

Diploma Programs at the New Hal-hale College of Social and Management Sciences

Yoftahe Kibrom

The new College of Social and Management Sciences will launch Advanced Diploma Programs in February 2004.

Students will study for three years to earn an Advanced Diploma. In this first year, programs are available in Accounting, Business Management, Public Administration, Journalism and Mass Communication, and Library and Information Studies. The new program is meant “to produce mid-level professionals” in those areas says Dr. Yemane Misghina, Director of the College.

The College expects nine-tenths of its students to be job-seekers in need of non-degree training to get them ready for the challenges at work through capacity building. However, the one-tenth might have the ambition to continue their education in degree programs.

The College will also host a one-year Certificate Program in Archives and Records Studies.

Application for admission to the programs at the new College – at first year as well as advanced



Dr. Wolde-Ab handing out Certificates at the first Hal-hale commencement

level – was held in late December. Registration for qualified applicants will be between February 23 and February 25, 2004.

For this first semester, students with a Certificate and a cumulative GPA of 2.5 and above can apply for admission to the diploma programs at first year level. Students enrolled in a degree program at the University of Asmara (2nd year and above) can apply for admission at second year level. Applicants for the certificate program need to either have a GPA of 1.8 on the Secondary School Leaving Certificate Examination or be grade 10 complete with a minimum of two years of experience in the field of archives and records.

The director said, “Degree students dismissed from the University of Asmara with no credentials will be given a sec-

ond chance through the Advanced Diploma Programs.”

Though the certificate programs of the college have been phased out, the one in Archives and Records Studies will continue at least for the coming academic year.

The College housed at the University of Asmara’s Hal-hale Campus graduated about 420 students in one of nine areas at its first commencement on September 20, 2003.

The College has a language lab, a computer lab, a library, a cafeteria and dormitories for students. It has the capacity to accommodate 1000 students, but it will currently absorb about 700 students – 350 at first year level and 350 at second year level.

The facilities at Hal-hale, including cafeteria, lecture halls, computer and language labs, and dormitories are available to be rented for meetings, conferences and lectures whenever classes are not in session. Contact the Dean of the College of Business and Economics, Dr. Yemane Mesghina, for more information.

Book Club to Take Part in National Book Fair

Yosief Tekle

The Book Club of University of Asmara will participate in the third National Book Fair in March 2004. The Club's presentation will dominantly be paintings drawn from reading materials read every Friday in the Book Club.

"We're participating in the Book Fair to enhance university student's reading habits in particular and the public in general," said Rahel Asghedom, one of Book Club coordinators. "This gives students an opportunity to participate through their artistic

abilities and develop a positive attitude toward reading."

Stories, poems, articles and books that are read in the Club's usual meeting time, which is at 6:00 PM Fridays, will be sources of inspiration to the artists. People with painting skills will be provided with materials they require and come up with paintings from those readings.

The completed paintings will be displayed with captions in Tigrinya, Arabic, and English during the week of the National Book Fair in Expo. So far, more than 40 student painters are registered to participate in the Book Fair.

Established in November 2002, the Book Club of the University of Asmara is coordinated by Ms. Rahel Asghedom and Mr. Jonathan Moore both from the English Department.

According to Club reports, the Book Club is open to all students of both sexes and from all years and departments, as well as to all staff members. People interested in joining the club can contact Ms. Rahel Asghedom or Mr. Jonathan Moore in room D-120.

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Christmas SpooF by Drama Club



Members of the University of Asmara Drama Club entertained students, faculty and staff in the courtyard of the Main Building on December 24 with their own version of Christmas at the University of Asmara.

CTTC Launches New Programs: Consultancy, Training & Testing Center to Reopen

Even before the doors open at the newly renovated CTTC building in Asmara, the Consultancy, Training & Testing Center is launching a host of new continuing education and consulting services.

“There is an overwhelming national need for quality educational opportunities to produce skilled professionals at every level,” said Dr. Bissrat Ghebru, Director of the Center. “Our Distance Education programs make higher education possible for Eritreans around the coun-

try, and our new University Extension Programs and Computer and IT courses offer opportunities to advance skills at every level.”



The CTTC Building

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The CTTC is an associate of the Cisco Networking Academy Program, a comprehensive e-learning program that provides students with Internet technol-

ogy skills. Courses are taught in designing, building, and maintaining computer networks. Other Information Technology and Computer Training courses prepare individuals in basic computer maintenance.

