



UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

A Centre of Excellence in the Heart of Africa

VICE CHANCELLOR'S SPEECH AT THE SECOND SESSION OF THE 23RD GRADUATION CEREMONY

28th OCTOBER 2022

The Guest of Honour, Gen. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, the President of the Republic of Uganda.

The Chancellor of Uganda Christian University and Archbishop of the Church of the Province of Uganda, The Most Rev. Dr Stephen Kaziimba.

My Lord Bishops and Trustees of Uganda Christian University.

Honourable Ministers and Members of Parliament.

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 Community, Mama Patience and my family. Happy Silver Jubilee to UCU! I welcome you all to the second session of the 23rd graduation ceremony. Congratulations to all of you, graduands! This is a special day for you, your parents, guardians, and sponsors.

Today 1,570 students are graduating, **828 females (53%)** and **742 males (47%)**. Of these, **36** have obtained First Class degrees. **Robert Cadribo**, a student of Bachelor of Education, is the overall best student and overall best male student with a **CGPA of 4.86**. The best overall female student is **Zainab Candiru** of Bachelor of Education with a **CGPA of 4.75**. The Best Science student is **Florence Kyoyagala** of Bachelor of Human Nutrition and Clinical Dietetics, with a **CGPA of 4.72** while **Robert Cadribo** is the Best Arts student. Congratulations to you all and your parents/guardians.

Table 1. Statistics for graduating students, October 2022.

	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
No. of Students	828	742	1,570
Percentage (%)	53	47	100
First Class Degrees	18	18	36

We are also glad to welcome back to UCU our former Vice Chancellors Rev. Prof. Stephen Noll and his wife Peggy Noll, and Rev. Canon Dr. John Senyonyi and his wife Lay Canon Dr. Ruth Senyonyi. Prof. Noll gave this year's Annual Public Lecture while Dr. Senyonyi was the discussant. We welcome former Chancellors, Bishops and Trustees of UCU, Council Chairpersons and Council members, Deputy Vice Chancellors, Senior Managers, and UCU partners.

2. UCU at 25 Years and Bishop Tucker Building at 100 years

This is also a special day for UCU as we celebrate its 25 years of providing a complete education to tens of thousands of great men and women who have passed through its gates. The iconic Bishop Tucker Building also clocked a centenary this year. In 1992, the House of Bishops of the Province of the Church of Uganda resolved to start a university, but that decision was implemented on 5th October 1997 when UCU was established as a university. In May 2004, it became the first chartered private University in Uganda and currently, it has about 13,000 students. It has received acclaim as the most beautiful Christian university in Africa and the cleanest in Uganda.

Although we are celebrating a Silver Jubilee for UCU's status as a university, this institution is 109 years old. It started as Bishop Tucker Theological College (BTTC) that was established by missionaries led by Alfred Robert Tucker in 1913. It is the oldest institution of higher learning in Uganda and probably the second in East Africa, after St. Paul's Divinity School in Kenya (now St. Paul's University) which was founded in 1903. All universities begin as small colleges or institutes; Makerere University started as Uganda Technical College in 1922 and it became a national university as we know it today in 1970. In my view, therefore, our official documents should state that UCU was founded in 1913.

We are forever indebted to the men and women who conceived the UCU vision and those who made it happen. We celebrate you. You will read more about UCU's history and milestones in the newspapers today. I look at UCU and the institution that preceded it from St. Paul's imagery of a "seed" in 1 Corinthians chapter 3 verses 6-8:

I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labour.

Just as St. Paul and Apollos played a key role as co-workers in the growth of the early church in Ephesus and Corinth, many of you here (and those who departed this world) were instrumental in planting and watering the UCU seed. We recognised many of them yesterday. The House of Bishops led by Archbishop Livingstone Mpalanyi Nkoyoyo approved and launched the university; Bishop Eliphaz Maari who was Principal of BTTC then led the transition to UCU as Acting Vice Chancellor; while Stephen Noll, John Senyonyi and Aaron Mushengyezi have served as first, second and third Vice Chancellor respectively. Four Chancellors have nurtured UCU: Archbishops Livingstone Nkoyoyo, Henry Luke Orombi, Stanley Ntagali, and Stephen Samuel Kaziimba, supported by many Chairpersons and Members of the University Council, Deputy Vice Chancellors, and other senior university leaders. Thus, many have planted and watered the UCU seed, but God has made it grow to what it is today.

