



UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY AND ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

STRATEGIC PLAN 2013-2018

MAY 2013

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, previously designated as the Department of Geography, is the first and the oldest Department of Geography in all public and private universities in Kenya. It started as a Department of Geography in 1956 when the University of Nairobi was first established as the Royal Technical College. In 2005, the department was renamed Department of Geography and Environmental Studies. The department offers a wide range of academic programmes leading to Diploma, BA, BSc, BEd, MA, MSc and PhD degrees in diverse fields of geography and environmental studies. Whereas the department is administratively under the Faculty of Arts, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, it offers degree programmes in the School of Biological Sciences and the School of Education. In addition, the department offers service courses to the School of Biological Sciences; School of Economics; Institute of Anthropology, Gender and African Studies; School of Journalism and Mass Communication; and the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine. As such, the department has produced a significant pool of highly trained and skilled professionals who have continued to play a significant role in the Kenya's development and beyond. Furthermore, the alumni of the department are employed in all sectors of the economy. The department intends to maintain its position in providing leadership not only in geography and environmental studies, but also in enhancing skills in applications such as Remote Sensing, Geographical Information Systems (GIS), Environmental Impact Assessment and Audit, and Monitoring and Evaluation, among others.

1.2 Administrative Structure of the Department

The department currently consists of 30 full-time academic members of staff, 10 full-time technical staff and the secretariat. The administrative and academic operations of the department are overseen by the Head of Department appointed by the Vice-Chancellor. However, the management of the department incorporates all the staff through faculty-based and departmental-based committees, as well as consultative departmental meetings.

1.3 The Planning Context

The Department of Geography and Environmental Studies Strategic Plan 2013-2018 has been cascaded from the University of Nairobi Strategic Plan 2013-2018; College of Humanities and Social Sciences Strategic Plan 2013-2018; and the Faculty of Arts Strategic Plan 2013-2018. The Plan takes into consideration the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies Strategic Plan 2008-2013; the global changes in the teaching of geography and environmental studies; the general changing and dynamic environment; the emerging environmental challenges; the expectations and demands of the Kenyan people; the Vision 2030; the Constitution of Kenya 2010; and the Universities Act 2012.

1.4 Significance of the Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan creates and affirms the purpose for which the department exists. It takes stock of the environment in which the department is operating and identifies the critical issues that must be addressed. The Plan looks into how well the department is positioned to develop its full potential, taking into account the changing environment internally, regionally and globally. The development of this Strategic Plan follows the steps required of any organizational strategic plan namely: a shared vision, mission and core values, as well as being cognizant of its strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats.

2.0 VISION, MISSION AND CORE VALUES

2.1 Vision

The department aspires to be:

A department of international repute committed to scholarly excellence in geography and environmental studies

2.2 Mission

Deriving from the vision, the department's mission is:

To provide dynamic leadership in the teaching, research, consultancy and outreach services in geography and environmental studies for the benefit of humanity and sustainable development

2.3 Core Values

To realize its vision and mission, the department shall be guided by the following core values:

- 1. Academic excellence***
- 2. Creativity and innovativeness***
- 3. Freedom of thought and expression***
- 4. Quality customer service***
- 5. Good corporate governance***
- 6. Responsible citizenship***

2.4 Guiding Principles

The key guiding principles of the department are:

- 1. Professionalism in all aspects***
- 2. Inclusiveness and equity***
- 3. Commitment to integrity***
- 4. Social and academic mentorship***
- 5. Respect for and conservation of the environment***

3.0 STRATEGIC ANALYSIS

A **SWOT** analysis of the department revealed the following Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats:

3.1 Strengths

1. The oldest department of geography in the country
2. A wide range of highly qualified and competent staff
3. Strategic location in Nairobi
4. Inter- and multi-disciplinary nature of the discipline and programmes
5. A wide network of local and international links and collaborations
6. Capacity for research, consultancy, outreach services and income generation
7. A long tradition of research and publication
8. Active involvement in local, national, regional and global environmental governance
9. Responsive and transformative management

3.2 Weaknesses

1. Inadequate appropriate and up-to-date teaching facilities and equipment
2. Inadequate and poorly maintained physical facilities
3. Inadequate ICT infrastructure
4. Low staff-student ratios
5. Inadequate facilitation for research and training opportunities
6. Under-reporting of individual-based research, consultancy and outreach activities
7. Weak staff mentorship and orientation programme

3.3 Opportunities

1. High demand for departmental programmes
2. Increased demand for research, consultancy and outreach services
3. Well established local and international linkages and collaboration

