

THE POLITICS OF MULTI-CAMPUS LOCATION IN GHANA: THE EXPERIENCES OF THE UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

S. M. Kuu-ire

*Central Administration, University for Development
Studies, Tamale, Ghana*

ABSTRACT

The University for Development Studies (UDS) is the first in Ghana to be established complete with decentralized administrative structures under Deans of constituent campuses. This novel experiment brought along with it certain challenges to educational administrators, teachers, learners and surrounding communities. The radical departure from a centralized university system to a multi-campus system with the additional task of using a problem-based, student-centred and community-based approach to teaching and learning brought to the fore various anxieties, misconceptions, expectations and demands by the envisaged beneficiaries of the University. This work, endeavours to show the critical features of the University for Development Studies, its background, training philosophy, and the administrative challenges involved in operating a novel multi-campus system. The study captures the tensions from within the university in interpreting the new training philosophy and the politics of concerned individuals, regional groupings and government on the permanent location of campuses and faculties. Angling for the permanent location of campuses and faculties received priority attention among the stakeholders over the mobilization of funds and other support systems for the growth of the University. A strong commitment from the University authorities for deeper consultations and collaborations along lines proposed by the stakeholders during the consultations to prepare the Strategic Plan of the University would be most beneficial.

KEY WORD: Location and Ethnic Politics, Curriculum Accreditation, Management, Multi-Campus System, Institutional Mandate

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The multi-campus system is a fairly new phenomenon in Ghana. Although the University of Ghana, Legon, operated research stations and trial farms, these did not have miniature governance structures and resident students to replicate major administrative functions at that level. The University of Cape Coast and Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) did not have satellite campuses until Tarkwa School of Mines, now Western University, was established. The location of the then KNUST School of Mines at Tarkwa did not generate too

much controversy since the Western Region had the greatest concentration of mining towns which could provide the needed linkages to support the economy. When the University of Education, Winneba was established, the adoption of the Kumasi and Mampong Campuses as Colleges did not offer any location difficulties. In the case of the University for Development Studies (UDS), prior knowledge by stakeholders that each of the four constituent regions of the catchment area of the University would receive at least a campus threatened the very foundation of the University along regional lines.

This work focuses on the structure of the UDS, its establishment mandate, arguments informing the location of campuses in four different regions and the management difficulties of the geographical spread of campuses during the past decade.

2.0 THE MANDATE OF UDS

The UDS was established by PNDCL 279 of 1992. Section 2 of the Act envisaged that the University would provide education to all manner of persons suitably qualified and capable of benefiting from such education. As well, it was expected to undertake research and promote the advancement and dissemination of knowledge. Furthermore, it was expected to "blend the academic world with that of the community in order to provide a constructive interaction between the two for the total development of northern Ghana in particular and the country as a whole." Consequently, the UDS works toward becoming a home for world class pro-poor scholarship.

The aims of the founders came from painstaking submissions made by the Benneh Committee (1991) on the object of a university in the north. These aims were to be achieved through the establishment of programmes in agriculture, medical/health sciences and integrated development studies. It was envisaged that the teachers would work with learners to develop skills for critical and independent thinking and create awareness about the uses of university education in nation-building. This mandate was to be pursued through practical training, teaching, and dissemination of research findings and knowledge creation. This underlining philosophy set the UDS apart from earlier/older universities. In reality, the UDS became the first University, in the world, devoted entirely to development work.

It is worth mentioning that Act 79, which transformed the University College of the Gold Coast to the University of Ghana (UG) in 1961 envisaged that it would introduce programmes that would provide the needed human resources for the newly-independent Ghanaian public sector. The premier University was expected to produce sufficient human resources for Nkrumah's Africanisation and Ghanainisation programmes. The University of Ghana was consequently tasked with furthering the ideals of African unity by understanding the peculiar histories, cultures, civilizations and institutions, which bind Africans as one people.

3.0 UNIQUE FEATURES

The special circumstances warranting the establishment of a university with a different thrust led to certain built-in features to survive the onslaughts of orthodoxy.

