

Challenges and/or Opportunities Facing Academic Staff in PHEA Countries

Highlights from *African Higher Education: An International Reference Handbook*

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Country: Egypt	Challenges and/or Opportunities Facing Academic Staff	Author: Mohsen Elmahdy Said
<p>- Selection and recruitment practices Academic staff is selected from the cohort of graduating students at the bachelor's level, which results in the following four problems. 1) Hiring appears to be an incentive to encourage and support strong students rather than a meaningful exercise to meet program needs or advance strategic development plans. 2) Little injection of "new blood" and hence little variation in teaching and research models. 3) Draws from very narrow pool of candidates and limits the possibilities of hiring the most qualified individuals. 4) Assumes that high academic standing at the undergraduate level is a reliable predictor of solid performance as a researcher and teacher.</p> <p>- Academic qualifications and competencies Graduate students, who lack of experience and expertise, serve as undergraduate teachers. Since 1975, limited program of pedagogical training (3-4 weeks), which results in lack of continuity in the area of development of teaching skills of faculty members and there is no obligation and/or commitment on the part of faculty to further develop their teaching skills.</p> <p>- Remuneration and other incentives Low salaries and salary scale consists of a base (which is the same for all within the rank) plus additional increments. Senior administrative staff (deans and chairs) receives negligible monetary compensation for taking on administrative positions. By law, all faculty members are allowed to hold other jobs. Junior faculty (below the level of assistant professor) is allowed to tutor but not to work as consultants until they are in the third year of their hire. Having two and sometimes three jobs contributes to high rates of absenteeism, particularly in the professional programs.</p> <p>- Educational Process – Teaching methods, workloads, technology, research and training,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It is difficult to use new teaching methods other than the traditional lecturing style because of large classes, limited acquaintance with and support for new teaching technologies, limited resources and available facilities and space. ○ Heavy workload (8 hours per week for full professors, 10 for associate professors, and 12 for lecturers) plus membership on various committees ○ Lack of conducive working conditions for innovative teaching or research ○ Majority of staff are hired for permanent (tenured) positions on the merit of their undergraduate academic standing. Only two formal promotion exercises are carried out during the entire career of an academic – no mechanisms for merit pay, or regular student course ratings, peer evaluations or teaching portfolios. Promotion occurs in 5 year intervals between each rank (from lecturers to assistant professor and from assistant professor to full professor) ○ Lack of modern education technology ○ Lack of research and development infrastructure - research is dependent on individual faculty members (some of whom produce and publish research of high international standards. Others engage in research and publish so as to fulfill the criteria for promotion rather than to produce innovative and quality research. 		

