



LAIKIPIA UNIVERSITY LAUNCHES ITS TREE GROWING EXERCISE FOR FY 2024/2025.

In line with the Government's commitment to growing 15 billion trees by 2032, Laikipia University launched its first and second tree-growing exercises for FY 2024/2025 on 12th September and 24th November 2024 respectively. Prof. Kibett Rotich, the Vice Chancellor, spearheaded the launch opposite the Halls Department.

The Vice Chancellor underscored the importance of this noble course by inviting women to take a leading role in ensuring a climate-secure and climate-friendly future.

His Excellency President Dr. William Ruto launched the 15 billion tree-growing campaign in December 2022. The initiative aims to increase tree cover to 30 percent within 10 years. Laikipia University, one of the government entities, supports the programme by planting trees on its land in collaboration with its partners and stakeholders.

The University also encouraged its employees to grow more trees in their homes for a widespread impact in the country. The institution committed to this goal by donating tree seedlings to its staff members and surrounding schools. Tree-growing efforts aim to mitigate climate change caused by greenhouse emissions.

The event was attended by Prof. James Ogola Onyango, Ag. Deputy Vice Chancellor, Administration, Finance and Planning; Prof. John Kanjogu, Director, Research, Human Rights and Gender; Dr. Naftal Nyang'ara, Director, Directorate of TVET, Career Placement, Alumni and External Linkages; Rev. Fr. Dr. Peterson Kabugi, University Chaplain and Lecturer; and other staff members drawn from different departments.



Ms. Sophia Muchiri, Director of Resource Mobilization, during the second tree planting exercise



Vice Chancellor Prof. Joseph Kibett during the inauguration of the 2024/2025 tree-planting exercise



Laikipia University Staff during the second tree planting exercise held on 24th November 2024

HIGHER EDUCATION LOANS BOARD OFFICIALS' VISIT TO LAIKIPIA UNIVERSITY

Officials from the Higher Education Loans Board (HELB) and Universities Fund paid a courtesy call to the Office of the Vice Chancellor on 24th September, 2024.

Their visit aimed to sensitize students and the administration to the student-centred New Funding Model (NFM). It also endeavoured to address emerging issues in loan and scholarship applications, allocations, and disbursements, which have been a topic of discussion in the country in recent days. Therefore, the initiative was geared towards reviewing the emerging trends, informed by the dynamic students' and stakeholders' needs.

Correct information during application is key to accurate banding, which ultimately enhances smooth learning for students. There have been enormous cases of students complaining of wrong banding, while in reality, some of them did not participate in verifying the accuracy of information submitted during loans and scholarship applications.



Prof Charles Nguta Ag. DVC (ARSA), representing the Vice Chancellor in a meeting with Higher Education Officials and Laikipia University staff members

The officials implored the students to own the Higher Education Financing application process by actively participating and not letting it be handled solely by cyber cafe vendors. They were also urged to appeal if they felt aggrieved by being allocated to various bands.

Mr. Samuel Otieno, a University Fund official, also noted that some Laikipia University students had not yet received their past semester's finances. However, the matter was being handled for a quick resolution. Towards the end of the visit, the officials had a successful forum with the students at Vision 2030 Hall, who listened and responded to their queries.

Laikipia University is committed to improving the welfare of all its students. Therefore, the institution prioritises engaging key stakeholders such as HELB and the Universities Fund.

The meeting was chaired by the acting Vice Chancellor, Prof. Charles Nguta. Other members present were Prof. Robert Mwebi, Registrar, Academic Affairs; Mr. Geoffrey Langat, Finance Officer; and Prof. Felicia Yieke, Director of Corporate Affairs. The Office of the Dean of Students was led by Ms. Beatrice Yogo, while HELB was represented by Mr. Michael Kiplagat.



