Salaries | Inequalities | Intervention

Varsities strike: Education minister asked to intervene

By Martin Kitubi and Jill Akanshumbusha

The Ministry of Public Service has requested the Minister for Education and Sports, Janet Museveni, who is also the First Lady, to intervene in the ongoing controversy regarding salary enhancement of university staff.

This follows a failed redistribution of salary enhancement that was proposed last week by the education, public service and finance ministries with the intention of resolving the inequalities in the salary structure of senior administrators and support staff at public universities.

The three line ministries had proposed a 40% salary enhancement to teaching and non-academic staff at all public universities, but this has also been rejected.

Allan Muhereza, the assistant commissioner in charge of active payroll at the public service ministry, told *New Vision* yesterday that senior administrative staff rejected the move to offer them a 40% enhancement in favour of the 99% that was released this month.

"Senior administrative officers did not agree to compromise their monies to the support staff, so this explains why we need the intervention of the sector minister," Muhereza said.

By yesterday, only Makerere University Business School (MUBS) senior administrators had accepted to receive a 40% salary increment equal to that of the support staff.

He also explained that failure to harmonise the salary increment, has delayed payment of salaries for July to all university teaching and non-academic staff.

"We have halted processing for salaries for July to university staff; this is because the salary structure that was developed has been contested by support staff," Muhereza said.

Makerere University secretary Charles Barugahare has since written to Makerere University staff appealing to them to wait for the final position from line ministries in regard to salary structure for 2017/2018 to enable payment of salaries.

"This is to inform you that following the circular dated July, 1 2017 from the permanent secretary Ministry of Public Service, the salary processing that had commenced could not proceed due to complaints from NUEI members," the letter reads.

Yesterday, the strike paralysed operations at Makerere and Kyambogo universities, where libraries and colleges remained closed with notices informing students about the stand-off.

However, senior administrative offices remained open with staff attending to huge numbers of recently admitted students picking registration forms .

Speaking to *New Vision*, the Public Universities Non-teaching Staff Executive Forum (PUNTSEF) general secretary, Bruce Twesigye ,demanded an audit of salary enhancements.

Twesigye said this will enable the education ministry to establish if the salary enhancements have been going to the right individuals and fairly in the previous years.



A woman walks past notices of closure on doors of Makerere University main library yesterday. Photo by Lisa Anenocan

BACKGROUND

The non-academic staff have been on a strike for two weeks. They are demanding a salary scale review and redistribution of salary enhancement by the public service ministry. Non-teaching staff include secretaries, librarians, laboratory technicians and cleaners.

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By Simon Mas...

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