

CHUSS Holds the 2nd CERTL Small Grants Dissemination Workshop

Deans and Heads of Departments from the College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHUSS) on Thursday 8th September, 2022 converged at Hilton Garden Hotel in Kamwokya to critique and provide input into the research works of the Grantees funded by the Center of Excellence in Research, Teaching and Learning (CERTL).

CHUSS received a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation of New York for the establishment of a Center of Excellence in Research, Teaching and Learning (CERTL).

The primary aim of CERTL is to explore and develop mechanisms of strengthening and promoting teaching and learning in the humanities and social sciences.

The centre provides small grants for short term research and covers costs related to baseline study, data collection, analysis, report writing, computing costs and consumables

The grantees received funding last year 2021 and were presenting their research findings. The half day workshop was opened by the Director CERTL Prof. Andrew Elias State and closed by the Principal CHUSS Prof. Josephine Ahikire moderated by Dr. Levis Mugumya and Dr. Edgar Nabutanyi.

The grantees whose research work focused on pedagogical practices at Makerere University are expected to publish in journal papers and included Dr. Gerald Walulya, Dr. Kasozi Mutaawe and Mr. Nicholas Mugabi. Others were Dr. George Okiror and Prof. Julius Kiiza.

Closing the workshop, the Principal CHUSS. Prof. Josephine Ahikire thanked researchers for the effort and recollected the goal of CERTL.

Prof. Ahikire said, the college learnt from other universities that the centers are not about addressing administrative challenges because administrative issues can be channeled through administrative processes.

“So Centers of Excellence in teaching and learning are about improving the experience in the university and adding value to what the units are already doing. In our case as CHUSS, Professor Elias state and professor Mushengyezi made a round tour across the globe to South Africa, USA to see what other centers are focused on”. The Principal recalled.

Prof. Ahikiire said, while some centers are more focused on writing skills, CHUSS focus is on improving the competences of academic staff to deliver given the history of neoliberal reforms, the history of increasing numbers and the demonization of humanities.

“The teaching of humanities especially within this methodic kind of specific existence has gone down. The way we teach history, political science, gender, social work and that core kind of methodic kind of specificity has actually gone down and our argument was that in addition to that, the members of staff are brought on board for orientation but the main one was to enhance that we lost in the last two decades.” The Principal said.

Prof. Ahikire stressed that those who wrote the proposal for CERTL looked at the limitations and how the humanistic and social sciences can build resilience.

Prof. Ahikire observed that the humanities which is the soul has been muddled and as leaders there is need to redeem that soul and focus on how limitations can be turned into opportunities.

She expressed the need for the center to encourage co-publications and to how to increase and improve graduated training and completion rates.

“PhDs apparently, is where our strength will be. Our students have competed globally and they have won. These are the kind of things that will get us out of a tide. If we do PhD supervision very well without delays, as the supply side, we are able to offer leadership and show that it is possible to complete PhD in time and hence we shall attract graduate students” She advised.

She explained that courses like political science which attract many people is an opportunity not a problem. She encouraged staff to make sure they address the problem to the right people to push the agenda of the college and rise above on what it means to study humanities.

The Director CERTL Prof Andrew Elias State said the center aims at improving teaching and also learning on the side of students.

“We have been more focused on the teaching side and we hope that when we invite you Deans and heads of departments, you are the key stake holders that normally control the learning and teaching in the various units.

You are also aware that this is an inter-disciplinary center, so, it combines efforts from all other sectors whether trained or not trained you are all welcome. We have noted the enthusiasm and would like to maintain it. We have had colleagues make presentations before and it was a very good effort”, Prof. State said.

He thanked the grantees for the research work and expressed hope to receiving comments on their presentations and research outcomes from the audience as well as stake holders.

Compiled by;

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