

ALL STUDENTS IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS ARE SUPPOSED TO PAY SH20,000 TO NCHE ANNUALLY

BY MARTIN KITUBI

THE NATIONAL Council for Higher Education (NCHE) has warned students at higher institutions of learning against failing to remit their annual contributions of sh20,000, adding that they will not graduate before payment.

According to NCHE, students are required to pay sh20,000 annually for the period spent at a higher institution of learning.

Students are required to pay directly to NCHE's accounts with the different banks operators. However, universities and colleges often claim the money on behalf of NCHE.

On average the council targets to collect about sh5b annually from students in form of contributions, but only sh3b is collected.

Dr Pius Achanga, the head of university unit at NCHE, said several students have graduated over the years from universities, technical institutes and colleges without remitting the funds and this derails the performance of the institution.

"Starting this year, we shall demand a receipt acknowledging payment from students before graduation," he said.

But he declined to reveal students, institutions which have not paid.

Achanga also revealed that all graduates who want to certify their academic papers by the council for job opportunities will be required to present receipts and establish if they paid to the institution.

The national council blames failure to collect the funds on training institutions, which have declined to reveal the exact number of students

Higher education body to block students graduation over fees

enrolled.

Saul Waigolo, the NCHE public relations officer, said the institution would set up a vigorous mechanism to increase compliance of the students and institutions.

"We will also name institutions which have collected monies from students but declined to remit it to the council," he said.

According to the NCHE strategic plan 2017/2018 to 2019/2020, the institution targets to collect sh13.7b in three years with an annual collection of sh4.5b.

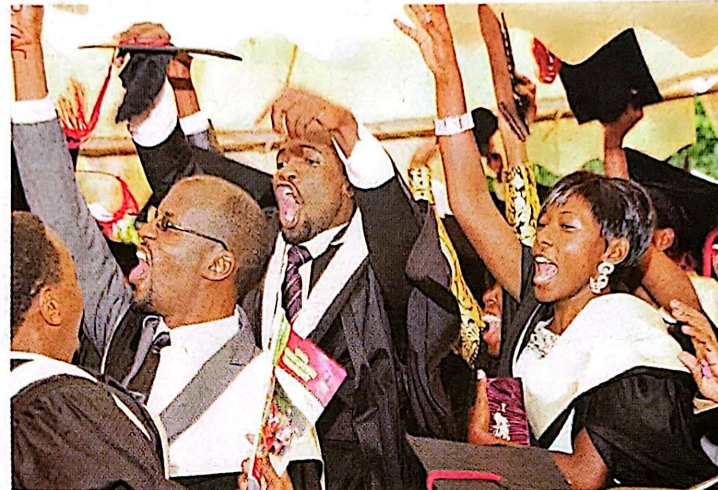
■ ENROLMENT

The December 2017 NCHE report dubbed "the State of Higher Education and Training in Uganda" for the period 2014/2015, which is the latest report on enrolment, highlighted an increase in general enrolment at all higher institutions of learning from 247,473 in 2013/14 to 257,855 in 2014/2015.

On completion, graduation and employment of graduates, NCHE indicated that on average about 94% of students admitted graduate at universities, while about 92% graduate from other tertiary institutions.

Despite the increase in enrolment, NCHE was able to collect not more than sh3b annually as contributions from students.

According to the June 2017 Statement of Cashflows by NCHE, the institution



Makerere University students during a graduation ceremony. All students who do not pay NCHE fees will no longer be allowed to graduate

received sh2.88b as cash contributions from students, a decline from a bout sh2.97b received in 2016.

NCHE has several funding sources, including contribution from government, development partners and disposal of assets used to finance operations.

"We have inadequate funds and yet we are required to monitor progress of all training institutions, especially on accredited courses. All these, among others, need funds and students are not complying," Waigolo said.

■ INSTITUTIONS REACT

Prof. Barnabas Nawangwe, the vice-chancellor of Makerere University, said all their students were required to pay for NCHE before they are registered.

He said before graduation, they are compelled to present all their bank slips, including that of payments made to the council.

"At Makerere, you can't graduate before clearing with NCHE, and it has been our tradition," he said.

Prof. George Nasinyama, the deputy vice-chancellor in charge of research, innovation and extension at Kampala

International University (KIU), said: "We separated the contribution from tuition and all students are required to clear before they graduate."

■ WHAT THE LAW SAYS

NCHE derives powers to collect monies from each student from the 2010 Statutory Instrument Supplement No.12.

The instrument is part of the Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act, which was signed by the then education and sports minister, Geraldine Namirembe Bitamazire.

Section 1, of the instrument

under Funds of the National Council reads: "Funds of the National Council shall include a contribution from each student of one currency point per year, which shall be a pre-condition for student registration and enrolment."

A currency point is equivalent to sh20,000.

And section two says: "The National Council shall hold bank accounts into which students shall pay their annual contribution of the one currency point plus bank charges."

However, Mike Wanyama, the accounts assistant at NCHE, explained that they could not enforce remitting monies before students are enrolled, because some institutions requested to receive the monies on behalf of NCHE and then pay it on behalf of students.

"It would be good for institutions to collect this money on behalf of NCHE because some have no access to banks. It was therefore convenient for institutions to collect it," he explained.

■ PENALTIES

The Act instructs higher institutions of learning not to register any student who has not cleared his or her annual contribution to the NCHE.

The Act warns that an institution which contravenes these regulations commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding one currency point.