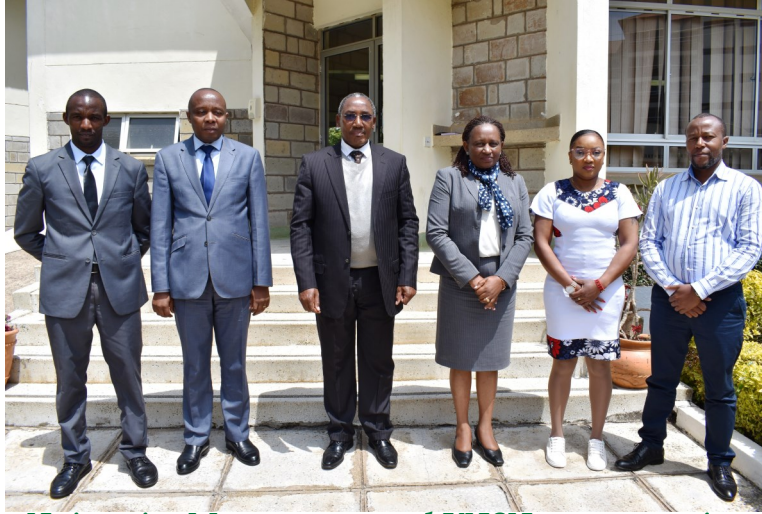


KUSU OFFICIALS APPRECIATE RECOGNITION OF UNIONS IN UNIVERSITY PROCESSES

After the recent University management consultative meeting with the leadership of the Universities Academic Staff Union (UASU), it was the turn of representatives of the Kenya Universities Staff Union (KUSU) to meet with Management on Thursday, 20th July 2023.



University Management and KUSU representatives

This is in pursuit of creating a harmonious working environment which the Ag. Vice Chancellor, Prof. Linus Gitonga, has been emphasizing about. Not only has he emphasized on the need of talking to each other rather than at each other but also that in having such a talk, different parties are able to solve issues to the satisfaction of everyone. He noted that even though it may not be possible to achieve 100% satisfaction, it would count as progress to have a majority of them satisfied as improvement measures are sought.

“Even though we may not be able to reach out to all staff in the University, it is through their elected representatives that their issues are heard. We recognize that the role Unions play is key and central to the University,” said the Ag. VC noting that he looks forward to building a culture where everyone is respected, honored and valued. Such a culture would, subsequently, make KarU a place where people

“Even though we may not be able to reach out to all staff in the University, it is through their elected representatives that their issues are heard. “

would desire to work in because of the utmost respect and regard accorded to one another. “In bringing cohesion, togetherness and harmony right from the Council, University Management Board and other levels, we can build an institution that we are proud of and a working environment that is positive.”

The Acting Deputy Vice Chancellor in charge of Academic, Research and Student Affairs, Prof. Hellen Kamiri, noted that Unions are an important constituent of the University. She posited that it was important for each staff to contribute to the bigger vision of the institution, to know and feel that the University is growing and that it has a future. Therefore, each member is expected to continue building the institution to make it better. She appreciated the fact that staff members have started recognizing where the University is heading to and the direction being set by the Acting Vice Chancellor.

The Acting Deputy Vice Chancellor (Planning, Finance and Administration), Prof. Richard Kiai, said that engaging in dialogue has a major implication in the success of the University. The success of any organization is also dependent on how its human resource is handled and taken care of.

Despite the diversity in the institution, it was important to learn to work as a team by taking advantage of the different views we have. He also stated that as the needs of staff are looked into, it was vital that those of students are given priority as well since they are the main product that the University is producing. On conflict management, harnessing divergent views while effectively handling conflicts makes staff and the institution to grow. He encouraged the KUSU leaders to lead by example in all spheres.

The KUSU leadership was represented by the Branch Chairperson, Mr. Patrick Nguring'a, Branch Secretary, Mr. John Njaguara and Branch Treasurer, Ms. Jackline Kagu. The Chairperson appreciated the Ag. VC and his team for recognizing all the Unions in the University. Specifically, he was grateful for the inclusion of Union officials in the Budget Committee. The Branch Secretary, Mr. John Njaguara presented a number of issues on behalf of the members.

Collective Bargaining Agreement

According to the Branch Secretary, the status of the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) is what makes a Union. However, a CBA may not be delivered to members if the Unions do not talk to the employer. He noted that there was a previous agreement to put the negotiations on hold but that it was time to pick up the process again. KUSU, he said, is open to start the negotiations depending on the extent the University management can go while in their acting capacities. The Union is also open to discuss any circular on the matter

from different government agencies but especially the Salaries and Remuneration Commission (SRC). The Ag. VC challenged them to think of how the previous stalled CBAs should be handled since it would be impossible to start from 2013 due to among others, financial constraints. He, nevertheless, urged them to prepare themselves for negotiations that are likely to start once substantive appointments of top management are made.

