

FEATURE ARTICLE

Fifty Years of Generating and Advancing Knowledge: the University of Dar es Salaam's Experience and Outlook for the Years Ahead

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Abstract

The University of Dar es Salaam celebrated its 50th anniversary or its 'Golden Jubilee' on 25 October 2011. The University was founded on 25 October 1961 as a University College, Dar es Salaam, in a special relationship with the University of London. Among the series of celebratory events running up to the climax, was a two-day university-level conference held on 10 and 11 October, on the theme "The University of Dar es Salaam: 50 Years of Advancing Knowledge". One of the six papers presented was based on the research-and-plan-based discussions and decisions reached in the recent past. It begins with a historical note on the foundation of the first and earliest higher institution of learning in the country, highlights the critical moments, landmarks and decisions in the 1980s–90s period, the institutional innovations instituted or attempted, and ends with the outlook for the next fifty years, especially in the area of teaching and research, postgraduate programmes and civic engagement.

Introduction

On 25 October 2011, the University of Dar es Salaam was exactly 50 years old, tracing its foundation back to 25 October 1961. At that time, only two months before Tanzania's independence, this institution was founded as a University College 'in a special relationship' with the University of London of the United Kingdom, along the same tradition followed previously by Khartoum University College of the Sudan in 1947, the University College of the Gold Coast of Ghana in 1948, University College of Ibadan of Nigeria in 1948 and Makerere University College of Uganda in 1949. All these university colleges had a special relationship with the same London University system.

The University College, Dar es Salaam, had actually begun as the University College of Tanganyika, but the name was changed immediately thereafter. It is recalled, obviously with fond memories, that the founder-statesmen in the national political mass movements—particularly TANU, the Government and academia—made this happen at the time it happened.

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In fact, the timing in October 1961 had actually been brought forward by some three years from the originally planned date of 1964. The new target date of 1961 was prompted by the nationalists' insistence on the pressing need for higher education for Tanzanians 'sooner rather than later'. The post-event explanations by Mwalimu Julius Nyerere tell it all:

This college has been started in a rush. Recommendations for opening a University College in Tanganyika had put a much later date than the operative one, but my Government felt that this was a matter of the highest educational priority. It has been said that this was a political decision. It was. (Nyerere, 1966, p.130).

The details of nationalist pressure for higher education, decision-making processes to bring forward the start date, the search for land and construction of a university college within a short space in time for independence, are all amply recorded by historians in a recently published book *In Search of Relevance: A History of the University of Dar es Salaam* (2008), edited by Kimambo, Mapunda and Lawi. The book and the narrations are both telling and quite interesting.

Given the important milestone of a 50-year anniversary of an institution such as the University of Dar es Salaam, it is pertinent to look at where one is coming from, where one is going to, and how one plans to get there in the most efficient and most effective way. The question, in other words, is: What role was the University supposed to play and what did it do? And, what would it like to see happen in the 50 years ahead – not only as a fountain and propeller of knowledge but also as a distinctive pan-African institution of higher learning?

A balance sheet

The period from 1961 to the mid-1970s (see Table 1) seems to have sailed through fairly easily, with glorious years of brick-laying in terms of the newly-found esteem of a "Western-type" academic apex-institution established on African indigenous soil, happily competing for and offering knowledge and insights blended with indigenously interpreted issues of importance – for which a distinct "Dar es Salaam School of Thought" developed in the different disciplinary centres of teaching and research, such as in History, Political Science, Law, and the East African Society course (which was subsequently renamed Development Studies). It was a happy moment of distinctive curriculum development in African indigenous perspectives and branding (Bown, 2000: 79-83; Kimambo, Mapunda and Lawi, 2008: esp. Chapters 6 and 7).

