

## **PRESS STATEMENT BY CONCERNED STAFF OF THE UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA (UEW)**

**For Immediate Release! Thursday, 1<sup>st</sup> June, 2023.**

### **Introduction**

It is said that, a goat does not bleed to death at childbirth while there is an elderly person in the house. It is on the basis of this well established and recognized adage, that we the Concerned Staff of the University of Education, Winneba (UEW), have taken this bold step (knowing very well the consequences) to put some unhealthy developments at UEW in the public domain, which, if action is not taken immediately to put a stop to, would lead to chaos in the University.

We therefore seek to draw the attention of the general public, and the President of the Republic in particular, His Excellency Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, to these happenings, i.e., total disregard for constitutional and other conventions in UEW, which continue to mar the peaceful atmosphere of the University. We are particularly worried about the actions and inactions of the Chairman of the Governing Council, Nana Ofori Ansah I, whose continuous autocratic tendencies, coupled with his arbitrary disregard for laid down procedures in the running of the University, has led to heightened tension in the University, which can explode at any moment. This bizarre approach to the running of UEW, is clearly manifested in the appointment of the next Vice-Chancellor (VC) of UEW.

### **Background**

On 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2015, Professor Mawutor Avoke, was appointed the Vice-Chancellor (VC) of UEW. His appointment followed a thorough and meticulous procedure, including the formation of a Search Committee whose Report subsequently led to the appointment of Professor Avoke as the VC. Unfortunately, in July 2017, certain events in UEW culminated in the removal of Prof Avoke from office. Subsequently, Rev. Fr. Prof. Anthony Afful-Broni, was appointed to succeed Prof. Avoke. Prior to the end of Rev. Fr. Prof. Afful-Broni's tenure as VC of UEW, in accordance with the Statutes of UEW, a Search Committee was constituted to search for a new Vice-Chancellor. The Committee finished its work in August, 2021, and just at the point of submitting its Report to the Governing Council to consider and appoint the next VC, court processes were served on the University. The writ, among other claims, sought an injunction against the University Governing Council from receiving and discussing the said Report. As a

result, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Pro-VC) was appointed to act as VC from 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2021, as stipulated by the University Statutes.

On Wednesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> February, 2022, the Winneba High Court ruled that Prof. Avoke be reinstated as VC of UEW until he attains the mandatory retirement age of 60 years. The UEW Governing Council in compliance with the decision of the court, proceeded to appoint Prof. Avoke as VC of UEW with effect from 7<sup>th</sup> February, 2022 to 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2023.

Even though this ruling to a greater extent appeared awkward and suspicious to many in the University Community, however, in the interest of peace, almost everyone kept mute. The UEW Governing Council itself decided not to appeal against the ruling and suspended the implementation of the 2021 Search Committee Report till further notice, arguing that the matter was before court. A matter that UEW for whatever reason, never entered an appearance.

In a few months' time, Prof. Avoke, will be ending his tenure as VC of UEW, thereby necessitating the implementation of the 2021 Search Committee Report. The crux of the matter is that the University has blatantly refused to file any response to the vexatious writ against the Council receiving and discussing the said Report since it was filed in 2021.

In an attempt to pronounce a 'death penalty' on the 2021 Search Committee Report, on 19<sup>th</sup> May, 2023, the University Council under the Chairmanship of Nana Ofori Ansah I, announced the formation of a new Search Committee, which invariably will seek to set aside the existing Search Committee Report, thereby, effectively extinguishing the hopes of the two (2) Professors recommended by the said Report for the position of VC of UEW. Is this the reward of years of hard work and service to UEW and Ghana at large?



## **Nana Ofori Ansah I leadership in UEW**

1. The UEW Governing Council Chairman, Nana Ofori Ansah I, has demonstrated gross leadership weakness since he was sworn into office in August 2021. On 1<sup>st</sup> March, 2022, barely seven (7) months after having been sworn in, the local branches of the University Teachers Association of Ghana (UTAG) and the Ghana Association of University Administrators (GAUA), issued a joint Press Statement calling on the President of the Republic and the appointing authority to withdraw his appointment as Council Chairman of UEW. This call was necessitated by what the Unions referred to as his 'bulldozer' approach in Council proceedings.
2. Since he took office as Council Chairman of UEW in 2021, his administration has nurtured uneasiness and further nursed and grew adequate plans to destabilize the peace of UEW. For instance, at his maiden meeting with some faculty members, the Council Chairman is alleged to have openly declared that a section of the staff of UEW have in the past, enjoyed certain privileges and that it was high time for others to enjoy same. Is this how a public university is run? This raises concerns about his ability to play the role of a peacemaker. The Council Chairman is clearly bereft of ideas in the running of a university. Indeed, he has demonstrated beyond every reasonable doubt that he has very minimal insights into and appreciation of the operations of a public university.
3. Nana Ofori Ansah I, has tacitly been running UEW in a way that he would not even run his household. He has on many occasions disregarded UEW Statutes and other laid down and established procedures of the University. A typical example is the manner in which the University Chancellor was appointed. The Council, for whatever reasons that are yet to be given, extended the deadline for the search of the Chancellor (when there was absolutely no need for the extension, since the Committee had received nominations in excess of the number stipulated by the University Statutes for recommendation) in order to pave way for him to nominate his preferred candidate. Magically, even though his preferred candidate was sixth on the Search Committee's list; how his preferred candidate became third and was subsequently shortlisted, still begs for answers. Without shame, when the Chancellor Search Committee Report was tabled for discussion at a recent Council Meeting, it was the Council Chairman who moved for the acceptance of his preferred candidate who was third on the list.

It is against all the established rules and conventions that a Council Chairman would move for the acceptance of a candidate who performed abysmally in an interview.

