

# Strategic Faculty Management Plan for Teaching and Research at the Faculty of Business Administration and Management – Uganda Martyrs University, Uganda

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## Abstract

The Ugandan higher education system is built on the one which was promoted by the colonial government from about 1920s. The system has been remodelled under the 'higher education reforms' implemented during 1980s and 2000s. The reforms, among others, allowed government to shift the bulk of the education budget from higher education (universities and other tertiary institutions) to the lower level, especially at primary. It also introduced private students' enrolment for university education and privately paying for their education. It further allowed private investment in university education and other tertiary institutions by entrepreneurs. This led to an increase in the number of universities, tertiary institutions, and privately sponsored students. This thus required additional staff (part-time) to teach the big number of students, who sometimes study during evening and weekend. The big number of part-time staff created a challenge in faculty management, since most of them report to university only to teach and thereafter leave immediately to attend to other engagements. Many of the part-time staff lack teaching and research skills thereby affecting the quality of teaching and learning, and research and scholarship in the higher education system.

At Uganda Martyrs University, the Faculty of Business Administration and Management (BAM) in particular lacked formal strategic planning which included a lack of clear strategic direction, uncoordinated teaching and learning, the absence of a faculty research agenda, difficulties in managing staff work load, failure to track

students' learning and unsatisfactory scholarship activities of academic staffs. Many lecturers did not align course contents with course objectives, delivery methods and course outcomes, and students' learning was not appropriately monitored. Most of the teaching staff never participated in private research activities or had written any research projects in their entire teaching carrier, many had no interest in research projects.

The Project Action Plan (PAP) which has been designed and implemented in the frame of the International Deans' Course 2013/14 was designed to reverse the above trend in the faculty of BAM, by implementing specific action points to achieve specific milestones. The key achievements of the PAP are:

- all examination papers are moderated two weeks before the examination time;
- course outlines, delivery methods and assessment are regularly harmonized;
- interaction between students and lecturers outside classrooms has increased;
- the number of staff involved in research activities has steadily improved;
- young faculties are mentored in the faculty; and
- the number of publications and scholarship activities by staffs has increased.

## **1 Introduction and Background**

The Faculty of BAM at Uganda Martyrs University is mandated to teach and conduct research in management and business frontiers. The Faculty has three departments: Accounting and Finance, Microfinance and Management. The Faculty operated without a formal strategic plan to guide its future developments. It had no staff planning structure to guide staff recruitments, development and skills improvement. Staff recruitments were conducted on an ad hoc basis, based on immediate staff needs which resulted in skewed staff competences in the faculty (excessive staff in some areas while scarcity of certain skills in others). The skewed staff competences created skills deficits which affected the efficient delivery of teaching and research. It also resulted in hiring part-time staff to teach some of the courses. This led to a blotted payroll with staff who could teach few courses yet they were fully paid. It increased the operational costs and promoted inefficient service delivery.

The faculty had not conducted any critical strategic analysis and planning for staff requirements and the ranks (Professors, Associate Professors, Senior Lecturers, and Lecturers) established for the faculty. In addition, the faculty neither had a

policy nor procedure on staff training and/or identifying programmes for staff to enrol and gain skills. The trainings undertaken by staffs of the faculty were not based on skills gaps or strategic faculty focus. Consequently, many of such trainings were largely not relevant thus not relevant to address the skill gaps in the faculty.

The faculty had few members participating in research and scholarship activities both from within and without. The few that engaged in research activities only managed very few publications or presented papers in conferences. The inadequate involvement in research and scholarship by staff inhibited their ability to effectively supervise students' research projects. Therefore, the overall quality of knowledge generation and dissemination in the faculty was at its lowest.

After implementation of PAP, a number of things changed; many staff improved their teaching methodologies, course outlines, delivery methods and assessments are closely linked. The quality of assessment has also improved; financial assessments now comprise all levels of questions. There is an increased consultation by students outside lecturer hours. There is also improved staff involvement in research activities. Many have published ever since the first PAP results were released.

## **2 The PAP**

The Project was formulated and implemented specifically with activities and milestones each based on specific issues. It examined the critical challenges in teaching and learning, and research and innovation in the Faculty of BAM at Uganda Martyrs University. The PAP was set to strengthen departmental structure in the Faculty to execute the medium term objectives, action plans and activities. The structure proposed staff establishment, aligning faculty activities to two strategic objectives of the University, i.e. research and scholarship, and quality service delivery.

