

**Report of the
Addis Ababa University
Revitalization Study Committee**

July 2020

CONTENTS

List of Figures

List of Tables

Annexes

Abbreviations and Acronyms

Acknowledgements

Chapter 1 Inception and Methodology

1. Inception	1
2. Methodology	5
3. Limitations and Challenges	8

Chapter 2 Attributes of a Successful University

1. Introduction	10
2. Roles of Research Universities	13
3. Characteristics of Research Universities	17
4. Challenges of Universities in Developing Countries	18
5. Sample Experiences from Developing Countries	21
6. Benchmarking	30
7. Lessons for Addis Ababa University	34

Chapter 3 Historical Profile of Addis Ababa University

1. Introduction	36
2. Teaching and Learning	38
3. Research	41
4. Community Service	44
5. Governance	47
6. Planning, “Strategic” or Otherwise	54
7. Infrastructure	59
8. Campus Environment	60
9. Conclusion	63

Chapter 4 Perceptions of the Current Situation of AAU

1. Introduction 64
2. Teaching and Learning 65
3. Research 76
4. Community Service 79
5. Governance and Management 79
6. Environment 86

Chapter 5 Summary and Recommendations

Summary 90
Recommendations 92

References 97

List of Figures

Figure 1	The Purpose of Public Research Universities	11
Figure 2	Characteristics of a World Class University	17

List of Tables

Table 1	AAU Staff Size and Profile, 2019	38
Table 2	Course Workload against Program Level	66
Table 3	Quality of Teaching Learning by Program Level	69
Table 4	Accessibility of Teachers by Program Type	71
Table 5	Mean Based Overall Satisfaction Cluster	74
Table 6	Quality of Dorms and Facilities at Dormitories	87

Annexes

Annex 1	Code of Conduct of the Study Committee
Annex 2	Questions for Focus Group Discussions and Key Informant Interviews
Annex 3	Student Satisfaction Survey
Annex 4	Benchmarking Study of Three American Universities
Annex 5	Benchmarking Study of one European and Two African Universities

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AAiT	Addis Ababa Institute of Technology
AAU	Addis Ababa University
AAUTA	Addis Ababa University Teachers' Association
CHS	College of Health Sciences
CSU	Colorado State University
EiABC	Ethiopian Institute of Architecture, Building Construction and City Development
EUS	Ethiopian University Service
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GMU	George Mason University
HEI	Higher Education Institution
KAU	King Abdulaziz University
KII	Key Informant Interviews
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SJTU	Shanghai Jiao Tong University
UCAA	University College of Addis Ababa
UCH	University of Chile
UCT	University of Cape Town
WCU	World Class University
WSU	Wayne State University

Acknowledgements

In the course of executing its assignment, the AAU Revitalization Study Committee (whose members are listed on page 2 of the Report) benefited from the support and cooperation of a number of individuals and institutions. The Committee would like in particular to express its gratitude to the following:

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- Dr. Ameha Mulugeta, Assistant Secretary of the Committee, who was our anchor person, coordinating the FGDs and KIIs with consummate skill and exceptional dedication, recording the minutes of the Committee meetings, as well as attending to all other logistical needs of the Committee; and, above all,
- To all the participants of the FGDs and KIIs, whose frank and open discussion of the challenges faced by AAU was a measure of their deep concern for the welfare of this flagship institution.

Finally, the Committee owes the data it used for the assessment of the current situation (the subject matter of Chapter 4 of the Report) to the excellent work done by Dadimos Consulting Group in recording the FGDs and synthesizing the report and the comprehensive student satisfaction survey conducted by Dr. Wondwossen Mulugeta and Ato Mesele Birhanu.

We apologize for any omissions of individuals and organizations who had lent their support to this undertaking.

Chapter 1

Inception and Methodology

1. Inception

Addis Ababa University (AAU) is the oldest, largest, and top-ranked public university in Ethiopia. The university has ten colleges, two technology institutes, three teaching cum research institutes, and six research institutes. About fifty-five departments, twelve centres, nine schools, and two teaching hospitals operate under these units. Currently, AAU runs a total of 363 programs (70 undergraduate, 221 Masters, and 72 PhD programs) with more than 50,000 students.¹

In recent years, a number of factors have induced considerable erosion in quality. These include: increased demand for higher education opportunities in Ethiopia and the constraints that this has imposed on the limited public resources, a commitment to enhance access and equity, and a diverse student population generally unprepared for the rigors of university work. Despite advances in some domains and its growing size, there appears to be a general understanding that its recent performance has been far from satisfactory, as shown by the declining quality of its graduates. Addis Ababa University has tried to deal with the aforementioned issues in various ways before, but there has now emerged a consensus that conditions have deteriorated even further. The challenges to the quality of higher education at the University are multifaceted, including as they do academic, political, societal, financial as well as governance matters. Urgent action is therefore required in those areas where policy changes are expected to make significant impact.

In consideration of the above, its newly reconstituted Governing Board concluded that, to restore the quality and effectiveness of AAU, an in-depth look at the underlying causes and possible solutions is a matter of the utmost urgency. The Board accordingly set up in June 2019 a committee, named the AAU Revitalization Study Committee, to conduct a thorough study of the

¹ Data in this paragraph are extracted from the *Addis Ababa University Strategic Plan (2008-2012 EC)/(2015/16-2019/20 GC)*.

situation and present its diagnosis and recommendations. The study is thus expected to undergird the introduction of appropriate reforms. The Committee was designed to be a completely independent body, answerable only to the AAU Governing Board. In order to get the broadest possible representation, it was composed of three current faculty members elected by their peers, three former faculty members and two experts in educational management from the Ethiopian Diaspora selected by the Board, and two representatives of the private sector. Following is a full list of the members:

1. Prof. Daniel Kitaw, School of Mechanical and Industrial Engineering, AAU, Committee Chairman;
2. Dr. Alemayehu Seyoum, Senior Research Fellow, International Food Policy Research Institute, Secretary of the Committee;
3. Woizero Aster Solomon, Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce;
4. Prof. Bahru Zewde, Professor Emeritus of History, AAU;
5. Dr. Gebeyehu Ejigu, Executive Vice President and Visiting Professor (Retired), Governors State University, U.S.A.;
6. Prof. Mogessie Ashenafi, Professor Emeritus of Food Microbiology at Addis Ababa University and former president of AAU;
7. Prof. Teshome Abebe, Professor Laureate, Professor of Economics, Eastern Illinois University, U.S.A.; and
8. Prof. Yalemtehay Mekonnen, Professor of Cell & Human Physiology, College of Natural & Computational Sciences, AAU.

The Committee was ably assisted by Dr. Ameha Mulugeta, as Assistant Secretary, and Ms. Tewedage Belhu, as Administrative Assistant, both faculty of Addis Ababa Institute of Technology. Two other members of the Committee, Prof. Eshetu Woncheko and Dr. Aklu Gergirie, resigned after some time for personal reasons.

The Study Committee was mandated to explore the primary causes for the current unsatisfactory state of AAU and the key changes needed to transform it into an effective and internationally recognized successful university.

1.1. Conceptual Framework

The Committee held extensive discussions on the best way of conducting the study and successfully complete its task. It agreed on the following broad steps:

- identify the core questions to be answered;
- consult the available literature to set the global and historical context;
-
- identify appropriate as well as aspirational peer institutions of higher education from around the world and gather benchmarking information about them;
- collect and analyze data from key stakeholders of the University using various techniques of data/information gathering and analysis; and
- submit its findings and recommendations in a report to the AAU Governing Board.

The following chapters describe these steps.

The Study Committee decided that its investigations should focus on four interrelated core questions:

- i. What are the desirable attributes of a successful university?
- ii. How did AAU find itself in the condition that it is today?
- iii. What are the major problems facing AAU today?
- iv. What are the major steps to be taken to solve the identified principal problems?

Members of the Committee used their considerable knowledge and expertise of the functioning and management of a university (including AAU) in a detailed discussion to develop the following inceptive answers to two core questions.

What are the desirable attributes of a successful university?

The following were identified as the principal attributes that AAU should aspire to have. AAU should:

- enjoy institutional autonomy, academic freedom, and operational independence (with an overall enabling environment (spanning legal, structural, financial, and administrative dimensions));
- assure basic competency of its graduates (consisting of critical thinking, critical reading, fluency in verbal and written communication, scientific thinking, responsible citizenship, and professional competency in a chosen field of study);
- have a highly qualified, well-resourced, aspiring, accountable, and disciplined faculty and staff that effectively participate in the shared governance of the institution; and
- conduct and disseminate high-quality research conducive to the expansion of knowledge and pertinent to the development needs of the country;

These issues are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2 of the Report.

How and why did AAU find itself where it is today?

The following were identified as primary causes for the current far-from-satisfactory state of AAU:

- i. loss of institutional autonomy and operational independence and erosion of academic freedom;
- ii. politicization of academic and administrative processes and decisions;
- iii. limited ability to recruit, retain, and grow academic staff with the resultant sizeable brain drain (specific issues include weak monitoring and evaluation, and inadequate remuneration);
- iv. absence of a core general education program (including a Freshman year) spanning basic sciences, logic, languages, history, etc.;² and
- v. excessively rapid expansion.

These issues are discussed in greater detail in Chapters 3 and 4.

² We are happy to note that, since the launch of this study, the Ministry of Science and Higher Education has introduced general education courses in all higher education institutions, effectively reviving the Freshman Program.

A key outcome of this situation has been a disengaged, disillusioned, and fatalistic (and sometimes compromised) faculty. This outcome added to the worsening of AAU's performance and further complicated (and complicates) the process of effecting change.

Deterioration of the overall educational standards in the country has also contributed to the situation, particularly because AAU does not have proper remedial courses to deal with the consequent weaknesses of the students that are assigned to it.

It was emphasized that these constraints require transformative legal, structural, and policy solutions.

1.2. Code of Conduct

One of the first things that the Committee did was to draft and agree on the code of conduct that will govern its operations. The code of conduct is annexed to this report:

2. Methodology

2.1. Data Collection

The inceptive answers above provide an initial diagnosis that need to be tested and enriched through an extensive and comprehensive process of data collection and analysis. Data collection covered, among others:

- the stated aspirations of the AAU Board and the AAU administration;
- the views and assessments of AAU faculty, staff, and students;
- the development needs of the country;
- the quality of graduates, as well as expectations of students and employers;
- characteristics of successful/resurgent universities or peers; and
- the historical evolution of AAU.