Table 1: Selected innovations and changes in the growth of UDSM, 1961-73

Year	Major Developments	Government budget subvention trend (%)
1961	Foundation of the University College Dar es Salaam with ◆ Faculty of Law in temporary premises in the City of Dar es Salaam	100
1964	Establishment of ◆ Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS) at University Hill ◆ Institute of Kiswahili Research	≈100
1965	Faculty of Science opened	≈100
1968	Faculty of Medicine established out of the Dar es Salaam Medical School	≈100
1969	Establishment of the Faculty of Agriculture, out of the College of Agriculture Morogoro, within the University College Dar es Salaam System	≈100
1970	University of Dar es Salaam established as an autonomous national institution	≈100
1973	Establishment of ◆ Faculty of Engineering ◆ The Institute of Development Studies	≈100

Sources: UDSM Archives, annual reports and records (various)

Note: Government subvention during this “formative period” was fully or ≈ 100 percent.

From the mid-1970s well into the late 1980s, the years of honeymoon and flamboyance had for the most part passed, leaving behind a period of hard times and uncertainty in the face of financial doldrums, a greying institutional infrastructure and waning public enthusiasm, among other woes. This decade, especially from 1989 well into the 1990s, will be remembered to have been a terrible decade – characterised by a highly curtailed public subvention (see Table 2), diminished teaching-learning resources such as laboratory apparatus, chemicals, even chalk in the classroom; essential textbooks in the library and bookshops. In the meantime, the book grant was being turned by students into alternative uses for survival. It became a prime time for looting of the university library or else vandalising its stock in the bookshelves. In short, it was a decade that forced people into abandoning the core-mission activities of the University in search of survival elsewhere, such as in private transportation business, chicken rearing, and even (in a few though rare cases) into misdirecting the meagre research funds into private house-construction or dairy-cow keeping to make ends meet.

Table 2: Selected innovations and changes in the growth of UDSM, 1979-91

Year	Major Developments	Government budget subvention trend (%)
1979	Establishment of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The Institute of Marine Sciences in Zanzibar ◆ The Faculty of Commerce and Management out of the Department of Management and Administration of FASS 	n.a
1982	Establishment of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Institute of Resource Assessment out of the Bureau of Resource Assessment and Land Use Planning (BRALUP) of FASS ◆ Institute of Production Innovation (IPI) though it had existed in practice since 1979 	n.a
1984	Conversion and upgrading of the Faculty of Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Science into an autonomous Sokoine University of Agriculture.	77.8 (1985/6)
1989	Formation of the Faculty of Education out of the former Department of Education of FASS	53.9 (1989/90)
1991	Upgrading of Faculty of Medicine into the Muhimbili University College of Health Sciences (MUCHS)	39.7 (1991/92)

Sources: UDSM Archives, annual reports and records (various); University of Dar es Salaam Bursar (Finance Office)

Notes: From the mid-1970s, Government subvention to the University's budget began to wane or else to fluctuate.

n.a = Data not available

One would take this to have, perhaps, been the darkest of times for the University of Dar es Salaam, associated with the lowest ebb of knowledge generation, which ushered in heavy dependency on externals, even for simple formulae that could have been discovered by the University's own indigenous research endeavours. The academics had become so '*lumpen*' (of the proletariat), so to say, that the first-order responsibility and priority of knowledge creation and knowledge advancement had slipped off the agenda and out of mind.

The situation of institutional life, as described above, has now passed for the most part. But one can still say that the nasty part of that situation added to the experience and lessons in the search for a 'problem solution.' People say that 'you will never find a way unless you face a problem or come to a crisis situation—when you begin to think harder and further so as to get out of the shell in which you are locked'. The statement is surely not untrue.

The two decades of the mid-1990s to the 2000s seem, by all accounts, to have provided a respite and to have made a difference from the past. Some three years prior to 1994 had involved the University community in critical reflection and ‘soul-searching’ on the afflicting woes, as well as in strategic thinking on the need to plan for its future, along with a rethinking and redefinition of priorities for purposes of institutional transformation (renewal and change) and better modalities of knowledge creation and knowledge advancement. In 1994, the University’s Governing Council approved the University’s first-ever *Corporate Strategic Plan* (UDSM, 1994). Strategic planning is, by definition, “a process by which members of an organisation envision its future and develop necessary procedures and operations to achieve that future” (Pfeiffer, Goodstein & Nolan, 1986). Such strategic planning—serving as the basis for institutional transformation—has since targeted all aspects of the University’s institutional life and touched upon all key objectives of the University’s three-fold core mission of (i) teaching, (ii) research and (iii) public service. Innovations, changes and adaptations instituted within the University over the now 18-year period of corporate planning are illustrated in Table 3:

Table 3: Selected innovations and changes in the post-1994 growth of UDSM

Year	Major Developments	Government subvention trend (%)
1991-3	Institutional review workshops and planning seminars	39.7 (1991/92)
1993	Establishment of a University Consultancy Bureau (UCB)	37.6 (1993/94)
1994	Corporate Strategic Plan (CSP) approved by University Council: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Guided by Steering Committee chaired by VC ○ Executed/monitored on an everyday basis by Programme Management Unit (PMU) 	28.9 (1994/95)
1994-8	Implementation Committee appointed to study, analyse, recommend and follow up, university-wide, on cost-cutting and income-generating measures for the University	n.a
1995	Installation of a full Internet system and connectivity (following an e-mail system installation in 1992/93/94)	n.a
1996	The former Ardhi Institute upgraded into a University College of Lands & Architectural Studies (UCLAS) as a constituent college of the University of Dar es Salaam	n.a
1998	Income-Generating Unit (IGU) established as an operational part of the UDSM management structure, dedicated to cost cutting and income-generation measures. Academic Audit of the University	n.a
1999	Reconstitution/chartering of the University Computing Centre into the University Computing Centre Limited	n.a
2001	Disestablishment of the Faculty of Engineering and the Institute of	

	<p>Production Innovation and establishment of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Prospective College of Engineering and Technology (pCET), with new Faculties of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Civil Engineering and the Built Environment (CEBE); ○ Mechanical and Chemical Engineering (MECHE); and ○ Electrical and Computer Systems Engineering (ECSE); ◆ University of Dar es Salaam Entrepreneurship Centre (UDEC) established ◆ Mabibo Hostel opened (to accommodate expanding student enrolment) 	<p>54% (2001/02)</p>
2002	<p>Establishment of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Faculty of Aquatic Sciences and Technology (FAST) ◆ Directorate of Planning and Development (DPD) ◆ Centre for Continuing Education (CCE) 	<p>58% (2002/03)</p>
2003	<p>Establishment of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ the African Virtual University (AVU) Learning Centre ◆ Institute of Journalism and Mass Communication (IJMC) ◆ Directorate of Student Services (DSS) 	<p>57% (2003/04)</p>
2004	<p>IGU elevated to a Directorate of Investments and Resource Mobilization (DIRM)</p>	<p>57% (2004/05)</p>
	<p>Establishment of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Faculty of Informatics and Virtual Education (FIVE) ◆ Directorate of Undergraduate Studies (DUS) ◆ Directorate of Investments and Resource Mobilization (DIRM) ◆ Directorate of Human Resources Management (DHRM) 	
	<p>Second Academic Audit of UDSM</p>	
2005	<p>Following the Universities Act of 2005,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ MUCHS and UCLAS hived off UDSM to become autonomous national universities 	<p>52% (2005/06)</p>
	<p>Establishment of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Dar es Salaam University College of Education (DUCE) - September 2005 ◆ Mkwawa University College of Education (MUCE) - September 2005 ◆ Campus College of Engineering and Technology (CoET) - October 2005 	
2006	<p>Mlimani City Project (consisting of shopping complex and conference centre) launched on University land</p>	<p>42% (2006/07)</p>
	<p>Establishment of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ School of Graduate Studies - August 2006 	
2007	<p>Overall structural reorganization of the University – among other changes, disestablishing ‘Faculties’ and reconstituting them into either ‘Colleges’ or</p>	

	'Schools' within the nomenclature.	
	Rescinding of the School of Graduate Studies and reinstating the Directorate of Postgraduate Studies structure and system	63% (2007/08)
2010	Launching of two on-line degree programmes, using well-developed e-learning facilities, digitised material and UCC regional centres <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) ◆ Master of Engineering Management (MEM) 	63% (2009/10)
2011	College of Information and Communication Technology (CoICT) established merging together former School of Informatics and Communication Technology and Department of Computer Science, offering e-learning and blended undergraduate, and postgraduate diploma and degree programmes.	53% (2010/11)

