

Makerere staff great, tuition fees worrying

By Vision Reporter

Makerere University continues to produce graduates in different fields. But many challenges still lie in its way of providing quality education.

The Vision Group survey indicated that a number of its alumni were satisfied by the way the university handled personal development programmes, teaching staff and learning resources. However, the former students said they felt the university had not handled issues of student welfare, premises, discipline, studying arrangements and tuition to their satisfaction.

Conducted from February 25 to February 29 the study sampled 800 respondents through face-to-face interviews and semi-structured questionnaires. Respondents were selected amongst male (57%) and female graduates (43%) who live or work in and around Kampala and completed their undergraduate studies between 2012 and 2016.

Because of ease of access, respondents were selected from nine major universities namely – Makerere University, Uganda Christian University Mukono, Uganda Martyrs University Nkozi, Kyambogo University, Makerere University Business School, Mbarara University of Science and Technology, Ndejje University, NKumba university and Kampala International University.

THE START

Established in 1922 as a technical school, Makerere



Prof. Ddumba Ssentamu

University is one of the oldest and most prestigious universities in Africa.

The school began with 14 day students who started out studying carpentry, building and mechanics. It became a

centre for higher education in East Africa in 1935 and became a University College affiliated to the University College of London in 1949.

The university transitioned from the faculty-based to the

collegiate system on July 1, 2011 and as of Friday, December 30, 2011, Makerere University officially transformed into a collegiate university with nine constituent colleges and as at July 1, 2014, 10 Constituent Colleges including the School of Law, all operating as semi-autonomous units of the university.

At the undergraduate level Makerere University has 145 programmes. It offers over 139 postgraduate programmes.

RESPONSE

WHAT VC PROF. DDUMBA SENTAMU SAYS

Even though the findings point to major weaknesses in performance, the vice-chancellor Prof. Ddumba Ssentamu says a lot has been put in place to address the teething problems facing the university.

"We have invested a lot in staff. That is why we have top quality teachers. Compared to other universities in the country, 50% of our lecturers have PhDs. Not only this, they are also experienced in their fields of expertise. They are also well-published researchers in East Africa. This gives us an edge over a number of universities in terms of providing academic staff.

In addition to this, we have invested heavily in our learning resources and other teaching programmes to ensure that our students get the best. There are still challenges, but we are doing our best to address them.

I agree with the students' observation on premises. What I can say is that we have challenges in providing adequate room and sufficient facilities for lectures and other infrastructure. However, we are doing something about this. For instance, we are coming up with two new buildings near the faculty of social sciences.



The Makerere University main building

MAKERERE

Vision: To be the leading institution of academic excellence and innovations in Africa

Mission: To provide innovative teaching, learning, research and services responsive to national and global needs

Motto: We Build for the Future

residence is not good. We are suggesting that these halls be privatised as a way of improving their state.

Tuition fees remain a thorny issue. We still charge reasonable tuition fees and, therefore, the issue of reduction in fees is difficult. We have courses where students pay as low as sh600,000 per semester. Which university charges such an amount except here in Uganda? We still remain affordable despite having done a study showing that humanities courses should cost sh6m, while sciences and medical courses should cost sh8m and sh12m, respectively. We are not implementing this, so we are not expensive at all.

If I were to offer tips to other universities I would say:

- Invest in human resources
- Hire quality staff. Don't pick anyone on the street
- Invest heavily in learning materials

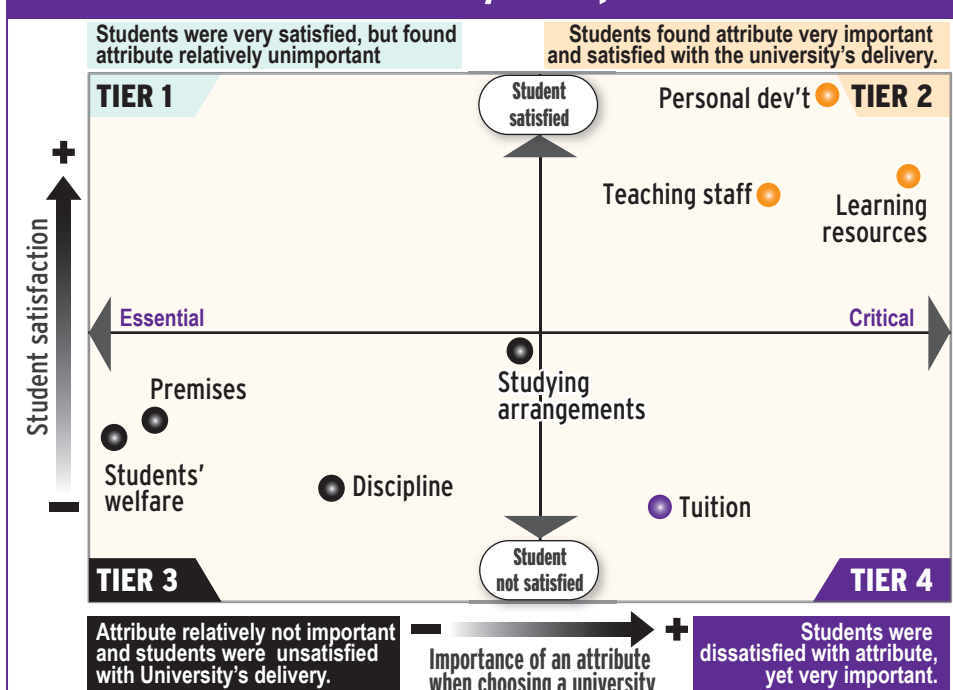
These will improve on space in the next two years.

However, the students' view on some aspects of welfare is fair. For instance, feeding has improved at the university. However, we have yet to address some key issues. Yes, the situation in the halls of



The college of engineering, design, art and technology

Makerere university competence score



What changes they would have liked to see at MUK

