

Mak New hires trained on varsity policies, curriculum development & implementation

New employees across colleges of Makerere University were on 7th December 2022 equipped with information and tools on how to succeed on the job at Makerere University.

The main objectives were to update the new hires in terms of the policies and to help them know the core business of curriculum development and implementation and to make sure that they are effective teachers.

The third new hires workshop held in the Yusuf Lule Auditorium was organized by CHUSS Centre of Excellence in Research, Teaching and Learning (CERTL). The College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHUSS), received a grant from the Mellon Foundation of New York for the establishment of the center to explore and develop mechanisms of strengthening and promoting teaching and learning in the humanities and social sciences.

The third new hires training was facilitated by panelists from university Directorates, prominent alumni and former staff working outside Makerere university including Prof. Aaron Mushengyezi, the Vice Chancellor Uganda Christian University Mukono. The workshop was officially opened by the Deputy Vice Chancellor in charge of Academic Affairs (DVCAA) represented by the Principal, College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences Assoc. Prof. Gorrettie Nabanoga.

The DVC AA appreciated all those involved in this noble task of orienting new staff noting that the importance of employee orientation in many organizations is often understated. The new hires workshop according to the DVCAA was in line with the mandate of the university in ensuring that teaching and learning is effective and secondly, it was timely for new hires to be aware of the changes brought by COVID in the way teaching and learning is conducted.

“Orientation serves to assist new employees with the tools and information they need to succeed in the job. It establishes the stage for human resource processes and company policy in the organization. An effective employee orientation program like this one will make a notable difference in how swiftly a new employee becomes prolific with other long-term impressions on the organization”, Part of the speech read

The DVC commended all those who have put aside their commitments to come and provide the new recruits with the tools and information they require to serve the university.

“Orientation encourages employee confidence and helps the new employee adapt faster to the job; Contributes to a more effective, productive workforce; Improves employee retention; and. Promotes communication between the supervisor and the new employee. Without an adequate, skilled and well-motivated workforce operating within a sound human resource management programme, development is not possible, “he added.

The DVC AA congratulated and welcomed the new hires for successfully joining Makerere noting that the University has many opportunities but, like any other higher education institution, there are challenges including; the academic student -staff ratio, inadequate funding, staff welfare issues, and infrastructural challenges and challenges related to managing relationships, training

and development, talent retention, diversity in the workplace, embracing inevitable change as well as employee health and well-being.

Besides the Policy Framework, Financial Sustainability and Infrastructure Support, the DVC AA reported that the new Strategic Plan (2020/21-2030/31) considers Human resource as the foundation of the University's success.

He pledged the University commitment to have an integrated and innovative people-centered services that foster attraction, retention and development of an engaged, rewarded, motivated, healthy and effective workforce supporting the strategic direction of the University.

The objectives under Human Resource Development according to the Deputy Vice Chancellor include; to attract, recruit and retain quality Human Resource to support the mission of the University; to create an enabling environment for optimal performance of staff in service delivery; and to increase the capacity of teaching staff to deliver using modern pedagogy, including use of Online, Distance and e-Learning (ODEL) technologies.

“The university has continued to lobby government and succeeded on welfare where salaries for staff were more than doubled by the target period. Appraisal tools were developed and are being used and staff development programmes, including sabbaticals, were instituted. The academic staff-student ratio was decreased which is within acceptable levels internationally and we continue to pursue our goal of becoming research led- a move to focus more on graduate training” he added.

He reminded recruits that Makerere is an equal opportunity institution that embraces diversity in order to achieve maximum potential without discrimination. He implored them to commit to the university's core values including accountability and upholding ethos that meet the expectations of the different stakeholders

The DVC AA also implored employees to uphold Professionalism and adopt work ethics that demonstrate competence and capacity to generate results to the expected institutional, national, international and discipline specific standards.

“We also cherish integrity and upholding ethical values that will ensure that you do the right thing in all circumstances and maintaining the value of honesty, trust and responsibility in all your actions.

