

**Thesis Defense
Goes Online
and face-to-face**
Lemma Gudissa Angessa (PhD)

JULY
2020

ETHIOPIAN

CIVIL SERVICE UNIVERSITY

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BUILDING CAPACITIES IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

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ECSU Council Plant Tree Seedlings

#አረንጓዴዐሻራ



**ECSU signed a contract agreement
to build modern kitchen and G+1 soil
laboratory with SA Construction Private Limited Company**



**ECSU signed a contract agreement
with Bantewalu Tessema Construction Company to
complete the construction of G+2 dormitory of Woliso Campus**

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Our Vision

To become a leading center of excellence in public service capacity building in Africa by 2025 through building efficient, effective, Transparent and accountable public service which can contribute to the realization of the development and transformation drive of the country

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Our Mission

Enhancing the service orientation, transparency and accountability of the public service by building its capacity through Specialized Education, Training, Consultancy, Research and Community Services.

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Our Values

Customer Focus
Commitment
Continuous Learning
Welcoming Diversity
Attention to the Disadvantaged
Participation
Collaboration



Ethiopian

Civil Service

University

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ECSU COUNCIL PLANT TREE SEEDLINGS

Ethiopian Civil Service University Council members planted tree seedlings at Woliso campus of the university on July 29, 2020.

He also briefly explained the training center of ECSU at Woliso campus and future plan of the center to the council members.



Professor Fikre Dessalegne
Ethiopian Civil Service University President



Mr. Gebrehaweriat Gebremedhin
*Ethiopian Civil Service University Vice President
for Administration and Students' Service*

Professor Fikre Dessalegne, ECSU President, welcomed the council members and thanked the members being part of the national green legacy campaign. At national level the government has a goal of planting 5 billion trees during this rainy seasons and we as civil servants are part of it and make the goal practical. This is an initiative that should be repeated every year in the fight against climate change he added.

Ato Nigusse Dirba, Director of ECSU Training Center of Woliso Campus, thanked the council .He also said that this is multi-purpose campaign. We contribute to the national seedling campaign and also beautifying our campus. Planting tree seedlings alone is not our end, you will come and care the tree seedlings or create other mechanisms to care the seedlings he under scored.



The council members have also appreciated the coordinator and planned to care the seedling by creating different mechanism.

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በ2011 ዓ.ም ከተተክሉት ችግኞች 95 በመቶው ጸድቀዋል ። የአካባቢው ማህበረሰብ በተለይም ወጣቶች እንዲሁም የቀበሌና የወረዳው አመራሮች የተተክሉ ችግኞች እንዲጸድቁ ለበረከቱት አስተዋፅኦ ምስጋና ይገባቸዋል ብለዋል አቶ ብርሀኑ ፈይሳ ።

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ምንጭ ፡- የሲቪል ሰርቪስ ኮሚሽን



ECSU SIGN A CONTRACT AGREEMENT

The Ethiopian Civil Service University signed a contract worth 72,480,662.19 Birr with Bantewalu Tessema Construction Company to complete the construction of G+2 dormitory of Woliso Campus of Ethiopian Civil Service University on May 12, 2020.

will finish the project based on the plan and the agreement. This is a lesson for other contractors who do not deliver as per the agreement they signed with public organization, he added.



Professor Fikre Dessalegne
Ethiopian Civil Service University President

Ethiopian Civil Service University president, Professor Fikre Dessalegne, said that this contract is signed as a result of the termination of the first contract agreement with Data Construction be-



Ato Bantewalu Tesma, General Manager of the Bantewalu Construction Company said they will finish the project based on the terms stipulated on the project document.



cause of poor performance and failure to meet the completion date set in the project agreement. We terminated the contract and signed a new contract agreement with Bantewalu Construction Company. The new construction company surely

ECSU SIGN A CONTRACT AGREEMENT

Ethiopian Civil Service University signed a contract agreement to build modern kitchen and G+1 soil laboratory with SA Construction Private Limited Company on June 5, 2020.



During the signing Ceremony the consultant explained the overall bid process. According to him 30 contractors purchased the bid document, out of which 9 contractors met the overall criteria, and 2 contractors qualified to compete in the competition process. We evaluate the contractor's technical approach and qualifications (including its experience, technical competence, capabilities) and other no cost/price factors besides its total cost, he added. SA Construction Private Limited is expected to deliver within 365 days.

The SA Construction Private Limited Company Deputy Manager explained their capacity and experiences in building different governmental and non-governmental organizations .SA is registered first grade contractor. We give emphases for quality and surely we will deliver the project based on the terms stipulated on the project document he added. Finally the contractor visited the project area.



Ethiopian Civil Service University president, Professor Fikre Dessalegne, said as the project is very crucial for the university, the contractor should strictly follow the contract agreement and deliver the project based on delivery time. This is an institution that educates citizens, so you should be concerned about quality and do your best to deliver based on the standards and timely basis, said Professor Fikre.



