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Uganda: Makerere Professor Retirement Worries

BY AGNES NANTAMBI, 24 JULY 2012

Fourteen Makerere University science professors have retired after turning 60 years of age, which is the retirement age. The 14 professors who formally retired last Friday are all from the Makerere University College of Natural Science (CoNas). They will however continue serving Makerere University on a contract basis for another year.

According to the Principal of the college, Prof. J Y T Mugisha, there were 12 professors and 11 associate professors out of the 139 teaching staff at the college.

Out of the 12 professors, nine have retired. And out of the 11 Associate professors, five have also retired. This leaves the college with three professors and six associate professors.

The professors include, among others, Livingstone Serwadda Luboobi who was also the vice chancellor of the University. He has been renowned mathematics professor at the college.

Others are Professors Yusto Kaahwa (Physics) and Prof. Hannigton Oryem Origa of Botany who joined the university in 1974.

Both Luboobi and Kaahwa have been at Makerere University for over four decades - having joined the institution in 1970.

Speaking during their send-off dinner at Kampala Serena Hotel, Prof. Mondo Kagonyera, the Chancellor of Makerere University regretted that the University had retired high calibre scientists yet their services were still needed.

"Responsible people should design new methods of retiring workers basing on some one's ability to perform," Prof. Kagonyera said.

"We cannot stand this, losing these experienced people yet we have no hope of replacing them in the near future," he added.

He lamented that although science professors are needed in the academia, they are poorly remunerated and therefore difficult to attract and recruit.

Kagonyore said they will have problem replacing them considering that they are on high demand in universities.

Prof. Kagonyera described their retirement as a blow to Makerere University and a great loss to the college and students who are undertaking sciences.

Mugisha said it is a big challenge as they have not been able to get applicants whenever they have advertised these positions.

"The College of Natural Science is dedicating time to celebrate and pay tribute to the committed service rendered to us by these gallant scientists who have served us in various capacities," Prof. Mugisha said.

He explained their dedicated supervision has left behind a total of 87 PhDs and 95 MScs in various fields.

"Their dedicated efforts as well the research grants they won have laid a firm foundation for the future and greatly aided the internationalisation aspects of the university." he explained.

Eng. Dr Charles Wana-Etyem, the chairman of the University Council applauded the retiring professors for sacrificing their time to serve their country. "We appreciate that you did not abandon your country to serve abroad, because the life of an academia in a developing country is a

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sacrifice," he said.

Over the past few years, Makerere University has lost over 50 top lecturers including professors. Some courses, for example the master of journalism and communication, have been closed due to severe staff shortage. A number of departments have been forced to rely heavily on part-time lecturers.

As of early this year Makerere University had 74 professors and 150 associate professors. A university should have at least 60% of its staff as PhD holders, but Makerere had much less

Until recently a professor at Makerere was earning an average of sh1.8m per month.

On the contrary, lecturers earn an equivalent of sh6m in Kenya and sh7.2m in Tanzania per month, according to Dr. Tanga Odoi, the academic staff association boss. .

RETIRED PROFESSORS

- 1. Livingstone Serwadda Luboobi - Mathematics
- 2. Yusto Kaahwa - Physics
- 3. Prof. Hannigton Oryem Origa - Botany
- 4. Prof. John C.K. Enyaru - Bio Chemistry
- 5. Bernard T. Kiremire - chemistry.
- 6. Henry Sekaalo - chemistry
- 7. Eldad J.J.B Banda - Physics.
- 8. Fredrick W.B Bugenyi - Zoology
- 9. John B Kaddu - Zoology

ASSOCIATE PROFESSORS:

- 1. Dr. Fred Kironde - Biochemistry
- 2. Dr Deborah Baranga - Zoology
- 3. Dr. Gerald M. Mutumba - Botany
- 4. Dr. Moses Gilbert Isabirye Basuta - Zoology
- 5. Dr Jolocam Mbabazi - chemistry

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