Summarized below are the principal means of data collection and information gathering and data analyses used.

2.1.1. Literature (or desk) review

The review covers all relevant internal and external documents/studies (collected and deposited in the Dropbox shared folder of the Committee). These include previous assessments of/by AAU and recommendations thereof, the relevant literature including that on the international experience, and studies on the key features and dynamics of the ecosystem within which AAU operates. The main aims of the review are to deduce the key features of a successful research university, the historical evolution and major current problems of AAU as well as the corresponding suggested solutions.

2.1.2. Consultations

Consultations provide the core source of information on all aspects of University life and corresponding remedial ideas. The relevant stakeholders include current and past AAU officials, AAU students (including those with disabilities) and administrators (central and college/institute-level), employers (private and public sector), and government officials. As appropriate, the study has deployed quantitative and qualitative methods. These include key informant interviews (KIIs) with two former presidents, the current president and eleven employers, thirty-eight focus group discussions (FGDs) with various sectors of the University community, and a structured questionnaire-based survey covering students, both undergraduate and graduate, regular and non-regular, with over 2000 responses obtained from the survey.

In addition to the discussions with the stakeholders enumerated above, the Committee made site visits of teaching and research facilities of four colleges (CHS, CNCS, AAiT, and CPVA) and the dormitory and canteen conditions at the main campus (Sidist Kilo). The site visits have enabled the Committee to gain a firsthand appreciation of the conditions of at least some of the facilities in the campuses.

Support from a survey company was sought to record the FGDs and submit a synthetic report of the findings.

2.1.3. Gathering administrative/statistical data

Data on the performance of AAU over the years has been found to be instructive about the past performance and current status of the University. The relevant information has been gathered from AAU databases as well as reports and minutes of various meetings.

2.1.4. Benchmarking data and information from selected peer institutions

An important way of concretizing the desired attributes of a successful university is by examining the experience of selected universities, which are deemed to have attributes worthy of emulation. A two-part benchmarking process was planned. First, two universities, namely Makerere University and University of Cape Town (UCT), were chosen from within the continent because of their salience to the history and aspirations of AAU. Second, a number of reasonably representative universities at the global level were explored on the basis of information available on their websites. These include three universities from the United States (namely, Colorado State University, George Mason University, and Wayne State University) and four other universities from Asia and Europe, (namely, Seoul National University, ETH Zurich, Sapienza University of Rome and Tel Aviv University). The projected site visits to two of the selected universities, Makerere and UCT, could not materialize because of budgetary and time constraints. This gap was partially filled by consultation of their websites and other pertinent literature.

2.2. Data Analysis

Appropriate instruments and guidelines were developed for interviews, surveys, and focus group discussions. A significant deliberate effort was made to make the entire process gender sensitive.

The information thus gathered was compiled and analyzed with the aim of inferring key constraints and potentials, trends, and perceptions/assessments regarding problems and their solutions.

Data from KIIs and FGDs (mainly in narrative form) were categorized and analyzed using qualitative data analysis methods (including content analysis). Data from secondary sources and structured questionnaire-based surveys were analyzed using appropriate statistical techniques (primarily descriptive analysis).

2.3. Formulate key findings and recommendations

The Study Committee has examined all the information gathered and systematically analyzed it to generate its findings and formulate its recommendations.

2.4. Develop and submit a draft report to the Board

The Study Committee compiled its findings and recommendations in a draft report for submission to the AAU Governing Board.

2.5. Submit a final report to the Board

The Committee's draft report was then amended to reflect, as appropriate, the comments of the Governing Board and resubmitted to the latter as a final report.

3. Limitations and challenges

3.1. Loss of institutional memory

One of the challenges faced by the study committee is the difficulty of finding relevant documents pertaining to the university. Documentation within the university is highly disorganized and the Committee had a hard time accessing relevant documents.

3.1. Delay in budget approval and release

The budget approval process took more time than expected and this delayed the work of the Committee considerably. In addition, the budget release process was time- and energy-consuming, thus creating an unfavorable working environment.

3.2. Unavailability of individuals for interview

Among the targets of KIIs were previous presidents of the university. Owing to circumstances beyond our control, two former Presidents, Prof. Andreas Eshete and Prof. Admassu Tsegaye, as well as some other lower officials, were not available for interview. That may have caused a small information gap in the study.

3.3. Inability to conduct benchmarking visits

The Committee had decided to make at least two benchmarking visits. Accordingly, Makerere University and University of Cape Town were selected for the purpose by virtue of their relative geographical proximity and closer academic experience. These visits could not be carried out because of the delay in the approval of the earmarked budget and the government authorization required for such trips.

Chapter 2

Attributes of a Successful University

1. Introduction

Universities are meant to be the place where scholars search for new ideas in a spirit of free inquiry (Altbach and Salmi 2011). Increase in the importance of knowledge results in the concomitant importance of higher education. Countries also find it important to have people acquire a higher standard of education. National development and competitiveness are predicated on the generation of good quality knowledge by higher education institutions (World Bank 2000). To fully participate in the global knowledge economy and to benefit from science and scholarship, countries and academic systems must have at least one research university at a world-class level.

Research universities of world class status are elite, complex institutions with multiple academic and societal roles. They link global science and scholarship with a nation's scientific and knowledge system. They produce much of the new information and analysis needed to bring about advances in technology and contribute to a better understanding of the human condition through the social sciences and humanities. As national institutions, they contribute to cultural, technological and social development; as international institutions, they are linked to global intellectual and scientific trends (Salmi 2009). A "world class university" (WCU) is mostly governed by a drive to "compete in a global tertiary education marketplace" (Salmi 2009; Sharpe 2014). World class status is determined not only by the quality of the educational process, but also dimensions that are visible and easily measured in quantitative terms. For example, research activity is measured by the number of publications and citations and teaching is measured by major faculty awards. Although teaching, service to society, and research are all emphasized in the assessments, ratings seem to be limited largely to the research dimension (Levin et al 2006).

The Research University takes into account international standards of excellence focused largely on research productivity, while at the same time being grounded in national and regional service and other responsibilities that may not contribute to ranking regimes. The concept of a research university de-emphasizes rankings and broadens the focus beyond research. Research universities

are research-intensive institutions, or ones in the process of becoming so, while at the same time having wider recognized goals (Fig 1) (Douglass 2014).

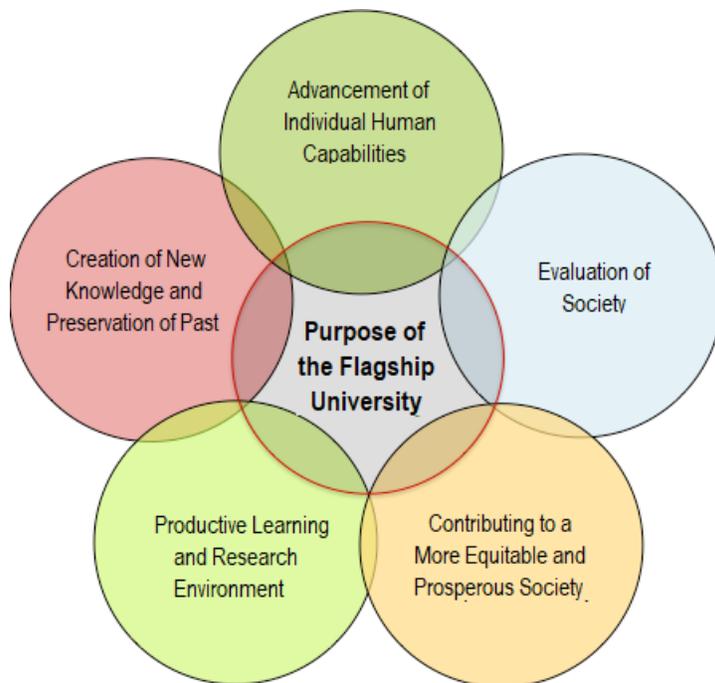


Fig. 1 The Purpose of Public Research Universities (Douglass 2014)

The research university is a central institution of the 21st century. It is committed to the creation and dissemination of knowledge in a range of disciplines and fields and is equipped with the appropriate laboratories, libraries and other infrastructures that permit teaching and research at the highest possible level. The research university educates students needed for technological and intellectual leadership, usually at all degree levels. Indeed, this synergy of research and teaching is a typical feature of research universities, which employ mainly full-time academics who hold doctoral degrees (Altbach 2007).

Research universities serve the best students in the country and employ the best qualified academics. They educate students at the doctoral level and their research output is considerable. Smaller countries may have only one research university, whereas larger ones may have many (Altbach and Salmi 2011). Research universities predominantly focus on research, although teaching and advisory services also remain important. Most of the academic community, including

the undergraduate students, often has the opportunity to participate in research and is exposed to the research culture (Altbach and Salmi 2011).

Research universities aspire to be the best in teaching, research, and participation in the global knowledge network. Students are expected to perform at a high level. Despite its importance in the knowledge economy, a research university must also consider culture, religion, society, and values. Because of its firm link to society, it has the ideal of serving the needs of society in addition to the creation and dissemination of knowledge. A successful research university may focus on national and regional services while still conscious of the international higher education landscape (Douglass 2014).

A research university, thus, has a unique academic and research mission and requires sustained support and favorable working conditions much more than other universities. Its success requires sustained financial support from government and a considerable degree of autonomy on decisions about programs and other academic matters. In a research university, such areas as hiring and admissions policies, promotion standards, and degree requirements for staff members and students are solely merit-based. The principle of academic freedom is a core value of a research university (Altbach and Salmi 2011).

Professors at a research university have full-time employment and are paid adequate salaries that can support them and their families. For a research university to be successful, the academics must enjoy conditions of employment that will permit them to give their best. Research universities especially need the full involvement of the faculty in the key decision-making arrangements of the institution. Students must also be consulted as key stakeholders in the academic community. The best universities have shared governance, with the academic community in control of essential academic decisions and the administrators and managers responsible for resources, facilities, and other administrative matters.

Research universities function well in a higher education system that consists of stratified structure, adequate and stable long-term funding, competition, flexibility, well-defined standards, immunity from political manipulation, well-defined links to other sectors, supportive legal and regulatory environment, and system-wide resources (World Bank 2000).

