



UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

Intellectual Property Training for IP Committee, IP Champions, Principal Technologists and Selected Researchers

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SPEECH BY VC

BACKGROUND

Innovation is the major source of improvements in the quality of life. It is through innovation that we are able to overcome many of the challenges that confront our society. Intellectual property plays an essential role in innovation by capturing the economic value of innovation, thereby encouraging investment in research and development (R&D), and by arbitrating between the encouragement of investment in innovation, on the one hand, and the sharing of the social benefit of innovation, on the other hand.

In the quest to maintain a pole position as the leading public university in the country and Africa in terms of teaching and research necessitated the creation of the new Division of Research, Production and Extension. The constituent units in the new division were deliberately chosen on basis of the extent to which they informed the University's research agenda. This was the case with the establishment of the Intellectual Property Management Office to handle innovation and intellectual property .

ACHIVEMENTS

The University of Nairobi has a long history of contributing to the national development through its research activities. It recognizes that the public benefits from new products, processes, plant varieties and other intellectual creations resulting from discoveries, inventions and creative activities by the

University staff, students and associates in the course of their University activities. Indeed one of the core values of the University is “innovativeness and creativity”.

Since its creation this division has made tremendous efforts to deliver its mandate. On the policy formulation level the division put in place the Intellectual Property IP Policy. It has also drafted policies on plagiarism, Research Open Access which have been adopted by the University management. All these policies have a positive impact on the capacity and visibility of UoN research agenda.

CHALLENGES

Diminishing or prorated disbursements from the exchequer, have severely militated against the university's efforts to expand and run its academic programs and upgrade its capacity for research through procurement of state of the art equipment and hiring and retention of relevantly qualified personnel. To further confound the picture, the increased assertiveness of the various segments of Kenyan society that has been ushered in by the 2010 constitutional changes requires the university to justify continued public investment into its programs by availing goods and services through technology transfer. The wheels of technology transfer start their rotation at the point of disclosure of research results.

The University Management recognizes the problem of low levels of disclosure of research results due to corresponding low levels of awareness of IP and lack of appropriate motivational packages for creativity. In this regard, the management has consistently supported the Division to do all in its power to ensure that the IPMO is facilitated to create awareness about IP so that IP creations are duly protected and commercialized for the benefit of the university, creator and society. I note with satisfaction that these efforts are beginning to bear fruit and that more and more of our staff and students are routinely consulting the IPMO for advice on IP issues before publishing their research results. Specifically the University is committed to optimize the environment and incentives for research and the creation of new knowledge by ensuring that benefit-sharing provision of the IP policy are implemented. On top of this, the University management has appointed an Intellectual Property Committee to oversee the implementation of the Intellectual Property Policy.

In implementing its mission, the university enters into partnerships with individuals, organizations and institutions at national, regional and global levels. This workshop is a testimony to that arrangement.

I note from the program that resource people have been drawn from our national intellectual property offices. I am fully appreciative of the fact that it is the same offices which provided logistic and other support to the university to formulate its IP policy and set up the office to implement it. This is a testimony of the cordial relationship existing between the university and these very important offices. I wish to assure you that the university values this relationship and shall do all in its power to nurture it.

With these remarks I declare this workshop officially open.