Since its establishment, UCU has been a university of “firsts”: it was the first private university to get a charter; it is the cleanest campus in Uganda and the most beautiful Christian university in Africa; it issues certificates and transcripts on graduation day; it is famous for sports excellence; it has won more National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) awards than any other university; it excelled in e-learning during the COVID-19 pandemic; it pioneered e-voting for Guild elections; it pioneered the three-semester system, and it is the first university in Uganda to develop and use its own management information system. Therefore, we salute all of you who have contributed to the UCU vision. Ebenezer, thus far the Lord has helped us (I Samuel 7:12).

3. UCU Staff who have won accolades

We congratulate members of staff for the following achievements:

- (a) Dr. Angella Napakol, Head of Research and Partnerships at the Directorate of Research, Partnerships and Innovation, has co-edited another book with Dr. Carol Azungi Dralega from NLA University College (Norway) titled, *COVID-19 and the Media in Sub-Saharan Africa: Media Viability, Framing and Health Communication*. This is their second book in 2022. We also applaud UCU staff who contributed chapters to this volume.
- (b) Dr. Miriam G. Mutabazi, Dean of the Faculty of Public Health, Nursing and Midwifery, in collaboration with Save the Mothers East Africa, McMaster University (Canada) and Makerere University have released a publication titled, “Sexual and reproductive health and rights of ‘last mile’ adolescents: A scoping review.” It is available online in the National Library of Medicine.
- (c) Rev. Canon Assoc. Prof. Olivia Nassaka Banja, the outgoing Dean of the UCU School of Education, has been appointed Vice Chancellor of Ndejje University.

4. Infrastructure Successes Registered this Year

Despite the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, we have made strides in improving Campus infrastructure:

(a) The Rock Kingdom facility

We are grateful for The Rock Kingdom ministry for blessing UCU with a new facility and land on Besania Hill. We thank these missionaries for loving UCU.

(b) Kivengere parking lot and walkways

We have constructed a parking lot at Kivengere building, and improvements on pedestrian walkways around Kivengere and Maari blocks are ongoing.

(c) Kampala Campus

After roaming in different rented properties in the city over the years, in July 2022 Kampala Campus moved to our property that we purchased along Musajja Alumbwa Road in Mengo. Construction of a new teaching facility at the site will be completed soon.

(d) E-Campus vision

Our students continue to have seamless access to all available online resources and services, such as the Moodle e-learning platform, application and registration for the semester, and seamless access to their results as soon as Senate approves them. They elect their Guild Government online using the homegrown voting platform, *e-Chagua*. UCU has also rolled out an online internship assessment tool that allows our students to conveniently log their internship experience online, and they can be assessed online by their supervisors. This has proven cost effective, and it fits well in our vision of evolving into an e-campus.

(e) Student accommodation

Courtesy of a partnership agreement with the Ankrah Foundation early this year, we have expanded our accommodation facilities to Besania hill, where some of our

students will have access to premium residential space. Our School of Business also moved to its new home at the Ankrah Complex.

5. Scholarships for Needy Students: The “10K Campaign”

On 15th June 2022, the Chancellor launched the “10K Campaign” with the slogan, “*For Just 10K, Change a Life.*” The objective is to raise scholarship funds to support the training of more clergy, ordinands, children of the clergy and other needy students enrolled at UCU, whose sponsors have been mainly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. So far, we have raised about UGX 31.8 million. Collection bags are going around, so please give generously to enable a needy student to attain a degree at UCU. You can make their dreams come true.

6. Presidential Pledges

We thank Your Excellency for supporting UCU. During your visit to the campus in February 2020 at the launch of the Guild Run you pledged the following:

- (a) To improve security for our students through installation of security lights in the Campus and surrounding roads (Bishop Tucker, Cathedral and Ankrah). Mukono Municipality and Ministry of Local Government responded and installed lights on a section of Bishop Tucker Road. We eagerly await installation of more lights.
- (b) To assist UCU secure utilisation of her land in Ntawo, without resistance from the squatters. We thank the former Head of State House Anti-Corruption Unit, Lt. Col. Edith Nakalema, for deploying a Police Unit to monitor the land.
- (c) To request UNRA to upgrade Bishop Tucker Road to Mandela National Stadium via Namanve Industrial Park to bitumen standard. We pray that UNRA will fulfil its promise to pave this road as a priority.

