



Going against the tide in Uganda's higher education: A brief historical account of Uganda Martyrs University

C.A. MUKIDI, M. OLWENY, R.S. NAKABO, L.A. OTAALA, M.F. MURONGO, J.S. SENTONGO, D. TSHIMBA. and P.M. NINA

Uganda Martyrs University, P.O. Box 5498, Kampala, Uganda

Corresponding author: rnakabo@umu.ac.ug

ABSTRACT

Uganda Martyrs University (UMU) was founded in 1993 and was accredited as a private not-for-profit university by the Uganda National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) and chartered in 2005. This paper provides a brief granular historical account of Uganda Martyrs University (UMU), focusing mainly on three units, namely, its Registry, its Faculty of Agriculture, and its Faculty of the Built Environment. These units are purposively selected for their unique contributions to the remarkable journey of UMU over the past thirty years—a story of tenacity of purpose and hope daring decision-making and unconventional partnerships. The early years of UMU, were devoted to setting up the systems and infrastructure of the university, at the core of which the Registry ended up playing many key roles. The role of the Registry kept evolving, with the later years being characterized by expansion and refinement of programmes, policies, and functions of different academic units. The Faculty of Agriculture (FA), on its part, grew from a one diploma- and one degree-awarding programme to a fully-fledged multi-disciplinary undergraduate and postgraduate (master's and doctoral) faculty, with the largest student cohort since 2000. Finally, the Faculty of the Built Environment (FoBE) evolved to become Uganda's first-ever architectural programme to address the need to look at the teaching of architecture as a forward-looking field, to addressing future concerns for Environmentally Conscious Design (ECD) as a pertinent issue in built environment education and practice in both local and global contexts. Knitted together the story of these three units of UMU present a brief yet telling account of UMU going against the tide in the country's higher education landscape in the post-Structural Adjustment dispensation.

Keywords: Catholic-funded University, Uganda Martyrs University

RÉSUMÉ

L'Université des Martyrs de l'Ouganda (UMU) a été fondée en 1993 et a été accréditée en tant qu'université privée à but non lucratif par le Conseil national de l'enseignement supérieur de l'Ouganda (NCHE) et a été chartée en 2005. Cet article fournit un bref compte rendu historique granulaire de l'Université des Martyrs de l'Ouganda (UMU), en mettant principalement l'accent sur trois unités, à savoir son Service des inscriptions, sa Faculté d'agriculture et sa Faculté de l'environnement bâti. Ces unités sont sélectionnées à dessein pour leurs contributions uniques

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au parcours remarquable de l'UMU au cours des trente dernières années, une histoire de ténacité et de prises de décision audacieuses et de partenariats non conventionnels. Les premières années de l'UMU ont été consacrées à la mise en place des systèmes et de l'infrastructure de l'université, au cœur desquels le Service des inscriptions a joué de nombreux rôles clés. Le rôle du Service des inscriptions a évolué au fil du temps, les années ultérieures étant caractérisées par l'expansion et le perfectionnement des programmes, des politiques et des fonctions des différentes unités académiques. La Faculté d'agriculture (FA), quant à elle, est passée d'un programme de diplôme et d'un programme de diplôme à une faculté de premier cycle et de cycles supérieurs (maîtrise et doctorat) à part entière, avec la plus grande cohorte d'étudiants depuis 2000. Enfin, la Faculté de l'environnement bâti (FoBE) est devenue le premier programme d'architecture en Ouganda à aborder l'enseignement de l'architecture comme un domaine tourné vers l'avenir, en tenant compte des préoccupations futures en matière de conception respectueuse de l'environnement (ECD) dans l'éducation et la pratique de l'environnement bâti, tant au niveau local que mondial. L'histoire de ces trois unités de l'UMU présente un bref récit révélateur de l'UMU allant à contre-courant dans le paysage de l'enseignement supérieur du pays dans l'après-ajustement structurel.

Mots-clés: Université catholique, Université des Martyrs de l'Ouganda

Introduction

The idea of a Catholic-founded university in Uganda dates as far back as the nineteen forties, when it was conceived by the late Archbishop Joseph Kiwanuka. According to an unpublished commissioned report dated November 1982, a commission chaired by one Basilio Kiwanuka was set up to generate a proposal to establish a Catholic-founded university in Uganda. By 1955, the "Catholic Church, on her own, felt ready to start a Catholic University if it had not been for the objection of the Colonial Government!" (1982, p. 1) The Basilio Kiwanuka Commission Report further noted seven objectives which this catholic-founded university, in the name of Uganda Martyrs University was to be based, among which were to (i) develop in the young men and women a sense of Catholic ethical values... thereby intensify the integral relationship of the community and the Church; (ii) complement national efforts by establishing fields of knowledge not existing at the national university for students to pursue; and (iii) complement the national efforts by proving additional facilities to reduce manpower shortage through inadequate facilities (1982, pp. 5-6). Unfortunately, various circumstances impeded the foundation of a university at that time. This proposal was renewed during the nineteen eighties and was endorsed by the Uganda Episcopal Conference in 1989. The University was officially launched on March

24th, 1991, by His Excellency Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, the President of Uganda and it opened its door to the public on 18th October 1993, the anniversary of the canonization of the Uganda Martyrs. The University was granted a charter by the Government of the Republic of Uganda on 2nd April 2005.

UMU's vision is to be a university that is nationally and internationally recognized for its excellence in teaching, learning, research, advancement of knowledge and community engagement. Accordingly, the mission of the University is to provide quality higher education, training, and research for the betterment of society guided by ethical values, based on her philosophy derived from the Christian ideals of the human person. Indeed, the motto of the university, "Virtute et Sapientia Duc Mundum," which means "In Virtue and Wisdom Lead the World," sums up the entire mission statement. UMU endeavors to achieve its mandate as a higher education institution (HEI) through various faculties, schools, and institutes. The University has since grown to nine faculties and two institutes. However, for the purpose of this article the focus has been placed on three selected units: Registry, Faculty of Agriculture and Faculty of the Built Environment.

It is also worth noting that from the Main Campus at Nkozi, the University has evolved to cover all the four ecclesiastical provinces

of Uganda through its campuses of Fort Portal (in the west), Lubaga (in the central), Ngetta (in the north), Mbale (in the east), and Masaka (in the central). It has also gained an international reputation by attracting both students and visiting scholars from all over the world. In the next sections, we present a discussion on the role of a registrar in UMUs mission, followed by profiling training trends and management in the Faculty of Agriculture and later Faculty of Built Environment, and lastly, leading change in architectural teaching.

