

Campus This Week – December 4

USIU-Africa's pioneer Bachelor of Pharmacy class achieves 100% pass rate in the Poisons and Pharmacy Board of Kenya's Licensure Exams

By Dr. Lincoln W. Munyendo

The Bachelor of Pharmacy Class of 2020 registered for the Pharmacy and Poisons Board of Kenya examinations to obtain a license to practice as pharmacists in Kenya, achieving a 100 percent pass rate.

Results of the exams released in the last week of November 2020 brought joy to the School of Pharmacy & Health Sciences as this was a ground breaking 100% pass on the first attempt. This is a source of great pride to the entire USIU-Africa community given the crucial nature of the pass rate for students selecting a Pharmacy degree program.

The exam is administered by the Ministry of Health for evaluation and assessment prior to registration of pharmacists. The professional examination for the assessment of a pharmacist is split into two parts; Stage I and Stage II. The Stage I examination is administered before candidates proceed for a compulsory one-year internship program.

The Dean of the School of Pharmacy and Health Science, Dr. Francis Ndemo offered his congratulations to the students, noting that they had made one important step towards becoming professionals in the field of Pharmacy.

“This year, you went down in history, by virtue of being our first ever graduates from the Bachelor of Pharmacy program. As you go out there, I want to urge each and every one of you to apply the knowledge and the principles that you have learnt at the University, and use them to bolster your colleagues in the field, as we seek solutions to some of the world’s pressing problems in healthcare,” he said.

All graduates who sat the exams shall now proceed to internship then enroll the Stage II examination after the successful completion of internship. Upon successful completion of both stages of evaluation and assessment, the graduates will qualify to apply to be considered for registration as a pharmacist in Kenya and be licensed to practice.

Chandaria School of Business hosts 2020 edition of IFITTalk@Nairobi



The IFITTalk flyer. IFITT encourages the organization of local workshops in chapters around the world where its members are represented. USIU-Africa was the third host of the workshop, since its debut in Nairobi in 2017.

By Mary Mutisya

On November 26 and 27, the Chandaria School of Business hosted the 2020 edition of the IFITTalk@Nairobi, which focused on building a resilient tourism destination through ICTs post-COVID-19. The two-day event also included a Postgraduate Colloquium on Thursday, November 26, as a precursor to the workshop. The event was jointly organized by IFITT, Karatina University, Kenyatta University, United States International University-Africa and Mount Kenya University, and attracted 386 participants on the Zoom platform and had 4,100 views on Facebook live over the course of the two days, from participants in over 20 countries.

IFITTalk@Nairobi 2020 was a platform for various stakeholders to engage in conversations about the survival of the industry, and recovery strategies post-pandemic. It sought to present participants with the status of the industry, with a focus on analytics of travelers' behavior online and how the industry players were reacting to the shift. Experts from various African destinations discussed the trends that have emerged amid the pandemic and how tourism is shifting as a result. The workshop was opened by Cabinet Administrative Secretary for Tourism and Wildlife in Kenya, Mr. Joseph Boinnet, who spoke at length on the status of tourism activities in Kenya amid the

pandemic and the strategies that the Ministry was putting into place to ensure the resumption of safe and profitable economic activities.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has really affected the Kenyan tourism industry. The Ministry of Tourism is working towards putting in place strategies that will be driven by innovation, adoption of technology, product development and up skilling of personnel, to ensure that the local tourism industry is able to recover post COVID-19,” he said.

These sentiments featured prominently in the presentation by the Team Leader, Travelport Helpdesk, Ms. Rehema Adam Issa, whose presentation was on the global and personal trends of travelers over the past few months in comparison to previous years. She also shared on the metrics that contribute to the confidence index of a destination, and was able to demonstrate to participants the growing confidence in African destinations, specifically Kenya.

The CEO of Kenya Association of Travel Agents (KATA), Ms. Agnes Mucuha provided an overview of the resilience of the destination throughout the pandemic. She illustrated the imaginative and innovative methods industry partners were using to ensure travellers were safe and businesses stayed afloat.