Sources: UDSM Archives; *UDSM Facts and Figures* (various years from 1995/96-2009/10); various annual reports and records. n.a = Data not available

Six principal things in the result areas could be mentioned in a positive evaluation of the strategic planning-cum-implementation process conducted by the University in the last eighteen years from 1994 to 2011 as follows:

1. Cost-cutting and income-generation ventures (Chungu, 2004);
2. Academic auditing (academic self-evaluation) – in 1998, 2004 and 2011² (Nkunya & Ishumi, 2003; UDSM, 2005);
3. Information and communication technology (ICT) and its ramifications for teaching-learning and research programmes (UCC, 1995; UDSM, 2005);
4. Student enrolment expansion (Mashalla & Ishumi, 2005);
5. Gender-balancing and mainstreaming policies and practice (Mashalla & Ishumi, 2005; Mukangara, 2009); and
6. A university-wide alumni tracer study for academic improvement (Mkude & Ishumi, 2004).

These, singly or collectively, are reflected upon in a fine story told by one of the University's architects of strategic corporate planning and a well-recognised institution-builder (Luhanga, 2009: Chaps 4-7). Three of these—i.e. 2, 3 and 6—are directly related and supportive of knowledge creation and knowledge advancement at the highest level of institutional academic and intellectual activity towards rejuvenation and change. The other three elements (1, 4 and 5) have a macro-level focus on the navigational, supportive or else corrective impact on the knowledge-creating function of the institution.

² From 21-29 May and again from 21 - 27 August 2011, the University was subjected to a comprehensive 'academic auditing' by a Chancellor's Visitation Panel consisting of an international group of five senior academicians and experienced administrators from Ghana, Malaysia, the United Kingdom, the University of Dar es Salaam and Tanzania's Ministry of Communications, Science and Technology.

Future Outlook and the University Role in Further Advancing Knowledge for the Next 50 Years

Renewed thinking has emerged since 2006 regarding ways by which the University role can be further enhanced in anticipation of future developments (UDSM, 2004). These future developments include:

- a. A continued and perhaps more dramatic increase in the country's secondary school population, against a proportionally smaller number of teachers available;
- b. A substantially expanded university student enrolment (even if it may still be lower than the levels at Nairobi in Kenya and Makerere in Uganda);
- c. A substantially increased number of higher education institutions established—currently as many as eight public universities, three public university colleges, nine private universities, nine private university colleges, as well as more than 14 non-university tertiary education institutions (TCU, 2010/11, pp. iv-v); and
- d. Growing and keen competition among university institutions within the country, as well as between these and university institutions in neighbouring countries, for student enrolment.

Against these conspicuous challenges, the University of Dar es Salaam has been thinking strategically and identifying ways it can prepare itself for such eventualities. Suffice it to summarise here what the University is doing, or is planning to do, to meet some of the challenges.

(I) Undergraduate training for leadership in human resource staffing (teacher preparation) for schools

- ◆ The University of Dar es Salaam is still looked upon as a major source in the production of the nation's graduate secondary school teachers. Through its constituent Colleges of Education at Dar es Salaam and Mkwawa, the University will have to continue to enrol candidates with this goal in mind — i.e. it will have to continue to supply graduate teachers for an ever-increasing number of public and private secondary schools, which currently number around 4,260, with a total enrolment of more than 1.6 million pupils, and yet with an estimated deficit of secondary school teachers standing at 22,500 for the total school system (MoEVT 2010, pp. 57-62)³. The University was accepting this implicit obligation when the Government transferred ownership to the University of its College at Chang'ombe in Dar es Salaam and the school at Mkwawa in Iringa for upgrading and transformation into university college status.

³ Secondary schools have increased from 1,202 in 2005 to 2,300 in 2006 to 4,260 in 2011. Total pupil enrolment has increased from 675,000 in 2006 to 1,638,699 in 2011 (MoEVT 2010: 57-62). The average strictly qualified-teacher-to-pupil ratio for both public and private schools stands at 1:51, while, with the 8,836 untrained/unqualified 'teachers' in the system, the teacher-pupil ratio stands at 1:30 (ibid: 77), indicating a growing staff shortage from 10,000 in 2006 to more than 22,500 in 2011.

