



The Campus This Week

ISSUE 106 | Friday May 26, 2023

Quality Assurance starts from individuals - Sumbuk

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QUALITY Assurance is not limited to just academic staff.

It is everybody's business and must start from individuals before it reaches the organization.

These comments were made by former UNRE Chancellor Professor Kenneth Sumbuk last Friday at a Quality Assurance (QA) workshop at Kairak Centre for Sustainable Rural Development (KCfSRD).

The workshop was attended by University VC Professor Aisak Pue, Registrar Mrs Jennifer Popat, Bursar Mr Edward Laki, KCfSRD Manager Mr

Hosea Turbarat and line managers.

Professor Sumbuk said staff of the University must understand why they are here and aim to maintain quality.

He explained that the Department of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (DHERST) has set a requirement for all universities to meet and this is through the Quality Assurance process.

"Quality Assurance is about assuring quality of your product and the product is your graduates," said Professor Sumbuk.

He said QA starts with

individuals.

"How you dress, your punctuality at work and if your targets are met every day. Before talking about institutional quality, staff must begin to assess themselves first."

He said the Academic Quality is part of QA and it ensures that the University produces quality graduates who are marketable.

"Quality Control comes after the product has been produced to ensure your product is marketable and this term has been borrowed from entrepreneurs," said Professor Sumbuk.

Professor Sumbuk

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Students learn how to crossbreed rice

THIRD-YEAR Agriculture students took to the rice fields as early as 6:00am yesterday morning for a practical on how to crossbreed rice to produce hybrids.

Lecturer Dr Caleb Breria said the practical comes under the module *Crop Genetics and Breeding*.

"The students have studied the fundamentals of crop genetics and breeding with the methodologies in plant breeding, the designs of plant breeding trials and finally to complete the course, they did the hands on practical," he said.



▲ Rodney Ibachim who is majoring in Crop Protection carries out the emasculation process.

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OUR VISION

Advancing Knowledge for Sustainable Development

OUR MISSION

To develop into a sustainable University through delivery of innovative research, quality teaching and learning, developing staff and students as alumni agents for positive change.

THE CAMPUS THIS WEEK

is the news bulletin of Papua New Guinea University of Natural Resources and Environment.

Produced weekly by the University's Public Relations Office, it is the voice of the University to relevant stakeholders and the community on developments at the University.

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Practical involves students from two strands

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"As far as I know, they might be the only people within the country to learn how to crossbreed rice conventionally (by hand)."

The two-part practical saw more than 60 students in two strands – Crop Protection and Crop Sciences – go to the rice field at 6:00am to do emasculation then return at about 11:00am to carry out controlled pollination.

Dr Breria said they have to go back after three days to check if their mating of male and female flowers has been successful.

"This is because it takes full conception to germination within a space period of three to seven days. From there, they can actually calculate the "success rate" of their crossbreeding trials," he said.

Bachelor student Rayleen Paita (*pictured below*) explained that emasculation is when the stamens are removed before anthesis (the period during which a flower is



fully open and functional) to obtain a female parent and pollen from the desired male parent is transferred on to its stigma.

She said the practical was very interesting because they are the first students to do the emasculation and controlled pollination rice practical.

Diploma student Rodney Ibachim also found the practical fascinating.

He explained that crossbreeding increases the yield of grain; increases the grain quality and develops a disease, insect and pest resistant variety. It also improves cooking characteristics of the rice.

Dr Breria thanked Farm Manager Alex Nugi for allowing the students to

use the rice fields for their practical.

Mr Nugi expressed satisfaction in the students using the rice field for their studies.

"Seeing students benefit from the practical aspects of teaching and learning is the motivation any personnel dealing with supporting academia needs in order to put in the hard yards daily," he said.

"Anything less and we fall short of producing the best graduate purpose built for industry and life itself."

The variety planted in the rice field is Taichung Sen 10 (TCS 10).

Its seeds were donated to the University last year by the Taiwan Technical Mission in PNG.