ECSU AND HUC SIGN MOU

Ethiopian Civil Service University (ECSU) and Hope University College (HUC) signed Memorandum of Understanding on June 4, 2020 at ECSU Hidasse Hall. The agreement was signed by President of Ethiopian Civil Service University, Professor Fikre Dessalegn and HUC president, Dr. Terefe Feyera,.



In the signing ceremony, ECSU president, Professor Fikre Dessalegn said ECSU has played its role in building the capacity of the public service through Education, Training, Consultancy, Research and Community Services for the last 25 years. According to Professor Fikre the University is working hard towards materializing its Vision of becoming a leading centre of excellence in 2025. Besides, the University is modernizing its facilities and empower its internal human resource capacity. The two institutions can work together for a common goal i.e. transforming the human resource to contribute for national development, he added.

Hope University College president, Dr. Terefe Feyera expressed his pleasure to work with ECSU. Dr. Terefe explained the establishment of the University College and its contribution in humanitarian services and vocational trainings. He also said that Hope is a local NGO that was established in 1971 in Addis Ababa to help the needy help themselves through basic needs, education, competence, job and business mediation and value education. He also capitalized on the importance of the agreement in helping HUC to empower the University College in different areas.

Ato wondimu Moges , ECSU International and Public Relations Directorate Director, thanked

the HUC management for their interest to work with ECSU and explained what the university is doing currently to capacitate the university's IT network and data base .



Professor Fikre Dessalegn
Ethiopian Civil Service University President

The agreement is focused on exchanging experiences in the field of networking, teaching, conducting training and consultancy, and undertaking research and community services besides implementing other cooperative efforts deemed to be mutually beneficial and viable for the Parties. Finally the team visited ECSU Information Communication Directorate Infrastructures.



ICT DIRECTORATE GIVES TRAINING

Ethiopian Civil Service University ICT Directorate gave online training on "online learning and testing" on 27th July, 2020 using Microsoft Teams, for more than 50 Academic staff.

Besides, it emphasized on: how to use on-line local storage prepared for the teaching staff which is accessible throughout the University, Using Microsoft Office 365 for outlook, and how to make online learning and testing.



Mr Yitbarek Ibrahim

*Information Communication Technology Directorate
Director*

The purpose of the training was to make the instructors acquainted with online learning & testing knowledge using modern Information technology facilities.

Mr Yitbarek Ibrahim, Information Communication Technology Directorate Director & Trainer, said the training will enable instructors to give online class and test assisted by Information Technology system. Such technology assisted capacity building training for teachers will persist to make the teaching and learning process modern and accessible he added.



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COVID-19 Outbreak and Teaching Learning Process in ECSU

Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 in our country, major events and people gatherings including the teaching learning process have been suspended. Accordingly, ECSU has temporarily suspended its normal face to face teaching learning process and has been following other mechanism; like online teaching system, to overcome the current challenge and introduced a guideline for this online teaching. In order to make this ongoing process clear to the university community, ECSU International and Public Relation Coordination Directorate had a short stay with Dr. Lemma Gudissa, ECSU Academic Vice President, to seek clarifications on a number of issues concerning the ongoing on-line teaching learning process in the midst of the COVID-19, among others. Experts follow.

IPRCD; Thank you for your valuable time.

Dr. Lemma; Thank you for inviting me.

IPRCD; Would you first tell us what the university has been doing in managing its core businesses in the midst of the COVID-19?

Dr. Lemma; The University has taken so many measures after the COVID-19 has occurred in our country. These measures can be classified into general measures that were taken by the university and particular measures concerning the academic works like teaching and learning. From the academic point of view, the measures that have been taken can be classified into three categories or phases. The first one was taken before the students left the campus. The second one was concerned with the process of taking our students back home and the third and the major one was taken after the students had left the campus.

Concerning the first phase, as soon as the government announced that COVID 19 had occurred in our country, we suspended the face-to-face education and made our students stay in their dormitories. Subsequently, we tried to provide all teaching materials like power points and other electronics and digital books through their common emails, telegrams and other digital means. But the students were not comfortable to stay in the campus. Because most of our students are adults and family leaders, they wanted to go home and be with their families. They were insisting they better go home. In consultation with the bodies concerned and the general direction

of the government, the ECSU management council has decided that it would be better that the students go home, not only to take care of themselves but also their families, communities and their localities.

After the council decided the students would better go home, we made a quick assessment focusing on, where they are from and hired buses for transportation and, with maximum possible care, we transported them to the centers with our expenses and we were successful in this phase.

In the third and the major phase, after the students left the campus, we have made a lot of evaluations. Before we made these evaluation, we also made a brief assessment in which we identified the challenges that our students and the university community might face and also the opportunities that we have to continue the online teaching.