4. Potential for expanding multi-disciplinary programmes
5. Potential for programme expansion through distance learning, including e-learning
6. Potential for provision of tailor-made programmes/courses

3.4 Threats

1. Competition from other institutions
2. Low budgetary allocation
3. Lack of incentives and recognition of academic achievements
4. Attractive opportunities in other sectors
5. Escalating cost of living

4.0 STRATEGIC ISSUES, OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES AND OUTCOMES

Strategic issues are the key challenges facing the department that need to be addressed if the department is to improve its performance and realize its mandate. Inadequate attention to these issues will adversely affect the performance of the department. Strategic issues are therefore the focal points of the strategic planning process. The department has identified four strategic issues for action, as well as corresponding objectives, strategies and outcomes.

4.1 Strategic Issues

1. Teaching and learning
2. Research, consultancy and outreach services
3. Resources and governance
4. Competitiveness of the department

4.2 Strategic Objectives

1. To produce quality and holistic graduates
2. To contribute to knowledge development, innovations and extension
3. To manage the department efficiently and effectively
4. To promote the positive image of the department

4.3 Strategic Issue 1: Teaching and Learning

Teaching and learning is the core business of the university. If there is no excellence in these areas, there will be no guarantee for survival and success in a highly competitive environment. The department is highly endowed with human capital and relevant academic programmes. It therefore must play a leading role in the generation and the dissemination of knowledge in geography and environmental studies to meet the national developmental challenges of the 21st Century and beyond. The department endeavours to produce holistic graduates with requisite knowledge and skills in geography and environmental studies.

Objective 1: To produce quality and holistic graduates**Strategies**

1. Review existing academic programmes
2. Introduce innovative programmes
3. Enhance best practices in teaching and learning
4. Facilitate appropriate teaching and learning infrastructure

Expected outcomes

1. Reviewed academic programmes
2. Innovative programmes introduced
3. Enhanced teaching, learning and examination processes
4. Appropriate teaching and learning infrastructure
5. Increased access to distance learning, including e-learning

4.4 Strategic Issue 2: Research, Consultancy and Outreach Services

Research, consultancy and outreach services are key strategic issues that the university must address to remain relevant in its pursuit of extending the frontiers of knowledge development and application. Research contributes to knowledge development and improvement of human life. Consultancy not only plays an important role in national development but also fosters public-private sector partnerships and the financial sustainability of the university. Outreach and extension services are part of the department's commitment to widely share specialized knowledge with the Kenyan community.

Objective 2: To contribute to knowledge development, innovations and extension**Strategies**

1. Provide conducive environment for research, consultancy and extension
2. Encourage participation in academic fora

Expected outcomes

1. Increased research and research outputs

2. Enhanced participation in extension and outreach activities

4.5 Strategic Issue 3: Resources and Governance

Adequate resources and good governance are key to quality teaching, learning and research. The department strives to promote democratic ideals, gender equity, social justice, inclusiveness, integrity, transparency and accountability in all its management structures. In addition, the ability of the department to deliver on its mandate will depend on resources available and the efficiency of their deployed.

Objective 3: To manage the department efficiently and effectively

Strategies

1. Review and implement good governance structures
2. Support and maintain a conducive working environment
3. Diversify and increase sources of revenue

Expected outcomes

1. Efficient and effective governance structures
2. Effective utilization of Management Information System
3. Higher income through research and consultancies

4.6 Strategic Issue 4: Competitiveness of the Department

With the increasing number of universities and related disciplines, the department needs to create a strong positive image and brand in the minds of the past, current and potential students, as well as all stakeholders and the public at large.

Objective 4: To promote the positive image of the department

Strategies

1. Produce holistic graduates
2. Create and revitalize linkages

3. Increase the visibility of the department
4. Encourage a culture of academic excellence
5. Ensure a conducive learning and work environment

Expected outcomes

1. Functional department-industry/public/private sector partnerships
2. Increased alignment of academic programmes to the Vision 2030, the Constitution of Kenya 2010, the Universities Act 2012 and the University of Nairobi Statutes and Policies
3. New and revitalized local and international linkages
4. Increased visibility
5. Holistic graduates

5 PERFORMANCE PLAN

STRATEGIC ISSUE 1: TEACHING AND LEARNING

Strategic Objective 1: To produce quality and holistic graduates

Strategies

1. Review existing academic programmes
2. Introduce innovative programmes
3. Enhance best practices in teaching and learning
4. Facilitate appropriate teaching and learning infrastructure