The role of the registrar in UMU's mission of making a difference in the education sector in Uganda

This section examines how the role of the Registrar at Uganda Martyrs University (UMU) has evolved over the last 30 years. It begins with the examination of the historical evolvement of the roles of the Registrar worldwide, demonstrating how these have changed overtime depending on the country and the university in question. The second part looks at the three phases of UMU's Registry with focus on how some roles have continued to be played, while others have been shed off and new ones have been added in view of the university living its mission. The third part looks at some of the lessons that can be learnt from elsewhere and inculcated in the roles of the Registrar at UMU.

The Worldwide Historical Evolution of the Role of the Registrar in Higher Education Institutions

The understanding of the position and role of the Registrar worldwide differs from one country to another and from one university to another. Despite this, there are common threads in the roles and functions of the Registrar that cut across countries, regions and universities. It is to these common areas of intersection in the roles and functions of the Registrar that this section examines briefly from a historical perspective.

The roles of the Registrar and the functions that are associated with it can be traced to the three great universities of the Medieval Europe,

namely, Bologna (Italy), Paris (France) and Oxford (England). In all three, an officer at the level of an administrator acted as a spokesperson of the institution but also implemented decisions made by higher authorities. This officer was also responsible for the general running of all processes of academic programmes which also included storing and managing official records of the university. In addition, the officer was also responsible for the financial running of the institution, maintaining its facilities and ensuring there was order in the institution (White, 1991). Using the nomenclature of today's staff in universities, this officer acted as a Registrar, Public Relations Officer, Records keeper, Chief Finance Officer and Estates Officer.

At Harvard, the end of the 19th Century saw the expansion of the roles of the Registrar to include the recording of the courses taken by students. Since then, the roles of the registrar to-date have tended to remain the same and generally uniform largely due to the existence of the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admission Officers. This body has defined the roles of the registrar to be centered primarily around admissions, registration, record keeping, generating statistics and research, supervision of personnel and control of supplies and equipment (White, 1991).

Though the body of Registrars and Admission Officers has regulated the main functions of the registrars, individual institutions, nonetheless, are given the liberty to be creative in the implementation of some registry functions. Thus, for some institutions, the functions of the Registrar also include being responsible for examinations, secretarial activities of faculty and its committees. Other functions also include planning for the provision of lecture rooms to faculty, timetabling for lectures, providing editorial to university newsletters and publications, generating reports on individual students' problems and checking academic portfolios of graduating students (White, 1991). The above notwithstanding, the beginnings of the twentieth century saw the description of the title 'registrar' in terms of the functions it was supposed to play. For example, some institutions came up with titles such as:

‘Registrar and Director of Admissions,’ ‘Director of Admissions and Registrar,’ ‘Dean of Admissions and Registrar,’ and ‘Dean of Admissions and Records.’ Clearly, the new title reflected the functions the Registrar was expected to play (White, 1991).

In Uganda’s context, not much has been written on the role of an academic registrar, though a few articles exist on the creation, maintenance, storage and disposal of records, which is one component of registry work. The little that is written about the role of an academic registrar is drawn from the information posted in adverts and websites of various universities, for instance, by Makerere, Kyambogo, Nkumba and the Islamic University in Uganda (IUIU), (Kyambogo University, Makerere University, Nkumba University, Islamic University websites). From this information, it is clear that the registrar’s role is basically centered on admissions and registration of students, coordination and supervision of programmes taught and to coordinate examinations, providing secretarial services to Senate and Council and its committees. In addition, the registrar’s role focuses on the creation, maintenance, storage and disposal of university records. Though the roles for many universities are generally the same, the nomenclature of their offices differs from one university to another. For many universities, public and private alike, the holder of the office of registry is called an Academic Registrar, others like Mountains of the Moon University uses the term Registrar Academic and UMU, until 2021, used the term Registrar. Since this topic is about UMU, it now suffices to examine the role the Registrar has played over the years in contributing to the efforts of UMU making a difference in the higher education sector in Uganda.

Roles of the Registrar at Uganda Martyrs University

In the last 30 years of UMU’s existence, the contribution of the registrar can be divided into three phases. The first phase (1993-2003) highlights the humble but solid beginnings out of which UMU built its reputation as a formidable academic institution known by its excellence and high quality, spiced by integrity; he second phase (2004-2014) consolidated the gains made in the first years of inception

but also paid attention to the establishment of new universities and thus looked for strategies for overcoming the competition; and the third phase (2014- to date) UMU focused on re-inventing and re-imaging itself in meeting the needs of the 21st century higher education demands.

Phase One: 1993-2003. The first phase of the Registry department coincides with the beginnings of the University in 1993 and with Benard Onyango, the first Registrar. Thus, to understand and appreciate UMU’s initial and humble efforts in establishing a university that would make a difference in the higher educational sector in Uganda, Africa and the whole world, leads to the unavoidable task of exploring more who Benard Onyango was. After completing his graduate studies at Makerere University, Onyango was appointed as the Deputy Registrar of the same university in 1963. With the completion of the restructuring of Makerere University in the late 1960’s where it became the national university of the Republic of Uganda, Onyango was appointed its first Academic Registrar on the 1st of July 1970, a position he held until 1992 when he relinquished it due to retirement (Nangonzi, 2013; Wamai, 2013).

In the twenty-two years as an Academic Registrar of Makerere University, Onyango stood out as an impeccable and excellent administrator of the University’s academic activities (Sibo, 2011). But added to these attributes were other qualities of incorruptibility, outstanding integrity, professionalism, truthfulness, fairness, purity, transparency, and academic excellence. The end of the year university examinations conducted during his twenty-two-year period as Academic Registrar were described regularly by students as ‘Onyango Disco’ because of his strictness in the conduct of examinations and overall academic administration of the University, especially the firm implementation of the university policies.

It was Onyango who, after being appointed by the Uganda Episcopal Conference, reported to his station of duty at Nkozi on the 1st of February 1992. One of the primary duties of the new Registrar was to begin preparations for the official opening of the university, key of which was to help select the new administrative

and academic staff that would man the Institute of Ethics and Development Studies and the Faculty of Business Administration and Management. The appointed staff reported for official duty on the 1st of October 1993 (Lejeune, 2013).

Onyango was appointed as a Registrar and not as an academic registrar because his duties were so broad that they made him act the roles of the Human Resource and Quality Assurance directors respectively, in addition to his academic duties. As a Human Resource Director, he was responsible for the appointment and disappointment of academic and administrative staff. All matters dealing with staff welfare, requests and grievances were handled by the Registrar. The Registrar was also responsible for staff benefits, their discipline, conditions, and terms of service. Under this docket, he also played the current role of the Public Relations Officer (PRO) as he was responsible for university adverts in terms of staff jobs and students' applications for programmes. The Registrar was also in charge of university security as well as matters of estates. In one instance, it is said that when the University was short of water, the Registrar had to fetch it for students and staff (Lejeune, 2013).

