

Organising for the Future



UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, Visitation Panel, Organising for the Future

Remarks of the Chairman, Sir John Daniel, at the Opening Ceremony, 30 April 2007

Transcript

Chairman of the University Council, Vice-Chancellor, Your Eminence, Members of the Academic Community, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

It is my privilege to respond, on behalf of my fellow members of the Visitation Panel, to the Chairman's kind welcome and the Vice-Chancellor's generous introduction.

We, the members of the Visitation Panel, are both deeply honoured by the invitation to undertake this important task and acutely conscious of the heavy responsibility that we bear. In recent years Ghana's premier university has been rocked by failures of organisation which, by undermining the credibility of its examinations, have sapped the institution's reputation.

The Panel's immediate task is to help the University of Ghana restore its academic integrity and regain its traditional credibility. But if that were all the Vice-Chancellor would not have brought together such a diverse and distinguished group of people. I have the privilege of leading an enormously eminent team. Our Vice-Chairman is your distinguished former Vice-Chancellor, Professor Aki Sawyerr, who is currently Secretary-General of the Association of African Universities. The Panel includes well-known Ghanaians and academics, experts and institutional leaders from five other countries: India, Jamaica, Nigeria, the United Kingdom and the USA who are serving in a personal capacity. UNESCO is assisting the process by assigning Ms Stamenka Uvaliæ-Trumbiæ of its Higher Education Division to the Panel and the Commonwealth of Learning is expressing its support through my own participation.

Our wider task is to help the University organise itself for the future. Although that future will present an ever-changing environment, the University's mission expresses aspirations that are valid for any future. According to the Strategic Plan the mission of the University of Ghana is to 'develop world-class human resources and capabilities to meet national development needs and global challenges through quality teaching, learning, research and knowledge dissemination'.

Flying down to Accra on Saturday I had the great privilege of sitting near to His Royal Highness the King of the Ashanti and when I told him about our panel he stressed the absolute importance of linking university programmes to the goals of national development.

The Panel is here to review your academic operations, your business processes, your administrative systems and your relations with stakeholders in order to recommend refinements, improvements and changes that will, if implemented, allow the University to face the future with confidence.

The Panel will spend this week in and around Legion and hopes to hear from a broad cross-section of the university community about the challenges you face and the opportunities you have to turn weaknesses into strengths. We shall then return for another week in late August to pull everything together and prepare our final report and recommendations.

I expect that the main output of our work in this first week will be a series of short statements about each of the main challenges that we will have identified in discussion with you, leading to some key questions that we shall ask you - by which I mean both the University as a whole and some of its units - to try and answer before we return in August.

Visits by panels like ours are becoming an increasingly frequent phenomenon in universities around the world. Most panels are sent out by national bodies, such as India's National Assessment and Accreditation Council, which sends teams to report on the quality of each of the thousands of colleges and universities in that country. Our panel is different because it has been established not by an external body but by the University itself. That gives us the opportunity to focus only on the University of Ghana but also the challenge of developing our own methodology.

Visitation Panels around the world have found that one of the most important elements of their methodology is to commission reports from within the university itself. Hence our intention to turn some of the questions back to you to work on in the coming months. Solutions that you develop yourselves are more likely to be owned and implemented than those imposed from outside.

I end by thanking you again for your welcome and saying how much the members of the panel are looking forward to the discourse with the University community that begins today.

Sir John Daniel
2007-04-30