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## 4<sup>TH</sup> NATIONAL ECONOMICS DEBATE

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### GOLDEN PEN WRITING EXPERIENCE

#### Meet Louise Peggy Rasiga Nyambori: A Two-Time Golden Pen Award Winner

When I first joined the Maasai **Mara University** Economics Students' Association (MMUESA), I knew I had stepped into uncharted waters. The association was newly formed, yet it had already drawn me in through its deliberate Friday debates, carefully shaped by the leadership at the time. I was looking for a space where ideas could be tested and refined; MMUESA was looking for a team willing to lead the association into the 3rd National Economics Debate organised by the Economics Students Association of Kenya (KESA). This would be our first appearance on the KESA stage, and the quiet beginning of my desire to attempt what felt beyond reach.

When members were invited to register for the debate, scheduled for 5 November 2024 at the University of Nairobi, the response within MMUESA was cautious. Many were willing to attend as observers, but few committed to participating. When the team was finally constituted, I found myself as the only lady. That reality unsettled me. It was not discouraging, but it was revealing. I was keenly aware of the voices that were missing.

Understanding the concept note became my first real test. The organisers' training offered clarity on approach, yet translating that guidance into sound economic reasoning was difficult. Connecting ideas to economic principles felt unfamiliar, and at times overwhelming. I owe much of my early growth to my teammate then, **Ken Kyle Chan**, who patiently walked me through the process. He helped me see how ideas could be structured, connected, and grounded in economic logic to form a persuasive narrative.

The moment we travelled back to campus carrying a trophy for **Golden Thoughts Award** for the **best team overall** in Collaborative Writing Experience and a **Golden Pen Award** medal for the **best essay writer overall**, remains vivid. The sacrifices we had made finally felt worthwhile. That experience taught me something lasting: that the unfamiliar, when met with commitment, can become extraordinary.

The 4th National Economics Debate marked a different chapter in my journey. This time, I returned as Vice Chairperson of MMUESA and overall team leader for the Collaborative Writing Experience. Leadership demanded more than personal effort; it demanded trust, judgment, and responsibility. Selecting teams whose passion was evident was a decision I embraced fully. We fielded two teams, each made up of two

members, despite the organisers' original design of three members per team. The challenge was real, but so was our resolve.

Each team rose to the occasion. Both produced **Golden Pen Award winners** (*Louise Peggy Rasiga Nyambori and Joyfridah Mumbi*), and one team emerged as **first runner-up by institution**. These outcomes reflected discipline, preparation, and belief rather than convenience or chance.

Returning to the national stage forced me to confront my own growth. I was no longer navigating uncertainty alone; others were now looking to me for direction. I **had to learn when to speak, when to listen, and when to trust the instincts of those around me**. Leadership, I realised, was less about visibility and more about responsibility, about making decisions that allowed others to perform at their best.

The collaborative writing segment demanded balance and restraint. Each writer carried a distinct voice, and my role was not to dilute those voices, but to guide them towards coherence and purpose. **Strong teams, I learned, are built through clarity, patience, and honest feedback**. The process was demanding, but it was also deeply affirming.

This platform by KESA created a space where preparation mattered, ideas were tested, and excellence was earned. **Through KESA, I encountered standards that pushed me beyond comfort and into growth. I learned to write not just to impress, but to persuade, to question, and to contribute meaningfully to economic discourse.**

Most importantly, the journey reshaped how I understood possibility. Confidence did not arrive fully formed; it was built through exposure. Each debate, each draft, and each critique added a layer of resolve. What once felt intimidating became familiar. What once felt distant became attainable, and in trusting the process, I learned to trust myself.

I remain deeply grateful to my team in the second edition of collaborative writing experience; **Joyfridah Mumbi, Samuel Kinyanjui, and Vivian Adhiambo**, for their dedication and consistency. I thank the MMUESA executive committee for their steady commitment, and our patron, **Dr Job Ogada**, for his support. My family, friends, and the Almighty God have sustained me from one victory to the next; to them I owe my love and loyalty.

To KESA and Economics Scholar Panel, I am grateful for a platform that does more than host debates. It identifies potential, challenges it, and allows it to grow. Through this space, I discovered a new dimension of my voice. My call to action is simple: **your interests do not always need to make sense to others. Sometimes, they only need to leave you fulfilled.**