FEATURE STORY

Learning In The Era Of Pandemic

How is Kenyatta University managing the virus?

(page 28)
VICE-CHANCELLOR’S FOREWORD

As the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic continues to be felt extensively around Kenya and the world, the Kenyatta University community’s importance cannot be over-emphasised. In these unprecedented times, I wish to reinforce Kenyatta University’s health and wellbeing of our students and colleagues is of paramount importance. In line with the Ministry of Health and WHO guidelines currently in force, the University is determined to ensure full compliance and that the students and staff members are safe.

Our teaching and non-teaching staff members continue to support the students’ community by working and delivering instructions both physically and using the blended mode of study. We are fortunate that the University already has a robust digital and virtual systems to enable online teaching, learning and distance study during the pandemic. At times like these, the positive and collaborative nature of the Kenyatta University key facilitating units has never been more important.

These are challenging times, which require enormous amount of rapid decision-making, planning, and understanding from all. I am profoundly grateful to the entire Kenyatta University fraternity: the students, staff, alumni, Governing Council, Management, Ministry of Education and the general public for the part they continue to play in ensuring continued smooth learning, strict observance of protocols against COVID-19 and focusing on completion of the academic calendar.
Greetings! It is with utmost sincerity that I express my joy in the completion of this magazine, it wasn't a walk in the park for the entire editorial team. Extra sleepless nights were spent to ensure it comes to a success.

On the insight, this particular issue has gone out of trend to capture other vast and widely ranged issues both within and outside the campus. It has with clarity featured trending issues. On behalf of the entire editorial team, I warmly invite you to have a read. Further, as the Secretary General KUSA, I register our openness for feedback and by extent forward our strong resolve and commitment to effective service delivery that will propel the University to the best of its ability. We will continue to diligently and with zero compromise put ourselves on the line on behalf of the students to negotiate with the administration for the best attainable well-being of our students and to forever uphold the Kenyatta University Alma-mata.

Enjoy the read. God bless Kenyatta University!

Byron Okello Dollah
Managing Editor and Secretary General, KUSA.
Send your feedback and articles to the secretary.general@students.ku.ac.ke

SPECIAL APPRECIATION

Let me take this opportunity to thank you all for having taken part in the cultural day. You were all great in your own special way. Indeed Culture bridges the gap. A harmonious community was demonstrated fully, it really touched me. We all joined hands for a common goal and we all won. My special thanks to all country representatives and the strong organizing committee team. Let me personally thank Mr Deko Kelvin for his outstanding support, our able committed Public Relations Officer, Miss Elfun who showed commitment, I am grateful. Special thanks to Madame Mathly (Botswana), for her wise counsel, hardwork and wonderful input to all areas of the event. Thank you so much ma. Finally to every individual from each and every country, THANK YOU for your participation and presence.

By John Zagabo
Congressman International Students
On 2020 International Students’ Cultural Day
EQUITY NOT EQUALITY!

I’m not a philosopher but I know feminism is a result of chauvinism. An empowered woman who voices out her opinions is most times rendered a radical feminist who has no regard or respect for men. If you doubt me try standing up for yourself as a woman you will be walking with an invisible feminist tag on your back like been a feminist is a bad thing. A feminist is anybody no matter the sex who believes in equal economic, political, social and personal opportunities of both sexes.

From my own understanding what well informed women are trying to achieve is not to be equal to a man but to be given the same opportunities men are given. Some companies will not hire a pregnant woman, some will not hire a human for a senior executive position just because they are female. They have been ruled out because of a biological condition they have no control over. We want to be ruled out because of genuine reasons like if we don’t meet the qualifications or somebody else has shaped their skill more than us but we could still meet the qualifications and have great working skills yet have to hand out sexual favours to acquire the job and if we don’t we lose the opportunity. Women out here are working four times as hard as men to get half the attention men have. A decade ago the beauty industry was a woman’s world but now it’s slowly evolving and I’m scared in the next decade it will be a man’s world why? Because besides women being the largest consumers of the industry they have embraced men and they are open and willing to let them braid their hair, make their nails and even massage them. This is the same thing being asked of men embrace that female engineer who is the first in her field help her break ground in that man’s world. Recruit that female soldier she deserves a shot.

