



# Fall Newsletter

October, November, December 2012

## From the Office of the President

In keeping with an old Ethiopian adage, “For everything there is time,” Dr. Minas Hiruy, the Founding President of Hope University College, remembered back in 1987 his return to Ethiopia from his long stay in the US to serve the needy. After 26 years of what he called a labor of love, he told the staff and the students that were gathered in the auditorium of the university college that the time had come for him to leave the institution and handover responsibility to new leadership. At the hearing of his resignation, people were shocked. But, reassuring them that he would do his best to support the university college, he asked the audience for one going away present. Conveying that the university college was developed with a uniqueness of vision, mission and strategy focusing on holistic student development, he requested for a promise to keep the uniqueness alive and well.

All promised to do so with a rousing applause. Thanking the audience for the affirming response, he introduced the President-Designate, Dr. Teketel Forssido, as the next President of the university college. He then ended his message with thanks to the Lord for helping him in the big task of developing the university college and the many dear friends for investing much with their means and prayers to make the university college a reality.



**Dr. Minas with the staff and students during a reflection hour**

There were also other developments during the quarter. In September, the university college was approved to offer degree programs in architecture on one hand and food science and technology on the other. These additions along with the five programs of last year enabled us to increase our enrolment by about 30%. We started classes for the sophomores on October 8 and for the new students on October 21. The evening school was also opened bringing our total enrolment to 416 students. At the same time, given that most of the expenses had to be covered by donations, Dr. Minas spent some time on fundraising. Our budget for operations finally shaped up as our two major donors, Ethiopiaid and Woord & Daad, responded positively to the requests that he made during the previous quarter. Donations along with income that was generated and costs that were saved by some downsizing, gave the university college the confidence to finish the 2012/13 academic year with a positive balance.

Dr. Minas had a lot going to complete some unfinished businesses so that the incoming president will not be encumbered. In this regard, he made sure that the big electric transformer having 1,250 KVA was received in good order and installed on campus as per the specifications. He ironed out the do list with regards to the outstanding works of the data system with Global Computing Solutions. He made some headway in campus beautification. Using his farm experience, he assisted in the introduction of vegetable gardening to campus. He oversaw the final departure of the building contractor, China Jiansu, from the premises that it occupied during the construction phase of the university college. Thanks to Woord & Daad, which advanced us the fund to settle the final payment to the contractor.



Dr. Teketel Forssido, the new President of Hope University College

Considering that the main mission of the university college was leadership training, Dr. Minas wanted to leave behind one tradition to influence students to be future leaders. He instituted the reflection hour as a way to talk about leadership dynamics and bring on stage exemplary leaders to share their experiences. He was the main speaker for a number of days focusing on a series about student empowerment and institutional responsibility in this regard. The students liked what they heard and soon they themselves became participants in the reflection hour. He also wrote the major lessons that he had learned from his experience as President and what he thought needed to be improved in the future and presented his points to the management and later to the Senate for discussion. The checklist of handover was met as Dr. Teketel, who came in as President-Designate on November 1 and took up the mantle of presidency on January 1, 2013.

## Academic Affairs

Mr. Atnafu Wondimu was assigned to serve as the Acting Dean of the Faculty of Science and Technology following the appointment of Dr. Letemeskel Asfaw to serve as the Vice President for Academic Affairs. The academic commissions of the three faculties held several meetings deliberating on staff and student affairs. Academic and subject advising got a lot of emphasis during the quarter considering weak performance in this area. The Senate met pretty much monthly and addressed issues pertaining to the rationalization of CBE (competency based education), staff discipline, student admission requirements, enhancement of student learning, quality assurance issues and student mentoring. The Senate also assigned a committee to select needy students for sponsorship. This committee used the criteria of result of the college entrance examination, documentation of need and results of the university college's examination in English and mathematics to select from among the many applicants.

Given the allowance of the Ministry of Education for the graduates of technical vocational institutes or TVET to be admitted to the university college provided they passed the examinations of CoC (Certification of Competency), examinations in various courses were prepared as per the guidelines of the Ministry and administered to many applicants that came from such background. Most of those who took the examinations passed and were accepted by particularly our programs of the Faculty of Science and Technology. Considering the strength of Hope Enterprises in vocational training, this window of opportunity is expected to benefit many graduates of Hope's vocational training.

