



NJALA UNIVERSITY MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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15th Undergraduate Congregation Ceremony: **2,815 Graduates**



Professor Sahr Moses Gevao, Chancellor of Njala University delivering the welcome address at the ceremony

Njala University has on Saturday, 25th February 2023, held its 15th Undergraduate Congregation Ceremony at the Forecourt of the Campus Administrative Building, Njala Campus.

Degrees, diplomas, and certificates were awarded to 2,815 outstanding graduates who finished the University's various undergraduate programmes.

Addressing the graduates, the Chancellor of Njala University, Professor Sahr Moses Gevao, stated that he chose to honour this year's graduation since it served as an essential starting point for substantial improvements to the institution's history. The Chancellor commended the graduates for completing Njala University's rigorous academic curriculum and assured them that the world would reward them for their hard work, humility, and forthrightness. According to him, the University had also identified several areas that required immediate collaboration for investable development, such as staff housing, student hostels, electricity supply, water supply, community contract farming, and University guesthouses, as well as the establishment of shopping malls on the respective campuses and locations.

Professor Bashiru Mohamed Koroma, Vice-Chancellor and Principal of Njala University, described the event as a celebration of success for the graduates, their families, friends, sponsors, Njala University, and, indeed, the entire country. The Vice-Chancellor and Principal went on to state that the University's commitment to high-quality national and human capital development was critical for Sierra Leone's much-needed faster growth and development. He asserted that as an institution, they had done everything possible to provide graduates with the knowledge, skills, and confidence needed to face today's numerous challenges.

The VC&P used the occasion to keep Sierra Leoneans up to date on the University's current operations, successes, and challenges. His report focused on events that occurred since September 1, 2022, thanking the Chairman and members of the University Court for their ongoing support for the current administration, and praising his administration's accomplishments in the areas of disciplined leadership, prudent economic management, and academic and administrative enhancement and discipline.

He also expressed gratitude to Brigadier (Ret.) Julius Maada Bio, His Excellency the President of the Republic of Sierra Leone and current visitor to the University, for keeping his word and handing over the Chancellorship of Njala University to Professor Sahr Moses Ngevaio, a Sierra Leonean with a demonstrated track record of high moral rectitude and integrity, as well as a solid academic background. He provided updates on other developmental activities, such as the establishment of additional campuses in the Bonthe and Pujehun districts, the expansion of the Law programme from three to four years, as requested by the Council for Legal Education and the Sierra Leone Law School, and the establishment of a Medical School at the Bo Campus Kowama location the following academic year.

Notwithstanding these successes, Professor Koroma highlighted the University's major challenges, including slow and limited funding from the Sierra Leone government, as well as unstable water and electricity supply. He pleaded with the authorities to give these issues immediate attention.



Cross section of graduates at the congregation ceremony

Professor Alpha Tejan Wurie, Minister of Technical and Higher Education, responded to the Chancellor's and Vice-Chancellor and Principal's remarks by reiterating President Bio's continued support for Njala University, noting that the President had demonstrated his commitment to transformative education, earning him the opportunity to become the co-chair of UNESCO. According to the minister, "his Ministry is working on creating a centralized application system so that students will no longer have to take entrance exams administered by the specific universities." He advised the alumni to volunteer for their university as a way of giving back.

VC&P showcases significant milestones in research and development at Njala University

Professor Bashiru Mohamed Koroma, Vice-Chancellor and Principal of Njala University, on Monday, 16th January 2023, presented some of Njala University's significant accomplishments in research and development during a one-day workshop with research scientists from the Bernhard Nocht Institute for Tropical Medicine in Hamburg, Germany.

Professor Koroma informed the four medical scientists that the University "is moving toward having formidable and more action-oriented research" when his administration met with them during their four-day assessment visit to Njala University to discuss various entry points in laboratory development and how to get their PhD graduate, Dr. Umaru Bangura, to start a laboratory.

In his submission, the Vice-Chancellor and Principal provided specifics on some recent developments in laboratories development as well as other crucial areas for collaboration. He added that "the University has serology and molecular diagnostic laboratories on Njala Campus in addition to the Basic Science Laboratories and the Njala University Quality Control laboratories for testing the quality of food, soil, and water."

The VC&P went on to say that "the diagnostic facilities for ecological and animal diseases are part of the molecular and serological laboratories." He claimed that the Ecological Diagnostic Laboratory deals with what he called the "lost fortunes" in scientific infectious diseases found in bats, lizards, and snakes and that the Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory currently deals with five disease agents.



