

OFFICE OF THE VICE CHANCELLOR

INTERNAL MEMO

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TO: ALL STAFFS AND MEMBERS OF SENIOR MANAGEMENT



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SUBJECT: STRATEGIC NOTE NUMBER 2 FOR UGANDA TECHNOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT UNIVERSITY (UTAMU) IN THE NEXT PERIOD-(OCTOBER 2016-SEPTEMBER 2017)

1. INTRODUCTION

The role of university education in transforming economies and societies is no longer a matter of contestation. Universities are more than ever before now challenged to show their relevance and contribution to society. They do this through their core functions of teaching, research and community outreach.

The role played by universities has always been shaped by the continual socio-political and economic dynamics of society and countries (Clark, 1983).

As universities execute their mandates, the journey is not always a straight line. Universities (both public and private) face a myriad of challenges which affects the execution of their mandates. In Africa, the challenges facing universities include the leadership and Governance deficit, provision of expected quality education and services, poor research productivity and inadequate staffing. Relevance of the curriculum offered by universities to the job requirements remains questionable in the eyes of many stakeholders. Universities remain in acute financing deficits, and there remains lack of full administrative and academic establishments. Universities in Africa have difficulty of high levels of brain drain. Of all the above, Leadership and governance present the greatest challenge to most universities since it is the leadership and the governance actors that provide direction for addressing the other tactical and operational problems affecting the universities.

The OECD (2014) report recognizes the importance of human capacity in development, economic growth and social stability. That is why, the report suggests higher education policy now occupies an increasingly important place on national policy agendas of any government. The widespread recognition that higher education is a major driver of economic competitiveness in an increasingly knowledge-driven global economy has made the urge for high quality higher education more important than ever before in both industrialized and developing countries. The Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016-2025, (or CESA 16-25), is driven by a desire to achieve quality education and training that provides the continent with “efficient human resources adapted to African core values”.

Universities need to instill creativity, critical thinking and problem solving skills among the products as such now remain hallmarks of the key competences that various employers require. These skills add to a pool of other additional specific needs of employers and a range of knowledge in various disciplines. The Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (2024) stresses the importance of higher education as it is responsible for the bulk of scientific production. CESA 16-25 outlines 12 strategic objectives supported by specific areas of work. Uganda Technology and Management University has to align its strategies to this thinking alongside the Uganda’s Vision 2040 strategies for higher education. The strategies also align themselves with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The CESA 16-25 strategies include:

- Revitalise the teaching profession to ensure quality and relevance at all levels of education.

- Build, rehabilitate and support education infrastructure and develop policies that ensure a permanent stress-free and conducive learning environment for all, so as to expand access to quality education at all levels including informal and non-formal settings.
- Harness the capacity of ICT to improve access, quality and management of education and training systems.
- Ensure acquisition of requisite knowledge and skills as well as improved completion rates in all groups through harmonization processes across all levels for national and regional integration.
- Accelerate processes leading to gender parity and equity.
- Launch comprehensive and effective literacy programmes across the continent.
- Strengthen the science and maths curricula in youth training and disseminate scientific knowledge and culture in society.
- Expand technical and vocational opportunities at both secondary and tertiary levels and strengthen linkages between the world of work and education and training systems.
- Revitalise and expand tertiary education, research and innovation to address continental challenges and promote global competitiveness.
- Promote peace education and conflict prevention and resolution at all levels of education and for all age groups.
- Improve management of education systems and build capacity for data collection, management, analysis, communication and use.
- Create a coalition of stakeholders to facilitate and support activities resulting from the implementation of CESA 16-25.

The use of ICTs to improve education access, quality and management, including helping to formulate policies and train education managers, building the ICT capacities of teachers and learners, developing Africa-relevant online content and creating mobile and online education and training platforms is an important ingredient upon which UTAMU was built. UTAMU as a private university must simultaneously meet the expectations of different stakeholders while it also strives to attain its goals and more so its business objectives (1) Growth, (2) profitability and (3) being sustainable. The university needs to accomplish the objectives within the regulatory provision of the higher education in Uganda.