2. Roles of research universities

What is a global research university? It is a university embedded effectively in its local and national contexts on an ongoing basis, and one that also has an established global role and presence. In addition, it is adequately resourced in revenues and human skills, and its system of governance fosters openness, initiative and the freedom necessary to make strategic executive decisions in relation to developing new knowledge and interpretations across the range of disciplines. Moreover, it is partly internationalized and is thus aware of what is happening in other institutions. Further, it exhibits strong global connectivity in communications, collaboration, two-way flows of knowledge and ideas, and continuing flows of faculty and students moving in and out of the institution. Above all, it has research capacity sufficient to generate globally significant output in all the sciences, thus enabling it to position itself in worldwide knowledge circuits and claim the reputation of a truly modern university (Marginson 2012).

In general, there is broad agreement that research universities have three major roles (Levin et al 2006):

- Excellence in the education of their students reflected through the resources and organization of undergraduate, graduate, and professional instruction. Achieving this goal requires outstanding faculty, high quality teaching and other instructional activities, and availability of good libraries, laboratories, and other pertinent facilities as well as highly prepared and motivated students.
- Research, development and dissemination of knowledge in terms of identification, growth, and extension of concepts and ideas as well as their transformation into applications, goods, and services that enhance understanding and social welfare.
- Activities contributing to the cultural, scientific, and civic life of society that include conferences, publications, artistic events and fora as well as the provision of services (e.g. clinics, hospitals and museums) that engage and contribute to the larger community including the regional, national, and international.

The concept of World Class University (WCU) is generally not properly understood. In the words of Altbach (2004), “everyone wants a world-class university. No country feels it can do without one. The problem is that no one knows what a world-class university is, and no one has figured out how to get one. Everyone, however, refers to the concept”. He further argues that “it is just as important to have ‘national-’ or ‘regional-class’ academic institutions as it is to emulate the wealthiest and, in many ways, most elitist universities”.

Universities ranked as world class are known mainly for their excellence in research. But excellence in research is possible only when other aspects of a university such as top-quality professors are available. And to attract and retain the best academic staff, favorable working conditions including arrangements for job security (tenure) and appropriate salaries and benefits should be made available.

Another important condition for a world class university is academic freedom where professors and students must be free to pursue knowledge wherever it leads them and to publish their work freely without fear of sanction by academic or external authorities. Adequate facilities for academic work, appropriate libraries and laboratories, access to the Internet and other electronic resources, as well as adequate offices for staff and professors, are additional basic requirements (Altbach 2004).

The modern university has developed the following essential attributes in its hundreds of years of history (Wang 2001):

- *The World-class University must be truly internationalized.* World-class universities recruit first rate professors and enroll students from all over the world.
- *The World-class University must be open.* The World-class University has to create an easy, free and open environment where students and professors, junior instructors and senior professors, and administrators and faculty members treat each other equally and exchange ideas without restrictions.

- *The World-class University must be critical.* The critical spirit is an essential nature of the university. When people use their critical eyes to judge existing knowledge, they have begun the process of creating new knowledge. When people challenge authoritative views or established traditions, they have begun the process of creating new knowledge. The university is better placed than any other agency to provide an environment conducive to critical thinking.
- *The World-class University must be inclusive.* The university is more inclusive than any other social institution. Firstly, it covers all fields, including not only traditional basic disciplines, but also those disciplines deemed obsolete and without much practical value such as ancient languages, or those disciplines and fields that have not been widely recognized, while at the same time forging interdisciplinary training and research. Secondly, all can find their place in the university, irrespective of their political belief, religion, race or nationality, sex or age,.

Although most countries, even the richly endowed ones, may afford to support only one or two world-class universities, the world-class debate is beneficial in that it focuses attention on the improvement of academic standards, the role of universities in society, and the way academic institutions fit into national and international systems of higher education. Many countries and institutions might do better to focus on building world-class departments, institutes, or schools—especially in fields that are relevant to the national or regional economy or society (Altbach 2004).

Major issues to consider while establishing a successful research university are:

- university mission and vision should be aligned to local societal goals;
- academic rigor and quality should be guiding principles, particularly with regards to peer review and knowledge generation; and
- the institution should be progressive, forward looking and nurture democracy, most notably by fostering academic freedom.

Salmi (2009) identified the three major conditions that should be satisfied for the realization of research universities of world class status (Fig. 2):

- *A high concentration of talent*, with a critical mass of the best students and best faculty.
- *Abundant resources*, obtained, depending on national contexts, from four major sources:

- government funding, consistent and long term, for both operational expenditures and research;
 - strong relationships and partnerships with public and private organizations through the funding of “contract research”;
 - endowments and donations from alumni and stakeholders; and.
 - income generated from tuition and other fees.
- *Favorable governance*, which requires relative independence from the state and freedom from bureaucracies and externally imposed standards. Such independence creates the ground for competitiveness, unrestrained scientific inquiry, critical thinking, innovation and creativity. Research universities should also be free to manage their resources with agility and quickly respond to the demands of a rapidly changing global market. Favorable governance permits control over the central elements of academic life, such as admission, curricula, the criteria for the award of degrees, the selection of new members of the professoriate, and the basic direction of the academic life of the institution. Governance features include inspiring and persistent leaders, a strong strategic vision, a philosophy of success and excellence and a culture of constant reflection, organizational learning, and change.
 - According to the World Bank (2000), desirable features of a higher education system consist of a stratified (differentiated) structure, adequate and stable long-term funding, competition, flexibility, well-defined standards, immunity from political manipulation, well-defined links to other sectors, supportive legal and regulatory environment, and system-wide resources.

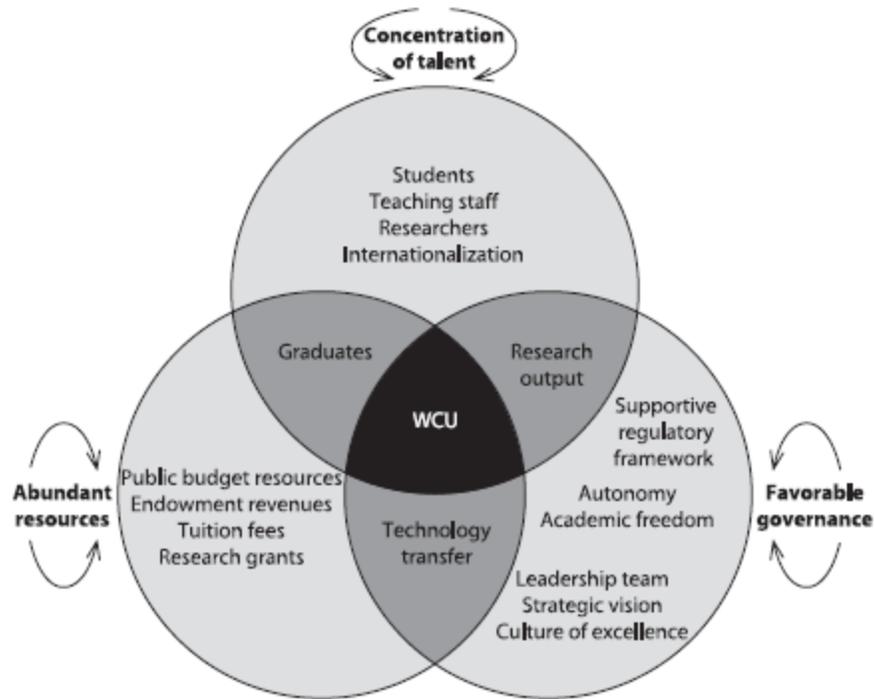


Fig. 2. Characteristics of a World Class University

3. Characteristics of Research Universities

According to Lee (2013), research universities have the following characteristics:

Internationalization: Unless it is internationalized, a university's activities are limited to its national boundaries. Successful research universities are perceived as ultimate destinations by leading faculty, academic researchers, and students in the nation and around the world.

Research intensive: Successful research universities function as research hubs in both the national and international realms. Accordingly, countries attempting to develop such universities often mobilize and highly prioritize their resources toward research. Research universities also respond to other academic demands, including high-quality teaching and public service.

Technologically smart and resource intensive: Successful research universities demand costly and up-to-date infrastructure, such as scientific laboratories and equipment, information technology, access to global knowledge, and large interdisciplinary research teams which provide the foundation for teaching and research at the highest possible level.

Institutionally autonomous: Successful research universities are not hampered by pointless government interference, not only over ownership, finance, and institutional management, but also over internal academic affairs, including instructional content and student selection. Ultimately, institutional autonomy contributes to unrestrained scientific inquiry, innovation, and creativity and enables universities to respond effectively and quickly to the demands of a rapidly changing global market.

4. Challenges of universities in developing countries

In the changing world economy, physical capital is continuously being replaced by knowledge capital as a source of wealth. Information technology, biotechnology and other similar innovations drive knowledge development and change the way we live and work. Rational and productive utilization of the natural resources of a country requires knowledge capital.

The growing importance of knowledge has necessitated the growing need for higher education. More young people must be educated to a higher standard. The quality of knowledge generated within higher education institutions, and its availability to the wider economy, is increasingly becoming critical to national competitiveness (Lee 2013).

This trend is creating a very serious challenge to developing countries. For various reasons, many governments in developing countries have generally assigned higher education a relatively low priority. As a result, higher education systems are underfunded despite the increasing demand for quality. Faculty are often under-qualified, lack motivation, and are poorly rewarded. Students are poorly taught and curricula are underdeveloped. Meanwhile, developed countries are constantly raising the quality and efficiency of their higher education system. For many developing countries, trying to maintain their position, let alone to catch up, is a daunting task. Currently, across most of the developing world, the potential of higher education to promote development is being realized only marginally despite the fact that the importance of universities in creating research-based knowledge is clear from the experience of developing countries (Lee 2013). Most universities in developing countries are disadvantaged primarily because of poor investment in higher education. In the late 20th century, higher education was shoved aside by both national governments and

international agencies. Most African countries have only a few universities and have not thus far developed the differentiated higher education systems required for the information age.

Most developing countries have not developed the capacity to adapt to changes in the global higher education system. Thus, they are less likely to meet external norms and standards. While it appears that some developing countries desire to create one or more research universities of world class status, developed countries and a few developing countries are moving at a faster pace and taking actions to win this global competition. The research environment for universities in most developing countries is much different from that of even average universities in developed countries (Altbach 2011). Research universities of world class status continue to seek great autonomy for their academic activities and innovation on a global scale, minimizing direct governmental regulation. However, in developing countries, the academic autonomy of universities is not well protected. Universities are often politicized because they train elites who are potential public servants and because the government regards them as platforms for mobilizing political opposition and as sources of social dissent.

