



INTER- UNIVERSITY COUNCIL FOR EAST AFRICA (IUCEA)

Quality Education for Development

THE 15TH IUCEA ANNUAL MEETING AND CONFERENCE



**Innovative Leadership and Governance Approaches in Higher
Education: Towards EAC Common Higher Education Area**

CONCEPT NOTE

**17-18 JULY 2024
JUBA - SOUTH SUDAN**

Introduction

The 15th Annual Meeting and Conference of the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) is a statutory gathering organized this year to bring together higher education managers, policymakers and practitioners from the East African Community (EAC) and beyond to reflect on the broader issue of higher education leadership and governance, which is critical for the achievement of the Common Higher Education Area.

The Declaration of EAC as a Common Higher Education Area by the EAC Heads of State on May 20, 2017 in Dar Es-Salaam, Tanzania was a major turning point in the transformation of the higher education landscape in the region.

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IUCEA committed to “advocate for and foster the implementation of the EAC Common Higher Education Area” and to “establish and implement university leadership programme in the region.””

By this Declaration, higher education stakeholders have been called to achieve a comparable, compatibility, coherent and harmonized system of higher education to facilitate free mobility of students, staff and professionals, and mutual recognition of qualifications. The achievement of these desired outcomes of the Common Higher Education

Area was envisioned to be hinged mainly on the implementation of the regional quality assurance framework and qualifications framework for higher education.

Higher education leadership and governance

are critical in the implementation of the regional frameworks and operationalization of the Common Higher Education Area. As key policy makers and implementers, higher education leaders are central to the implementation and institutionalization of regional higher education frameworks. More precisely, university leadership is crucial in establishing and maintaining quality assurance mechanisms and ensuring that academic standards are aligned with regional benchmarks to enhance the credibility and recognition of degrees and qualifications and facilitate mobility of learners and professionals across the region. This demanding responsibility for university leaders can no longer be taken for granted, due to among others: external demands for increased accountability, quality, standards, and excellence with respect to research and teaching (and the attachment of monies to the results of these assessments); the need to diversify the funding base of universities; the whole issue of mobilising resources, including good faculty and students, to sustain and enhance research and ensure the possibility of high-quality teaching in an ever evolving technological environment; and the sheer need to ‘position’ universities within the larger context of corporate leadership and governance. Given the breadth of objectives and functions and the great diversity of stakeholders, higher education institutions are very complex organizations, whose leadership and governance has a deep impact on the achievement of a common vision of a harmonised and quality regional higher education area.

Fortunately, innovative leadership and governance is increasingly being recognized

¹John Dearlove and UNESCO (1995), Governance, Leadership, and change in Universities, UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning, Paris.

as critical in confronting the challenges of management of higher education. In 2017 for instance, the American Council on Education conducted a study entitled Innovative Leadership. Drawing insights from the American College Presidents, the study established that in response to the growing challenges in their higher education institutions, innovative leaders have begun to emerge. Even though their stories are shaped by a unique set of circumstances, innovative leaders in higher education institutions share similar abilities and common approaches to building a more successful institution. According to the study report, innovative leaders have “the ability to come up with a vision and mobilize people behind the realization of the vision. They have a tolerance for taking strategic risks associated with potential policy shifts and thrive on turning challenges or moments of campus crisis into opportunities or accelerants for change. Innovative leaders also strive to create continuity on their campuses and sustain progress. Furthermore, innovative leaders are able to exploit new technology and employing new thinking to generate new value and to bring about significant changes in their organizations and communities. Finally, these leaders are able to establish and leverage both internal and external networks to help them achieve their goals”.

This conference provides the social space for higher education leaders to reflect together as peers and to establish innovative strategies of addressing common challenges in achieving the desired goals of the EAC Common Higher Education Area. The conference is premised on the current IUCEA's Strategic Plan of 2021/2026 which gives great attention to the promotion of the EAC Common Higher Education Area and promotion of university leadership programme. Under Strategic Objectives 1 and 2 of the said Strategic Plan, IUCEA committed to “advocate for and foster the implementation of the EAC Common Higher Education Area” and to “establish and implement university leadership programme in the region”.

