



UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

A Centre of Excellence in the Heart of Africa

Office of the Vice Chancellor

VICE CHANCELLOR'S SPEECH AT THE 24TH GRADUATION CEREMONY

28th JULY 2023

- The Guest of Honour, Rt. Rev. Dr. Dunstan Kopoliano Bukenya.
- The Chancellor of Uganda Christian University and Archbishop of the Church of the Province of Uganda, The Most Rev. Dr Stephen Kaziimba.
- The Deputy Chief Justice of the Republic of Uganda, Justice Richard Buteera.
- Honourable Ministers.
- Members of Parliament.
- Our Lord Bishops and Trustees of Uganda Christian University.
- The Chairperson of the University Council, Rt. Rev. Prof. Alfred Olwa, and Members of the University Council.
- Representatives from Cultural Institutions.
- The Resident District Commissioner, Mukono District.
- Deputy Vice Chancellors and Members of University Management.
- Local Government Leaders.
- Staff of UCU and UCU Partners.
- The Guild President of UCU.
- Parents, Guardians, invited guests and graduating students.

1. Welcome and Greetings

Warm greetings in Christ from the UCU Management, UCU Community, my wife Mama Patience, and the entire family. I welcome you all to the first session of the 24th graduation ceremony. Congratulations to you all, our graduating students! This is a special day for you, your parents, guardians, and sponsors.

UCU also welcomes back Bishop Dunstan Kopoliano Bukenya, one of the 'historicals' that pioneered the vision to transform the former Bishop Tucker Theological College (BTTC) into Uganda Christian University (UCU) in 1997. In fact, he is renowned for planting the first signage for UCU, for being the first University Secretary, and for spearheading the establishment of the now famous UCU Law School by unilaterally writing its first draft Law curriculum. Bishop Bukenya, UCU honours you for your contribution and we are proud of you.

Today 1,006 students are graduating, 562 females (56%) and 444 males (44%). Of these, 29 have obtained First Class degrees (18 Females and 11 Males). Eyob Yohana Ghebrekristos of Bachelor of Dental Surgery is the overall best student; she scored a CGPA of 4.71. She is also the best female student and the best student in Sciences. The best male student is Wilson Wanyama of Bachelor of Development and Social Entrepreneurship with a CGPA of 4.64 and he is the best Arts student as well.

Table 1. Statistics for graduating students, 28 July 2023

	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
Number of Students	562	444	1,006
Percentage (%)	56	44	100
First Class	18	11	29

2. Graduation of pioneer students of Medicine and Dentistry

This is a special ceremony for UCU because 44 of our pioneer students of Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery and 9 of Bachelor of Dental Surgery are graduating today. This is exciting news for us as we send out our first crop of doctors in the medical field. We congratulate them and their parents/guardians and sponsors. In a special way, we honour Dr. Edward Kanyesigye for the great work he did as the pioneer Dean of the UCU School of Medicine, and the team of dedicated Doctors who worked with him. We also thank Dr. Rose Mutumba, the Medical Director of Mengo Hospital (our medical training partners) together with her hospital administrators and specialists who have supported the two Schools from the very beginning. Special thanks to our Uganda Partners (USA) for mobilizing funds and equipment for the two Schools; the former UCU Council and administration for starting this vision; and we also salute the current Deans Dr. Gerald Tumusiime and Dr. James Magara and their teams of medical and dental specialists, for nurturing these Schools into formidable centres of excellence in medical training. We honour all those who have helped to make this dream a reality.

3. UCU Staff who have won accolades and those that have been promoted

We congratulate our members of staff for the following achievements:

