

A L U M N I

SU

NEWSLETTER

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# SU goes wireless...

and laptops spring up in every corner of the campus

*Strathmore University has deployed a wireless network in its Madaraka campus. While the computer labs with nearly 300 desktop machines remain in the wired network, this new initiative targets the growing base of students who would like to access information and learning material from their classrooms, lecture halls, the cafeteria, court yards and the library.*

The goal is simply to have the IT resources accessible by authorized users from anywhere in the campus and the response has been overwhelming. The number of students with laptops has increased dramatically over the past 3 months. Staff members from the ICT department say that they have to give instructions on how to connect to the wireless network to at least 4 laptop or PDA users on a daily basis.

## What can be accessed?

Most students opted to purchase laptops once they realized they could access the internet from wherever they may be situated in the campus. Nearly all the MBA students carry laptops to their lecture halls and can access any references the teacher provides in the Internet.

One of the main resources for access is the E-learning system where students can view the coursework material that lecturers have posted, submit their finished assignments, update their calendars, interact and chat with fellow students, participate in various fora and communicate with their lecturers.

Other resource material in the local Intranet that students are now able to access from any location in the campus include the Academic Management system's student module, the lecturer's website and the library system among others.

## Mobility

"It's no different from working from a computer lab, except that it eliminates the hustle of having to walk to a lab every time you want to go online and do your work," says Josphat Munyu, the ICT infrastructure



manager.

"The main challenge for us as a department is network security but we are confident of the measures that we have put in place this far," he continues to add.

## Will offer connectivity from home

But if this current initiative sounds good to the students and staff, then what is coming next will be one of the best projects to have been accomplished by the ICT department.

"We are in the process of integrating our Local Area Network with the Kenya Data Networks (KDN)'s network infrastructure," says Mr. Martin Wanjohi, ICT Director, Strathmore University.

"What this means is that our students and staff will be able to access the Internet and our online resources from their homes using our local ICT infrastructure at absolutely no cost for them. Our cost will also remain unchanged since we will only be riding on KDN's public infrastructure to connect to our Internet servers in the campus. We are also in the process of increasing our Internet bandwidth from 4Mbps currently, to nearly double that size."

Kenya Data Networks (KDN), a member of Sameer Group, is a full-service data communications carrier that was licensed by the Communications Commission of Kenya in January 2003 as a public data network operator. KDN is a local company and has a stated policy to use local investors and local expertise

to build world-class infrastructure in Kenya. In its recently conducted trials of Wireless Fidelity (Wi-Fi) service, a wireless Internet technology, the firm says that over 22,000 users logged onto the free service in a single weekend.

“It’s mostly people at home and individuals who are logging on,” says Mr David Owino, general manager of KDN. The research indicates that the service is most popular in the evening between 7pm and 9pm. KDN

is rolling out its WIFI network in the Estates and the City Centre of Nairobi.

“In addition to providing our students and staff with Internet connectivity in their homes, we are also going to provide an Internet-based telephony service known as VOIP,” says Mr. Martin Wanjohi. “That will be a big benefit for us as an educational institution and more so to our staff members who will be able to make cheap local and international calls.”



*The second runners up, 2nd year Bachelor of Commerce student in the 2006-2007 academic year, Pauline Wandia is presented with her award by Prof Vitalis Onyango-Otieno, Dean, Faculty of Commerce*

## Unilever presents Kshs 20,000 to Chancellor’s award winner

*Bernard Oketch Omondi, the winner of the 2006-2007 academic year Chancellor’s award was presented with a Kshs 20,000 cheque by Unilever Limited at this year’s Prize Giving Day held on Monday, 8th October 2007. Also, the top three undergraduate students in each faculty and the best performing students in the School of Accountancy (SOA) were awarded at the ceremony.*

Speaking at the event, Vice Chancellor Prof John Odhiambo said he was happy to hear the top students were also active in co-curricular activities. “You are leaders of today, not tomorrow. If you find any university publication or the website reading you are the leaders of tomorrow, delete it,” he said.

“When you participate in the leadership of clubs and sports, you sharpen your creativity because you

exercise transformational leadership. This exposure prepares you to be leaders in the market and lead the market,”

he continued.

