



# HIGHER EDUCATION TODAY

## The Uganda Vice Chancellors' Forum Quarterly Newsletter

MARCH 2026 Issue #005

Theme: " *Driving Innovation, Research & National Transformation* "

### INSIDE

#### Editorial Message

Welcome to this 5th edition of our newsletter! In this issue, we explore exciting developments, expert insights, and inspiring stories that matter to you. Dive in and stay informed, connected, and inspired

#### Thought Leadership

Discover fresh perspectives and expert insights that challenge conventional thinking and inspire innovation.

#### Institutional Highlights

Stay updated on the latest achievements, milestones, and initiatives from our member institutions.

#### Events

Explore upcoming and past events, including impactful workshops, conferences, and leadership forums. Stay informed, stay connected.



Figure 1. Prof Eriabu Lugujo - UVCF Executive Director

## Message from the UVCF Secretariat

Dear Vice Chancellors, University Leaders, and Esteemed Partners, I am pleased to present the Uganda Vice Chancellors' Forum Q1 2026 E-Newsletter.

This quarter reflects renewed momentum in driving innovation, strengthening governance, accelerating digital transformation, and expanding research output across our member institutions. Universities continue to position themselves at the center of Uganda's socio-economic advancement.

Our theme – **Driving Innovation, Research & National Transformation** – underscores our collective mandate. As leaders of higher education institutions, our responsibility extends beyond academic excellence. We are architects of knowledge, catalysts of innovation, developers of human capital, and strategic partners in national development.

Through collaboration, policy engagement, research commercialization, and institutional strengthening, we are shaping a higher education sector that is responsive, competitive, and globally relevant. Thank you for your continued commitment and collaboration.

## Special Congratulatory Message

### To H.E. President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni

The Uganda Vice Chancellors' Forum joins the nation in congratulating H.E. President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni upon his victory in the recently concluded presidential elections. This milestone reflects the confidence that Ugandans continue to place in his leadership and vision for the country.



*Figure 2- H.E. President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni*

We also acknowledge the continued leadership of the First Lady and Minister of Education and Sports, Hon. Janet Kataaha Museveni, whose stewardship of the education sector remains vital to strengthening Uganda's human capital. As universities, we value the partnership between government and higher education institutions in advancing policies that enhance quality, access, research, and innovation across all levels of learning.

As institutions of higher learning, we remain committed to providing quality and inclusive education that equips our students with the knowledge, skills, and character needed to serve the nation effectively. Through teaching, research, and community engagement, we strive to foster innovation, ethical leadership, and practical solutions to the challenges facing our communities. We will continue working collaboratively to strengthen higher education as a key pillar in

Uganda's development and transformation.

On behalf of the Secretariat of the Uganda Vice Chancellors' Forum, we extend our warm congratulations and wish H.E. the President wisdom and continued success in serving the people of Uganda.



## Did You Know?

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”

– Nelson Mandela

## UVCF Executive Committee Convenes at Cavendish University Uganda



The Executive Committee Members and Secretariat of the Uganda Vice Chancellors' Forum (UVCF) convened at Cavendish University Uganda for a strategic Executive Committee meeting aimed at advancing the Forum's mandate and strengthening higher education leadership in Uganda.

As the principal decision-making organ of the Forum, the Executive Committee plays a critical role in providing strategic oversight, policy direction, and institutional guidance to ensure that UVCF effectively serves its member universities and stakeholders.

The Forum was graciously hosted by the Vice Chancellor of Cavendish University Uganda, Dr. Olive Sabiiti, whose leadership and hospitality contributed to the success of the meeting.

UVCF extends its sincere appreciation to Cavendish University Uganda for hosting the Executive Committee and for its continued support toward advancing higher education excellence.

## Africa Educationist - Award

### Prof. Barnabas Nawangwe



Figure 3 Prof. Barnabas Nawangwe - Vice Chancellor, Makerere University

Makerere University Vice Chancellor Prof. Barnabas Nawangwe has been awarded the African Educationist of the Year Award at the 15th African Leadership Magazine Persons of the Year ceremony held in Accra, Ghana.

The prestigious award was presented by Lesotho's Prime Minister, Sam Matekane, during a ceremony presided over by former Tanzanian President Jakaya Kikwete, who chairs the African Leadership Magazine. The recognition followed a public

vote conducted in December 2025.

The accolade celebrates Prof. Nawangwe's contribution to higher education and his leadership in navigating Makerere University through complex development challenges facing African institutions. Under his stewardship, the university has pursued institutional reforms, strengthened research-driven innovation, and expanded international partnerships aimed at repositioning Makerere as a globally competitive university grounded in African solutions.

