



1ST MENTORSHIP SESSION FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS



FUMSA

Federation of Uganda Medical Students Associations.



**THEME:
WHY RESEARCH?
UNDERSTANDING THE BASICS OF RESEARCH**



**14TH MARCH 2016
FACULTY OF MEDICINE BOARDROOM**

SESSION REPORT

1.0 Introduction

As part of MEPI-MESAU efforts to establish a student mentoring program at the Faculty of Medicine, a number of staff at the Faculty have during the timeframe of the project been trained as mentors. Students have also been trained as mentees in order to benefit from this relationship. A mentorship guide was also developed to aid this process. Thus with all these in place, MESAU in partnership with FUMSA and its special committee on research exchange (SCORE); mentorship sessions have been introduced at the Faculty of Medicine. They will be running on a monthly basis covering a variety of topics selected by the students themselves, and presented by a panel of mentors who have also been selected by the students.

2.0 Goals & Objectives

The purpose of the Mentorship Program is to prepare students for successful careers in medicine by integrating academic learning with real-life experiences and to become a model for workforce readiness, embraced by the community.

Specifically, the mentorship program will:

- Help identify career paths for students and support students' personal growth.
- Provide an opportunity for students to interact with experienced professionals.
- Equip students with the understanding and tools to make ethical and informed decisions.
- Shape students into confident graduates with excellent leadership, communication, critical thinking, professionalism and other skills important to the transition to the world of work.
- Help students identify and pursue opportunities for employment related to their degrees.

3.0 Date and venue

The first mentorship session was conducted on Monday 14th March 2016 in the Faculty of Medicine Boardroom from 2:00 pm to 5:00 pm.

4.0 Participants

The session was very well attended and included participants from all the elementary classes of Medicine, as well as Pharmacy programmes in the Faculty as described in the table below:

Course	Class	No. of Participants
MBChB	Year 1	32
MBChB	Year 2	34
MBChB	Year 3	4
Pharmacy (Certificate)	Year 1	22
Pharmacy (Diploma)	Year 2	9
TOTAL		101

5.0 Mentors

The first mentorship session was facilitated by lecturers in the Faculty of Medicine who have been teaching the students, and were selected by them; as well as a recent graduate from the Faculty of Medicine who is heavily involved in research. These included:

Name	Title	Qualifications
Dr. Loum Constantine Labongo	Senior Lecturer, Medical Anthropology/Human Nutrition	PhD, Post.Doc
Mr. Ronald Wanyama	Lecturer, Biochemistry Department, Faculty of Medicine	MSc. Human Nutrition
Mr. Denis Anywar Arony	Lecturer, Biochemistry Department, Faculty of Medicine	MSc. Molecular Biology
Dr. Ouma Simple	Intern Doctor, Gulu Regional Referral Hospital	MBChB

6.0 Presentations/ Talks

There were 4 presentations in total that covered all the basic aspects of research necessary for undergraduate students who were just getting acquainted with research. These topics were carefully selected to cover the basic/elementary aspects of research and included the following:

a) Definition of research & its importance – Dr. Constantine Loum Labongo

Dr. Loum discussed the definitions of research. The presentation focused on the classical scientific methods, testing a hypothesis, and the differences between a thesis, antithesis and synthesis. The presentation also looked at dependent and independent variables as well as the difference between qualitative and quantitative research. In his presentation, Dr. Loum urged students to plan for their research. He also discussed the importance of research, citing a few examples like: it allows the student to think in a systematic way, supports the development and validation of vaccines and therapeutics, as well as helps the student to develop characteristics such as self-discipline, commitment and determination.

b) Choosing a suitable research topic – Mr. Ronald Wanyama

In his talk, Mr. Wanyama encouraged students to be creative and know what they want, which would determine how they select their topics. He

emphasized that students should not go to supervisors, asking them to identify research topics for them.

c) **Developing a research proposal** – Mr. Denis Anywar Arony

Mr. Anywar discussed the main elements of a research proposal, the potential sources of research problems for help in formulating a topic, which included scanning and reading published and unpublished research, disagreeing with some previous research and developing a new study to test its findings, gaps in explanations or in accepted principles as well as questioning the validity of a generally accepted procedure. The presentation also looked at the formulation of research objectives, significance as well as review of related literature among others. He finalized by urging students to always read more.

d) **The fruits and benefits of research to students** – Dr. Ouma Simple

Dr. Ouma gave a vibrant presentation regarding the benefits that he has obtained from research since his exposure during the MEPI-MESAU funded grant. He thanked MEPI-MESAU for building and sustaining a culture of research among students and expressed the joy of being a Principal Investigator and encouraged students to get into the habit of research as it has many benefits including enriching clinical practice, prestige, financial benefits, contributing to the community, adventure, opportunity for collaboration, leadership and building one's career.