Talking about academic achievements, the VC said those being awarded had broken the old standards. “At SU, we are always setting new standards.

We don’t limit the number of people who get first classes as long as they deserve it, for example. Your achievement today is historic and will be recorded in the annals of history,” he said.

The VC’s sentiments were echoed by Mumbi Kyalo, Unilever’s Corporate Relations Manager who said SU is synonymous with quality. “What comes to my mind whenever SU is mentioned is quality,” she said.

“SU sits well with our mission at Unilever which is to add vitality to life. We want to be associated with

winners like the ones being awarded today,” she added.

She said it would be good to have students attending such functions even if they are not being awarded so that they can be inspired to challenge for the awards. “I

am also happy to see that many female students were awarded today,” she said.

Out of 18 students in top three positions in the faculties, 11 were female. Mumbi said Unilever would come to talk about its employability programme at SU soon.



*Left to right: Cliff Mogere, Hussein Lightwalla, Nyambura Mutanyi, and Nelson Gakio*

## SU to lead Kenyan universities in Celtel Africa Challenge competition

*Strathmore University will for the second time this year lead a contingent of Kenyan teams to a regional tournament after it emerged the country's champion in the Celtel Africa Challenge in-country tournament held on Thursday, 1st November 2007.*

SU team made of Nyambura Mutanyi (ACCA, II), Nelson Gakio (ACCA, IV), Hussein Lightwalla (BBIT III), and Cliff Mogere (BCom III) emerged tops after beating Egerton University in the final game. SU is the only team that didn't lose a game in the competition held at the University of Nairobi.

The team started its fairy tale campaign by beating last year's semi-finalists USIU. The tournament was played on a double knock out format which meant in subsequent rounds winners met winners.

SU's second game was a cracker against University of Nairobi (UoN). The game tied in the first and second rounds. SU led in the third round which meant UoN picked the rapid fire questions also called the Ultimate Challenge first.

After Ultimate Challenge, the teams were tied and the game went to sudden death. UoN were first to go for the sudden death question but didn't get the answer. SU got it and took the game.

SU's third game was against Moi University. It was a closely contested affair but SU again prevailed and qualified to represent the country in the regional tournament to be held between 18th and 24th January 2008 here in Nairobi.

The fourth and final game pitted SU against last season's champions Egerton – which is the only other team that had lost a game in the tournament. SU won the game to emerge the country's champions.

16 universities participated in the tournament. Speaking at the closing ceremony, Celtel Kenya's CEO, Mr David Murray hailed SU as the new kids on the block. SU is the only team in the Kenya contingent that didn't participate in last season's competition. Other teams in the contingent are Egerton, Moi and Kenyatta universities.

There will be 16 universities in the regional competition. Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania will each send four teams and Malawi and Zambia will send two each. The university that wins the regional tournament will get a cash prize of U\$50,000. Individuals in the winning team will also get cash prizes.

SU Vice Chancellor Prof John Odhiambo says the game is a good motivation for students to develop interest in knowledge areas outside their specializations and thus be truly learned.

# Should IT Graduates Get an **MBA**?

*The pressure is on for IT practitioners in Kenya to prove their business savvy, and job advertisements for ICT Directors are asking for an MBA. Do IT practitioners need an MBA to make it as ICT Directors?*

Majority of the Kenyan ICT Directors interviewed by SU's Director of School of Graduate Studies, Dr Freddie Acosta, 52% of whom possessed post-graduate qualifications in various disciplines, said that knowledge of business precedes technical knowledge.

Dr Acosta further asked IT graduates of Strathmore University with 2-3 years work experience and are aspiring to become ICT Directors their views on the issue. Below are the views he gathered from a sample of 71 graduates. 11% are self-employed, 3% are in top management, 20% in middle management, 39% in lower management, 35% are at support level.