There are various strategies and approaches that help institutions achieve excellence and enhance global competitiveness (Wang et al 2012). In spite of many social, cultural and economic differences across the globe, the three main strategies are:

- *Competitive funding schemes*, such as those implemented in China, Japan, Korea, Germany, and recently in Taiwan, Russia, and Saudi Arabia, where selected universities and research centers were provided extra and concentrated funding to develop excellence in teaching and research.
- *Internationalization*, which can be addressed in various ways, such as curriculum reform and student and faculty mobility. For example, curriculum reform has been encouraged in top universities to extend the capacity of universities for international cooperation, to enrich students' learning experiences with a multicultural dimension, and to raise their awareness of global citizenship (Mohrman 2008). High-quality faculty recruitment has also been encouraged in both national policies and institutional visions. Leading academics are

believed to be able to contribute to upgrade the institutions and to establish graduate programs and research centers in areas of comparative advantage (Altbach and Salmi 2011). To further facilitate the progress of world-class universities, a number of leading universities have formed productive partnership with other prestigious universities, particularly in the industrialized world, by establishing dual-degree programs, research collaboration, and university consortia. This form of international collaboration has also served as a platform for student and faculty exchange, and the sharing of resources and ideas.

- *Governance* issues embrace a range of features: autonomy, leadership, regulatory frameworks, strategic visions, competitive environments and organizational cultures (Salmi 2009, 2011). A successful research university needs to take into consideration the ecosystem within which institutions evolve. The ecosystem includes the elements of the macro environment, leadership at the national level, governance and regulatory frameworks, quality assurance frameworks, financial resources and incentives, articulation mechanisms, access to information, location and digital and telecommunications infrastructure (Salmi 2011). International experience might be helpful to provide experience and lessons; however, a simple policy copying exercise may not transpose effectively from one country or university to another.

University of Science and Technology in Hong Kong, China; the State University of New York in Incheon in the Republic of Korea; and the Singapore Management University have all distinguished themselves in numerous university global rankings. The following are lessons learnt from these universities on what it takes to become world-class (World Bank 2000):

- *Adopt a multidisciplinary approach*
Most universities require faculty members to collaborate with others outside their fields to solve problems coming from industries. Others encourage students to have a double degree or second major to broaden their horizons.
- *Partner and collaborate*

Universities work with and secure support from government and industry. They connect with industry in order to prepare a curriculum that is responsive to the needs of employers and to make sure graduates are hireable. They forge a host of industry partnerships to open internship and employment opportunities for students.

- *Find leaders with good connections*

The founder and honorary president of State University of New York in Incheon, Korea, has been involved not just in academia but also in government and industry. This gave him a unique perspective when it comes to setting the vision and planning for the university, which has to continuously work with government and industry to develop a curriculum that produces work-ready graduates.

- *Hire the best*

A key success factor in attaining world-class status is hiring the best researchers and teachers, including from the Diaspora.

- *Leverage on technology*

The availability of digital tools has allowed faculty members to dispense entirely with paper syllabus; students and teachers do not have to visit the library as learning materials are now all online.

5. Sample Experiences from Developing Countries

As knowledge production and dissemination must spread internationally, all regions of the world need a role in the knowledge network (Altbach 1987). It may not be possible for each country to have a research university, but many developing and middle-income countries can develop universities with research capacity and the ability to participate in the world knowledge system. All countries need academic institutions linked to the global academic system of science and scholarship so that they can understand advanced scientific developments and participate selectively in them. Academic institutions in small or poor countries may not be expected to compete with highly ranked world class universities of industrialized countries. But most countries

can support at least one university of sufficient quality to participate in international discussions of science and scholarship and undertake research in one or more fields relevant to national development (Altbach 2007). Some examples are provided below.

Shanghai Jiao Tong University (SJTU), China

The following are the measures that Shanghai Jiao Tong University's (SJTU) took toward becoming a research university with world-class capacity (Wang et al 2011):

The university first articulated its mission and goals in 1996 and designed and undertook strategic planning accordingly. The Office of Strategic Planning integrated accountability, evaluation, and institutional research to chart the direction for and provide essential support to university leaders and other university divisions. The objective was: (a) to implement SJTU's mission of building a university with a capacity for world-class research and education and (b) to improve the university's programs and services.

The following strategies were formulated to translate the university's mission and goals into a definitive process:

- to develop the university's capacity by improving the quality of its faculty (increasing the number of internationally competitive faculty members and improving the quality of managerial and technical staff);
- to strengthen the fundamental sciences by initiating new approaches (employing scholars who formerly held leadership positions, adopting a performance evaluation system, and setting up natural science foundations);
- to encourage interdisciplinary research in different subject areas; and
- to promote the institution's internationalization.

After 10 years of such initiatives, SJTU made progress. At the beginning of 2008, the university became strongly aware that the next five years, from 2008 to 2013, would be a crucial transition period. Eventually, the Strategic Plan for 2008-2013 was drafted by the Office of Strategic Planning and approved by the University Council. The aim was to enhance the quality of SJTU's profile and academic performance to meet the world standard by benchmarking and evaluating the university's performance based on its international counterparts.

Performance indicators were:

- university, school, and department scale (for example, the total number of teaching and research staff members, undergraduate students, and postgraduate students);
- talent capacity building (for example, the proportion of international students, visiting scholars, and courses taught in a bilingual approach);
- leading academics (for example, the number of highly cited authors, editors for recognized international journals, and Chinese Science Academy members);
- internationalization of teaching and research staff (for example, the proportion of staff with PhD degrees from overseas institutions and with degrees from world-class universities, foreign staff, and the number of international conferences held in the school);
- research funding (for example, the amount of research funding from government-funded projects and the volume of international research collaboration);
- research achievements (the number of journal articles published in Nature and Science, the high-citation indicators, and the number of patent applications); and
- disciplinary development (for example, the number of key disciplines and of key national laboratories and research centers accredited with national and international recognition).

Each department and school was required to create its own goals and performance indicators in the departmental strategic planning—a task related to its benchmarking and evaluation exercise. In 2020, SJTU is ranked globally 157th by Times Higher Education.

University of Ibadan, Nigeria

Established in 1948, the University of Ibadan has passed through the colonial era, when the university was affiliated with the University of London, the post-colonial era of the nascent national university, when state power altered the autonomy of the university, and the turbulent years characterized by civil war and prolonged military rule with an interregnum of civilian rule. Each phase has had a major impact on the development of the University of Ibadan. Uninterrupted civil rule since 2000 has given the University the opportunity for a renewed academic life (Materu 2011).

The Universities Autonomy Act of 2003 made new provisions for the autonomy, management, and reorganization of the universities in Nigeria. It restored the powers of the University Council

and the Senate on administrative and academic matters, respectively. It gave the University Council the responsibility of setting institutional policies, hiring new management, and forwarding budgetary requests to the government. It gave the university control over its own student admissions and restricted the role of the National Universities Commission to quality assurance and system coordination. It legally separated the university from the public service, thereby ending its adherence to government civil service policies with regard to employment, remuneration and benefits (Materu 2011).

The university prepared a five-year strategic plan providing a road map for achieving the vision of a world-class institution with academic excellence geared toward meeting societal needs. Strategic issues included, among others (Materu 2011):

- management of governance to reduce delays and duplication of functions, effective and efficient management of University resources, effective communication strategy;
- teamwork and interdisciplinary effort in teaching and learning, addressing teamwork and interdisciplinary effort in teaching, research, and service, excellence and innovation in curriculum design, content development, and delivery, a reward system that recognizes teaching and learning as key elements, and university-industry linkage in the learning process;
- research, development, and innovation, consisting of effective research management culture, sustainable funding of pure and applied innovative research, interdisciplinary research for societal needs, commercialization of research results, research and documentation of indigenous knowledge systems;
- human resource development, with a reward system that attracts and retains high-quality staff based on merit and performance, opportunities for staff members and students to acquire national and international experience, commitment to equality, diversity, and equity in staff recruitment and development.

- community service and partnership with alumni, government, the private sector, civil society, and the local and international communities;
- financing mechanisms to ensure adequate resources to achieve goals, efficiency in management of finances, and financial control framework.
- program development in relation to demand- and needs-driven and globally competitive core academic programs, curricula to promote interdisciplinarity and skills development, ICT and open distance learning; and
- internationalization through teaching and research driven by modern and global trends, strong relationships with international communities in Nigeria. Internationalization focused on partnerships with several universities, donor agencies, and development organizations around the world in the form of exchanges of staff members and students, collaborative research, development of internationalized curricula, increasing joint internships, and other policies.

The university has a student–to–staff member ratio of 16 to 1, with some variation among fields of study. It also has a relatively high proportion of senior-level academics who are able to lead research teams. A daunting challenge for Ibadan has been the size of its nonacademic staff. After dramatic reduction through the years, there are still three nonacademic staff members to one academic staff member.

The major sources of income for Ibadan are government allocations, the Education Trust Fund, students’ fees and levies, endowments, grants, and internally generated revenues.

The University of Chile (UCH), Chile

Established in the 19th Century, the University of Chile is one of the most respected institutions in Chile. The University added a research mission in the 1960s and began producing full-time academics with advanced degrees in its own graduate programs. In 1968, shared governance by faculty members, students, and administrators was introduced (Bernasconi 2011). This was eliminated during the period of military rule (1973–90); academic units in the social sciences,

humanities, and the arts were closed and their personnel dismissed. The higher education reform of 1981 severed from UCH all of its regional branches, which were turned into small, independent regional universities.

By the time democracy returned in 1990, UCH had only 18,000 students and public funding had declined by over 60%. Although governance of the institution was normalized, and the academic momentum was recovered thereafter, strains of previous years, together with structural difficulties, made it difficult to adapt to changing circumstances. The degree of heterogeneity across academic units was a challenge, as some units were research-intensive centers while others made little progress beyond a basic teaching function served mostly by adjunct faculty members. The unchecked decentralization, long established at UCH, was identified as the principal cause for its heterogeneity. Lack of monitoring reduced the efficiency and effectiveness of the educational process.

