1. Monitor

**Govt transfers 650 vocational teachers** *(Uganda)*. Government has transferred 651 teachers from Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions to different secondary schools across the country. The Education and Sports ministry says the move aims to enhance practical learning in TVETs and address staffing shortages in secondary schools, particularly in rural areas. Multiple sources from the ministry yesterday said the decision will see teachers from 146 government TVETs redeployed to different secondary schools. Mr Dennis Mugimba, the ministry spokesperson, said the affected teachers were teaching only theoretical subjects yet the government is reorganising the sector to ensure that learners study purely practical lessons. “These were secondary teachers who were trained in education but had no practical skill that is required in TVETs. Every teacher of TVET must have a diploma in practical skill,” he said. [Read more here.](#)

2. University World News

**Study lists factors that impact researchers’ mental health** *(Africa)*. Stress, uncertainty about their scientific career pathway, being perceived as a student even though they might have worked for many years before embarking on their PhDs, and the lack of sufficient locally based role models and mentors are factors that influence researchers’ mental well-being. These and the inherent difficulties associated with performing science in Africa have been identified as major contributors to mental health challenges among researchers affiliated with the Sub-Saharan African Network for TB-HIV Research Excellence (SANTHE), a new study has found. “A major issue that emerged from our efforts was the challenge of mental health support for all our scientists. Our consortium – and, particularly, the PhD and post-doctoral trainees – had very strong feelings about this key challenge and agreed that more needed to be done to support scientists in what is probably universally acknowledged not to be the easiest of career paths,” the authors said. [Read more here.](#)

3. The Guardian

**More women are thriving in science – does that mean attitudes have changed?** *(Global)*. Over the past four years, you could be excused for thinking that there has been an avalanche of women excelling in the field of science. We have seen half a dozen women collect Nobel prizes in physiology or medicine, physics and chemistry. Their staggering achievements range from Katalin Karikó’s contribution to the development of mRNA vaccines against Covid-19 to Andrea Ghez’s co-discovery of a supermassive black hole at the centre of our Milky Way galaxy. In 2020, we witnessed the first science Nobel prize won by two women alone – without sharing the honour with a man – after Jennifer Doudna and Emmanuelle Charpentier revolutionised the study of genetics with the development of Crispr genome editing, raising hopes for the treatment of many diseases. So, what’s going on? Has there been a change in attitudes towards women in science? While the public celebration of women who reach the pinnacle of their scientific careers surely encourages girls in school, it is all too easy to overlook the persistent barriers that hinder entry into the profession. [Read more here.](#)
4. **News UCT**

**Assessing the state of post-school education in an unequal society (Somalia).** “Higher education can be an important catalyst of social mobility, but many of our country’s socioeconomic inequalities are replicated within the post-school education system itself.” This is one of the observations made by Dr Emma Whitelaw, a postdoctoral research fellow at the Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit (SALDRU) at the University of Cape Town (UCT). Her PhD – obtained in 2023 and with a focus on post-school education in an unequal society – is critical, as institutions of higher education prepare for the latest intake of students seeking to further their studies. SALDRU carries out applied empirical research and capacity building with an emphasis on poverty and inequality, labour markets, human capital and social policy, striving for academic excellence and policy relevance. Dr Whitelaw’s PhD and ongoing research contributed to SALDRU’s Siyaphambili post-school research initiative. [Read more here.](#)

5. **Inside Higher Eds**

**Report: Best Practices for Using, Teaching Generative AI in Research (Global).** Recent report from a Cornell University task force on AI identifies a framework and perspectives on how generative AI can aid or influence academic research. The report, “Generative AI in Academic Research: Perspectives and Cultural Norms,” was published Dec. 15 and highlights best practices in the current landscape, how university policies impact the Cornell community and considerations for other faculty members or researchers navigating the new tech tools. The background: The University developed the Cornell AI Initiative in 2021 to lead institution wide collaboration around AI development and application. The group published a report in early fall 2023 identifying policies for generative AI in higher education and pedagogy for faculty members. The December report identifies four phases of research stages and how generative AI can be applied to each phase, the perspectives and cultural norms around generative AI, and discussion questions for stakeholders. [Read more here.](#)

6. **ENA**

**AAU’s Autonomy Will Pave Way to Delivery of Quality Education (Africa).** Addis Ababa, February 5/2024 (ENA) The successful implementation of the autonomy at the Addis Ababa University will pave the way to the delivery of quality of education and contribute towards comprehensive societal transformations, Addis Ababa University Interim President Samuel Kifle said. Dialogue on Innovative Higher Education Strategies (DIES) International Dean’s Course (IDC) on Africa part III focused on strategic and practical issues in Higher Education Management opened in Addis Ababa today. Opening the five-day program, Samuel said the course has multiple opportunities in Ethiopia’s higher education system in general and Addis Ababa University in particular. It is beyond training, he said, adding it has created many more opportunities for collaboration among institutions and nations. Despite the challenges, Ethiopia has not only successfully expanded the education sector but also embarked on major reform initiatives such as governance reform of creating autonomous universities, and introducing exit exam as all of them guided by a clear roadmap of 2030, it was indicated. [Read more here.](#)

7. **University World News**

**Committee is probing degree mills and measures to stop them (Nigeria).** A committee tasked with identifying the causes of degree racketeering and those responsible for degree mills is expected to submit its report to Professor Tahir Mamman, the minister of education in Nigeria, in March. The spokesperson for the National Universities Commission (NUC), Haruna Lawal, told University World News the commission will reveal more measures to curb procurement of fake degrees after the committee submits
its report in March. Institutions affiliated to organisations in Togo, Benin, Uganda, Kenya, Ghana, the United Kingdom and the United States have been identified in actions by the Nigerian authorities over their alleged activities. Read more here.

8. People Daily
New chancellor pledges to make UoN first class varsity (Kenya). In the next five years, Prof Patrick Verkooijen will be at the helm of the University of Nairobi, having been appointed as the sixth Chancellor. “I am humbled and I do feel the weight of taking up this position. It is upon us to rewrite your stories, you came here for education and we are committed to giving you the best,” the chancellor stated. And added: “We want to become and we will become the number one university on the continent... and that is why you need a chancellor who is connected to and fro the global north because a lot of the funding which is required has to come from somewhere else, and that somewhere else is some of the world I represent.” Read more here.

9. Ghana Business News
Regional Maritime University to build first boat in June (Ghana). The Managing Director for Lamar Marine Services, an agency of the Regional Maritime University (RMU), Mohamed Saleh Alshareef, has disclosed that plans were underway to build the first boat at the university in June. The development follows a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed last year between RMU and the Dubai-based company, specialised in boat building, firefighting, and oil rigs. The company with its factory situated on RMU land, would construct the boat made from lightweight and durable fibre optics which would cater for the Ghanaian and West African markets, primarily for monitoring, security, and fishing purposes. He disclosed this during a presentation to a delegation from Dar Es Salaam Maritime Institute (DMI), Tanzania and RMU management in Accra. Read more here.

Note to Editors/PROs:

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