

# The Standard

UCU COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

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## Our view

### Make the Alumni Association relevant

A meeting of UCU alumni was recently convened to discuss salient issues. Unfortunately only a handful of them turned up. No one has explained why a body with tens of thousands of members failed to attract a reasonable number for the meeting. The silver lining in this dark cloud is that it has opened our eyes to the shortcomings inherent in the association.

It is important that the administration, which runs an alumni office on campus, investigates the reasons for the poor turnout for the important meeting. This is because the future of this august institution lies squarely on the shoulders of the alumni. Prestigious universities elsewhere owe their success to the alumni for support in various ways.

In any case, UCU is built on solid principles premised on its strong vision and mission. It is not just a university. It is a community identified by its pursuit of heavenly ideals which it wants to bequeath to the generations to come. And it is the alumni who have the responsibility and duty to carry UCU's flag far and deep. As they do that they are charged with the task of preaching the institution's gospel to the wider society, the way the missionaries preached Christianity.

There is every reason to believe that the botched alumni meeting was not organized in a way befitting of an institution like UCU. There seems to have been little preparation. There is also no evidence that steps were taken to sensitize the alumni about the meeting.

The Vice-Chancellor, Rev. Dr. John Senyonyi, while speaking at the launch of the UCU Alumni Eastern Chapter last month, said big rewards awaited active alumni. This message should be taken seriously.

It is important for the alumni to take seriously their membership. They are graduates with a difference who owe society a duty and responsibility to use the knowledge and skills they acquired to transform the lives of God's people.

They are repositories of the knowledge they acquired which they hold in trust for the society at large. The Alumni Association provides the best opportunity for them to serve their society.

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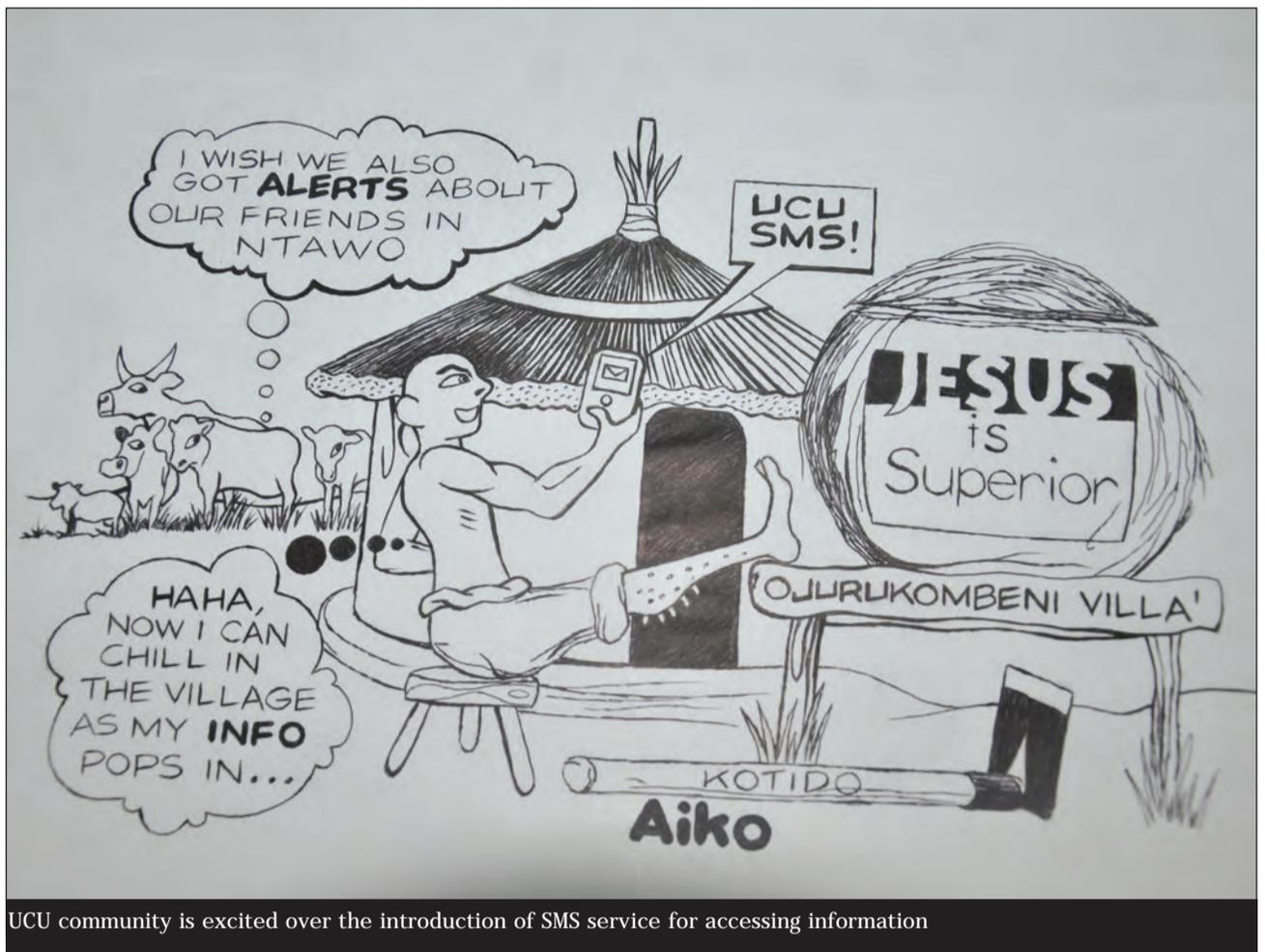
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## Opinion Opinion Opinion Opinion Opinion