This Conference offers the unique opportunity for higher education leaders to reflect not only on the pillars of the Common Higher Education Area but also to share their leadership experiences and best practices in shaping a harmonised higher education system in the region. By providing a platform for collaboration and knowledge-sharing, this conference aspires to equip education leaders with the tools and insights necessary to lead their institutions successfully in a rapidly evolving higher education landscape. It is an opportunity for the regional higher education community to come together, learn from each other, and shape the future of higher education leadership and governance.

The conference will precede the IUCEA Annual Meeting which is one of the statutory meetings provided under Section 7 (1) and (2) of the IUCEA Act 2009. The Meeting comprises heads of IUCEA member universities, permanent/principal/under Secretaries of ministries responsible for higher education, heads of national commissions and councils for higher education, heads of national commissions and councils for science and technology from the EAC Partner States, representatives of East African Business Council, representatives of students, and other higher education stakeholders. The Annual Meeting will bring together higher education stakeholders to take stock of the development in higher education and research in the region, to enable IUCEA to appropriately advise the EAC Partner States on aspects or matters related to higher education dynamics in the region and globally. Furthermore, the Annual Meeting provides a platform for IUCEA to give detailed accountability of its achievements, challenges, funding, opportunities, plans and proposals.

While the Conference is open to any interested individual to attend virtually, IUCEA Members are welcome to attend both the Conference and the Annual Meeting physically or virtually, as they find suitable.

²Louis Soares, Jonathan S. Gagliardi, Philip J. Wilkinson and Sherri Lind Hughes (2018), Innovative Leadership: Insights from the American College President Study 2017, American Council on Education, Washington DC.

³Inter-University Council for East Africa (2021), IUCEA Strategic Plan 2021-2026, Kampala.

Conference Aim and Objectives



To examine innovative leadership frameworks and strategies that address the dynamic challenges facing higher education institutions in the context of EAC regional integration



To highlight transformative governance practices that support institutional effectiveness, foster stakeholder engagement, and facilitate decision-making processes aligned with the goals of higher education harmonisation and regional integration.



To showcase innovative pedagogical approaches and teaching methodologies aimed at improving student learning outcomes, promoting critical thinking skills, and preparing graduates for success in a rapidly evolving technology



To reflect on innovative strategies for mobilizing and managing resources effectively, including sustainable funding models, public-private partnerships, and leveraging technological advancements for quality higher education



To provide a platform for knowledge exchange, networking, and collaboration among higher education stakeholders, including university leaders, policymakers, researchers, and industry representatives, to facilitate mutual learning and foster partnerships for advancing the common higher education area in the EAC

Conference Topics

By focusing on this major issue of higher education leadership and governance in the context of the EAC Common Higher Education Area, the conference will address key topics such as educational leadership innovations, transformative leadership, transformative teaching and learning, sustainable resource mobilization, and measures for regional integration to enhance access, quality, and mobility. The following topics will particularly be discussed:

1. Innovations in Educational Leadership

This topic will explore cutting-edge leadership models and strategies that address the unique challenges faced by higher education institutions in the EAC region. Discussions may include the integration of technology (including artificial intelligence technologies) in the management of Higher Education Institutions.

2. Corporate Governance as applicable to Educational Institutions

In addition to Innovative Leadership, best practices in corporate governance will be explored and shared. Focus will be made on dynamic changes in corporate educational environment that demands greater transparency and accountability with more structured engagements of stakeholders. Furthermore, the interactions will dwell on advocating for promotion of corporate governance as integral part of running an education institution.

3. Pedagogical Leadership for Transformative Teaching and Learning

This topic will focus on innovative pedagogical approaches that can transform teaching and learning experiences within higher education institutions. Discussions may include the integration of technology (including artificial intelligence technologies) in teaching and learning, open and distance learning (ODL), active learning methodologies and strategies to enhance student engagement and outcomes.

4. Innovative Resource Mobilization and Management for Sustainable Quality Higher Education

This topic will examine novel ways of mobilizing and managing resources to ensure the sustainability and quality of higher education institutions. Topics may encompass public-private partnerships, alternative funding models, and efficient resource allocation strategies to enhance institutional effectiveness.