Promotions

On promotions, it was noted that there was need to follow the right procedure as stipulated in the Scheme of Service. The request presented by the officials was for the process of promotions to be made public. Ideally, an internal advertisement should be sent out indicating the available vacancies. In cases where internal staff are not qualified to take up a position, the same can be advertised externally. In essence, clear information should be provided during the process of conducting any promotions. While the promotions should be conducted in line with the Scheme of Service, the Union representatives noted that there was need to review the Scheme putting into consideration that the Unions need to own the document as well. The Scheme, according to the Ag. VC, will be reviewed and implemented as objectively as possible. He, however, asked the officials to await the appointment of substantive top managers before the process can start.

Marriage Affidavits

The Branch Secretary foregrounded the need for the University to honor marriage affidavits the same way a marriage certificate is recognized. KUSU members and their dependents should not be denied services due to lack of a marriage certificate. They noted that even though the law had been put in place guiding on the issue, the same cannot be applied retrogressively to members who had already joined the University. The Ag. VC stated that he would consult the Legal Officer on the matter in order to get the correct position.

Medical Scheme

The Union officials requested for the process of getting new medical scheme service providers that has already been floated be made public to members. This would help in creating awareness and will also be an opportunity for members to give their input. This was agreed on by both parties citing that sensitizing members is important so that they are made aware of the process and the progress made.

Daily Subsistence Allowance

The issue of per diems brought to the fore the last reviewed rates which do not, presently, serve members well. The University management was implored to review and align the allowances according to the provisions of SRC circular on applicable

rates. This was especially emphasized on the half and quarter per diems which are not appropriately applied. The Ag. VC mentioned that half per diems are only applicable to Vice Chancellors and Deputy Vice Chancellors. However, the same can be explored further with an aim of having such included in the Terms of Service of other cadres of staff. This will also be guided by proper interpretation of SRC circulars that touch on zones and their appropriate per diem allocations.

Appreciation of staff during special events

The Union leaders noted that during special occasions such as registration of new students or conferences hosted by the University, staff from specific sections are some-

times required to keep early mornings and late evenings due to the increased workload. However, such staff are neither appreciated nor rewarded. They requested for a review of the appreciation method-apart from offering meals which are also hard to partake of in the melee of activities- in order to make the staff feel recognized for their dedication. The Ag. VC said that being sensitive and considerate to staff who are involved during such times is important. Any budgetary allocations for such occasions will be reviewed to ensure that every one is appreciated accordingly.

Mental health matters

Discourse on mental health issues have gained traction in the country since more and more people are being affected by it. The situation is no different at Karatina University. To remedy this, the KUSU officials proposed the identification of a

mental health facility in Nyeri County where staff can access services. This is in addition to the University providing knowledge and creating awareness on mental health matters. The Ag. VC noted the importance of having such a programme in place. However, due to budgetary constraints and a lack of such a facility in Nyeri County, a staff trained in psychiatry will be identified to help staff navigate the terrain of mental health. In addition, Heads of Departments and Sections will be trained on how to identify and deal with such cases. The issue will be handled as an evolving one where more avenues to help staff will be explored.

The next series of meetings will entail the University management having a luncheon with the academic and non-academic staff. The intention is to make each staff member know that they matter whether they hold an administrative or academic office or not.

SCHOOL OF BUSINESS DR. TERESIA KYALO FLIES KARATINA UNIVERSITY FLAG HIGH IN GLOBAL RESPONSIBLE MANAGEMENT EDUCATION FORUM



Dr. Teresia Kyalo (front in red striped coat) with other participants

Karatina University has provided Business Simulation training to its students in the School of Business since 2020. To enhance simulation training delivery, Dr. Teresia Kyalo from the School of Business attended the 11th Edition of the UN Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) Global Forum on 12 - 16 June 2023, hosted by Fordham University's Gabelli School of Business, USA. The PRME is a United Nations-supported initiative founded in 2007 as a platform to raise the profile of sustainability in business schools around the world.

Driven by its mission to transform management education, PRME equips today's business students with the understanding and ability to deliver change tomorrow. Working through Six Principles, PRME engages business and management schools to ensure they provide future leaders with the skills needed to balance economic and sustainability goals, while drawing attention to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and aligning academic institutions with the work of the UN Global Compact.