The 4 scientists from BNITM pose with the VC&P

Since Professor Patrick Sawyer, the current dean of the School of Agriculture and former head of the Soil Science Department, served as the principal consultant for the National Comprehensive Soil Survey project, the Vice-Chancellor declared that the quality control laboratory at Njala University had advanced.

Professor Koroma said in particular, "We are thinking and positioning ourselves for the opportunity for partnership in some priority sectors in research and development in Education, Health and Laboratory Research, Food Security and Modern Agriculture, Energy, Environment and Climate Change, Natural Resources Management, Digital Services, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), and in Gender Mainstreaming."

VC&P identified infrastructure, staff capacity building, electricity, and water supply as the major barriers preventing further advancement in research and development despite the University's reaching a milestone in that area.

The new Administration has been delighted by the current enrollment of women in significant science programmes, some of which, according to Professor Bahiru Koroma, even outnumber the enrollment of men.

Njala University matriculates over 6,000 undergraduate freshmen, VC&P warns against unwholesome practices

Over 6,000 freshmen for the 2022/2023 academic session matriculated at Njala University between Thursday, January 26 and Saturday, January 28. Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Professor Bashiru Mohamed Koroma, urged the new students to shun unwholesome practices and unseemly character.

In his remarks to the University's matriculating students at the Njala and Bo Campuses, the Vice-Chancellor urged them to be disciplined, obedient to the rules and regulations, and be good ambassadors of the University.

In addition to promising that the University management would allocate all funds paid for those basic services, such as hostel lodging, ICT services, field trips, and farm practices, toward the significant benefits of the students, Professor Bashiru Mohamed Koroma assured the new students of the University's commitment to pursuing their welfare and providing other basic social services and amenities.

Since lives and property have been lost over the years as a result of the covert operations by some students who try to destroy within the shortest time what they cannot gainfully construct, the VC&P expressed regret that certain students' inappropriate behaviour on the University's campuses "is becoming a concern." He stated that "the issue of cultism and criminality in the University is on the rise."

He emphasized that all anti-social behaviour remained prohibited on all the University campuses and gave the assurance that students would continue to be observed on each campus for proper behaviour.

Professor Koroma pleaded with the freshmen class, "I implore you not to indulge yourself in such activities as you remain vulnerable to other students who may persuade you to join using all fake and empty promises."

The Vice-Chancellor congratulated the new students for being among the successful candidates that gained admission into the University, urging them to live up to the excellent standards expected of them.

He used the occasion to express his deep appreciation to the Ministries of Health and Technical and Higher Education for assuring to move the Njala University hospital to a status that guaranteed the function of the hospital as a referral and teaching hospital.

He also revealed that his Administration had taken significant steps to establish the Veterinary School in Njala Campus, which will focus on the studies of emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases that are transmitted from animals to humans, and a second Medical School on Bo Campus, which would address the issue of the lack of trained health personnel in the country. "These establishments are envisaged in the 2023/2024 academic year," Professor assured.

"My Administration is making every effort to improve the current situation across the board, which is why we have revitalized the Center for Pedagogical Excellence to address the challenges of providing high-quality services and increase revenue generation for the University, the Academic Planning and Quality Assurance Directorate to adequately supplement the supervision and designate appropriate strategies to improve quality assurance of all our academic programmes, and the Academic Planning and Development Office to address the challenges of providing academic support services to students and staff, among others," VC&P informed the newbies.



Professor Bashiru M. Koroma
Vice-Chancellor & Principal of Njala University

The high points of the ceremony were the administration of the matriculation oath by the Registrar of the University, Dr. Muneer Jalloh, and the proclamation by the Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Professor Bashiru Mohamed Koroma, to formally admit the new students to membership of Njala University.



Cross section of matriculants at Njala Campus



Cross section of matriculants at Bo Campus

Conex Energy Sierra Leone (Ltd) takes over Njala University Petrol Station

On Tuesday, January 31, 2023, the Njala University Administration led by Professor Bashiru Mohamed Koroma, the Vice-Chancellor and Principal, officially authorized Conex Energy Sierra Leone Limited to start running the filling station on Njala Campus, completing the company's takeover.

The University Administration had previously been briefed on the Conex Card facility for the purchase of fuel and lubricants by Conex's Network Manager, Mr. Ismaila Conteh, and Lubricant and Specialties Manager, Mr. Francis A. Sannoh.