## Reasons Why IT Graduates Should **Get an MBA**

1. MBA is universal and many employers recognize and credit it highly. And an MBA makes it easier to get a management job unlike other Masters degrees.
2. IT professionals need an MBA because the world needs not only technical skills acquired in the undergraduate degree. IT professionals need to think like managers. So yes, an MBA is necessary.
3. One needs an MBA to get into management. You won't get a boardroom seat if all you are good at is opening CPU boxes and clipping cables.
4. MBA holders often have better salaries. My boss got her position because she had an MBA. Her salary is almost four times mine and it seems I am doing all the donkey work in the products and software that we produce.
5. MBA holders are more trusted to hold managerial positions than non-holders. For an IT person who wants to scale the corporate ladder, it is an absolute must.
6. An MBA gives individuals greater 'business sense' - especially where s/he is from an IT background.

## Reasons Why IT Graduates Should **Not Get an MBA**

1. The entry requirements for a good MBA are very high i.e. you need to have a lot of experience and sometimes to have worked at management level.
2. In our Kenyan way of doing things most management level positions will always be highly priced: a few years experience and some well known referees because a management position is a sensitive appointment and many companies will not dish out such positions to just anybody.
3. Most of those who have made it as entrepreneurs have not done an MBA. They go for classes after their businesses are stable and running. The bottom-line is for an entrepreneur, an MBA might not be necessary as his zeal and passion for what he does might be sufficient.
4. A good MBA is pricey
5. I guess the challenge for any formal education program is to produce people capable of innovation that will better themselves and their employers. Very many people have MBAs and they are not in management positions. This can be frustrating and could lead to under-performance in current position.
6. People pursue 'careers' that fulfill them. Some may find fulfillment in looking after babies at a children's home. MBA may not be necessary for that.

# Want quick money? Then don't go into business



*Boniface Munyao (left) receives his certificate from Ken Njoroge (right). In the middle is the course coordinator, Pauline Kuria. Boniface runs a shoe making business in Kibera*

*17 youth from Madaraka and Kibera completed a two-week business course organized by the Community Outreach Programme (COP).*

The course ran from 29th October to 10th November. It covered time management, communication skills, business plan, feasibility study, accounting skills, business registration, ethics and end-user ICT skills.

During the course's graduation ceremony held on Friday, 16th November 2007, Mr Ken Njoroge, founder and CEO of Cellulant Group emphasized the importance of soft skills in order to succeed in business. "Entrepreneurs need to be confident. This is shown by the way they talk about their ideas. They always talk about their ideas which they are very passionate about," Mr Njoroge who is an alumnus of the University said.

"Entrepreneurs dream their ideas. They wake up in the middle of the night to take notes. But like dreams, these ideas are difficult to share. So the pursuance of

the ideas is a lonely affair," he added.

"After dreaming, entrepreneurs get moving. They start business planning. Then comes the implementation. It is at implementation that the business starts biting because you have to spend money. More often, you also have to work at inconvenient hours," Mr Njoroge said.

"Once you are rolling, competition comes in. People who laughed at your idea now start copying it. To beat them, you have to differentiate your business from theirs. The best way of doing this is by paying attention to your customers. And this means providing exceptional services," he said.

"At this point in business, you will have realized there is no quick money. What keeps you going is your motivation. If your motivation was making quick money, then you will most likely give up," the 32 year old entrepreneur observed.

Mr Njoroge said entrepreneurs also have to make smart decisions on cashflow for example. "If at end

of the month, you don't have enough money to pay salaries and rent, it makes business sense to first pay your employees before paying your landlord. Why? When you pay your employees, they continue working which means you generate revenue to pay the landlord later," he said.

"Successful enterprises should grow. You either grow a business or it dies. Growth means you increase your customers or your services," Mr Njoroge said.

Mr Njoroge concluded by observing that the entrepreneurial process is cyclic. "You always go back to your motivation for guidance. You also review your previous steps. Entrepreneurs should learn from the

mistakes they make," he said.

Mr Marcos Migeri, the University's Director of Relations said Mr Njoroge was a very appropriate speaker for the event. Mr Njoroge is an established entrepreneur having co-founded 3mice interactive media, a leading web development firm in East Africa.