A self-study by the university identified, among others, the following strengths (Bernasconi 2011):

- the quality of its academic core;
- the quality and increasing numbers of its undergraduate students;
- the growing presence of accredited graduate programs (especially at the doctoral level);
- the rigorous process of faculty evaluation and promotion.

It also identified, among others, the following weaknesses (Bernasconi 2011):

- outdated infrastructure and insufficient equipment to respond to the growth of the institution;
- public administration rules that prevent the university from responding with agility to external opportunities;
- weak management information systems and indicators;
- institutional funding that is unrelated to strategic priorities; and
- a generalized lack of responsiveness by the academic community to the competitive conditions under which the university must operate.

In short, greater challenges came from governance, management, and funding rather than from the academics.

Based on these findings, a five-year strategic plan was prepared with programs characterized by ideological pluralism and tightly aligned with the needs of Chile. Better selection and follow-up mechanisms for students and improved alumni relations were stressed upon. Other objectives were to curb attrition and improve time-to-graduation indicators, greater transition to graduate studies, more English-language training, increased opportunities for general education, and more intensive use of information technologies.

Goals were also set to expand the number of graduate-level programs, especially at the doctoral level, to create pathways for continuing education opportunities, to foster relations with the business sector; to strengthen academic cadres; and to multiply opportunities for international exchange of students. It was also intended to increase research in the social sciences and the humanities, and to pay greater attention to applied research and technological development. Additional goals were adding young academic talent as well as promoting interdisciplinary centers, projects, and programs.

An agreement was entered into with the government to fund the reform of the university's central administration structure to free the leaders and other high officials from management duties so that they could concentrate instead on policy making and monitoring, to transfer management responsibilities to the campuses, and to introduce a world-class information management system to run and monitor all activities and resources of the university, at all levels, in real time, and in an integrated manner.

After the reform, UCH recruited students in Chile with the best scores in the national university entrance test. Surveys of business executives and human resources managers routinely placed graduates of this university among those most sought by employers. UCH also employed some of the most talented faculty members in the country, especially in its professional schools and science departments. The library system boasted 49 libraries, with some 3 million volumes and access to an electronic collection of more than 18,000 journals (Bernasconi 2011).

King Abdulaziz University (KAU), Saudi Arabia

King Abdulaziz University was founded in 1964 as a private higher education institution. It became a public institution in 1973. Presently, it is the largest university in Saudi Arabia with approximately 50,000 full-time students, 4,500 teaching and 15,000 administrative and technical staff. Moreover, it has hundreds of departments and programs of tertiary education in various disciplines

It charted a strategic plan to meet the challenges that it would face if it were to become an internationally ranked world-class university in the future. As a consequence, it decided to re-focus its vision and mission towards becoming a multi-faceted hybrid university. It decided to maintain its traditional identity as a comprehensive large university, while placing emphasis on aspects such as electronics, research, and entrepreneurship. Its strategic plan addressed the following points (Tayeb and Damanhuori 2011):

- *Human Resource Development.* The university reached the conclusion that enduring performance rested on high quality human resources. Human resource development strategy was aimed at substantial improvement in all staff categories: teaching, research, administrative and technical. Student needs were kept at the top of the list. The intention was to pursue the goal of creating elite human resources with excellent intellectual skills, abilities, and experiences that will contribute intellectually in all environments and perform at the highest levels.
- *ICT Development and its Applications in University Management.* KAU embarked on open and distance learning based mainly on multimedia-rich e-learning, with the goal of reaching across Saudi Arabia. It provided high quality education, training and development, from a lifelong learning perspective. It had a plan to back up the system by a satellite interactive TV channel. Furthermore, it also planned to utilize e-learning to provide distance learning graduate studies. In addition, KAU utilizes the concept of electronic management with regards to all of its administrative, service, and information dissemination functions.

- *Benchmarking Exercise.* Key performance indicators were put into place with the intention of using these indicators for benchmarking KAU's year-on-year performance.
- *Building University Culture.* Being committed to each student's learning and subsequent academic success, the university is dedicated to having a positive and a strongly grounded culture with the aim of nurturing the student with virtues of a mature, self-aware and responsible citizen, thereby enabling him/her to be a worthy member of society capable of great achievements.
- *Accreditation and Quality.* Another major route in KAU's strategic development is the focus on full academic international accreditation of its programs. Non-academic accreditation was gained for both the Blood Bank and the Hospital in the Medical Centre. Various administration units have been awarded 25 quality certificates of ISO 9001–2000.
- *International Dimension.* KAU made efforts towards promoting and expanding its international presence and overseas cooperation. Strategies included exchange visits, cooperation and twinning agreements, joint research, and the establishment of the International Advisory Board of KAU.
- *Focusing on Research Capacity.* To be recognized as a research university, current achievements include: increasing the amount of public funds allocated for research; soliciting endowed scientific research chairs; endowment funds for research; establishing six research centers of excellence; promoting research and publication; investing in laboratory and research capabilities; winning competitive research funds; and establishing a research science park.

KAU is striving to be more consistent and focused in its efforts to foster and nurture public engagement by encouraging faculty and students to bring their knowledge and skills to bear on pressing contemporary problems and, through communication, to encourage widespread public understanding and subsequent civil society involvement in the institution's future.

6. Benchmarking

In an attempt to discover what is the best performance being achieved by others in the academy, the Committee has undertaken benchmarking—a process of measuring the performance of the university against those considered to be the best in class. In a way, the experiences described above would contribute to that exercise. While the dimensions typically measured in benchmarking are quality, time and cost, the point of this particular exercise is to identify gaps in AAU's overall practices in order to achieve internal opportunities for improvement. For reasons already indicated in Chapter 1, Committee members were not able to make site visits of the benchmarked institutions. But we feel that a thorough desk review and online consultation of pertinent material has reasonably made up for that deficiency.

The committee has undertaken a generic type of benchmarking to broadly conceptualize practices or functions that can be practiced in identical or similar ways. While the outcome may be a broad conceptualization, the thrust will be a careful understanding of performance practices that work extremely well. It is believed that, through this benchmarking, there will emerge broad, new perspectives, innovations, high potential for discovery, and a non-competitive and non-threatening self-realization that would help AAU compare itself to the rest of the world. Because the focus here is on being innovative and gaining insight into excellent practices rather than the processes of a particular university, the question of identifying best-in-class becomes irrelevant and unnecessary. The benchmarking is broadly categorized into two: the American experience and the African experience.

The American Experience

The committee identified three institutions in the United States. These institutions are: Colorado State University (CSU), George Mason University (GMU), and Wayne State University (WSU).

Colorado State University (CSU) is a land-grant institution and a Carnegie Research University (Very High Research Activity) established in 1879. CSU was chosen because of its high impact practices in the placement of its graduates, its international program, and its University Honors program. It was also chosen because of its Academic programs and practices, with a unique set of

applied sciences programs relevant to any developing country, and because of its Student Affairs/Services practices.

George Mason University (GMU) is a large public university with a noteworthy economic think tank. GMU has produced two Nobel Laureates in Economics – James M. Buchanan and Vernon L. Smith – and a highly noted scholar in Gordon Tullock, best known for his public choice theory. GMU was chosen because of its high impact programs, its extraordinary faculty along with a unique combination of academic programs, and its pattern of enrollment by gender, 53% of its students being female.

Wayne State University (WSU) is a public research university in Detroit, Michigan. It is the third largest university in Michigan. Founded in 1868, WSU consists of 14 schools and colleges offering nearly 350 programs to nearly 32,000 graduate and undergraduate students. WSU is considered a premier research university serving a diverse body of motivated students. Along with the University of Michigan and Michigan State University, Wayne State is one of the three land grant institutions in the state of Michigan. WSU was selected because of its high impact practices, its academic programs that were both unique and extensive, and its extensive and high research output. In addition, it has won huge and continuing grants from the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the National Institute of Health (NIH) and has created various centers of high impact to business and industry for which it has received acclaim.

All three institutions considered for this benchmarking are large public institutions with similar governance systems. All three are created and enabled by state legislation. All three receive annual funding from their respective states—nearly 50% state funding and about 50% tuition comprises their annual budgets. All three are supervised by a state level higher education commission. All three have independent Boards of Trustees—WSU has an elected Board, while CSU and GMU have appointed Boards. All three are accredited by the Higher Learning Commission—a national accrediting body in the United States. All three have revenue-bond-financed capital outlay projects in addition to the State Capital Outlay Projects of their respective states. Finally, in all three institutions, all administrative, faculty and other staff positions are filled through competitive processes.

We believe that, in all three institutions, there exists a concerted institutional imperative to ascertain the congruity of all three criteria listed above to stated objectives and goals, and therefore, worth emulating. Details are to be found in Annex X.

The African Experience

In its effort to draw useful lessons closer to home for the revitalization process, the Committee paid special attention to two African universities: the University of Cape Town and Makerere University. The first was chosen because it has consistently been ranked as the top African university. The latter was chosen as an example of an institution that had gone through a period of near disintegration and shown remarkable revival. We will give highlights of their accomplishments below. Additional and detailed information is to be found in Annex X.

The University of Cape Town (UCT)

UCT was founded in 1829 as the South African College, making it the oldest higher education institution in sub-Saharan Africa. It has been ranked 136th globally in 2020, while it has consecutively been the top university in Africa. It is headed by the vice-chancellor, who is elected and accountable to the Council, the highest governing body, composed of thirty members, 40% of whom are internal to the University. He/she is assisted by three deputy vice-chancellors, the chief operating officer, the registrar, seven deans, nine executive directors and the director of the Graduate School of Business (GSB). Admission of students is the prerogative of the University. Application process is also conducted through the respective faculty, with each faculty developing its own application requirements. Orientation is conducted by a team of 200 orientation leaders and consists of both general orientation about University life and orientation by the respective faculties.

There is a highly developed ICT department, which gives full end user support as well as a host of IT-related services. All materials in the university are stored and are available online. The university is implementing an online platform where staff can purchase travel, office supplies, courier services, research consumables, etc. Other services provided include e-Travel, and e-Shopping with vendors that have a contract with the university. Maintenance is also requested online through a maintenance request form.