Laikipia University Students' Association officials with Higher Education Loans Board Officials

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THE COMMISSION FOR UNIVERSITY EDUCATION INSPECTS LAIKIPIA UNIVERSITY'S OPEN, DISTANCE AND E-LEARNING SYSTEM

A team from the Commission for University Education (CUE) led by Prof. Urbanus Mutwiwa, the Deputy Commission Secretary of Accreditation, visited Laikipia University for the inspection of the institution's Open, Distance, and e-learning (ODeL) mode of learning on 1st October, 2024.

Prof. Joseph Kibett Rotich, the Vice Chancellor received the officials. The officials inspected critical ODeL facilities that included the **E-Learning Resource Centre**, the **Library's E-Resource Section**, the **ODeL Office** at the Department of Computing and Informatics, and the **Electronic Media Studio**.

The team found that the Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC), accessible through the Learning Management System (LMS) or the university website, adequately supported students.

Laikipia University's Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) facilitates smooth learning by enabling students to search for learning materials by; author, keywords, subject, or title. Thus, information from all over the world can be retrieved faster.

The tremendous ODeL achievement has been realized because the ODeL governance and administrative structure have been implemented using the approved university ODeL policies. Additionally, ODeL training manuals for staff and students have been conducted. There has been an orientation of students on the ODeL system. Configuration of ODeL courses on the LMS has also been carried out. Importantly, the LMS has been used to plan, implement, and assess the ODeL learning processes.



Vice Chancellor Prof. Kibett Rotich (fourth left) with a team from the Commission for University Education (CUE)

The ODeL process should happen without compromising the quality of education and research in the University. This is one of the key reasons for the institution's engagement with the Commission for University Education (CUE). The mandate of CUE is to make better provisions to advance quality university education in Kenya.

Their inspection, therefore, aimed at ensuring that our students are well supported during their studies. The CUE team also gave recommendations to the university ODeL governance team on the areas of improvement which the team committed to work on promptly. Overall, this was a successful visit to the University.

During the inspection, the Commission for University Education officials were accompanied by Laikipia University staff that included the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Joseph Kibett Rotich; Acting DVC (ARSA), Prof. Peter Mwaura Njuguna; Registrar Academic Affairs, Prof. Robert Mwebi; Director Corporate Affairs, Prof. Felicia Yieke; Director Quality Assurance and Standards, Dr. Charity Chemnjor; Coordinator ODeL, Dr. Isaac Gitogo; Senior Assistant Librarian, Dr. Peris Kiilu; Systems Librarian, Mr. Dancan Waiguru; Senior Corporate Communication Officer, Ms. Roselyne Mulefu; ICT staff, Ms. Agnes Nduku and Mr. Eric Yullu; and Mr. Erick Wambugu from the Laikipia University Electronic Media Studio.



CUE officials meeting with Laikipia University representatives during the Open, Distance, and e-Learning (ODeL) inspection.

STUDENTS' PEER COUNSELLING TRAINING

The 2024/2025 Peer Counsellors Training ended on 9 October 2024 at Mandela Hall. Ms. Beatrice Yogo, the Dean of Students, concluded the four-day training, which began on 4 October. In her address to the peer counsellors, Ms. Yogo urged them to be good ambassadors of Laikipia University by being active listeners, neutral, disciplined, and solution-oriented.

The training is fundamental as it instils peer counsellors with skills in guiding and counselling their fellow students. Some of the topics covered in the training included Communication Skills; Drugs, and Drug Abuse Counselling; Ethical Issues in Counselling; Trauma/PTSD Counselling; Financial Management; Relationship Management; Time Management; Self-awareness; and Life Skills.

Peer counsellors are expected to help address mental health issues affecting some of their fellow students. These mental health issues majorly emanate from drug and substance abuse, cohabitation and unhealthy relationships, financial challenges, and dysfunctional family issues among others.

The Dean of Students also urged the peer counsellors to always refer cases that they feel are beyond them to their fellow counsellors or professional counsellors for the best results.

Through the Office of the Dean of Students, Laikipia University is committed to making students' welfare more accommodative and friendly. This should have a positive impact on students' overall growth.