The PAP aimed to achieve quality service delivery by addressing the challenges in teaching (course contents, objectives, outcomes, and delivery methods). Similarly, research and scholarship objectives were pursued by strengthening the research capacity in the faculty (writing research papers and publications, conference papers, project writing). The PAP was based on seven medium term objectives which include establishing and maintaining course files, conducting mid-semester

assessment, examination moderation, external examination, faculty research & and publications. The PAP framework is attached: appendix I

## **2.1 Broad Objectives of PAP**

The Project's objective was to design and implement a strategic faculty management plan for teaching and research in the Faculty of Business Administration and Management at Uganda Martyrs University.

## **2.2 Specific Objectives of Teaching and Learning**

- Align
  - course contents to course outcomes,
  - delivery methods to assessment criteria,
  - assessment to expected outcomes,
  - outcomes and delivery methods
- Effectively monitor teaching and learning

## **2.3 Expected Outcomes of Teaching and Learning**

- Improved teaching because staffs are trained in designing course outlines, delivery methods and assessments.
- Students benefit because lecturers could effectively link course assessments to course contents and delivery methods.
- Students' learning improves since lecturers could relate course assessment to intended course outcome.
- Faculties gain skills because they could be able to focus on all categories of students (weak, average and bright) and they are able to deliver and assess their courses professionally.
- Students enjoy learning because of the professional approaches employed by staffs in teaching and this improves students' learning.

## **2.4 Specific Objective of Research and Innovation**

- Formulate a research agenda,
- Seek for research funds,
- Disseminate research results, and
- Measure research products of faculties
- Create an enabling, transparent and efficient system in the Faculty for research and innovation
- Strengthen research and innovation capacity in the Faculty to explore the existing research opportunities nationally and internationally

- Improve research and publication culture among the staff members
- Encourage faculties to solicit for funding for research and innovation activities
- Increase faculties' responsiveness to social and applied research
- Improve the quality of students' research projects

## 2.5 Expected Outcomes of Research and Innovation

- Increased publication/conference presentation by faculty staff and increase their chances of promotion.
- Growth in knowledge among staff because of increased research and collaboration
- Visibility among the scientific community due to publications and presentations
- Increased revenue from research grants won by faculties.

## 3 Literature Review

### 3.1 Teaching and Learning

Teaching is an embodiment of academic, standard, pedagogical methods, personal contact with students. It also involves the personal contact of students with administrative staff as well as interactions with the support functions such as classrooms, library, computer facilities, and students' office. Good teaching therefore, involves a thorough and effective learning which also means a thorough and lasting acquisition of knowledge, skills and values the instructor or the institution has set out to impart (Stahlke and Nyce, 1996).

The authors emphasize that teaching has an instructional objective which involves the statement of specific observable actions that students should be able to perform if they have mastered the content and skills the instructor has taught. Some of the teaching and learning aspects discussed are highlighted below.

#### 3.1.1 *Effective Preparation of Course Outline*

Faculty members should adequately prepare course outlines clearly describing the course; define course objectives, delivery methods, assessment criteria and intended outcomes. When the course outline is well prepared, the facilitator is guided by the guideline as he/she delivers the course (Shulman, 2000). This also avoids time wastage and confusion during lectures.

### ***3.1.2 Maintaining Students' Attention***

This involves giving the students' something to do (group exercise, short questions, recalling prior materials, responding to questions, problem solving, explaining written materials, analytical, critical thinking, giving general questions and summarizing assignments). Martensen et al. (2000) maintain that involving students in learning is more critical in achieving learning objectives.

### ***3.1.3 Cooperative Learning***

This should involve allowing students to work in teams to accomplish assignments and produce results. This makes them achieve a number of benefits (positive interdependence, individual accountability, face-to-face which promotes interaction, appropriate use of team work skills, and regular self assessment of team functioning).

### ***3.1.4 Assessment and Evaluation of Teaching Quality***

This should focus on assessing and evaluating learning outcomes, which critically looks into the performance-based approach as opposed to teaching-based approach (Chickering and Gamson, 1987). The assessment also focuses on learning based models of students' development as opposed to assessment as an add-on to more naturalistic approach which is embedded in actual instructional delivery. Finally assessment should focus on obtaining accurate picture of students' content knowledge and skills performance.