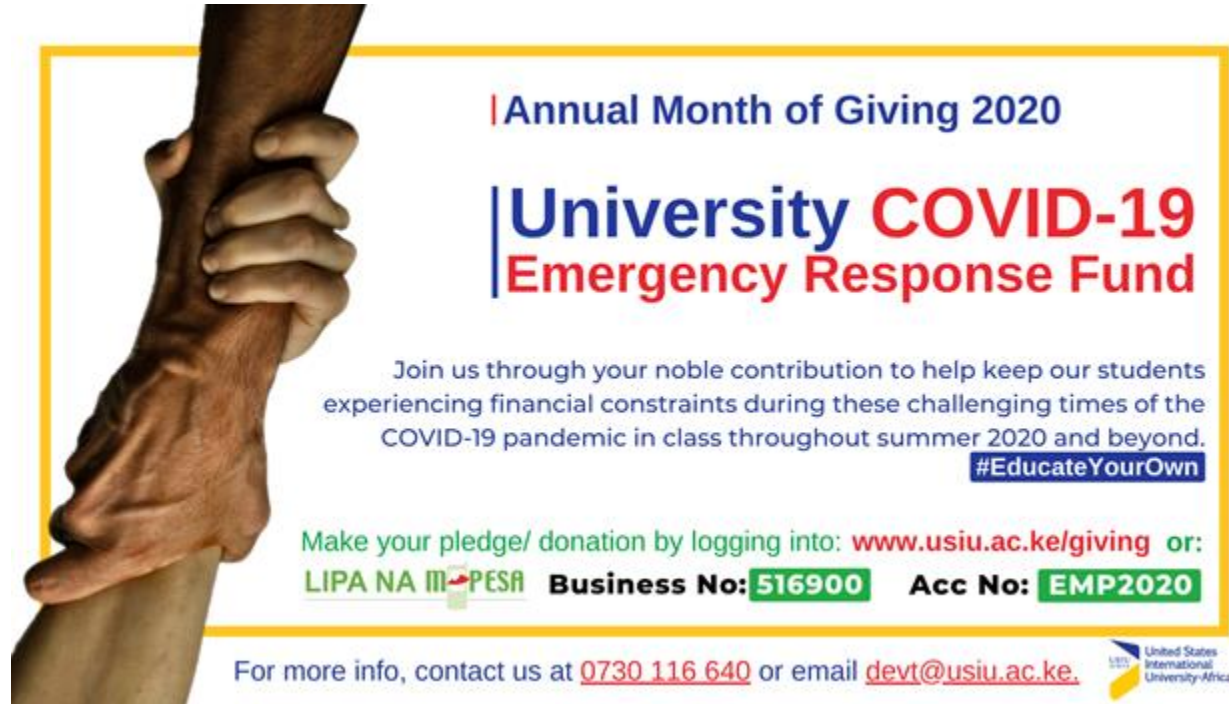
“COVID-19 has made tourists rethink how they travel. With many countries yet to lift their no-fly rules, domestic tourism has seen a surging demand. If the trend with closed international borders continues, it is possible that people will simply have no other choice. Service providers must therefore focus on listening to their customers, and observing their behaviours keenly, for this is how they will be able to capitalize on the opportunity presented,” she said.

The postgraduate colloquium held on November 26 gave a platform for Masters and Doctoral students pursuing Tourism and Hospitality programs to interactively present and discuss their research with peers and mentors in a supportive and relatively informal setting. It also allowed postgraduate students to receive mentorship sessions from tourism and hospitality scholars on various facets of their postgraduate journey. The colloquium featured presentations from 2 postgraduate students and mentorship sessions from 5 scholars.

The International Federation for Information Technologies and Travel and Tourism (IFITT) is a global community for the discussion, exchange and development of knowledge about the use and impact of new Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in the travel and tourism industry and experience. Every year, in addition to its main eTourism annual conference, IFITT encourages the organization of local workshops in chapters around the world where its members are represented. Nairobi hosted its first IFITTtalk workshop in 2017.

38 students receive scholarships from the COVID-19 Emergency Response Fund

By Christine Kamala



Annual Month of Giving 2020

**University COVID-19
Emergency Response Fund**

Join us through your noble contribution to help keep our students experiencing financial constraints during these challenging times of the COVID-19 pandemic in class throughout summer 2020 and beyond.