Ms. Evelyne Oketch, Mr. Alex Mukaisi, and Mr. Benedict Musyoka, drawn from the Office of the Dean of Students were the peer counsellors' trainers.



Ms. Beatrice Yogo, Dean of Students addressing peer counsellor trainees



Laikipia University peer counsellors posing for a group photo after training

LAIKIPIA UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL SCIENTIFIC ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE CONDUCTS RESEARCH ETHICS TRAINING TO ACADEMIC STAFF

Laikipia University Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee (LU-ISERC) conducted a Research Ethics Training for university academic staff at the School of Education boardroom on 8th October, 2024.

LU-ISERC was accredited by the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI) in 2020. NACOSTI's mission is to facilitate quality research in the areas of science, technology, and innovation through regulation, promotion, and provision of advisory services.

LU-ISERC operates and conducts ethics reviews of research proposals in Biomedical, Environmental, and Social Sciences undertaken by members of Laikipia University, who comprise undergraduate and postgraduate students, the staff, and the community surrounding the university. This practice ensures that quality is upheld and researchers do not contravene animal and human rights during research proposal writing, data collection in the field, and the actual report writing.

Ms. Teresia Nyawira, a Principal Scientist at NACOSTI highlighted the importance of upholding ethical principles during research. Respect for a person's independent opinion and choices, voluntary decisions, self-determination, and autonomy must always be considered when handling participants. For Minors, a legal representative should be requested to give consent. Further, transparency, awareness, and literacy, as well as adaptive governance, must be considered when undertaking research

Ms. Nyawira also highlighted the importance of creativity and taking ownership of research projects in an era when Artificial Intelligence (AI) Research is taking over human research.

Researchers must also ensure that they are not harming anyone by violating participants' privacy and confidentiality or by biases in their research topics. Harm avoidance is an extremely important concept in ethical research.

The LU-ISERC, in conjunction with NACOSTI, plays a pivotal role in approving research proposals for Laikipia University students, staff, and researchers within the region.

Prof. Mbutia Ngunjiri, Chairperson of LU-ISERC, moderated the session and was assisted by Dr. Prisca Tarus, a member of LU-ISERC.

The secretariat comprised Mr. Anthony Mwaka and Mr. Joseph Maina. Presentations were made by Prof. Peter Mwaura, Dean of the School of Business and Vice Chair of LU-ISERC; Prof. Felicia Yieke, Director of Corporate Affairs; Dr. Janerose Mayabi Mulamba, Secretary of LU-ISERC; and Ms. Teresia Nyawira of NACOSTI.



Laikipia University Academic staff during the ISERC training

LAIKIPIA UNIVERSITY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION FUNDS DRIVE AT KARURA FOREST

The Laikipia University Alumni Association held a successful fund drive at Karura Forest on 20th October, 2024. Prof. Robert Mwebi, Registrar of Academic Affairs, and one of Laikipia University's Alumni, officially commissioned the noble event.

The walk aimed to raise funds to support needy students through the Alumni Scholarship Fund. The diversity of the cohorts from the class of 1997 to 2022 suggests that its attendees had a distinctive outlook.

The Laikipia University Alumni Scholarship Fund has been in operation since 2022 and has really impacted the academic lives of many students whose lives would have been jeopardized due to financial constraints.

The walk had exciting socialization sessions, during which every member shared their personal experiences after graduation and their perception of the current political and socio-economic issues among other things. All these activities were combined with physical health activities and tips to keep fit, as shared by Dr. Naftal Nyang'ara, Director TVET, Career Placement, Alumni and External Linkages.



Laikipia University Alumni and Officials at Karura Forest

Mr. Jesse Mwangi, the Alumni Chairperson, lauded Laikipia University's Management Board for its trust in its former students, as evidenced by the alumni members' employment to serve the community, which not only shaped them as scholars but also gave them the most important tenets of human survival.