Expected Outcome	Performance Indicators	Baseline	Targets	Time Frame	Responsibility
Reviewed academic programmes	Number of reviewed academic programmes and courses	-	1	2013-2018	HoD Staff
Innovative programmes introduced	Number of new programmes	-	2	2013-2018	HoD Staff
Enhanced teaching, learning and examination processes	Compliance with the stipulated teaching, learning and examination processes	-	100%	2013-2018	HoD Staff Students
Appropriate teaching and learning infrastructure	Schedule for comprehensive maintenance of teaching and learning infrastructure	-	Yearly	2013-2018	HoD
	Number of renovated and well-equipped lecture rooms/halls	-	2	2013-2018	HoD
	Proportion of lecture rooms with ICT infrastructure	-	100%	2013-2018	HoD
	Proportion of staff with adequate and well-furnished offices	25%	75%	2013-2018	HoD
Increased access to distance learning, including e-learning	Proportion of course units with teaching modules for distance learning	25%	100%	2013-2018	HoD Staff
	Number of students on open, distance and electronic learning (ODEL)	100	200	2013-2018	HoD

STRATEGIC ISSUE 2: RESEARCH, CONSULTANCY AND OUTREACH SERVICES
Strategic Objective 2: To contribute to knowledge development, innovations and extension
Strategies

1. Provide conducive environment for research, consultancy and extension
2. Encourage participation in academic fora

Expected Outcome	Performance Indicators	Baseline	Targets	Time Frame	Responsibility
Increased research and research outputs	Number of research projects	1	4	2013-2018	HoD Staff
	Number of academic publications	30	1 per staff per year	2013-2018	HoD Staff
	Number of academic papers presented	60	2 per staff per year	2013-2018	HoD Staff
Enhanced participation in extension and outreach activities	Proportion of staff engaged in outreach and extension activities	50%	75%	2013-2018	HoD Staff
	Proportion of students engaged in outreach and extension activities	25%	50%	2013-2018	HoD Students

STRATEGIC ISSUE 3: RESOURCES AND GOVERNANCE
Strategic Objective 3: To manage the department efficiently and effectively
Strategies

1. Review and implement good governance structures
2. Institute mechanisms for recognition of outstanding performance
3. Support and maintain a conducive working environment
4. Diversify and increase sources of revenue

Expected Outcome	Performance Indicators	Baseline	Targets	Time Frame	Responsibility
Efficient and effective governance structures	Compliance with the Faculty Service Charter	100%	100%	2013-2018	HoD Staff Students
	Compliance with ISO 9001:2008 standards	100%	100%	2013-2018	HoD Staff Students
	Compliance with the University policies and procedures	100%	100%	2013-2018	HoD Staff Students
	Average staff performance appraisal index	75%	90%	2013-2018	HoDs Staff
	Periodic customer satisfaction survey	-	Quarterly	2013-2018	HoD
	Improved lines of communication	-	Continuous	2013-2018	HoD All staff Students
Effective utilization of Management Information System	Department-based comprehensive and up-to-date database	-	Continuous	2013-2018	HoD Staff Students
Higher income through research and consultancies	Income generated by the department through research and consultancies	-	1 million per year	2013-2018	HoD Staff

STRATEGIC ISSUE 4: COMPETITIVENESS OF THE DEPARTMENT
Strategic Objective 4: To promote the positive image of the department
Strategies

1. Produce holistic graduates
2. Create and revitalize linkages
3. Increase the visibility of the department
4. Encourage a culture of academic excellence
5. Ensure a conducive learning and work environment

Expected Outcome	Performance Indicators	Baseline	Targets	Time Frame	Responsibility
Functional department-industry/public/private sector partnerships	Number of contractual partnerships	1	5	2013-2018	HoD Staff Student
Increased alignment of academic programmes to the Vision 2030, the Constitution of Kenya 2010 and the Universities Act 2012	Level of compliance	50%	100%	2013-2018	HoD Staff
New and revitalized local and international linkages	Number of local contractual linkages	3	5	2013-2018	HoD Staff
	Number of international contractual linkages	5	8	2013-2018	HoD Staff
	Number of visiting scholars	3	5	2013-2018	HoD Staff
Increased visibility	Updated webpages	-	Continuous	2013-2018	HoD Staff
	Organization and participation in outreach activities	-	Continuous	2013-2018	HoD Staff Students
Holistic graduates	Students participation in professional associations	45%	75%	2013-2018	HoD Students

The Department Strategic Plan Committee

1. Dr. Samuel Owuor Senior Lecturer & Chairman of Department
2. Dr. Stella M. Mukhovi Senior Lecturer
3. Dr. Boniface Wambua Lecturer