



Prof. Gerald Karyeija, dean School of Management Science (left), Francis Lubanga, the chairman governing council UMI (third-right) and Dr Saturninus Kasozi Mulindwa, the director of programmes and students' affairs (second-right) with other staff of UMI during the flagging off of students who are travelling to Finland

UMI roots for quality research

By Vision Reporter

To advance innovative research, Uganda Management Institute (UMI) has sent a group of six PhD students and four staff abroad, for a student and staff exchange programme for 2019.

Prof. Gerald Karyeija, the dean of School of Management Science at UMI, said the group will have their work developed and critiqued by professors at the host university. The programme, he said, is aimed at producing quality research.

Five students and two staff have gone to the University of Tampere in Finland, while one student and two staff have gone to Moi University in Kenya.

"We expect that when they return, they will be ready to defend their dissertations, and would have published in international peer reviewed journals," he said.

Dr Proscovia Namubiru Ssentamu, the head of department of quality assurance at UMI, said this was the second phase of students travelling on a similar educational programme.

She said the first phase of the programme saw students and staff travel to Finland to do research and teach under the Leadership and Management of Uganda and Ethiopian Universities (LMUE) — a partnership with UMI, Makerere University and University of Addis Ababa in Ethiopia.

She noted that the other partnership cuts across a number of institutions. These include: Makerere University, Nelson

Mandela University in South Africa, University of Dar-es-salaam in Tanzania and Moi University in Kenya, which is also the headquarters of the centre.

Ssentamu said the programme is part of the East and South African-German Centre for Educational Methodologies and Management (CERM-ESA) which is one of 10 African-German Centres of Excellence spread across the continent. The student going to Moi University will be under this arrangement

She said through the DAAD programme, invites for proposals from various centres of excellence were sent out and UMI applied with the partner institutions. As a consortium, they won euros 1.3m.

"The funds ran between October 2014 to December 2019. We are also fortunate that when they evaluated our programme, they liked it so they gave us another phase that will run for four years. The funding instrument for this partnership is four fold," she noted.

Objectives of the programme
Ssentamu said the main objective of the programme is to advance and expand excellent and innovative educational research on methods, didactics and management strategies for African contexts, and teaching and training of future educational leaders in terms of research methods, innovative management solutions and didactics at masters and PhD level.

"The programme is to advance capacity building and staff development in academia and management of the participating

UMI AIMS AT BUILDING CRITICAL RESEARCH SKILLS AMONG ITS STAFF AND STUDENTS

universities in didactics and management for (future) leaders and sustainable institution building," she said.

Ssentamu added that they want to see that they can nurture and grow research, especially educational research in Sub-Saharan Africa that is typical to the African context and looks at the African problems and solutions to them.

She added that another funding instrument is scholarships for the Sarmesa programme where a number of students have benefited, and have got PhDs.

"Another is the summer school programme for lecturers to attend summer schools in the selected universities. The two-week programme allows lecturers to attend a rigorous training, but also helps the students who are gathered in these universities to understand what educational research is all about such that they can engage more fruitfully with it," Ssentamu explained.

She added that another funding instrument is mobility of students and staff. "A number of students go to the various institutions to benefit from academic programmes. Over 100 academic staff from Sub-Saharan Africa have benefited from the support supervision programme and UMI has had 10 staff who have benefited," Ssentamu said.

Karyeija said through the programme, a number of researches have been carried out by the students at doctoral and masters level, and there are plans to come up with an educational journal, where some of the best works can be published.

Karyeija noted that the programme supports the training of managers of educational institutions, deans and heads of department, research co-ordinators, with the aim of helping them learn how to manage research function within the university.

Students challenged

While flagging off the students to Finland and Kenya, Francis Lubanga, the chairman governing council UMI, congratulated the leadership of UMI for their foresight in establishing the partnerships with other institution to ensure that their students have quality research.

Lubanga noted that this is a step further for all the student in pursuit for their PhD in administration and management, noting that these areas of specialisation were of great significance to UMI in its efforts to secure a place of honour in the world of academia and professional

institutions in the world.

"It is our sincere hope and honour as UMI that you will live to your expectations. I also thank the partners in Finland for their kindness to set aside resources to enable our students to pursue PhD programmes," Lubanga said.

He explained that the partners' support is a timely shot in the arms of the institute's effort to improve management development, public administration and research.

"As council we would like to build a critical mass of academicians and professionals who will have the enduring capacity to sustain the gains so far made by UMI to enable the staff gain competences and skills to undertake research," Lubanga said.

He urged the students to raise the Ugandan flag high and its good reputation, saying this will also help the institute to expand its boundaries as established.

Dr Saturninus Kasozi Mulindwa, the director of programmes and students' affairs, congratulated the students who qualified for the programme, noting that they were going to sharpen their research skills, especially in literature review and research methods.

"All the travel and accommodation expenses are fully covered by the project. What is required of you is to give in your time and energy and also to make sure that you come back with verifiable output," he said.

He reminded them that the bar had already been set high by the students who went there first, so they should ensure that they meet it high.