3.1 Powers of Full-Fledged University

The UDS, from the onset, was vested with the power to award its own degrees, diplomas, certificates and distinctions. The three older universities before it all had to serve as university colleges under older universities. The University of Ghana (UG) was overseen by the University of London, UK from 1948 to 1961. The University of Science and Technology (KNUST) served as a college under the University of Ghana from 1951 to 1961. The University of Cape Coast (UCC) was overseen by University of Durham, UK until it became a full-fledged university in 1971. The University of Education, Winneba (UEW) was under the University of Cape Coast from 1993 to 2003.

It is worth speculating that given the level of public misconceptions about the need for a fourth University and its philosophy of education, if the UDS were to serve as a college before being upgraded, plain orthodoxy and its physical and financial deprivations would have made its progression to full-university status interminably long. The UDS fought her way to survival and growth on the commitment, determination and power to issue her own certificates without recourse to any external body.

3.2 Seed Money

While the three older universities were opened in good times when the government could afford to give quinquennial, triennial or biennial votes to universities, the UDS was born when PNDC Government, (through pressure from international and bilateral funding sources), had just returned to constitutional rule. The World Bank did not, for instance, support the creation of the University and withheld vital resources from it to compel the PNDC/NDC Government to abort its inception. Happily, the World Bank, after failing, has pledged assistance but the deprived University is watching cautiously. The University of Ghana in particular was given £2 million as seed money, which it invested to meet its cash flow requirements.

3.3 Advisory Committees

The founders may have envisaged a tendency to pull in different ways concerning the permanent location of campuses and the expected benefits from such a novel university. They accordingly provided for the creation of a University Interim Advisory Committee and Regional Advisory Committees on the UDS. While the University Interim Advisory Committee was expected to harmonise conflicting demands and help mobilize a community sense of ownership, the Regional Advisory Committees were expected to articulate the hopes, aspirations and fears of the constituent regions

to ensure that the facility was perceived as common property worth their material and financial support. There is no record that the University Interim Advisory Committee has been properly constituted to this day. Regional Advisory Committees, if they existed, have been moribund. Voices of discontent, on several occasions, were often received not from these advisory committees but from concerned youth groups and other indigenes expressing their disenchantment about the pace and spread of infrastructure development or the allocation of campuses.

3.4 Multi-Campus System

The UDS was envisaged as a multi-site university with campuses on each of the four constituent regions comprising the catchment areas of the Brong Ahafo, Northern, Upper East and Upper West Regions of Ghana. The Bennèh Taskforce Final Report recommended disposition of the campuses as: Northern Region: – the School of Medicine and Health Sciences and the Faculty of Agriculture; the Faculty of Basic Sciences (now re-designated Faculty of Applied Sciences was to go to Navrongo in the Upper East Region and Faculty of Allied Health Sciences to be located at Kintampo. The Integrated Development Studies Faculty was to be sited in Wa in the Upper West Region.

The establishment of the Faculties was to be staggered based on funding levels, teaching staff situation and other physical infrastructures. As the Regional Advisory Committees were moribund, delays in the starting of campuses intended for some regions generated rumours of alleged plans to divert them to other areas. The rumours and mistrust impeded the cultivation of the goodwill of all the stakeholders for the growth of the University.

3.5 Trimester System

By 1992, all Ghanaian universities had changed over to the semester system to align with international trends and allow for exchange of students with other reputable foreign institutions to which they had some linkages. The UDS was, however, charged to operate a trimester system to execute the field practical component of its mandate. During the third trimester every year, the students go to the communities to test their skills in data collection techniques, needs assessment, community animation and mobilization while developing proposals or development plans. More importantly, the students of the University learn to live and work in rural communities, apply theoretical learning in real communities while building skills and knowledges for rural development and grounding theory.

This departure implies that while other universities on the semester system are on their long vacations to rest and recharge themselves, UDS teachers and students work all year round to catch up with the academic calendars of their colleagues to enable them participate meaningfully in inter-university dialogues and games.

3.6. Integration of Field Practical Training

Initially, the various faculties planned their own practical training independently. The training has now been integrated such that students from all the constituent faculties form integrated teams to examine problems in a multi-disciplinary manner. This is different from what obtains at the traditional universities where individuals undergo attachments for practical learning and on return present their learning experiences for evaluation.

All these and the practical-oriented nature of UDS curricula with a central focus on the development of communities within the catchment area set the UDS apart from other universities, which naturally have the whole country as their catchment base.

