

Shun peer pressure in choice of programmes, CEO Wahome urges students at career fair

The Kenya Universities and Colleges Central Placement Service (KUCCPS) has urged secondary school students not to fall victim to social pressure when making critical career decisions.

Chief Executive Officer Dr Mercy Wahome advised students to focus on their strengths and areas of interest to select the right careers.

Speaking during a Career Day at Kirinyaga University on March 30, 2023, the Dr Wahome said most students fell into the wrong careers due to pressure from their peers, parents and teachers.

"Students come to my office with their parents who suggest different courses for them," Dr Wahome said.

"At the end of the day, a student ends up more confused."

She advised students to focus on areas of their interest and their strong subjects so they could make the best decisions.

The agency will have three course revision cycles for students who completed their KCSE examination last year.

Dr Wahome utilised the platform to boost awareness about the agency's mandate and inform students about selection of courses.

She lamented that many students shied away from courses focused on mathematics and science subjects, instead preferring humanities and social sciences.

During the event, Kirinyaga University Vice Chancellor Prof Mary Ndung'u said the science, technology,



A high school student demonstrates to KUCCPS Chief Executive Officer Dr. Mercy Wahome (right) and Kirinyaga University Vice Chancellor, Prof Mary Ndung'u how to programme a robotic car using a mobile phone, during a career fair at the university on March 30, 2023.

engineering and mathematics (STEM) sector had many untapped programmes.

"When a student passes secondary education, they should be informed on the available opportunities, which include clinical medicine, electrical engineering and nursing," she said.

The event, which brought together high school students from Kirinyaga County, was organised to also improve awareness about STEM subjects and to root for increased enrolment at higher learning institutions.

The event came as KUCCPS prepares to open its portal for students to revise their courses ahead of the placement exercise of the 2022 Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examination candidates to various universities and TVET institutions.

Dr Wahome disclosed that best performing students often struggle to choose careers because they are not adequately prepared. She urged teachers to help students identify their passions and strengths, and advise students early about their preferred careers.

In their own words: Students share campus experiences, applaud KUCCPS services

During a visit to Taita Taveta University on March 28, 2023, KUCCPS spoke to students and faculty on various issues relating to their higher education journeys, experiences and KUCCPS services. We bring you an excerpt.

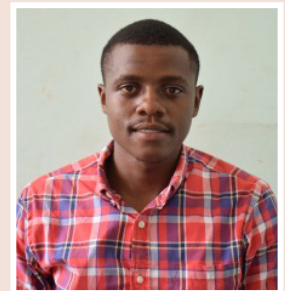


JOYLINE CHEPKOECH YEGO – *Fifth-Year Student, Bachelor of Science in Mining and Mineral processing Engineering*

“You should choose the course you are comfortable with. Just do what you love. Don’t be pressured to choose something that you don’t like because the purpose of life is to fulfill your ambitions. KUCCPS makes it easier for students to choose courses. And when students are placed in universities and programmes they are not pleased with, KUCCPS always gives them a chance to change to whatever institutions and course they like.”

MOSES KARANJA KIMANI – *Fifth-Year Student, Bachelor of Science in Mining and Mineral Processing Engineering*

“One of the most appealing things about mining engineering is that it is a multidisciplinary course. You study civil engineering, water engineering, electrical engineering, mining engineering, underground engineering and survey engineering. It covers about five disciplines. KUCCPS plays a very big role in terms of your career. I would urge students to familiarise themselves with KUCCPS so that they may understand how to make the right choice programmes.”

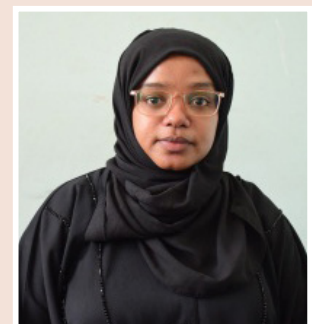


EMMANUEL KIAMBA MUTINDA – *Lecturer, Department of Mining and Mineral Processing Engineering*

“Mining engineers understand the other fields. A mining engineer can work as a miner and as a civil engineer. One thing I ask students is: “What is your passion?” If you have a passion for engineering, don’t shy away from applying to young universities. As long as you have the drive, you’ll make it.”

KHADIJA OMAR SAID – *Tutorial Fellow, Mining and Mineral Processing Engineering*

“Some people used to discourage me from undertaking this programme, saying that it was male-dominated. But after detailed research, I realised that the mining industry is also safe for women. In addition, this university has opportunities for students to collaborate with international institutions. We host the Centre of Excellence in Mining and Environmental Resource Management. Through this centre, students are linked to international institutions for collaborations in academia and research.”



Students begin to select courses under new higher education funding model

KUCCPS opens portal for all the 2022 Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) examination candidates revise their course selection ahead of admission of students to higher learning institutions.

The 869,782 students who sat the 2022 KCSE examination have begun selecting courses for admission to universities and colleges that are expected to admit them by September under a new higher education funding model.