7. News from Colleges, Faculties and Schools

UCU Colleges, Schools and Faculties continue to report success in several areas. We have put a lot of emphasis on research grants, partnerships and innovations, and many scholars at UCU are already winning several grants:

(a) School of Journalism, Media and Communication

The School has registered a number of achievements:

- i) The School recruited its second Professor, James Kiwanuka-Tondo, from North Carolina State University, in the area of health communication. We welcome him to UCU. Today, the School Dean, Prof. Monica Balya Chibita, will be inducted as a Fellow of the Uganda National Academy of Sciences. Congratulations to her.
- ii) Monica was part of a Team led by Prof. Pontiano Kaleebu (UVRI) and Prof. Alison Eliot that won the NIHR Global Health Research Group on Vaccines for vulnerable people in Africa (Vanguard) project, worth £2,984,447 (Euro 3,422,698.30). It focuses on studying how communities can benefit fully from vaccination programmes in Kenya and Uganda.
- iii) Prof. Chibita and Mr. John Semakula, the Head of Undergraduate Studies at the School, are part of a team that won the ERASMUS Project worth Euro 799,974 focusing on capacity building and partnerships for transformation of journalism education in higher education.
- iv) Dr. Emilly Maractho, a Senior Lecturer at the School, published a report titled, “Enhancing the value of short-term volunteer missions in health from host country perspectives: The case of Uganda.” The report is the result of a collaborative health research between UCU and Lehigh University in the US.
- v) *The Standard*, our community newspaper, went digital last year. Apart from the online paper, the platform also features a regular podcast. Additionally, undergraduate students at the School started an online TV Channel called *UCU*

Focus TV. The channel runs a weekly news bulletin and a range of other programmes.

- vi) The School also actively supports staff and student mobility. Mr. John Semakula visited Hanze University on a short-term staff exchange programme, while two MA students visited NLA University College for one semester on an Erasmus+ funded student exchange programme.

(b) School of Education

The School of Education has launched the first-ever Writing Centre in a university in Uganda. Writing is at the centre of academia, and so it is important that we constantly work at improving this skill among students and staff. The Centre was the brainchild of the Vice Chancellor, and we are grateful to Prof. Tom Deans, a Fulbright scholar from the University of Connecticut (USA), who helped us to write its concept and structure. We also thank the Muriel Lile Trust (USA) for the donation of \$10,000 through Uganda Partners to set up the centre. I encourage both students and staff to utilize the Writing Centre to improve their writing skills.

(c) Bishop Tucker School of Divinity and Theology

Bishop Tucker School of Divinity and Theology has secured a grant to set up a video conferencing centre, courtesy of a donation of UGX 130 million from Local Leaders International (Australia). This project will improve theological training at UCU.

(d) Faculty of Public Health, Nursing and Midwifery

Through the Maternal and Child Health Department and Save the Mothers East Africa, the School has received and disbursed USD 184,600 (UGX 683,018,994) toward the following causes:

- i) Establishing 5 Maternity High Dependency Units that use digital technology to monitor mothers with complications in the referral hospitals of Mbale, Jinja, Tororo, Mityana, Nakaseke and Mildmay. This is courtesy of the Jeff Family in Canada who are very good friends of UCU. We thank them for the generosity.
- ii) Providing emergency medicines or PPEs that save the lives of mothers and their babies at six health facilities including Kagando Mission hospital, Boroboro Health Centre III, Mityana General Hospital, Mbale People's Hospital, Mukono General Hospital and Nakaseke General hospital. This grant is courtesy of Leila Reader Jones Foundation.
- iii) Providing neonatal incubators used for the survival of both premature babies and sick new-borns at five health facilities of Buikwe St. Charles Lwanga Mission Hospital, Tororo General Hospital, Mityana General Hospital and Nakaseke General Hospital.
- iv) Working with four districts in the dioceses of North Mbale and Mbale to reach out to 1,056 postnatal mothers and their babies through domiciliary services to the hard-to-reach homes at the top of Mt. Elgon.
- v) Supporting the dioceses of North Mbale and the Mbale women's SACCO to implement a community health insurance programme in the two districts of Manafwa and Sironko.
- vi) Training mothers and their daughters in the slum area of Naguru on financial literacy for better income management and sexual and reproductive health rights from a biblical world view. We are grateful to St. Joseph's Hospital (Canada) for supporting this cause.

