Curriculum Review on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2019 at the University.

The stakeholders' workshop is a mandatory step in the universities' curriculum review process as required by the Commission for University Education (CUE). The curriculum for Health Promotion and Sports Science, in the School of Public Health, Biomedical Sciences and Technology (SPBS&T), has been under review in order to meet the development needs of the society and align with changes in the country such as the introduction of the new Competency- Based Curriculum (CBC). The purpose of the Review is to develop transitional curriculum for upgrading, modularize Bachelor of Science (Bsc) and Diploma curricular, develop occupational standards for Recognition Prior Learning (RPL) certification and create two specialization pathways in the BSc curriculum; Health Promotion and Sports Science.

The Ag DVC (ASA), Dr. Bernadette Sabuni officially opened the stakeholders' workshop on behalf of the Ag. Vice Chancellor, Prof. Asenath Sigot. Dr. Sabuni said that the stakeholders' contributions would enrich the curriculum under review. She added that curriculum review is the right way to do things because times have changed. She commended the newly launched MMUST gymnasium, adding that people need to do exercises more and eat healthy. Dr. Sabuni also said that there is need for the University to relate with the industries through respective schools and departments such the Health Promotion and Sports Science Department.

Mr. Issah Kweyu, a member of staff in the Department, presented the draft proposal of the curriculum, giving stakeholders an opportunity to make their contributions on it. He said that the curriculum was first reviewed during a 3-day workshop that involved different groups addressing aspects such as review of the old curriculum, identifying employability skills, development of occupation standards, core and their support courses, a synopsis which is in line with CUE requirement and finally, examination and evaluation.



**Dr. Bernadette Sabuni, the Acting Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic and Students Affairs) giving her remarks.**

Prof. Vincent Onywera, from the Department of Physical Education, Exercise and Sports Science at Kenyatta University, talked about the global trends in physical education, exercise and sports science. He said that physical inactivity is the 4<sup>th</sup> leading risks factor for global mortality hence the need to advocate for habitual physical activity. Prof. Onywera said that he was impressed by the University's gymnasium adding that it is well equipped.

“We need to increase awareness of health benefits of physical activity and

exercise. According to World Health Organization (WHO), 3.2 million die as a result of physical inactivity,” said Prof. Onywera.

He said that the Health Promotion and Sports Science curriculum is adequate in form, content and is in line with global practices, the Presidential Big Four Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (3). Prof. Onywera also talked about the new Competency-Based Curriculum, saying that everyone has a role to play in its rollout.

Also present was Prof. Abel Toriola from Tshwane University in South Africa. Prof. Toriola said that the proposed draft curriculum has relevant programmes focusing on international trends. He also commended the vision and mission statements terming them as ‘good’. He said that students should be trained and equipped with skills to work globally.

Dr. Peter Bukhala, the Chairperson of Department of Health Promotion and Sports Science at MMUST gave an overview of the Department. He said that the first three (3) students were enrolled in 2010 and there are currently nine (9) PhD and ten (10) Masters Students with Diploma having the highest enrollment with nineteen (19) students.

“We are focusing on improving staff development, providing market driven programmes hence the review, development of facilities through outsourcing, more partnerships and acquisitions and increasing student enrollment,” he said.



Dr. Bukhala said that the University has partnered with Body Flex to run the gym. He also said that the gym will help in treatment through regular exercises and prevention of lifestyle disease among staff, students and the community at large. He encouraged collaborative research between staff and students and interschool collaborations within the University. He thanked stakeholders for their contributions.

Mr. Patrick Chiriswa, a representative from KICD (Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development), commended the faculty for the good work noting that curriculum development is not easy but an ongoing process that begins with needs assessment. He gave his remarks on the Health Promotion and Sports Science curriculum under review noting that the units need to clearly reveal competencies.

“Competencies must be explicit and measurable,” he said.

Mr. Chiriswa also suggested renaming of some of the units.

Mr. Stanley Maindi, from the State Department of TVET, talked about the Competence Based Education and Training (CBET) Policy Framework. CBET is an outcome based approach to TVET which was launched on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2018. He noted the important role of industry in provision of industrial data, monitoring standards, providing training to students and professionals among others.