From a scale of 1-10 how many women remarry after their husbands die? What about the vice versa? We all know the answer. Women possess some kind of inner strength men can only dream of. She will conceive, give birth, raise children, she is the primary care-giver of the and most still managed to bring 50% of their financial share to the table. Every woman trying to seek equality you are undermining your capabilities there is no way you will be equal to a man and the sooner you realize that you will realize the strength you posses.

Wangari Gitau
karrycalls.wordpress.com

VALENTINES IN THE LIFE OF MOST UNIVERSITY STUDENT S

S an Tzu one of the most decorated Army General in Ancient China once said, “Love is of all the strongest, for it attacks simultaneously, the head, the heart and the senses.” February is often referred to as the month of love, since we get an entire day devoted to reminding those near and dear to our hearts of this four letter word that comes in different sizes and shape called LOVE. Our ancestors once said that love is a despot that spares no one and I tend to agree with this sentiment to extreme extents.

This year’s Valentines was hyped as early as the eve of new year, as folks took to social media to remind each other of an imaginary Annual Men’s Conference that was supposedly going to be held in Lesotho, from then, the hype about valentine has been gaining momentum on these social media walls especially Twitter and WhatsApp. I was a Proponent of Men’s Conference for reasons best known to me of course. Around the campus it has not been different either, the event was hyped to a considerable extent.

It is funny how folks celebrate the day around this streets, since it is always not a day off, it is not surprising to see folks adorned in anything red ranging from caps, dresses to shirts and even trousers. However, my observation during this year’s Valentine made me deduce that maroon actually is the new red. Having attended a morning class on that material day, I was taken aback to see folks especially those of female gender adorned in maroon while others in black party dresses, one of my associate hinted that maroon is the new red and I assumed but after seeing a dozen of beautiful damsels adorned in maroon attires, I found it intriguing to conclude that maroon is the new red.

This year’s Valentines was a blessing in disguise for both comrades and “Undes” as folks prefer to call them. It happened to be on a Friday, so those male comrades who reside outside, in the guise of taking their girls for dinner outside school, found the perfect opportunity to host and perhaps spend the weekend with love of their lives, very lucky of them indeed. On the other hands, those who have “Undes” also got rare opportunity of taking supper in high end eateries either within the City’s Central Business District (CBD) or within the outskirts of the city and eventually spending a night in those posh restaurants we see being advertised on our televisions.

Broke folks like yours truly, spent the better part of the day watching some series or even sleeping. Thank God, the Student Organization here, had organized for a beauty pageantry and so those who were not lucky enough to host or be hosted ended up as the cheering crowd. Personally, I just watched a soccer match that night before doing at least two episodes of a certain series that I have become fond of lately. I know you are quite aware of the predicaments of being broke as a dude with this commercialized love, it is never easy on this southern part of the globe.

Karan Ochieng
thejerryhub.wordpress.com
KNOW YOUR STUDENTS’ GOVERNANCE COUNCIL

From left to right: Milka Kawira - Gender and Special Needs Secretary, Martha Nyanchama - Vice Chair, Ekiram Amina Mohammed - Academic Secretary, Karanja Benard - Chair, Mabwa Samuel - Finance Sec, Byron Okello - Secretary General & Abdullahi Dido - Organizing Secretary
How long have you served as the DSA?

I have served at the Directorate of Student Affairs since May 2017 when I was appointed to the position of Deputy Director. While in this position, I worked closely with the Director to ensure smooth running of the Directorate. Later on, in the month of March 2018, the Vice Chancellor appointed me as the Director (Student Affairs). To date, I continue to serve the Directorate in the same capacity.