In keeping with our strategy of having our students interface with companies, a trip was arranged by Ms. Lieske Hulscher to visit four different Dutch companies in the vicinity of Debrezeit, a rapidly industrializing town some 40 kilometers south east of our campus. The companies visited were Ethio-Dutch Profile Plc., Crown Plastic and Packaging Co., Holland Dairy and Maranatha Farms. We used our bus for the trip and the hosting was just superb with one of the companies offering the lunch to our students and staff. Most of the students have not had an experience of the type with much learning being just theoretical. The experience provoked interest in other faculty members work on similar opportunities as they are expected to do.



Some of our students travelling for the company interface.

The field of environment science was one area for which an application was submitted for accreditation and we did not succeed on account of certain gaps. We managed to recruit Ms. Sarah Assefa, An American with a master's degree in environment science from Clark University of Massachusetts, to help us in redoing our proposal. Ms. Assefa, who arrived in October, revisited our proposal in the field and prepared an equipment and textbook list for purchase. She had also taken some courses in English and biology to teach. We again contacted our friends in California to assist us with the equipment and gave the go-ahead to Sapna Book House, an Indian company that we had used before, to search for books in the field using the balance of funding that Woord & Daad provided in 2011 for the initial book purchase.

## Student Affairs

Mr. Teferi Ayalew, our Dean of Student Life, began to study the students through one-to-one and group talks and acquaintances. From this interaction, he came to know what to do in responding to their needs. Sports became one area that he focused on. His goal was to get our university college involved in the famous intramural competitions of private colleges the following quarter in the national stadium. And he recruited students to take part in the events of running, football, volley ball, badminton and table tennis. We were also assisted by Vapor Sports Ministries, an American organization that supports sports. Mr. Teferi also cultivated other student interests in the form of clubs and began counselling a number of students on a regular basis.

Dr. Minas' use of the reflection hour was quite motivating. His point about every individual having the potential to realize his/her goal if he/she believed in oneself and took the first step certainly hit a cord. His points about success being an outcome of putting one's priorities right and using one's time by exploiting the opportunities that the university college provided also made sense.



**Maarten Hasselman, a notable Dutch student with many friends**

Our students were quite active this quarter and we are quite pleased with their motivation and maturity. The sophomores organized themselves and had a reception for the new students. The words of welcome and the cutting of a big cake were very comforting and encouraging to the new students. In early December, the students also organized a farewell to one of their own, Maarten Hasselman, a Dutch student, who came for a semester to study in the Faculty of Business from Erasmus University. Maarten was so touched by the gesture and the overall friendship of

the students, he remarked in his report that such kind of social relations was one strength of Ethiopia. Along the same line, the students gave a token of appreciation to Dr. Minas, an art work, thanking him for taking the initiative of the college so that they could have an opportunity for higher education.

A number of the students formed several clubs. One interesting club was the Positive Thinkers and Actors Club, which promised to green up the campus if the college availed working tools. This club corresponded with the city's Office of Environment Protection and managed to get us seedlings of precious trees for planting on campus. The student body as a whole volunteered in cleaning up the pond and it was great to see Sarah Assefa, our staff member join them.

The Women Students Club did something that was just a hit. It organized students and staff members to celebrate the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Day of Ethiopia. Considering the diversity of Ethiopia as an "ethnic museum", the country has drawn strength from this diversity and has been celebrating it annually. It was great for our community to add to the celebration with shows of various



**Coffee ceremony, an Ethiopian institution of social connectivity**

shows of various dresses, eating habits and, of course, the famous coffee ceremony. The ceremony was also enjoyed by our friends from the UK who came to provide training and our expatriate faculty.



**Yohanna Tewolde, a leader in the making**

The Women Students Club, headed by the very active, Yohanna Tewolde, a marketing student, also did something else that was so exemplary. It had a fundraiser to help pay for the lunch that began to be served to needy students early in November. Most of those benefiting from the lunch came from out of state with stories of their own struggles to survive and make something of themselves. This show of goodwill that was joined by our staff members, brought a campus spirit that was just right.

Many of our students began to express their strengths in so many ways. There were, for instance, poets, writers and artists. In December, our students took part in a nationwide Q&A TV program adding to our publicity. A rapid assessment of student performance during the first semester showed noticeable improvement and this was encouraging to the faculty as it saw its efforts pay off.