4.0 RATIONALE FOR THE UNIVERSITY

The Benneh Task Force established that the three northern regions were also the three poorest regions in Ghana. Poverty studies on Ghana, after more than a decade, confirm that nine out of every ten people in the Upper East, eight out of ten in the Upper West and seven out of every 10 people in the Northern Region were poor (Ghana Government/NDPC 2003; GSS, 2000). By situating a university in the north of Ghana, the founders hoped to open doors for the use of education as a tool for empowerment, poverty reduction and social mobilization and mobility in the long-term.

It was further argued that situating a university in the north of Ghana with faculties in Agriculture and Medicine had considerable potential for dealing with the underlying problems, which hindered health and agricultural productivity of the area. It was expected that the area would be opened to scientists and researchers for work toward identifying and solving development problems specific to communities north of Ghana and for informing and improving national poverty reduction efforts. Section 3 (3) of PNDCL 279 specifically required the lecturers to use local materials for teaching and practical demonstrations to demystify the myth between academic work and the concerns of rural peoples.

By approving a multi-campus model in an election year, the PNDC Government also was able to gain the support of the peoples of the catchment area. The government demonstrated that it had the welfare of the people at heart by granting a wish many past governments had lacked the courage to do. In sharing the campuses among the four regions of the defined catchment area, the PNDC/NDC Government tried to satisfy the competing regional demands for attention in their educational expectations. I shall shortly deal with the arguments and misconceptions that bedeviled the final allocation of operational campuses as soon as the University commenced as a nascent tertiary experiment.

5.0 THE POLITICS OF CAMPUS LOCATIONS

The story of the travails and achievements of the UDS will not be complete without a piece on the angling and jockeying for campuses when the University finally started in September, 1993 on only a paltry €96.0 million operational money. The founding Vice-Chancellor, in his wisdom, started the University in 1993 with only 40 students for the Faculty of Agriculture. In 1994, the first batch for the Faculty of Integrated Development Studies was also admitted with Professor B. G. Der as the Founding Dean. The two faculties attended lectures at the Islamic Senior Secondary School but stayed at a hostel for the School of Hygiene (Haizel, 1996).

Surprisingly, the authorities of the Islamic Senior Secondary School suddenly decided to take back their classrooms, which they had loaned to the UDS for lectures. In a desperate attempt to deal with the situation, the Vice-Chancellor sent the Agriculture students to Nyankpala, to open the campus of the then Agricultural College. Due to pressure on utilities, students of the Faculty of Integrated Development Studies (FIDS) were sent to Navrongo, also to occupy the near abandoned structures of the defunct Institute for Field Communication and Training. The people of Tamale reacted with a series of demonstrations alleging that the administrators of the University were trying to share campuses that were all supposed to be located in Tamale (Bening, 2005).

The Minister of Education, the Interim University Council and the four Regional Ministers in the catchment area were rallied together to resolve the unfolding crises. Council wisely set up the Haizel Committee (1996) to review the proposals for the permanent location of campuses and faculties among others. The Committee undertook broader consultations, this time soliciting opinions from students and lecturers regarding the realistic permanent location of the faculties. On 5th November, 1996, the Haizel Committee submitted its Final Report in lieu of the terms of reference. The findings are summarized as follows:

Table 1: Haizel Committee Recommendations on Campuses

Region	Location	Proposed Programme/Faculty
Brong Ahafo	Kintampo Campus	i. Community Health Diploma Programme and Training of Medical Assistants (SMHS)
	Sunyani Campus	ii. Renewable Natural Resource
Northern Region	Nyankpala Campus	i. Medical Science Programme
		ii. Faculty of Agriculture
Upper East	Navrongo Campus	i. Faculty of Applied Sciences ii. Agricultural Mechanization and Irrigation Technology
Upper West	Wa Campus	i. Faculty of Integrated Development Studies ii. Centre for Interdisciplinary Research

Source: Haizel Report (1996) p.7

Although the Interim University Council accepted the Report for implementation, the politics of campus locations did not stop there. Threats by some concerned citizens

of Tamale on a baseless allegation that the founding Vice-Chancellor wanted to move the School of Medicine to Wa eventually led to the Academic Board, University Council and a Presidential Committee under Professor Awoonor to revisit the matter.