We thus identified the-would be challenges. These challenges were categorized into six. The first one was the internet connection problem that our students may face at their localities. The second one was that even if there is internet connection, the unpredictable sustainability of the connection as well as the power interruption at their living places may affect the online teaching learning process. The third challenge was the resource availability. In order to continue the online teaching, students need to have a minimum of smart phones and laptops. This may not be easy. The internet fee might be expensive for them. Even some of our instructors do not have strong connection in their living places and they may not have laptop computers. The fourth challenge was related to the capacity of our students in reading and understanding what is sent to them on online. The fifth challenge was that our teaching materials were



Lemma Gudissa Angessa (PhD)

Ethiopian Civil Service University Academic Vice President

prepared to support the face to face teaching, not for on line teaching. These materials were prepared in a sense that they support the face to face teaching and they are not full-fledged materials and the students may not get the detailed information from their readings. The sixth challenge was that there are some courses that are mandatory to be provided in face to face teaching. These were the major challenges that the university community faced.

On the opportunity side, we have identified about four major opportunities. The first one is that more than about eighty five percent of our students are post graduate students and the aforementioned challenges may not be severe to them because they can read and understand what is sent to them online. At post graduate level, most of the works are expected from the students themselves not from the instructors. Because of this, it is the opportunity that less than fifteen percent of our students are under graduate students. The second opportunity that we have identified was that almost all our students are employees either in public or private institutions. This will reduce the challenges that we expect in having smart phones or laptops and the like even these may be provided by their institutions. The third opportunity was that most of our students are living in Addis Ababa. More than fifty percent of our students are pursuing their education in the evening and weekend classes and these students are living in Addis Ababa and the challenge that is connected to the resources like connectivity, instability and interruption of power may not be a big challenge. The fourth opportunity relates to the way we made another brief assessment on our post graduate students who are expected to graduate this academic year. We sent them a questionnaire which we thought indicate their status on their master the-

sis. Eighty percent of the masters student who are expected to graduate this year have either completed the data collection and are finalizing their thesis work, or they can complete their theses without any problems. They are consulting on online with their advisors. The fifth opportunity concerns our instructors. Some of our instructors may not have laptops and they may face the connectivity challenges. These challenges have been minimized through two measures. The first one was the university tried to provide them with laptops as much as possible through budget transfer. Concerning the connectivity if they could not get the connection from their living places they could use their offices. These were the identified opportunities.

Having collected all this information on the challenges and opportunities, the management council sat down and discussed these issues and reached certain decisions. The first decision was on the post graduate students. Based on this, the council decided that our post graduate students can continue their education and their thesis works online. That is because these challenges were so minimum for the post graduate students and cannot impede them from completing their education. The second decision was concerning the under graduate students as the aforementioned challenges are more severe to them. By taking this into consideration, the council decided that there will not be any examination and we will keep on providing them with the materials that they can read and become ready for any continuing decision. This will be important for three things. First they will not interrupt their readings if we provided them with the materials. The second is that if the COVID-19 ends in a short period of time, the students may come back to the campus. In this case we will not take a

long time like four and five months , for full semester work. If they read and keeping on getting ready by themselves, we may decide, depending on their level within short time of face to face lecturing, we can manage the problem. The other one is that, if the COVID -19 stays for long time and the students cannot come back to the campus, it can be decided that they can continue the education online. Concerning the instructors we decided that all our instructors should engaged in the process.

In order to facilitate these, we have formed two major task forces. The first one is the academic task force, which is being led by the Academic Program office Director and involves college deans, directors and IT experts. The second one is technology platform task force which facilitates the IT side.

Following this, we prepared a detailed guideline on who to manage these times. This guideline is posted on our website by the International and Public Relation Directorate. That general guideline contains everything; the steps and the change that we have made , starting from what materials were going to be supplied , which course would be given online, which level students should take them and the like. A tentative post COVID-19 plan has also been included in that general guideline. All these measures have been taken so far in consultation with the university community and managing council of the university.

IPRCD; Some students, especially post graduate students who are taking courses are still concerned on how continuous assessment and final exam will be administered. What are the modalities for thesis defense?

Dr. Lemma; The COVID 19 period management is not a routine or formal time management. It is crises management. What makes it crises is that some of the challenges are beyond our expectations and imaginations and some of the measures taken may not rectify the problems hundred percent. But still, we have not lost our hope that we can still manage it with different options. One option we have in mind so far is that it is possible to assess our students online. Final exam can also be given through online means whether it is through office 365 or any other means. It is not the first time that exams are given online. The only thing is adopting and choosing which option is best to follow. This is the first option we have. But we have not decided yet. The second option is that we are participating in the ongoing discussion that the presidents and vice presidents of higher educational institutions in the country by the coordination of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education. In the discussion it was raised that we can use different uni-

versities located in different regions and can help one another by sending exams to them and facilitating theirs. We are also assessing this option. ECSU has also aits on experience of administrating entrance exams. We have been using centers. Our instructors were going to centers and examining students and this also be considered. The last possibility is that our students can come to the campus to take the exam. All these possibilities are there but we have not decided yet. We will choose which one will be best fit for situation.