- (a) The Vice Chancellor of UCU was elected to the international Board of Directors of the Hanseatic League of Universities (HLU) at its Third Annual Conference held at Florida Gulf Coast University in the USA from 15th to 17th May 2023. He was also elected to the Governing Council of the national Federation of Uganda Employers (FUE).
- (b) The Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs was elected Chairperson of the Research and Education Network for Uganda (RENU). RENU is a key internet service provider for universities in Uganda.
- (c) The Dean of the School of Education, Rev. Canon Assoc. Prof. Olivia Banja, was appointed Vice Chancellor of Ndejje University.
- (d) Assoc. Prof. Martin Mwanje Lwanga, former Dean of the UCU School of Business, was appointed Director General of Eastern and Southern African Management Institute (ESAMI) in Arusha, Tanzania.
- (e) Assoc. Prof. Peter Nyende of Bishop Tucker School of Divinity and Theology has published a book titled, *The Restoration of God's Dwelling and Kingdom* (Langham 2023).
- (f) Prof. Monica Balya Chibita, Dean of the School of Journalism, Media and Communication, was recognized by the Uganda Media Women's Association for her contribution to the field of media and communication in Uganda.
- (g) Rev. Canon Assoc. Prof. Edison Muhindo Kalengyo was promoted to full Professor of New Testament in Bishop Tucker School of Divinity and Theology.

- (h) Rev. Dr. Andrew David Omona, Dean of the School of Social Sciences, was promoted to Associate Professor of Ethics and International Relations.
- (i) Dr. Erisa Kigenyi Mazaki was appointed Principal of Mbale University College.
- (j) The Director of Student Affairs at UCU, Mrs. Bridget Mugasira Mugume, was appointed Dean of Students at Kyambogo University.
- (k) The University Chaplain, Rev. Canon Eng. Paul Wasswa Ssembiro, has won a scholarship from Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky, USA, to do a Doctor of Ministry degree effective August 2023.
- (l) The Assistant Chaplain of UCU, Rev. Dr. Lydia Nsaale Kalungi Kitayimbwa, was appointed Chaplain of St. Francis Chapel, Makerere University.
- (m) Rev. Dr. Samuel Opol who has been Senior Lecturer at the Bishop Tucker School of Divinity and Theology, was appointed Chaplain of Soroti University.
- (n) Dr. Jonathan Tumwebaze, Coordinator of Uganda Studies Programme, obtained a PhD in Public Policy from the University of Pretoria in South Africa.
- (o) Dr. Andrew Nalumenya graduated with a PhD in Systematic Theology from North-West University in South Africa.
- (p) Three of our academic staff at the School of Law (Winnie Kwagala, Isaac Mpirwe and Paul Kalondo) have been appointed as Grade One Magistrates.

We wish all of them success in their new positions and careers.

4. Infrastructure developments

We continue to make strides in improving Campus infrastructure as indicated below:

(a) Planned infrastructure projects

The University Council has approved new infrastructure projects to be constructed soon at UCU. These include new student residences at Mukono and Kampala Campuses, as well as construction of Senate Building, the university's main administrative building. Management has already concluded a space needs assessment plan for the buildings. Our architect has completed a project plan detailing the scope, feasibility, and estimated costs for Senate Building, and he is now working on the project plan for student residences. The Chapel Council has also contracted an architect to design the new University Chapel. We will consult key stakeholders when all the architectural designs are ready.

(b) New Kampala Campus building

Construction of a new academic building at Kampala Campus is almost complete. The building will provide more teaching, learning and recreational space for students studying at Kampala Campus.

(c) Construction of parking lots and walkways

We have paved parking lots at Kivengere and Kivebulaya buildings and completed paving pedestrian walkways around those areas. This has enhanced the ambiance of the Main Campus. We plan to pave the parking lot at Pilkington building and renovate several old buildings. Our vision is to turn UCU into one of the most beautiful, cleanest, and organised, green campuses in the region.

5. Scholarships for needy students

On 15th June 2022, the UCU Chancellor launched the “10K Campaign” with the slogan, “*For Just 10K, Change a Life.*” The objective is to raise scholarship funds to support UCU students with great financial need. The campaign has already raised UGX 113,000,000 and it has supported 79 students. I encourage you to continue giving generously to enable a needy student to achieve his or her dream.

6. The UCU E-Campus vision

We continue to pursue the plan to turn UCU into a digital campus embracing ICTs in all its operations. We are constantly updating our home-grown Alpha MIS and utilising it in all our university operations. Various student groups have also held successful virtual elections using our e-voting system, *e-chagua*. These include Students’ Guild, UCU Law Society, and the Business Society.