In 2000, 3mice was acquired by Africa Online for KShs 40M. Cellulant, the company he founded after the sale of 3mice, is now a leader in the provision of content and commerce experiences on mobile phones in Africa. It has operations in Kenya, Nigeria and the UK and clients in Kenya, Tanzania, Nigeria, South Africa and Botswana.

## Consulting firm offering scholarships to SU students



Paul Ochieng, Elias Kiptoo, Chris Stephenson, and Lydia Kariba

*McKinney Rogers, a leading consultancy firm is offering scholarships to six students every year to pursue degrees courses in three East African countries that is, Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania. The firm is sponsoring two scholars per country.*

The Kenyan scholars will study at SU. Chris Stephenson, Managing Partner for McKinney Rogers East Africa visited

SU on 22nd November. He said that they were happy to partner with Strathmore Research & Consultancy Centre (SRCC) in offering the scholarships.

The scholarship caters for tuition fees, accommodation and a stipend. The first students in Kenya to benefit are Lydia Kariba who is undertaking BBIT and Elias Kiptoo who is undertaking BCOM.

The Dean of students, Mr Paul Ochieng said that the scholarships had come at an opportune time. He thanked the firm for the initiative. He appealed to other corporate to do likewise and give other needy and deserving students a chance to pursue university education.



## Alumnus ordained Deacon

Charles Wanyoike Mundia was ordained deacon on 24th November in Rome by the prelate of Opus Dei, Bishop Javier Eschevarria. Deacon Charles was admitted to pursue CPA in Strathmore's School of Accountancy (SOA) in January 1997. He joined University of Nairobi in 1998 to pursue a Bachelor of Commerce degree. At the same time, he continued his CPA studies. He graduated from SU in 2002.

# Top Brazilian coach holds soccer clinic in SU



*From left. SU's Mickey Weche, Bob Oyugi of KFF's Technical Department, and Marcelo Galvao at SU grounds*

*Marcelo Galvao, a top level coach from Brazil held a two-day soccer clinic at Strathmore University.*

The clinic held on 12th and 13th November was followed by a two-day recruitment drive at the University grounds that was attended by coaches from various teams and institutions as well as students.

Marcelo said there is a lot soccer talent in Kenya. He added that the only way to perform at top level sports was by nurturing talent through youth programmes that are well structured.

The Brazilian said that in order for Kenya to keep abreast with soccer at world stage, Kenyan coaches and trainers should embrace current scientific methods of coaching. Marcelo is currently working with the Brazilian national team. He is a scout for Liverpool, Chelsea, Manchester United, and Reading football clubs.

Marcelo is also a trainer for Houston Baptist University in USA. He recruited several players to play in USA. Among them were SU's Michael Owiti, Allan Onyango, Kevin Omondi and Leon Omondi.

Mickey Weche, a former Kenyan international and currently the Strathmore soccer coach was delighted by the exercise and his players' performance during the trials. He noted that one player from SU, Duke Ogega was already playing in the USA and adapting well in the division one league.

Weche was impressed by the experience Marcelo brought to the players as well as to the coaches who attended the clinic. Marcelo is a FIFA and UEFA certified coach. He plans to come back and run another clinic that will involve all the coaches in the country in the near future.

Mr Isaac Mwangi, the University Sports Officer said the clinic was a first major step towards improving the quality of coaches at SU as well as the country and helping students achieve academic and sporting excellence in line with the department's plan of promoting coaching education. He promised that the University will host more of such clinics and seminars in the future.

## Hockey team visits Children's Home

As an act of gratitude, the men's hockey team, the Gladiators visited Mama Ngina Children's Home in Nairobi's South C. The team has had a very successful year. It is the reigning East Africa hockey club champion and nine of its members are in the national hockey team. The team gave the home Christmas gifts and spent some time with the children.

They were accompanied by the women's hockey team, the University sports Officer, Mr Isaac Mwangi; and the Dean of Students, Mr Paul Ochieng. Part of the donation given to the children's home was sent by Melissa an economics student at Harvard University through an alumni of SU Isaac Nyangolo who is also an alumni of Harvard.