Working hand in hand with the Vice Chancellor, the Registrar was also involved in the procurement of stuff especially for teaching. In addition to all these duties, the Registrar was an overall administrator who ensured all systems were operating normally. Last, but not least, the Registrar was Secretary to Senate and to Council and to all their committees. Thus, the Registrar acted as a Human Resource Officer, Public Relations Officer, Security Officer, Procurement Officer, an administrator, and an Estates Officer (Lejeune). Playing all these roles was understandable at the time because the staff count was very lean.

In this phase (1993-2003), there was no such a thing as Quality Assurance office. Issues of programme development, monitoring of teaching, lecturers' teaching content, and students' class attendance, and overseeing students' evaluations of their lecturers, and supervision of Deans and Heads of departments were all duties performed by the Registrar.

It was also in 1994 that UMU started its first Distance learning programme in the Faculties of Education, Agriculture and Business Administration and Management which was followed later with similar programmes. Before these programmes were structurally organized, the Registrar acted as the coordinator. So, on top of playing so many roles as described above, the Registrar was also a Quality Assurance Officer long before the office and the National Council for Higher Education was created and faced many challenges in the process. But because of his wealth of experience, Onyango was able to manoeuvre the initial challenges that UMU faced.

With Academic functions, the first Registrar laid a firm foundation of integrity and excellent quality that has lasted up to the present period. Amidst an era of corruption and dishonesty even in academic circles where it was normal for individuals to present fake documents for admission or present documents that they did not work for, Onyango put up a very solid system of admission where no one could be admitted unless he/she qualified. As early as 1993, one of the requirements for admission was a recommendation from a parish priest or a leader of the community. Students who merited the admission were taken through rigorous routines of lectures where it was a must to attend. To qualify for a final examination, one was expected to attend at least 66.7% of the sessions. In addition, every student was required to pass course work before sitting the final examination. This practice alone compelled students to work hard and ensure that they passed. Students who were not able to pass were subjected to supplementary tests and retakes (UMU Academic Handbook, 2017). To mitigate against copying and thus promote quality of higher education, a policy on academic irregularities was initiated and enforced. The policy defined what an academic irregularity was and what should be done to culprits. An academic Irregularities Committee chaired by the Deputy Vice Chancellor was put in place to check the academic malpractices of the students. Depending on the magnitude of the offence, students caught in such conducts were discontinued, or given two years or one year of suspension (UMU Academic Handbook). The zero tolerance to copying put UMU on pedestal

that up to today is known for the quality of its students.

At the time of UMU's beginnings, it was only Makerere University and two other private universities that existed. It was almost impossible for students to complete their studies in time. To make matters worse, it was impossible to complete their research projects due to lack of availability of lecturers. Students who succeeded to complete and graduate, found it hard to get their academic documents in time. Onyango, who knew how Makerere University functioned, initiated a system of supervision and monitoring that eventually led to students' completion in time. What was even surprising to stakeholders and challenging to competitors was the issuing of academic documents to students on their day of graduation. This practice that has continued up to today has advantaged UMU's students over other graduates for the competitive jobs. In fact, several old and new competitors alike have copied this practice for their respective universities. The Registry Department has indeed, over the years, demonstrated how UMU can make a difference in the academic life of the student and of the higher educational sector in general.

Phase Two: 2004-2014. Phase two of the Registry Department (2004-2014) consolidated the UMU practices that had been implemented in the first phase. It was during this period that the University became more formal in its operations and consequently a few roles were removed from the Registrar. With the appointment, for example, of Dr. Fr. Lawrence Ssemusu in 2003 as the second Deputy Vice Chancellor, the Registry got relieved of the roles of managing human resources. With this, other associated roles such as overseeing security, public relations, procurement and estates were also removed from the Registrar. In 2007, the first Quality Assurance Director in the person of Sr. Lucy Akello was appointed, hence removing this role from the Registrar as well.

With the coming into force of the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) in 2001 as part of the Government's legal framework of the "Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions

Act (UOTIA)" (Bisaso, 2017), the Registrar's role of maintaining, storing and disposing off of some records became more enhanced. Unlike in the first phase, the Registrar was required to furnish the NCHE and the Ministry of Education and Sports with the university's statistics as well as regular reports regarding the status of the university.

In this phase, UMU opened centers in Arua, Kabale, Nyamitanga, Fort Portal, Masaka, Soroti, Lira and Moyo for purposes of conducting their face-to-face sessions and examinations for their distance learning students. It was the work of the Registrar, working hand in hand with the Education Secretaries of all Catholic Dioceses in Uganda, to coordinate face to face teaching at these centers and ensure that students sit their examinations and complete their studies. It was some of these centers that gradually became Campuses of UMU when the Uganda Episcopal Conference resolved that UMU's educational services be extended to all corners of the ecclesiastical provinces of Uganda. Thus, Campuses were opened in: Kabale and later Fort Portal for the Western Province, Mbale for the Eastern Province, and Ngetta for the Northern Province. Masaka, Lubaga and Nsambya were opened by UMU following demands from the market. During this time, a number of institutions were affiliated to UMU. They were: St. Francis Nyamitanga (Mbarara), Bishop Magambo Counselling Institute (Fort Portal), Mbuye (Masaka), Ggaba Primary Teachers College (Kampala), and Kisubi Brothers' College and Multi-Tech (Kampala). Owing to this phase of development, the Registrar became their coordinator who worked hand in hand with the Directors of the Campuses and heads of the affiliate institutions.

During this period, several new universities were licensed and hence there was competition for students. To mitigate against these looming threats, UMU, under the leadership of the Registrar, organized re-training sessions for teachers in teaching and learning and assessment of learners. It was during this time that several modules for the different programmes were written and refined. Also, owing to the coming on board of the NCHE, the Registrar's role was to ensure that new programmes are accredited,

and old ones are reviewed and re-accredited by the NCHE. When the Curriculum Review Committee was established in 2010 by Prof. Charles Olweny, the Registrar became its secretary.

Phase Three (2014-to-date). This phase adopted and consolidated the policies and practices that had developed during the first two phases. In this phase, the primary role of the Registrar, in collaboration with the Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor and Directorate of Quality Assurance, was to make the University compliant with the requirements of the NCHE and Ministry of Education and Sports. By 2018, for instance, all UMU campuses, which had been operating illegally, were accredited by the NCHE. In addition, the role of the Registrar concentrated on coordinating the development of new programmes such as: Bachelor of Fashion and Textile Design, Bachelor of Laws, Bachelor of Arts with Education, Bachelor of Science with Education, Bachelor of Journalism and Mass Communication and Bachelor of Agriculture. In the same period, many programmes have been reviewed and re-accredited by the NCHE. The Registrar, in this period, could be described as a compliance officer for ensuring that UMU conforms to the guidelines of the regulatory bodies of the NCHE and the Ministry of Education and Sports.

