

DEPUTY VICE CHANCELLOR FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALLY RECEIVING BOOKS AND ITEMS DONATE BY UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA CANADA

I wish on behalf of the Counselling and Guidance Centre to welcome you to our home. We are glad to receive you.

The Counselling and Guidance Centre is one of the young units of the University that has been growing steadily.

The counselling services were started by staff members who were providing the service as a voluntary service in the 1970's until 1987 when the Centre was officially recognised by the University. In 2005 the Centre attained an autonomous status under the Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor Finance and Administration.

The Centre was located in the University Hospital than 2009 when the University Council allocated Plot 106 Mary Stuart Road to the Counselling and Guidance Centre. We officially attained the premises in January 2012 and we are glad we are close to the community we serve. This has increased our visibility and accessibility. It has also increased the number of people receiving services and created more awareness of the services. Inspite of this we still need to do more as I will highlight further.

What do we do and why should we exist?

The University focus is academics which require an individual with a sound mind and of course body. The Centre therefore serves both staff/families and students to address mental health/emotional issues and hence be more productive the community would be unhealthy without mental health hence affirming the British 2010 Policy states "Health without Mental Health" I wish to assert that the health and productivity of us all is grossly dependant on our state of mental health.

We are here to provide counselling and guidance services in all forms individual, group, online counselling, etc so that all people within the university enjoy maximum mental health and be productive. Our service supports the university in attaining the three cores as stipulated in the 2008/09 -2018/19 strategic plan.

We do this through providing counselling and guidance services to the university community and the prospective members of the university community and the entire Ugandan education sector.

We contribute towards the global body of knowledge on the quality of human life, we provide a variety of services based on the availability of both human and financial resources.

What have we achieved so far?

1. We have been able to lobby and acquire the current status.
2. We are serving thousands of students every year right from orientation talks throughout their stay at the university not to mention the staff and their families.
3. We have acquired our own space/premise where we are now and we have tried to make it a good place although much work awaits to be done to do renovation and we plan for a modern counselling facility. On this note I wish to thank you for supporting us to come up with the architectural design and also ensuring that it is included in the University Master Plan.
4. We have been made a self accounting unit several years ago our budget was part of the Vice Chancellor's budget. However, in spite of this accessing finance to run the Centre's activities is one the hardest tasks for me.
5. We have written a number of proposals and recently one of them was successful. The Project is called KAPAUFG and I am the Principal Investigator with co-investigators from School of Public Health, Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics. I hope this study will enable us and the Directorate of Health Services to plan better for services related to reproductive health of female students.
6. We have built a number of partnerships within the University, in Uganda and abroad. We have partnerships with University of Missouri St. Louis, University of Syracuse, university of Cape Town and now the University of British Columbia Canada.

In Uganda we have had working relations with Uganda Insurers Association and have also built very rewarding relations with CEDAT, where we have been able to get the architectural design be made and the art pieces in our compound. The School of Computing donated to us 50 chairs and we are still partnering with more academic and administrative units to promote our university and enhance the wellbeing of its members.

Challenges

1. The Centre has lean staff which needs to be beefed up with more skilled, enthusiastic, creative and motivated people. We are currently three staff one of them having managerial responsibilities
2. The Centre has huge challenges of finances. We have a small budget per annum but it is even harder to get that money that is budgeted for. Next financial year we shall operate on a budget of 41 million shillings.

We humbly request that we are allowed to get our own account and receive quarterly remittances so that we can quickly receive the funds to carry out the Centre activities.

3. The Centre facilities are grossly lacking. The building requires renovation because at the moment the building is leaking and the doors are weak which predisposes the items to being stolen. The internet services are not available, the computers are lacking and the counselling rooms need to be worked on to create the right ambience.
4. The counselling services are not known by all potential beneficiaries. Some have wrong information and others do not know because they don't attend orientation talks and do not access the university website. We do not have a sign post. The one we had made was cut out on the promise that they were to provide uniform sign posts which and we have waited for two years.

What do we want to do?

We want to provide better services.

1. We want to create more awareness through enhancing our website, visiting colleges, schools and administrative units.

2. We want to strengthen our partnerships and build more partnerships
3. We want to continue writing proposals to all possible development partners.
4. We want to increase the income of the Centre through utilizing the space offered by the university and selling out our services to companies and schools plus lobbying the University for more funding.
5. We realise there is a lot of undone work among students and staff. We want to have
 - a. Graduate support programmes for graduate students
 - b. Staff programmes
 - c. Weekly programmes for students
 - d. Support the training of graduate students in counselling and clinical psychology and the resources we have received are to support us in that.
 - e. Outreaches to hostels, halls and academic units.
 - f. Online support services
 - g. Beef up the career counselling services and linking students to the world of work.
 - h. Specialised programmes like alcohol and drug addiction.
6. It is a requirement for each counsellor to undergo continuous professional development annually. The staff at the Centre have not been doing that for long and it's unethical we want staff to be taking up courses annually to be more effective in their work.
7. We wish to request for your support in putting in place a Counselling Policy.

Finally, I wish to thank you very much for your support to the Centre and to request you to continue offering us your support and guidance.