

MAKERERE



UNIVERSITY

**OPENING REMARKS BY THE VICE CHANCELLOR, PROF.
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**AT ONE DAY SELF ASSESSMENT RETREAT FOR UNIVERSITY
MANAGEMENT AND COLLEGE LEADERSHIP**

**THURSDAY, JULY 23, 2015
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH [RESILIENTAFRICA NETWORK
OFFICES]**

My colleagues in University Management, Principals, Deputy Principals, Deans and Directors; I welcome you to this one-day self-assessment workshop, which is majorly focusing on our core functions of i) *Teaching and Learning*, ii) *Research and Innovations*, iii) *Partnerships and Networking*. It is important for University Management and the College leadership to regularly assess ourselves against our mandate as a University. We need to work as a team. I am happy to note that as a University, we continue to do our best to achieve our vision and mission.

As you are already aware, Makerere University was ranked 3rd in the prestigious *Times Higher Education (THE)* pilot ranking of African Universities. Outside of South Africa, Makerere is ranked number one. I take this opportunity to thank you for your individual contributions to this achievement, and through you extend sincere thanks to all members of staff for consistently working for the good of our University despite a number of challenges. We are moving in the right direction and should continue to work even harder to fulfil our vision.

This recent ranking is based on research influence. I am therefore glad to note that Makerere University continues to excel in terms of research output and publications. Indeed the Web of Knowledge ranks Makerere University among the top research institutions in the region. However, most of the research and innovations are coming from the science-based disciplines/units. For instance, the top publishers for the period 2008-2014 were from the College of Health Sciences. We need to encourage and support more research and publishing across the board.

As you are aware, the National Council for Higher Education recommends publication of at least two papers a year but as a starting point, let us urge and request our staff to publish at least one paper per year. If we do this, we can certainly be the best on the African continent.

On the other hand, there is still a lot more to do in order for us to sustain our standing as a leading University. We have several challenges, some of which can be mitigated by focusing on our core values which are: i) *Allegiance to the Institution*, ii) *Integrity*, iii) *Customer Responsiveness*, iv) *Professionalism* and v) *Openness to Diversity*.

I therefore wish to call upon all of us as leaders who drive the progress of this University to reflect on these core values as we engage in the discussions today.

Teaching and Learning is our number one core function. Are we abiding by our core values in the provision of teaching and learning services? We are aware that there are a number of issues regarding teaching and learning:

- Absenteeism [of both lecturers and students]
- Turning up late for lectures [by both lecturers and students]
- Lack of supervision for students
- Awarding of marks without marking
- Alteration/change of marks for money
- Alteration/change of marks for sex
- Missing marks for both course works and final exams

These issues are very critical and pose a serious threat to our image as a leading University in the region. I pose a question to each one of us as University leaders - what can we do to address these issues?

Timelines of Activities in the University; most of the activities of the university are always behind schedule despite prior planning. We have failed to meet practically all deadlines apart from the deadline of the commencement of examinations. What can we do to meet the deadlines?

- Starting the Semester on time
- Registering students on time
- Submission of coursework results before beginning of examinations
- Submission of marks/results
- Submission of graduation lists
- Implementing the tuition policy
- Issuing of examination permits

Monitoring and Evaluation; there is need for us to understand the roles of the centre vis-à-vis those of the colleges. We need to understand who does what and at what point. There are several issues and activities, which should be solved at College level because it is difficult for the center to keep track of all matters. I am therefore happy to note that one of the topics of discussion today is the College Statute. It is very important for us to demarcate the varying roles in order to effectively and efficiently monitor and evaluate our performance and outputs.

Intrigue and Lack of Team Work; there is an overwhelming level of intrigue and lack of teamwork in the way we do business and this is having a negative impact on the delivery of our core functions. We need to refocus our energies to the core business of this university instead of engaging in behavior and activities that damage the image of our great institution.

You are aware that there is a lot of “bad mouthing” in the University including spreading of malicious and defamatory information in the press. We need to engage in dialogue to propose solutions to the challenges we are facing. I am confident that we can find solutions to our challenges if we work together as a team.

Without undermining the foregoing issues, I would like to point out other main challenges of the University:

Inadequate Funding

We are all aware that the University is cash strapped, especially in light of the meager Government funding. As you will be informed by the Acting University Secretary, the arrears and obligations of the University for FY 2014/2015 amount to UGX 60 bn excluding pension. There are reasons for this including accumulated arrears, decreasing student numbers, increased engagement of contract and part time staff and stagnant Government subvention despite increasing costs.

It is our joint responsibility to mobilise resources. As University Management, we have put in place mechanisms to achieve financial sustainability including the establishment of the Makerere University Endowment Fund and the Makerere University Holdings Company Limited. In addition, we continue to engage Government to allocate more funding.

Colleges and units too have an important role to play in resource mobilisation through writing proposals for funding and networking with stakeholders like Development Partners and the private sector. I am glad to note that some units are actively engaged in resource mobilisation efforts. Most recently, the Makerere University Revenue Office received a total of 18 computers from Stanbic Bank, following acceptance of a proposal for partnership. Similarly, I am happy to inform you that Makerere University Printery wrote a proposal to the Japanese Embassy and secured a grant from the Government of Japan worth UGX 72 m in form of equipment and technical support to the unit. I encourage other units to do the same.

Human Resources

As indicated in the table provided, we are understaffed and operating at only 48% of the total establishment. In relation to our staffing situation, we are well aware of the ban imposed by Government on recruitment of more staff. This implies that we have to work with available staff and where possible allow part time staff. We have previously had issues where part-time staff go unpaid.

This is partly because they are not presented at the beginning of the semester and therefore not properly budgeted for.

As I conclude, I would like to call for a frank discussion during this one-day workshop. We have serious challenges, which need immediate solutions for the good of our institution.

We call on the Colleges to:

- Improve on the delivery of our core functions.
- Support the implementation of the collegiate system. Let us identify the challenges within the Colleges and try to overcome them.

- Revive seminar series and participation in national debates.
- Engage in resource mobilisation.

On the part of University Management, we are committed to:

- Providing an atmosphere conducive for working, teaching and learning.
- Ensuring effective communication on all issues concerning the University.
- Streamlining Human Resources.
- Streamlining the procurement process.

Colleagues, we need to work together as a team in order to succeed in our endeavours.

I thank you.