#EducateYourOwn

Make your pledge/ donation by logging into: www.usiu.ac.ke/giving or:
LIPA NA III-PESA Business No: 516900 Acc No: EMP2020

For more info, contact us at [0730 116 640](tel:0730116640) or email devt@usiu.ac.ke.

United States International University-Africa

The month-long COVID-19 Emergency Response Fund campaign was able to raise Kes. 650,000, which was awarded to 38 students to pursue their studies across several disciplines in the University.

Following of the adverse economic situation following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Fundraising Department set up the COVID-19 Emergency Response Fund, which sought to create a safety net to enable underprivileged students to continue their studies. Working with the Educate Your Own initiative, the month-long campaign was able to raise Kes. 650,000, which was awarded to 38 students to pursue their studies.

Through this collaboration, a total of 61 students have received scholarships to study this year, as a result of an additional 23 scholarships worth Ksh. 320,000 being awarded to continuing students by EYO to undertake their studies during the Spring semester. These scholarships have supported beneficiaries from 11 Undergraduate and Graduate programs.

The Grant Award Committee Chair, Mr. George Lumbasi, noted that the beneficiaries were selected based on a number of factors, including their need, to ensure that only the most deserving students were selected.

“To mitigate the financial impact of the COVID-19 crisis to our students, even students with negative fee balances were considered for the grant since at the time of application, all applicants had fee balances. We had to make sure that the selection process was as meticulous as possible, so as to give each applicant a strong chance, and ultimately, to ensure that the grants went towards supporting students who were most in need,” he said.

The Chief Manager, Fundraising, Mr. Eannes Ongus, noted that the contributions would go a long way towards supporting students in the pursuit of their dreams, praising the willingness of the University community to come together to support its members.

“The fundraising office wishes to thank the USIU-Africa community for their generosity and confidence in the impact of their contributions. The scholars also express great gratitude for the remarkable dedication and compassion that is displayed every day,” he said.

“This is a difficult period for everyone, and we don’t take lightly the sacrifice that each of you have made towards this noble cause of making a difference in these students’ lives,” he added.

Sandra Joan (BA. Psychology), one of the beneficiaries noted that through the grant, she has come to truly believe that USIU-Africa is indeed a family, and she was honored to be part of it. This sentiment was echoed by Sarah Masila (BA, Journalism), who notes that “It is how we connect to each other and how we treat one another with patience, compassion and honesty.”

To strengthen its fundraising efforts to support students, the University has procured an Advancement System (Raisers Edge NXT and Blackbaud Net Community) that will improve donor relations, engagement and online giving. Other strategic programs being implemented include proposal writing to support school grants & research efforts as well as case statements to corporates and foundations.

How to manage loneliness

By the Counselling Centre

“The greatest disease in the World today is not TB or leprosy; it is being unwanted, unloved, and uncared for. We can cure physical diseases with medicine, but the only cure for loneliness, despair, and hopelessness is LOVE - Mother Theresa.

It is okay to experience loneliness, loneliness is a human experience, a consequence of being a social being in a complicated world. Naturally, humans are relational beings and they love the connection especially that of being around other people, feeling accepted, getting encouraged, having conversations etc. This is very normal, don't be afraid to embrace the feeling.

If you are feeling lonely because of isolation due to COVID-19, understand that you are not alone in this situation. Several other people are holed up in family homes/rooms, hospital isolation rooms and/or other spaces they did not choose to be in. Some people have even found themselves in other countries, cities, towns and places they were only meant to be in temporarily. This awareness and understanding will help you to stop blaming themselves and take it as a health requirement which, however uncomfortable, is emphasized for a good reason. It is important to protect oneself and loved ones; and the community/country at large. Each person's actions make the difference. Loneliness should encourage solidarity, being kinder and being attuned to people and appreciative of what we have.

Loneliness does not always mean absence of a person or people; it means absence of connection. Some people are lonely because they have low self-esteem or poor social skills and have difficulties connecting with other people; or they feel their company is not valuable to others. Some people feel unwanted and unattractive or 'boring' hence feelings may be heightened during this period. Whatever the cause, find some counsel online, use positive thought strategies, pray regardless of your faith or religion, do some positive self-talk, smile, dance, and be tenderer with yourself.

