

MANAGING GHANA'S PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN A NEW AGE

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Presentation Outline

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Introduction: Importance of Governing and Managing Universities

- Governance is at the heart of managing universities.
- Governing refers to the legal, policy and institutional frameworks for decision-making among multiple and complex actors in universities. It means less about what universities do and more about how they do it.
- Managing refers to the organization and coordination of the daily activities to attain those goals efficiently.
- **Importance of governance:** The “greatest challenge and threat to universities arise from the manner in which they are governed, both from within and from without” (James J. Duderstadt, 2002).

Findings

- **Two broad categories of university governance:** external governance and internal governance
- **External governance** connotes “relations between universities and their supervisors” (Executive, Parliament, GTEC, Auditor General)
- It involves a state supervising model in which the state steers universities at a distance through their councils and employs indirect steering instruments such as funding allocations, evaluation, and programme accreditation to shape their mandates
- **Internal governance** refers to lines of authority within the HEIs. They are the Chancellor and Council. Management plays a key role in governance without which governance would not be effective

Governance and Management Architecture

1. External Governance Architecture

- Parliament (Parliamentary Select Committee on Education and Public Accounts Committee)
- Ministry of Education
- Ghana Tertiary Education Commission (GTEC)
- Auditor General
- Vice Chancellors Ghana (VCG)

2. Internal Governance Architecture

- Chancellor
- University Council

Governance and Management Architecture (cont'd)

- **Management Structure**

- Vice Chancellor
- Pro-Vice Chancellors, Provosts, Deans, Directors, and Heads of Department
- Registrar and Registry
- Convocation
- Boards (such as the Academic Board; College/School/Faculty Board, Advisory Board)
- Standing Committees (such as the Business and Executive Committee (BEC), Finance; Disciplinary)
- Ad hoc Committees (search committee; investigation)

Findings (cont'd)

- Major reforms in legal, policy and institutional frameworks.
- Merger of NCTE and NAB under the Education Regulatory Bodies Act, 2020 (Act 1023) to form the GTEC in August 2020.
- Expansion of neo-liberal HEIs for access: 16 public and 10 technical HEIs, 5 specialized ones and about 110 private tertiary institutions (TIs) created by Companies Act, 2019 (Act 992).
- Tensions between either external and internal governance structures or governance and management structures
- Tensions the result of the complexity of the governance and management architecture and actors with different interests.

Findings (cont'd)

- Issues of governance and management have serious implications for mandates of universities. They have either influenced or have been influenced by uncertainties: declining funding, relevance, increasing competition, globalization and government interference.
- Mandates of universities have followed the trajectory of others in Africa: initial colonial project to national HEIs to the post-1990 neo-liberal (New Public Management (NPM) and SAPs) - entrepreneurial/enterprise institutions and becoming research intensive.
- Some counterproductive legal and policy initiatives: Examples: the dissolution of Councils under the Statutory Boards and Corporations in Section 14(1) of Presidential (Transition) Act 2012, Act 845 in a transition period and approval of fees by Parliament under the Fees and Charges (Miscellaneous Provisions), 2022, Act 1080.

Findings (cont'd)

- The legal, policy, and institutional frameworks are in themselves evidence of the capacity to initiate reforms and manage crisis – crisis-reform nexus.
- NPM reform strategies (decentralization, IGFs, teaching and learning, a shift in vision, digitalization, PPPs, quality assurance and crisis management) were implemented with varying degrees of emphasis, success, and challenges. They reinforce the issues of relevance, access, equity, and “publicness”
- The realization of the mandates of universities should be seen as work in progress given the evolving nature of relevance, demands, competition, globalization, and funding.

Findings (cont'd)

- Weak monitoring of institutions by GTEC resulting in inadequate quality assurance (programme accreditation), use of titles, etc.
- No harmonized criteria for performance management, promotion and infrastructure showing incomplete NPM implementation
- Militancy of student and staff unions has become more rampant, a situation that calls for more interaction between the governance and management structures on one hand and the unions on the other
- Absence of national research fund and rating of researchers
- Inadequate funding
- Employers' demand for vocationalization of university education

Recommendations

1. Reconsider the Legal and Policy Framework

- Exclude University Councils (UCs) from the list of “Statutory Boards and Corporations” in the Presidential (Transition) Act 2012, Act 845.
- Amend the Fees and Charges (Miscellaneous Provisions, 2022 (Act 1080) to give the universities a free hand to charge fees to finance their operations despite being public institutions.
- Limit directives that will not frustrate but facilitate the mandates and operations of universities.
- Revisit mandates of universities considering three important relationships that they must navigate and negotiate: (i) political distance from the state; (ii) culturally close to society; and (iii) intellectually linked to wider scholarly and scientific values of the world of learning.

Recommendations (Cont'd)

2. Revisit the Institutional Framework

- Address the interference of government in the appointment of some Vice Chancellors to reduce delay and uncertainty.
- Governance and management structures should interact more with the unions to reduce disruptions in the campuses. Unions make realistic demands
- Deepen shared governance: the allocation of accountability to the council, academic matters to the academic board and faculty, and managing the institutions to the administration.
- Transformative leadership is still needed. Leadership is embedded in the governance and management structures.

Recommendations (Cont'd)

3. Deepen Reform Strategies and Consider New Ones

- Review NPM strategies through reform and engagement with actors.
- Governance and management structures must undertake self-introspection and see what things to do differently
- Managing universities entails dealing with the dilemma between universities being public institutions and being entrepreneurial
- Consider emerging models. New Public Service is asking governments to reconsider the universities as proper public institutions to promote the public interest
- Continued reforms in universities and their linkage to performance based on research production, graduation rates, publication of theses, etc.

Conclusion

- Governing and managing universities have always been complex because of the multiple stakeholders with differing interests. Success depends on all actors.
- The post-1990 NPM reforms have brought both gains and deficits to public universities. Whether they have either succeeded or failed in curing the ills for which they were designed is debatable.
- Universities in a new age will have reposition themselves through their governance and management structures to navigate and negotiate the evolving contextual complexities. A window of opportunity is the use of new technologies, curricula transformation, becoming research intensive, collaboration and funding innovations.

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