Some of the recommendations made at the end of the workshop included; thorough proofreading of the draft curriculum, sourcing of funds, capturing

of domains of learning in learning outcomes, development of Centre of Excellence in training and certification, allocation of time for each unit, consultation with other universities and colleges, facilities development, certification of reforms and creation of links with alumni networks and industries.

Prof. Edwin Wamukoya assured the stakeholders that the Department would work on the recommendations made. Dr. Bukhala expressed his gratitude to the University for its support in making sure the stakeholders’ workshop was a success.

The workshop was closed by Dr. Gladys Mengich, the Acting Dean School of Public Health, Biomedical Sciences and Technology (SPHBS&T), who gave a vote of thanks to the stakeholders for their support. She also reiterated the fact that there is need to collaborate with other Schools such as the School of Medicine.

# MMUST-Univen Efforts to address Global Environmental Challenges

By Wambugu Mary Wangari

**A**s from 7<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> July 2019, the School of Natural Sciences (SONAS), led by the Executive Dean, Prof. William Shivoga, hosted a team from the University of Venda (UNIVEN), South Africa. This came due to the existing Memorandum of Understanding between Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology and the University of Venda (UNIVEN), South Africa. The team from UNIVEN comprised of Prof. John Odiyo and Dr. Eduard Stam. They visited MMUST for a joint collaborative research and supervision of postgraduate students as well as field/laboratory work on river *Isiukhu*.

In the field, the team, together with a number of postgraduate students, sampled different sites, namely; *Ichina, Ivakale, Kimangeti, Senyende, Shirere, Rosterman, Mwimbatsilo, Shibeye, Mutono and Ekeru*.

In each site, the following activities were carried out;

- Collection of water and sediments samples
- Collection of benthic macro invertebrates
- Measure of physiochemical parameters using hydro lab
- Measuring and estimation of width
- Measuring of velocity using velocity

meter

Later on, the data was taken to the University Zoology Lab for sorting, identification, analyzing and was then fed in a database.

The climax of the visit was a presentation made by Prof. John Odiyo, the Dean, School of Environmental Sciences, UNIVEN. The Professor of Hydrology and Water Resources addressed the issue of ‘*Global Environmental Challenges, Impacts and Opportunities*’.

“Universal environmental challenges have become a major problem,” he stated.

According to him, these challenges are related to climatic change, natural resources exploitation and associated issues in waste management and public health.

“Africa is under pressure from climate stresses and highly vulnerable to the impact of climate changes,” he continued.

A 2017 Report from United Nations stated that there is need for climate action as it plays a central role in achieving sustainable development goals.



**The Executive Dean, School of Natural Sciences, Prof. William Shivoga (centre) on a field visit with visiting team from the University of Venda, South Africa.**



# University Gym to Spur Active Lifestyle for Staff and Community

**Interview By Brenda Nashilluh**

This feature interview focuses on the newly opened gymnasium at the University. We interview Dr. Peter Bukhala, the Chairperson of Department, Health Promotions and Sports Science, under whose jurisdiction the gym (project) falls.

**Q: Tell us a little history that led to the establishment of the University Gym.**

In 2017, the Department of Health Promotion and Sports Science wrote a proposal to an individual investor called Body Flex to invest in the University for the purposes of establishing a gym to serve both the staff and the community. In 2018, the investor started putting up the structure. It was, initially, supposed to be at the Star Annex (Town Campus) because of its proximity to the community. However, the University gave space where it currently is.

**Q: What is the name of the Gym?**

We are yet to settle on the exact name for the gym. We may probably call it the MMUST Body Flex Wellness Centre.





## Q: What is the shareholding ratio between Body Flex and MMUST?

Body Flex has invested in the structure and the gym machines at an estimated cost of **Kshs 30million**. The gym is divided into four phases; machine/equipment section for body building, aerobics, physiotherapy room and a café. The proposal was embedded on the 2015/16-2019/20 Strategic Plan on having the University construct a Health, Wellness and Fitness Centre by July 2017 as part of its physical infrastructural development. The gym is to serve as a teaching laboratory for the Department as well as generate resources for the University. The investor shall recoup funds utilized in its establishment as per the signed five year Memorandum of Understanding with the University. The Department will receive 15% of the profits accruing each year. As a Department, we are comfortable with the arrangement because we have a state of the art facility to teach sports. MMUST is the second University in Kenya, after Kenyatta University, to have such a well-equipped teaching facility.

