

The International Humanities conference 2022 ends at Makerere University

The Makerere University international humanities conference came to an end on August 26th, 2022 after four days of debate and discussion under the theme, “Knowledge revolution and practices; Area Cultural and Global studies’.

The conference organized by the College of Humanities and Social sciences commenced on August 23rd, 2022 as part of the activities to mark the 100 years of Makerere university service to humanity.

The conference ended with a panel of practitioners deliberating on the roles, status and challenges from the different fields of humanities and social sciences such journalism, performing art and film, poetry and writing and psychology.

Prominent scholars including leading psychologist Professor John Munene, renown artists and film actor Alex Mukulu, writer Goretti Kyomuhendo, Daily Monitor media personality Carol Beyanga and Sherinah Namata a consultant and promoter of Literacy attended the closing ceremony.

While officially closing the conference, Makerere University Deputy Vice Chancellor in charge of Academic Affairs Associate Prof. Umar Kakumba expressed delight that the spirit of the centennial celebrations has been well captured and deployed by the College of Humanities and Social Sciences through different activities since the year started.

Prof. Kakumba said, the international humanities conference 2022 is a direct interpretation of the centenary celebrations theme which is to leverage 100 years of excellence in building a transformed society, and, has been quite activating, exciting, enriching and informative in terms of knowledge sharing and experiences.

The DVCAA was optimistic that the goal of the conference to explore the impact of knowledge revolutions on university practices and on the conduct of research in the humanities and social sciences has been realized.

Kakumba said, the Humanities and Social Sciences touch every aspect of knowledge base in Makerere whether veterinary or health Sciences.

As an educational and research institution Prof. Kakumba reaffirmed the University’s committed to contributing to national development through holistic capacity building and advancement of research across all disciplines as it seeks to be research led.

“We are committed to leaving no discipline behind which includes our beloved Humanities and Social Sciences... We need scientific disciplines to skill us in technical operations. But we equally need the humanities to make just that human and humane.

The humanities bring out the realities in society. The humanities and social sciences are about the community, and lives of the people and services because they touch the very base of the community and their livelihood.”, The DVCAA affirmed.

Through the new Strategic Plan (2020/21-2030/31) Prof. Kakumba said the university aimed at transforming the University into a research-led institution with a multi-faceted research agenda and enhanced engagement with industry and the business sector.

“In the context of changing global trends and increasing competition in higher education, we considered it a priority to further strengthen our academic development and research as well as student development.

Part of this initiative includes; leveraging our wealth of experience in liberal arts education and our research excellence to collaborate with eminent universities, offering more distinct degree programmes, providing research opportunities for outstanding students across the world, and so doing, elevating our reputation in the international arena”. He said

As Makerere University, Prof. Kakumba said, they are constantly challenged that it is not good enough to conduct cutting edge research but also equally important to find the most appropriate and beneficial ways to disseminate the findings thereof. He reported that this conference was part of the effort to do just that in partnership with our development partners.

He was hopeful that the participants have had an opportunity to strengthen partnerships and collaborative networks with other key stakeholders so as to continue inquiring and finding lasting solutions to the challenges in the Humanities and Social Sciences and their interfacing areas.

Prof. Kakumba was also optimistic that the outputs of this conference will cumulatively and going forward in a supportive environment, enhance livelihoods and contribute to the development of a vibrant humanities and social sciences discipline as set out in the conference theme and objectives.

The DVCAA commended the chairpersons and the presenters of all sessions that covered the various sub-themes and challenged Makerere staff and students and all partners to undertake follow-up research and innovative initiatives in these sub-themes.

Kakumba also thanked the Principal CHUSS Associate Prof. Josephine Ahikire and her team for successfully organizing this conference. He thanked development partners especially Andrew Mellon Foundation and Gerda Henkel Stiftung for supporting this conference and academic activities in the college.

The Principal CHUSS Assoc. Prof. Josephine Ahikire described the conference as a great success.

“We are gratified that we have finally accomplished what we started on Tuesday. We have debated, we have networked, we have listened, we have done all these that it takes for an academic event”, The Principal asserted.

Speaking on behalf of the Deputy Principal CHUSS, the Dean School of Liberal and Performing Arts Prof. Patrick Mangeni appreciated the DVCAA for keeping with the college and commended the Principal CHUSS for the exemplary leadership and for having delivered on building teams and empowering and capacitating staff in the college in respect of managing and coordinating events like this.

“The best example for team work for me was at the opening ceremony when Prof. Ngungi Wa Thiongo was not able to be with us physically and how the literature department rose to the occasion and it was a very memorable occasion and a substantial day”. Prof. Mangeni narrated.

He appreciated the day’s panel and implored the conference organizers and the literature department to organize the narratives beyond the You tube by transcribing the discussions for archives and for students’ research and to guide the future conversations.

The Conference Convener Dr. Levis Mugumya said the journey to the conference started in December 2021 while the first meeting for organizing teams were convened in January 2022 and the call for abstracts went out in March 2022.

Dr. Mugumya said, the college has hosted similar events since 2018 and has become the college tradition. At that time, the convener said, the college begun with meetings of graduate students and eventually, faculty from the college was brought on board.

He said in 2020, the meeting expanded beyond the university and with the COVID19 disruptions, the college put up an online event in 2021 that pulled scholars from all over the country and beyond.

This year, Dr Mugumya reported that they solicited 130 abstracts from scholars and practitioners from Kenya, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Cameroon, Nigeria the US, Germany and Uganda.

He was grateful to the college steering committee, composed by deans who provided support to the organizing team, the projects coordination committee led by Dr. Edgar Nabutanyi and Dr. Pamela Kanakhwa and Principal who provided the prompt intervention during the preparatory phases and excellent leadership.

Dr. Mugumya appreciated the entire organizing committee members for the tremendous time and effort and the scientific committee that has been the engine led by Prof. Grace Bantebya and other members who have gone an extra mile to ensure success.

He also thanked the graduate session committee leader Isaac Tibasiima and graduate students for participating in the conference as well as the welfare committee led by Dr. Eve Nabulya and Dr. Nakijoba, the health committee chaired by Dr. Peace Musimenta and Dr. Anthony, the PR and ICT team led by Ritah Namisango, . Dr Martin Baluku -the one man's security committee, the hospitality team led by Dancun Muhanguzi and all individuals who in one way or the other contributed to the success of this Conference.

He thanked the chairs of different session for the guidance, keynote speakers Prof. Nakanyike Musisi and Prof Derrek Peterson for travelling all the way from the US As well as Prof. Ngungi's representatives who put up a great conversation and panelist who were able to come back to Makerere to share their experiences.

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