

Ssekandi calls for market-oriented courses

MPIGI

By Mathias Mazinga

The Vice-President, Edward Kiwanuka Ssekandi, has asked academicians at Uganda Martyrs University (UMU), Nkozi to develop academic courses that will help their students compete favourably in the job market.

He also called for holistic education, which develops all the faculties of students and empowers them to utilise the opportunities that are exposed to them by the "unprecedented developments in science and technology."

"The socio-economic challenges that we are experiencing as a country require us to have higher education courses that are relevant to our needs.

"I call upon all higher education stakeholders to empower our young people with innovation, entrepreneurship and vocational skills. This will enable the students to become competent players in the realisation of Vision 2040, a national strategic plan that aims at propelling the country to a middle-income status. Our academic programmes should thus be in conformity with the unprecedented developments in science and technology," Ssekandi said.



UMU's chancellor Archbishop Odama, the vice-chancellor Prof. Maviiri and the Vice-President Edward Ssekandi during the academic procession. Photo by Mathias Mazinga

He was addressing the 23rd graduation ceremony of UMU, which took place at the university's main campus (at Nkozi) in Mpigi district on Friday.

A total of 1,167 students graduated with masters and bachelors degrees,

BETWEEN THE LINES:

■ Ssekandi encouraged the graduands to take advantage of government programmes to develop themselves.

diplomas and certificates. They graduated in agriculture, development studies, business administration, medicine, public health, computer science and information technology. Others were international trade policy, education and financial

mathematics.

Ssekandi congratulated the graduands on the successful completion of their courses. He asked them to use the skills and knowledge they had acquired to contribute to the transformation of the country.

He also encouraged them to take advantage of government programmes such as the Youth Livelihood Programme to develop themselves.

Ssekandi further asked them to shun risky lifestyles and immoral behavior that may expose them to deadly diseases such as HIV/AIDS.

Ssekandi paid tribute the Catholic Church for its "immense contribution to the county's development" through education and the health sector.

He thanked them in particular for founding UMU, which he said was producing committed and ethical professionals, who serve their country and humanity with zeal.

The UMU chancellor, Archbishop John Baptist Odama, announced that the university will be celebrating its silver anniversary, next year. He said the university was going to build a multi-purpose building at its Kampala campus in Rubaga.

He asked the Government to support the project of the silver jubilee monument by waiving

VAT from the construction materials, equipment and labour.

Odama asked the graduands to uphold the ethical and moral values they have got from UMU and use them to champion peace, love and development in their communities.

The vice-chancellor of UMU, Prof. John Chrysostom Maviiri, highlighted several achievements that the university had attained recently. One of them is its recognition by the World Bank as an African centre of excellence in agro-ecology and livelihood systems.

"The impact-oriented centre will train local and regional top-notch personnel that are envisaged to be job creators but also innovators with badly needed work and behavioral ethos. The \$6m World Bank project will have a lifespan of five years after which the centre will be self-sustaining and entrenched in the university system.

"It is planned that by the end of five years, the centre will have trained 32 PhDs, 180 masters of science students, 500 students pursuing assorted short courses and carried out skilling courses to over 3,000 Ugandans," Maviiri said.

As a practice of the university, outstanding students were recognised with cash gifts.