There are still voices of despair and varied speculations about the motives on the variances from the Haizel Report on permanent disposition of campuses and faculties as a manipulation of facts out of context and time. I shall now turn to the stakes put up by the various regional blocks in the run-up to the permanent disposition of campuses and faculties.

5.1 The Northern Region

The position of the people of Northern Region was simply that the UDS was not the first but the fourth public university in Ghana and that it was unexplainable why when it got to the turn of Tamale the campuses were split among other regions and towns. They contend that the University of Science and Technology is in Kumasi, the University of Cape Coast is in Cape Coast and the University of Ghana is in Accra. Hence, the question why a University meant for Tamale is dotted over as many as four regions?

It is noteworthy here that the Haizel Report as shown in Table 1 did not even recommend a campus for the Tamale township. This was to offend the sensibilities of the people of Tamale for receiving nothing when they expected that all the faculties would be located within Dagbon, to say the least. This particular grievance eventually informed the decision of the UDS Academic Board and Council to resite the School of Medicine in the Tamale Metropolis while the Agricultural Science Faculty remains at Nyankpala, within Dagbon, but in the Tolon-Kumbungu District.

At one point, in 1996, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) Youth Wing for Northern Region asserted that, "Tamale township at the moment is enveloped with tension for this sad news and we are afraid if proper investigation is not conducted into this matter, it may result into the outbreak of uncontrollable violence in the Region" (Bening, 1996:7).

On March 20th, 2000, the Concerned Citizens of Tamale wrote to the then Vice-Chancellor saying: "It was with profound grief and heaviness of heart that the entire membership of our Association learned about the intended movement of the faculty (sic) of Medicine and Health Sciences out of Tamale for relocation elsewhere outside the Northern Region." Continuing, the Association said, "the truth is, we of the concerned Citizens Association of Tamale are not opposed to locating even the whole new university in the Upper West Region or even a faculty. But much as we recognize the need for this, we do not think it is a healthy practice hiving off such crucially needful entities from one point of extreme need to another...." The Association further added that:

Indeed the goal of every progressive as far as this is concerned should be to have adequately resourced centralized infrastructure housing all the faculties and residences together, much in the fashion of the more established universities down south. We believe the idea of affiliated faculties in distant campuses is best achieved when the university is well grounded and not in the budding stages of the university as in the case of the UDS.

The President of the concerned Citizens of Tamale, Mr. Basharu Daballi who signed the letter, distributed the letter to all paramount chiefs of Northern Region, Youth Associations in Northern Region, Members of Parliament of Northern Region, the Northern Regional Minister and the Northern Regional Director of the Bureau of National Investigations. The said letter was not copied to any body outside Northern Region, not even the Minister for Education. The letter clearly posted the seriousness of the issue and the narrow regional interest underlining the petition. It was very clear that the letter was not informed by the Task Force Report, PNDCL 279 or even the Haizel Report. An understanding of these reports and Law could have averted the obvious ethnic and local sentiments conveyed in the letter. To Mr. Daballi and his Concerned Citizens, those pushing for the multi-campus system were not just enemies of the Northern Region but were also non-progressive.

Noteworthy also is that Professor W. S. Alhassan, who was then a member of the Interim University Council and privy to all the literature on the University, and who hails from Northern Region, submitted a memorandum to Council, which did not support the multi-campus system. Alhassan (1996:1) observed on the temporary transfer of FIDS to Navrongo that: "As these [water and electricity crises] are being tackled, new compelling reasons are emerging. The impression should not be created that the University Authorities are foot dragging on the issue of returning FIDS to Nyankpala." Alhassan (1996:2) further observed that, "the dissipation of the four faculties into the regions at a time the core campus is not developed will only compound the funding problems of the young University. As funding becomes more available, the sub-campus, field stations and laboratories can grow into university colleges and eventually into autonomous universities." On the possibility of prevailing ethnic conflict affecting the growth of the new university, Alhassan (1996:3) concluded that: "Concern over the ethnic conflict should transcend the mere access to a particular university as there are three other national universities and one university – college presently." Without doubt, the debate by the informed and uninformed left much to choose from in the saga for the permanent disposition of faculties and campuses.

