

## **Department of Plant Sciences, Microbiology and Biotechnology says farewell to Prof. Simmons**

Prof. Mark Pitkin Simmons is returning home after a year spent as a Fulbright scholar at the College of Natural Sciences (CoNAS), Makerere University. A small farewell function was organised for his send-off on June 2<sup>nd</sup> 2017 in the BOT/ZOO Lecture theatre. He has left a wonderful impression and donated high class equipment for the Research lab.

The Department of Plant Sciences, Microbiology and Biotechnology hosted Prof. Simmons from Colorado State University in the U.S.A as a Fulbright Scholar for the academic year 2016/2017. He was based at the Makerere University Herbarium. During his stay, Prof. Simmons as a visiting professor did the following: teach both graduate and undergraduate courses in phylogenetics, scientific writing and scientific process; give out-of-class scholarly lectures to the university community; and undertake joint research with staff.

The collaboration is expected to strengthen international linkages for Makerere University staff as well as foster professional growth. During his stay, Prof. Simmons worked closely with Assoc. Prof. Esezah Kakudidi and Dr. Mary Namaganda, Deputy Curator of the Makerere University Herbarium. Prof. Simmons is the first visiting Fulbright Scholar to the department. His research project while at Makerere was titled, 'Gene flow in a recently cultivated plant lineage: the spread of *catha edulis* (qat) in Uganda'. In the Africa region, he has previously conducted research in Ethiopia and the East African Herbarium in Nairobi, Kenya.