During this period, special attention was paid to the development of some policies. Out of this effort, for example, the following policies were developed: Credit Transfer Policy (2014), Short Course Policy (2014), shortened version of the Prospectus (2015), Examination Policy (2019), University Council Manual (2022), and Review of the Academic Handbook (2017), and Review of the 2005 Charter and its Statutes (2022). Academic Policy development and implementation became more associated with the roles of the Registrar. The Registrar became a policy developer and enforcer.

During this period, the university was faced with the challenge of low student numbers because of competition arising from the mushrooming universities. Most affected was the main campus at Nkozi which students wrongly perceived to be a village campus.

The Registrar's role was to ensure that student numbers increase again. By producing the half-tuition bursary strategy that was extended to the Catholic dioceses, religious communities, UMU staff, Alumni, Districts and Kingdoms, in addition to the sports bursaries that had already been in existence, students' numbers once again increased. The role of the Registrar became one of marketing but also of strategizing for the university.

During this period, the university has ensured that all university records are well maintained and stored. Special mention are the students' records that begin with one's application and admission until the time of graduation. In between, files on students' results and updates on each student's academic progress are well kept by the Faculties and Registry. From the existing records, a current student can be informed of his/her academic progress, including what is called normal progress (NP) or whether one has a supplementary, retake or specials. Besides providing information to students, well-kept records can inform Management and all other key stakeholders to make informed decisions concerning how best to run the university. For example, from the records, University Management can know the status of student numbers and their financial implications on the University. Students' records can assist the planning process of the University. For example, Management can invest more resources in the marketing strategies of the University. The Registrar also uses these records for generating university statistics for the NCHE and to the Ministry of Education and Sports.

Lately, keeping and management of students' records has been beefed up with Zee-varsity – an online Management Information System (MIS) that links the Registry, Finance and the Department of Human Resource. This Management system supports students in so many ways. For example, students can access their results online or be able to tell whether they have retakes, supplementaries or they are progressing normally. The student is also able to know the financial status of his/her ledger. In addition, a student who has fully paid fees is able to generate an examination card during the examination period. This improvement of

students' access to information or the capacity of the University to serve him/her has made UMU to be a student-centered university.

During the time of COVID 19, the role of the Registrar was expanded to include management of crises. The Registrar became the Chairperson of the COVID 19 Committee charged with the handling of all covid related matters. Working hand in hand with the Deputy Vice Chancellor, the Registrar coordinated the application process to the NCHE for the emergency Open Distance E-Learning (ODEL) which allowed online learning at UMU during the lockdowns of 2020 and 2021. The Registrar provided roadmaps to ensure that students studied during the two lockdowns. The role of the Registrar as a Coordinator of Teaching and Learning and as a manager of crises during this troublesome period was very monumental.

Lessons on the Role of the Registrar from UMU's Thirty-year experience

Before embarking on the profiling of training trends and management dynamics in Faculty of Agriculture, there are lessons to learn from the roles and functions of UMU Registry. However, a few key ones will suffice for this space. From some of the foregone reviewed literature, the role of the Registrar should transit from the performance of the day-to-day duties to one of being strategic, keeping in mind UMU's contribution to the ideals, vision and mission of the Higher education sector in Uganda. Secondly, the role of the Registrar should be to strategize to digitize operations of the Registry Department; first, to enable the Registry to maintain and store better its records. Digitalization will also link together far-off campuses into one digital cobweb. This will not only make services reach students in record time, but also, will make university operations cheap to run. The Registrar can push for the formation of a Registrars' body at the national level that can facilitate the sharing of knowledge of like-minded officials.

Training Trends and Management Dynamics in the Faculty of Agriculture

Agricultural transformation is an undertaking whose complexity is unvaryingly challenging for any stakeholder. This is especially true for stakeholders who seek agricultural

transformations to simultaneously meet multiple goals. In Uganda for instance, in addition to traditional economic development and poverty reduction goals, the Government also focuses its agricultural transformation programme to achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). While the drivers of agricultural transformation in Uganda are multidimensional, interrelated, and change over time, they have been interpreted, and understood well by UMU's Faculty of Agriculture. The multidimensional interrelatedness requires transformational readiness and a critical strategy to significantly influence the likelihood of accelerating processes of change. After having keenly interpreted the national and individual requirements for agricultural transformation, and subsequently offered focused training, in this section, the faculty examines the graduation trends of the student stakeholders.

Historical Brief about the Faculty of Agriculture

The Faculty of Agriculture (FoA) owes its inception to Prof. Michel Lejeune who, in 1996, led a team of partners and started a farm project. This project was launched in 1998 as "Equator Valley farm". Among its objectives, the Equator Valley farm was established to lay ground for training future students in the agricultural specific sciences. In the interim, a needs assessment team started studying the possibility of opening agricultural training at Uganda Martyrs University. The team completed their work towards the end of 1999. Their report was adopted by Senate and the Faculty of Agriculture was launched in 2000. The team was led by Prof. Charles Ssekya, and deputized by Prof. Julius Mwene who became the first and third deans of the faculty, respectively. Several other deans have steered the faculty to the present.

Agriculture being the backbone of Uganda's economy dictates that the Faculty of Agriculture ought to be the market leader in knowledge provision but also helping to solve farmers' multidimensional Agriculture related problems. The role of the Faculty of Agriculture is to respond to national and global needs, especially towards the alleviation of household poverty, reducing hunger, enhancing environmental protection and ethical values. Since the year

2000, the Faculty of Agriculture is by far one of the largest faculties at Uganda Martyrs University, running graduate, undergraduate, diploma and certificate programs. Guided by its vision, the Faculty holistically builds a critical quality and quantity of professional agriculturists with sustainable resource management hands-on skills, to meet the University's goal of creating an environment where intellectual and moral values are a priority. The Faculty of Agriculture also contributes to the national goal of modernizing agriculture as a means of achieving food security, alleviating poverty, and diversifying foreign exchange earnings through short and long term, demand driven curricula, as well as farmer-needs-oriented research and outreach programmes. The Mission of the Faculty is to produce a graduate with capacity to create jobs and with a round knowledge of agriculture that translates into real physical and financial outputs.

Graduation trends

Despite its importance to Uganda's economy, agriculture has remained largely underdeveloped in production both for the domestic market and for export. This scenario cannot be dissociated from insufficient training programmes offered by affected countries. Since its inception, the Faculty of Agriculture pursued the trajectory of providing high quality education, designed to meet the dynamic demands of the agricultural sector.