When the Interim University Council (IUC) rejected the Awoonor Committee Report on the permanent location of campuses, Awoonor wrote a letter to persuade the Sector Minister, Mr. Ekow Spio-Garbrah, to ignore the academic arguments for location of campuses and faculties. He argued that "to uproot FIDS from Navrongo and send it to Wa, where no infrastructure of any kind exists at present, or even to

hold out the prospect of this move over the faculty and the community seems to the Committee to be a recipe for disorder” (Awoonor, 1999:2).

Awoonor (1999), furthermore, surmised that, “our advice to the University cannot be deemed to be violating ‘spatial equity’ or the multi-campus institutional character of UDS.” The then Minister of Education, Ekow Spio-Garbrah, did not raise the matter again anywhere, officially or unofficially, when it was indicated to him that Awoonor’s letter was only an advise and not a command to him or the University.

5.2 Upper East Region

The people of the Upper East Region did not originally object to the sharing of campuses and faculties as suggested by the Benneh Task Force Report, the Haizel Committee Report or the Report of the IUC. However, after the temporary relocation of the Faculty of Integrated Development Studies to Navrongo, arguments emerged that rather than ask staff and students relocate (again) to Wa, it would be better to site the Applied Sciences Faculty, which had not yet started at Wa. This thinking raised some challenges as the Applied Sciences Faculty was planned for the Navrongo Campus because of the proximity of irrigation, good hospital laboratories and research stations at Tono, Navrongo, Bolga and Bawku for which considerable collaboration could be enhanced. Additionally, the good road linking Navrongo to Tamale could enable the Faculty scientists to service the basic sciences component of the Medical School at Tamale until they could recruit their own scientists. The same scientists, through the efficient road transport, could continue to service the introductory science courses for students of Agriculture at the Nyankpala Campus.

When the Upper West Region staked a claim to the Faculty of Integrated Development Studies, concerned youth groups in the Upper East and Upper West and their Regional Houses of Chiefs traded some arguments over expediency and vested interests. In the unfolding rumpus, the Upper West rejected the argument that the intended permanent relocation of FIDS to Wa and FAS to Navrongo was tantamount to an unequal exchange of “a cow for a goat.” The argument of robbing Peter to pay Paul was equally thrashed. The Upper West also indicated that “temporary care” for their cow by the Upper East did not amount to ownership. The Upper West again pointed out that as the Applied Sciences Faculty was yet to come to their region, there was really no exchange involved but a clash of interests. The matter was amicably resolved by a phased movement of lecturers and workers to Wa Campus over a three-year period beginning from September 2002 – September, 2005. The author spent four months at Wa from June – September, 2002 to prepare the grounds for the take-off of the Wa Campus.

5.4 The Upper West Region

As alluded earlier, the Upper West Region held on to its claim to be the permanent home of the Faculty of Integrated Development Studies and the Centre for Interdisci-

plinary Research. The Task Force Report and Bening (1998) confirmed the dearth of facilities in the Upper West Region. It was pointed out that the Region would be better served by a social sciences faculty, least dependent on laboratories and scientific equipment to pursue her mandate. The bad road from Wa to Tamale required a Faculty that could function with least collaboration from Tamale except to attend important meetings on the Academic Calendar.

In a letter from the Chairman of the President's Office Committee on UDS dated 1st September, 1998, Professor Awoonor allegedly sought to diffuse growing tension on the furore over the permanent location of campuses breeding mistrust and not helping the mobilization of ideas and resources for the growth of the University. In that letter, Awoonor upheld the Academic Board's recommendations to site the hospital-based programmes in Tamale but also directed that the Faculty of Integrated Development Studies should continue to be at Navrongo "in the interest of the University and the communities it is expected to serve." The Academic Board reacted to this promptly that political expediency should least form the basis of allocation of campuses in a University and re-iterated its position to go by the recommended location of campuses with the FIDS going to Wa. Since NDC government left office in December 2000, the matter of permanent location of campuses has not resurface yet, at least not at the official level.