In light of the global, regional and Uganda specific context and developments, it is appropriate to have a common philosophy coined around key areas that need attention to drive UTAMU to its desired goals. A common strategic direction to guide all management and staff is thus necessary. It is in this context that this document '**strategic note number 2**' is being issued. This is the second strategic note issued by the Vice chancellor to guide the direction of the university in the period running October 2016 to September 2017. The first strategic note was issued on 6th October 2015 and has guided the university up

to September 2016. This second strategic note builds on the successes attained during the past year and also gives direction to addressing the challenges that have attempted to drive us away from the core mandate. All staff and senior management will need to internalize the document and undertake their duties according to targets. The targets are set in line with the five key pillars of the university strategic plan.

2. UNDERSTANDING THE INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

With a strong ambition and desire to address the challenges of our societies and economies as well as those specific challenges that afflict the higher education sector on the continent, and in Uganda in particular, it was on September 11th 2012, when eminent men and women, academics and practitioners, young and old, penned down the initial documents which incubated a new private university to offer relevant education, research and community emancipation UNDER the brand of Uganda Technology and Management University (UTAMU). The university was started to make a difference in the provision of higher education services. Through the hard work and diligent core values upon which the university was started, on 11th March 2013, UTAMU was formally accredited by the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) under License Number UIPLO22 to operate as a private university in Uganda.

UTAMU has surely now moved from its infancy, and as of September 2016, the university had reached maturity level having graduated over 190 students. The university now has a total student population of 1,200 hence it is now in a high drive to attain true adulthood position. The university runs four schools, and three directorates including the UTAMU graduate school, School of Business and Management, School of Computing and Engineering as well as the School of Professional and Vocational Education, Directorate of Academic affairs, Directorate of ICT and Library services, as well as the Directorate of Finance and Administration. The work of the former Directorate of Engagement, Research and innovation is now handled by the Vice Chancellor.

The university now boasts of a total of 42 academic programmes at undergraduate and postgraduate level, and all these are fully accredited by NCHE. The programs were specifically designed to produce university graduates with appropriate theoretical and practical skills, competences and behavioral attitudes demanded by the 21st century. From almost a staff number of less than 10 in 2012, the university now employs more than 100

well experienced academic and administrative staffs (both full time and part-time).

The academic staffs of UTAMU continue to shape the policy agenda of government and other sectors in their various fields of specialty through the university's community engagement approach. The university is the first university in the country to fully integrate the use of blended learning technologies in higher education. The highly experienced members of the governance infrastructure of the university and management remains a strong force that has steered and continues to steer the university to the desired goals. Decision making at governance and management levels is robust and consultative. The reliance on merit-based selection processes with a strong signal on versatility and sharp decision making whether in administrative or academic aspects has set a true path for the university's transformation agenda. The university has all the basic administrative structures and systems to be run as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Of particular niche has been the use of blended learning techniques and the unique block release mode of delivery especially for postgraduate programs which have demonstrated to our student clientele the flexibility and wide range of menu the university offers. Through the e-learning platform and e-learning facilities, UTAMU is now a university of choice for highly busy and experienced manager desirous of attaining higher academic qualifications. The e-learning system is supplemented by a strong e-library whose resources are updated on a daily basis by the specifically recruited staffs to undertake this task. The use of industry –based practitioners in teaching combined with thorough and highly experienced academics has set a clear tone for the university's teaching, and research agenda. The efficient and effective academic processes, the fast decision making practices and the culture of transparency has set a clear message on our long journey of transformation. The expansion of the research and consultancy advisory services by the university has also increased the profile of the university.

Despite the impressive developments since inception, the university finds itself operating in what is best described as a chaotic local, regional, continental and global environments which generate numerous forces that should continuously shape or direction. Competition with other providers of similar services is real and at its highest. The demands and expectations of the various stakeholders is on the increase and the university will continue to attract scrutiny from all corners and contexts. The governance challenges that have at times affected the expected progression need mention here. The failure by some actors to appreciate the reality of change and transition have some negative effects on the direction of the university. The needs of our various student categories keep changing and this demands us to have seamless processes and a high

degree of robustness coupled with a dedicated team of staffs willing to work beyond the call of duty.