7. New Laptop scheme for UCU students

Every student at UCU is required to own a laptop. Therefore, UCU, Equity Bank and CompConsult Technologies have rolled out a laptop loan product through which our students will be able to acquire a brand-new laptop directly from the manufacturer and pay for it over a period of 1-3 years. Students and their sponsors will pay in instalments agreed on with Equity Bank and CompConsult Technologies. The laptop will have insurance cover and a tracker to locate it in case of loss, and it will have a warranty of 3 years. This warranty covers all software and hardware defects. Interested students and parents can get more information on the laptop loan product from Equity Bank branches across the country, from the Directorate of Student Affairs, or contact CompConsult Technologies, the authorized partner for Dell, HP, Lenovo, and Acer computer brands.

8. Major successes from Colleges, Faculties and Schools

UCU Colleges, Schools and Faculties continue to report successes in several areas. We have put a lot of emphasis on writing fundable research projects, establishing mutually beneficial partnerships, and initiating innovations. Many scholars at UCU are already winning several research grants, publishing their research findings, and they are building national, regional, and international partnerships with reputable institutions. These efforts are already boosting UCU’s profile internationally.

For instance, in its recent release, UniRank ranked UCU in Number 3 position among universities in Uganda. UniRank ranks universities basing, inter alia, on their regulatory status, sound academic offerings, pedagogy, and modes of delivery, and they rely on independent, valid, non-influenceable web data. Web-based rankings of universities are not perfect, but we still have reason to rejoice for UCU’s ever-growing reputation among other universities.

(a) School of Journalism, Media and Communication

The School is part of a consortium of 6 African universities (including Makerere University) that are implementing a project worth UGX 3.3 Billion funded by the European Commission. The project, “Communicating Migration and Mobility E-Learning Programmes and Newsroom Applications for Sub-Sahara Africa,” is

focusing on building capacity for reporting migration and mobility across borders in Sub-Sahara Africa.

(b) School of Education

The School of Education, in partnership with Edify (a Christian organisation), has trained 600 Head Teachers and school proprietors from at least 10 districts of Uganda. They conducted the seminars in the areas of competence-based curriculum development, financial literacy, customer care, and integration of ICTs in education.

(c) School of Law

At the Law Development Centre (LDC) graduation ceremony held on 23rd June 2023, 20 UCU School of Law alumni graduated with First Class degrees. Of these, 10 appeared on the Director's List and were recognized for their outstanding performance. The overall best performing student was a UCU alumnus, Emmanuel Okia. The top four First Class LDC graduates were all from UCU: Emmanuel Okia, Shamira Kitimbo, Reagan Ahumuza, and Jemimah Jehopio. We congratulate them and wish them the very best in their legal practice.

(d) Faculty of Agricultural Sciences

- i) In November 2022, the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences won a grant of 749,000 Swedish Krona in partnership with the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU) and the International Centre for Insect Physiology (ICIPE). The project will establish a regional network for training scientists in field experimentation for 2 years.
- ii) A team led by Dr. Geoffrey Ssepuyya from the Department of Food Science and is collaborating with Uganda National Council for Science and Technology to develop a cricket feed product. The “*Food Waste-2-Cricket Feed*” project produces cricket feed from food waste and then turns the insects into a nutritious food supplement. This will help address hunger and malnutrition challenges in Sub-Sahara Africa. The project is supported by the Directorate of Research, Partnerships and Innovation.
- iii) In 2022, the Faculty released three varieties of African eggplant (*nakati*): UCUNAKATI 1(E16), UCUNAKATI 2(E15) and UCUNAKATI 3(E11) for commercialization at the 42nd National Variety Release Committee meeting of the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF). UCU owns these varieties, and they are registered in the National Variety list of Uganda. These varieties are eligible for certification and marketing in accordance with section 9(8) of the Seed and Plant Act, 2006.
- iv) The Faculty has introduced 3 new programmes at post-graduate and undergraduate levels. These include a PhD in Agricultural Systems and Value Chain Management, and a blended 3-year programme that targets professionals looking to address various challenges in the agricultural and food systems value chain. Other new programmes include a Master of Science in Agricultural Economics, a blended 2-year programme; and a Bachelor of Science in Human Nutrition and Dietetics, a blended 4-year degree programme.