4.5 Brong-Ahafo Region

The Brong-Ahafo Region can best be seen as the only stakeholder still on the sidelines. Although on paper they were expected to receive campuses at Kintampo and Sunyani for Allied Health Sciences and Renewable Natural Resources respectively, they have not benefited from any campus yet. The delay has led to the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology successfully bringing the Sunyani School of Forestry under its fold. Negotiations for collaboration with Kintampo premises continue to swing in all directions with each change of Minister of Health or Education, the responsible ministers. The change of government in 2001 has not helped the process of making progress in this direction.

Under the NDC Government, the Awoonor Committee also set up a sub-committee on the Medical School under the chairmanship of the founding UDS Council Chairman, Brig. Dr. Deh. The sub-committee was charged with the responsibility of harmonizing talks over the focus of SMHS curriculum, the incorporation of the Rural Health Training Centre at Kintampo into UDS as well as the accreditation for the Medical School, among others. The Committee could not complete its work before the fall of the NDC Government.

The New Patriotic Party Government, on assuming office, also set up a Committee under Vice-President Aliu Mahama to continue to dialogue on unfinished residual problems on the Medical School. The Committee still meets but no visible progress can be seen from the outside. The UDS is surprised at taunts that no attempts have

been made to adopt the Kintampo Campus because the founding Dean of the SMHS Prof. H. A. Addy submitted a Draft MOU as far back as 1996 on the proposed adoption.

Although the Sunyani Forestry School has been absorbed by KNUST, the stakeholder consultations to arrive at a workable Strategic Plan for the UDS from 2003-2008 revealed that, Atebubu is prepared to offer land and infrastructure to UDS for a campus or research station. The people of Techiman have also demonstrated similar goodwill to work with the UDS. In light of all these developments, all is not lost yet to establish the presence of UDS in the Brong-Ahafo Region, its fourth constituent region.

5.5 RESOURCING THE UNIVERSITY

Since its inception, the UDS has been depending on quarterly and monthly subventions to pursue its complex mandate. It is fair to acknowledge that the founding President and Chancellor of UDS, J. J. Rawlings, donated his Hunger Prize of \$50,000 to the UDS toward the development of some of its infrastructure. This, among other things, was cited for the decision to honour J. J. Rawlings with a doctorate in what turned out to be an abortive exercise in March 2005.

With GETFund assistance, the quality of physical infrastructure has improved but the distribution among competing campuses makes it appear as if not much has changed. With hindsight, one can now say that the period before the inception of the GETFund was a wasted one in the University's physical development history.

The deprivations of the UDS have been well-catalogued by Professor Osei (2000) when he was chairman of the University Teachers Association of Ghana. Bad press, occasionally, carried forth our institutional and management inadequacies to the public (The ADM, Sep. 30, 2004). The truth is that the UDS has suffered what some observers refer to as "presidential desertion." The founding Chancellor of the UDS, President Rawlings, visited the UDS and donated his Hunger Award but never attended any congregation personally during his eight-year constitutional rule as leader of NDC and President of Ghana. President Kufour successfully repeated this feat by personally avoiding all the congregations during his first four years as President of Ghana. Both presidents, have on their campaign trails, not failed to visit our campuses at short notice to speak to students and workers. It is reckoned that such surprise visits are calculated to catch academics unawares. As academics scamper to regroup on what to say, the presidents are able to escape bombardments on the University's numerous problems, often catalogued with repeated emphasis at formal ceremonies such as congregations.

The despair and frustrations from the continued apathy of Northern politicians was aptly conveyed with repeated emphasis at the 2005 Congregation Address. In that address, the VC, Prof J. B. K. Kaburise said: "The only times that I often see the

northern politicians are when it is time for admissions or when they want to interfere with some disciplinary proceedings in the University." At a similar ceremony in 2003, Hon. J. H. Mensah, representing President J. A. Kufuor, had occasion to lament about the apathy of northerners to the plight of the University that: "The North cannot continue to be permanent missionary territory for others to come and develop." The import was that northerners are important stake holders for the development of the UDS.

7.0 CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND ACCREDITATION

In spite of the express declaration in PNDCL 279 of the University's power to award degrees and diplomas, the University has had running battles with the Medical and Dental Council (MDC), the Ghana Medical Association (GMA) and the National Accreditation Board since 1993. As I write, no Faculty in UDS has received Final Accreditation for all her programmes. The School of Medicine and Health Sciences has been denied interim accreditation for her clinical programmes. The Benneh Report (2000), Wereko-Brobby Report (1999) and the Addy (2000) Interim Accreditation Report on the School of Medicine and Health Sciences amply testify to curricula problems of the UDS.

