

# **UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI**

## **BOARD OF COMMON UNDERGRADUATE COURSES (BCUC)**

### **Introduction:**

The Board of Common Undergraduate Courses (BCUC) is a body established by The University with the responsibility of administering and monitoring the regulations, organizing the teaching, examinations, and the evaluation of curricula for Common Undergraduate Courses.

Common Undergraduate Courses are courses that are taught to all undergraduate students throughout the University, regardless of the degree programme that the student is studying.

The aim is to produce graduates who are holistic, well-rounded and who have a general understanding of cross-cutting issues about society. While the undergraduate line courses provide a student with expertise in specific areas, in real life, demands on the graduate by society are usually much broader.

Therefore, the Board of Common Undergraduate Courses offers courses that are designed to help a graduate look at life more broadly.

### **The courses**

The University Senate has to-date approved ten Common Undergraduate Courses.

These are:

1. CCS 001: Communication Skills
2. CCS 002: Fundamentals of Development and their Applications in Kenya
3. CCS 003: Human Health
4. CCS 004: Law in society
5. CCS 005: Environmental Science
6. CCS 006: Chemistry and its Applications
7. CCS 007: Science & Technology in Development
8. CCS 008: Elements of Philosophy
9. CCS 009: Elements of Economics
10. CCS 010: HIV & AIDS

## **Appointments**

During the year 2010, the following appointments were made:

1. The Vice-Chancellor renewed the appointment of Prof. Jacob O. Midiwo, BSc, Ph.D and Professor of Chemistry as The Director, Board of Common Undergraduate Courses for a second term of three years w.e.f. August 22, 2010.
2. Mr. Erastus Njeru of The School of Public Health was appointed as the coordinator for CCS 010: HIV/AIDs to take over from Prof. Joseph K.Wang'ombe who had served for two years.
3. Ms Abigael B. Olimba was posted to the board and re-deployed as Assistant Registrar in the office of the coordinator for CCS 010: HIV/AIDs at The school of Public Health.
4. Mrs. Josephine Odongo Mandala was posted as Assistant Secretary and re-deployed to the office of the coordinator for CCS 010: HIV/AIDs at The school of Public Health.

The board welcomes the new appointments and appreciates the work provided by Prof. Wang'ombe during his term as coordinator for CCS 010: HIV/AIDs.

### **Beefing- up the office of the course coordinator**

Course coordinators are very critical in the running of Common Undergraduate Courses. The Board appreciates the heavy responsibility bestowed on these coordinators and would wish to provide staff to assist in their offices.

In this regard, BCUC would like to appoint and post support staff to the office of every course coordinator. Where it is necessary, like in the case of coordinator for CCS 010: HIV/AIDs which is taught in the entire University, BCUC would post a complete team of an administrator and a secretary.

The strategy is to convert every office of the coordinator into a BCUC satellite office that is able to handle routine matters concerning the course in consultation with the head office.

In 2010, BCUC opened a satellite office at the School of Public Health to be run by the coordinator for CCS 010: HIV/AIDS. An Assistant Registrar and a Secretary were posted to this satellite office.

### **Teaching and Examinations**

The teaching and examinations of common undergraduate courses follow the general academic Calendar for module I semesters. The only difference from the mainstream courses being that the common courses are one-off semester courses and therefore, the teaching takes place in one semester and students sit a final examination in that same semester.

In the 2009/2010 academic year, teaching and examinations in all common undergraduate courses were done on schedule, except in some isolated cases where missed lessons were reported and resolved.

### **Special and Supplementary Examinations**

Due to logistical problems, the board does not administer special or supplementary examinations in Common Undergraduate Courses. Students who fail or who miss out in their scheduled examinations are allowed to sit the next immediate scheduled examinations in the courses either as a re-take or a re-sit. It is provided that a student may have a re-take or a re-sit examination in any centre where the examination is administered, but with prior arrangement through the board.

In the year 2010, there was confusion in some schools which went ahead and arranged timetables for supplementary examinations in these courses despite the Board's advise. This created anxiety, especially to the affected students, but we are happy to report that the matter was resolved after clarification.

### **Challenges**

BCUC encountered some challenges in the management of common undergraduate courses during the year 2010. These challenges and proposals on how they can be resolved have already been documented and forwarded to University Management. It is hoped that Management is addressing the issues raised and it will communicate to the board at the appropriate time.