

LAIKIPIA UNIVERSITY RECEIVES NEW DEPUTY VICE CHANCELLOR

Laikipia University was excited to receive Prof Patience Mlongo Mshenga, the new Deputy Vice Chancellor in charge of Administration, Finance and Planning (AFP) on 2nd December, 2024. She took over from Prof. James Onyango Ogola, who had been in the office acting since January 2024.



Prof. James Ogola Outgoing Ag. DVC (AFP) handing over to the New DVC (AFP) Prof. Patience Mshenga

In his remarks, Prof. Ogola thanked the University Council for entrusting him with the office for the period he executed its mandate. He also highlighted the significant achievements made during his tenure. They include the commencement of the construction of the university perimeter wall; timely payment of retirement benefits; training of prospective retirees to ensure they can have a smooth life during retirement; staff skills development; conservation of the environment through the planting of 30,000 trees; youth empowerment through internships; timely statutory remittances among others.

Prof. Ogola also apprised the Incoming DVC of the division's operations and the directorates and departments directly linked to the office. They include Administration and Human Capital; Finance; Planning and Performance Management; Finance; Medical; Farm, and Information and Communication Technology. The University appreciates Prof. Ogola's outstanding contributions to the institution during his tenure.



Prof. James Ogola, outgoing Ag. DVC (AFP) appreciating Heads of Departments in Administrative Division for the great support during his tenure

Prof. Mshenga, a professor of agribusiness management, comes in with a wealth of experience in administration, resource mobilization, finance, and planning. She is also a scholar par excellence known for her academic and research output in higher education. She has a PhD in Agribusiness Management from Egerton University (2009), an MBA from the University of Nairobi (2000), and a Bachelor of Agribusiness Management from Egerton University (1995).

Prof. Mshenga has been the Principal Investigator of key monumental projects from the **European Commission** (2021-2024, 2013-2015); **RUFORUM** (2018-2020); **Ford Foundation (through RUFORUM)** (2012-2014); and the **Collaborative Masters in Agricultural and Applied Economics (CMAAE) Faculty Research Grant** (2012-2013).

In addition, she has taken part as a Collaborator in distinguished projects such as **The European Commission** (2020-2023), **Finnish Government** (2020-2024), **The MasterCard Foundation** (2016-2024), **Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (WOTRO)** (2015-2019), **Netherlands Initiative for Capacity development in Higher Education (NUFFIC)** (2012-2014), and the then **National Council for Science and Technology (NCST)** (2012-2013).

All staff members at Laikipia University are requested to accord Prof. Mshenga the necessary support as the Deputy Vice Chancellor, Administration, Finance and Planning. As an institution, we look forward to the outstanding contributions she will make to the University. We are indeed proud and congratulate her once again.

Dr. Poti Abaja, the acting Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academic Research and Student Affairs attended the handing-over ceremony. Other staff members included Dr. Mugo Muriithi - Ag. Registrar Administration and Human Capital; CPA Geoffrey Kiprotich Langat - Chief Finance Officer; Dr. Samuel Onyuma - Director, Directorate of Planning and Performance Management; Prof. Robert Mwebi - Registrar Academic Affairs; Prof. Felicia Yieke - Director, Corporate Affairs, Mr. Joseph Oduol - Ag. Farm Manager; Jonathan Kiptolong - Ag. University Medical Officer; Josiah Sekoyo, Security Officer; and staff from the DVC, AFP, and Directorate of Corporate Affairs.



Prof. Patience Mshenga (New DVC (AFP) 5th left, and Heads of Departments in the Administration Division

LAIKIPIA UNIVERSITY ENGAGES POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Prof. Maria Sassi and Ms. Martina Bellinzona from the University of Pavia, Italy, paid a courtesy call to Prof. Patience Mshenga, Deputy Vice Chancellor, Administration, Finance and Planning on 4th December 2024, to explore possible areas of collaboration.

The meeting was timely as Laikipia University has always been open to partnerships that spearhead Education, Research, Training, Consultancy, Innovation, Outreach, and Collaboration.

We are optimistic about initiating collaborations in Research, Capacity Building, Staff, and Student exchange programs.

The meeting was also attended by members of staff namely: Dr. Poti Owili, Ag. Deputy Vice Chancellor - Academic Research and Student Affairs, Prof. Peter Mwaura - Dean School of Business and Economics, Prof. John Kanjogu - Director Research, Human Rights and Gender, Dr. Samuel Onyuma - Director, Planning and Performance Management, Dr. Naftal Nyang'ara, Director TVET, Career Placement, Alumni and External Linkages, Dr. Florence Opondo CoD Business, and Ms. Roselyn Mulefu - Senior Corporate Communications Officer.