What you can do to manage loneliness

It is important to acknowledge that different activities work for different people hence it is important for you to identify what works for you.

Stay active by;

- ✓ Staying connected with your family members and friends either virtually or physically. Ensure you observe government directives during physical meetings.
- ✓ Doing something meaningful that will make you experience a form of satisfaction e.g. volunteer work.
- ✓ Read on areas that interest you. You can also watch programs, TED talks, shows that excite you.
- ✓ Online engagement in groups that discuss topics that are of interest to you e.g. DIYs, music
- ✓ Listen and create music if you are a music lover.
- ✓ You can practice artwork if you love art i.e. painting, crocheting, knitting drawing or origami.
- ✓ Take up online classes to keep you busy on areas that interest you.

- ✓ Engage in soothing activities like steamy shower, hot chocolate as they comfort from loneliness.
- ✓ Engage in outdoor activities like going for nature walks, picnic, cycling, hikes among other fun outdoor activities. Ensure you observe government directives if going with friends.
- ✓ Have a friend or family member you can confide in about how you feel. Having a strong support system comes handy while dealing with such.

Things to note

Use your time wisely during this period, as solitude enriches creative work. Many people, especially teenagers and adults, have not created or afforded such a "free" period of time for many years. One could feel uncomfortable and disoriented, but it's best to use this time to plan, set goals, review goals and progress. So while it lasts, a lot of positive and productive stuff can come out of such a time which will lessen feelings of loneliness. One can literally take it as their reflection period or 'quiet time' and if used wisely, it can compensate for what has been lost in many years. If anyone is in isolation and feels lonely, take this time to plan to come out better, more organized and focused.

Find things to be grateful for. In this time of uncertainty, there are complaints and negative events around the world. Some people may have lost loved ones, lost jobs, forced to take salary cuts etc. For someone who is in isolation, it would reduce their feelings of loneliness if they proactively chose to be more grateful. Make gratitude your friend. Journal about the things you're grateful for. Better still, one can speak them out. Be grateful for who you are. Grateful for your health. For your loved ones. Grateful that you are still employed. Grateful that your symptoms are manageable and there is hope. Grateful that this too shall pass. Grateful that you are alive!

Work with a structure. Periods of lack of activity can easily attract feelings of loneliness. One can make a plan for each day and ensure they have at least two or three goals to accomplish in any given day. For instance, wake up, pray, exercise, take a shower, video call family/friends, read up a favorite book/chapter, listen to a podcast etc. The structure can change each day but at least do something productive. Occupy the mind and body productively. Loneliness, if not well managed can lead to depression, a form of anxiety, alcohol and substance abuse, stress, powerlessness, physical illnesses due low immunity and suicidal behavior.

If you feel overwhelmed and need help, contact a counselor. You can call *0730116748/750* or email: counsel@usiu.ac.ke

USIU-Africa Alumni appointed as the Manager of Football Kenya Federation Premier League



Caption: *Mr. David Thiru, who has been appointed as the manager of the Football Kenya Federation Premier League. Photo: Courtesy of the Star Kenya.*

By Ernest Mwanzi

USIU-Africa Alumni Mr. David Thiru, has been appointed the manager for the newly merged Football Kenya Federation Premier League (FKFPL). He will now be tasked with managing the Kenya Premier League's operations, which kicked off on November 28, 2020.

Thiru graduated from USIU-Africa in 2005 with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration (currently referred to as Bsc. International Business Administration). He is also currently an adjunct faculty teaching Entrepreneurship at the Chandaria School of Business.

In an interview with the Star newspaper, he said that with the experience he has, both in the management of football and in education, he believes that he is well prepared to serve. He added that he was not there to earn a salary but to expand opportunities for the youth and for the country to benefit. "I also have a passion to improve on the Kenyan football product out," concluded Thiru.

David was part of the team that spearheaded the launch of Alumni Endowment fund which aims at raising funds through the Alumni Association and well-wishers to support gifted but underprivileged students.

The USIU-Africa Spoken Arts & Debate Society (SADS) soars virtually amid COVID-19

By Precious Wangu

2020 has been the most challenging year for all the university students' clubs globally, and the USIU-Africa Spoken Arts & Debate Society (SADS) was not exempt from the disruptive nature of the outlined activities for the year. The Society's leadership together with its members quickly saw opportunity to explore, to be more innovative and to embrace technology and today as we publish our last article of the year, we can truly say, WE DID IT!