## Q: How will the Gym benefit members of staff?

One of the things we noted from a research we conducted is that quite a number of University staff are being referred to hospitals for lifestyle conditions like back pains and lethargy. Such conditions can be treated with appropriate exercise. With the advent of the gym, we envisage this to drastically reduce. As we speak now, the University has saved approximately **Kshs 29million** after referral of therapy cases to the gym.

Initially, we used to conduct these exercises under not very conventional spaces/rooms. Now, the gym will help in handling staff in a much better environment since there is now provision of a room and machines for continuous support. We hope to move staff from sedentary to active lifestyle through the gym. Therefore, the gym provides the University with an opportunity to reduce on expenditure on some of the conditions that can be handled.



**Photo: Dr. Bukhala takes us through a tour at the gym**

The Department is well equipped and staffed with professionals in gym management. We will give you correct and expert advice and an entry assessment report and carry out a second assessment midway. Already, such has been done for members of staff who have registered. We send nutritional information to registered members every time. For any changes to be noticed from the 12<sup>th</sup> week, one needs to come to the gym three times a week for 30min a day.



There were those fears of the gym being flooded by students. This is not the case. Currently, we are working on renovating a building in the former ASK Showground. It is spacious and has more equipment for the students. Their rates are also cheaper.

### **Q: How has been the uptake of the Gym so far?**

The uptake has been good. So far, we have one hundred (100) registered members of staff. We are expecting more to come. The reason why many people are yet to come in was because the gym did not have showers. Currently, though, the water system is in place, showers have been fixed and changing rooms are in place. People can come in at any time of the day. Also, the number was small because more activities were taking place in the evening where people would exercise and go home. Now, they can come at 6a.m all the way to 8pm. We have aerobic sessions as from 6am to 7am, lunch hour sessions and two sessions in the evening. On the gym side, members can come in at any time form 7am-8pm. The facility is always open. There is currently a room to serve as a physiotherapy room as we await the construction of a proper one.

### **Q: What is the registration fee?**

Members of staff have been offered half the charges given to the community. We charge **Kshs 150/-** per day, **Kshs 2,000** per month and **Kshs 15,000/-** per year. Registration fee can be paid through Paybill No: at the initiation and arrangement of individual staff with the Finance Office, we accept check off system. We also accept

payments in installments, three installments in a year, payable to this telephone number 0742060116. We believe this is affordable for most staff.

For the community, we charge **Kshs 200/-** per day, **Kshs 3200/-** per month and **Kshs 32,000/-** per year. Right now, the number of members from without the University is higher than from MMUST. Due to this University gym, most of other gyms in Kakamega town have closed shop because this is more spacious and better equipped.

### **Q: Do you have any awareness or marketing interventions in place to get more people to join?**

Yes. Even though staff members are slow in uptake, we have shared information about the gym on the intranet and other social media platforms. From outside the University, we are using word of mouth and also distributing flyers to the community in churches, schools, markets, business people etc. We are receiving quite a good response.

### **Q: There is currently an influx of 'Lose Weight Experts' on social media with information on exercise and dieting. What would you say about the idea of Intermittent Fasting (IF) as a weight lose strategy?**

Yes, there are many myths about exercise and dieting. From a sporting perspective, however, we say good health practice is not skipping meals. You must eat meals at least three times a day. However, the meals must be within the correct portions.





You must not look like you are having hunger pangs at any given time. This is because, when you are hungry, the body tries to create the impression that you are starving and so any food you take in is quickly converted to fats and stored to be used later.

When you think that you are using up the fat that was stored by going hungry, the body actually reacts to that. Therefore, one must eat because it is needed for metabolism and improving health because performance in other areas of life is dependent on the nutritional intake. When the body misses out, you miss out on vitality and performance on other areas go down. You will not add weight when you eat correct portions at the right time. What needs to be done is to be active in that, once you have eaten, you must be able to expend the excess energy and food from the system.