The Laikipia University Alumni Association made some pertinent resolutions to strengthen and increase its impact. This included publicizing Laikipia University to the world, lobbying, and fundraising for the kitty by reaching out to former course mates, and carrying out mentorship programmes for current students.



Laikipia University Alumni during the hike to raise funds to support the Laikipia University needy students

Prof. Robert Mwebi, on his part, highlighted the importance of having an endowment fund that can generate a continuous financial revolving fund. The Laikipia University Alumni Association aims to hold such activities regularly to strengthen the connection and continue to impact society positively.

VICE CHANCELLOR'S ADDRESS TO THE 2024/2025 FIRST YEAR STUDENTS

In line with Laikipia University's commitment to nurturing and transforming for the world, the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Kibett Rotich delivered his address to the first year students on 25th October, 2024 at the Vision 2030 Hall. In his address, the Vice Chancellor welcomed the students by congratulating them for being part of the larger Laikipia University fraternity.

Prof. Kibett further reminded the first year students of how Laikipia University prides itself on being the only University that **has a tropical forest; cool weather that cools the mind; competes internationally in ICT; and produces the best teachers; and competent professionals after undertaking their studies at the University.** He further challenged them to focus on real things by visualising their goals and allowing their vision to be their guiding principle. They were also urged to take charge of their freedom responsibly.

Laikipia University operates an *Open-Door Policy*, which allows the students to walk into any office for assistance freely. Therefore, the Vice Chancellor underscored the importance of expressing their issues for assistance with any office as the University endeavours to provide a conducive environment for academic excellence and social growth.

Setting clear goals and laying down strategies to achieve them should be of paramount importance, and this would be evidenced through each day's activities. Therefore, whatever students do should bring them closer to what they want to acquire tomorrow.



The Vice Chancellor Prof. Kibett Rotich during his keynote address to the 2024/2025 first years.

On overcoming challenges, the Vice Chancellor advised his 'newborns' to grow by learning through their mistakes. They are supposed to correct their mistakes and learn from them because **'kukosa mara moja sio kosa, kurudia kosa ndio makosa'**.

However, there could be moments when challenges are insurmountable, and in such a situation, **'A problem shared is a problem half solved'**. The Vice Chancellor urged the students to find the right person to share their problems with to overcome them. They were advised to visit the Office of the Dean of Students for Guidance and Counselling; and the Chaplaincy for spiritual nourishment. This is because their ability to overcome challenges will be key to their success here on campus and beyond.

The Vice Chancellor concluded his speech by urging the students to follow the university rules and regulations; voluntarily join clubs and societies; participate in sports; create meaningful friendships and networks; cultivate a culture of care and support for each other; use available resources prudently; and avoid taking shortcuts.

While expressing their gratitude to the Vice Chancellor for his inspiring address, the first year students also openly displayed their admiration for the scholarly regalia donned by the Vice Chancellor and his entourage. They remarked that they were motivated to work hard, and eventually attain the highest degree possible in their academic journey, and make their parents and guardians proud.

The Vice Chancellor was accompanied by members of the University Management Board, Deans of Schools and Directors, Departmental Chairpersons, the Dean of Students, the University Chaplain, and the Librarian.



First year students during the Vice Chancellor's address



Prof. Robert Mwebi, the Registrar (Academic Affairs) addressing first year students

LAIKIPIA UNIVERSITY HOLDS ITS 2024/2025 CULTURE WEEK

Laikipia University held its culture week themed 'Embracing Art as a Tool for Human Advocacy' from 12th to 15th November, 2024. The event was pivotal as it spearheads national unity values. Students had the opportunity to showcase their talents and different cultures, making the event lively and engaging. The winners of this year's culture week were as follows: Kerry Edwin, Mr. Laikipia University; Precious Nelly Okelo, Ms. Laikipia University; Polycarp Odhiambo, Mr. Culture, Laikipia University; and Sarah Chidzeli, Ms. Culture, Laikipia University.