Analysis of the extent to which this objective has been achieved was done by obtaining data records on 2,729 students who had graduated from the Faculty in different years and at different levels. The analyses reported here attempt to provide a picture of how students in these groups have been faring in disciplinary fields overall and especially in the areas of Agroecology, Monitoring and Evaluation, and other agricultural sciences in which the nation has an arguent need .

Data from secondary sources were obtained for cohorts between 2000 (year of inception of the Faculty) and 2022 (latest graduation year). The purpose was to assess trends and patterns in programme and gender representation at various years of graduation. Data on graduation

records were compiled and summarised using Microsoft Excel 2010. Figures 1, 2, 3, and 4 highlight the total graduation cohort trends by programme of study. Figure 5 highlights cohort graduation trends by Gender.

The Faculty has graduated more Agroecology students not necessarily that the programme graduates a big number of graduates per cohort (Figure 1A), but because the programme has been running longer the Master's degree in Monitoring and evaluation. On average, the Master of Science in Monitoring and Evaluation graduates a larger number of candidates per cohort even when it started later in 2016 (Figure 1B). The variations in the numbers have always been influenced largely by a known factor, availability of funding. More candidates tend to complete their study programme if that cohort has been sponsored for all or part of their study programme. Projects such as Ecological Organic Agriculture Initiative, Agroecology in Practice, African Centre for Agroecology and Livelihood Systems, support students' study programmes and this facilitate completion. Funding from entities such as the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) have been useful in supporting candidates on Monitoring and Evaluation programme.

The undergraduate programmes offered by the Faculty are quite popular. It can be observed from Figure 2 that the number of graduating students has been steadily increasing for both old and recently introduced undergraduate programmes. More students have graduated with a Bachelor of Science in general agriculture as a distance learning programme since the program was started in 2003/2004. One other unique programme that was started in 2005/2006 is a distance learning programme of B.Sc. Organic Agriculture. This programme has been reviewed and its current name is Bachelor of Science in Ecological Organic Agriculture. From its first graduation cohort of 2009 (Figure 2), there have been increasing numbers of students undertaking this programme although the progress is slow. The Bachelor of Science Agriculture and Ecological Organic Agriculture programmes capture entrants who already graduated with a diploma in various fields

of agriculture and agricultural education. Needs assessment reports conducted by the Faculty pointed to the need for training young people freshly graduating from the high schools on a full-time. To this end, three additional programmes were promulgated by the Faculty. These include, a Bachelor of Agriculture opened in 2014, and Bachelor of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness Management opened in 2018. The total number of students graduating from these programmes (Figure 2) has been on the increase.

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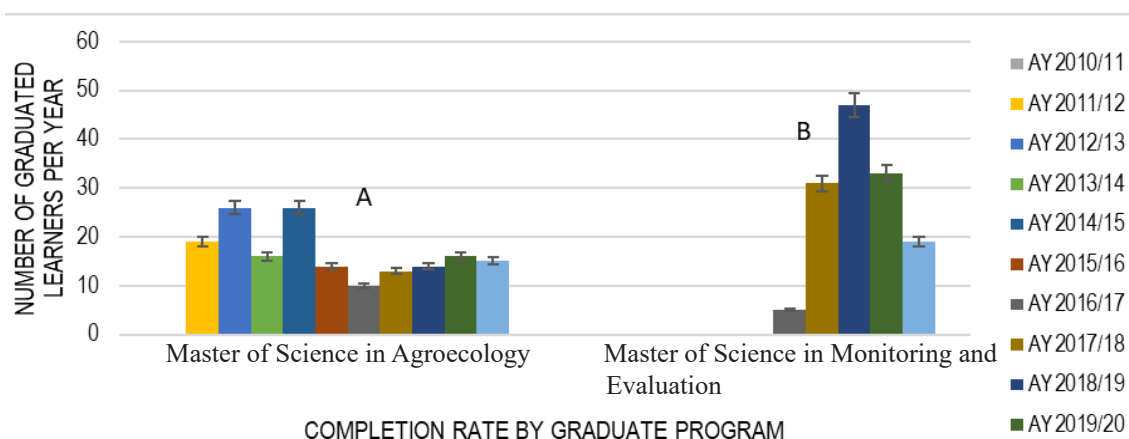


Figure 1. Total graduation cohort trends by postgraduate programme among faculty Graduates for the period 2011 to 2022

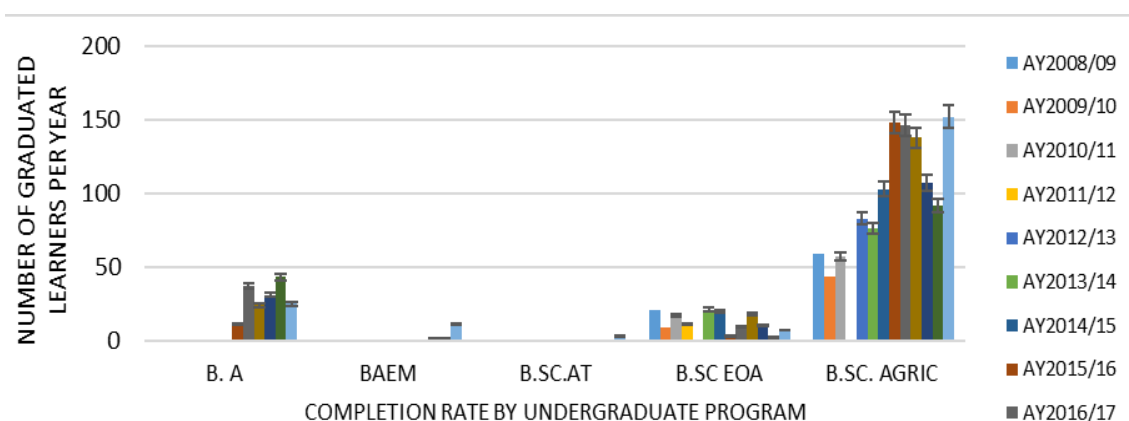


Figure 2. Total Graduation Cohort Trends by Undergraduate Program Among Faculty Graduates for the period 2008 to 2022

KEY; B. A refers to Bachelor of Agriculture, BAEM, refers to Bachelor of Economics and Agribusiness Management, B. SC.AT refers to Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Technology, B.SC EOA refers to Bachelor of Science in Ecological Organic Agriculture, B.SC AGRIC refers to Bachelor of Science in Agriculture.