(e) Bishop Tucker School of Divinity and Theology

- i) With support from our Australian partners (Local Leaders International) the School successfully conducted a three-day staff training on the integration of faith in learning and service. UCU managers, academic staff, Assistant Registrars and Administrators, benefited from this programme. The seminar equipped our staff with skills to seamlessly incorporate faith across various disciplines, course units, and extra-curricular activities.
- ii) BTSDT also conducted an online competence training for affiliate Colleges to enable co-teaching with academic staff at the Colleges. Each College will receive a smart screen and laptop to facilitate sharing of e-learning resources. Local Leaders International has provided an additional grant of UGX 194 million to BTSDT to set up a smart classroom to augment our e-learning efforts on the campus. We are grateful to them.
- iii) We have also received a donation of books worth UGX 22 million from the Theological Book Network (TBN) to expand our theology library resources.
- iv) We are working on establishing a partnership with the GAFCON Anglican Diocese of New England in Boston, USA, through which theology students will periodically go for block placement and cross-cultural ministry exposure in the Diocese for three months, beginning in September 2024.

(f) Faculty of Engineering, Design and Technology

- i) The Department of Engineering and Environment and Dartmouth College of Engineering in the USA have implemented a joint student-led project which has resulted in installation of an 800-litre solar water heating system at our kitchen. This project has equipped students with skills in renewable energy and experience of working in a multi-cultural, professional working engagement.
- ii) Responding to the local and international need for professionals in the fields of data science, artificial intelligence, mechatronics and robotics, the Department of Computing and Technology has started a strategic programme in Data Science and Analytics at undergraduate and post-graduate levels. These programmes are unique in East and Central Africa. We invite interested applicants to apply. The Department also signed a partnership agreement with Uganda Industrial Research Institute (UIRI) to offer practical training, research, apprenticeships, and technology incubation of UCU students' innovations. The first cohort of students of Electronics completed training at UIRI's mechatronics laboratory. The second cohort of fifteen Computer Science students is currently doing training at UIRI. We thank Prof. Charles Kwesiga, UIRI Executive Director, for supporting this research and innovation partnership with UCU.
- iii) The Department of Engineering and Environment in collaboration with Aksaray University in Turkey obtained an Erasmus+ grant of Euro 15,600 to support student and staff mobility for three years. The programme has supported 2 UCU students to undertake internship training at Aksaray University and 4 Engineering staff will be participating in an exchange programme with Aksaray University as well.

- iv) The Department and the Artefact Centre for Sustainable Development in Germany won a grant of Euro 30,000 under the Bingo project, to support installation of a 12m³ biogas plant at Mukono Campus. The project is currently supporting research in managing organic waste streams generated from the university's facilities. The research project has demonstrated how renewable energy and organic fertilizer can be recovered through integrated approaches to managing waste. The university kitchen is using the biogas produced by the plant for cooking.
- v) Under the DALILA project funded by the European Union, students in the School of Business and the Faculty of Engineering, Design and Technology successfully carried out a one-month internship training at Sapienza University in Italy and the University of Cadiz in Spain from January to February 2023. Five staff members also visited the University of Cadiz under the project.

(g) School of Social Sciences

The School had a successful exchange programme with Hanze University of Applied Sciences in The Netherlands which benefited 10 students and 2 staff from the Dutch Institute and some UCU students. The School initiated partnerships with Cedarville University and Antwerp University to start joint research programmes.

(h) Directorate of Postgraduate Studies

The Directorate has launched a new Centre for Research and Academic Writing Services (CRAWS) in collaboration with the Hamu Mukasa Library and University ICT Services. The Centre will train staff and graduate students to improve their research and academic writing skills, standardise the quality, branding and printing of UCU dissertations, and provide document editing and proofreading services to the UCU community and the public. CRAWS is developing an App which will be used to track the dissertation submission process from proposal to completion.