## **Construction and Equipping**

Communication was made with Global Computing Solutions (GCS) to verify the progress made on the purchase of remaining materials as well as getting a replacement for missing IP telephony systems. It was agreed that all the goods will be procured by Woord en Daad and shipped to us with GCS being responsible for the installation of the IP telephone system. The doors of the apartments of the university college were painted to reduce sun glare and modifications were made in the shower rooms making them more spacious and easy to use. The stone flooring of the ground between the apartments was redone allowing easy walking and traps were put in the pipeline of the waste water to avoid unpleasant smells.

Some of the furniture that we bought from Ethio-Dutch Furniture needed repairs. We aligned our facilities management crew and the repairs were done. Similarly, there were leaks of water pipes underground. Our sanitary staff dug those out and replaced them. We are still waiting for China Jiangsu to redo the poorly overlaid copper roofing of the multipurpose hall that left gaps and caused ongoing leaks. We had rejected the silicon treatment as this could only be a temporary measure considering risks of weathering during the drastic changes in temperature. In addition, the remote control for aluminum windows were not yet handed over to the university college and the contractor left without settling the water bill and part of the electric bill that it had used since the start of the construction. The university college will continue to retain funding until these issues are ironed out.

## **Administration and Finance**

Dr. Teketel Forssido was situated in a temporary office as President-Designate on November 1 and this arrangement gave Dr. Minas a chance and enough time to provide orientation and background briefs on a number of issues pertaining the university college. Dr. Minas also shared about the lessons that he had learned, some of the activities in progress and what he thought to be the attention points for the future with the President-Designate, the vice presidents and the Senate and time was taken to discuss each point.

Considering the potential to use some of our open space for vegetable garden, Mr. Mesfin Sileshi, a plant science graduate from Haromaya University, our famous agricultural school, was hired. Wishing to involve students in this project, interested students were asked to submit their proposals on how they could be part of the effort and earn some money. Considering financial needs, we introduced the vegetable garden to raise funding from the sale of vegetables that are planned to be raised in the many open spaces on campus. There is a plan to weave in poultry and cattle fattening as additional income source.

Upon the leadership of Dr. Minas, an ad hoc committee was selected to go over the staff evaluations of the previous semester and identify the top performers from among the teaching and support staff. Considering the importance of recognition, the top achievers were subsequently appreciated by letters from the President and with financial bonus. This step boosted morale and encouraged others to do likewise.

At end of the quarter, our Director of Decisions Support, Mr. Adamu Assefa, resigned getting a job with the United Nations in South Sudan. He had been quite an asset and we wish him well.

After advertising for food caterers for our cafeteria on the Addis Reporter, Ms. Alem Zeleke won the bid and began to offer cafeteria service starting from October 8 on the basis of pre-negotiated menu, quality and price arrangements. With improvements in the service, we noted an increased clientele pool.

Ethiopiaid/UK sent a team of eight professionals, led by Ms. Caroline Barwick to our campus to conduct training for management members of various NGOs with whom the charity had worked for a number of years. A total of 40 persons attended the training from December 5 to 7, addressing topics like strategic leadership, business planning and team building. The delegation stayed in our guest apartments and



**Our campus is enjoyed by our visitors amidst the noise and clamor of our emerging city.**

meals were provided by a graduate from the Ladders of Hope's School of International Hotel Service and Catering. Break merriments and lunch for the trainees were provided by our caterer. The team, finding our facilities, staff and campus environment quite accommodating, thanked the university college for a great hospitality. On our part, the training opened up an opportunity to introduce the university college to other NGOs and to process check ourselves and our facilities to do better in the future.

### How you can help

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The vision of HUC is to provide quality education that produces graduates who combine knowledge, skills and values to contribute to the renewal and transformation of Ethiopia. HUC believes all students should be in a setting where they develop a love of learning driven by creativity and curiosity, and also a desire to make their communities a place of hope, justice, peace and progress.

We value each student and desire to involve them in an educational process that develops them to their full potential. In this initiative, we believe that no student who has the thirst for learning should be left behind. For students of financial need, we are currently looking for student sponsorships for the 2012-2013 academic year.

For more information or to make a donation, please visit our website or contact us in our office. Thank you for your support!