The University provides adequate counseling service to students, including group therapy sessions. Provision of accommodation facilities is extended to postgraduate students; indeed, they are given priority if they have spouses and/or minor dependents. There is also pre-primary day care for children of faculty and students. Campus life is enriched by an array of extracurricular activities, partially funded by the University, the rest being covered by membership fees. The University has also put in place a number of motivational awards, including Distinguished Teacher Award, UCT Book Award, and Creative Works Award.

The university's research support Hub website guide the researcher through the various support services available. Staff performing above the requirements of the position may be paid a once-off non-pensionable performance bonus. Medical aid is given based on the Medical aid policy.

UCT did not set advancement in the international league table as a goal in itself because of the university community's varied reactions and opinions to university rankings, but it helped its faculty to understand the philosophies, biases, strengths and weaknesses of global university rankings, as well as ranking impact on funders and policy makers (Wang et al, 2012). The university actively engaged the faculty in identifying relevant issues and indicators in their specific departments and prompted them to evaluate their own performance in relation to the university's goals. Based on the evaluations, the University decided upon four strategies and principles that would enable it, as a university in the global south, to achieve excellence in a globalized and competitive world. These were (a) increasing focus on its specific location in Africa, (b) increasing international collaboration, (c) increasing research visibility, and (d) increasing support to researchers at all levels.

Makerere University

Makerere University started as a technical school in 1922 and was raised to the status of a regional college for East and Central Africa in 1940. In 1949, it was affiliated with the University of London as Makerere University College. It was in 1970, in the very last year of Milton Obote's presidency, that it finally assumed its current form as Makerere University. No sooner was the university inaugurated than it entered its darkest days with the seizure of state power by Idi Amin, leading to a massive exodus of staff and degradation of the institutional basis of the university. The task of revitalizing, which started in earnest in the early 1990s, was a long and difficult process, requiring

the combined efforts of its leadership and staff. In the words of John Ssebawufu, who served as the University's Vice Chancellor in the critical years 1993-2004, "The road to recovery has been long, slow, hard and painful" (Ssebawufu 2017). The progress has resulted in Makerere becoming one of the leading universities in Sub-Saharan Africa, globally ranked in the 600-800 category in the Times Higher Education 2020 index.

The challenge faced by Makerere University in Uganda has been essentially addressing the perennial problem of providing good-quality higher education to large numbers equitably, but without undue dependence on government funding. The challenge was met by devising alternative financing strategies, putting in place new management structures, and introducing courses that have high demand. As a result, it has reached a point where more than 30 percent of its revenue is internally generated. Income-generating ventures were in the form of limited liability companies wholly owned by the University Council. They included the University Guest House, the University Printing Press, maize mill, bakery and the University Bookshop. Every unit had to cover the salary of its staff, pay the appropriate tax and cover all its operational costs. As it turned out, they were able not only to meet all their operating costs, but could also turn out good profits which were reinvested in the business.

The increase in institutional revenue has had a salutary effect on staff salary structures and incentive schemes. The payment of higher salaries to faculty has had the effect of slowing the exodus of academic staff as well as making it unnecessary to engage in multifarious activities outside the university to earn extra income.

7. Lessons for Addis Ababa University

As knowledge production and dissemination is spreading in all regions of the world, Ethiopia must develop a research university that is linked to the global academic system of science and scholarship so that it can produce well educated and competent graduates that can partake of advanced scientific developments. Even technology that is transferred from advanced countries requires competent graduates to adapt, implement and maintain it. The recent differentiation of higher education in Ethiopia, as recently publicized by MoSHE, has classified Addis Ababa University as a research university. Thus, in order to play a crucial role in the society, Addis Ababa University must enjoy strong government support with institutional autonomy and operational

independence to develop into a research university that can respond effectively and quickly to the demands of the nation's growth and development. The experiences of the various higher education institutions that are surveyed above will provide important lessons on how to proceed to execute that role efficiently and successfully.

Chapter 3

Historical Profile of AAU

1. Introduction

Addis Ababa University had its origins in the University College of Addis Ababa (UCAA), which was founded in 1950. Classes started on 11 December with 71 students and nine staff, all of them expatriate. The college was officially inaugurated on 3 March 1951. It had to wait three more years before it was officially gazetted as a chartered organization in July 1954. The 1950s were a decade of higher education expansion, with a string of colleges being set up in different parts of the country. Thus, the College of Engineering was opened in Addis Ababa in 1953, the College of Agriculture in Alemaya (or Haromaya, as it is now known) and the Public Health College in Gondar in 1954 and the Ethio-Swedish Building College in Addis Ababa in 1955. Unlike UCAA, these colleges were not autonomous, chartered organizations; rather, they were administered by the ministries of agriculture, public health and education, respectively. In 1960, the Holy Trinity high school that had been opened in 1942 was upgraded to a college level.

In 1959, the Ethiopian Government commissioned a team of seven academics from the University of Utah to examine the higher education landscape in the country. On the basis of its recommendation, the various colleges were merged to form a university which came to be known as Haile Sellassie I University. The university got its charter in February 1961 and was inaugurated on 18 December in a highly colourful ceremony. Throughout the sixties, more colleges and schools, some of them newly established, others upgraded from diploma to degree, joined the university: the College of Business Administration, the Faculty of Law and the School of Social Work. A development that extended the University's outreach was the upgrading in 1962 to degree level of the Extension program, which was first opened as a diploma program in 1953; it soon came to match the regular program in terms of enrollment.

The outbreak of the 1974 revolution ushered in a period of uncertainty and dislocation. To start with, the university was renamed first National University and then Addis Ababa University. More significantly, it was placed under the newly constituted Commission for Higher Education, thereby

losing its chartered institution status and cherished autonomy – a state of affairs that has persisted to the present. The political violence that attended the revolution took a heavy toll on university staff, whose number dwindled through detention or death as well as the concomitant brain drain. Marxist-Leninist indoctrination became the norm – through the Freshman Program for students and the weekly “discussion forums” as well as more extended summer sessions for staff. Only in the 1980s did some sanity prevail once again, marked by the initiation of graduate programs and the expansion of both faculty and student research.

The administrative reach of Addis Ababa University was extended through the incorporation in the 1970s of the Bahir Dar Pedagogical College, the Awassa Agricultural College and the Debre Zeit College of Veterinary Medicine. While the last mentioned still forms a component of AAU, the first formed the nucleus (with the Polytechnic Institute) for Bahir Dar University and the second has now been transformed into Hawassa University. Likewise, Alemaya College of Agriculture and the Gondar College of Public Health became independent universities in 1985 and 2004, respectively. These offshoots of AAU opened the gate to the mushrooming of universities in the last two decades, now reaching the staggering figure of 46.

The change of regime in 1991 initially augured well for AAU. Faculty could freely express their views on national issues through their resuscitated organ, *Dialogue*, and they were also able to elect the president and vice presidents of the university for the first time in the institution’s history. But the honeymoon came to an abrupt end with the dismissal of over 40 senior academics in early 1993 and the imposition of direct administration by the Ministry of Education. The hope of regaining its charter has remained ever elusive. On the other hand, the exponential growth of the student population and the opening of many graduate and postgraduate programs have posed new challenges. The university has been trying to cope with these pressing challenges through various mechanisms, ranging from strategic plans to Business Process Reengineering (BPR).

The following pages examine the evolution of Addis Ababa University in its six decades of existence under the following rubrics: teaching and learning, research, community service, governance, strategic planning, infrastructure and campus environment. Given the length of time that is covered (some sixty years), the account is bound to be schematic.

2. Teaching and Learning

The first thing worth noticing is the steady increase in the student enrollment figures. By 1969, the 1950 figure of 71 students had risen to 6,897, of which 2261 were extension students. Correspondingly, the number of graduates had risen from 13 by degree and 5 by certificate in 1954 (the first batch of UCAA graduates) to 277 by degree and 741 by certificate in 1969, bringing the total in the nearly two decades of the university's existence to 2052 by degree and 2912 by certificate. Currently, AAU reportedly has nearly 50,000 students enrolled in 76 undergraduate and some 350 graduate programs (more than 90 of the latter in PhD). More than 30% of the students are enrolled in the various graduate programs.

The academic staff profile has also changed dramatically. Until 1956, UCAA had no Ethiopian faculty member. By 1970, Ethiopian faculty have achieved parity with expatriate staff. So much so that the Ethiopianization process was considered one of the most successful in sub-Saharan Africa. The departure of a lot of the expatriate staff in the wake of the revolution swayed the balance in favor of the nationals. Further, the initiation of the graduate programs in the 1980s, which was primarily designed as a strategy for staff development, accelerated this Ethiopianization process. Currently, the proportion of expatriate staff is just under 3%. The following table illustrates the staff size and profile of the University in 2019:

As a result, the procurement process has been and continues to be an impediment to the timely and effective acquisition of goods and services.	Type	Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
	Academic	2,418	507	2,925
	Administrative	1,482	3,015	4,497
	Technical	103	35	138
	Health	457	745	1,202
	Total	4,460	4,302	8,762

Table 1. AAU Staff Size and Profile, 2019

In terms of academic qualification and rank, while AAU has comparative advantage over the newer universities, it still has some way to go to attain global standards. In 2009, only 28.4 percent of the faculty were PhD holders and the majority had only the rank of Lecturer. The proportion of assistant professors, associate professors and professors was 42.4%, 10.6% and 4.9%, respectively. These figures have shown significant change in recent years thanks to the expansion of the PhD program and the facilitation of research projects. Even more disturbing is the length of time that many staff take to be promoted to the next rank. Thus, according to the same 2009 figure, 58.3 of the assistant professors and 87.4 of the associate professors have been serving in that position for more than ten years.

In terms of programs, the introduction in the second year of UCAA's establishment of a two-year diploma program in port administration was a manifest attempt at national relevance, as it anticipated the federation of Eritrea with Ethiopia. Otherwise, programs initially tended to be rather eclectic. For instance, the first batch of graduates got their BA degrees in "Education, Public Administration and Foreign Service". Nine departments (Education, Economics, English, Geography, Public Administration, Social & Political Sciences, Humanities, Commerce and Social Work) came to constitute the Faculty of Arts. Subsequently, the Department of Social & Political Sciences was further broken down to form the departments of History, Political Science and Sociology. Likewise the Faculty of Science was differentiated into the standard disciplines of Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics and Physics.