By attending the UN-PRME Global Forum, Karatina University's name has been placed in the global arena. This will open up more avenues to network and improve business practice by facilitating knowledge sharing across an international community of business leaders, scholars, students and policy makers. The Forum has allowed the University to benchmark best practices of delivering content in business-related courses.

DEPUTY UNIVERSITY LIBRARIAN ATTENDS SUMMER SCHOOL FOR ACADEMIC LIBRARIANS FROM AFRICA



Thirteen academic librarians from 12 countries across Africa visited Western for a week-long Bibliometrics and Research Impact Summer School (Christopher Kindratsky/Western Communications)

The Deputy University Librarian, Dr. Evelyn Anduvare, was one of the thirteen (13) academic librarians from Africa who were hosted by Western University Ontario in Canada for a Bibliometrics and Research Impact Summer School which ran from 26th - 30th June 2023.

Participants were introduced to the concepts of Bibliometrics, Infometrics, Webometrics and Altmetrics. They also learnt about research impact measures and had practical experiences on bibliometrics tools such as Web of Science, Scopus, Dimensions, and

Almetrics.com. In between, the team visited the D.B. Weldon Library, C.B. "Bud" Johnston Library at the Western Ivey Business School and London Public Library. They also had a chance to present on the status of libraries in their respective countries.

The Summer School was conceived and coordinated by Isola Ajiferuke, Professor and Assistant Dean, Research in the Faculty of Media and Information Studies (FIMS). Prof. Ajiferuke hopes that "both the theoretical and practical lessons from this session enable the participants to establish bibliometric and research impact services in their respective university libraries."



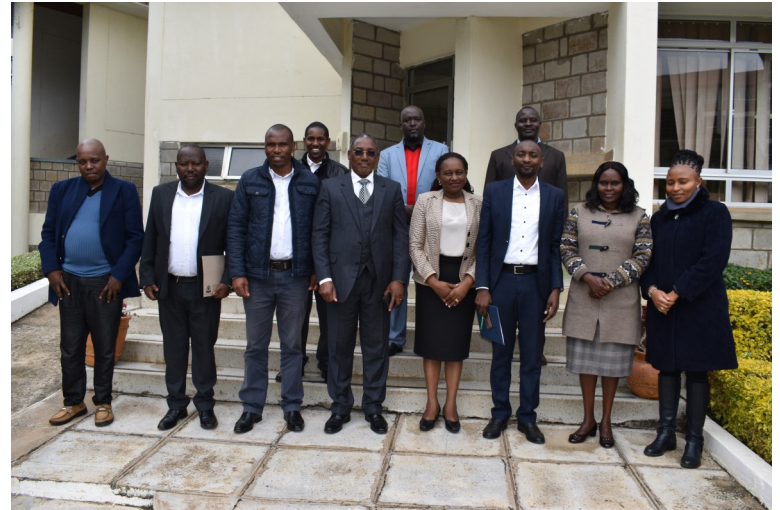
Together with Prof. Peter Gatiti presenting on status of libraries in Kenya



The Governor, Nyeri County, Mwalimu Mutahi Kahiga, on Wednesday, 19th July, 2023 received a copy of the book titled *'STRUCK DOWN BUT NOT DESTROYED'* by Ms. Jackline Ruguru Kagu, an administrative staff in the Dean of Students Office who is a renowned mental health advocate.

ACADEMIC STAFF UNION MEETING WITH UNIVERSITY MANAGEMENT A PRECURSOR TO DESIRED INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE CHANGE

The International Labour Organization (ILO) has outlined that one of the most important factors in creating and strengthening unions is in working people coming together to talk about their problems at work and devising solutions based on collective action. In an institution such as Karatina University, the three unions-UASU, KUSU and KUDHEIHA- form part of the ecosystem that is crucial for the overall growth of the institution. Their role in ensuring that the plight of workers is looked into and mutually beneficial solutions are arrived at is important. In a proposed series of meetings that the Acting Vice Chancellor, Prof. Linus Gitonga, looks forward to holding with the Unions, he, today, held a consultative meeting with the leadership of the Universities Academic Staff Union (UASU).



The Acting Vice Chancellor (with spectacles) together with UASU representatives

Prof. Hellen Kamiri, who challenged the UASU representatives to help preach to its members the gospel of resource mobilization through research. Funds accrued from resource mobilization, she said, would help bridge any financial burden that the University may be grappling with. She said that the University management is ready to facilitate any approvals required to support research. The Acting Deputy Vice Chancellor (Planning, Finance and Administration), Prof. Richard Kiai, on the other hand, noted that the success of the University is dependent upon the satisfaction of the members of staff. He said that it was important to solve any issues through dialogue.