*Director of SALO, Professor David Sperling (right) talks to an alumnus at the reunion*

# School of Accountancy Reunion

## Want to be immortal? Then be generous

*Those who give of themselves immortalize themselves - they live lives that are far longer and fulfilling than their physical years, says Mr Eric Kimani, the Chief Executive Officer of Sameer Group.*

Mr Kimani said this while addressing a reunion of School of Accountancy (SOA) classes of 1988-1998 on Friday, 13th July 2007 at The Stanley hotel ballroom. The reunion was organized by Strathmore Alumni Liaison Office (SALO). Mr Kimani, an alumnus of SOA was the guest speaker.

Mr Kimani's speech was titled 'Living by conscience'. He described human conscience as the small voice that tells us that what we have done or want to do is wrong.

"Human conscience is higher than any written law. It is the one gift that every normal human being has in equal measure. All thieves, rapists, corrupt men, etc have it in equal measure to all good men," he said.

He extolled those assembled to form their conscience properly. He also gave examples of the wisdom of following conscience and folly of ignoring it. Concluding the speech, he remarked, "If I were sitting where you sit tonight, what would I do differently?"

"I would do four things differently. One, I would follow my conscience more than any written law or any preacher."

"Two, I would banish fear, worry and anxiety more.

Unfounded fear and worry kept me far too long chained to procrastination. It has been conclusively established that 95% of our fears are unfounded. With hindsight, I think 99% of my fears were unfounded!"

"Thirdly, I would reach out more. I would give out more of myself- my talents, my wealth to all! I have learnt this immense secret rather late in life: that those who give of themselves immortalize themselves- they live lives that are far longer and fulfilling than their physical years. This is man's greatest yearning. I would be a little Mother Teresa in my community and within my capability."

"Finally, I would endeavour to live life more abundantly. Believing in myself more. Believing in the world more. Believing that there is more good in the world than we care to acknowledge. Believing that the world is truly a catalogue for me to place an order for my life. I would follow my dreams more no matter how lofty."

"If I were sitting where you sit tonight I would believe in my unlimited ability to achieve my dreams. I would take life less seriously. I would play more. I would act like a kid more. I now truly know that we human beings are supernatural beings in human form," he concluded.

Fielding questions after the address, Mr Kimani said corporates in Kenya are responding to philanthropic requests.

He also said all jobs are important and revealed he

considers his job as important as that of the cleaner. He said attitude to work is important. "I don't consider myself an employee. I work for my employer," he said. "Life is a journey, not a race. Do the best with your time," he said.

He also urged those assembled to provide leadership to youth. "The youth need to be provided with leadership. The current youth have grown up with the wrong idea that what matters is how much material wealth one accumulates. They need to be inspired to strive to better themselves as people. Thus the need for creation of new aspirations in the country's psyche," he observed

Kimani considers himself a wealthy man. "I am a rich man of God. I try to walk the talk. I am of the few who accept they are rich," he said.

Giving the closing remarks after the main speech Dr James McFie, a lecturer at Strathmore University who did his A levels at Strathmore in 1963-64 and studied accountancy at Strathmore in 1968-70, said SOA alumni are his joy, happiness and pride.

"I am nothing and you are everything. My love is teaching and I don't want even death to take that away

from me," he said light heartedly.

Dr McFie said Kenyans who go to work abroad make IT right to the top in their firms. This is a statement of their quality. For example, Mrs Elizabeth Njai-Karenge who left KPMG Kenya to work for KPMG in Washington DC was named the best KPMG employee in the world in the year 2005.

"Their leaving Kenya is also a blessing because they leave jobs that other Kenyans take up. But whenever I meet them, I always remind them they can't run away from Kenya," he said.

Professor David Sperling, the Director of SALO, thanked the guest speaker for a sincere, forthright and humble presentation. Mr George Kairu, Director SOA, presented Mr Kimani with a gift on behalf of the School and the Alumni.

Mr Kairu also thanked the alumni for turning up in large numbers. He also thanked the organizers: Marcos Migeri, Pauline Kuria, Moses Mwariri, James Thiongo, David Ndolo, Elizabeth Gachenga, John Olukuru, Edward Kariuki, Geoffrey Injeni, Mugumo Kiragu, and David Owino for their work which had made the evening a success.



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