Specialized tailor-made courses address individual organizational needs. One such program developed for an NGO trains refugee women in entrepreneurial skills of bookkeeping and accounting. Another program taught trainers at the National Workers Union in methodology and course evaluation. The CTTC links organizations with the appropriate experts at the University to develop each program.

In future, the Center will offer an upgraded Secretarial Science Training program in response to widespread demand. Interested candidates should keep an eye on the University of Asmara website (www.uoa.edu.er; click on CTTC) for further information.

Not only does CTTC provide training and education, but it also links the expertise of University faculty and staff with the needs of the community. CTTC staff link individual faculty members with ministries, businesses, and other organizations in need of professional consultation. Specific research projects can be developed on a contract basis as well.

The CTTC staff also offers important

professional services to companies, government organizations, and others. They provide skilled organization and management of professional conferences and workshops and offer secretarial services for such events. Specialized feasibility studies can be conducted for investors and others who need data to assist them in making important business decisions.

The CTTC is known for its role as the nation’s only educational testing center - a role that will expand under the new organization. Standardized educational tests, including the Eritrean Secondary Education Certificate Examination (ESECE), the Graduate Record Examination (GRE), Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOFEL), and the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) will all be administered for citizens of Eritrea. Job screening tests are also offered for organizations conducting employee applicant evaluations.

According to Dr. Bissrat, “CTTC represents a valuable resource not only for Eritrean businesses and government organizations, but also for the many NGOs and foreign organizations working in Eritrea. Our presence will also attract foreign investors who need skilled workers to become established here. We expect to see many of their employees coming for training at CTTC.”

AGE DIFFERENCES CREATE OPPORTUNITIES AND PROBLEMS

Yonas Mesfun

Tekhlezghi Gebretnsae is the father of three children. A typical Eritrean father, he has a lot of things on his mind – his children, his extended family, his job, and the current national situation.

Beginning in 2001, he also started to worry about term papers, exams, projects, deadlines and tutorials. Tekhlezghi admits it is not easy to find oneself a college student at the age of 39. However, he said the growing number of students in their late 30s and early 40s at the University of Asmara has created a unique learning atmosphere that is beneficial to both young and older students.

As part of a World Bank-financed human resource development project, the University of Asmara admitted Eritreans who have a minimum of 7 years of service working in the civil services. The Internal Scholarship scheme allowed students to enroll at the University while they receive a USD 150 monthly stipend to compensate for the wages they used to earn at the ministries.

This arrangement, started in 2001 and benefiting 1000 students last year, has allowed many Eritreans who are well above college age to come back to the University and follow their studies.

“One day I overheard people in the streets near the campus talk about ‘how the University has a very big number of workers who are students,’” said Siye Iyasu, 20, from the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication. She said the big age difference among the students makes the young students feel uncomfortable.

The average age of students who join the University after completing high school is around 18 – 19. The Internal Scholarship students, who generally have stayed away from school between 10 – 15 years before they joined the University in 2001, average around 36 – 38 years. The majority boast years of experience in different occupations and extensive participation in Eritrea’s long war for independence.

Ghidey Dawit, 41, would have liked a separate arrangement for the different age groups. He said having separate classes may solve many of the problems created by the social, academic and economic pressures the older students feel.

Sieyum Woldemariam, 44, political science major, said there is extensive cooperation and exchange of experiences going on in the current arrangement.

“Academically, it is very helpful. I just spent the whole day working with two children [young students] on some mathematical material. I didn’t go for lunch,” he said.

Sieyum said the young students also benefit from discussions on real world

issues in some courses in political science and public administration.

“However, culturally it may be difficult for young students to avoid feeling shy in a group with many elder students.”

The Office of Public Relations and Communications invites staff, faculty and students to contribute to the University of Asmara’s monthly News Bulletin and other publications. We welcome everyone to use our office.

You can visit the University of Asmara website at www.uoa.edu.er for updated information on the University’s activities.

**Happy New Year
and
Merry Christmas!**

Nobel Laureate Recognized: J.M. Coetzee Celebrated in Seminar

Tirhas Teklay



Professors Tej Dhar, Fissehaye Tecele and Buroshiva Dasgupta

The department of Journalism and Mass Communication organized a special seminar in December in celebration of South African writer John Maxwell Coetzee, 2003 recipient of the Nobel Prize in Literature.

Entitled "The Role of Literature and Media in Shaping Africa's Image," the seminar brought faculty from the Journalism and English departments together in a lively discussion of creative writing and the role of the writer in Africa. Speakers agreed that little is known around the world about the diversity of Africa, and the continent is generally recognized as economically underdeveloped and politically unstable. What role can African writers and the media play in re-shaping the continent's image? What should be their approach?