Students call for wider awareness on DCA before signing

STUDENTS of PNG UNRE joined their peers in other sister universities in the country on Monday to protest against the Defence Cooperation Agreement between the United States of America and Papua New Guinea.

The students main concern was that there needed to be more awareness on the benefits and consequences of the agreement.



Fisheries students conduct biodiversity assessment

MARINE ecology is a new course that was introduced and incorporated into the fisheries degree program under the recently adopted scheme of strands.

This year's third year Bachelor of Fisheries and Marine Resources students are the pioneers of this course under the Aquatic Science strand.

Last month, course coordinator and lecturer Vonklauss Siwat and the 33 marine ecology students went on a field trip to Urara Island, off the northern coast of East New Britain Province for a practical lesson on the assessment of coral diversity using coral growth forms as a subset of species diversity.

Corals form coral reefs which are home to an amazing variety of other plants and animals from microscopic bacteria and protists to all kinds of invertebrates and a dazzling display of fish and other tertiary consumers. The diverse and significant ecological functions of coral reefs consequently make them some of the habitats with the highest biological diversity on earth and a rich fishing ground.

Coral reefs also protect coastlines and help prevent erosion while supplying communities with seafood



▲ Students lay out the transect line on the coral reef for coral survey.



▲ BSFMR Year 3 students doing coral growth forms observations and data recording.

Photos courtesy of Willie Takale, BSFMR Year 3.

and other benefits.

Papua New Guinea is part of the Coral Triangle, an area known to have extremely abundant marine life and significant biodiversity; and the

country's coral reefs are a vital source of food and income for coastal and island communities and an integral part of their traditional culture.

Mr Siwat said the aim of the field practical was to develop the students' capacity as future aquatic scientists, managers, and conservationist in applying scientific methods of biodiversity assessment including the presentation of the collected information in a scientific report format.

Biodiversity assessment is a central component of the understanding of the dynamics of natural environments in the face of climate change, overfishing, habitat destruction, aquatic pollution, biological invasion, and the increasing human population.

Despite the minor challenges encountered, the field practical ended on a good note with students not only gaining hands-on field experience but also being exposed to a wide range of challenges in conducting scientific research within the marine setting.

Mr Siwat expressed satisfaction with the collective effort and passion demonstrated by the students in the field practical. This experience will also help guide the development of the Marine Ecology course into the future.

■ Article contributed by Mr Vonklauss Siwat, Lecturer - Department of Fisheries.

Recommendations from PNG UNRE 2013 External Quality Assurance Audit Report

THE 26 recommendations from 2013 that formed the basis for the 2019 Audit and which will be used for the 2024 Audit.

1. Ensure that comprehensive information on programs, modes of teaching, use of fees and expectations is readily made available to prospective students in hard copy and online and supplied to all students prior to their being offered a place at UNRE.

2. Develop a Risk Management Policy, identify all significant risks including academic and reputational risks, and implement strategies to control these risks, including regular consideration by Council and updating of a risk register.

3. Develop a new strategic plan focusing on the achievement of academic

and professional excellence and including clear targets for growth and key performance indicators.

4. Develop and implement a transparent budget formation and management process, ultimately approved by Council, to ensure clarity of budget lines and linkage to clearly-articulated and prioritized educational objectives.

5. Through its Council, commission an urgent full forensic audit by an independent and well-credentialed firm of all University accounts, including all private accounts, which need to be brought within the main University financial framework.

6. Through its Council, implement a formal Financial Delegations Framework and

that academic managers be empowered to manage their own budgets within delegated parameters.

7. Through its Council, improve its oversight and monitoring of the University's Objectives, mission and strategy.

8. Ensure that the operations of Academic Board meets the norms and standards expected of the main academic governance body of a University.

9. Work with current student representative leaders to re-institute a Student Representative Council that is provided with a budget and that has the power to bring student concerns directly to the University Council.

10. Urgently improve the engagement of staff across its Vudal and Popondetta

campus, including responsiveness of staff to requests, and that UNRE ensure an adequate resource base for the Popondetta Campus.

