

Address challenges of universities

Turning private universities into public universities without addressing the fundamental challenges in these institutions will not make them any better.

They have fundamental issues that were created at inception, where most university founders thought and still think that starting a university is not any different from starting a secondary school.

A university is a heavily resource-based institution in terms of infrastructure, financial and human resources, that require good governance to ensure that proper systems and processes are in place for its success.

There are public institutions such as Makerere University Business School, which has not had a strike in the past 10 years. Uganda Technology And Management University (UTAMU) has built the student numbers to more than 2,000 in four years since inception, and has managed to pay salaries to all its staff by the 24th of every month.

There are also other private universities, which have demonstrated success since inception. What has made these institutions succeed when operating in the same political, social



and economic environment with the struggling institutions? There is some uniqueness in the governance of these institutions. This uniqueness must be explored by both public and private universities.

A good number of private universities are universities in name, but secondary schools in terms of governance, infrastructure and human resources.

Converting a private university into a public university without addressing the fundamental governance challenges will not solve their problems. These struggling converted private universities should be turned into

colleges of well-established public universities that have demonstrated good governance. The well-established systems and processes would then seamlessly be transferred to these colleges for their growth.

Taking an example of South Africa with the biggest economy in Africa and a member of the BRICS and has only 26 public universities. Uganda needs not more than five well facilitated and resourced public universities, plus several specialised colleges under each public university to achieve its development agenda.

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