Prof. P. Mshenga DVC (AFP) and Laikipia University Researchers



Prof. P. Mshenga DVC (AFP) centre Prof. Maria Sassi 3rd right, Ms. Martina Bellinzona 4th left and Laikipia University Researchers

LAIKIPIA UNIVERSITY 12TH GRADUATION CEREMONY

Laikipia University was thrilled to have successfully held its 12th Graduation Ceremony on 18th December 2024 at the University Graduation Pavilion. This Year's theme was **From Knowledge to Action: Nurturing and Empowering Graduates to Lead and Transform.** The colourful, magnificent, and splendid ceremony was graced by Honourable Julius Migos Ogamba, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Education, who also represented the President of the Republic of Kenya.



Hon. Julius Migos Obamba (2nd right) arriving at Laikipia Universities 12th Graduation ceremony

While presenting the president's speech, the Honourable Cabinet Secretary highlighted the government's commitment to supporting universities to enhance their research and innovation through quality education. He lauded Laikipia University for its commitment to offering quality higher education to its students despite the limited resources.

However, he noted that 23 public universities have gone bankrupt due to financial challenges, which compelled the government to unveil the New Funding Model (NFM). NFM addresses universities' financial challenges by funding students according to their needs and programme costs. He reiterated that the government is still fine-tuning the model to make it more effective and accommodative to every student.



Hon. Julius Migos Ogamba, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Education, chatting with the Laikipia University Council Members and H.E Joshua Irungu, Governor, Laikipia County

His Excellency Joshua Irungu, Governor, County Government of Laikipia, also graced the graduation ceremony. The governor lobbied for more financial resources from the national government to Laikipia University to enable the institution to meet its mandate efficiently through research programmes that benefit the national and international people of Laikipia County. He also urged the graduating Class of 2024 to step out confidently and aggressively and be job creators in line with their graduation theme: **'From Knowledge to Action: Nurturing and Empowering Graduates to Lead and Transform'**. In his divine closing remarks, the Governor encouraged the graduating students to be God-fearing people with strong values and character.



Hon. Julius Migos Ogamba, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Education, addressing grandaunts

The Cabinet Secretary also implorred all the University Councils and Management Boards nationwide to make the right decisions that do not harm students and other stakeholders. He congratulated Laikipia University's Class of 2024 on their diligence and resilience and wished them success in their future endeavours.



His Excellency Joshua Irungu, Governor, County Government of Laikipia addressing grandaunts

Dr. Lemein Korei, the University Council Chairman who also served as the Chancellor for the ceremony, expressed his gratitude to the government for its unwavering support through the Ministry of Education. He said that the government's financial support to Laikipia University has enabled the institution to improve its facilities and systems, leading to quality education for its students.

The Council Chairman also thanked the University Management Board led by Prof. Kibett Rotich, Vice Chancellor; Senate; faculty, and staff for their immense support, culminating in the graduation ceremony for the conferment of degrees and award of diplomas to the 1412 grandaunts.



Dr. Lemein Korei, the University Council Chairman addressing grandaunts

Prof. Kibett Rotich, Vice Chancellor, thanked the government through Kenya Universities and Colleges Central Placement Service (KUCCPS) for their support by allocating over 3000 students to Laikipia University in the 2024-2025 academic year. This was 500 students more than the previous academic year, which contributed immensely to the university's growth, especially through the new funding model, where student numbers are the determinant of financial capitation.

Prof. Kibett further underscored that Laikipia University is committed to supporting students' welfare, especially those from needy and vulnerable backgrounds, through bursaries and work-study programmes. These opportunities aim to enhance diversity and equity in sharing academic resources because education is the best equalizer.



Prof. Kibett Rotich, Vice Chancellor Laikipia University addressing grandaunts

While congratulating the Class of 2024 for their remarkable academic milestone, the Vice Chancellor reminded them of the importance of carrying with them the invaluable experiences they have gained during their study stay at Laikipia University while holding the vision of *'Nurturing and Transforming for the World'* as inculcated in them by the Great Laikipia University. **CONGRATULATIONS CLASS OF 2024!!!**



Dr. Sheila Wandera-Simwa, Dean, School of Humanities and Developmental Studies with the Mace during graduation procession



Hon. Julia Migos Ogamba, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Education; Dr. Lemein Korei, Laikipia University, Council Chair and Prof. Rotich Kibett, Vice Chancellor, Laikipia University during graduation procession