11. Adopt a more transparent process of management, allowing staff at various levels to provide input into operational management decision making to improve coordination and resolve outstanding issues.

12. Act urgently to make new academic appointments of a scale and level appropriate to a university and to ensure that all future appointments are based on merit, using transparent and equitable criteria and processes.

13. Develop and implement a robust performance review

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Audit recommendations cont'd

and development process for all staff, linked to the achievement of University priorities.

14. Professionalise its management of human resources, through the appointment of more senior and experienced personnel and professional development of capable staff.

15. Expand the breadth and depth of its academic programs in order to achieve the stature of a full University and in accordance with its own strategy.

16. Urgently commissions a credible external review of block mode teaching and implement the recommendations as soon as possible in 2014 or the latest 2015.

17. Establish a Teaching and Learning Methods Unit, to improve the quality of teaching practice at UNRE and assist the professional development of academic.

18. Develop a new and Comprehensive assessment policy and ensure the policy is implemented consistently across the University.

19. Urgently analyse and report to Council trend data on enrolments, retention, progress and completion of annual cohorts and develop systems that enable reliable and efficient reporting of these data.

20. Establish clear rules on exclusion and supplementary examinations for failure in course, in consultation with students and staff, and ensure that rules are communicated to and understood by students and applied fairly and equitable by staff.

21. Employ a qualified counsellor on the Vudal Campus and consider the need for personal counselling services to be available for students at the Popondetta Campus.

22. Commits to providing a regular and substantial appropriation for growing library materials to baseline level appropriate for tertiary education.

23. Reprioritise resources allocation to give highest priority to the delivery of robust and reliable internet access to students and staff.

24. Reprioritise resources allocation to ensure the availability of essential laboratory facilities appropriate to a tertiary institution running science-based programs.

25. Give high priority to investigating the feasibility of implementing an electronic student management system and in the interim give consideration to a back-system for at least its student records.

26. Develop and implement policies and procedures for research management, including policies on ethics, intellectual property, data management and acquittals.

University is responsible for its QA processes

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summed up with three important points:

1. The primary responsibility for quality assurance lies with the university itself. The role of external quality evaluation is to only review the internal processes while respecting and promoting the primary responsibility of UNRE.
2. Institutional quality management will require a comprehensive, all-encompassing approach. This will cover all activities of the university, governance, management, research, teaching and learning, service to the society and support services.
3. Quality management should be derived from the vision and mission statements and the strategic goals of the university and will constitute the fundamental part of overarching institutional QUALITY CULTURE that aims at continuous enhancement of QUALITY.

Sharing a discussion paper that he wrote in March this year on the Quality of the PNG Education System, Professor Sumbuk said the discourse on the quality of education brought about by questions raised by Mendi MP, Hon. Raphael Tonpi on the floor of Parliament, is timely and important, but it should not be limited to Higher Education.

Sharing the findings of the 2011-2015 External Audit, he said all universities failed to meet the 13 standards examined.

All standards assessed were either partially met or not met to any

significant extent.

Professor Sumbuk said quality challenges in higher education are global and are not exclusive to Papua New Guinea.

"This topic has been placed on the higher education policy agendas and actively and continuously addressed in nearly all parts of the world for at least the last three decades, if not longer in some parts of the world," he said.

He said to improve quality assurance work, especially at universities and TVET institutions, there needs to be:

- Autonomy of Higher Education Institutions - There is a need for clarity in the regulatory framework governing the Higher Education Sector. The 2014 HE Act inadvertently led to an unfavourable environment for universities due to the misuse of Section 109 (*National Executive Council to make or approve certain appointments*) and 152 (*State intervention under specific circumstances*) by the former Minister; and a
- Quality Assurance Agency should be established - The agency can be part of DHERST or be an independent entity.

Professor Sumbuk also expressed concern that no external agency is auditing the work of DHERST.

"We need to be members of regional and international regulatory agencies to provide oversight to what DHERST is doing. Only PAU (Pacific Adventist University) has that opportunity through the Adventist Accreditation Association," he said.



▲ Vudal Campus Line Managers at the workshop last Friday.