Which other offices have you held in the University

Before moving to the Directorate of Student Affairs, I was the Deputy Director in charge of Accommodation Services. It important to note that at various points in the past, I had also held other positions of responsibility in Kenyatta University, include: i) Acting Director (Accommodation Services) ii) Acting Chairman (Department of Educational Management, Policy and Curriculum Studies) iii) Assistant Registrar (Admissions) iv) Programmes Co-ordinator (Post-Graduate Diploma in Education and Content Enhancement) and; v) Examinations Co-ordinator in the Department of Educational Management, Policy and Curriculum Studies. (including being: i)

How would you describe your role and duty as the DSA?

My main role at the Directorate of Student Affairs is to ensure smooth running of the Directorate.

This role entails ensuring that the students’ welfare is well taken care of and that they are adequately supported and accompanied while at University. Further, the Directorate is charged with the responsibility of ensuring that there is proper management of student activities and services. Of great import is that we also oversee, alongside other University organs, the conduct and behaviour of all students and their leadership. Accordingly, we enforce University rules, regulations and policies. We try as much as possible to make the Directorate “home away from home” for the entire student body.

What is your word of advice to the Kenyatta University students as the office holder of one the most frequently visited offices?

I would like to advise and encourage all students of Kenyatta University to continue visiting and/or calling the Directorate of Student Affairs for support of whichever kind. The staff at the Directorate is welcoming, professional and always ready to listen and offer necessary services, and support. However, it is important for all students to also handle the staff cordially and with utmost respect. In case of any challenge(s), the Director’s office is always open and ready for dialogue and discussion on any issue(s).

As the patron of KUSA, could you may be comment on the leadership of the present 16th congress

I have now been at the Directorate for a while and thus can talk about student leadership with some level knowledge and confidence. In fact, I have worked with several cohorts of KUSA leaders and thus, without any shadow of doubt, I can say that the current leadership (i.e. the 16th Congress) has a positive attitude and is well-intentioned in all its dealings with the Directorate and the University at large. Further, the 16th Congress leaders are generally mature, reflective and a listening lot; they do not engage in destructive and unimportant populist actions and behaviours. Most importantly, they are focused and committed in their studies. This far, KUSA leadership has performed its duties with consistent excellence; and has offered creative ideas for change and improvement of student lives and our great University. Their respect for authorities and collaborative approach to solving student issues and challenges has so far been impressive. These many attributes of the present KUSA leadership are outstanding and striking.

With correct, consistent and adequate mentorship and guidance to KUSA leaders, the nation, region and the world at large will have a pool of fine leaders to pick from for the service of humanity and God.

Word of caution and precaution to the Students about the Corona Virus

During this time of Covid-19, I strongly advise that all students and KUSA leaders, just like the staff, should adhere to the safety and health protocols that have been put in place by the University, Ministry of Health and World Health Organisation. The protocols are for our own good. Let us, therefore, avoid reckless behaviours and instead uphold them so as to protect each other from the pandemic.

I wish you all the very best in your studies at Kenyatta University.

May God bless the entire student body and KUSA leadership, and our great University.

DR. CHARLES MAGOMA
DIRECTOR, STUDENT AFFAIRS
Some time in October last year, I was buying a gift for a friend when I ran across black Barbie dolls on the shelves. It was beautiful, had an afro, dark like ebony. As I was admiring it, I overheard an Indian lady say, “Who can even buy this?” I hid my disappointment and thought how cheap of a thinker she was. The saddest thing about our society today is that it judges people over situations that they have no control over. When the Indian lady asked that question, I asked myself what was so wrong with having a black Barbie doll? Rather, what is so wrong with being dark skin in this current society? No one has control over how their race or skin tone. It is disappointing how the most educated people are actually the least intelligent. If education came hand in hand with intelligence, then we would be way much far as a society. People should open their eyes and see beyond the skin tone. Recently, I read an article on how the skin-lightening industry is making huge profits from the pockets of hungry-dark skinned women. Most of the products being sold were actually illegal and unhealthy. Some of these ladies are willing to go an extra mile despite the consequences in order to chase the so-called beauty. Its roots have grown deep into the society and dealing with this situation will take more than just banning the products.

