

RUFORUM Annual General Meeting 2019

RUFORUM-UCC-FAWoVC Mentoring session

Date: Friday 6th December 2019

Venue: School of Graduate Studies Conference Room

Contact: Runyararo J. Rukarwa (r.rukarwa@ruforum.org)

Wivine Adidja (w.adidja@ruforum.org)

Concept Note

Background

Early on, graduate students learn that advanced study differs vastly from their undergraduate experience. As undergraduates, the goal was to obtain knowledge, while in graduate school the goal is to contribute knowledge to a field of study. Graduate school is the professional training ground where students learn the skills to be successful in their fields and gain an understanding of how their disciplines work.

Research confirms what most faculty and graduate program directors already know: many students enter their graduate programs with little understanding of the complex landscape of higher education or how different philosophies in graduate programs drive expectations for academic excellence and ideal career pathways. In fact, despite very articulate statements of purpose in their applications, many graduate students initially are unsure of what they will do with a graduate degree.

This is not a problem but rather an opportunity for good mentoring. Students' career goals are evolutionary and good mentors assist students and young faculty with their professional evolution.

Mentoring is important, not only because of the knowledge and skills students can learn from mentors, but also because mentoring provides professional socialization and personal support to facilitate success in graduate school and beyond. Quality mentoring greatly enhances students' and young faculty chances for success. Research shows that students and young faculty who experience good mentoring also have a greater chance of securing academic

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tenure-track positions, or greater career advancement potential in administration or sectors outside the university.

Aims and Objectives of the side Event

The aim of the session is to enable the mentee to develop their own skills, strategies and capability so that they are enabled to tackle the next hurdle more effectively with or without the mentor’s presence. Specifically, the RUFORUM-UCC-FAWoVC Mentoring session will be aligned with the strategy for high performance and will focus/address the following human capital areas:

- Onboarding - Support mentee in understanding RUFORUM, UCC and FAWOVCS values, vision, mission, and goals.
- Skills Enhancement - Share the skills and knowledge of successful, experienced, and highly competent individuals, and to pass their expertise on to others who need to acquire specified skills.
- Professional Identity – Contribute to understanding of what it means to be a professional in the working environment. Professionals embody the values of the profession and are self-initiating and self-regulating.
- Career Development – Help mentees plan, develop, grow, and manage their careers. Mentoring also helps mentees to become resilient in times of change, more self-reliant in their careers, and more responsible as self-directed learners
- Leadership and Management Development – Encourage the development of leadership competencies. These competencies are often more easily gained through application and guided practice rather than by education and training.
- Education Support – Help to bridge the gap between theory and practice. Formal education and training are complemented by the knowledge and hands-on experience of a competent practitioner.
- Knowledge Management/Knowledge Transfer – Provide for the interchange/exchange of information and knowledge between mentors of different organizations and mentees.

Approach and Methodology

Group mentoring will be used in this session, where multiple experts (mentors) and multiple learners (mentees) work in a group setting. Although structured as a group, learning is individual and each mentee works on his or her own unique learning needs and development goals. The Mentors guide rather than train. Both mentors and mentees benefit from participating in group mentoring. Mentoring groups will explore career development, provide psychosocial support, help build networks and facilitate knowledge transfer. Mentors will guide mentees by sharing experiences, asking Socratic type

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questions, participating in shared activities, allowing mentees to job shadow, and introducing mentees to others in the RUFORUM network that can help further their goals.

During the mentoring sessions the following activities will be done:

- review experience
- identify objectives
- provide feedback
- identify strengths and achievements
- identify areas of development
- explore options
- coaching on specific areas if required
- discuss professional issues
- agree support needs
- set targets for future actions
- create opportunities for mentees to gain experience

Outputs/ outcomes

The mentorship session learning outcomes will be:

1. **Build and support effective relationships**
Based on mutual trust, respect, and accountability that creates a safe space for the mentee to work towards personal learning goals.
2. **Provide objective guidance and feedback based on personal experience:**
Facilitate mentee's ability to create and work towards specific learning goals by providing objective feedback and guidance on goals and action steps, sharing lessons from personal experience, and serving as a connector to people and resources.
3. **Facilitate reflective thinking:** Pushes mentee to reflect on experiences by asking thoughtful, thought-provoking questions that seek deeper meaning and help the mentee to become more self-aware of strengths and growth opportunities.
4. **Take ownership for own personal growth and learning:** Serve as a role model for personal growth and learning by employing practices of goal-setting, seeking feedback, and reflection for one's own development during the mentoring relationship.

Venue and Participants

The side event will take place at the University of Cape Coast in Ghana. The participants will be graduate students and young faculty.

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**Side Event
Organizers
and Contact**

The organizers are RUFORUM, University of Cape Coast and FAWoVCs.

About FAWoVC

FAWoVC is an umbrella group of female university leaders in Africa that was created in 2016 to spearhead gender responsive training in higher education institutions and to increase the enrolment of female students in STEM, as well as galvanize women to take up leadership positions. FAWoVC was established to be an influential voice within the higher education space in Africa and champion the gender equality and women’s empowerment agenda, which is a requirement for the fulfilment of all the SDGs.

About RUFORUM

Established by African university vice chancellors in 2004, the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) is a consortium of 121 African universities operating in 38 countries on the continent with a vision to create “a vibrant agricultural sector linked to African universities which produce high-performing graduates and high-quality research responsive to the demands of Africa’s farmers for innovations and able to generate sustainable livelihoods and national economic development”. RUFORUM Secretariat is hosted by the Ministry of Education and Sports in Uganda with Secretariat at Makerere University in Kampala. In 2014, RUFORUM signed a MoU with the African Union Commission to support implementation of the Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA 2024) Priority One on reducing poverty and ensuring food and nutrition security. Please visit www.ruforum.org for more information.

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List of Mentors

No.	Mentors	Mentor Affiliation	Country
1.	Prof. Stella Williams	Nigerian Women in Agricultural Research and Development	Nigeria
2.	Prof. Mabel Imbuga	Former Vice-Chancellor of the Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology	Kenya
3.	Prof. Patrick Rubaihayo	Makerere University	Uganda
4.	Prof. Alice Pell	Former Vice Provost, Cornell University	USA
5.	Dr. Patel Bharatiben Karsondas		India
6.	Prof. Mick Mwala	University of Zambia	Zambia
7.	Prof. Jackson Gilbert Majaliwa	Makerere University	Uganda
8.	Prof. Adil Deifalla	University of Gezira	Sudan
9.			
10.			

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