## **3.2 Teaching and Learning Capacity**

The teaching and learning has seen a great leap in innovation ever since the work of Chickering and Ehrmann. Their "seven principles" (Chickering and Ehrmann, 1996) promote the use of innovation in teaching and learning through on-line consultations with faculties, sharing of learning resources, and ease access to learning materials online. Kim and Bonk (2006) posit that successful reengineering in higher education must start right at teaching and learning. They stress faculties to focus on course contents, delivery methods and course outcomes which should largely be linked to industry or commerce requirements. Therefore, faculties should be akin with the market demands and include industry information in their teaching and learning process. This would delineate delivery methods that are planned to achieve the expected course outcomes. Kim and Bonk (2006) emphasized that in trying to achieve reengineering in teaching and learning in higher education, first priority should still be given to achieving academic interests first, others should follow.

Chikering and Gamson (1987) provided the seven principles for good practice in undergraduate education which

1. Encourages contact between students and faculty;
2. Develops reciprocity and cooperation among students;
3. Encourages active learning;
4. Gives prompt feedback;
5. Emphasizes time on task;
6. Communicates high expectations;
7. Respects diverse talents and ways of learning.

Their study emphasizes that the principles acts as a guide for faculties and students to enhance teaching and learning, especially at undergraduate level. For the system to work efficiently, it requires an effective monitoring system which should enforce delivery of course outlines, assessment and outcomes. They also stated that most courses are delivered inadequately, assessed inappropriately and students' scored exaggerated without proper basis.

The cognitive assessment procedures were not followed by most faculty members which also affected quality of delivery, students' learning and quality of assessment. Most questions in examination papers concentrated on surface-end learning with limited focus on deep-end learning. The skewness affected quality of assessment and learning.

Most lecturers (16 out of 20) 80% did not bother to identify and handle the different categories of students (bright, slow-learners, and weak), thus leaving some group of students not adequately attended to by lecturers. This resulted in slow-learning or weak students failing to comprehend some courses, most especially the quantitative papers while bright students scored highly in such courses.

### **3.3 Research and Innovation**

#### ***3.3.1 Research and Innovation Capacity***

The Faculty did not have a research agenda to guide research activities; neither did the Faculty relate its research and innovation activities to the University's strategic objectives, which puts research and innovation on top of its priorities. Many of the research projects in the Faculty are guided by donor objectives or individual interests. Specifically, the University provided one strategic objective on research and innovation which encourages faculties to solicit for external research

grants and promote their visibility through publications. Nevertheless, many of the faculties still remain unengaged in research activities due to absence and/or inadequate of research grants. This has also affected the attempts of many faculties getting promotions in their job.

There is also inappropriate dissemination of research outputs by faculties due to high competition in high-impact journals among scholars thereby making access to many faculties difficult.

### **3.3.2 Introduction**

- 3.2.1 Equip staff offices with computers and maintain the ICT facilities
  - Install computers with full-time internet connectivity all the time
  - Form multi-disciplinary research teams in the faculty
  - Train staff to effectively utilize the internet facilities
  
- 3.2.2 Develop a research agenda for the faculty
  - Formulate faculty research priorities that feed into the university research policy
  - Develop faculty research priorities to promote basic and applied research
  - Link the faculty priorities to the University's strategic plan
  
- 3.2.3 Facilitate collaboration and global networks
  - Promote and facilitate collaborations with leading research organizations and other institutions of higher learning
  - Promote existing collaborations and networks
  
- 3.2.4 Support faculty staff to update skills in research management
  - Conduct training workshops/seminars in grant proposal writing, scholarly writing and dissemination
  - Develop and update research management tools in the faculty
  - Support staff to attend skills enhancement courses locally and internationally
  
- 3.2.5 Provision of guidelines for research supervisors and supervisees
  - Disseminate the research rules and guidelines for students and supervisors
  - Develop and review periodically the guidelines for research supervision

## 4 The PAP findings

### 4.1 Introduction

Details of PAP findings are presented in action plan (Table 1 & 2). The study was guided by two broad objectives in teaching and learning and three in research and innovation. The objectives in teaching are; to enable faculties align course contents to delivery methods and assessment, and effectively monitor teaching and learning while the ones under research and innovation include; formulate faculty research agenda and write grant winning proposal, strengthen research and innovation capacity among faculties and disseminate research results to promote visibility. The study was conducted in the faculty of business administration and management which has 32 faculties, 20 faculties participated, reflecting 62%. This includes those who have been in the departments for over three years. This period is considered appropriate for one to have engaged in teaching and research. The achievements of PAP are classified under two sections; research and innovation, and teaching and learning. The results of this study were discussed in the faculty board meeting and action points presented in the reports have been agreed from the meeting.

