



FRIENDS OF HOPE AFRICA UNIVERSITY

FRIENDS NEWSLETTER September 2025

HAU as a Christian Institution

Recently, one of our supporting organizations asked us to report how Hope Africa University maintains its commitments as a Christian institution. Amid concerns about new campuses, enrollment growth, our Jubilee Celebration, and Capital Campaign, we can get fixated on programmatic details and forget one of the institution's main goals. So it was good to be asked: How is HAU sharing the Gospel? Here is some of what we reported.

HAU is part of the Free Methodist Church of Burundi. Education is HAU's biggest ministry. The academic program is built on the integration of faith and learning. Classes integrate Biblical principles, scripture, and examples of Christ-inspired living into the curriculum and extra-curricular activities. "That's evangelization through education," says Rector Servilien Nitunga, and more than 8,000 students from many faith traditions are currently being influenced in this way. It is not unusual to hear hymns being sung during class time, and student-led small group prayer times spring up on the rocky campus parking lot as likely as on the manicured lawns of U.S. Christian campuses.

Academic programs such as medicine, agriculture, social work, theology, community development, entrepreneurship, and other areas are intentionally geared to prepare students to serve God's poorest people in Burundi and in other countries.

A theology student in the Advanced

English course wrote, "I'm studying English because I want to preach the gospel in all the ways I can to reach people in Burundi." The new chaplaincy training, sponsored by the Butterfield Foundation, is preparing students to serve in hospitals, the police, and with the military in Burundi and other countries. HAU's faculty and staff serve as faith ambassadors on campus and off, and the women faculty and staff have a special prayer ministry where they come together weekly to pray for the work of the university and individual student needs.

But HAU's evangelization, like its education, is not restricted to campus sites. The Voice of Hope Radio Station broadcasts daily programs of Christian music, prayers, and sermons reaching half the country. The university is responding tangibly to corporal acts of mercy by feeding the poor (through the agricultural program and various projects for local farmers, in conjunction with the Haley McCready Fund), sheltering the homeless (by bringing displaced young people to campus to pursue an education), and providing education and support for disabled persons in Burundi.

The University does not track new conversions or baptisms among those it serves. But numerous testimonies among its students and others who have come to know Christ (including some Muslim students) have been recognized. As an entity of the Free Methodist Church of Burundi, HAU is intentionally linked to the work of the church in the country.

The report we submitted and what is mentioned here is not an exhaustive list. Information about the campus prayer days or the many community outreach activities are not seen as special "ministry" opportunities but are just part of acting "Christianly" at HAU. We hope the report conveyed that HAU is living up to its name and serving as a beacon of hope in Burundi.

All of the activities we share in this newsletter are necessary to the building of an excellent institution of higher education in a poor country. But it is good when our Friends raise questions to help us stay focused on the Big Goal: to bring people to the saving knowledge and love of God. Bishop Bates would remind us, “This is Kingdom Work.”

A Volunteer Opportunity

An earlier newsletter had a teaser about a coming volunteer opportunity, and now it's here. As part of keeping HAU a strong bilingual institution, we are looking for 5-6 Friends to join us in supporting HAU faculty or staff in strengthening their English skills. This is a pilot project to see if online practice helps staff become more fluent and confident in their English usage and, therefore, more willing to use English in their classrooms. We are not asking people to “teach English.” The HAU staff have had some English instruction but may not use English frequently or comfortably. Those of you who have tried to learn and use another language know that practice is essential for fluency and comfort in speaking the language. No formal ESL training is necessary to help with this project. We are recruiting partners willing to commit at least three hours a month for an initial four months, have a computer and internet access (for Zoom). You will be paired with one or two HAU staff members for practice sessions at least three times a month. If you are interested in this opportunity and want more information, contact Betty Overton at bjoadkins@comcast.net.



Monthly Prayer Requests

Please include us in your prayers this month:

- Pray for those of us who are traveling to Burundi in September
- Pray for donors to support the expansion of our solar power system
- Give thanks with us for the installation of the new Starlink Internet System at HAU

Donate: There are many ways to give. Please consider giving to Friends of Hope Africa University online at <https://fofhau.kindful.com>. Or, if making a gift by check is preferred, you can mail your gift to Friends of Hope Africa University at PO Box 580, Spring Arbor, MI 49283.

Correspondence: Friends of HAU, 2245 S. 9th Street, Springfield, IL 62703 | contact@haufriends.org

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