Country: Ghana	Challenges and/or Opportunities Facing Academic Staff	Author: Paul Effah
<p>- Remuneration and other incentives In the 1990s, poor salaries and conditions of service led to strikes by the University Teachers Association of Ghana and the Polytechnic Teachers Association of Ghana in 1995 and 1997 respectively. Although salaries have seen some improvements during the past decade, a relatively poor salary structure still persists. For instance, Bankole Oni shows that the pay package for the average Ghanaian professor is about 8.7 percent of that of her or his counterparts in South Africa and 10 percent of that of counterparts in Zimbabwe (Oni 2000)</p> <p>- Academic freedom and autonomy At times in past, the government attempted to press unpopular measures on the university. For example in the 1960s, the government decided to appoint “special professors” directly responsible to the president, who was also the chancellor. Attempts were also made to control the appointments of heads of departments (Ajayi, Goma, and Johnson 1996). Although, currently, for the most part, universities are insulated from external forces and interference, there are still reservations about situations in which they are asked to conform to rules and regulations imposed on by ministries and government departments.</p> <p>- Research: Challenges and Dilemmas Limited research output due to the lack of clearly articulated educational and research priorities at both national and institutional levels (Kwapong 1979); increasing involvement of academic staff in undergraduate teaching because of the growing numbers of students, making it increasingly difficult to undertake research; lack of opportunities for sabbatical leave, conferences, seminars; and in general lack of strong academic leadership in various departments, faculties, and research units (Ajayi, Goma, and Johnson 1996). However, by far, the biggest obstacle in the area of research appears to be financial deprivation.</p> <p>- Postgraduate training Postgraduate training in universities in Ghana is still at its lowest ebb after 3-4 decades of existence. Out of a total enrolment of 11, 865 at the University of Ghana for the year 2000, only 1,265 (10.66) percent are pursuing postgraduate studies. At the University of Cape Coast, postgraduate students represent 6 percent of total enrolment.</p> <p>- Brain Drain v Brain Gain In order to creatively address the effects of brain drain, a new approach has been proposed which is described as “brain grain strategy” and involves 2 options – the return and the Diaspora options.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The return option, which has been implemented in Africa since the 1970s involves attempts by countries to encourage their highly skilled expatriates to return home. However, Ghana has not been able to implement the return option effectively because of the difficulty matching the salaries and infrastructure available in more developed countries. ○ The Diaspora option is based on network approaches. It sees brain drain not as a loss but a potential gain to a country of origin. Highly skilled expatriates are looked upon as a pool of potentially useful human resources for the country of origin. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Set up a mechanism for taking an inventory of Ghanaian professionals abroad ▪ Adopt a more aggressive policy of networking with intellectuals who have migrated and encourage the formation of expert groups abroad to be linked with existing networks ▪ Link educational institutions to systems of diasporic networks and promote teaching, learning, research and distance learning through Internet/teleconferencing ▪ Encourage ministries, departments, and agencies to use the services of Ghanaian professionals abroad through short stays, technical assistance, sabbaticals, and consultancies. 		

Country: Kenya	Challenges and/or Opportunities Facing Academic Staff	Author: Charles Ngome
<p>- Over-employment of support staff The ratio of support staff to students is double that applicable in other universities and, as such, there is gross over-employment at public universities. The burden and inefficiency of over-employment has to be addressed by determining the appropriate staffing needs and improving the remuneration package for those who remain. This will both eliminate unnecessary personnel costs and motivate and retain competent staff</p> <p>- Unemployment among University Graduates The output for graduates subsequently increased with the opening of more universities. The National Manpower Survey of 1986 -1988 revealed that, even for specialized degrees, output has surpassed the demand for graduates in the labor market Due to constrained economic growth and the massive expansion of university education over the last twenty years, employment opportunities have not kept pace with the increasing number of graduates from the universities. This situation is aggravated by student overenrollment in arts programs.</p> <p>- Poor state of Research, Teaching, and Publishing One key factor that has stunted the growth of research in the Kenyan university system is the lack of adequate research funds. The massive expansion of university education from the mid-1980s to the 1990s took place without a proportionate rise in the physical resources available to universities, which results in lack of material resources, scholarly literature, and equipment for research. In addition, the large portion of support (although inadequate) for postgraduate and staff training and research work comes from donors and international organizations. Another key factor is the lack of adequate qualified researchers. Poor utilization and dissemination of research findings also inhibits research.</p> <p>- Remuneration and other benefits The remuneration packages that lecturers receive cannot guarantee them even the basic minimum living requirements. Therefore some of the most competent lecturers and researchers have been forced to abandon universities for greener pastures. This exodus of the best brains from the universities has meant that only a few lecturers can handle research methodology courses effectively. In addition, academics try to supplement their university income by moonlighting; teaching on part-time basis in private universities, consultancy work, selling goods, operating food kiosks, and other jobs.</p> <p>- Brain drain Apart from losing skilled workers, universities are unable to attract high-caliber faculty to their institutions or to retain them. Moreover, the number of PhD degree holding lecturers has declined. For example, at the University of Nairobi, only 40 percent of the teaching force holds Ph.D.s, 33 percent of the faculty of Kenyatta, 32 percent of the faculty at Moi, and 19 percent of the faculty at Egerton.</p>		