It has come to my attention that lighter skin women are more preferred in most job opportunities, not just abroad but also in Africa. This is more than bias as it is racism but just in a modernized world. The world has fed the minds of most dark skinned women with lies that skin tone is the basis of one’s beauty. Most dark skinned ladies do not look at themselves with pride anymore. I would like to remind them that they owe no one an apology for how they look. It is high time we encourage these ladies to love themselves just as they are. Being dark skin is way more than just the melanin in it. It takes us back to our roots in Africa, reminding us of who we are. Dark is beautiful.

By Kakai Christabel.
How can we protect others and ourselves if we don’t know who is infected?
Stay safe by taking some simple precautions, such as physical distancing, wearing a mask, especially when distancing cannot be maintained, keeping rooms well ventilated, avoiding crowds and close contact, regularly cleaning your hands, and coughing into a bent elbow or tissue. Check local advice where you live and work. Do it all!

When should I get a test for COVID-19?
Anyone with symptoms should be tested, wherever possible. People who do not have symptoms but have had close contact with someone who is, or may be, infected may also consider testing – contact your local health guidelines and follow their guidance. While a person is waiting for test results, they should remain isolated from others. Where testing capacity is limited, tests should first be done for those at higher risk of infection, such as health workers, and those at higher risk of severe illness such as older people, especially those living in seniors’ residences or long-term care facilities.

How long does it take to develop symptoms?
The time from exposure to COVID-19 to the moment when symptoms begin is, on average, 5-6 days and can range from 1-14 days. This is why people who have been exposed to the virus are advised to remain at home and stay away from others, for 14 days, in order to prevent the spread of the virus, especially where testing is not easily available.

Are there treatments for COVID-19?
Scientists around the world are working to find and develop treatments for COVID-19. Optimal supportive care includes oxygen for severely ill patients and those who are at risk for severe disease and more advanced respiratory support such as ventilation for patients who are critically ill. Dexamethasone is a corticosteroid that can help reduce the length of time on a ventilator and save lives of patients with severe and critical illness. Results from the WHO’s Solidarity Trial indicated that remdesivir, hydroxychloroquine, lopinavir/ritonavir and interferon regimens appear to have little or no effect on 28-day mortality or the in-hospital course of COVID-19 among hospitalized patients. Hydroxychloroquine has not been shown to offer any benefit for treatment of COVID-19. WHO does not recommend self-medication.

SOURCE: WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO)
I began modelling when I was in high school, St. Mary’s Lwak Girls High School. I took part in my first pageant in 2014 and was crowned Miss Lwak 2014/2015. From then I developed a great interest in modelling. My second pageant was in campus, Mr and Miss KUSA 2018/2019, where I was among the pageant finalists. The next one came a few weeks after that, Mr and Miss KU Onagi nation 2018. I got my second crown as the Miss KU Onagi nation 2018/2019. Later that year I contested for Mr and Miss KU 2018 but didn’t do well. I contested for the same pageant the following year, last semester, and I was crowned the Miss KU 2019/2020.

How does it feel like being Miss Ku?
As a model and particularly as the reigning Miss KU, I have featured on a tv show GBSTV also on two fashion events; one of them the Norfolk Fashion Show, wearing KACHE by Angie. I have featured on two newspapers: as a model for KACHE by Angie on Business Daily 27th November 2019 and as Miss Kenyatta University on Daily Nation November 4, 2019.

A day in the life of Sharon Shally?
Part of my daily routine include morning workouts as well as evening walks or runs. I enjoy dancing as part of my work outs too. I go for shoots once in a while to improve my profile, as well as frequent catwalk training.

What are some of the benefits and challenges that comes with modelling?
Challenges in modelling may vary from the type of modelling or from individuals. The only challenge for me would be financial constraint especially when buying or hiring outfits for a pageant and having everything ready for the same. The benefits outnumber the challenges. I’ve had an opportunity to train models and also be a judge in two pageants, both which contribute to my personal development. Modelling has given me an opportunity to realize my passion and through it be an inspiration to girls and the society in general, and hopefully change lives through my project. Exposure and opportunities come with modelling, and one only needs to be hard working and disciplined.