This development, which was made possible by a partnership agreement between Njala University and Conex, is in line with the Vice-Chancellor and Principal's goal of creating a Public Private Partnership of key areas within the University.

Mr. Ismail Conteh, Network Manager of Conex Energy Sierra Leone, claimed that by lowering cash transactions, minimizing financial fraud, and fostering brand loyalty, the Card facility had set Conex apart. "The card is satellite supported," he explained, "so all transactions are sent to our office via a debit-credit transaction." He advised the Administration to safeguard their pin codes while reassuring them of the card's security and dependability.



Officials from Conex pose with members of NU Administration after the commissioning

Mr. Conteh commended the Vice-Chancellor and the University Administration for their proactive stance and for tolerating Conex's legal process, which delayed their full takeover of the facility.

Professor Bashiru Mohamed Koroma welcomed Conex to University and declared that "the development is vital to the campus because of the administration's need for a consistent fuel supply because of the campus's remote location." He reassured them that a significant consumer of Conex fuel would be the University.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Njala Campus, Professor Alieu Mohamed Bah, expressed his enthusiasm for the takeover and said that it would not only benefit the staff but also the community. He thanked Conex for fulfilling their request and for their response.

Professor Bah praised the Vice-Chancellor and Principal for his hard work and claimed that under his direction, the University had turned into a work yard.

Professor Osman Sankoh (Mallam O.) becomes Adjunct Professor of Njala University



Professor Osman Sankoh (Mallam O.)

The Administration of Njala University had on 1st December 2022 appointed Professor Osman Sankoh (Mallam O.) COR, as an Adjunct Professor in the School of Community Health Sciences, Bo Campus to continue his exceptional intellectual and other support to the University.

The Appraisal Review Committee's recommendations led to Malam O.'s appointment, which has an initial validity of two years.

As an Adjunct, the 'Professor of Bongology' will receive no salary but will have all the rights and privileges of a University staff, including the right to nominate the University as the host institution for research applications, eligibility to co-supervise higher degree candidates in line with Research Candidates Policy, and the opportunity to represent the University at professional conferences and seminars.

Mallam O. is also held accountable to the Dean, School of Community Health Sciences and is subject to all University policies, rules, and regulations.

Speaking about his appointment, Professor Bashiru Mohamed Koroma, Vice-Chancellor and Principal of Njala University, noted that due to Professor Osman Sankoh's prior outstanding service as Acting Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the University and his ongoing support for the University, the Management of Njala University unanimously decided to name him as an Adjunct Professor in the School of Community Health Sciences. "In fact," Professor Koroma said, "we are looking forward to him engaging more as a full-time staff in the near future."

"I am happy that Professor Sankoh will offer us, particularly Bo Campus where the School is located, the exceptional and varied contributions that would enhance service delivery at the School. This time, he showed his modesty by agreeing to our appointment. We look forward to his invaluable contribution," Professor Mohamed Syed Fofanah, Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Bo Campus and Pro-Vice-Chancellor of Njala University stated.

On receiving the letter of appointment, Mallam O. was thrilled: "I treasured the time I served as Acting Vice-Chancellor and Principal because it exposed me to both the challenges and opportunities of the University. It also gave me the chance to collaborate closely with former college mates, including Dr. Muneer Jalloh, the Registrar, Professor Bashiru Mohamed Koroma, the former Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Njala Campus, Professor Mohamed Syed Fofanah, former Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Bo Campus, Professor Alieu Mohamed Bah, former Dean of the School of Agriculture and Food Sciences and Professor Abdul Rahman Sesay, Dean of Postgraduate Studies. I, therefore, value the current University authorities' consideration."



Professor Osman Sankoh (Mallam O.)

Mallam O. attended Njala University College (NUC, USL), which is now Njala University (NU). He was a former president of the Njala University College Students' Union and the former Acting Vice-Chancellor and Principal of Njala University. He oversaw a remarkable transformation and advancement during his brief time serving as the University's Acting Vice-Chancellor and Principal. He is a well-known researcher in Sierra Leone and is the author of numerous papers.

Currently serving as Vice-Chair of the United Nations Statistical Commission, Professor Sankoh is the Statistician General of Statistics Sierra Leone (Stats SL). He has received numerous national honours, including the presidential Commander of the Order of the Rokel.

Njala Campus DVC boosts Njala Garage

In a symbolic presentation at the Njala Campus garage, Professor Alieu Mohamed Bah, Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Njala Campus, gave the Njala University garage management working tools and equipment.