Country: Madagascar	Challenges and/or Opportunities Facing Academic Staff	Author: James Stiles
<p>- Disproportionate student-to-faculty ratio In 1996, the student-to-faculty ratio was 22:1. Presently this ratio is still alarmingly high and is cited by students as one reason that they pursue private higher education.</p> <p>- Career Development and Promotion All faculties are appointed and promoted by the Ministry of Higher Education. Because they are a part of the government bureaucracy and are thus subject to external review by the Ministry, promotion can be quite difficult to achieve on the basis of qualifications alone (Rambelason-Rapiera 1992). Faculty report that being part of the federal bureaucracy imposes difficulties on the academic culture. The ministry, rather than academic officers, sets salaries and working conditions. It can be difficult or impossible, for a chairperson to shift a department's academic priorities and procedures, and firing a poorly performing faculty is virtually impossible. However, the government appears to have progressive gender equity policies in that women have made significant inroads into faculty positions, accounting for 31 percent of all teaching staff.</p> <p>- Activism and leverage Faculty has strong ties to politics and the political system. Two to three of the elected presidents of the republic have been university professors (Tsirinana and Zaffy), and many serve or have served in the assembly. In addition, the history of faculty and student unrest and the Malagasy tradition of expository speaking (known as <i>kabary</i>) have resulted in an academic environment that is generally free from the undue influence of administration or government. The Association of University Faculty jealously guards faculty rights but at times can impede reforms of department chairs and others.</p> <p>- Remuneration and Incentives Although professors are amongst the highest-paid civil servants, the rate of pay (\$150-\$360 per month) does not go as far as the average annual income of the country might suggest. For instance, a modest one bedroom apartment in the capital could cost \$400 per month. Frustrated by the low pay and inadequate resources, talented professors have left the university and ventured into the private industrial sector. Some members of faculty take up positions or teach additional courses at private universities and, consequently, devote less time and energy to their public university courses.</p> <p>- Brain Drain The brain drain that so often plagues developing countries is counterbalanced by strong family ties and the strong presence of a middle class in within Malagasy culture. According to one U.S. State Department official, Madagascar has one of the highest rates of return for students who study abroad. While there are Malagasy individuals who marry and settle in Europe, America, and other countries, the majority return home at the end of their training. The French government has been a strong supporter of repeated short-term intellectual exchanges with Madagascar. These exchanges serve as additional enticement for Malagasy students to return home after their university studies.</p> <p>- Research and Publishing There is a lack of adequate funds, equipment, time, and documentation to conduct research. However, the government has begun the process of refurbishment of research labs and libraries to provide better research space with the support of funding from donor nations (Japan, France, and the U.S.) However with these shortages the research enterprise is strong due to its early history, relations with donor nations (particularly France), and the rich natural environment of the island.</p> <p>- New Government Initiatives One articulated objective of the Ministry of Higher Education (MINESUP) is to improve the management of human resources. In order to meet increased demand from students, it will be necessary to shift resources from administrative and technical personnel to the teaching staff, whether through voluntary departure, retirement, education, or professional retraining of current administrative and technical staff.</p>		