SADS remained the most active club during the pandemic with active student membership and online participation, with its various activities and events taking place online with the utmost goal of growing the club's membership in speaking, creative and critical thinking skills. Each branch of the Society, from Debate, Public Speaking and Spoken Arts, held a unique introductory session for all new members, welcoming them to the Society and equipping them with the fundamental knowledge and skills they needed in order to build reap maximum growth from our activities and events.

Led by Jeremiah Kashaka (SADS Logistics Officer) and Precious Wangu (SADS Executive Secretary), the Spoken Arts branch has held biweekly activities that have enhanced the members' creativity, critical thinking and presentation skills. Members went through sessions like '*Realizing my source of inspiration*', which entailed discussions on personal interests, sources of motivation and being in a state of flow, enabled the members discover their unique sources of inspiration. The session helped members come up with rhyming lyrics and lines, which helped them in the composition of poems, songs and spoken word.

These trainings culminated in an event, the Poetry Slam 2.0, which was held on Friday, November 27, 2020, and brought students from all over Africa to perform spoken word pieces, poems and songs. The event was hosted by Jeremiah and Precious, with Effie Okolla from Strathmore University attending as a guest speaker.

The Public Speaking team also had similar biweekly events, such as '*How to become a public speaker*', in which attendees were taken through the basic elements of public speaking, various forms of public speaking, elements of a good public speaker and how to manage speech anxiety. Grace Kinyua had a training session with the members as well on the elements of a good speech, in which she discussed at length the purpose of a speech, developing the topic, investigating the subject, structuring the message and converting the message for oral presentation. Two of the major events from this branch included:

A Call to War, where members had to apply the skills they had previously learnt to come up with speeches encouraging a target audience toward a certain course of action. The

activity focused on tonal variation, empathy when communicating, voice projection and owning your speech.

Recite Your Piece, a viewing and critiquing session where members presented monologues from different artists and actors and critiqued them as a group. In this session members presented monologues and speeches by their favorite actors from various movies. They analyzed the method of speech delivery, the power of a speech and how to analyze and engage with one's audience.

The Debate team, led by Chantelle Mukabi (SADS Chair) and Kagia Samuel (SADS Vice-Chair) – has been able to flourish throughout the semester with weekly debate training sessions held to continually train and engage debaters. This semester, the Society's debaters have represented the university at various online global debate tournaments, including the Pretoria Parley Intervarsity Debate Championships (PPIV), African Intervarsity Debate Championships, Jozi to Accra Debate Championships, Brand Arguments International Debate Tournament (BAIDT), and African Nations Invitational Debate Championships, managing to be among the top speakers at these tournaments as well as Semi-Finalists.

SADS also hosted the final tournament of the In-House Debate Series (which began in the Spring Semester, and ran from January to April), the In-House 4.0 Debate Championships held from November 2 to November 8, 2020 in which SADS members managed to top the leaderboard as well as become partial semi-finalists, semi-finalists and finalists as well as winners of the tournament. Currently, the SADS debate team is training for the imminent Pan African Universities Debate Championships (PAUDC) – an annual high-level debate tournament hosted in a different African country each year, and will now be held online. Beginning on Tuesday, December 15, 2020, USIU-Africa will be represented for the first time ever in the week-long PAUDC tournament, and the following teams have been selected to participate:

1. Chantelle Mukabi (SADS Chair) & Kagia Samuel (SADS Vice Chair)
2. Jeremiah Kashaka (SADS Logistics Officer) & Bienvenu Faraja (SADS Interclub Coordinator)
3. Louis Gitu (SADS Member) & Chut Giet (SADS Member)
4. Shalom Kimani (SADS Treasurer) & Fresher Diana (SADS Member)

Along with the following judges:

1. Stecy Onyango (SADS PR Officer)
2. Faith Musumba (Former Public Speaking Vice Chair)
3. Lucy Njeri (Former Public Speaking Member)

SADS continues to shine in this time of adversity seeking to demonstrate the core values of USIU-Africa: integrity, life-long learning, social responsibility, academic freedom and innovativeness.

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