7.1 The School of Medicine and Health Sciences Curricula

The Ghana Medical Association submitted the Wereko-Brobby Report (1999), which assessed infrastructure, lecturers, curricula, equipment and laboratories to determine whether there were adequate resources to continue a full-blown medical programme in collaboration with the Tamale Regional Hospital. Inside the Medical School at Tamale, there were deep cracks as to what constituted student-centred, problem-based, integrated approach and community-oriented learning philosophy. The different approaches by the young lecturers without previous teaching experience at any medical school confused the anxious students. There were also divisions among faculty over whether the training of medical students was along the lines of the Benneh Report (1991) or Kofinti Report (1996). The basic difference in the two approaches is that while the former suggests a four-year basic sciences programme prior to a clinical phase, the latter stresses a parallel programme of the basic sciences and clinical training. The Wereko-Brobby Committee expressed its dismay at the use of a proposed curriculum when it had not been vetted and approved by the Academic Board of UDS and whose content was not even known by most members of the School Board (Wereko-Brobby, 1999). Full-time and part-time lecturers taught their courses according to their personal convictions on student-centred and problem-based learning. The Mensah Committee (1999) of UDS recommended that the use of the Benneh Report by SMHS in order to receive accreditation from the Ghana Medical and Dental Council.

In addition to the differences over curriculum content in the School (SMHS), factions took entrenched positions over the Dean's unilateral change of the criteria for medi-

cal school admissions from 70% for academic work and 30% for interviews to 30% for academic work and 70% for interviews. The decision allegedly resulted in many northern students with very good SSS grades not coming through while many southern students managed to come through because of the heavy weighting on interviews. The Academic Board deliberated on this and eventually directed that all candidates who lost out on account of the unapproved interview criteria should be admitted alongside the favoured ones and that interviews for admission to the Medical School should be abolished subsequently.

The long and short of the curriculum politics is that the SMHS of UDS has come to take the orthodox form of training medical students. The GMA and GMDC did not bless the proposals presented to them as capable of training good doctors. This largely confirmed the conservative nature of universities and professional bodies as Driver (1971) saw it. Driver observed, "Reform a University! You may reform a cheese; there is a certain flavour about a university as there is about a cheese springing from its antiquity, which may be easily lost by mishandling" (p. 2). The result of these conflicts is that almost ten years after the establishment of the medical school, students are still transferred to the older medical schools for clinical programmes.

Before the second Dean of the SMHS could retire and leave, he was driven by mounting frustrations to write to the then Vice-Chancellor, Professor Bening, reminding him that he belonged to a powerful group of "Mystics and Media" which had capability "to belong to a suicide squadron to perform a needed task." He concluded with this philosophical piece that: "Popular history is written by mushrooms. They are primitive, succulent and easily digestible. True history is written by oak trees. They are hard and indigestible, but aged and wise" (Kotei, 1999). In spite of the threat, the Vice-Chancellor slapped him with only a one-year non-renewable contract without the option of deanship. This ended the tenure of Prof. Amon Kotei. Before the exit of Dean Kotei, students who were unhappy with vacillations in the SMHS curriculum "sanded" the Vice-Dean in the absence of ponds. Perhaps it is worthy to note that in spite of several promises to the UDS, the Tamale Hospital too has not been upgraded to the status of a Teaching Hospital.

7.2 Other Faculty Programmes

The Faculties of Integrated Development Studies, Applied Sciences and Agriculture received favourable assessments from the National Accreditation Board. The Community Nutrition Programme of the SMHS was also assessed favourably. These programmes have been running smoothly and producing graduates who are holding their own in the world of work.