The 2024/2025 Culture Week winners, together with the LUSA representative, the Dean of Students (far left), and the University Librarian (second right) during a photo session



Laikipia University students displaying their different cultural dances during Culture Week



CULTURE WEEK



Laikipia University students in an eating competition event during Culture Week

PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN LAIKIPIA UNIVERSITY AND THE NYANDARUA NATIONAL POLYTECHNIC

Laikipia University and the Nyandarua National Polytechnic signed a collaboration agreement in the areas of research, innovation, and technical support on November 13, 2024, at the Nyandarua National Polytechnic.

The Laikipia University delegation was led by Prof. Kibett Rotich, the Vice Chancellor while that of Nyandarua National Polytechnic was stewarded by Mr. Felix Mung'atu, the Chief Principal. The Vice Chancellor and the Chief Principal expressed their confidence in the collaboration, describing it as a springboard for mutual benefits to students from both institutions. The world today is driven by innovation, research, and technical skills, which underscores the importance of this collaboration.

A monitoring and evaluation team from both institutions was set up to achieve the set goals and targets. The Laikipia University team comprised Prof. John Kanjogu, Dr. Poti Abaja, and Dr. Emily Cheshari. On the other hand, the Nyandarua National Polytechnic team included Dr. Nahashon Kanyi, Ms. Pauline Kariuki, and Mr. Evans Kamau.

The National Polytechnic is ISO 9001:2015 certified, just like Laikipia University, which is also ISO 9001:2015 and ISO/IEC 27001:2013 Certified. This underscores a win-win partnership because both institutions are committed to rendering quality services to their clients, who are mainly students who will be more grounded in technology, research, and innovation. The University also appreciates the collaboration since it aligns with its mission, 'To contribute to the world through Education, Research, Training, Consultancy, Innovation, Outreach, and Collaboration'.

Other members accompanying the Vice Chancellor included Prof. Charles Nguta, Ag. Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academic, Research and Student Affairs (ARSA); Prof. Robert Mwebi, Registrar Academic Affairs; Dr. Poti Owili, Dean of the School of Science and Applied Technology; Dr. Naftal M. Nyang'ara, Director TVET, Career Placement, Alumni and External Linkages; Ms. Irene Odhiambo, Assistant Registrar, Directorate of Research, Human Rights and Gender; and Mr. Joseph Ndenda, Public Communications Officer in the Directorate of Corporate Affairs.



Officials from Laikipia University and Nyandarua National Polytechnic during the signing of the Collaboration Agreement



Prof. Kibett Rotich, Vice Chancellor, Laikipia University and Mr. Felix Mung'atu, Chief Principal, Nyandarua National Polytechnic, during the signing of the Collaboration Agreement



ISO MANAGEMENT REVIEW MEETING AND PERFORMANCE CONTRACTING SIGNING

Laikipia University is committed to reaching the highest standards in its operations. The University Management held an audit report follow-up meeting at Mandela Hall on 14th November, 2024. The meeting aimed to highlight the findings from the just concluded internal audit process and then chart how to ensure continual improvement.

Prof. James Ogola, the acting Deputy Vice Chancellor (AFP), officially commissioned the meeting and thanked all staff for the work done so far to ensure continual improvement and quality service delivery to our customers. He particularly emphasized the importance of performance and productivity in all operations of the university.

The ISO Management Review Meeting was immediately followed by the University Performance Contract (PC) signing ceremony at the same venue. This was spearheaded by Prof. James Ogola, who represented the Vice Chancellor. The PC signing is a commitment to the results framework and is a demonstration by the heads of departments to implement the strategies laid down to achieve targets set out in their respective PCs.

All Functional Heads in the University, including Deputy Vice Chancellors, Deans, Directors, Chairpersons of Departments (CoDs), and Heads of Departments (HoDs), signed their PCs under the witness of their respective PC champions. The departmental PCs are cascaded from the University Council PC, signed between the Cabinet Secretary for Education and the Chairman of the University Council.

