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OFFICE OF THE 1ST DEPUTY VICE CHANCELLOR - ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

STATEMENT BY PROFESSOR BENON C BASHEKA (NEW DVC-ACADEMIC AFFAIRS) ON WHY KABALE UNIVERSITY SHOULD BE A UNIVERSITY OF CHOICE BY POSTGRADUATE AND UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

The DVC- Academic Affairs oversees the Directorate of Academic Affairs whose scope constitutes the core and the academic life of the University. The purpose of the office of Deputy Vice Chancellor academic affairs is to provide leadership and coordination of teaching, research and publications matters including policy and standards. The DVC-AA Assists the Vice-Chancellor in the performance of his or her functions and in that regard is responsible for the Academic Affairs of the University. In the absence of the Vice-Chancellor the DVC-(AA) performs the functions of Vice-Chancellor. The DVC-AA is responsible for the Academic Registrar, Director/ Graduate Training, Director/ Research and Publications, Deans of Faculties or Schools, Directors of Institutes, Colleges or other academic bodies and the Deputy Director/ Quality Assurance.

Kabale University is only about four years as a Public University. It began as a community incubated private University in 2002 with a total of 42 students. Even under the private status, by 2014, it had acquired a charter -the highest accreditation status for private Universities in Uganda in accordance with the Universities and Other Tertiary institutions Act, 2001 as amended. In 2015, Kabale University was taken over by Government of Uganda and it accordingly became a public University. Since being a public University, Kabale University has been undoubtedly on a steady progress. The student population for example has increased from 2,666 in the 2016/17 academic year to 3,193 by end of March 2020. This is a 20% increase in enrollment. Of the number of students only 318 are Government –sponsored students. The University offers 55 academic programmes of which 12 are postgraduate, 26 are undergraduate Degrees and 17 are undergraduate diploma programmes.

The academic programmes of the University are offered in 7 Faculties (Faculty of Education, Science, Agriculture and Environmental Sciences, Faculty of Engineering, Fine Art and Design, Computing and Information Sciences, Economics and Management, Arts and Social Sciences), one School (School of Medicine) and one Institute (Institute of Language studies). There are 341 staff of which 237 are academic and 104 are non-teaching staff. The academic staff vary in rank. The University has 15 full Professors, 6 Associate Professors, 19 Senior Lecturers, 50 Lecturers, 90 Assistant Lecturers and 25 Teaching Assistants. The University has a sound library with 20 library staff. While these numbers are not adequate given the vision of the University, the four years of existence of Kabale University as a Public University signifies a university on

positive progression. In March 2020, the University Council passed a new strategic plan which will guide the University in the next five years. The University also has a Master Infrastructure Plan (2020-2063) which provides a long term blue print for the development of modern infrastructure and facilities. With the 53 Acres of Land owned by the University so far, the excellent future of the full academic life of the University is perfectly in sight.

With its unique history of transiting from a community initiated private University to a public university, Kabale Universities has a grasp of ideologies of private sector models and those of a public sector orientation. It is the first University in Uganda to transit from private to public and therefore offers the best template for government intervention in similar direction. Moreover, it is the only university located in the Francophone and Anglophone countries. This enables the University to have a huge catchment area that needs to be immensely exploited. Beyond associating with a university of unique origin and development, there are a number of other compelling justifications why it should be a University of choice now and in the coming years for both undergraduate and postgraduate studies. Some of these factors that makes it possible for students to wish to join the University and enjoy their stay include the following:-_