Seminar organizer, Prof.

Chakrabarti, Head of the Department of Journalism & Mass Communication, outlined the works of Coetzee and extolled the important role played by writers in developing and nurturing popular images and historical insight.

Professor Buroshiva Dasgupta of the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, said, "The role of a writer in Africa is a difficult balance between an artist and an activist." Freedom of writing is absent in Africa, he argued, and the artist here is challenged because of the post-colonial realities that always must be questioned. "The writer has to make art out of commitment," he added.

Dasgupta noted that not only is most of the world ignorant about Africa, but big news agencies like CNN and the BBC generally cover only the bad sides of the continent.

Prof. Tej N. Dhar, professor of English and Dean of the Faculty of Arts, felt

that the conferring of the Noble Prize on Coetzee deserves celebration, even if as a writer he is less concerned with image building than with general human situations.

Dhar offered listeners a brief historical overview of African literature since colonial times. Early writers glorified Africa and Africans, treating the colonials as evil people. After liberation African writers began to change their position when problems arose from the leading resistance leaders and the failure to keep promises. Today, he pointed out, many of Africa's greatest literary minds are either in prison or exile – continually testifying against the political and cultural realities that hold Africans back.

African writers need to be more realistic argued Dhar. Out of their commitment two things will emerge: One is criticism and the other is truth. Thus, they have to criticize reality equally, whether it is in Europe or Africa. And because they use the English language to reach a broad audience, they can effectively reconstruct the damaged image of the continent around the world.

New Arts College Launches an M.A. Program

Yosief Tekle

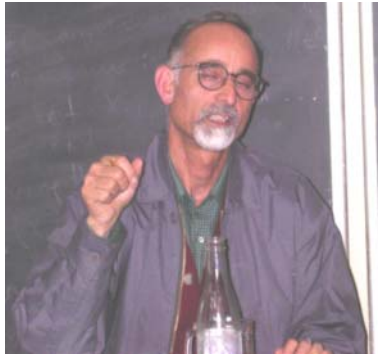
An independent College of Arts was formed in July this year, after being separated from the College of Social Sciences. The move came as the University felt that Arts was not growing as fast as Social Sciences within a single college.

Prof. Tej Dhar, Dean of the new College of Arts, heralds the change as there will be more space for arts, access to diversified courses, and room for growth in languages and literature.

In the past three years, Prof Dhar created new departments within the former College of Arts and Social Sciences that would ultimately form a new college. During those years, he said, he helped build two new units—the Eritrean Languages and Literature, and the European Languages Units.

Prof. Dhar then prepared a strategic plan for a separate college, which was established in June. Today the new college consists of two departments—English and Journalism— and three units—Philosophy, Eritrean Languages and Literature, and European Languages.

The College of Arts plans to add three more departments in Performing Arts, Visual Arts, and Religious Studies in the coming three to five years.



Prof. Tej Dhar, Dean College of Arts

The new college is now trying to establish its own linkages with former partner universities, as well as explore new ones.

“We’re trying to revive our contact with the British Council, which could lead to linkages with English Departments in three universities in Britain,” said Prof. Dhar. “We also received favorable support from University of Cape Town; it is likely that we have durable linkages with that university.”

Meanwhile, the Department of English will launch a graduate degree program in 2004. The program has two parts: one year of course work and another year of research work.

Prof. Dhar said that they have developed a curriculum for the Master’s degree program, which has been approved by the University of Cape Town. “If everything goes well by September [2004] we’ll start,” he said.

The drive for an M.A. program is

pushed by the need for more highly trained manpower. Graduate training enables the university to save money formerly spent to teach people abroad. Further, as the Ministry of Education is diversifying education by building more technical schools and new institutes, there is a growing need for more local experts.

As a result, the University of Asmara will be not only “a research center, but also a resource center,” he added.

Faculty members at the University, according to Prof Dhar, should be locals because the program must not be allowed to collapse in the absence of expatriates.

Aside from English, departments of Geology, Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics, Geography, Plant Science, Land Resource and Environment, and Economics will start graduate degree programs in September.

For the Master’s degree program, the university is providing computers, new labs and other equipments by the first quarter of 2004. “Whatever facilities are needed to get the program started will be available in the next few months,” Dhar said.