Any project underway?
As Miss KU, in collaboration with the former Director KUTv and radio services, Dr. Haron Mwangi, I have a project that is under draft and will soon commence after its approval and launch. The project is named EACF, Embrace a Comrade Fund. It is a project that basically will raise funds to help campus students who have challenges in taking care of their basic needs. I’d like to call upon all who are reading this to come join my team and I in changing the lives of students in school.

A word for the future
In the near future, I hope to take part in national and international pageants, and someday be the face of the world or universe.

Tell us something about your modelling journey
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The Torturous Journey that Birthed Students' Organizations

A lot has been said and done but still, a lot remains untouched only whispered in low tones within the political corridors of Kenyan campuses and with equal breath, Kenyatta University. Campus politics however comes with its package, a tale of amalgam of blessings and curses, the good and the bad, the love and hate and most importantly global opportunities to serve humanity and or regrets. Now, before anyone gets me wrong, let us walk down the river of memory and serve ourselves some buffet of history on students' leadership and organization. Cicero, the celebrated Roman politician put it rightly that to be ignorant of what occurred before we were born is to always remain a child. He further challenges the worth of human life unless it is woven into the life of our ancestors by the records of history. So let’s have some inverted lens on students’ leadership.

History of Students’ Organizations in Kenya
Fast backward to the advent of student organizations in Kenya dating back to the 70s, it was inadmissibly true that it marked a very torturous journey that would later birth students' union. James Orengo (SONU 1973) now Senator Siaya County natured the then infant union which would later transcend into the powerful SONU. The union morphed into a very powerful organ that could challenge the governments of the day giving alternative voice against the then single party state.

However, I will be deliberately failing to present history in its pristine form by not mentioning the gallant leaders that made this happen. You can never fail to mention a few of them like Titus Adungosi (SONU 1982) who was jailed and later succumbed to torture in police cells, GPO Oulu who was shot down at close range on State House road, Chelegat Mutai who flew to Tanzania and later died on isolation and Solomon Muruli whose body was burnt beyond recognition in his room at UoN’ Kikuyu campus who paid the ultimate price for the students’ leadership, may their souls rest in power. Some like Wafulwa Buke the shortest serving SONU chair and Mwandawiro Mnganga among other were, arrested, tortured and incarcerated for months by President Moi's government.

The students’ union is on record to have been in the forefront fighting for national changes like multipartyism. Others like the great orator, Christopher Owiro famously known as Karl Marx were very powerful leaders who however were never elected to any official position. But their history remains with us, we quote them even to date. They leveled the valleys for present day campus leadership, we must never forget them.

History of KUSA
KUSA equally suffered almost the same fate, having been founded just like others in the 70s, banned like all others after the 1982 coup and reinstated in 2004. Now back to our present time, campus politics as observed has changed great deal. The last nail was however drawn by the University (Amendment) Act of 2016 that resulted in what I call indirect representation and structured and institutionalized tribalism moving away from the popular vote to the electoral college system.

The Act despite having its own share of goods like adequate inclusion and gender parity, resulted into a theorized notion that one can only be properly represented through individuals from their region, something I personally find farfetched and Mwandawiro describes it poetically, “During our time, there was democracy within the university and we were surrounded by a lot of dictatorship in the society. Today, things are different. There is dictatorship in universities and democracy outside the university.”

Lovemon Dennis
When I was growing up, during my tender age especially in lower primary school, the only people who could hold me, defend me, protect me and even keep me moving were my friends. They could do anything to make me happy. We walk together, played together and even cried together simply because we were children. I have realized that as we grow up nature has a way of eliminating friends. I have sat down and imagined all sorts of friends of mine that vanished because I was not successful in life. All friends that went away because I was poor, all friends that disappeared because I couldn’t afford my fees on time.

