

New vice-chancellor vows to turn IUEA into research-based varsity

By Conan Businge

Having worked as a dean of the faculty of science and technology at International University of East Africa (IUEA) for five years, Dr Emeka Akaezuwa was recently promoted to vice-chancellor.

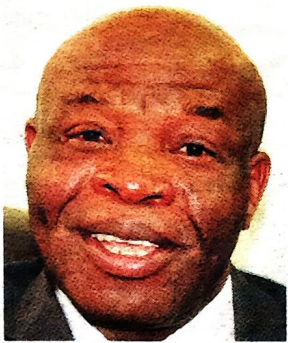
The 64-year-old has set an ambitious agenda. He wants to make the university "research-based institution. Dr Akaezuwa says this is premised on the fact that universities in Africa are not offering "relevant research to the communities".

"It is not about having several research studies cited. It is about the research quality and how relevant it is to the people. We plan to make the university a top innovation and entrepreneurship centre for Africa," he says.

Upon completion of his university education, Dr Akaezuwa, a Nigerian, worked at Obafemi Awolowo University in Nigeria, before getting a scholarship to study in the US in the 1960s. At Obafemi University, he worked with prominent world renowned authors, including Wole Soyinka, Okot p'Bitek and David Rubadiri.

After decades in the US, he returned to Africa.

He is one the engineers who participated in building technology that has revolutionised the world.



Dr Emeka Akaezuwa

Prominent among such technologies is the development of critical systems of the US Navy, among them the torpedo. In 2000, he got a Congressional Award for the Naval Research Laboratory of the US Navy for his work on the torpedo.

Akaezuwa is also serving as a visiting scholar at the Paul Robeson Centre at Rutgers University in the US.

He is also a recipient of the 2013 New Jersey Governor Jefferson American Wall of Fame in 2010.

Akaezuwa has a patent, pending application on a universal search engine for the Internet.

His education journey

Akaezuwa's journey to the US



A student doing an assignment at International University of East Africa

is what started his drive from the world of humanities to that of sciences. While working at Obafemi Awolowo University, he got a trip to perform in the US in 1980. Some senior dons in Nigeria had already connected him to universities there.

He sat interviews, was assessed on his knowledge acquisition

and was admitted for a master's programme in art at the Rutgers University in New Jersey.

After his studies, Akaezuwa desired to return home, but realised there was a high rate of unemployment. He decided to stay in the US.

He was at the time president of the African Students

Organisation in the United States. Two years later, he got a job at the African World Press as manager.

He developed the love for computers and learnt how to set up computer networks, after which he enrolled for a doctorate in information systems and structures at Rutgers University.