His recognition places him among notable African leaders previously honoured by the magazine, including Ghanaian Presidents John Mahama and John Kufuor. The award reflects a growing continental appreciation of education as a critical pillar in Africa's socio-economic transformation.

The ceremony drew prominent leaders, policymakers, and influencers from across Africa. The honour significantly elevates the visibility of Makerere University and Uganda within pan-African leadership circles. It reinforces Uganda's longstanding reputation as a regional centre for academic excellence and intellectual leadership.

For many in the education sector, the award is not only a personal milestone for Prof. Nawangwe but also recognition of Makerere's continued role in shaping Africa's future through scholarship, innovation, and leadership.

## Over 9,200 graduated at Makerere University's 76th Graduation

Makerere University set a new academic milestone during its 76th graduation ceremony, awarding 213 Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degrees, the highest number of PhDs ever produced by the university in a single graduation.

The ceremony took place from 24th–27th February 2026 at Freedom Square at Makerere University in Kampala. Thousands of students graduated with different qualifications, but the 213 PhD graduates stood out as a major highlight of the event.

### Growth in research training

The large number of PhD graduates reflects Makerere University's growing focus on research, innovation, and advanced academic training.

University leaders noted that increasing the number of doctoral graduates is important for strengthening research capacity in Uganda and across Africa. PhD holders play a key role in teaching at universities, conducting research, and solving national development challenges.

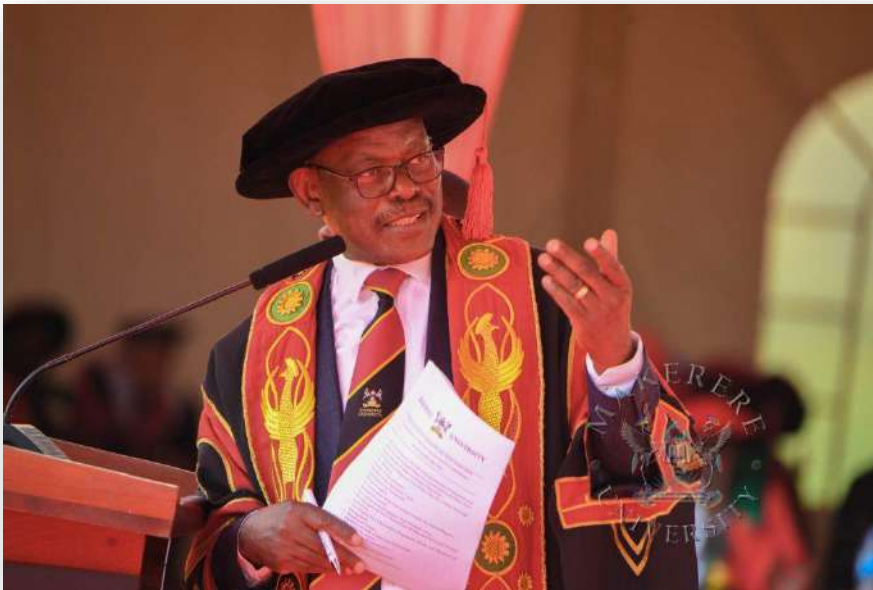


Figure 4 Prof. Barnabas Nawangwe -Vice Chancellor, Makerere University

### GENDER REPRESENTATION

Out of the 213 PhD graduates,

- 126 were male
- 87 were female

This shows continued progress in women's participation in advanced academic research, although men still form the majority.

# Did You Know?

AI tutors can now create customized study plans for University students

# YMCA Graduation 2026 🎓

More than **2,200 students** graduated during the **28th graduation ceremony** of YMCA Comprehensive Institute held on **27 February 2026** at the institute's campus in Buwambo. The graduates received qualifications in various disciplines including **computer science, journalism, industrial art and design, cosmetology, early childhood development, catering, fashion and design, plumbing, business, and information technology.**

During the ceremony, the Chancellor, James Ruyonga Nkata, urged the graduands to **embrace integrity, adapt to emerging technologies, and remain competitive in the evolving job market** as they transition into the world of work.

The event celebrated the institute's continued commitment to **skills development and vocational education**, with a notable **majority of the graduates being female**, reflecting growing participation of women in technical and vocational training



Figure 5YMCA Comprehensive Institute - Graduation

**“All students can learn and succeed, but not on the same day in the same way.”**

By:William Spady

# UVCF Executive Committee Meets Commissioner for Higher Education

Some members of the UVCF Executive Committee, together with the UVCF Secretariat, met with Mr. Timothy Ssejjoba, Acting Commissioner of Higher Education (University Education and Training) at the Ministry of Education and Sports to discuss key issues affecting private universities.



