

HIGHER EDUCATION

CORPORATE SCENE

KU ACQUIRES LCD DESKTOP MAGNIFIERS FOR LOW VISION USERS

Kenyatta University Acting Vice Chancellor Prof. Paul Wainaina (left) launches two new Merlin LCD Desktop Magnifiers for use by low vision students at the Post Modern library. He is flanked by Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) Prof. John Okumu and library Director Dr. Gitau Njoroge



Kenyatta University has acquired two new Merlin LCD Desktop Magnifiers for use in the Post Modern Library at a cost of Ksh1.2M. The LCD Desktop Magnifiers will be used by students and staff with low vision and marks another milestone in the University's commitment to cater for students with special needs.

The University is already rated among the best in the provision of access for disability students complete with a shuttle and is currently the University with the highest number of not only Visually Impaired students and staff, but other special needs too. The University admits students with visual and hearing impairment and physically challenged.

Speaking during the launch of the machines, Acting Vice Chancellor Prof. Paul Wainaina said that Kenyatta University would continue to cater for students with special needs by providing the requisite infrastructure and services.

Prof. Wainaina affirmed the University's commitment to providing a conducive working and learning environment. He revealed that plans are underway increase the number of machines as well as other equipment to assist students with special needs.

Since its inception the University has

passionately catered for users with special needs, as evidenced by the provision of Shuttle Services for the handicapped, provision of sign language interpreters, provision of a resource centre for transcription of examination and CAT scripts. In addition, Kenyatta University holds an annual Disability Day focusing on the welfare of the disabled persons in the KU community.

The University Library uses assistive technology such as CCTVs (Closed-circuit television) to magnify print for the low vision; Braille machines for the totally blind; embossers to transcribe print into Braille; JAWS (Job Access with Speech) and NVDA (Non Visual Desktop Access) screen readers which are software that enable the visually impaired to search/listen to information from the internet; scanners; magnifying lenses; headphones; talking books; calculators and Braille books.

"As a result of our concerted efforts to cater for persons with disabilities, the University has the largest number of students and staff with special needs in the country," Prof. Wainaina says.

In addition, Kenyatta University has become a model in the country and region and is frequently visited by other institutions for benchmarking on provision of facilities for persons with disability.