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Country: Mozambique	Challenges and/or Opportunities Facing Academic Staff	Author: Arlindo Chilundo
<p>- Remuneration and Incentives Public institutions employ mainly full time lecturers, while private HEIs rely mainly on part-time staff. It should be emphasized that a great number of part-time staff at private institutions are also full time lecturers in public institutions. These lecturers use employment in the private sector as a way of supplementing the low salaries paid by public institutions.</p> <p>- Research and Publishing Due to the high level of moonlighting by faculty, many faculties have less time to devote to research and publishing or supervising the research of postgraduate students. Moreover, only the three oldest HEIs in Mozambique are engaged in research activities. This is because private institutions are setting their own pace because they remain profit-driven institutions and because not enough direct funds are invested in research activities. In addition, whatever limited research that takes place suffers from lack of relevance to the country's development challenges, lack of multidisciplinary in some scientific areas, and a weak demand for research products. Exacerbating the situation are the following; 35 percent of staff have less than five years teaching experience, no direct compensation for research activities; contracted expatriate staff do not stay long enough to start any meaningful research activity; research laboratories do not exist or are obsolete; campuses have very limited access to scientific literature and communications technology; and teaching staff are regularly forced to undertake consultancies for additional income. In the publishing arena, dissemination of research results mostly happen through publication in small internal journals or booklets, since Mozambique has very few peer-reviewed scientific journals</p> <p>- Staff Demographics After independence, the bulk of higher education lecturers were expatriates. Twenty-five years later due to a strategic investment, this situation has been reversed in all public institutions. Public institutions employ mainly Mozambican staff, while the private schools count mainly on expatriate staff.</p> <p>- Academic staff qualifications and competencies The Mozambican teaching staff consists mainly of professionals with the <i>Licenciatura</i> degree (a five year B.A. or B.Sc., which is little more than an honor's degree). However, public institutions have been carrying out a program of raising the academic and scientific qualifications of their staff during the last ten years. In addition, international cooperation has made a significant contribution toward the effort to upgrade the Mozambican staff in terms of postgraduate training</p> <p>- Teaching methods Teaching methods in the majority of HEIs rely normally on the expository transmission of knowledge, in which the lecturer is at the center of the teacher-learning process. The use of audiovisuals is not widespread in HEIs in Mozambique. Other teaching methods face problems of availability and dissemination of learning materials, since there is little material for student research (including books and manual, computers, films, etc). However, with an increasing number of lecturers undergoing postgraduate training study abroad and experiencing and assimilating new teaching methods, there are a few examples of non-systematic ways of introducing new teaching methods</p>		

Country: Nigeria	Challenges and/or Opportunities Facing Academic Staff	Author: Muzali Jibril
<p data-bbox="157 289 493 316">- Activism and leverage</p> <p data-bbox="109 321 1950 552">The academic staff of HEIs in Nigeria represents one of the most organized and most articulate segments of Nigerian society. They also tend to be better educated than other professionals (in terms both of the level of educational attainment and the quality of education received, which are usually partly undertaken abroad). They also tend to hold radical political views and to be better able to challenge authoritarian regimes than other organized groups in Nigeria. The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASSU) is the most militant and influential of the higher education trade unions. It has always drawn attention to the neglect of the universities by successive governments and has been proscribed several times over by successive military regimes. However, it is believed that trade unions tend to overuse the weapon of the strike. Nigeria is one the few countries I the world in which a few powerful trade unions can hold the nation at ransom over the slightest provocation. Its leaders have often been detained for their trade union activities.</p> <p data-bbox="157 557 724 584">- Remuneration and Conditions of Service</p> <p data-bbox="109 589 1950 787">Although in recent times, the government has improved the salaries of faculty, the take-home pay of a full professor is only about \$1,000 per month is still low, even by African standards. It is alleged that these unfavorable remuneration packages are responsible for the migration of Nigerian academics and other professionals to other countries, notably South Africa, Botswana, Saudi Arabia and the U.S. It is hoped that ongoing reforms will result in higher and fairer wages for teaching staff and other staff and decentralization and deregulation of the system. This, in turn, should lead to more localization of trade union concerns and consequently to less instability in the system. In addition, Nigeria also faces an imbalance in the representation of women, both as academic staff and students. As such there is a need for progressive policies which will result in expanded access to women and other marginalized groups.</p> <p data-bbox="157 792 724 820">- Postgraduate Training and Employment</p> <p data-bbox="109 824 1950 1153">Graduate education is still in the infancy in most Nigerian universities, in the 1989-1990 academic year, graduate students in al l the federal universities accounted for only 8.7 percent of total enrolment, while undergraduates accounted for 84.3 percent of total enrolment. However, some of the older universities, notably the University of Ibadan, have been increasing the proportion of the graduate students to around 30 percent. Overall graduate enrollment tends to be in the arts, the social sciences, and education with relatively few students enrolling in engineering, and medicine. There is some indication that the government is considering the advisability of establishing a graduate university or converting one of the existing universities into a graduate university. According to the annual abstract of statistics (Federal Offcie of Statistics 1998), Nigerians with postsecondary education constituted 21.5 percent of the total unemployed population in 1997. However, university graduates constitute only 6.5 percent of the unemployed. The reasons for their high rate of unemployment are the productive sector of the economy is not only stagnant but declining, while the service sector is already saturated with too many white-collar workers. HEIs, especially universities, will have to integrate entrepreneurship education into their curricula so that their graduates can use their skills to create employment for themselves</p> <p data-bbox="157 1157 430 1185">- State of Research</p> <p data-bbox="109 1190 1950 1356">Academic staff are required as part of their contract to carry out research and to publish results of such research as a precondition for career development. However, in the face of poor funding and even poorer management of research funds by the universities, and in the face of inadequate research infrastructures in the universities and an almost total lack of interest on the part of the local private sector in sponsoring or utilizing the results of university research, only basic research of the publish-or-perish type tends to be carried out. Spending on research is among the lowest in the world as a percentage of gross national product.</p>		