Hon. Julius Migos, 3rd left and other dignitaries posing for a photo



PhD Graduate and Supervisors during the Laikipia University's 12th Graduation Ceremony



Graduates during the Laikipia University's 12th Graduation Ceremony

HANDING OVER CEREMONY OF THE DEPUTY VICE CHANCELLOR, ACADEMIC DIVISION

Laikipia University Academic Division was excited to have Prof. John Kiumi Kanjogu as the new Ag. Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic, Research and Student Affairs (ARSA) with effect from 6th January 2025. He took over from Prof. Charles Nguta, who had been in the office in an acting capacity since January 2024. Prof. Kanjogu is a distinguished associate professor of education recognized for his tremendous experience in teaching and research at the university level. With over 20 years of experience, the University is happy to see him play a pivotal role in shaping the future of Laikipia University's academic division.

Prof. Nguta thanked the University Council for trusting him to head the Academic Division in 2024. While handing over, he reflected on the growth, milestones, and tremendous strides made in enhancing the quality of education and innovation while supporting students and faculty.

Under his stewardship, Laikipia University entered into a collaborative research project, 'Building Capacity in Plant Breeding and Biotechnology Education and Research, through a partnership program in Africa, the Middle East, and Europe for Agricultural transformation (BREEDTECH) for which Laikipia University is a collaborating partner and secured funding of € 87,586.00. The project is set to benefit the University in capacity building for staff and students, curriculum development, and research equipment.

Prof. Nguta also oversaw the University's renewal of its partnership with Wageningen University and Research in the Netherlands and a MoU with The International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT), among other achievements. He emphasized that the division's strength lies in its shared commitment to progress, collaboration, and excellence.

Prof. Nguta expressed his optimism that Prof. Kanjogu would spearhead the critical work the division had already initiated, building on successes and addressing new challenges with vision and dedication. He acknowledged the unwavering support received from staff and faculty throughout his tenure.



Prof. Charles Nguta handing over to Prof. John Kanjogu and witness Dr. Samuel Onyma

In his remarks, Prof. Kanjogu expressed sincere gratitude to his predecessor, Prof. Charles Nguta, for his exceptional leadership and tireless contributions to the division's growth. He noted that the foundation laid down over the years is strong and that he would commit to upholding and building upon the legacy. He committed to working closely with his colleagues to ensure that the strategic goals and vision of the division continue to guide his efforts towards academic and research excellence and enhancing the student experience.

In addition, he was enthusiastic about the opportunities ahead. He emphasized that with the collective efforts of dedicated faculty, staff, and students, it would be possible to navigate any challenge and continue to elevate the University's standings in academic circles and the wider community.

All staff are requested to support Prof. Kanjogu as the new Ag. Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic, Research, and Student Affairs.

Dr. Samuel Onyuma, Ag. Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Administration, Finance and Planning; Ms. Jane Muli, Senior Administrative Assistant; Ms. Veronica Mukiri, Senior Office Administrator; and Ms. Roselyne Mulefu, Senior Corporate Communication Officer, attended the handing-over ceremony.

DR. BARNABAS KURGAT APPOINTED TO HEAD THE DIRECTORATE OF RESEARCH, HUMAN RIGHTS AND GENDER

Dr. Barnabas Kurgat is the new Ag. Director, Directorate of Research, Human Rights and Gender. He holds a PhD in Agricultural Science (Climate Change Mitigation) from Humboldt University, Germany, a Master of Science in Agricultural Science in Tropics and Subtropics (Natural Resource Management) from the University of Hohnheim, Germany, and a Bachelor of Science in Natural Resource Management from Egerton University. He has substantially contributed to research, community outreach, and professional development. Prior to his appointment, he was the Chair of the Department, Earth Sciences in the School of Science and Applied Technology.



Prof. John Kanjogu handing over to Dr. Barnabas Kurgat

The handing over event from Prof. John Kanjogu who is now the Ag. Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academic, Research and Student Affairs took place on 9th January 2025. While handing over, Prof. Kanjogu expressed optimism that Dr. Kurgat's expertise and vision would help drive the Directorate forward towards achieving the University's Vision and Mission. We wish Dr. Kurgat success as he embarks on this new role.

The handing over ceremony was attended by staff from the Directorate and Ms. Roselyne Mulefu, Senior Corporate Communication Officer.

