



The Fifth African Higher Education Week and RUFORUM Biennial Conference 2016

13th RUFORUM Principals and Deans Meeting

Concept Note

Background

The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) is an African-owned, member-based, and dynamic network of 60 universities in 25 African countries. It was created in 2004 by the then 10 African Vice Chancellors ‘to strengthen the capacities of Universities to foster innovations responsive to demands of small-holder farmers through the training of high quality researchers, the output of impact oriented research, and the maintenance of collaborative working relations among researchers, farmers and national agricultural research institutions’. The member universities recognise the need to collaborate rather than compete as a means of strengthening graduate training in Africa and enhancing relevance of African Universities to development needs in the continent.

The current RUFORUM’s Strategic Business Plan 2015-2020 recognizes the importance of all three traditional mandates of the universities – namely training, research, and outreach and calls for strategic interventions in each of those three levels of Tertiary Agricultural Higher Education to ensure that RUFORUM remains relevant to its various customers and stakeholders amidst a fast changing socio-economic environment; especially with renewed interest of the African Union recognising higher education as critical for achieving its Africa Vision 2063.

Principals and Deans play a key role in managing academic quality at universities. As such, they are central to the implementation of RUFORUM activities and towards the achievement of the outcomes and ultimate goals as stipulated in the RUFORUM Theory of Change (ToC). RUFORUM Strategic Business Plan (2015-2020) highlights the following outputs that need to be achieved by RUFORUM within the ToC:

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1. RUFORUM member faculties produce more relevant and user oriented research;
2. RUFORUM member faculties produce proactive and skilled graduates;
3. Universities institutionalize enabling policies, principles and practices;
4. Universities mainstream new approaches in pedagogy and academic management.

Purpose of the Side Event

The meeting brings together Principals and Deans from the RUFORUM member universities to discuss issues related to the RUFORUM overall objectives. The meeting this year will focus specifically on the issues of low graduation rate coupled with low publication rate and increasing cases of plagiarism among universities. There will also be focus on:

- a) Exploring opportunities for new graduate programmes;
- b) Strengthening academic delivery through use of ICTs; and
- c) Debriefing on opportunities for collaboration under the African Higher Education Centres of Excellence (ACE)

Moreover, there will be opportunities to learn about existing resource mobilisation avenues to strengthen research and training at African universities. As such, the meeting will focus on harnessing existing and upcoming calls for proposals that universities may apply to. In addition, the Deans and Principals will meet in a closed meeting to deliberate on RUFORUM Network issues.

Objectives of the side Event

The specific objectives of the side event are to:

1. Convene and hold the RUFORUM Principals and Deans Committee Business Meeting;
2. Discuss opportunities for strengthening delivery of academic programmes;
3. Debriefing on the ACE training opportunities

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4. Discuss ways to improve low graduation rate and low publication rate, and how to decrease cases of plagiarism in universities;
5. Explore funding opportunities for Higher Education in Africa.

Approach and Methodology

The meeting will involve presentations, group work and panel discussions.

Venue and Participants

The meeting will be attended by Principals, Deans and senior members of staff of African universities, key partners and stakeholders. The Deans and Principals Business meeting will be attend exclusively by Deans and Principals.

Venue: Century City Conference Centre (CCCC), Hall B & Meeting Room 9 & 10

Date & Time: 15th & 16th October 2016 from 0830-1645

Side Event Organizers and Contact

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