

The Standard

UCU'S COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

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Our view

After you bag that degree

UCU's 12th Graduation was a colourful occasion. The stories of struggle for fees touched us all. But once the party is over, reality dawns on you that you badly need that dream job for you to get the most out of that degree certificate.

Today's job market is incredible especially for the young inexperienced job seeker. One way around the lack-of-experience bottleneck is to offer your services on a voluntary basis. The exposure you pick up when you volunteer at a company or non-government organisation introduces you to the intricacies of the working life. Some have done so well as interns and volunteers that when vacancies came, they were quickly absorbed.

That work experience you get as a volunteer can be part of your CV as a young graduate. During interviews you always get that question: "What have you been doing since you graduated?" Those who show evidence of trying their hands at something like volunteering tend to impress the interviewing panel.

UCU organises a career week each academic year. Look out for that programme. You might meet your future employer there.

CONTACT INFO:

Aggrey Mugisha - Supervisor
amugisha@ucu.ac.ug

Sam Wakhakha - Staff Writer/ News
news@ucu.ac.ug

Lydia Lakwonyero - Staff Writer/Life style
lifestyle@ucu.ac.ug

Walter Washika - Staff Writer/ Sports
sports@ucu.ac.ug

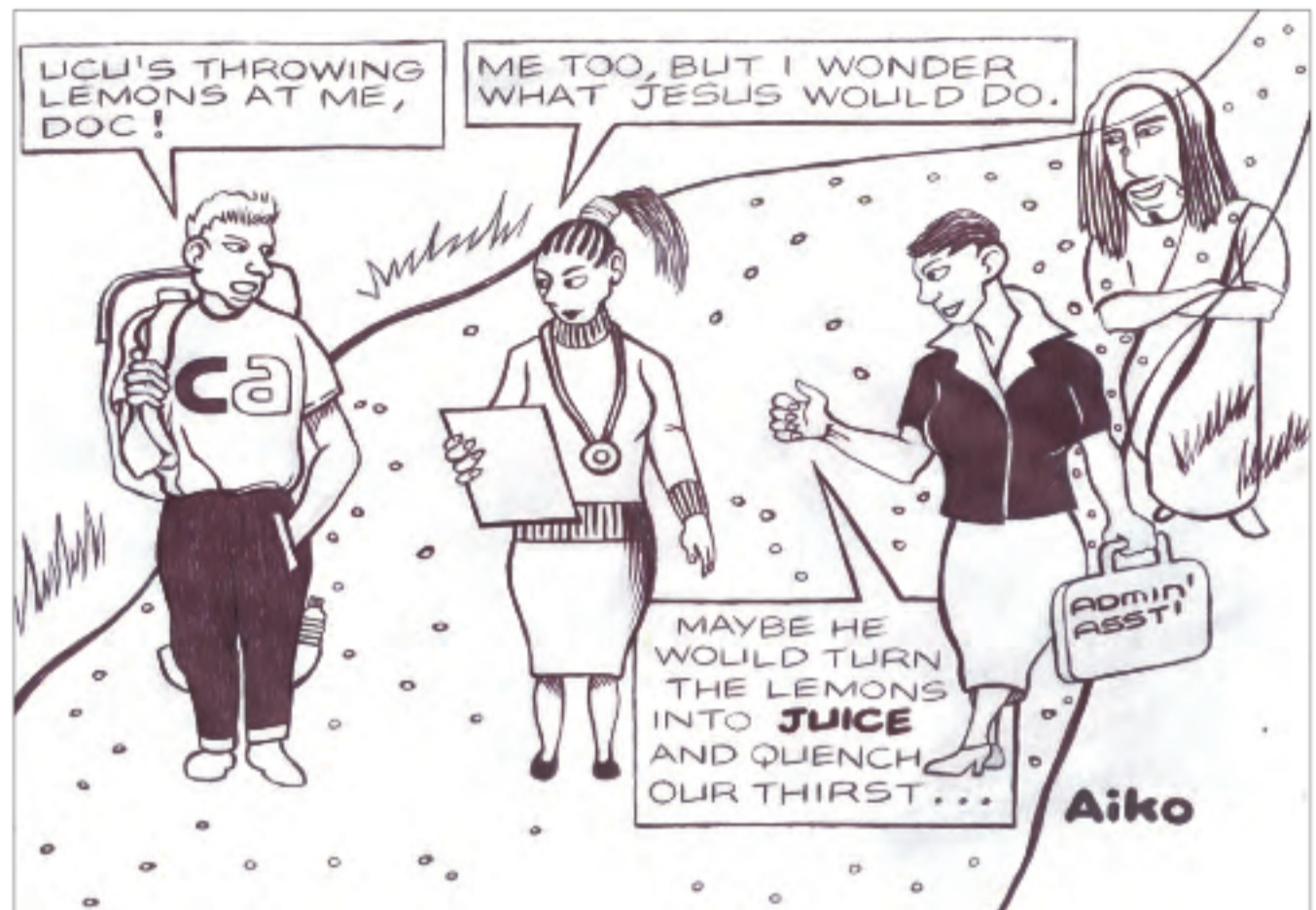
Justin D Emedot-Staff Writer/Campus News
campuslife@ucu.ac.ug