Like other higher education institutions, UTAMU grapples with resource constraints, and the blending of public sector work mentality that some of the actors tend to display as opposed to the private sector styles of management which demand greater flexibility, innovation, efficiency and effectiveness across all administrative and academic processes of the university. Not only is the university faced with an increasingly regulated environment but stakeholders demand more than ever before. The owners need their returns on investment. Students have greater expectations and demand feedback almost instantly in all academic processes-admission, registration, class attendance, examinations, release of results, graduation and how their complaints are managed. The parents and guardians have their own expectations on the university especially in as far as shaping the character and behavior of their children is concerned.

The administrative and academic staffs of the university have their own demands but which must be met alongside those of the university. Management does have their own expectations. The game changer in all these dynamics depends in a large measure on how those in management and leadership positions meticulously execute their tasks and provide appropriate direction. Some of the tasks will undoubtedly require staffs and senior management teams to go beyond the call of duty as the values of UTAMU demand us. Promoting our resolve on the culture of efficiency and effectiveness while building the structures of the University will be central to our direction.

UTAMU needs to be run along the best governance practices. The governance practices sets guidelines on the structures, the processes and roles of different organs upon which management systems, processes and regulations are to be anchored. The new strategic plan of UTAMU has outlined key strategic objectives that need to be attained over the planned period. There are strategic actions under each of the strategic goals. Leadership which entails providing guidance to the full implementation of the strategic goals and actions is paramount.

As a private University our focus should be on three interrelated areas. **First**, our systems, processes and services should enable us grow the student numbers and the other business areas that can ensure adequate financial resources to meet the demands of various stakeholders. **Second**, our services in totality should be offered in a manner that enables us to attain dividends for the shareholders of the university and meets or exceeds the client's interest.

Third, we need to lay strategies that will ensure the university becomes sustainable financially, organizationally and administratively.

Attaining the core business virtues will be possible through offering -our academic services, research and engagement activities with distinction. There should be a difference in how we execute our activities and services. While some of the forecasts are in the long term, this strategic note is intended to provide focus on what we need to do in our core areas within the coming one year. After the period, we shall evaluate how far we have gone in attaining our targets before setting targets for the subsequent periods. Heads of sections, departments and directorates need to re-align their activities to the strategic actions. Those in leadership positions at various levels should ensure all activities and services offered address the areas as they are crafted from the university strategic plan. Below are the core areas where our attention should be focused as we undertake the various roles and duties bestowed upon each of the staffs.

3. KEY STRATEGIC ACTIONS (October 2016-SEPTEMBER 2017)

Strategic objective 1: To provide interdisciplinary teaching and promote industry-oriented education in management, technology, science, administration and governance through blended learning approaches

Strategic actions (Deans, Directors and academic staff will be core in this area)

- i. Fully integrate the use of e-learning within the educational process for teaching, learning, information access, collaboration, and communication. This will require the directorate of ICT and library services to ensure the e-learning system is fully functional and updated regularly.
- ii. Establish an e-learning platform with online educational provision in mind. The university is increasingly poised to attracting many foreign distance students and their needs must be met. This will entail the development of various learning materials including animation ready materials.
- iii. Subscribe to a variety of online libraries to allow easy information access for the students and staffs. The Directorate of ICT and library and all heads of academic units will be required to ensure current and up-to date resources are identified and sourced.
- iv. Adopt the problem based and student centered learning methodology during teaching and learning. The academic staff will take a central lead. There should be a direct connect between theory and practice. A variety of pedagogical approaches that encourage critical thinking and

- application will need to be encouraged. Visit to organizations to learn the challenges/problems that need solutions need to be emphasized to ensure our graduates directly relate to the world of work.
- v. Provision of teaching, research that blends different disciplines. The interdisciplinary focus will need to be emphasized as problems and solutions of the world today often go beyond one discipline
 - vi. Engage students to take ownership of the learning processes. Students shall need to be taken as active participants in their learning. The use of practical case studies where applicable should be promoted.
 - vii. Maintain easy and effective staff presence virtually through the e-learning system and physically through staff offices. The academic staff must remain in touch with the students. The e-learning officer will provide regular reports on the level of contact between academic staff and students through prescribed online activities.
 - viii. Create synergies with colleagues, organizations and universities to receive onsite trainings plus establishing regional centers for face to face teaching and learning.