Country: South Africa	Challenges and/or Opportunities Facing Academic Staff	Author: George Subotzky
<p data-bbox="163 261 443 289">- Staff Demography</p> <p data-bbox="111 293 1946 623">In stark contrast to the dramatically rapid Africanization of the student body over the past few years, the composition of staff, and of faculty in particular has remained relatively unchanged and predominantly white (Afrikaans). Despite some increases in the number of African faculty, particularly at historically disadvantaged institutions, the race, gender, and institutional inequalities generated by apartheid remain clearly imprinted on the staff composition of South Africa's HEIs. The recent Employment Equity Act provides a clear statutory imperative and procedural framework for addressing the above-mentioned imbalances. It entails formulating employment equity plans for submission to the Department of Labor. The plans include analyzing institutions both quantitatively and qualitatively; identifying the current profile of staff in the various occupational categories according to race, gender, and disability; examining procedures and policies to pinpoint barriers to the advancement of these marginalized groups; and surveying staff perceptions and experiences. A major challenge is that the pool of suitable potential black, female, and disable employees remain small, particularly in the fields of and senior levels that they are already underrepresented. The answer lied in finding creative ways to change an institution staff profile by a combination of mechanisms such as offering early retirement, encouraging students to enter the profession, and creating conducive conditions to attract and retain staff.</p> <p data-bbox="163 628 674 656">- Research and Knowledge Production</p> <p data-bbox="111 660 1946 889">The research output of South African HEIs suffers from fragmentation, a lack of planning, and a lack of adequate output data. Research and development expenditure in higher education represents a relatively low proportion of the total in international terms and remains concentrated in a narrow band of five fields: agriculture, health, education, community and social services, and manufacturing. Consequently the key fields of energy, environment, communications, and tourism have been inadequately serviced. There is debate over the relevance and responsiveness of research to the needs of South African society. A prominent feature of policy debates has been the trend away from the focus on disciplinary-based knowledge production toward strategic science or applications-driven, transdisciplinary, heterogeneous, team-based knowledge production, often in off-campus partnerships. There is also a debate concerning the role of research within a new differential institutional framework.</p>		

Country: Tanzania**Challenges and/or Opportunities Facing Academic Staff****Authors: Daniel Mkude and Brian Cooksey**

