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Dr. David Irakiza

By Josh Iselin, Cyber Engineering Freshman

Dr. David Irakiza was born and raised in Uganda, primarily living and studying in Kampala, the nation's capital. After graduating from secondary school, Irakiza decided to attend Makerere University in Kampala, choosing to pursue an education in computer science. While he had many reasons to pursue a degree in computer science, his main motivation was the opportunities it provided. The field was emerging with exciting new ventures that were intriguing to him. However, he wasn't sure what he would do after graduating.

After graduating from Makerere University with a bachelor's degree in computer science, Dr. Irakiza moved to Ruston to work as a Ph.D. student on a Louisiana Tech research grant at the recommendation of his academic advisor. In the following five years as a graduate research assistant, Dr. Irakiza received master's degrees in computer science and mathematics while working on a Ph.D. in Computational Analysis and Modeling. While working on his Ph.D., Dr. Irakiza contributed to two research papers for the Louisiana Tech Center for Secure Cyberspace, both dealing with user authentication protocols.

After graduating with his Ph.D., Dr. Irakiza decided to stay with Louisiana Tech full-time, becoming a lecturer within the College of Engineering and Science. He specializes in computer science and network security, lecturing in courses for both the Mathematics and Computer Science programs. In his computer science classes, Dr. Irakiza teaches students a variety of programming languages, such as Python and Java, his two favorite programming languages.

Dr. Irakiza has not left his home country behind. At Louisiana Tech, Dr. Irakiza acts as an advisor for the African Students Association and readily enjoys helping support the Ugandan students both on campus and abroad to help pursue an education in the field of engineering, whether domestically or in the United States. Dr. Irakiza also formerly acted as an electoral commissioner for the Ugandan

North America Association, an association dedicated to providing support to Ugandans in North America and in their home country. While Dr. Irakiza has slowed his activity with the association, he maintains close contacts with the organization to provide support when he can. In the rest of his free time, when he is not working or helping others, he enjoys leisurely activities, like reading books and watching TV at home.

For Dr. Irakiza, taking the leap to pursue a Ph.D. at Louisiana Tech was a bold move, but one that paid off. While he was at Makerere University, he had no idea that he would be flying to Louisiana to pursue a doctoral degree so shortly after or that he would eventually become a full-time lecturer at Louisiana Tech, but the risk was worth it in the end. Dr. Irakiza enjoys his time as a lecturer at Louisiana Tech, thanks to its welcoming "small-school effect" and concentrated class sizes, which he hopes the University will maintain as it grows in the coming years. However, considering the radical shifts in his life over the past six years, Dr. Irakiza wonders what the future holds for him.

Dr. Irakiza gave advice for undergraduate cyber engineering and computer science majors through one of his favorite quotes: "Make hay while the sun shines." In the modern age, the foundation of interaction and productivity rely on technology, which is rapidly evolving. The world of today will be different from the world of tomorrow, and understanding the foundations and inner workings of the technology that surround us will prepare us for the innovations of tomorrow. Even for the undergraduate students outside of cyber engineering and computer science, Dr. Irakiza suggests that students appreciate their time at Louisiana Tech. While grades are important, ultimately what matters is growing as a person during college; undergraduate years only happen once.