### **Our Concerns**

It beats one's imagination as to why the Council Chairman against all odds, is feeling reluctant to implement an already existing Search Committee Report, but is bulldozing his way (as is usual of him), to constitute another Search Committee (unnecessary financial burden on the State) which will ultimately lead to chaos in UEW.

We have decided to place emphasis on the Council Chairman because he has betrayed the trust and confidence bestowed on him by the President of the Republic, and therefore, ought to be immediately removed from office. The entire UEW Governing Council as currently constituted, ought to be dissolved immediately, if peace is to prevail in the University.

Besides the aforementioned, Nana Ofori Ansah 1 has demonstrated that it is either his way or no other way. In a recent meeting with the leadership of UTAG UEW and GAUA UEW on the way forward regarding the search for the next VC of UEW, the Council Chairman was emphatic that he wasn't interested in the 2021 Search Committee Report, since in his opinion, the said Report was moot because of the frivolous injunction application against it. Wasn't there an injunction application against the Pro-VC election held on 17<sup>th</sup> March, 2023, and yet the University went ahead with the election and the Council subsequently appointed Prof. Victor Antwi as Pro-VC based on the outcome of the 17<sup>th</sup> March, 2023 election?

The double standards of the Council Chairman regarding the appointment of the next VC of UEW is further exposed in the advert for the position of VC of UEW. At the Council Meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> May, 2023, two (2) senior positions at UEW were tabled for discussion, thus, the upcoming vacant position of VC and the current vacant position of Principal of the College for Distance & e-Learning (CODeL). The fundamental question is, why weren't the two (2) positions (VC & Principal, CODeL) advertised on the same 19<sup>th</sup> May, 2023 after the Council Meeting? Under normal circumstances, the current vacant position should have been advertised first (advertised on 29<sup>th</sup> May, 2023), ten (10) clear days after the advertisement of the upcoming VC position. A position that is vacant and occupied by someone in an acting capacity (Principal, CODeL), and a position occupied by a substantive person and yet to



expire in just over three (3) months' time (VC, UEW), which of these is more urgent to take steps to fill?

Still on the 2021 Search Committee Report, a similar legal issue regarding the acceptance and discussing a Search Committee Report arose at the University of Ghana, Legon (UG) in 2021, just before the UEW issue manifested. However, in the case of UG, the Council appointed the candidate who placed first on the Search Committee Report to act as VC until the matter was disposed off in court. After the final determination of the issue in court, this candidate who was appointed to act was subsequently appointed the substantive VC. If the Council Chairman of UEW, Nana Ofori Ansah I, had the interest of UEW and Ghana at heart, he would have followed the path earlier charted by UG, and not throw UEW into the current uncharted waters. Therein lies the hollowness of the Council Chairman's stand against implementing the 2021 Search Committee Report.

On the flip side of the coin, whilst agreeing with the Council Chairman's admission that he is clueless about the running of a university (grounds for his immediate removal from office as Chairman of the UEW Governing Council), it is important to reiterate that the said injunction application that he constantly refers to, is a figment of his imagination; primarily raised by him to further his selfish and destructive agenda against UEW.

It will interest you to know that this Chairman, who takes delight in manipulating every given situation to suit his whims and caprices, was at his usual modus operandi at the recent Investiture of the Chancellor. His posture and maneuverings, both covert and overt, made it obvious that he was bent on imposing a certain Prof. Stephen Mitchual on UEW as its VC from 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2023, paradoxically, using the same 2021 Search Committee Report, in which Mitchual was not even short-listed by the Committee Chaired by Prof. Philip Ebow Bondzi-Simpson.

On 21<sup>st</sup> April, 2023, during the visit of President Nana Akufo-Addo to UEW on the occasion of the Investiture of the Chancellor, the unseen hand manipulating the Council Chairman to destroy UEW, informally introduced Prof. Mitchual to the President and proceeded to assert that in a few weeks' time, he (Mitchual) will be appointed as the new VC of UEW. This assertion, indeed, was based on the same 2021 Search Committee Report (where Mitchual placed a distant third), and was not even short-listed due to his below par performance. Is it

because of the plagiarism allegations against Prof. Mitchual, for which reason a committee has been constituted by the Akenten Appiah-Menka University of Skills Training and Entrepreneurial Development (AAMUSTED) to investigate him that has dramatically scared the Council Chairman and his bankrollers away from the 2021 Search Committee Report? It is unbelievable that, Prof. Mitchual has overnight, become toxic to the very people who were singing his praises at every given opportunity just a few weeks ago.

### **Appeal**

On the basis of the above and other issues that cannot be put in the public domain, we are appealing to His Excellency, President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, to as a matter of urgency, withdraw the appointment of Nana Ofori Ansah I as Council Chairman of the University of Education, Winneba. The University has known no peace since his appointment. He has no clue whatsoever as to how a university is run. How can a Council Chairman who has no business in the day-to-day administration of UEW, commandeer a University Toyota Fortuner (GC 5867-20) together with a driver employed by the University, fueled and maintained by UEW for his personal use? This particular vehicle had been previously assigned to the Ag. Internal Auditor. This is a clear abuse of office and a conduit to cause and actually causing financial loss to UEW and Mother Ghana.

As clearly stated above, the call for the immediate dissolution of the UEW Governing Council and the subsequent dismissal of Nana Ofori Ansah I from office as Council Chairman of UEW is justified without doubt. He pursues his personal interest and the interests of other UEW saboteurs and saboteurs of Ghana at large at the expense of the entire UEW and Ghana as a whole. His continued stay in office as the Governing Council Chairman is a threat to the peace and stability of the University.

**Issued by Concerned Staff, UEW**

Signed: .....

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