A Multidisciplinary Research Program for the College of Agriculture

Yoftahe Kibrom

The College of Agriculture has developed a research program – Sustainable Natural Resource Management: Nutrient Retention and Sensible Water Use (NURSE) – that provides a focused, multidisciplinary approach to sustainable agricul-

be integrated to develop sustainable management of natural resources, while maximising production.

The College intends to produce qualified graduates to carry out research activities addressing environmental degradation problems and improve production in the country's marginal areas.

Research at the University has historically been “strongly discipline oriented” with little cross-linkages among disciplines.

Dr. Woldeselassie Ogbazghi, Dean of the College said, “The fragmented research in the College was not satisfactory.”

The College has thus adopted a thematic research program in line with the University's research policy. “The College would like to start the program along with its graduate programs in September 2004,” said the dean, “since the MSc programs will be based upon the thematic research program.” However, the new approach will require research centers.

Dr. Ghebrebrhan Ogubazghi of the University of Asmara said at the June 15-17 workshop on developing the College's research program, “The University's research efforts should be aimed at maximising the research impacts in the most efficient way.”

Dr. Paul Struik of Wageningen University said, “Staff and MSc students will acquire both horizontal skills related to systems analysis and vertical skills related to in-depth disciplinary analysis (from thematic approach).”

The College of Agriculture believes the workshop was a beginning of a long journey helping it to understand “how to integrate, and address in a holistic approach, different but interlinked problems.”

The College, having the minimum infrastructure requirements as well as researchers and having identified themes of societal relevance, is ready to implement its new research program.

Partner institutions can also help in identifying priorities and developing infrastructure as well as establishing links with funding agencies.



Tractor demonstration at the college farm

ture-based utilization of Eritrea's natural resources, and contributes to degraded ecosystems' restoration.

The program is meant to “safeguard Eritrea's potential for food production.”

The College has formulated two themes. Sustainable Agricultural Production, covering experimental and modelling research to understand processes influencing crop production and vegetation growth in terms of water and nutrient availability at various spatial levels; and Integrated Watershed Management by which watershed areas will



Demonstration in the college dairy farm

New Appointments

Academic Appointments:

Dr. Markos Walter
Head of Computer Science
Department

Dr. Senait Bahta
Head of Anthropology &
Archaeology Department

Dr. Iliia Kachiriski
Head of Physics Depart-
ment

**Alumni Association
Takes Off**

Graduates and former students of the University of Asmara have enthusiastically begun joining the new UOAA Alumni Association. Ato Tekie Asehun, Director of Student Affairs, urges all interested former students to visit the UOA website, click on Alumni, and sign up as a member. You will automatically receive email notification and a link to the *UOA News Bulletin* and will be invited to University alumni events. Invite your fellow alumni to join you!

Visit www.uoa.edu.er today!



Journal of Eritrean Studies – Second Issue

The latest issue of the *Journal of Eritrean Studies* is due off the presses within the month. Published by the Colleges of Arts and Social Sciences at the University of Asmara, the Journal is the University’s first regular research publication.

Look for the *Journal* on the web at www.eritreanstudies.uoa.edu.er

The following articles will appear in this next issue:

- War Crisis and Child Mortality in Eritrea: 1981-1995*, by Gebremariam Woldemicael
- Tradition of Tigrinya Oral Poetry in*

- Eritrea*, by Ghirmai Negash
- The St. Chrischona Pilgrim-Mission’s Private Archives as a Source for Eritrean History: From a Romantic Quest for “Ormania” to the Establishment at the Erythraean Coast*, by Wolbert Smidt
- Heritage and Tourism in Eritrea: Issues and Alternative Directions*, by Peter Schmidt
- Language Diversity, Policy, and Practice in Eritrea*, by Chefena Hailemariam, Sjaak Kroon, and Joel Wlaters
- Plus several reviews.

Research and Graduate Training in Agriculture at the University of Asmara

A One-Day Workshop
January 9, 2004

Sponsored by the College of Agriculture

A day-long discussion/workshop at the College of Agriculture will culminate a year-long strategic planning process to develop graduate education and research in Agronomy, Horticulture, Animal Production and applied Soil Science including Soil and Water Management.

The session will be held on January 9, 2004, and it promises to allow for wide-ranging discussion of the plans to develop a multi-disciplinary M.Sc. curriculum that fits within the framework of the research “Sustainable Natural Resources Management for Food Security in a Fragile Environment: Nutrient Cycling and Sensible Water Use (abbreviated to the NURSE project).

For more information on the workshop, contact Dr. Woldeselassie Ogbazghi, Dean, at 162607.