UCU community is excited over the introduction of SMS service for accessing information

## Attracting partnerships and fresh thinking is good for all

THOMAS FROESE



The old Yiddish joke goes like this. 'Do you know what makes God laugh? People making plans.'

This is the mystery of it, of the Gospel itself, really. Even our lives, fragile and short as they are, are not ours to over-script. No, we need to open them to possibilities outside ourselves, and when we do, surely good surprises will come along the way.

It's as true for any person as it is for an institution like UCU. I was reminded of this while around the dinner table - twice - during my family's recent season back in North America.

The first related to my wife, Dr. Jean Chamberlain Froese, who received an honorary doctorate from the University of Waterloo for her ongoing leadership of Save the Mothers, the Canadian - Ugandan program based here at UCU.

The day at Waterloo turned into a family affair with our children there to cheer on their mother.

It was also a sort of UCU family event because in attendance was Dr. Ned Kanyesigye, UCU's Associate Dean of Science and Technology. He had been in nearby Hamilton, Ontario, at the United Nations University for clean water projects that UCU is now partnering with.

And while Dr. Kanyesigye later sat at our dinner table in

Hamilton and we talked, this is what it all came back to: partnerships and new ways of doing things with them.

The second related to Dr. Stephen Noll, UCU's founding vice-chancellor, and his wife Peggy, who had long ago invited Jean and me to their American home in Pittsburgh, some hours south of the Canadian border.

Little did we ever imagine that when we'd finally sit around that dinner table it would be in the context of Dr. Noll assuming the chair of Save the Mothers' new American board.

As Jean puts it, "Dr. Noll is the master of partnerships." And this meeting over a couple of days in Pittsburgh was an example of how old partnerships can surprisingly spill into new ones.

This, more than anything, is UCU's lifeblood from such founders and passed down to others still working hard to see that UCU is not only a well-planned university, but, also, in that mysterious way, a place held with loose hands.

Of course, Save the Mothers is just one example of a partnership that makes UCU a unique place to study and work. The university has plenty of others across several faculties.

UCU benefits with new programming and infrastructure and a reputation beyond its borders.

Partners, meanwhile, benefit from administrative support and expertise. They have the advantage of being at a place of faith with a friendly environment and often younger, keener faculty.

Younger universities also tend to have less red tape, and this, as UCU continues to mature, is something to remember if it wants to attract more fresh thinking.

True, as anyone in any partnership - take marriage - will tell you, sometimes sparks between partners will fly. This is what happens when iron sharpens iron, sometimes even in front of the children.

But as my own young children listened, sort of, to their mother's convocation address at Waterloo, I couldn't help but think of the unique experience they were having. They might even remember her reference to Bilbo Baggins, that beloved hobbit from Lord of the Rings.

Yes, Bilbo experienced his grand adventure for one reason. Because he held all that he had, even his life, with loose hands. This is how he helped his world. And it's how he became what he was meant to be.

Author and journalist Thomas Froese is a Standard founder. Follow him at [www.thomasfroese.com](http://www.thomasfroese.com) and [www.dailydad.net](http://www.dailydad.net)