In spite of the stresses in pioneering work of the UDS, the plight of lecturers and managers is unmistakably not good. Too many deprivations assail them in almost every facet of their lives; from water to chalk to living accommodation and office space. I salute all the gallant workers who have made many substantial sacrifices to

ensure the survival of the University, which sometimes threatens to disintegrate from internal and external manipulations. When Yebo-Okrah (1997:5) said "Virtuous living demands a modicum of material comfort", he was speaking for the many silent, suffering workers in universities who are helping to mould future leaders. There is the need for Government to look critically at the conditions of service of the universities, if Ghana is to continue to produce quality graduates for a global world and economy. The role of universities has been explained several times but perhaps needs another repetition. Osei (2000:1) cites the CVCP that:

Universities are involved in the training of the mind; body and soul of a country's most valuable asset, the human resources, and their products cannot be easily quantified in terms of money or profit or loss. In determining their salaries and conditions of service, therefore, great care has to be exercised so as not to create a sense of frustration, rejection and lack of regard by the society in general for a university career.

The above summary of the nature and role of universities in national development partly explains why universities in Ghana initially refused to be classified under the Ghana Universal Salary Structure (GUSS), since a structure indexed to public salary relativities would not be competitive enough to attract renowned foreign scholars. The CVCP lost out; but all Ghanaians would soon realize the folly of the refusal to treat universities as international in character.

8.0 SUCCESSION PLANNING

It has been said that the UDS is the most deprived University in Africa south of the Sahara. If this is not intended as a joke, then what it lacks in aesthetics on the ground is more than compensated for by the production of competitive graduates in sloppy surroundings. It appears the enormity of the challenges in UDS always overwhelms the leaders who take up tenure with the University. The complex problems are further exacerbated by the peculiar difficulties of the novel multi-campus system.

In its 12-year lifespan as at July 2005, UDS has had three Vice-Chancellors, three Registrars and four Finance Officers. The University of Ghana, which has existed since 1948, has had only seven (7) Vice-Chancellors and six Registrars. Those who leave their seats at UDS do not seem to look back with favour on the survivors. The exception to this may be the founding Registrar of the University. This sorry state seems to suggest that the human resource attrition rate is very high. Why is it so difficult for top management in this University to be at peace and retire happily? Has it got to do with the environment, the external stakeholders, internal politics or the politics of managing such a novelty? It is, however, desirable that friends of this University help top managers to remain with the University and deal with its challenges so that younger people under them can be mentored to maturity, more effectively. .

The agony of the endless search for a dean for the UDS Medical School is far from over as a microbiologist has acted as Dean since 1999. There is also the need for a

human-centred leadership that is capable of dealing with the least preferred worker in circumstances where deprivations and prejudices continually breed discontent. There has been a case when a Vice Chancellor of the University was asked to proceed on leave not upon proven impropriety but for the mere possibility of misuse of office after being denied a second and last term. Convocation looked on in awe at the enormous powers of the then Chairman of Council.

9.0 CONCLUSION

This article has examined the PNDCL 279, which established the University for Development Studies, pointing out peculiar features in the Act intended to protect her from the vagaries of orthodoxy in academia. I have also looked at its mandate and vision to become a home of world class pro-poor scholarship. This educational philosophy, which informed the establishment of the University, and the various angings and manifestations of regional interests in the permanent location of faculties and campuses are also discussed. Poor funding and a history of unfulfilled career expectations at the top management positions have also been discussed as some of the challenges preventing a common direction to transform the catchment area into a land of promise and prosperous peasants as envisaged by the founders. I conclude that northern politicians, friends of the North and all the UDS stakeholders have to consult and collaborate more transparently and objectively to ensure that this God-sent opportunity does not falter and collapse in their lifetime.

The North can mobilize ample financial resources and goodwill from within to harness the potential for each of the regional campuses growing into full-fledged universities in the future. In an area so infested with poverty, our quest for attitudinal and behavioral changes as a University will come to nothing unless we can establish our relevance to meet the food requirements of most northerners. George Benard Shaw is cited in Irish et. al. (1981:101) to have said: "Man (sic) does not philosophise on an empty stomach. Poor people worry about basic needs such as food, clothing and shelter; about not being able to pay for a visit to a doctor, about their children being bitten by rats. These concerns are quite different from those of the wealthy matron who has to worry about overeating, avoiding high taxes and getting her children to the best schools." This was true of poor of Britain at the time but it is equally true for social progress today in the North of Ghana. At UDS, leaders who push too hard for institutional performance without any concern for the overall well-being of the people operating under sloppy conditions meet their "waterloo" sooner than they had hoped. The university, like any organization when built on personalities instead of teams, is bound to be run down with time and in no time.

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