1. **Government and Political Support**. Throughout its years of existence as a Public University, Kabale University has enjoyed top government and political commitment and support. While the University still has gaps in infrastructure, funding and staffing levels, the support of Government has in the last four years been commendable. The science-orientation policy of Government towards the University enables the University focus on academic programmes critical for the development agenda of Government and beyond. This also makes it possible to have employable graduates.
2. **Visionary, Experienced and Committed Council and Management Team**. The University has throughout its governance and management structures visionary, experienced, focused and committed teams. The Council and Management team members have a wide diversity of expertise in government and the private sector. Policies and decisions are blessed with intense discussions and the choice of best practices that aim at pushing the University to the desired direction. There is therefore a conducive environment for undertaking the core business of the University and the interests of students are taken as a priority.
3. **Flexible and affordable fees.** Kabale is the only public University in Uganda that offers the cheapest undergraduate and postgraduate course fees. This makes it flexible and affordable to all categories of local and international students. The University is constantly cognizant of the fact that its catchment area is within a resource-poor environment but also the university desires to contribute to increased access to higher education of the young population.
4. **Qualified and Competent staff**. The University has invested and will continue to heavily invest in attracting, developing and retaining qualified and competent academic and administrative staff. There are currently 70 PhD Holders employed in the various Faculties and Units of the University. The University has 15 full time professors, 6 associate professors and 19 senior lecturers. These are useful for advancing postgraduate teaching and research.

5. **Location of the University**. Kabale University's location in a cool environment and its geographical disposition makes it unique for academic life. It is the only university in Uganda that joins Francophone and Anglophone countries. The natural weather conditions makes it conducive for academic study.
6. **Cost of Living**. The cost of living in Kabale for both undergraduate and postgraduate students is low and affordable. This makes it possible for all types of students to attain university education.
7. **Learning and teaching methods**. While the university still lacks adequate infrastructure and facilities due to its young nature, the lecturer-student ratio is excellent and this allows effective teaching and learning through the lecturers effectively interfacing with all students. There is a direct contact between lecturers and students in a tutorial-oriented environment due to the not large numbers of students. Specialized courses like medicine are taught practically from the Kabale Regional Referral hospital. Agriculture students have an opportunity to practically relate with farmers. Engineering students practically connect with the industry players.
8. **Student voice**. Kabale University has a vibrant culture of encouraging student to exercise their voice and get full involvement. Students are represented on almost all organs of the university and the student views are respected when they are within the rules of the University and the Country. Student Bazaars are periodically organized to enable students interact with the leadership of the University (Management and Heads of Academic Units).
9. **Community Support**. There is good community support towards the University. This offers a conducive learning environment for students. Student placement opportunities are also supported and this enables students to easily transfer their theoretical knowledge to practice.
10. **Partnerships and collaborations**. Kabale University has an excellent potential and willingness to attract local, regional and international partners. This makes it possible to promote staff and student exposure, exchange and knowledge sharing.
11. **Curriculum Review and Development**. Kabale University runs accredited programmes by NCHE and endeavors to regularly review the existing programmes to align them with the manpower requirements of the country and the regional and global developments. There are a number of new programmes that have been developed and all are aligned to the current development needs of the country, region, continent and global agenda.
12. **E-learning and E-library Resources.** Kabale University has developed a new e-learning system which shall allow modern teaching and accessibility. This system is flexible and will allow students from the globe to have access to the learning resources. There is in an addition a now expanded e-library resource which makes it possible for learning to take place easily. The book-student ratio is also impressive and the university has access to excellent online resources for undergraduate and postgraduate learning.
13. **Accessible internet.** While the whole campus is yet to be fully connected with wireless internet, the speed of the existing internet allows learning.

Like any young University, there are challenges, especially the infrastructure and facilities but these will be addressed as outline in the new University Strategic Plan and Master Infrastructure plan. I encourage existing students to positively tap into the opportunities to acquire their qualifications. The University aspires to produce graduates with a difference. Student discipline and commitment are core in this effort. I also encourage new students who wish to join the University education on various undergraduate and postgraduate programmes to join Kabale University. To the postgraduate students, you will be assured of effective supervision and timely completion of your various programmes. The details of all the programmes can be accessed at the university website at www.kab.ac.ug. You can make a different in someone's life through sharing such opportunity to those potential people who seek to advance their future through University education.

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