

Kyambogo Vice Chancellor defends recruitment of Cuban dons

By Nelson Kiva

Kyambogo University has defended the decision to recruit professors from Cuba, saying they are facing problems attracting local academicians.

"We have been advertising, but we could not receive applications because the people with the required requisites are not there," the vice-chancellor, Prof. Eli Katunguka, explained during a press conference in the university boardroom yesterday.

He said the university needs both full and associate professors to provide academic leadership at the institution.

He insisted that there was no connection between the university's move to recruit the Cuban scholars and the proposal by government to hire Cuban doctors.

According to him, at least two professors are required to handle each of the 48 departments at the institution, but the university has only 14 associate professors and two



Prof. Katunguka during a press conference at Kyambogo University yesterday. Photo by Juliet Kasirye

professors including the vice-chancellor. The university, he said, has in the past employed Cuban expatriates.

The vice-chancellor explained that the university's staffing problem worsened after the North Korean professors pulled out of the university. The United Nations imposed

sanctions on North Korea and as a result Uganda was forced to terminate activities of North Koreans in the country.

"Following the termination of the Korean professors and unsuccessful efforts to attract staff at the level of associate and full professors in specialised areas of study, I was directed

BETWEEN THE LINES

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by the appointments board and the university to solicit for such staff," he said.

Katunguka said a team from the university between the month of March and April travelled to Cuba to establish educational collaboration with their government.

"We visited Cuba with the view of searching for prospective scholars from Cuban universities for recruitment into Kyambogo University service in the fields of engineering, science and

education," he said.

Katunguka said the team met officials from six universities as well as officials from the Cuban ministry of higher education.

"The ministry of higher education of Cuba and Kyambogo University agreed to collectively analyse and agree on terms and conditions under which Cuban professors would work," he added.

He said between six and 10 Cuban professors were expected in the country by September and the process was going on to formalise their work in Uganda.

Katunguka said the Cuban academicians would be paid as their Ugandan counterparts who with the enhanced salary

structure would be getting about sh10m.

He added that they have started clearing allowance arrears for staff who went on strike recently by refusing to take part in marking of examinations and supervision of students on both research and school practice over delayed pay.

Over sh4.5b out of the required sh5b had been released to clear the allowance arrears for the period between January to May 2018.

The university is also in the process of outsourcing catering service providers as it moves to stop providing meals to the students. The students will receive a food allowance.



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