Some of the PC targets that departments committed to implementing include digitalization of services, productivity improvement, enhancing industry linkages and mainstreaming research, as well as Science, Technology, and Innovation (RSTI).

As an institution, we are committed to serving our customers and stakeholders with Quality, Integrity, Innovativeness, Inclusivity, and Sustainability.



Dr. Charity Chemnjor, the Director of Quality Assurance and Standards, and Dr. Samuel Onyuma, Director of performance, Planning, and Management, during the PC signing



Laikipia University departmental heads, section heads, and Performance Contract Champions

Q&A WITH OUR TRAILBLAZERS

This segment features Laikipia University staff and students making a difference while carrying out their daily mandate. Today, we feature **Mr. Joseph Oduol**, the acting Farm Manager.



Mr. Joseph Oduol, the acting Farm Manager.

Q: What is unique about the Farm Department?

ANS: Well, Laikipia University Farm lies on the Equator, with the highest points occupying up to 2,550 metres above sea level. The average annual rainfall in Laikipia University is 1,012 mm. The University Farm is also endowed with several natural all-weather streams and dams that provide water for various uses on the farm, especially in our horticulture section. This makes the department ideal for crops and livestock enterprises as we aim to generate revenue for the university.

Q: What strides has the farm department made since you took over?

ANS: A very good question. I took over in January, 2024 as the Farm manager in an acting capacity. I had earlier joined Laikipia University as an Animal Health Officer, and at that time, the Farm Department had only two enterprises, dairy and wheat. Through my current efforts, in addition to dairy and wheat, we are keeping layers, broilers, pigs, and sheep. We also grow maize, and our horticulture section is fast growing. This means that one can walk on the farm anytime and ask for eggs, broiler birds, vegetables, piglets for farmers, milk, pork, and more, and get them immediately at a reasonable price, hence more revenue for the university.

I have made the department tidy and aesthetically appealing while ensuring that the biosecurity measures are current. This has attracted many students for attachment and internship programmes from both Laikipia University and other institutions. I have done silage and Boma Rhodes for hay to ensure feed availability for the cattle, and the lactating cows are currently confined (Zero grazing).

This is happening for the first time since the university got its charter. I have also managed to build a strong workforce of individuals who understand their roles, and today, any visiting group is taken around different sections by professional individuals. To market our products and the University, I took some of our animals to the ASK Show in Nakuru and returned with a trophy and several awards. This is also happening for the first time



Q: Laikipia University's core business is academics; how does your department relate to the academic section of the University?

ANS: The department offers its animals to students undertaking agriculture-related programmes for practicals. We also allocate plots for research purposes. Further, we spearhead professionalism for students undertaking attachment and internship through the department's well-trained individuals working on our farm; this is in line with the University's Vision to Nurture and Transform for the World.



Q: How are you addressing the high cost of farm input to ensure that you remain financially sustainable?

ANS: Well, the cost of input has kept on increasing. As we speak, I have started assembling raw materials for feed formulation. *We look forward to formulating our own chick mash, growers mash, layers mash, sow and weaner feed, dairy meal, broiler starter, and finisher by February 2025.* This will help us reduce the cost of production in dairy, piggery, broiler, and layers units. We are presently using the manure from our animals in the horticulture sections. We have planned for crop rotation for the field crops to control some weeds. All these are aimed at reducing the cost of production.



Q: What does the future hold for the Farm Department?

ANS: This is a good question. In three years' time, I am looking forward to making Laikipia University Farm the best producer of wheat, eggs, and broilers in the region, the best pig and sheep breeder farm in the region, and the biggest supplier of vegetables. We are planning to add value to our milk (value addition), and we will be selling yoghurt very soon. Going forward, we shall be formulating animal feeds not just for our animals but also for sale to external farmers in a bid to help the University generate extra revenue.

Did You Know?

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