**Q: What is your thought on the current detoxification craze?**

The best detoxification for the body is water. I am not sure about the truth on the combinations given for juicing and other concoctions but nutritionists will tell you that the best detox is water. Adequate intake of water purifies both your blood and your body system. There is a measure of the usual eight glasses of water per day on the minimum. Do not take water because you are thirsty but because it is important to improve your metabolism.

**Q: What would you say about walking as a form of exercise as opposed to jogging on the treadmill?**

Whether brisk walking, running in the field or being on the treadmill, they all serve the same purpose. The only difference is

that the gym provides equipment that help you to do more at a shorter time. In the case of walking, you have to walk for at least 30minutes and walk briskly. Even if you walk leisurely, you still expend energy though at a lower rate. For older people, we advise them to take brisk walks as opposed to being on the treadmill as their joints may be bruised. We encourage older people to walk but not run.

**Q: One of the challenges people face when joining gyms is lack of information on types of exercises and their impact to the body. What do you say about this?**

We have different exercises and machines/equipment for different body parts. This advice is not given when one joins the gym. The problem of some gyms is that instructors do not have the skill to be able to monitor participants. They are not adequately trained. As such, some put you on very high levels of exercise at the beginning which is what bruises the body. At the MMUST gym, we give you personalized training. We run you through the equipment that will enable you achieve your goal of joining the gym; the correct equipment, correct pace and the correct length of time per activity until your body picks up. It is only then that your body will start experiencing change and benefiting from exercises.







**Q: Approximately how long does it take to see any changes in your body system once you start exercising?**

It takes approximately 8-12 weeks to see any changes in the body. Consistency is important and the amount of exercise per day must also be observed. For example, if you exercise 30min per day three times a week, the other days should be engaged in active recovery as opposed to sleeping and/or eating too much in the pretext that you will exercise the next day. Everything should be done in moderation. Have active walks, for example, walk from the office to where you have parked your vehicle a little further. Walk around to keep the body mechanism moving.

**Q: How many personnel are at the Gym right now?**

We have three staff on a daily basis. We also have three students on attachment. There are also staff from the Department who go in every now and then to support in terms of personalized attention. If you come in, you will always find someone there.

For members of staff, if you want to benefit from the gym, do not do what you think you want to do. Ask the gym instructors to advise you on what is best for you. You may end up concentrating on only one area of your body yet you may need other exercises for cardiovascular endurance, muscle build up, flexibility activities etc. Each one of these machines do different things; there are those for the legs, strengthening your arms, others for the tummy and those for the heart. So, work with the gym attendant to gain what you want.

**Q: What are the future plans for the Gym?**

In the reviewed Strategic Plan, we have

included the need for putting up a swimming pool for the University and a complete Health and Wellness Centre. The University spends a lot of money in sending students to Mudasa Academy in Vihiga County to learn about swimming. We have already had discussions with the Finance Officer to see whether a budget can be approved for the design of a swimming pool. We envisage building an Olympic model swimming pool. This will act as a laboratory for teaching swimming where students will be able to learn more. It will also provide the rest of the students, the community and the children within Kakamega with a spacious, safe and clean swimming pool unlike what is currently provided in Kakamega. The University will be able to get money out of this. In the Health and Wellness Centre, we shall provide nutritional advice, fitness advice, teach dance, exercise counselling and a variety of other activities.

**Parting shot?**

I wish to ask members of staff to adapt to an active lifestyle. It is good for them. It is healthy. Our nature of work is, sometimes, that which makes us overwork and also sit a lot. I want to urge them to put priority on their own health as the first key thing they need to think about.

As a Department, we are willing and ready to hold mass aerobic sessions, free of charge, at the Graduation Square for members of staff. Such sessions can also act as team building efforts for cohesion among staff. We only require around forty (40) staff members to have such in place. The Departmental staff also have morning road runs, where a number of staff take part in, under the guidance of Mr. Issa Kweyu.



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*Post*

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