5. Promoting Access, Quality, and Mobility for Regional Integration

This broad topic will address issues related to regional integration within the EAC higher education landscape. Discussions may cover the development of common standards for regional programme accreditation, promoting cross-border education and student and faculty mobility, the implementation of EAC Students Mobility and Scholarship Scheme (EAC-SMS) and strategies for ensuring access to quality education for all.

6. Higher Education Policies for a common space in the East African Community

This topic will focus on higher education policy frameworks in the EAC partner states concerning harmonization. It aims to foster strategic discussions on and exploration of available policies that promote access to learners in the region, policies on recognition of qualifications, policy on harmonization of curriculum among others. The discussions should generate effective strategies that ensure policy coherence, ultimately contributing to the realization of a harmonized higher education space for the region.

7. Cross-cutting Topics

Sessions will also be dedicated to cross-cutting topics such as the role of technological advancement (artificial intelligence) in higher education management, higher education data, research and innovation in higher education, building collaborative networks among institutions, and addressing equity and inclusivity in the pursuit of a common higher education area.

Target Audience

- University Presidents, Provosts, Rectors and Vice-Chancellors
- Government Officials in Higher Education
- EAC Leadership
- Education Policy Makers
- Industry Representatives
- Researchers and Scholars
- Higher Education Experts
- Innovators
- Student representatives

Conference and Meeting Format

The conference will be a one-day activity and will take place in a hybrid format to accommodate both in-person and virtual participants. The conference will feature keynote speeches from thought leaders in the field, interactive plenary sessions and panel discussions. Interactive panel discussions will feature higher education leaders, managers, policy makers and other stakeholders exploring critical issues in higher education, the role of higher education in the EAC regional integration processes, facilitating dialogue on best practices, and proposing solutions for the challenges faced by educational leaders. Participants will also have the opportunity to network with peers and higher education partners. Informal networking sessions, social events (joint dinner), will provide participants with the opportunities to connect, share experiences, and build

valuable professional and institutional relationships and partnerships. The details of all these conference activities can be found in the detailed programme.

The Annual Meeting will be restricted to IUCEA member institutions and key stakeholders only, considering that this is a statutory meeting as provided by the IUCEA Act, 2009. It will also be a one-day meeting guided by a Meeting Agenda to be circulated to the members prior to the meeting. During the Meeting, various reports will be presented including reports from the IUCEA Executive Committee, IUCEA Secretariat and EAC Audit Commission. The Meeting also provides an opportunity for members to interrogate on achievements and challenges and make strategic contributions for advancing the development and landscape of higher education in the region.

Expected Conference Outcomes

This conference is expected to benefit participants in several ways but more particularly, participants will:

1 Develop a deeper understanding of innovative leadership practices and frameworks that can enhance institutional resilience and effectiveness in the context of regional integration.

2 Acquire strategies for implementing transformative governance practices that promote transparency, accountability, and greater stakeholder engagement in higher education institutions.

3 Identify pedagogical innovations and teaching methodologies that can enhance student engagement, promote active learning, and improve learning outcomes in higher education settings.

4 Gain insights into effective resource mobilization and management strategies that support sustainable development and growth of higher education institutions within the EAC region.

5 Have the social space to initiate networks for collaboration and partnership among higher education stakeholders, fostering opportunities for future collaboration, academic partnerships, and knowledge exchange initiatives aimed at advancing the common higher education area in the EAC.

6 Develop common understanding, strategies and concerted efforts on how universities should contribute to the operationalisation of the EC Common Higher Education Area.

Conclusion

The Conference on Innovative Leadership and Governance Approaches in Higher Education is envisioned as a platform for dialogue on the EAC Common Higher Education Area and for fostering collaboration, sharing insights and best practices, and shaping the future of higher education in the EAC region. Participants will thus contribute to the development of a harmonized and integrated higher education area within the East African Community.

Registration for the Conference

For those interested to participate, please register through the following:
<https://www.iucea.org/15aM>

About IUCEA

The background and detailed information about IUCEA can be obtained from the following link: <http://www.iucea.org/>

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