Strategic Objective 2: Improve the quality of research capacity and deliver practical and credible consulting and advisory services within the university's areas of specialisation to government and other key stakeholders

Strategic actions

- i. Ensuring effective supervision and timely completion of graduate students will be a key focus area for the respective academic schools.
- ii. All academic staff required to develop joint journal articles with students on dissertations supervised. Schools required to have a clear research agenda, innovation agenda and appropriate intellectual property policies
- iii. Foster linkages with industry for students and staff attachments for purposes of increasing application of what is taught in class and generating examples from industry on teaching with intention to address real world problems
- iv. Establish annual and regular conferences, seminars and topical discussion series
- v. Mobilization of research and innovation funds through research and innovation proposal writing
- vi. Undertake regular research and innovation training of staff and students
- vii. Permit collaborative partnerships from both private and public sectors both locally and internationally in areas critical to the core business of the university.
- viii. Provide incubation services to both students and staff to nurture their ideas into reality

- ix. Actively participate in government research forums, exhibitions and create visibility for UTAMU research outputs
- x. Engage the public and private sector research undertakings
- xi. Participate in jointly organized forums for research, business and innovation engagements
- xii. Improve the quality of the International Journal of Technology and Management through affiliating it to respected data bases
- xiii. Encourage publication of special journal issues in partnership with editors of other journals where UTAMU faculty has a core competence

Strategic objective 3: Attract, develop and retain the highest quality and motivated academic and administrative staff

Strategic actions

- i. Offer attractive remuneration packages for both administrative and academic staff
- ii. Develop systems and practices that lead to job satisfaction among all categories of staff
- iii. Establish mechanisms to nurture and manage talents
- iv. Promote and institutionalize UTAMU values and cultures among all staffs
- v. Implement the UTAMU human resource manual and develop a capacity building plan for administrative and academic staff
- vi. Solicit and utilize eminent scholars and experts for knowledge transfer through using them as guest lecturers, adjunct faculty, external examiners and reviewers of proposals, journal articles and reports
- vii. Strengthen efforts for academic staff to undertake skills enhancement in pedagogy especially as related to online teaching methodologies and assessments
- viii. Provide an excellent environment for knowledge transfer and acquisition by both staff and students
- ix. Offer Scholarships and tuition waivers for staff and selected students who want to enroll on the different academic programmes within UTAMU. The selected students will be a pool for future recruitment of academic and administrative staff of UTAMU
- x. Increase the level of staff performance monitoring system and performance target setting

Strategic objective 4: Enhance the university’s competitiveness and sustainability

Strategic actions

- i. Increase the student enrollment improve the quality of services offered to those already recruited

- ii. Ensure timely completion of students on all programmes
- iii. Develop strategic partnerships to promote the UTAMU's research and consultancy services
- iv. Strengthen value for money systems and structures that ensure economy, efficiency and effectiveness
- v. Develop and operationalize an alumni strategy and develop and implement effective fund raising strategies
- vi. Establish funds annually for infrastructure development guided by the pedagogical requirements
- vii. Encourage investments in the acquisition of land to enable the university construct its own campus within the next three years
- viii. Seek to offer different services and programs through diversification
- ix. Participate in joint award certifications and mentorship programs

Strategic objective 5: Enhance the capacity of support functions to facilitate effective and efficient delivery of UTAMU services

Strategic actions

- i. Build a comprehensive and integrated ICT infrastructure for all UTAMU processes and services
- ii. Construct a state of the art campus for the university
- iii. Develop and implement a marketing , public relations and communications strategy
- iv. Establish & implement quality assurance system for all UTAMU administrative and academic services
- v. Review UTAMU's structures and systems from time to time to reflect the changing dynamics
- vi. Ensure the university makes regular annual contributions to the shareholders as part of the return on investment
- vii. Develop a comprehensive M&E framework for all university activities.

4. IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK AND KEY ADMINISTRATIVE PRINCIPLES

For the university to fully implement the above activities within the next planning period, an appropriate implementation mode is necessary. The top-down approach and bottom-up approach will both be used concurrently. The bottom-up approach will entail supervisees consulting their supervisors where some activities need clarification while the top-down approach will require supervisors to indeed supervise people they supervise. The supervisors will set targets for their subordinates and will ensure every staffs below them is fully aware of their targets. While the principle of delegation will be encouraged where necessary, the supervisor will take primary responsibility for ensuring the targets are accomplished timely and with the high quality standards.

The second element of the implementation modality will involve a clear reporting regime. The person responsible for a task will be required to submit progress reports to the supervisor and the supervisor will compile a detailed report which shall be submitted to management for discussion and to guide decision making. It is from these comprehensive reports that management will equally develop their reports to council and other governance organs as well as the shareholders of the university. Management will ensure council gets regular detailed reports on what is going on in the university and a copy of the reports will be submitted to other organs and stakeholders where necessary.

The third element will be enforcement of sanctions to those who transgress against agreed upon positions and values of UTAMU. Every staffs who is required to do a task or delegated to do a task by the supervisor will be expected to observe timelines and quality without any excuse. The staff should demonstrate the highest competence in executing any task assigned. Where a staff does not deliver without legitimate reasons the supervisor will without fear or favor be expected to enforce the established sanctions as per the human resource manual or any other policy.

Finally, to attain the set targets the university will be guided by key administrative principles among which include:-

1. **Specialization of tasks**-Each staff shall be expected to focus his or her attention on work for which he or she was employed and where he or she is presumed to have a competitive advantage. The staff will be expected to master all skills and competencies needed

to execute tasks demanded of his or her job. This principle however will work alongside the practice of multi-tasking as the university endeavors to be cost-effective in delivery of its services. A staff teaching strategic management for example maybe called upon to assist in the development or review of the university's strategic plan. .

2. **Respect for hierarchy and established rules**-Our success will depend on how each staff respects those above him or her. Likewise, the supervisors should have respect for their subordinates. There is a clear hierarchy in the various units and organs of the university. Communication channels will follow the reporting system. All official communications should be channeled through supervisors and where supervisors are not available, a copy of the communication shall be given to the concerned person.
3. **Autonomy and effective decision making at all levels**-Each unit and organ of the university shall be empowered to make their own decisions as long as those decisions are not intended to affect negatively the philosophy, goals and mission of the university.
4. **Client Respect and Responsiveness across all levels**-All staff will be expected to maintain a high degree of respect for both internal and external clients. Students, parents, guardians, partners etc will all be given the services that reflect the image of the university. This applies to email communication, telephone discussions and physical presence. Every client should leave every office with a smile! Asking clients to return 'tomorrow' even when the officer can attend to them will be discouraged. Every staff will respect and serve a fellow staffs with a high degree of care.
5. **Student Governance**-Students have their own governance structure and all communication to them shall follow the established processes. The students should always be involved in key decisions to avoid a gap between management and students. Each class will be expected to have a class leader and these should be empowered to report any issues that affect their learning to responsible officers. The guild government will also have regular interactions with the university management.
6. **Teamwork and collegiality** -Teamwork across all levels will be a key principle in ensuring our success. When a staff is undertaking a task which is needed urgently, it shall be a duty of the other staffs to help out in ensuring the task is completed as quickly as possible. Special activities like graduation ceremonies, conference events etc will be handled through joint teams

7. **Respect for UTAMU values**-Every staffs shall respect the UTAMU values and we shall transact our business using business-like styles and techniques to avoid a culture of public sector mentality. However, some good practices of public sector will be applied in our quest to offer distinctive service.
8. **Efficiency and effectiveness**-These will be ensured in all academic and administrative processes of the university. Financial prudence, openness and accountability will be key parameters for ensuring efficiency
9. **Records**-All official matters will be communicated in writing and the university will ensure there is a system of records management for all records of the university. Academic and administrative records will be secured in the best effective ways possible (both soft and hard copies)

5. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Each of the tasks will be carefully monitored and evaluated on progress of set targets. Management reports will be a key tool for measuring the progress and the reporting will always cover activity, persons in charge, progress, variance, reasons for variation if any, proposals on how the issues can be addressed and lessons/best practices.