NEW COD APPOINTMENTS

No.	NAME	DEPARTMENT
1.	Dr. Veronica Kimani	Earth Sciences
2.	Dr. Babere Chacha	Social Studies
3.	Dr. Lucy Mureithi	Psychology, Counselling and Educational Foundations
4.	Dr. Benson Mobisa	Mathematics

STAFF WHO HAVE EXITED THE UNIVERSITY

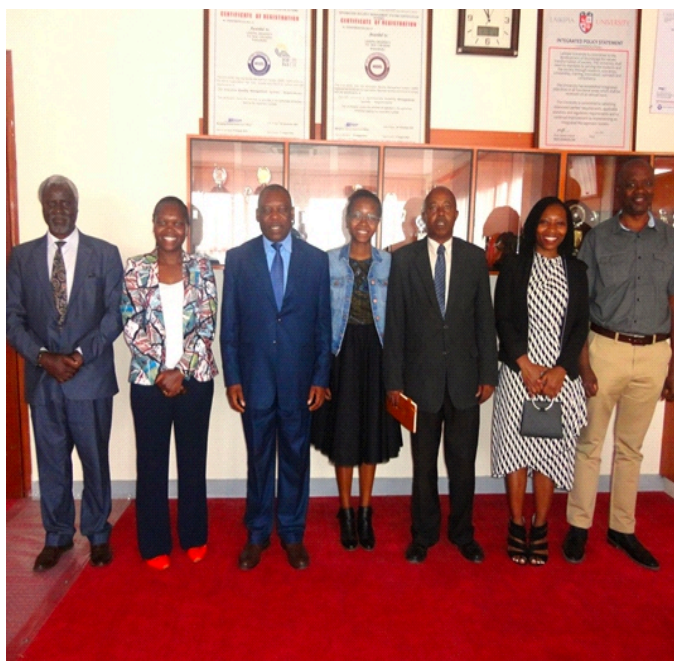
Staff who have exited the University from January 2024 to December 2024

No.	NAME	DEPARTMENT
1.	Regina Wairimu Kamande	Social Studies
2.	Samwel Chepkuto	Farm
3.	Dr. John Mathenge Kingau	Research Human Rights and Gender
4.	Raymond Kiptoo Ngetich	Curriculum and Educational Management
5.	Omar Nyamawi Ng'ala	Quality Assurance and Standards
6.	Andrew K. Cheruiyot	Medical
7.	Julia Wamuyu Mureithi	Library
8.	Peter Andakalu Mulari	Estates
9.	Lazarus Collins Odiango	Estates
10.	Cyrus Kimani Njogu	Medical
11.	Adams J. Amutavi	DVC, AFP
12.	Maurice Odhiambo Andango	Estates
13.	John Aramach Kuamu	Transport
14.	Francis Peter Wandere	Transport
14.	James Kipyego Kenduiyo	Security
16.	Rosemary Nyambura Kinuthia	Finance
17.	Florence Oyuga Omondi	Procurement
18.	John P. Odida Okiri	Graduate School
19.	Mary Nyambura Njuguna	Economics
20.	Magdalene Kotut	Halls
21.	Margaret Wairimu Gichohi	Library
22.	Catherine Waithera Munene	Social Studies

CAREER MENTORSHIP TO LAIKIPIA UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Laikipia University is committed to empowering its students and making them competitive professionals. The Directorate of TVET, Career Placement, Alumni and External Linkages, led by Dr. Naftal M Nyang'ara, held a career and mentorship session for our students on 9th January 2025. The forum aimed at equipping them with the right skills for the job market and entrepreneurial space.

The students received mentorship from Ms. Sarah Ndegwa, and Ms. Dolly Mbichira (World Bank, Washington, DC, USA), and Mr. Thomas Nyambane (United Nations). The officials also paid a courtesy call to the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Kibett Rotich, and Ag. Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academic, Research and Student Affairs, Prof. John Kanjogu. We encourage our students to always take advantage of such career mentorship opportunities.



Prof. Kibett Rotich, Dr. Naftal Nyang'ara, Ms. Sarah Ndegwa, Prof. John Kanjogu, Ms. Dolly Mbichira and Thomas Nyambane posing for a group photo during a courtesy call at the Vice Chancellors' Office



Group photo for trainer and trainees

Q&A With Our Trailblazers

This segment features Laikipia University staff and students making a difference in their daily mandate, featuring **Mr. Benson Obwanga** - Lecturer of the Department of Biological and Biomedical Science Technology



Tell us more about yourself

I hold a BSc in Applied Aquatic Sciences, an MSc in Limnology (Egerton University), and a PhD Fellow (Fisheries and Aquaculture Science) at Maseno University Faculty of Agriculture and Food Security. I am also an Environmental Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) expert.

