

## **Dr Bernard Obaa Appointed Ag. Head, CAES Department of Extension & Innovation Studies**

Makerere University Council has appointed Dr Bernard Obaa Acting Head, Department of Extension and Innovation Studies, College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences (CAES). Dr Obaa takes on from Prof. Nelson Turyahabwe who has held the position for the last four years starting 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2019. Dr. Obaa is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Extension and Innovation Studies at CAES. He holds a PhD in Rural Sociology (Food systems, Agriculture and Environment and Social Change and Development) from Iowa State University, USA, and an MSc in Agricultural Extension and Education from Makerere University.

During the official handover ceremony held on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2023 at CAES, the Principal, Prof. Gorettie Nabanoga appreciated the outgoing Head for his contribution. She congratulated the new Head and implored him to further strengthen the Department in line with the new strategic direction intended to transform Makerere into a research-led University, with more innovations to foster the country's development.

In Prof. Turyahabwe's four-year term of office, the Department of Extension and Innovation Studies has continuously registered improvement in the performance of students on the Bachelor of Agricultural and Rural Innovations programme. There has also been increased enrolment of students into the Masters of Science in Agricultural and Extension Education and PhD in Agricultural and Rural Innovations (PARI). Other achievements include; improvement in the completion rate of PARI students with the highest number of PhD students at CAES being from PARI. The Department has also reviewed curriculum for several programmes to meet the requirements of the Uganda National Council for Higher Education and Makerere University. These include; the Master of Science in Agricultural Extension and Education that has been renamed Master of Science in Agricultural Extension and Rural Innovation and approved by Senate. Both the Bachelor of Agriculture and Rural Innovation (Internal- BARI) and the Bachelor of Agriculture and Rural Innovation (External – BAXI) were reviewed and renamed Bachelor of Agricultural Extension and Rural Innovation.

The Department staff have won several research grants namely: Enhancing the Capacity of Faculty and Students on the Bachelor of Agricultural and Rural Innovation, External Degree Programme for E-Learning at Makerere University; the CAES Innovation Scholars Programme run in collaboration with Michigan State University's (MSU) Borlaug Higher Education for Agriculture Research and Development (BHEARD) with support from MSU's Global Centre for Food Systems Innovation. Other projects include; Diversity and Inclusion in Leadership Training between Makerere University and MSU's African Studies Centre and Michigan Fellows Agribusiness Initiative (MFAI), supported by the Alliance African Partnership (AAP); and SECA (2019-2021)

with support from Carnegie Cooperation of New York titled – Strengthening academic supervision and mentorship for enhanced completion rates of graduate students in the Department of Extension and Innovation Studies. There is also an ongoing project – Enhancing the Capacity of the Department of Extension and Innovation Studies to Facilitate E-learning and research through installation of the state of the art video conferencing system- Under consolidating Early Career Academic Programme (CECAP) at Makerere University. It is supported by Carnegie Cooperation of New York.

In his remarks, the outgoing Head, Prof. Nelson Turyahabwe appreciated the College leadership and staff, as well as programme coordinators for the support extended to him during his term of office. He also appreciated the incoming Head, Dr Bernard Obaa for accepting to take on the leadership of the Department, and pledged continued support to further strengthen the Department. Similarly, Dr Obaa appreciated Prof. Turyahabwe for his outstanding contribution towards the development of the Department and committed to build on the achievements registered thus far.

The handover ceremony was witnessed by the Dean, School of Agricultural Sciences, Dr John Baptist Tumuhairwe; the College Human Resource Office, Ms. Hawa Harriet; the representative from the Directorate of Internal Audit, Mr. Aggrey Luwuliza; and members of staff from the Department.