

## **DGRT Calls for Institutionalisation of the CHUSS -CERTL Staff Induction and Retooling Initiative at Makerere**

The Director Centre of Excellence in Research, Teaching and Learning (CERTL) and the Management of the College Humanities and Social Sciences (CHUSS) have been asked to engage top Management to institutionalise the initiative of inducting and retooling staff in aspects of Research, Teaching, Learning and research.

The call was made during the opening session of the CHUSS CERTL Colloquium (18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> May 2023) held at Hilton Garden Hotel in Kamwokya – a Kampala suburb by the Deputy Director in charge of Administration and Graduate Training Associate Prof. Julius Kikooma.

### **Excellent performance does not translate into good workers/teachers**

Makerere University come on the strength that they performed well in their studies with very good qualifications.

"But those qualifications do not translate into being good workers because the activities they are doing like teaching and research, are aspects that they need to be trained in. Their qualifications and preparations did not train them." Prof. Kikooma explained adding:

"So it is always a problem because the university does not have a system where there is a period gazetted for induction where you are inducted into the different aspects of your work.

Until this innovation of the Centre CERTL came up, there was no systematic programme the university had in terms of attending to those needs of a new hired person. So we think that this is very important," the professor added.

Prof. Kikooma appreciated the Director CERTL and CHUSS management for the innovative project saying, it has contributed to the improvement of research, teaching and learning at Makerere University.

"It was also good that CHUSS saw the bigger problem for the university and was not selfish not to focus on the new hires in the college but was generous enough to spread it to the rest of the university for any academic staff who is recruited," He appreciated.

### **CERTL should transit from donor-project-funded to a university program for sustainability**

Speaking on the evolution of the CERTL, Prof. Kikooma reported that the centre came up as a donor - funded project that it has a time period and not an open ended project.

"CERTL was designed as a project with funds for about three years. And what will happen after three years with all these programmes the centre has come up with? So we need as a university to enter into a conversation of how to transit from a project -funded programme to a project that is run by resources that the university gets like any other programme for sustainability", Kikooma noted.

He proposed that the CERTL activities should be part of the university budget to reduce reliance on project funds to run the aspects of teaching and learning in the university for sustainability.

### **Privatisation and perception affected the quality of higher education, CERTL Director**

THE Director CERTL Prof. Andrew Elias State expressed the need for staff to take note and confront the current tendencies that have affected the quality of teaching and learning and how they can be more relevant by asking themselves hard questions, refreshing and upgrading their teaching methods.

In higher education institutions of learning and Makerere inclusive, Prof state said, there is a tendency of perceiving students to be on the receiving end. The university receives students from high school, those who finished certificates, diplomas and bachelor and others on mature scheme above 25 years.

“In terms of teaching and learning, when you report to the university, if you are a teacher and you are using the high school model, you are in a wrong place. The university is a set of knowledge where we interface with brains that bubble because students are eager to learn, transiting from primary, to high school where they undertake a national exam, but unfortunately we don't have a national exam.

So our teaching and learning kind of switches. When students Reach University, some of them get lost, some get very interested and that's when the lecturer becomes very relevant and thus the need for CERTL centre”, Prof. State said.

Prof. State decried the nature of students universities are receiving that are quiet different unlike when most lecturers were entering the university in terms of being inquisitive, wanting to explore and visiting the library because they can find everything else on their phones.

“So the tendency has been that the university receives students who are processed but unfortunately not processed in the format the university wants to receive them and start on research.

The second tendency that has bedevilled higher education is the higher education reform and privatisation that changed the nature of classes and people entering university education.”

State explained that when Makerere opened up to allow more Ugandans and other nationals to access higher education, the nature and number of the students received and the nature of the university that has become were affected.

“The classes have become congested, instructors became overwhelmed, tutorials disappeared.. We have been increasing the number of students admitted but at the same time putting a cap on staff recruitment process because the budget does not allow and while professors are retiring, they are not being replaced”, State stated.

The recent tendency that has emerged that staff need to take care of according to Prof. State is the tendency of Artificial Intelligence (AI) coupled by the abundance of google apps that are

available-so much that, when students are asked to research, they just google and lately they just say it, and receive responses.

The AI tendency according Prof. State has not only affected students, but staff who also go to google, get notes and put on photocopiers, the same things that students access making no change in terms of teaching and learning.

### **The establishment of CERTL.**

CERTL according to Prof. State was conceived following Prof. Muhamood Mamdanis publication in 2006 titled , “Scholars in the market place” where CHUSS was one of the case studies,

The book looked at neoliberal policies on higher education and subsequent effects including the increased enrolments and declining quality which in 2009 -2010 resulted in national outcry over the quality of graduates from the university.

Although Internship emerged as one of the mitigating measure in 2000 , the need to improve the teaching and learning experiences and establishment of a centre for Research, Teaching and Learning was conceived and established following the needs assessment ,online surveys and benchmarking centres of excellence in teaching and learning overseas including Rhodes university, centre in cape new city , university of connect cut , university of Minnesota and university of Michigan.

Members of staff according to the CERTL Director reported that they had never had any training in terms of teaching and learning and were never exposed to some of the methodologies despite university efforts to involve the school of education which primarily focus on production of primary and secondary school teachers.

The proposal was granted by the Mellon Foundation and the centre focussed on teaching and learning, early career fellowship and research.. Since it was a centre, Prof. State said, it was decided that people should be having research funds but only on learning and teaching and developing innovative ways of teaching a discipline that others should be able to learn when Makerere takes over the centre.

The centre has held a number of workshops to help those duly recruited and evaluation have been good. The centre has helped Heads of Departments and Deans to be oriented on Human Resource and academic issues and lecturers who have been in the system on how to deal with students in terms of research and marks. The centre has experts in curriculum development and review, looks at peer evaluation of colleagues and guide on evaluations of the syllabus among others.

### **The CERTL Colloquium 2023**

CHUSS projects coordinator Dr. Edgar Nabutanyi said the colloquium was an intimate direct form of debate.

“We intend to have a more interactive, not just presenting research findings but having a debate on current issues with regard to teaching and learning”, Dr. Nabutanyi said.

15 CERTL fellows presented research they have been researching on mainly in teaching and learning.

In his opening remarks, the Deputy Principal CHUSS Assoc. Prof. Eric Awich described the colloquium as rich in terms of research, subject matter and issues.

“It should not be a monologue but a dialogue to allow us engage with research, findings and see how to improve our teaching and learning” Prof. Awich said.

As the university strives to become research-led, Prof. Awich reported that a special committee had been instituted by the Vice Chancellor to build evidence-based advocacy and to engage and lobby government to provide more resources to conduct cutting edge research to meet the university’s aspirations and the national development goals.

“With over 1000 senior academics holding PhDS, Makerere is expected to produce at least 300 PhDS per year from the current 100 PhDS”, Prof. Awich added.

He urged senior academics to play their roles in mentorship, strive to attract financial resources to the university and publish, as these, will be the basis for promotion among others.

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