



GHANA ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATORS

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The President, UTAG, KNUST
The President, SSA-UoG, KNUST
The President, TEWU-TUC, KNUST
The President, TEWU-GH.

Dear ALL,

GAUA-KNUST's CONCERNS REGARDING THE ONGOING STATUTE REVIEW IN THE UNIVERSITY

The Ghana Association of University Administrators, KNUST (GAUA-KNUST) has expressed serious concern over aspects of the ongoing review of the University's Statutes, particularly the proposed inclusion of statute 79 on the Alumni Association, and changes relating to the appointment of Pro Vice-Chancellors (Pro VCs) and Deans. GAUA believes that the University's governance framework must strengthen, rather than weaken, the University's established governance architecture and that any proposals should promote merit, transparency, accountability and effective participation by members of the university community. The Association therefore calls for careful reconsideration of the proposed changes.

1. STATUTE 79 AND THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

GAUA calls for the proposed Statute 79 on the Alumni Association to be expunged from the Statutes. It is important to distinguish between the University's Alumni Community as a whole and the Alumni Association as a distinct organisation. While all alumni are stakeholders of the University, the Alumni Association has its own membership, constitution and governance structures and should not, therefore, be regarded as synonymous with, or representative of, the entire alumni community. This distinction is consistent with the freedom of association guaranteed under Article 21(1) of the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana.

The Association's position is based on the following key considerations:

(i) *The Alumni Association is an external stakeholder*

Like other external stakeholders, including professional and industry partners, the Alumni Association is not part of the University's internal management architecture. The Alumni Association operates independently of the University management. GAUA therefore questions

the appropriateness of creating a dedicated schedule within the University's Statutes for an organisation that is institutionally independent of the University's management structures.

(ii) *The Alumni Relations Office already provides the appropriate institutional link*

The existing Alumni Relations Office (ARO), under the Registrar, provides an established mechanism for coordinating relations and activities between the University and its alumni including the alumni association. The mandate of the office is well-captured in the University's Administrative Manual, which has been approved by the University Council. Statute 79 is creating and defining a new role for this same office and makes it an office for the Alumni Association, which will create conflict of roles and undermine the office of the Registrar. It must be mentioned that several alumni associations per best practices have their offices independent of their alma maters', and the same should be pursued by the KNUST Alumni Association. Merging ARO and the Alumni Association risks creating competing lines of authority and an avoidable conflict between the governance role of the ARO Board and the administrative authority of the Registrar.

(iii) *The proposed statute 79 could be used as an avenue for the University to spend on the Alumni Association*

Statute 79 proposes using the already existing Alumni Relations Office under the Registrar as the coordinating office, and by extension, the headquarters of the Alumni Association. If statute 79 is, therefore, allowed to remain in the statutes, the office could be used as an avenue for the University to finance the activities of the Alumni Association. This is against best practices where alumni associations rather source for funding, partnerships, and other benefits for their alma mater.

(vi) *GAUA's Position*

GAUA supports the statutory recognition of the Alumni Association as an important stakeholder and partner of the University but considers that Statute 79, in its present form, blurs the distinction between the Alumni Association and the Alumni Relations Office (ARO), which is a University administrative office. In particular, the proposed ARO Board, with authority to determine the strategic direction of and exercise oversight over the ARO, could create competing lines of authority and undermine clear administrative accountability.

GAUA, therefore, recommends that Statute 79 be replaced in its entirety, to expressly preserve the ARO's place within the University's administrative structure, remove the proposed ARO Board's managerial and oversight functions, and establish instead, an Alumni Relations Liaison Committee as an advisory and collaborative mechanism, while making clear that neither the Alumni Association nor the Committee shall exercise executive, managerial or supervisory authority over University offices or employees.

This approach will strengthen alumni–University collaboration while preserving the integrity, clarity and accountability of the University's established governance and management structures.

2. APPOINTMENT OF PRO-VICE CHANCELLORS

Over the years, the framers of the University's Statutes have created space for staff participation in the governance and decision-making processes of the University. Unfortunately, and sadly, the ongoing statute review exercise is taking away this time-tested, sacred, universally accepted and critical staff role that underpins any good governance system. The draft statutes proposes that Pro Vice-Chancellors must be appointed through search committees without the participation of staff through voting among the nominated candidates.

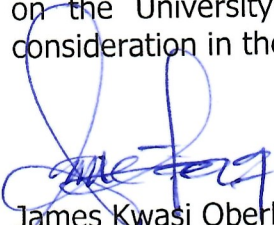
GAUA is advocating for a transparent and competitive process in the appointment of Pro Vice-Chancellors. The Association's considered view is that should we alter the time-honoured nominations of the candidates by the Vice-Chancellor for convocation to vote on, then internal announcement is made for qualified candidates in the University to apply, go through a transparent and fair screening process and three short-listed applicants presented to convocation to vote to elect one of them for appointment should more than three qualify Applicants apply. GAUA believes that either of these approaches would appropriately balance the strategic oversight role of Council and Management with the participation of staff in selecting individuals who will provide academic and institutional leadership for the University.

3. APPOINTMENT OF DEANS

GAUA, similarly, advocates for a competitive and collegial process for the appointment of Deans. The Association proposes open contest for persons who qualify to lead every faculty or school to file their nominations and be screened and voted over by the academic senior members of the relevant faculties or schools, depending on the mode of appointment as established by the existing statutes. In GAUA's view, those who work directly with academic leaders should have a meaningful role in their selection. Such participation would reinforce collegial governance, ensure accountability and promote confidence in the leadership of the faculties and schools.

4. GAUA'S COMMITMENT TO THE ONGOING PROCESS

GAUA is open to engagement on these matters with a view to securing a fair, lawful and administratively sound resolution. The Association remains committed to constructive dialogue, institutional stability and the advancement of the University's governance framework. The Association believes that the University's aspiration to move from excellence to eminence can best be achieved where all members of the University community have confidence in the fairness, transparency and accountability of its governance processes. GAUA, therefore, calls on the University Council and all relevant stakeholders to give these matters careful consideration in the interest of the University and its long-term institutional development.



James Kwasi Oberko
PRESIDENT



Phanuel Seli Kwadzo Asense
SECRETARY