It should also be remembered that we now have a new category of public-community secondary schools—ward schools, or “shule za kata”—with a new set of additional problems and challenges.

- ◆ In connection with this challenge, the School of Education at the Main Campus is to assume a dual role. It has to augment the production of school personnel by offering more *specialised university-level courses* that cannot be offered by the two colleges (DUCE and MUCE) in their current setup but which are relevant and critical to secondary education provision (courses such as Physical Education and Sport Science [PESS] as well as adult and community education studies) *in addition to* servicing the campus Colleges of Science and Arts and Social Sciences in producing secondary school teachers.

(II) Postgraduate training – at both the Master’s and Doctoral degree level

In principle, postgraduate programmes (at the masters’ and doctoral levels) are currently offered by all colleges and schools, and by the three institutes (IDS, IRA and IMS) in addition to the Library. They have been running for a long time, and have been growing in terms of student enrolment numbers and graduate output. While this development is being further urged by the University, these campus colleges and schools, particularly the School of Education, have an even bigger obligation. They are supposed to concentrate on more specialised graduate training of higher-level personnel—of Masters and Doctoral qualifications—in order to:

- ◆ staff the many and various higher education institutions in the country such as DUCE, MUCE, various other colleges, schools and institutes within the University; and
- ◆ staff the newer, younger and principally undergraduate universities and other university institutions in the country (e.g. the University of Dodoma, Tumaini University, St Augustine University, Mount Meru University, Zanzibar State University, National Institute of Transport, Dar es Salaam Institute of Technology, Institute of Finance Management, College of Business Education, etc, etc).

A dedicated School of Graduate Studies had been created within the University structure in 2006, but the structural re-organisation of the University in 2008 reinstated the previous Directorate of Postgraduate Studies. In no case, however, has this affected the need and tempo of enrolling and supervising the increasing numbers of postgraduate students, as Table 4 demonstrates:

Table 4: Postgraduate student enrolment at UDSM, 2005/06-2009/10

Gender	2005/2006	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Female	504	683	780	712	864
Male	1,229	1,893	2,110	1,840	1,741
Total	1,733	2,576	2,890	2,552	2,605
% Female	29%	27%	27%	28%	33%

Source: *UDSM Facts and Figures* (March 2011)

It is anticipated that the provision of University education and student enrolment at the UDSM would progressively and eventually arrive at a proportion of 30-40%graduate to 60-70% undergraduate, making it more of a postgraduate research university. It is one of the plausible targets for the next 50 years. We believe that, as several public and private university institutions take on more candidates for undergraduate training, the value-added effect on the University of Dar es Salaam's postgraduate programmes would demonstrate itself at both institutional and national level in terms of graduating more specialised personnel for the many undergraduate and postgraduate training institutions in the country.

It is a philosophical insight that goes into rationalising the deliberate levelling-off of the undergraduate student enrolment at around 19,000 per year while stepping up postgraduate enrolment figures, now standing at a total of 2,605 (2009/10)⁴. Newly registered postgraduate students in the 2010/11 academic year amounted to 1,087 (117 for the postgraduate Diploma, 881 for Master's and 89 for PhD). Obviously, there is a long way to go, but the ball is in our court. We have to think more about what strategies would turn this into reality. One of the strategies may relate to the delivery mode.

(III) Orientation Towards Doctoral Taught-Programmes [PhD by Coursework-and-Dissertation] at the UDSM

Since 1967 or thereabouts, the University has been offering PhDs by research and thesis. The trend of enrolment and numbers involved have been very small—from about five in 1970/71, to less than 15 in 1975/76, less than 100 in the mid-1980s, about 100 in 1993/94, around 150 by 2005/06, 283 by June 2009, and about 300 in 2010/11. Over time, the rate of matriculation for doctoral programmes became largely superseded by that of the masters' programme, especially where departments and faculties had adopted or concentrated on offering the master's degree by coursework-and-dissertation.