Education Cabinet Secretary Ezekiel Machogu on May 17 launched the Kenya Universities and Colleges Central Placement Service (KUCCPS) application portal after universities and colleges provided the costs of their programmes for publication on the portal.

The Cabinet Secretary, who spoke as he officially opened the Nairobi Innovation Week at the University of Nairobi, also announced that KUCCPS would place all qualified students to universities and technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions on merit and considering their choices.

"For the avoidance of doubt, all the 173,127 young Kenyans who attained the minimum university entry grade of C+ in the 2022 Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examination will be placed to Degree Programmes. Those with C (plain) and below will be absorbed in TVET institutions across the country," he added.

For the first time, the costs have been displayed on the portal alongside the programmes, their minimum requirements and cut-off points from previous years, to aid the students in making their selections.

Students will no longer be guaranteed automatic

State funding owing to a change in the funding model. President William Ruto on May 3 said students will be categorised as extremely vulnerable, vulnerable, needy and less needy. Only the vulnerable and extremely vulnerable will be fully funded. The rest will be partially funded and the difference will be catered for through loans, bursaries and other funding sources.

During the release of 2022 KCSE examination results in January 23, Education Cabinet Secretary Hon. Ezekiel Machogu said 173,345 students qualified to pursue degree programmes. Of these 173,127 are Kenyan citizens.

Machogu said that based on the 100 percent transition policy, the rest of the learners are eligible to compete for spaces in tertiary learning institutions.



Hon. Ezekiel Machogu, Education Cabinet Secretary launches KUCCPS portal and 2023/2024 placement of students to universities and colleges during opening of the Nairobi Innovation Week at the University of Nairobi on May 17, 2023.

"The Placement Service should also engage with higher education regulatory bodies to ensure that all learning institutions are prepared to enrol new students," the CS directed.

Dr Wahome said automation of the placement process had helped to improve speed and transparency.

Dr Wahome said that students will be notified through the agency's official channels once the portal is opened.

In the 2022/2023 cycle, 250,052 students who submitted their applications to join higher learning institutions took up the more than 600,000 slots available.

Varsity's hidden gem transforms face of village in Voi County

Taita Taveta University is gradually changing the face of a small semi-arid village in the outskirts of Voi town.

The institution was established in 2007 as a campus of Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology before earning a charter in 2016.

It has since carved out a niche for itself as a leading

trainer in mining and mineral processing, which are its flagship programmes at the undergraduate and post-graduate levels.

Its determination to be a top-notch institution has sparked interest from its international peers and researchers who have assisted it in setting up a centre of excellence for mining, environmental

Cont. next page

From Pg 3

engineering and resource management

The centre is a joint initiative with Germany's TU Bergakademie Freiberg and University of Applied Sciences Dresden and is funded by German Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs through German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). The DAAD supports the international exchange of students and researchers.

Since the launch of the initiative in 2017, 120 students and staff have benefited from the annual Summer School programme in Germany. As per the accord, about 16 students and four staff members are recruited to participate in the programme annually.

In addition, five post-graduate students take part in a yearly one month research stay in the European nation. The students are attached to a laboratory during their visit. The university says that 15 students have participated in the programme.

The university has invested in engineering and mining workshops, geoinformatics and nanotechnology innovation laboratories to enable students acquire quality theory and practical learning experiences.

The management has set off a series of construction projects that will catapult the quality of education at the institution. It includes the construction of a mining research and teaching complex that will house 16 laboratories and lecture halls.

A Ksh345 million administration building that will host offices, a conference centre and boardrooms is underway.

The developments have also transformed the face of its immediate neighbourhood, leading to booming businesses aided by well-tarmacked roads and an upcoming shopping centre. The real estate sector is also growing as investors put up student hostels and residential houses.

Placement body, Taita Taveta University seek to enhance enrolment in key niche programme

Kenya Universities and Colleges Central Placement Service CEO Dr. Agnes Mercy Wahome on March 28, 2023 led a delegation on a tour of Taita Taveta University.

Dr Wahome used the tour to sensitise the university's fraternity about KUCCPS' mandate and discuss emerging trends in the placement of students to the institution's niche programme – Bachelor of Science in Mining and Mineral Processing Engineering.

The team was hosted by the Taita Taveta University Council Chairman Prof. Isaac Mbeche, Vice-Chancellor Prof. Fred Simiyu Barasa and members of the Senate.

The KUCCPS team was taken through the institution's learning resources to aid it in advising students about careers as well as obtain feedback



A lecturer demonstrates a model mine at Taita Taveta University during a recent visit by KUCCPS delegates led by CEO Dr Mercy Wahome.

regarding KUCCPS services.

Dr Wahome was accompanied by Placement Coordination and Career Development Director Dr. John Oluoch, Corporate Communication Manager Paul Juma, and ICT officer Felix Rutto.

ACK Garden House, 1st Ngong Avenue, Nairobi

P.O Box 105166 – 00101, Nairobi

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 info@kuccps.ac.ke

 020 5137400 | +245 723 954 927