Led by their Chairperson, Dr. Grace

Muriithi, the union representatives presented a number of issues to the University management. Dr. Muriithi expressed the Union's gratitude for being granted an opportunity to interact with the University management citing that such interactions signify new hope for growth of the institution as well as staff members.

Tenure of Tutorial Fellows

The Secretary General, Dr. James Gichuki, who was the spokesperson of the team, presented six issues on behalf on the entire academic fraternity.

The first was the security of tenure of forty three (43) Tutorial Fellows who have acquired the necessary requirements for promotion but have stagnated in the same position some as far back as 2012. The Union made a proposal for the Tutorial Fellows to be moved to Assistant Lecturers. Such a move, it was noted, would make the said staff feel valued and, in turn, create a sense of belonging to the University. The Ag. VC asked the Union leaders to advise the affected staff to send their requests for

review of terms of service to the Registrar (Planning and Administration) by end of week. He stated that their cases would be considered in accordance with the requirements stipulated in the Scheme of Service and other institutional legislations.

Collective Bargaining Agreement

The stalled Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) was another key point of discussion. According to the Secretary General, no negotiations for a new CBA have taken place since 2013. Specific request was made to review mileage/transport allowance as well as subsistence allowance in order to reflect the current demands of the economy. He called upon the University to harness the potential to negotiate the CBA since Unions are willing to hold such deliberations. The Ag. VC reiterated that the University is ready to engage on negotiations where the issue of the allowances can be reviewed. He,

Access to medical services

Along the same line, the Union raised the issue of provision of medical services and the need for staff to have access to hospitals with national reach. They were, nevertheless, grateful that the process for implementation of this initiative had already been kick started by the University. Both parties agreed to give the process an opportunity to reach its conclusive end.

Devolving examination processing

A lecturer's duty, according to the Secretary General of the Union, is to teach, research and engage in community service. He, however, noted that these Terms of Service have been overburdened by the inclusion of processing examinations. This has been discouraging particularly to the Heads of Departments who have had to take up administrative duties as well. To alleviate the burden, it was proposed that the University creates an Examination Office tasked with examination processing and its attendant requirements. Such an Office can eventually

‘In an institution such as Karatina University, the three unions- UASU, KUSU and KUDHEIHA- form part of the ecosystem that is crucial for the overall growth of the institution. Their role in ensuring that the plight of workers is looked into and mutually beneficial solutions are arrived at is important.’

be devolved to be domiciled in a School or Faculty. This would, then, ensure that academic staff are left to deliver on their mandate of quality teaching, research and counselling of students. The Ag. VC noted that such a move would require a major shift involving a sit-in with relevant stakeholders in order to chart an appropriate way forward. His vision, he stated, is to automate all systems and other operational functions of the University including examination processing.

Scheme of Service

The Union representatives also brought to the fore the issue of the Scheme of Service noting that it would be prudent for the members of the academic staff to know which particular Scheme was in active use. With that said, they implored the University management, in the spirit of transparency, accountability and good faith, to consider reviewing the Scheme of Service. The Ag.VC agreed that, for ease of administration, the Scheme would be reviewed in order to work out any inconsistencies. This would, however, require some time for the process to be initiated as the University awaits substantive appointment of top management. He noted, though, that it is possible for the review process to start in the 1st Quarter of the 2023/2024 FY, that is, September 2023, and be completed in the 2nd Quarter, that is, December, 2023.

Academic representation

Lastly, the issue of representation in terms of elected versus appointed Deans of Schools was also deliberated on. The Union leaders noted that when a qualified academic staff expresses interest to become the Dean of a School and the eligible ones are elected, the elected Deans will work with a sense of responsibility and their loyalty will not be lost. Such Deans can also be eligible for re-election based on their performance. The Ag. VC noted that for such a change to occur, where a Dean is elected rather than appointed, it would require the amendment of the University Statutes.

Other points to note is the Ag. VC's challenge to the Union representatives to push for the automatic conferment of incremental credits to academic staff who attain a doctorate degree. He also noted the need to establish proper systems and structures that recognize and proffer due respect to each member of staff. He looks forward to building a culture of respect for one another which will, in turn, impact the community we live in and the families we come from.

The Ag. VC looks forward to eventually meeting with representatives from the Kenya Universities Staff Union (KUSU), KUDHEIHA as well as both the academic and non-academic staff members.