As he presented an air compressor machine, toolbox, and complete industrial battery charger and starter to the Director of Physical Plant Services, Mr. Santigie Sesay, Prof. Alieu Mohamed Bah stated that the equipment had been made available with help from the central administration.

According to Professor Bah's situational analysis of the various units under his office, the garage was one of the areas in need of support to improve efficient service delivery.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor stated that he wanted to leave his successor with a significant legacy that would be upheld and improved upon, and he pledged to offer comparable assistance to other Units.



The Director of Physical Services thanked the DVC and the central administration for supporting the garage as he accepted the supplies, emphasizing that the garage urgently required support in order to operate properly.

Mr. Santigie Sesay warned his staff not to misuse the equipment, emphasizing that “they are intended for use in the University’s work and not for individual use.” He urged his team to assist the DVC because doing so, he said, “will make it possible for him to achieve more in the future.”

He advised the Transport Officer, Mr. Bassie Lakoh to show leadership and make sure the equipment are used as intended. Mr. Bassie Lakoh thanked the University Administration for supporting his unit and pledged to take excellent care of the equipment.



The Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Njala Campus presenting the items to the Transport Officer

Njala University participates in US Embassy Sierra Leone five-day Symposium on Sustainable Agricultural and Business Development for Women Farmers in Bo District



Prof. Bashiru Mohamed Koroma presenting a certificate of participation to one of the participants

The Vice-Chancellor and Principal of Njala University, Professor Bashiru Mohamed Koroma, and other senior officials of the University attended a five-day 'Sustainable Agriculture and Business Development Symposium' for 56 women farmers in February 2023, as well as a one-day training for 25 market sellers in Bo. The symposium, organised by Healey International Relief Foundation (HIRF) in collaboration with Caritas and Njala University, was funded by the US Embassy through its Public Diplomacy small grants programme.

According to Benjamin Parra, Executive Director of HIRF, the grant had three priority areas, and HIRF chose the Green Economy and Entrepreneurship track, which focused on strengthening connections between US and Sierra Leonean businesses, expanding economic opportunities, entrepreneurship, and financial independence among women, youth, and underserved populations, particularly for programmes with innovation and economic opportunity related to climate change. The project also aimed to show how the United States and Sierra Leone could work together to achieve climate goals.

Ms. Omega Tawonezvi, an American who works extensively on developing women's entrepreneurial skills, explained that the symposium curriculum included sharing best practices in green and sustainable farming, teaching basic financial literacy, recognizing business opportunities, and identifying and understanding market demand. She also stated that one of the symposium's key highlights was having US-based participants partake in the cultural exchange, sharing best practices, and engaging in great discussions, questions, and answers on how to keep cooperatives thriving, dealing with climate change, biodiversity, and eco-friendly farming practices, and high yielding crops.

Professor Bashiru Mohamed Koroma expressed gratitude to the funders, the US Embassy; the American people; and the HIRF team for collaborating with Njala University and providing him and his team with the opportunity to exchange ideas with US-based professionals and farmers. He expressed his delight at the prospect of discussing sustainable agriculture techniques and business with the female farmers and market sellers.

Professor Roland Soluku, the lead trainer and head of the Department of Animal Science at Njala University, recommended participants to cease burning charcoal, which has contributed to deforestation, negatively impacting agricultural productivity and livelihoods.



The Training Facilitators & other Njala University staff

According to Alfred Halim Navo, the training co-facilitator, the key difficulty for farmers in Sierra Leone "is not only farming healthy and sufficient crops but also making decent revenues to fulfil fundamental requirements."

A participant from Waiima Village described the training as educational and timely. She expressed her gratitude for the many simple techniques she could immediately begin applying on her farm, such as lowering the height of the soil beds for specific crops and the direction she would plan her irrigation for improved absorption and water conservation. Similarly, a member of the Sewa River Agricultural Women's Group in Wanga stated that she had become aware of how some of her previous farming practices were endangering the soil and environment, but that with the knowledge gained from the symposium, she would now implement better practices and educate other farmers on the same.

Each enrolled participant received a certificate of completion, a smartphone, and a solar lamp at the end of the symposium. HIRF board members Ms. Josephine Garnem and Mr. Moses Baryoh; Mr. Amadu Bah, Deputy Chief Immigration Officer; Professor Rashid Ansumana, the head of the Department of Community Health Sciences, and two local chiefs participated in the training.



Dignitaries from the US Embassy & Njala University pose with participants after the symposium