As earlier noted, the distance learning programmes and, to some extent, the full-time programmes are fed by the students holding diplomas. Figure 3 shows the diplomas offered by the Faculty and their graduation trends since 2008. The diplomas include Diploma in Crop Production and Farm Management, Diploma

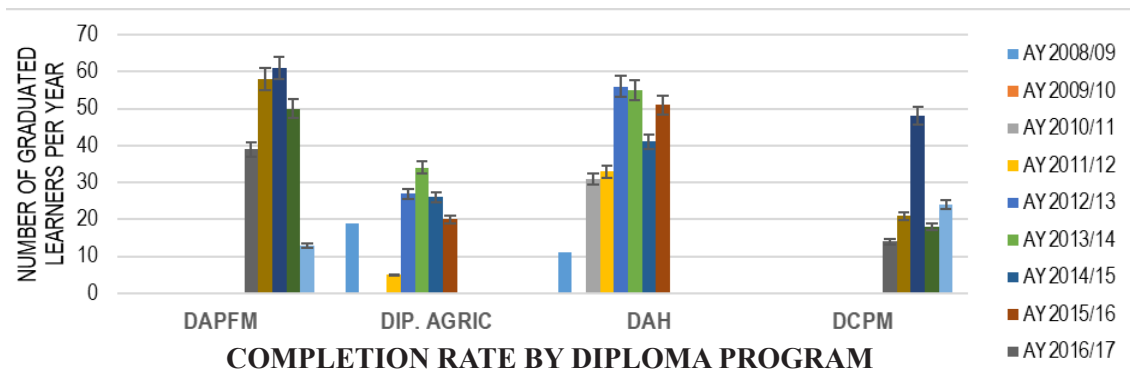


Figure 3. Total Graduation Cohort Trends by Diploma Programme Among Faculty Graduates from 2008 to 2022

in Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness Management, Diploma in Animal Production and Farm Management, Diploma in General Agriculture, and Diploma in Animal Husbandry. While there have always been variations in the total number of the students graduating with a diploma per year for the different diplomas (Figure 3), the members for each diploma has increased with time.

In all its attempts to partner with Civil Society Organisations, Farmer-Based Organisations, Non-Government Organisations, Faith-Based Organisations, networks and individual enterprises that have a stake in developing sustainable agriculture through research and appropriate knowledge dissemination, the Faculty has remained mindful of gender-based training. Figure 4 shows segregation of graduates from all programmes based on gender.

There are significant variations between the number of graduated males for each year from 2009 to 2022. A similar observation is true for females for the same period. Whereas the Faculty has made all efforts to effect training to balance the genders, it can still be observed that most of the students who have graduated from the Faculty are males compared to females (Figure 4). The total number of both males and females that have graduated from the Faculty programmes has been on the increase subsequently hitting the highest mark in 2018/19 year of completion (Figure 4). The trend shown by the Faculty of Agriculture is an epitome of the growth trajectory of Uganda

Martyrs University launching from the 84 pioneer students to over 5000 present day students

Contribution to National Agricultural Growth Potential

The Faculty of Agriculture of Uganda Martyrs University over the last 23 years has not back tracked on its contribution to training young people towards national economic development. The agricultural sector's economic influence stretches beyond the production sector into the wider food system, incorporating practices in processing, manufacturing, and training services. While the employment potential of Uganda's agriculture and agri-food system remains untapped, 70% of the country's employment opportunities, contributing more than half of all exports, and about one-quarter of gross domestic product come from agriculture. The Government has defined agriculture as a key economic sector in Uganda's transition into a middle-income country. To this end, emphasis has been placed on the importance of value addition, commercialization, and building resilience to climate change, an aspect the Faculty's training is designed to address especially through the systems wide approach of agroecology and concern for livelihood systems.

Leading Change in Architectural Education: The Faculty of the Built Environment (FoBE).

The opening of the Uganda Martyrs University at the main campus at Nkozi in 1993 was a task

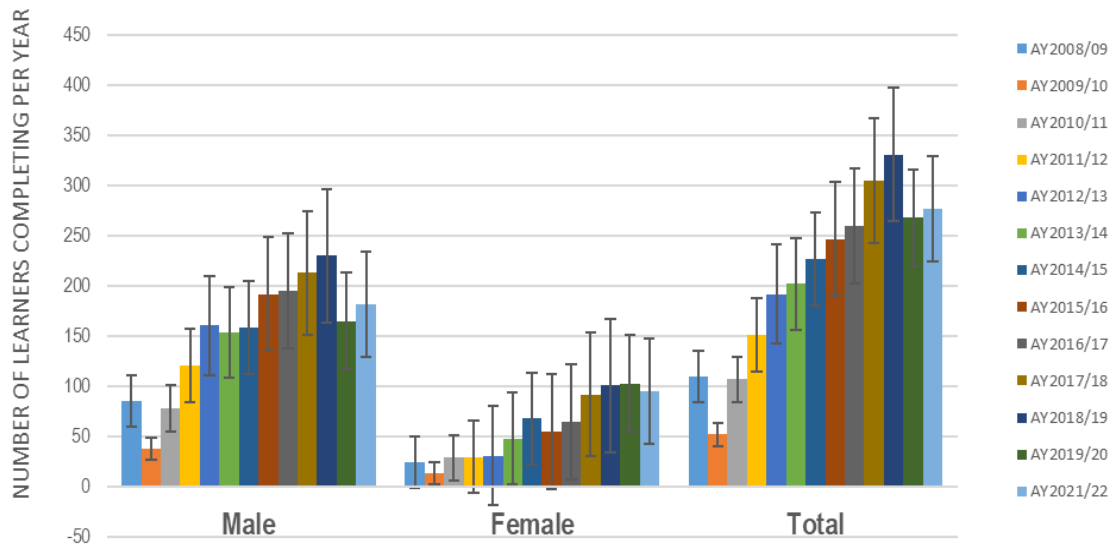


Figure 4. Segregation of graduation cohort by gender among Faculty of Agriculture Graduates from 2008 to 2022

that involved a significant amount of work by the then Vice-Chancellor, Michel Lejeune, and a host of dedicated individuals, in particular, Dee Carabine. This involved renovation of existing buildings, to ensure they were fit for purpose as a university. The growth of the University over the next few years made it necessary to plan for new buildings in a manageable way, a task fulfilled by a colleague of Prof. Lejeune, Prof. Firmin Mees of Ghent University. Initially, this task was the initial master plan for the development of the university campus, for which he worked with architecture students from Ghent University. The project formed the basis for the development of the Nkozi campus over the next decade, during which student halls, Onyango, Carabine and Hafflet, as well as teaching blocks for faculties of Health Sciences, Building Technology and Architecture and Science, were constructed. This initial engagement led to a proposal to start a new faculty dedicated to the education and training of architects, an evident gap in the educational sphere in Uganda, with only a single school of architecture at Makerere University, itself only a few years old having taken in its first batch of students in 1989.