### 4.2 Research and Innovation

The key issues assessed under research and innovation were derived from the standard measurement tools which include among others UMU/BAM faculty research policy and priorities, on-going research projects, research projects conducted in the last three years, research publications, conference presentations and writing of books and book chapters. Data collection period focused on three year- duration (2011, 2012, 2013). The main findings under each of the parts identified areas are summarized below.

#### 4.2.1 Faculty Research Priority

The results on research priority reveal that none of the staff in the faculty was aware about the faculty research priority. Out of the 20 responses received, none of the respondents expressed knowledge about the faculty research priority. This also implies non-commitment to the faculty research issues, including initiating research projects.

#### 4.2.2 Research Project concluded

The study reveals that only 6 faculties out of 20, representing 30% have been involved in any research project in the last three years. The majority, 11 (55%) had

not engaged in any research project in the last three years. This result suggests that faculty involvement in research and innovation in the faculty is not adequate and this affects knowledge creation in the faculty.

#### ***4.2.3 Involvement in local, regional and international Research Projects***

The analysis result reveals that the majority of the faculty staff did not engage in research projects either at local, regional or international levels. The details show that only 3 (15%) out of 20 respondents had ever participated in research projects outside the country. This implies that the majority of the faculty members did not have international research networks.

#### ***4.2.4 Research Publications***

Research publication by each faculty was analysed and the results show that only 4 (20%) out of 20 respondents had been active in research publication while 8 (40%) out of 20 respondents had never published any research outputs in their academic carrier. These results confirm a weak research culture in the faculty and few faculties engaging in research projects.

#### ***4.2.5 Writing Books, Book Chapters and Project Papers***

The analyses reveal that only 2 (10%) out of 20 staff had ever written books and 3 (15%) others had written book chapters in the last three years. There were only 2 (10%) out of 20 other books were being written by 2 (10%) out of 20 other faculty members. The results also show that some of the books had not been well reviewed. Further still, the study also reveals that few staff of the faculty engage in writing projects, only 4 (20%) out of 20 had never participated in projects writing.

### **4.3 Teaching and Learning**

The main PAP issues concerning teaching and learning were assessed with regard to appropriate rating techniques. The main areas assessed include course outline, updating course outlines, course objectives, delivery methods and assessment, and students' consultations among others.

#### ***4.3.1 Course Outlines***

Analysis of responses on preparation and updates of course outline show that 18 (90%) out of 20 respondents assert that they prepared and updated course outlines regularly. They confirmed that they always used the updated course outlines in class. This result suggests that most of the courses delivered to students were based on updated course outlines. The key issues analysed in course outlines

include new knowledge, current debates and new approaches. The majority 17 (85%) out of 20 agree that they updated course outlines in consideration of the issues identified.

#### ***4.3.2 Course Objectives, Delivery Methods and Assessment***

The study analysed course objectives, delivery methods, and assessment criteria. The results show that only 6 (30%) out of 20 respondents linked course delivery methods to course objectives and 14 (70%) out of 20 don't. The analysis also reveals that 13 (65%) out of 20 respondents relate course delivery methods to course assessment and 7 (35%) don't. These results confirm some challenges, especially the lack of understanding the relevance of relating course objectives, students' assessment and delivery methods.

#### ***4.3.4 Course Content and Assessment***

The analysis of course contents and course assessments for various courses taught by the BAM faculty and results reveal that only 9 (45%) out of 20 respondents link their assessment to course contents and 11 (55%) don't. These results reveal the challenge BAM faculty face conducting effective and efficient teaching and learning. The students' assessments are usually skewed with many questions not based on cognitive competences

#### ***4.3.5 Students' Consultation with Faculty outside Classroom***

Faculty consultations by students outside classroom were assessed and the results show that only 6 (30%) out 20 faculty engage in guiding or discussing with students outside classroom. The main reason for this result is because most faculties reside outside the University. Majority of faculty staff travel on the Bus, arrive at 9:00 AM and leave at 4:30 PM. Further analysis reveals that most of them only come when they are on time table to teach but not to give time for students' consultation. This has to a greater extent drawn a distance between faculties and their students.

#### ***4.3.6 Moderation of Examination***

Most of the respondents 19 (95%) out of 20, agreed that examination papers of courses they teach were moderated. Only 1 (5%) out of 20 indicate that the final assessment was not moderated. They also affirmed in the same percentages regard to courses taught in other campuses and affiliated institutions. They agree that moderation of assessments had greatly improved the quality of the papers they give to students.