You are expected to have respect for fellow staff and students and that you will conduct yourselves with due regard and consideration for the rights of others and ensure acknowledgement, attention and good judgement in dealings with all our stakeholders”, he added

He applauded CHUSS and CERTL for this initiative and asked the Director and his team to continue using it to improve teaching and learning. As management, we also pledge our continued support to the center.

Session one on Makerere University academic and other policies brought together a panel of experts including Patience Mushyengyezi representing the Academic Registrar who spoke on academic policies. The Director Quality Assurance Dr. Cyprian Misinde presented on Quality Assurance policy while the Ag. Director Sanyu Lawrence deliberated on the Human resources policy and the Director Gender Mainstreaming Dr. Baine Euzobia presented the Gender mainstreaming policy and the Sexual Harassment policy.

Session two of the training was on working at a university and focused on privileges and academic responsibilities with advice from panelists: Prof. Paul Birevu Muyinda, Prof. Anthony Muwagga Mugagga, Prof. Florence Kyoheirwe Muhanguzi and Dr. James Taabu Busimba.

Aspects covered in session two included: Managing relationship with colleagues, Heads of Departments, Deans and Principals, Academics and senate Academics and peers, Academics and support staff, preparation to teach and Sexual Harassment and Teaching that as the elephant in the room .

The training was also graced by Vice Chancellor Uganda Christian University Mukono Prof. Aaron Mushengyezi. In his keynote address titled: From Teaching Assistant to Vice Chancellor: The academic and professional journey of Makerere academic. Prof. Mushengyezi advised new hires that it is alright to start small as a Teaching Assistant and progress step by step, but always endeavor to publish and aim at professorship as the goal.

Mushengyezi described Makerere as a place full of opportunities and privileges for employees to tap into saying, working as an academic requires hardworking and commitment but, a sacrifice worth making.

He advised new employees to define the philosophy of their leadership, lead to make a difference and serve beyond self-saying, sometimes they have to make sacrifices of their leisure and use creativity to make things work.

The professor also urged employees to pursue dreams beyond the university obligations, engage in community work, join good networks, support just causes, stand for the good of the institution, be sober minded, and to always put God first.

“Professorship is our dream us academicians, we all dream to be professors. Position yourself, find out what you are good at and use it as an opener for you. When there is always an opportunity for you, go for it. The biggest problem is our mindset change. Always be focused and deal with mindsets.

Join good networks of winners and associate with people who are innovative because you learn from them. Find a good mentor with mentorship skills that you admire. Lastly live to make a change in the community and God will bless you”, he advised.

The Director CERTL Prof. Andrew Ellias State told new hires that they are expected to communicate with students very well and to remember that culture and emotions affect communication hence the need to check their teaching effectiveness.

“Students will also remember you because of your unique teaching techniques and you need to ask and evaluate yourself if you are doing the right thing. Promote effective learning by encouraging students to deal with challenges in class and bring out the ideas and also debates. Do not prejudge. Engage students in active learning. ”, Prof. State advised

From the day’s discussion State asked new hires to pick positive professional relationships on reason that they are going to be in a community with other scholars, colleagues and are also going to teach multiple classes, serve on other committees, have family and also squeeze in time for scholarship.

“Take time and talk to others If the opportunity presents and involve those in and out of your department. On top of that, be kind, patient for the interests of others, don’t be selfish. Develop a reputation for acting with integrity and trying to understand your colleagues’ perspectives and avoid departmental factions.

Support networks, seek out mentoring in your profession line. Attend conferences, tell colleagues what your research interests are, where you want to specialize in. Take out colleagues for coffee and tea in case you have something to discuss”, State advised.

Prof. State also advised employees never to give up when their articles for publication get nasty comments but instead marry their science, for better or worse, pursue their passions and make sure they are good and also learn to say no and not to be afraid to change directions.

Compiled by:

Jane Anyango

Principal Communication Officer,CHUSS