Figure 6 UVCF Executive committee team held a meeting with Mr. Timothy Ssejjoba, Acting Commissioner of Higher Education at MOE offices - Legacy Towers

collaborative opportunities.

- ✓ **Staff Sharing:** Exploring inter-university collaboration to address PhD staffing gaps.
  - The meeting reinforced collaboration between private universities and the Ministry, supporting reforms, industry linkages, and research growth.

## Key Highlights:

- ✓ **Competency-Based Education:** Institutions urged to prepare for full implementation by May 2027 despite resource challenges.
- ✓ **Internships & Industry Collaboration:** Strengthening university-industry partnerships to improve student placement, research, and innovation.
- ✓ **Research Funding:** Private universities encouraged to engage stakeholders for access to grants and

# 7th Annual Higher Education Week in Gulu City .

The National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) hosted the 7th Annual Higher Education Week in Gulu, bringing together vice chancellors, academics, policymakers, and industry representatives. The event was **officially opened by Hon. Norbert Mao**, Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, who emphasized practical, innovation-driven education to meet Uganda's development needs.

- ✓ **Prof. Joy C. Kwesiga**, NCHE Chairperson, encouraged universities to strengthen STEM and digital learning, deepen industry partnerships, and ensure graduates are job-ready.



- ✓ **Prof. Mary J.N. Okwakol**, NCHE Executive Director, highlighted the importance of research, innovation, and quality assurance for socio-economic growth.

- **Discussions and Highlights:**

- ✓ Implementation of **Competency-Based Education and Training (CBET)** across institutions.

- ✓ Strengthening **university-industry collaborations** to improve internships, skills development, and research commercialization.
- ✓ Expanding **research funding access**, particularly for private universities.
- ✓ Sharing strategies on **staff resource collaboration** and inter-university support to address faculty gaps.
- ✓ Challenges in internship placements, practical training, and aligning programs with market demands.
- ✓ Opportunities for collective advocacy and policy input from Vice chancellors.



The week provided a platform to share **best practices**, **address challenges**, and **foster collaboration** between universities, regulatory bodies, and industry, reinforcing the role of higher education in Uganda's socio-economic development.

## Gulu Higher Education Exhibition Showcases Innovation

As part of the 7th Annual Higher Education Week, the **Gulu Higher Education Exhibition** brought together universities, industry partners, and research institutions

to display innovations, student projects, and collaborative initiatives.

The exhibition highlighted how universities are translating research into practical solutions, fostering **industry linkages**, and promoting **skills development** aligned with national priorities. Private and public institutions showcased projects in **STEM**, **digital technology**, **agriculture**, and **entrepreneurship**, demonstrating the potential of higher education to drive socio-economic growth.

Participants also explored opportunities for **research commercialization**, student internships, and partnerships that strengthen Uganda's innovation ecosystem. The exhibition served as a platform for knowledge exchange, networking, and showcasing the **impact of higher education beyond the classroom**.

# UVCF 77th General Meeting Held at Uganda Christian University

The 77th General Forum of the Uganda Vice Chancellors' Forum (UVCF) was held at **Uganda Christian University (UCU), Mukono**, with opening remarks from **Prof. Aaron Mushengyezi**, Vice Chancellor of UCU.



Figure 7- Vice Chancellors at the 77th General Forum Meeting held at Uganda Christian University - Mukono (UCU) On 16<sup>th</sup> March 2026

**Engineer Mbonimpa**, Chief Executive Officer of **RENU (Research and Education Network for Uganda)**, delivered a presentation on advancing digital connectivity, research collaboration, and networked learning across Ugandan universities.

The forum also welcomed **Prof. James Njiru**, Executive Director of the **African Institute for Capacity Development (AICAD)**, Kenya, who shared insights on regional collaboration and trends in East African higher education.

Key discussions focused on:

- ✓ Advancing **competency-based education** across institutions
- ✓ Strengthening **university-industry partnerships** for internships, research, and innovation

- ✓ Collaborative approaches to address **staffing and PhD capacity challenges**
- ✓ Promoting **policy engagement** and collective advocacy among vice chancellors

The forum reinforced collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and strategic planning to enhance higher education's contribution to Uganda's socio-economic development.

## QUARTERLY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### Q2 April - June 2026

MAY 7-8, 2026



#### Academic Registrars' Training

Professional development for academic administration

JUNE 8, 2026



#### 2nd General Meeting

Quarterly meeting of all member institutions

MAY 18, 2026



#### Leadership Strategic Planning Session

Annual leadership retreat and strategy workshop

JUNE 25, 2026



#### CBET Training

Academic and technical heads workshop on competency-based curriculum implementation

Kindly share updates from your institution for inclusion in the upcoming publication scheduled for June 2026.

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