My current research focuses on strategies for securing food and nutritional security among low-income populations in Kenya through climate-smart innovations in aquaculture production systems. Currently, I am partnering with partners from Kenya and Wageningen University, Netherlands to implement projects by working with small-scale farmers, women, and youth groups to produce Spirulina using organic manure (poultry, cow dung, goat, sheep, and pig). We are also implementing a project on the Affordable Aquaculture Circulatory System (A-RAS), which is solar-powered and uses minimal space for intensive fish production. The projects run in Mumias Western Kenya and select Sub-counties in Nyeri County. I am also keen on biodiversity conservation both in terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems.

What is your role in Laikipia University and how does it help the University achieve its Vision and Mission

I am a lecturer in the Department of Biological and Biomedical Science Technology. I have research networks and collaborations in universities and institutions in Africa (Ethiopia & Uganda), Europe (Italy, Austria, Netherlands & Serbia), Asia (Middle East-Palestine), and Kenya. My research, on training, consultancy, and dissemination activities impact the nurturing and transforming the world. For instance, I am in a team of researchers from Ethiopia, Palestine, Italy, and Serbia implementing the BREEDTECH project which seeks to build the capacity of students, faculty, and laboratory infrastructure in plant breeding and biotechnology education and research through partnerships in Europe, Asia, and Africa. This project will build capacity and improve research infrastructure in collaborating institutions including Laikipia University. Equally, I have been involved in the "Food and Nutrition Security for the Global South". The project focuses on innovations that ensure sustainability in food security and livelihoods among low-income populations and communities, while at the same time mitigating and adapting to climate change challenges. Through these projects and programs, I have been able to collaborate with other partners like KMFRI-Kenya, NASIO TRUST and FORSPA-Kenya, and Kenya Fisheries, to provide training, research, and extension to students, staff and target members of the community in Kenya, Uganda, and Ethiopia.

What are your best achievements and contributions to Laikipia University on the research and innovation front?

The biggest achievement was securing a grant in a consortium of 11 partner institutions drawn from Asia, Africa, and Europe through the BREEDTECH Project funded by the European Union where Egerton University is the Lead Institution. The Consortium secured a total grant of Euros (€787,575), equivalent to (Ksh.106,590,400.50), part of the money will be used for capacity building for select Laikipia University staff and students through research and training in Kenya, Italy, and Serbia. Additionally, through the Food and Nutrition Security for the Global South" and the "Feeding Cities and Migration Settlement Projects", my research partners and I developed the A-RAS system an affordable intensive fish production system that uses solar power instead of electricity.

This work is captured in two short documentaries one produced for the Embassy of the Kingdom of Netherlands (https://youtu.be/8wxEkbtEXhQ?si=-sPCjqTA81_aZiuj) the other on the process for Wageningen University and will be available in January 2025.

Previous works have also been documented in a short documentary which can be found on this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2MYOUZdjKVs&t=1s>. I also did a virtual presentation at a High-Level UN Food System Summit held in New York.

[The presentation can be accessed at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b4oGoYuCnJ0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b4oGoYuCnJ0). Two documentaries are in process and will be ready in January 2025.

What are the main challenges hindering many universities in Kenya from securing funds and being self-sustainable?

Several challenges hinder faculty from securing funds and being self-sustainable. Key among them are the lack of strong research teams, failure to timely prepare research proposals for calls in, poor research infrastructure (laboratories, etc) specifically in young universities to host students and visiting researchers lack of programs, lack of awareness of potential research grant and consultancy calls, failure of researchers to implement research objectives and deliver research deliverables, lack of knowledge on current/trending and fundable research themes, changes in global interests and funding priorities.

What are your suggestions and advice to researchers who are trying to secure funds for their different projects? Is there a specific niche of special interests and topics which can secure faster funding from global partners?

Every specialization can easily plug into current global research trends from the arts and social sciences or the Natural Sciences.

The current funding focuses on climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts in Middle and Low-Income Countries (MLIC). These diverse themes have been identified including climate change and food and nutrition security, capacity building in mitigation and adaptation, gender and youth issues, the possible impact of climate change on human-wildlife conflict, human conflict for grazing grounds and livestock watering points, etc. Researchers can therefore strategize to plug into these opportunities.

What advice would you like to share with researchers aiming to tackle current global challenges like climate change, food insecurity, unemployment, etc?

Researchers should collaborate and partner in multidisciplinary teams to have a multi-dimensional approach to deliver sustainable solutions. For instance, researchers from applied sciences could produce groundbreaking innovations that would need experts from the social sciences and the linguists to help communicate their research to the community in a way they understand.

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