Concerning the defense, we have already devised three scenarios. The one is that it is possible to make it online or virtual communication like zoom conferencing and the candidate can present his oral defense from wherever he or she located. The second scenario is a blended method, which is a combination of the online and face to face. This can also be possible. The last options is in connection with the emergency period management regulation, the maximum number of people engaged in the defense process are four. We do have sufficient spaces which can accommodate maximum of four people at a time with care and within the framework of the law. We have already started theses two modalities, the blended and face to face and so far we are highly successful.



Lemma Gudissa Angessa (PhD)
ECSU Academic Vice President

IPRCD; What is the fate of the bachelor degree students?

Dr. Lemma; Concerning the summer class students, we have post graduate and under graduate students. The fate of the post graduate students will be similar with the regular post graduate students. The decision for the undergraduate students will also be similar to the regular undergraduate students. There is no difference in decision and what we decided will be applicable to all students in all programs.

Concerning what will happen to the bachelor degree students and post graduate students who are

not able to pursue their education online, because we cannot be hundred percent sure all our post graduate students can pursue their education online due to certain difficulties, the fate of these students will depend on the life span of COVID-19. If it goes away within a short period of time, the possibility will be using a crush program like short period of time in August and September before the next academic year. Otherwise the other possibility will be extending the semester. It depends on the decision of the government on how to go back to the normal life in other situations as well. But if COVID-19 continues, the last possibility could be continuing the education online including the upcoming students. Online is not bad and in many cases it can reduce the cost of life as well.

IPRCD; Some students suggest research courses are better taken face to face than online. What would you say?

Dr. Lemma; Face to face is not better, but we can say research courses are possible online as well. Particularly for post graduate students it can increase their efforts to read more and my hope is it will improve their research capacity as they refer to different materials. It is not a course that we fear it cannot be studied online. Of course there are some courses which need the participation of others and better delivered face to face like some engineering courses. Face to face teaching might be preferable since you can ask the instructor where you face difficulties. But we do have still other options and opportunities. Previously before COVID-19 our students and instructors used to go to classrooms and the instructors provided the lecture face to face. But now the lectures are recorded and sent like video lecturing and the student can repeat them many times as they like. This is one advantage. Our instructors are also facilitating the program beyond uploading the courses on the Telegram and emails; they are supporting their students through Google classroom, zoom conferencing, giving video lecturing using their power points. This will continue and there will not be a worry as such.

IPRCD; Many students are registered to pursue their education in the university in the next academic year, 2023 E.C. Is there any specific date assigned for administering the entrance examination?

Dr. Lemma; We will continue with providing the entrance exam. There are lessons that will get from examining the students who are taking masters course this year. These lessons may help us to provide the entrance exam to those who have already

registered to take the entrance exam. Concerning intake capacity of the university the graduation matters in this academic year. If we are lucky enough and ninety or eighty percent of our students successfully graduated they will leave the place and the room for the upcoming students and we hope this will happen. Otherwise if the online teaching continues, they will be accommodated with the same procedures that we started this year. It will be strengthened and more facilitated for them whether they are masters or PhD students. We are trying to begin the PhD programs soon. PhD students are closer to online education and the PhD students have already taken the entrance exam and we have identified who have been successful to join us and we will announce them shortly. The same will be applied for others who have plans to join our university and have registered for the entrance exam. The under graduate students, including students who are not able to continue with their batches online now, the decision is not to dismiss them as there is a possibility to continue their education with the upcoming batch.

IPRCD; Your final message to the students and the university community

Dr. Lemma; The final message I have is an appreciation. I was so fascinated by what is being done in this university during this time, because it was worrying as an academic vice president when our students had to go home. We are an academic institution and there were no students to teach, this was a worrisome. But by the measure we have taken so far we tried to manage it.

The second appreciation goes to the Administration and Student Service vice president. I highly appreciate and admire the decision he made in agreement with the managing council to provide our instructors laptop computers by transferring budget in order to help the instructors assist the students. The last but not least appreciation is for the efforts being made by our instructors. This was beyond my expectation. Some times when I come to the campus during weekends, I see many instructors including those who live in suburbs in their office and helping their students. They are responding to emails and SMS by their phones on everything to students, and by taking the incentive themselves and starting video lecturing and communicating their students day and night. Finally, I say to every one of us to keep on caring to ourselves, our families, and our community and our nation in general and I hope we will survive and we will make it, if we take care.

IPRCD; Thank you for your time

Dr. Lemma; Thank you



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