Standard News Office: Ext. 879 & 213

<http://thestandard.ucu.ac.ug>

Thomas Froese
Founding Co-ordinator / Advisor
thomasfroese@thomasfroese.com

Opinion Opinion Opinion Opinion Opinion



Amidst incompetence, we all suffer ... What would Jesus do?

THOMAS FROESE



Many UCU staffers take their jobs seriously and perform competently, some even excellently. Others, less so. Consider these recent scenarios.

Situation One: A Canadian secondary school graduate with flawless English and a heart for missions is told that before he can study development studies at UCU, he needs an extra year of basic studies, that's mainly English.

This added time and cost, despite a letter from Uganda's National Council for Higher Education that exempts him, even under UCU's own policy. The registrar's office eventually revokes its decision but not before various frustrations lead the student to return to Canada.

Situation Two: A UCU faculty, a highly-sought Ugandan medical doctor with international credentials, has her modest UCU salary topped up by an external source. But for several months, after repeated requests and no explanation – despite having the external funds in hand – UCU finance doesn't pay the top-up, forcing the faculty to threaten resignation.

Situation Three: UCU takes on a temporary administrative assistant. For her two-month tenure, without prior notice, the replacement receives a lower job-ranking that pays just 5,000 UgSh a day, a tiny fraction of the standard salary for that role. She appeals to administration in vain.

Other stories of frustration abound. Not long ago, The Standard's requisition for a simple door repair of few minutes was ignored for weeks. When I looked into it, I was asked, incredibly, if I had a welder. So for weeks UCU can't find a welder to secure its own valuable technology?

Once, this newspaper couldn't even get a ream of paper for its large-scale printer. The UCU store clerk insisted there was none. I had just seen the paper and had the requisition in hand. Yet he told me repeatedly that the paper didn't exist. Why? To show his little piece of power?

This is the worst of such nonsense. Wanting to flex what authority they may or may not have, certain people at various levels of UCU play games. With incompetence – and sometimes with intent – they toy with both the truth and with people.

This hurts all of UCU. Because if you drive away one good student or one good faculty or one good missionary today, how many will come tomorrow?

And how do you make a good, never-mind excellent university without good students and faculty? You don't. You can't.

Of course, there is always one reason or another behind any mistake. With the above-noted Canadian student, a lower-level registrar's official didn't pay attention to important detail. Regarding the salary delay for the Ugandan doctor, it was a so-called "technical error" with UCU finance.

But in countries and communities that function well, serious problems get serious attention. Dysfunctional policies are changed. People who consistently perform poorly are let go.

Why doesn't this happen more in Ugandan culture? Why is there this mentality of entitlement, that once you have a job, you get all its benefits and security without its responsibilities? Where is the accountability?

Jesus would have something to say about all this. He'd encourage forethought and diligence and certainly truth-telling in all our work and relationships. He'd never allow anyone to just say "sorry" and then run off to community worship. In fact, the Scriptures tell us that God hates this, that it's highly offensive in His sight.

I'm always encouraged knowing that Jesus changed the world with a group of very average men and women. God doesn't need the best and brightest. He's more interested in the willing, people who are willing, for starters, to change themselves.

And is this not UCU's high calling? To change the culture, starting with its own? Surely, it is.

When we're not Christ-like, we're afraid of these things. Then ridiculous policies and people stay among us. They drive away good people. And, yes, we all suffer.

Author and journalist Thomas Froese is the founding co-ordinator of The Standard. His website is www.thomasfroese.com