Subsequently, Education was deemed too important to be kept at the Department level and it was given a faculty status in 1962. As a matter of fact, the Faculty of Education emerged as the largest single faculty of the University, enrolling 20% of the students. Indeed, secondary school teaching was given so much priority that a special one year program known as Laboratory School (also known as Prince Be'ide Mariam School) was instituted in October of the same year with a view to preparing students selected on the basis of their high school performance for enrollment in the Faculty of Education. A Sida report of 2014 records the growth in the number of constituent units of AAU by the second decade of this century as follows: 10 colleges (containing within them 12 schools), 4 teaching institutes, and 8 research institutes.

A major spurt in the university's course offerings came in 1978 with the opening of the graduate program. This was followed about a decade later by the initiation of PhD programs in a number of

departments in the natural sciences (Biology and Chemistry), social sciences and the humanities (history, foreign languages), medicine (anatomy) and agriculture (animal production). The School of Graduate Studies, which administered the graduate and postgraduate programs, has been described as “a real life saver for the University” as it helped ease the acute staff shortage it had experienced in the wake of the Revolution. The first strategic plan of AAU (2008-2012) underscored the need to expand graduate programs, particularly at the PhD level, with a view to covering all disciplines by 2010.

Considerable progress has been made to achieve this objective thanks to generous Sida funding. This came in response to an application submitted in 2008 for a ten-year block grant to the tune of nearly 2 billion SEK. This has resulted in a vigorous expansion of graduate programs in general and PhD programs in particular. The latter rose from five to seventy. The number of PhD students had also risen to 1575 by 2014 and of graduates from 15 in 2009/10 AY to 144 in 2013/14 AY. By 2018, AAU has come to have 82 PhD programs, along with 189 MA, 21 specialty and 32 sub-specialty programs. The number of students enrolled in the PhD program jumped from 810 in 2010 to 2505 in 2019, while that of MA students rose from 6,910 to 15,799 in the same period. Conversely, undergraduate enrollment decreased from 39,169 to 32,230.

Even more striking is the progress registered in encouraging female participation and students with disabilities thanks to the initiation of a scholarship scheme. Female students’ enrollment in PhD programs rose from 3 to 105 in the grant period. Over 30 graduate students are recipients of the Sida disability scholarship. The Sida evaluation report was ecstatic, dubbing the achievement “without parallel in Africa”.

Breathtaking as the expansion in both the undergraduate and postgraduate programs has been, it has regrettably been achieved at the expense of quality. This is a problem that is generic to higher education (nay education) in Ethiopia rather than unique to AAU. Indeed, in much of Africa as well, massification has entailed a decline in standards. Quality has invariably been sacrificed on the altar of equity. As can be expected, the problem is inherited from pre-university education. A study commissioned by the Forum for Social Studies in 2009 revealed that the majority of the students who took the school leaving examinations that qualify them for admission to HEI scored less than 50% in the nine subjects required. These ill-prepared students were allocated to various HEIs without the individual institution having any say in the selection process. The authority that

has been mandated to ensure quality and relevance of higher education – the Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency (HERQA) – has been focussing on private rather than public institutions.

While the decline in quality is evident in the lack of independent and critical thinking among students, perhaps its most glaring manifestation is in the low level of English language proficiency. This is arguably the most obvious difference between students and graduates of the 1960s and 1970s and the current generation. English is – and would probably remain for the foreseeable future – the medium of instruction. And yet, few students even at the postgraduate level could express themselves intelligibly, let alone eloquently. A good deal of PhD supervisors' time is spent making sense out of the draft chapters of their students rather than engaging with them on substantive issues. The remedial measures that were put in place to equip new graduate entrants with adequate language and computations skills as well as research methods have obviously proved insufficient to rectify a deeply entrenched problem. In view of the fact that a number of these graduates end up teaching at the schools or HEIs, the downward spiral effect that this is having on the quality of education in general is seriously disturbing.

Successive strategic plans have emphasized the problems in the teaching learning process, including the alarming decline in quality. But, there has been little noticeable change in the state of affairs. In February 2019, the AAU administration prepared a memo (for submission to the Board) on the current state of the institution and some of the major outstanding problems it is facing in various sectors. In the teaching learning sphere, it enumerated a catalogue of problems categorizing them as external (i.e. pertaining to the government) and internal (inherent in the institution itself). These included, inter alia: low budgetary allocation for postgraduate research, absence or inadequacy of budgetary provision for external examiners and visiting professors as well as postgraduate student participation in international conferences, regimentation of curricula in the name of harmonization, the relatively early age of academic retirement, and the disengagement of faculty members.

3. Research

Research is the second most important component, after teaching-learning, of the activities of a university. AAU is no exception. Since its inception, it has been one of the main centers of research

activity in the country. Research was conducted both by faculty and students and research staff of the research institutes that were established with the specific mandate of conducting research. To the latter category belong the Geophysical Observatory (founded in 1957), the Institute of Ethiopian Studies (1963), the Aklilu Lemma Institute of Pathobiology (1966), the Institute of Educational Research (1968), and the Institute of Development Research (1972). More recently, a number of other research institutes and centers have been established: Institute of Water Resources, Academy of Ethiopian Languages and Cultures, Water and Land Resources Center, Center for Human Rights, Center for Federalism and Governance Studies, Horn of Africa Regional Environment and Network, Institute of Peace and Security Studies and Institute of Biotechnology.

Student research goes back to early UCAA days, when, under the auspices of the Ethnological Society (founded in 1962), students made a courageous attempt to understand the different customs and traditions of their country – weddings, funerals, folktales, religious rites, etc. What made the exercise even more remarkable was that it was a labour of love, not something that was done to meet an academic requirement. The students disseminated their findings through the *Ethnological Society Bulletin*. Among the most active members of the Society were two future presidents of the university (Aklilu Habte and Duri Mohammed) and a number of faculty members. The journal was sustained for over a decade. The articles were considered of such high academic value that the Department of Sociology and Social Administration reprinted them in 2002. An attempt was also made to revive the journal but it was not sustained.

Student research was otherwise largely confined to the thesis and dissertation requirements for graduation. The BA theses that were produced in some departments in the late 1960s and early 1970s were of such a high standard that they were comparable to MA theses in some other universities. The initiation of the graduate program in the late 1970s gave a further boost to student research, which has increased exponentially after the expansion of the PhD program in the last 10 years described above, even if the quality of some of the outputs leaves a lot to be desired. Faculty research, on the other hand, has been more sporadic than sustained. Until the introduction of thematic research by the University in the last decade, it has been dictated largely by personal curiosity or the need to meet the academic promotion requirements.

With regards to dissemination, faculty research has had greater visibility than student research. The latter remains largely confined to library shelves. Various efforts to start a publication program

of the theses have come to nothing. The recently introduced requirement for the submission of electronic versions of theses and dissertations has helped change this state of affairs by making them accessible online on the AAU Library website. Abstracts of earlier theses and dissertations have also been digitized and made accessible online.

Faculty research, on the other hand, has been disseminated either through seminar and conference proceedings or publication in peer-reviewed journals. In the former category, it is worth citing the Interdisciplinary Seminar of the Faculties of Arts and Education that was organized throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s. Some departments like the Department of History also established a tradition of organizing annual seminars in the 1980s and 1990s. One of the most important venues for the dissemination of faculty research was the sixty-year old triennial series of International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, held alternately in Ethiopia (under the auspices of the Institute of Ethiopian studies) and abroad by rotating members of the large Ethiopianist community. The Sida grant cited above has also facilitated PhD student and faculty participation in international workshops conferences as well as student exposure to international academic milieu through short-term visits.

Sida has been instrumental in supporting research and capacity building projects that have lasted decades. Worthy of mention in this respect are the Ethiopian Flora Project (based in the Department of Biology), the Butajira Rural Health Project, and the Natural Products Project (based in the Department of Chemistry). Another major Sida input in capacity building was the decade-long funding of the microfilming by the Institute of Ethiopian Studies of archival material pertaining to Ethiopia located in European archives (British, French and Italian). Indeed, it was this microfilming project that made the initiation of the History PhD program feasible.

With regard to peer-reviewed journals, most of the research institutes cited above have been publishing peer-reviewed journals. Before the Revolution took its toll and forced its temporary interruption, the *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* (published by the Institute of Ethiopian Studies) was the leading academic journal of the Ethiopianist community, effectively dislodging the thitherto dominant Italian *Rassegna di studi etiopici*. Likewise, the Institute of Development Research published *Ethiopian Journal of Development Research* and the Institute of Educational Research has been publishing *Ethiopian Journal of Education*. Some of the most successful journals have been run by faculties, the most notable example being *Sinet*, published by the Faculty of Science,

or by professional associations, such as the *Ethiopian Medical Journal*, *Bulletin of the Chemical Society of Ethiopia*, and *Zede Journal of Ethiopian Architects and Engineers* (published by Addis Ababa Institute of Technology).

The research output of AAU faculty in recent years has been impressive. The 2014 Sida evaluation report records “an immense increase in peer-reviewed publications by AAU faculty over the period 2009-2012”, in the region of 50% to be precise. The College of Natural Sciences, with 34% of the total publications, recorded the highest, followed by the College of Health Sciences (22%). These achievements notwithstanding, research at AAU has been beset with a number of problems. A study commissioned in 2010 by the Forum for Social Studies identified the following major shortcomings:

- its scattered and uncoordinated nature;
- failure to align with stakeholder interests and needs as well as national priorities;
- pursuit of research merely for the sake of academic promotion or attaining academic excellence;
- the bureaucratic hurdles that research projects are subjected to from initiation to completion;
- poor dissemination of research outputs; and
- lack of integration with the teaching-learning process, including faculty-student joint research, particularly in the social sciences and humanities.

It was apparently such outstanding issues that pushed the university to initiate a thematic research program in 2010. The main objective of the program has been to encourage multi- and interdisciplinary research, giving an impetus to seeking external funding and garnering additional support for graduate research. The promotion of thematic research has been accompanied by the fostering of collaborative research with external bodies.

4. Community Service

Reaching out to the community outside the campus has been one of the principal mandates of the University. Such service has been in evidence since the early years of UCAA. Interestingly enough, the first initiatives in this respect have been taken by the students rather than the faculty or the Administration. Community engagement was officially launched at UCAA with the

establishment of the “Community Service Committee” in 1958. That initiated a tradition of conducting literacy classes first for college support staff, later on spreading off campus. Students even went as far as building schools (in Jimma and Alemaya). These initiatives eventually snowballed into the most important student community engagement of the imperial era, the Ethiopian University Service (EUS), which was started in 1964 and continued for about a decade. The program required students to do a year of national service (mostly teaching in provincial high schools) after the third year of their undergraduate study (in some cases, like Engineering, earlier). The idea was first aired by students but was subsequently taken over by the university administration and made a mandatory requirement. Although initially opposed to its imposition, students eventually came to appreciate its value in helping them understand their society as well as gathering data for their BA theses.