(i) Directorate of Students Affairs

UCU sports teams have maintained stellar performance in various games. The Men's Volleyball team was crowned champion in the volleyball category of the Eastern Africa University Games at Ndejje University. UCU won 20 Medals: 8 Gold, 7 Silver, and 5 Bronze. Three UCU athletes and a tennis player qualified for and are currently competing in the World University Games in Chengdu, China, from 26th July to 9th August 2023. UCU has also been selected among few universities to participate in the International University Sports Festival that will take place in Ekaterinburg, Russian Federation, from 16th August to 2nd September 2023. UCU will compete in the basketball 3x3 games (men and women), tennis (men), volleyball (women) and soccer (women). We thank all our sports students for raising the UCU and Uganda flags higher and higher.

(j) Africa Policy Centre

UCU's Africa Policy Centre has initiated a partnership with the Church in policy research, formulation, review and evaluation. The partnership will support

the Church as a key player in national development in its advocacy work, promoting evidence-based research, and policy formulation. APC will work with the Church in areas such as training in research, joint mobilization of resources, promotion and uptake of data, utilisation of information and communications technologies, and sharing of research results and policy briefs with government and other development agencies.

(k) Mbale University College

The College's Innovation Hub has continued to support the community and young entrepreneurs through training. Out of 15 entrepreneurs from the Innovation Hub who pitched their ideas during the NSSF Hi-Innovator women accelerator project in June 2023, 12 were successful. The winners received USD 20,000 each as seed funding to develop their businesses.

(l) Bishop Barham University College

BBUC will celebrate 100 years in 2024 and it has rolled out works to improve campus infrastructure, such as paving walkways. It also plans to construct more lecture rooms and renovate student housing. As part of the centennial celebrations, the College will launch a drive to raise UGX 500 million to support these infrastructural projects. Please support the fundraising drive.

(m) Arua Campus

Arua Campus plans to construct an academic building, the Bishop Orombi ICT Complex. It will house several facilities including the Campus innovation hub, e-learning centre, lecture rooms, and conference hall. The fundraising campaign is ongoing, and we appreciate your support.

9. Achievements by UCU Students and Alumni

- (a) Our UCU alumna Joyce Nakayenga earned a PhD in Engineering at Hiroshima University in Japan, where she has been retained as a post-doctoral researcher. Her research earned her the "Hiroshima Excellent Student Award."
- (b) Gloria Lynnette Kwagala, a UCU alumna who graduated with a degree in Procurement and Logistics Management in 2017, was awarded a scholarship to pursue a course in aviation at Uganda Aviation Academy. She secured a job at American Airlines, becoming the first female Ugandan to do so.
- (c) Jemimah Jehopio, a graduate of the UCU School of Law, was the most exceptional graduate at the 50th Law Development Centre (LDC) graduation ceremony held in June 2023. She scooped three top awards. Emmanuel Okia, another UCU Law School alumnus, excelled as the best Bar Course student with a CGPA of 4.90.
- (d) Two of our alumni, Emmanuel Apuun and Caroline Nyange Kihumuro, both graduates of Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA), were selected for the fourth cohort of the competitive scholarship programme by the Institute of Certified Public Accountants of Uganda (ICPAU).
- (e) An alumnus and former UCU lecturer, Mr. Isaac Christopher Lubogo, was recognized at the Africa Legal Tech Innovation Awards 2022 in Kenya with the "Best Legal Tech Researcher of the Year" award for his contribution to the field of Law. He has developed a platform dubbed "Suigeneris Law App" that is a handy digital research tool for students.

10. Conclusion

Our dear graduates, today marks a new journey in your lives. The knowledge, skills, competencies, attitudes, and values you have acquired at UCU will be very important throughout your career. Please nurture them because they set you apart as a UCU graduate. The world of work is beset with challenges, but we send you out as leaders with a difference, change-agents, and as conduits that God will use to transform people and communities.

UCU has prepared you to be an agent of positive change, so do not be part of the problem. Instead, be a problem-solver wherever you serve. Therefore, go forth into the world and aspire to achieve many more milestones beyond the university. God will make your dreams come true.

Assoc. Prof. Aaron Mushengyezi (PhD)
Vice Chancellor