Although at the University level a doctoral taught-programme (PhD by coursework-and-dissertation) was recommended as early as 1985 (by an external examiner to the then Department of Education), such a programme came to be adopted at university level by the Department of Economics in 2002. In 2010, eight years later, the Department of Political Science and Public Administration followed suit. These are only two departments in the myriad of university academic departments that we have. A dramatic difference could be made if these, too, followed suit.

A shift to this kind of programme delivery mode (the taught-course programme) has been justified by several considerations such as:

- ◆ The older mode—i.e. the PhD by research-and-thesis—is a slower process which, at the same time, does not enable a critical number of candidates to begin and finish within a relatively predictable duration of time. It remains 'highly individualised', depending only

⁴ UDSM *Facts and Figures, 2009/10* (March 2011: 11).

on individual readiness for registration and with highly unpredictable chances of eventual completion of the study programme.

- ◆ The programme is highly circumscribed on the theoretical part, with a consequent limitation on exposure to thinking of issues and choice of possible research topics occasioned by a highly circumscribed intellectual-theoretical exposure.
- ◆ On the other hand, the taught-programme exposes the candidate to both the theoretical discussion (based on wider reading in a formally prescribed course) and to a grasp of widely interconnected issues within a disciplinary framework of a series of taught courses and a wide menu of researchable issues connected to a theoretical base for field investigation. The field research itself is then well grounded in a well-mastered research-methodology course. It also, therefore, rests on adequate practice with data analysis tools.
- ◆ In such a taught-course environment, a critical number of those who enter the programme are enabled to come out of a consciously-packaged and time-defined programme. And this is essential with respect to the need for producing critical numbers to supply human resources for the many universities and other higher-education institutions where a deficit in staffing is almost endemic.

It is, thus, hoped that as many colleges, schools and departments as possible within the University will follow suit in initiating the PhD taught-programme. Already, a first step has been taken by the University to help Colleges, Schools and Institutes to begin developing this particular programme mode. On the whole, the University is looking forward to more doctoral candidates embarking on this mode of postgraduate training.

(IV) A Case for a Student Centre

This matter may seem not to be related to knowledge production and advancement; however, one would be wrong to think so.

What is a Student Centre, and why a Student Centre? A University Student Centre is both a physical and a virtual location, or place, designed to facilitate access by university students to information on programmes and events, group or collective amenities and facilities and any other vital thing necessary for a fuller orientation on campus, for greater knowledge by the students about their university, as well as for a detailed knowledge of, and identification with, the times, schedules and everyday events that take place within the university. A University Student Centre is, in other words, a focal point for community life at a university. It is a centre “more than just a physical place” for students to be furnished with information, which is “more than just a virtual place”, where they can physically meet and relax and reflect with a minimum of the tensions that arise from the daily schedules and routines of academic life. A University Student Centre is supposed to be a combination of work, leisure, relaxation and more reflective and productive thinking; and this is where the issue of knowledge generation and knowledge advancement relates directly to mind that are at peace to think more creatively and more innovatively. I should not belabour the definition, but will simply provide two major reasons

why the University is pushing the matter as one of the flagship ideas at the opportune moment of celebrating the past 50 years and welcoming the next 50-year phase of the University.

i. The need for a student centre or venue to sit, rest, relax and think more creatively. In spite of its long 50-year history, the University does not have such a Centre. Possibly, it may not have been very necessary, say in the 1980s and 1990s, when the size of the student body was still fairly small—around 3,500 in the 1994/95 and 1995/96 academic years! Such a student number, then, could probably be comfortably accommodated by such facilities as the Dean of Students’ Office, the Student Union office and their Halls of Residence. The same cannot be said today. The story began to change when the University decided to be more proactive in expanding student enrolment and admitting increasing numbers of qualified applicants as from 1994—thanks to the Institutional Transformation Programme and thanks also to the University’s growing sensitivity to issues of equity in educational access. The numbers have since then grown at a ‘geometrical’ rate of progression, as is indicated in Table 5:

Table 5: Student enrolment growth trend, 1997/98 - 2009/10

1997/98	1998/99	2000/01	2002/03	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2008/09	2009/10
4,807	5,047	6,691	10,860	11,768	13,463	14,402	19,718	19,110

Source: *UDSM Facts and Figures*, various years.