(e) Bishop Barham University College

The College will hold a graduation ceremony on 2nd December 2022 at its campus in Kabale. Students at the College competed in Kabale District Tertiary Institutions Gala

and won three trophies in volleyball, women's football, and athletics. Two UCU girls have been selected to join the Uganda Lady Cranes national team. In addition, two staff members at the college successfully completed a farming training program in Zimbabwe. The training offered will help BBUC's agricultural demonstration farm flourish. We thank Brian Kluth for supporting this cause. The College is also collaborating with the Canadian Institute of Mass Communication on a project, "Capacity Building for a Sustainable e-learning Environment at BBUC." This partnership will promote research, information exchange, and training in mass communication.

(f) Mbale University College

MUC plans to expand the computer laboratory and the innovations hub, construct a recreation facility, and purchase a college bus, and we have been fundraising for this cause. So far, we have raised UGX 247,538,400. We thank Your Excellency the President for the contribution of UGX 200 million.

(g) Faculty of Agricultural Sciences

The faculty of Agricultural Sciences has started a PhD in Agricultural Systems and Value Chain Management. The three-year programme will be taught using blended pedagogy. The Faculty recently lost Dr. Steven Kashub Tumwesigye, its former Head of the Food Science and Nutrition Department. He was a brilliant scholar who invented a biodegradable plastic bag made from cassava peels, that earned him national recognition. We salute him for his innovation.

(h) School of Social Sciences

Rotary Vijana Poa and the School of Social Sciences are establishing the Rotary-UCU Vijana Poa Entrepreneurship Centre, which will enable many students to start and grow their start-ups. So far, 11 students have completed a short course on *Enterprise development and mindset change* under this arrangement. This is a positive step in tackling youth unemployment.

(i) Research Ethics Committee

UCU Research Ethics Committee (UCU-REC) has been accredited by the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the office for Human Research Protection (OHRP) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). This means that scholars from the USA doing research in Uganda can get approval from UCU-REC, and their study findings will be recognized in the USA.

(j) Directorate of Students Affairs

UCU sports teams have maintained stellar performance in various games. The Lady Canons were crowned champions of the 2022 Women National Basketball League. Rose Akon, a student of Bachelor of Science in Accounting and Finance, was the best Defensive Player, Rebounder, and Most Valuable Player. Last week, we flagged off the Canons and Lady Canons to Turkey to compete in the International University Sports Federation (FISU) World Cup 3x3 Basketball Games. They are representing Africa. So far, UCU Canons have won 2 out of 3 games in Istanbul and have qualified for the knock-out stage. We wish them more victories.

8. Achievements by UCU Students and Alumni

- (a) Uganda Law Society:** Mr. Bernard Oudo, a UCU graduate, was elected President of Uganda Law Society.

- (b) **National Youth Parliament:** UCU has produced the last three Speakers of the National Youth Parliament (NYP). Mariah Speriah Nakigudde, a UCU Law student, was elected the fifth Speaker of NYP this year.
- (c) **HIV/AIDS Advocacy Initiative:** Our Kampala Campus Law student, Brendan Katushabe, launched a not-for-profit initiative called *Own Your Future*. It seeks to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS among young people at universities and other higher education institutions. We thank Mama Janet Museveni for launching the initiative on 13th August 2022.
- (d) **Stanbic Bank National School Championship:** Rosemary Marion Ndyemanya, a student at our School of Business, won the Stanbic Bank entrepreneurship competition under the theme, “Empowering tomorrow’s job creators.” Her “Anya Wrist” jewellery company concept won the “Alum-grow” category.
- (e) **World Vision Uganda:** Derrick Kyatuka, an alumnus of the UCU School of Journalism, Media and Communication (now an MA student in Strategic Communication), was voted employee of the Year by World Vision Uganda in September 2022.

9. Conclusion

Our dear graduates, go out into the world and raise the UCU flag by demonstrating excellence in word and action, making the most of the knowledge and skills you gained at UCU. Let your light shine at the workplace and strive to be a better leader who makes a difference in the communities. The world needs leaders who will make a difference, who will provide answers to humanity's challenges. We will cheer you on as you conquer the world and achieve greater feats for God on the road ahead of you. You will make it because God will go ahead of you.

Assoc. Prof. Aaron Mushengyezi (PhD)
VICE CHANCELLOR

1 SAMUEL 7:12