The Story of the Faculty of the Built Environment

Aided by a grant from the Flemish Interuniversity Council (VLIR), the new faculty took in its first cohort of 20 students in September 2000, enrolling the Bachelor of Science (Building

Design and Technology) (B.Sc. (BDT)). While the goal was to eventually have a fully-fledged architecture programme, the initial degree was geared to educate mid-level professionals who would fill a gap that existed between professionals and construction workers. Thus, from the start, a two-tier programme structure was envisioned, mirroring what was increasingly the norm across the globe. This acknowledged that not all students enrolling in lengthy degree programmes complete these degrees, often leaving university with no qualification. It also allowed students to take different career paths upon completion of the first degree. In 2004, the professional degree, the Bachelor of Architecture (B.Arch.) was started, with seven (7) of the pioneer students returning, with four eventually completing the B.Arch. degree.

As the programme came to the end of its first cycle, it was evident that there was a need to better distinguish the Faculty and its programmes in order to attract students. Also, of concern was the description of the undergraduate degree—the Bachelor of Science (Building Design and Technology) (B.Sc. (BDT))—which suggested that students were able to undertake designs upon completion of the degree, while the Architects Registration Statute (1996) indicated that this was reserved for licensed architects. Further, offering a second bachelor's degree did not acknowledge

a growing trend across the world to have a more focused professional degree with graduates with skills that transcended a bachelor's degree. There was also a need to look at the teaching of architecture as forward-looking, to address the needs of the future, which for the most part is largely unknown or very much unlike what exists at the moment. This meant engaging with the growing concern for Environmentally Conscious Design (ECD), as a pertinent issue in built environment education and practice in both the local and global contexts. It was also necessary to review the tendency to teach in silos, evident in the initial programme which had 46 separate course units across the three-year undergraduate programme, and more than 35 contact hours per week. The argument was that students needed to be kept fully occupied to ensure they were learning. This left students with little time to learn how to be architects. This teacher-centred approach was viewed as an inappropriate means of developing independent thinkers who would be able to address the constantly changing needs of the built environment and would create a dependence on the teacher as a source of knowledge and information.

A series of workshops in 2006 and 2007, involving academic staff and students, led to a revised programme that was rolled out in 2008 with a new pedagogical approach, and a new course structure and significantly, defined a new direction with an emphasis on research. Emerging from these workshops was the core goal of the faculty: 'to be a leader in built-environment education and scholarship in sub-Saharan Africa'. It also took the position that architecture was a multi-disciplinary, multi-dimensional and multi-faceted profession; and required to take account of global challenges, which at the time were evident in the Millennium Development Goals (later, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)). The goal was to define a forward-facing approach to teaching and scholarship, and offer international quality education, but with a focus on sub-Saharan Africa. The outcome of this process became the defining feature of the new Faculty of Built Environment, with a goal of engaging with transformational education at the core of teaching. This was a bold move straying away from the status quo approach to new programmes which often mirrored

what was done at Makerere University.

Development of new programmes. The new programmes that emerged reflected the new ethos of the Faculty but plotted a new way forward for architectural education in Uganda. The old BSc (BDT) was replaced by a new Bachelor of Environmental Design (B.Envi. Des.), while a new Master of Architecture (M.Arch.) replaced the B.Arch. degree. Key to the new programmes was a change from siloed teaching in individual course units to an integrated approach with the design studio as the centre of architectural education. This allowed the reduction of the number of course units (down to 31) and contact hours (down to 24 hours a week from 35 hours). In addition, electives were introduced to allow the exploration of individual interests—the initial goal had been to give students the opportunity to take on courses from different faculties across the university to allow the construction of their interests in architecture. Unfortunately, this has not come to fruition due to limited interest from different faculties. The number of electives is the highest for an architectural programme in East and Central Africa, standing at 10%. The revised programmes received accreditation by the Uganda Society of Architects and the Uganda National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) in 2008, and in 2011 they were validated by the Commonwealth Association of Architects (CAA).

Receiving validation for the programme was an important step in the ambitious goal of the Faculty to be a leader in architectural education and research in sub-Saharan Africa. Indeed, efforts to achieve this had already been put in place, it was the first school of architecture in a private university in Uganda, and now it was the first split programme and the first Master of Architecture degree programme in Uganda. The programme was also technically the first programme in Uganda to attain validation from the CAA. Achieving these milestones was only possible through strong leadership able to provide academic direction for the faculty. This also required support from the university administration, which was forthcoming from Vice Chancellors Prof. Michel Lejeune and Prof. Charles Olweny. Both were conversant with the requirements of a professional degree such as architecture, more so as this was the

first true science-based programme at UMU.

This support was important to overcome the resistance from various circles, both within and without the University. The supporters also recognised that to attract students, it was not enough just to have a programme in the books, it was necessary to actively recruit students, as well as have high calibre faculty to teach the programmes. For the latter, the faculty boasted a strong academic body, who were actively recruited for short stays to help boost the teaching and research. This was further enhanced by external examiners derived from across the globe. Academic faculty included renowned educator Prof. Antony Radford from Australia, Prof. Paul Thomas from Belgium, Prof. Sampson Umenne from Botswana, Stephen Cohlmeier (RIP) from Canada, Jean Lim from Malaysia, as well as prominent Ugandan professionals including Felix Okoboi then head of National Housing and Construction Company and Doreen Adengo (RIP). External Examiners included prominent ECD architects Paul Pholeros (RIP) (Australia), Daniel Irurah (South Africa) and Davy Mugamba (Uganda). This helped boost the image of the faculty, within the University, the country and internationally; and added to its ability to attract an increasing number of applications. There was a growth in student numbers who made UMU and the FoBE their first choice for architecture, and not a last resort after failing to get into any other programme. This was aided by the strong focus on a holistic architectural education, which appealed to a broad spectrum of applicants, and also saw a transformation of the student body from one that was predominantly male, to a more even intake between male and female students, with the FoBE being the first architectural school in East and Central Africa to achieve a 50:50 female/male intake in 2016.

Acknowledging that architecture is a global profession, the internationalisation extended to the examination of final year projects in the M.Arch programme. A decision to have all masters dissertations examined externally was an important step in ensuring quality. Research dissertations are examined by one local and one international examiner. Over the past decade, external examiners have come from Australia, South Africa and the United States. While this has been important in ensuring international quality, a challenge has been a failure by

the University to honour payments to examiners and the reality that remuneration has remained the same since 2000, making it difficult to find willing examiners. This internationalisation strategy was also critical in attracting international students who sought reassurance that their degrees would be recognised on their return to their home countries—in this regard, the value of international validation through the Commonwealth Association of Architects (CAA). It is therefore disappointing that the University administration did not see this as an invaluable part of the programme. Failure to renew accreditation when it came due in 2018 has meant that students graduating since then find it difficult, or in some cases impossible to enter a professional programme outside Uganda. This has become a challenge for students joining the programme, as it was an appeal of the programme with close to 10% of graduates from the undergraduate programme going abroad for further studies. To date, students have taken on architectural degrees in Italy, Lebanon, South Africa, Kenya and the United States of America, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and Sweden.