The results obtained from implementing the PAP activities show that number milestones were achieved. The specific objectives in teaching and research have been achieved. For instance, all course outlines are regularly updated, examination papers are moderated before they are administered to students, and there is increased faculty consultation by students (75%) from below 50% before PAP implementation. On research, knowledge among faculties on faculty research priority has increased from 25% to 60%, the engagements by faculties on research projects have increased from 55% to 75%. There is an increased publication among faculties (75%) from 25% before PAP implementation, amongst other achievements. However, faculties' participation in book writing or book chapters has not been adequate, only 30% have participated in it.

Based on the results of the PAP, higher education, and specifically, faculty management requires formal plans to address University or faculty-related issues. Deans and Associate Deans should develop specific action points in their faculty plans to track teaching, and research activities of faculties. In addition, Faculty Deans should develop and implement faculty plans for capacity development needs so that they encourage faculties build capacities in the areas of gaps. Further still, University management now requires use of basic management models such as; team management, gap analysis and management, motivational aspects so as to promote stability and growth among faculties.

Status prior to PAP	Action Point	Target	Time frame	Achievement by March, 2015
5 (25%) staff know faculty priority	Develop and/or publish research priorities	70 % faculties understand the research priorities	March, 2014	60% of the faculties understood research priorities
4 (20%) out of 20 staff pursue specific research areas.	Encourage more faculties to pursue faculty/department areas	60% faculties pursue specific research areas	May, 2014	40% faculties got involved in pursuing research activities
4 (20%) out of 20 respondents have published in the last three years	Encourage more faculties to publish regularly	Increase active publishing to 50%	June, 2015	30% of the staff engaged in publishing
6 (30%) out of 20, have been involved in any research project within the last three years.	Increase number of staff actively doing research	50% faculties actively participate in research projects	August, 2014	30% of the staff involved in research work
11 (55%) out of 20 have not engaged in any research project in the last three years.	Discuss in faculty each board meeting the promotion policy of the University	Reduce from 55% to 5%	June, 2015	(75%) out of 20 are involved in research projects. Only 5 (25%) did not participate
8 (40%) out of 20 respondents have never published any research outputs in their academic carrier	Train staff in academic writing publishing	Reduce this to 10%	June, 2015	5 (25%) out of 20 had not yet published.
3 (15%) out 20 respondents have ever participated in research projects outside the country.	Establish collaboration and encourage co-publishing	Reduce to 0%	August, 2014	10 (50%) had participated in research projects outside the country.
2 (10%) out of 20 staff have ever written books	Support and encourage joint writing in the faculty	increase to 30%	December, 2014	3 (15%) faculties had participated in book writing.
3 (15%) others have written book chapters in the last three years.	Support and encourage joint writing	Increase to 30%	December, 2014	3 (15%) faculties had participated in writing book chapters.
2 (10%) out of 20 are currently writing books	Support academic writing	Increase to 20%	June, 2014	3 (15%) faculties had got involved in book writing.
4 (20%) out of 20 have never participated in writing projects.	Promote co-writing	Reduce to 10%	June, 2014	4 (20%) faculties had never participated in writing projects.

**Table 1:** The Action Plan: Research and Innovation and Review

Current status	Action point	Target	Time frame	Achievement by March, 2015
18 (90%) out of 20 faculties affirm they prepare and update their course outlines regularly	Encourage regular update of course outlines	Increase to 100%	February, 2014	20 (100%) faculties regularly updated course outlines.
6 (30%) of 20 respondents agree they relate delivery methods to course objectives	Organize training in pedagogical skills	Increase to 60%	August, 2014	10 (50%) faculties relate delivery methodologies to course objectives.
13 (65%) out of 20 respondents relate course delivery methods to assessment.	Organize training in pedagogical skills	Increase to 85%	August, 2014	15 (75%) faculties relate delivery methodologies to assessments.
9 (45%) out of 20 respondents relate assessments to course contents.	Organize training in pedagogical skills	Increase to 70%	August, 2014	12 (60%) faculties relate assessments to course contents.
6 (30%) out 20 staff engage in guiding students outside classroom.	Encourage use of internet in consultations	Increase to 50%	May, 2014	15 (75%) faculties offered time for consultations outside lecturer rooms.
19 (95%) out of 20, agree that examination papers are moderated.	Encourage early submission of papers for moderation	Increase to 100%	April, 2014	20 (100%) faculties agreed that their examinations papers are moderated.

**Table 2:** Action Plan: Teaching and Learning and Review

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