I now understand why Jesus Christ said that small children will see the kingdom of God. I have now believed that friends do fade. In 1998, I had good friends who believed in me but unfortunately after my first KCPE they vanished. In my second KCPE exams in 1999 at Rongo primary school I made new friends who vanished again because I could not join them in Secondary school (thanks to poverty) again they all fade. In 2000 and 2001 I was privileged to join Kanga high school.

I managed to learn up to form two and as usual I made friends that I lost along the way when I failed to pay my fees. They all fade. I went back to class eight in 2002 at Kitere primary school. As I always believed that necessity is the mother of invention I dint lose hope even after dropping from form two to class 8.

I made friends but as a tradition, friends follow success and I wasnt successful! In 2003 after waiting vainly for a well wisher to take me to secondary school despite passing my exam I went back to repeat again at Sony Sugar Primary school. Of course I made friends who went. Again in 2004 my candle didn’t light, I went again to repeat in Rangwe Junior academy (not that I was dumb but it is because I couldn’t afford my school fees) as usual all my friends vanished. In 2005 and 2006 God opened for me the way and I joined Maseno school. I made new friends and as we speak they are nowhere to be seen.

I dropped out of Maseno school in 2007 and went back to class 8 in 2008 at Agoro Sare Primary. I passed my exams but didn’t manage to join high school. In 2009 I joined Aldorebby JNR Academy passed exams but failed to get fees for secondary school. Since I didn’t give up In 2010 I joined Agape Junior Academy. I made friends who vanished along the way. In 2011 I cases my last dice at Oriiri Primary school. God helped me and Wings to Fly via EQUITY BANK came for my rescue.

I joined The Nairobi School between 2012 - 2015 and only a few friends still check on one another. In Kenyatta University to date there are only few people that value friendship. My point is "People do love successful people when you are down or not successful no one want to associate with you. Some view you as a burden some see you as outcast some think you will never make in life. The only friend who will not run away from you is Jesus Christ."
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS’ CULTURAL DAY
I am soft,
And rough,
In all the right ways.
Layers of soft cushion,
Covered with hardened walls.
Built so high up,
Only the bravest,
Can claim its rewards.
Today, I am alone.
With you,
But totally alone.

I lay here,
Taking you in.
The curve of your back,
The length of your chest.
The breadth of your shoulders,
The warmth of your skin.
Your sweet melanin.
Yet I feel nothing.

I close my eyes,
When you open yours.
Mostly cause I’d rather,
Not pretend to care.
The eyes...you know
Have a way,
Of distinguishing real feelings.
From a cold blank stare.
Pillow talk for us,
Is out of the question.
The other day,
You asked me if I loved you.
I said of course,
Hoping you’d figure out,
That it wasn’t true.
That I said it just for you.

You see,
Those three words work,
In 3 different ways.
Depending on the intent,
Of the one saying them.
First...to communicate fondness,
For another in the hope,
That he/she feels the same way,
And reponds in your favor.

The second,
...is to guilt your partner,
Into love.
This I think,
Is the most often used today.
And true enough,
Most of us,
Say these words,
Without really meaning,
A single one.

The third and,
That which mine was intended,
Is to make your partner leave you.
Without having to do,
The dirty work yourself.
Mostly works on those,
You know for sure,
Don’t want you...But don’t wanna let you go either.
These ones usually are,
Already committed to another.
But string you along,
For what feels like forever.

When I first saw you,
You seemed like,
The type that keeps secrets,
And was kinda good at it.
What with,
The burner phone,
You’d just bought.
And the imprint on your finger,
Where your wedding ring.
Usually was.
You were...exactly the type,
I was used to seeing.
The kind that,
Could definitely,
Meet my needs.

On that first day,
I saw you looking,
From a mile away.
You liked my body,
But couldn’t see my face.
I could feel your eyes,
Travelling along my curves,
Almost bursting with lust.
On that first day,
I saw you,
For who you were,
A user...ultimately,
Just like me.

Poetry by Sheila Amadalo