To be a leader in architectural education, meant ensuring a strong research base in the Faculty. This was one of the most challenging elements to address. However, the refocusing of the Faculty toward ECD did make it easier to build collaborations that fed into some key projects. These included the Energy and Low-Income Tropical Housing (ELITH); Energy Efficiency in Buildings in East Africa (EEBEA); Joint Development of Courses for Energy Efficient and Sustainable Housing in Africa (JENGA), and; Supporting African Municipalities in Sustainable Energy Transitions (SAMSET). These projects have also been critical in enabling collaboration with students in different universities. Out of these and other projects, have come a variety of publications as well as teaching material that fed back into the teaching in the Faculty. Over the past twenty years, the Faculty has published well over 100 books, book chapters, journal articles and conference papers. As research is a core part of the ethos of the Faculty, students undertaking research courses for the honours and master's degrees are encouraged to present at international conferences and publish their findings. Students have participated in several conferences,

including the Passive and Low Energy Architecture (PLEA) Conference (Olweny *et al.*, 2022), the Association of Architectural Educators Conference and more recently, this has extended to journal papers, by Anthony Wako (Wako and Olweny, 2019), and Kafuuma, *et al.* (2022). These publications are a testament to the strategy of having research as a core part of the ethos of the Faculty, with direct links between research undertaken by academic faculty and the research activities of students.

While there have been several achievements in the Faculty, the goal of seeking to excel has, unfortunately, been viewed negatively by some; indeed, in one instance, a question was asked of the Associate Dean, ‘Why do you seek to be the best in Africa?’ The connotation is that we should not aim too high. This view has had the impact of stifling innovation in design, resulting in lost momentum that has impacted the Faculty. The failure to provide the much-needed support bears heavily on the ability of the Faculty to grow. This also affects the staffing, with a failure to offer remuneration at par with qualifications, making it difficult to attract and retain the very staff that students acknowledge are the reason they came to the school in the first place. This is unfortunately a reality of seeking to be different or to do things differently in Uganda, where the drive for innovation and to push the envelope of design, education and research, is a threat to the status quo. Nevertheless, the Faculty of Built Environment has been a valuable contribution to changing perceptions of architectural education and practice across the region.

To date, more than 400 students have graduated from the undergraduate programmes offered by the Faculty of Built Environment (the B.Sc.(BDT)/B.Envi.Des.). The value of the FoBE Mission and Vision is also validated by graduate destinations; many are employed in high-profile positions in the Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA), National Building Review Board (NBRB), UNHabitat and Enabel. Graduates of the B.Envi.Des. have also gone on to undertake further studies in universities across the world, highlighting the value of the broad-based undergraduate programme, and testament to the relevance of the objectives of the Faculty of Built Environment. True to its

insistence on high calibre international quality education, a considerable number of students have continued into further education in a variety of disciplines across the world, with more than 15% of students continuing into a graduate programme, with half of this doing so abroad. This in itself is a testament to the quality of education they received.

An increasing challenge with architectural education is addressing the disparate demands of applicants, many of whom are not very familiar with architecture as a discipline. This was increasingly seen as impacting on the nature of education itself, and how this could be effective. For many students coming into architecture, education was a result of what they perceived architects did—drawing plans—which was only 20% of the task. This perception has also increasingly influenced the intake of students, and while there was a significant and diverse student background in 2008, this is increasingly polarised, with virtually all applicants only doing mathematics, physics and technical drawings, affecting students learning as their perceptions of what they thought was out of step with the reality. To counter this and acknowledge the limitations of high school achievement scores in predicting success in architecture education, the Faculty of Built Environment intake criteria introduced interviews, and an aptitude test (incorporating exercises in problem-solving, interpretation and visualisation).

Conclusion

In the last three decades, UMU has experienced tremendous transformation brought about by growing numbers of her clienteles and the context within which the institution operates, both in terms of national and international policies as well as threats of pandemics like Covid19. Indeed, while the early years were devoted to setting up the systems and infrastructure of the university, where the Registry ended up playing many key roles, the later years are characterized by expansion and refinement of the roles of different academic units. A refinement process continues through paying more attention to compliance with changing guidelines from the regulatory bodies, local and regional competitions, and development of pertinent policies to guide the

process. Accordingly, among top programmes which emerged, agriculture and built environment reflected the new ethos of preparing future graduates and plotted a new way forward for agricultural training and architectural education in Uganda.

Increasingly, the roles of Umu's Registry continue to evolve towards being more strategic in respect of Umu's vision and mission aligned with Uganda Higher Education Sector's ideals that also reflect those of the world at large. For her two selected academic units, Umu created Faculty of Agriculture on the one hand, to respond to national and global needs especially towards the alleviation of household poverty and hunger, through training students to become farmers with ethical values and practical skills for enhancing environmental protection. In this sense, the Faculty of Agriculture also strives to produce a graduate with a capacity to create jobs and with a round knowledge of agriculture that translates into real physical and financial outputs. The Faculty of Agriculture has graduated 2,729 students since its inception in 2000 and boasts of a large number of students compared to other faculties. It also leads with the highest number of projects including World Bank Centre of Excellence in Agroecology and Livelihoods System in Africa and EU funded projects. Among other programmes, the Faculty of Agriculture offers BSc Organic Agriculture, MSc Agroecology and PhD in Agroecology and Food Systems that are pivotal in ecosystems and environment management.

On the other hand, the Faculty of Built Environment intended its focus to be on the need to look at the teaching of architecture as forward-looking, to addressing future concerns, which for the most part is usually unknown or very much unlike what exists at the moment. This meant engaging with the growing concern for Environmentally Conscious Design (ECD), as a pertinent issue in built environment education and practice in both the local and global contexts. Since its inception, the value of the FoBE Mission and Vision has been validated by graduate destinations; many are employed in high-profile positions in the Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA), National Building Review Board (NBRB),

UNHabitat and Enabel. Furthermore, up to 15% of students

graduating on the programme continue to graduate level training at both local and international institutions. To equip learners with advanced knowledge and entrepreneurship skills, Umu is constantly innovating the use of state-of-the-art technologies through blended teaching and learning.

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Statement of no conflict of interest.

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest in this paper.

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