- **Remuneration and Condition of Service**

For the most part, the government sets terms and conditions of service, with occasional cosmetic changes from the institution concerned. Salaries are also determined and regulated by the government or a body appointed by the government for that purpose. Until 1996, terms of service and salaries for parastatal organizations were determined and regulated by an organization called SCOPO (the Standing Committee for Parastatal Organizations). HEIs were regarded as parastatals so their salaries were also set and regulated by SCOPO. Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, salaries were extremely low. To cushion employees against the negative effects of this, the government introduced a string of allowances, such as fuel, housing, and sitting allowances. Eligibility conditions for these allowances were often vague and unclear. This gave rise to abuses, deceit, and corruption. Although salaries were low, take-home pay could exceed the salary by up to 400 percent under the allowance system. In 1996, the government introduced a new salary system that consolidated some of the allowances and abolished others. However, in order to fend off staff unrest, HEIs negotiated for a more reasonable arrangement with government. In 1998, there was a substantial increase in salaries. This was a measure calculated to stem Tanzania brain drain. A study of the brain drain had revealed that two main factors were poor remuneration and poor working conditions. Working and living conditions vary from institution to institution. Office space is usually shared between staff members. Up to 70 percent of staff lives on campus in houses owned by the institutions. They pay subsidized rent or nothing at all if they are entitled officers. The houses are not regularly maintained because the rent collection is insufficient for the purpose.

- **Career Development**

Opportunities for training and career development are dependent on the availability of funds. When funds are available priority is always given to academic members of staff. While in training staff are allowed to retain 90 percent of their salary; they also continue to enjoy other privileges, such as housing, and medical treatment. Although staff members who are allowed to get further trained are bonded, many do not honor the bond after completion of their studies. They leave for greener pastures without reimbursing the government for their training costs. Attempts to seek legal redress are unsuccessful because the courts do not recognize such bonds.

- **Activism and leverage**

Participation in decision making is done through representation. Staff members are supposed to be organized in labor unions or associations. Their views are solicited through these bodies. The unions or associations nominate representatives to the various boards or committees that handle policy issues. Although there is a national labor union, the Researchers Academics, and Allied Workers Union (RAAWU), to which all staff are supposed to belong, in practice it is primarily the administrative, technical, and support staff who take active interest in it. Academics tend to shun or ignore the national union and have instead formed their own associations, such as the University of Dar es Salaam Staff Association (UDASA), the Sokoine University of Agriculture Staff Association (SUASA), and the Open University of Tanture Staff Association (OUTASA). There has been fierce debate about whether academics should strive to set up and register their own labor union in order to formalize separate bargaining positions.

Country: Uganda	Challenges and/or Opportunities Facing Academic Staff	Author: Nkanyike B. Musisi
<p>- Political Climate (Effects of the 1970s and 1980s on the Higher Education Subsector) At independence, Uganda had one of the best higher education systems in Africa (World Bank 1992). However, political and economic crises of the 1970s and 1980s jeopardized the country's higher education system, particularly in the area of underfunding. Also, there were a number of student and staff unrests, which in the case of Makerere University led to the closing of the school in 1989.</p> <p>- Remuneration and incentives Another impact of the 1970s and 1980s was the depleted level of staffing and staff attrition due to underfunding. Salaries were not only meager, sometimes they came too late to have any meaningful impact on the recipient's quality of life. The poor remuneration and working conditions left the teaching staff humiliated and with few options other than absenteeism. Many teachers and staff moonlighted to feed their families and pay school fees for children. Others left migrated to other countries in search of greener pastures.</p> <p>- Academic Autonomy The University Act of 1970 gave government considerable control over university administration and resulted in poor policies, especially at the hands of dictatorial and ineffective governments. During this period, every effort was taken to silence and curtail students and academic staff engaging in organized and legal protest or having input in discussions or conditions affecting them. However, present reform initiatives such as diversifying sources of funding have been successful. However, there is still a need for the higher education system to remain relevant in a rapidly changing world.</p>		