

CEOs Roundtable: Discussions on Jobs, Internships and Career Opportunities.

Date and time: Tue, 2018-08-14 10:01

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Over 20 Chief Executive Officers and Human Resource Directors from various organizations around the country gathered at the University of Nairobi to deliberate on sustainable partnership between the industry, government and the academia. The roundtable took place at the UoN Towers, Monday 13, 2018 during the Chancellors Career Fair.

Speaking during the event, Vice Chancellor, Prof. Peter Mbithi challenged the CEOs to join hands with the University of Nairobi in developing ready talent for hire. The Vice-Chancellor stressed on four areas of interest: research, specialized courses, modernized infrastructure and University of Nairobi brand image. The Vice-Chancellor opined that it is through research and development that the industry can develop new products and services. He challenged the industry practitioners to submit their research problems to the university staff and students and they will come up with solutions. On specialized courses, the VC noted that the University is able to facilitate training and skills development for their staff and help companies cut costs of training their staff abroad. "I invite you to help us in developing modernized infrastructure and build a world class university. You will get naming rights. I urge you as well to contribute towards endowment fund to support needy students" he said. Finally, Prof. Mbithi promised to ensure that the University of Nairobi is ranked top in Africa from the current position five ranking by Webometrics and to be top 100 universities globally by the year 2020.

Human Resource Directors from various companies and multinationals like Oracle, Google, IBM, observed that most graduates lack technical job skills and soft skills and hence they spend up to two

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Published on Vice-Chancellor's Office (<http://vc.uonbi.ac.ke>)

years trying to impart them with the necessary skills. Secondly, graduates don't know how to transition from college to industry. They lack such skills like communication, hygiene, wiring skills and the willingness to learn. They resolved that the University need to appoint a multidisciplinary committee to help in addressing the challenges.

Philanthropist Manu Chandaria and Chairman Comcraft Group of Companies noted that the many universities we have in the country is a testament to the fact that the graduates are getting absorbed by the employers. He said that third and fourth year students need mandatory internship opportunities so that they can get work skills. Without hands-on experience and skills training, it will be difficult to get jobs as there are 3 people for every one job in the country. Google Country Manager, Charles Mwilu agreed with him. At Google for example, for every job vacancy, they get 40,000 - 80,000 applications The competition is too stiff.

Employers from the technology space urged students studying technical subjects to be conversant with the latest technologies like block chain, artificial intelligence, internet of things, design thinking and linux. Students were also urged to work on their critical thinking and problem solving skills.

Going forward, the CEOs agreed that are they ready to be part of the adjunct lecturers. They are willing to give talks, mentor students and share their industry experiences. All these are meant to prepare students to be ready for the job market. The University of Nairobi believes in creating holistic graduates and these endeavours go a long way in fulfilling that dream.

Expiry Date: Fri, 2019-08-30 10:01

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