Against such an increasing student enrolment, all seven halls of residence on campus provide accommodation space for only 2,623 students. The largest hostel facility available for UDSM students at Mabibo and four smaller off-campus areas provide living space for another 4,445 students, who in terms of academic programme attendance, are termed “day students”. These 4,445 students, together with many others who have to look for accommodation elsewhere within the surrounding community outside the campus, are by the very same definition the majority of students who live off-campus and have virtually nowhere to “sit-rest-relax-or-think-more-creatively” for all the hours of the day outside of class time (outside lectures, seminars, or tutorials) and away from food-vending outlets. These form a proportion of more than 80 percent and are students virtually in an unsettled (turbulent) state throughout the waking hours of the day. This state of affairs seems to raise, perhaps, the most urgent need for a student centre at the main campus.

ii. The need for a one-stop student information and services centre. Apart from normal academic schedules often published in *Calendars* and *Prospectuses*, there are numerous pieces of information and announcements for which different offices within the University need student attention for a fast response and smooth flow of academic and administrative business. Attention is required on such diverse matters as information on new or ongoing course programmes; applications for scholarships; deadlines for certain application forms; availability

or non-availability of University hostel rooms for immediate student response or action, and so on almost *ad infinitum*.

Quick and time-sensitive services needed by students include photocopying, printing, stationery such as paper, pens, highlighters, rubbers and correcting fluid, notebooks and many other items. In short, there is an obvious need for a “one-stop centre” for the kind of information inlets/outlets, services and facilities that would make the life of a student much easier and comfortable for effective learning. With a student centre, one could attend to several things at the same time and, thereby, save time from walking long distances in different directions in search of one or two of the many needs.

Examples of a “one-stop service” student centre are provided by the Universities of London, York, Bath and the City University of London (in the UK); the University of Toronto, Brock University, McMaster and Carleton University (in Canada); the University of Singapore (Singapore); the Universities of Sydney, Queensland and Adelaide (in Australia); and the University of Texas and Indiana (in the US). These examples of universities with a student centre have been known to have relieved much of the anxiety of their students and added to visible evidence of factors of comfort in learning and creativity in knowledge production and application (see for instance Neary and Winn, 2009).

Conclusion

In summary, one can say that the future outlook of the University’s mission is intimately tied up with the four initiatives taken, or to be taken up, as recounted above, namely (a) undergraduate training for supplying secondary school teachers and related educational human resources, (b) a steep rise in enrolment in postgraduate training, (c) a move towards taught doctoral programmes (with comprehensive exams), and (d) a drive for a Student Centre. These add up to *some* of the moves we, the University, should aim at for *repositioning* ourselves not only in terms of generating and advancing knowledge at the Hill to an even more visible level but also in terms of advancing the spirit and universality of the intellectual industry of a Pan-African university that should aim at re-asserting a distinct African personality and confidence. As Ambassador Dr. Juma Mwapachu rightly put it, the defining challenge of our universities is “striking an effective but delicate balance between the philosophical role of the university and the expectation of it as a strategic driver of Africa’s excellence in management, innovation, leadership and competitiveness” (Mwapachu, 2011, p.13).

Notwithstanding a few—and inevitable—shortcomings they pointed out, the Chancellor’s Visitation Panel, which recently audited the University’s activities, commended the University for some of the bold decisions it has taken towards strengthening its hold on the moral principle of a renewed effort and stewardship for creating a better learning environment for the advancement of knowledge for posterity:

It must be noted that the UDSM over the years has had to grapple with challenges of autonomy, inadequacies of funding, lack of human resources, political and economic

changes as well as relevance. It has braved many of these successfully.... Today, the UDSM can boast of a number of achievements against ... constraints. ... What is important to note is that top universities are able to provide an environment that fosters prolific, cutting-edge research and technology transfer, publications in leading journals and quality, highly-sought graduates. ... For this to happen the UDSM must build upon its recognised strengths so that it becomes an education hub attracting large numbers of highly qualified talent... (Chancellor's Visitation Panel, 2011, pp. 81-82).

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