Another major societal intervention of the University community came in the wake of the 1973 famine. This time the initiative came from the faculty, through their Ethiopian University Teachers’ Association (EUTA). In April 1973, three members of the faculty visited the affected province of Wollo and came back with photographs illustrating the magnitude of the disaster. Soon after, the University community, including students, set up what was first known as the University Famine Relief Committee (UFRC) to raise public awareness about the magnitude of the famine and to coordinate famine relief. The committee was subsequently upgraded to the University Famine Relief & Rehabilitation Organization (UFRRO), which, as its name suggested, coupled rehabilitation of the famine victims with extending relief aid.

The tension between voluntarism and commandism was to be a recurrent feature of community outreach throughout the history of AAU. The commandist element manifested itself most dramatically in the next major engagement of students (and faculty) in community service, i.e. the Development through Cooperation Campaign, which was initiated in late 1974 and continued for the next two years. It was even more controversial than the EUS. Some students, especially those who called for the replacement of the Darg by a provisional popular government, saw it as a sinister design to drive them out of the capital so that it could consolidate its grip on power. The most important achievement of the students and faculty who were sent to the various camps was the implementation of the land reform proclamation of March 1975. But, it did not come without a price, a number of students losing their lives as victims of landlords who resented the dispossession

of their land. The Darg, which saw the students' interpretation and implementation of the proclamation as too radical, was not particularly keen in defending them, either. Those who had opposed the campaign from the start cut short their stay in the camps and began trickling back to the capital to participate in the struggle against the Darg. It is also a matter of historical interest that it was from their campaign sites in Tegray that a group of university students fled to Dedebit and launched the TPLF.

The next major engagement of students and faculty with the community came in the summer of 1985 and was a demonstration of government commandism at its worst. Indeed, the use of the term *zamacha* (campaign) for both the 1974-76 and 1985 engagements underscores the commandist nature of the assignments. The 1985 campaign involved sending members of the university community (students, faculty and administrative staff) to western Ethiopia to build *tukuls* for people being resettled from the famine-ravaged provinces of northern Ethiopia. It was part of the government's belated response to the 1883-84 famine. Two areas were selected for this ill-conceived building exercise, Matakal and Gambella, the former being the primary destination of the Seddest Kilo campus community and the latter being earmarked largely for the Arat Kilo campus. The campaign was beset with a host of problems and was of little lasting value. Conversely, it disrupted the academic calendar and necessitated a series of adjustments to cover the syllabus, not to mention the *zamach* who lost their lives under various circumstances.

Much more meaningful, although still far from realizing its full potential, has been the University-Industry linkage program which was first initiated in 1986 as the University-Industry Cooperation Programme. This program fell astride research application/dissemination and community engagement. It aimed at the integration of theory and practice through the practical adaptation of research, student internship in industrial enterprises and the alignment of curricula with the needs and objectives of Ethiopian industries. It envisaged encouraging university faculty to spend their sabbaticals in industrial enterprises rather than travelling abroad and attachment of qualified industrial personnel to the University. In the first five-year phase of the program, about a hundred students of the Faculty of Technology benefited from a program of summer employment in industries in their final two years, followed by full employment on graduation. Funding was also extended to 40 students, 35 of them from the Faculty of Technology, to conduct research on practical industrial problems. Conversely, managerial staff and employees were given summer

training in such areas as research methodology, project engineering and production planning and control. Even more significantly, the idea of “industrial parks” and “incubators” was first mooted at the conclusion of the program in January 1991.

These ideas and measures have been pushed more vigorously in recent times. The University-Industry partnership has been receiving a further boost since 2007, when AAU established an office to promote that partnership. A policy was drafted, dialogue was initiated with the relevant industries, memoranda of understanding signed and a number of collaborative programs launched. The change of the office of the Vice President for Graduate Studies and Research to Vice President for Research and Technology Transfer is indication of the new orientation of AAU in this respect.

The 2019 self-assessment cited above highlights the following community-oriented activities undertaken by various AAU units: the provision of medical service (at reasonable cost) at the Black Lion Hospital, cattle vaccination and raising of public awareness on livestock care by the College of Veterinary Medicine in Bishoftu, giving free legal service on legal and human right issues as well as beaming human rights sensitization radio programs and offering public health services at Butajira and Batu campuses. However, it identifies the following challenges in the full and proper execution of the community service mandate: lack of conceptual clarity and absence of clear guidelines, failure to include it in the Senate legislation so that it could have a binding character, inadequate budgetary allocation by the Government (apart from the Black Lion Hospital), lack of clear delineation of the tasks pertaining to colleges and departments and poor linkage of the latter with their respective stakeholders. The office set up to coordinate community service has also not been performing to the required level.

5. Governance

When UCAA was set up in 1950, the task of administering it was entrusted to a group of Canadian Jesuits who, in turn, were largely inherited from the Jesuit-dominated Tafari Makonnen School. The president for the first decade of its existence, until UCAA was subsumed under Haile Sellassie I University in 1961, was the legendary Lucien Matte. He was overseen by a Board of Governors appointed by the Chancellor, Emperor Haile Sellassie, and consisting of the traditional scholar *Blatta Mars’e Hazan Walda Qirqos* as Chair, and the following dignitaries as members: the prolific author *Kebbede Mikael* (then Director General of Education), *Lij Mikael Emiru*, *Dejjazmach*

Zewde Gebre Sellassie, Ketema Yifru, *Lij* Endalkachew Makonnen and the emperor's granddaughter Princess Aida Desta.

When HSIU was inaugurated in 1961, Dr. Harold Bentley, the leader of the University of Utah team that had been commissioned to study the establishment of the university, served as Acting President. The university was given a new charter, which guaranteed academic freedom and the complete autonomy of the University from government interference. Yilma Deressa, the Minister of Finance, served as the Chair of the newly reconstituted Board of Governors, and there was provision for a representative of the Alumni to join it eventually. A Faculty Council was set up as the highest authority under the Board, with Academic Commissions exercising similar prerogatives at the faculty level. The Faculty Council was assisted by various standing committees and an Executive Committee consisting of the President, Academic Vice President, Secretary of the Council and seven other elected members of the Faculty Council. The University was also given its enduring motto: ኩሎ አመክሩ ወዘሆናዩ አጽንዑ (“Deliberate on All Matters and Hold on to the Best”). The rules and regulations that the Faculty Council issued at various times were eventually compiled to constitute the Consolidated Legislation of the Faculty Council, which became the supreme regulatory framework of the University.

In 1962, the University got its first Ethiopian president in the person of *Lij* Kasa Wolde Mariam. By virtue of his close association with the Emperor as former secretary of his Private Cabinet as well as his grandson-in-law, Kasa had unimpeded access to the Emperor and this proved an asset in ensuring the smooth running of the university. He was assisted by the Academic Vice President and Vice President for Administration and Business Development. Both posts were occupied by Americans, Harold Bentley as Academic Vice President and Kenneth Montgomery as VP for Administration and Business Development. Bentley was subsequently succeeded by another American, James Paul, popularly known as “Dean Paul”, after his earlier position as Dean of the Faculty of Law, which he had founded in 1964. In 1969, Kasa was succeeded as president by Aklilu Habte, who had earlier successively served as Dean of the Faculty of Education and the Faculty of Arts.

With the eruption of the 1974 Revolution, AAU entered an uncertain era. Apart from the disruption of its calendar with the launch of the Development through Cooperation campaign, it came progressively under government control, losing its autonomy and deprived of the academic

freedom it had enjoyed for so long. In 1977, it was placed under the newly established Commission for Higher Education. Proclamation No. 1099 of that year replaced the University charter and assigned to the University the task of propagating socialism and protecting the country from imperialist influences. This was followed by the introduction of mandatory courses on Marxism-Leninism in the Freshman programme. The hitherto independent EUTA was subsumed under the newly formed Ethiopian Teachers' Association (ETA), which was one of the mass organizations with which the Darg sought to bring society under its total control. The Revolution also negatively affected the teaching learning process by causing the depletion of its faculty in a number of ways: the decision of a number of expatriate staff to return to their countries, the incarceration or execution of some of its Ethiopian staff, the brain drain caused by staff who fled abroad or decided not to return after completion of their studies, and the deployment of others to various government ministries and departments.

It is indeed a miracle that AAU could survive these challenges and even experience a revival in the 1980s. Dr. Duri Mohammed, who was president for most of this period, has been credited with the diplomatic skill with which he steered the institution through treacherous waters, ensuring the survival and eventual revival of the institution. His departure in 1985 ushered in the full-scale regimentation of the University under a much more subservient leadership.

The advent of EPRDF to state power in 1991 initially ushered in a period of hope and optimism. The teachers' independent association, now rechristened Addis Ababa University Teachers' Association (AAUTA), along with its organ, *Dialogue*, was restored. AAUTA organized public dialogue on important national issues while two issues of *Dialogue* addressed critical and current problems. Most significantly, for the first time in the history of the institution, the University community was allowed to elect its top leadership, i.e. the President and the two Vice-Presidents. Professor Alemayehu Teferra was elected president, while Dr. Makonnen Dilgassa (the incumbent) and Dr. Ayele Tirfe were elected Academic Vice-President and VP for Business and Development, respectively.

Alas, the euphoria proved short-lived. In January 1993, in the wake of the arrival of the UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros Ghali, students staged a demonstration protesting against the imminent Eritrean independence referendum. Security forces opened fire and killed one student and wounded several others. This was followed by student boycotts of classes and a meeting of

the faculty denouncing the excessive measures of government forces and calling for the immediate withdrawal of government troops who had entered the campus subsequent to the demonstration. This was reinforced and amplified by a joint declaration of the Academic President, the President of AAUTA and a representative of the ad hoc student council that had been set up. That triggered the harshest reaction that any government has taken against the University. The elected president and vice-presidents were sacked on 16 January. The president was subsequently detained for a long period on trumped up charges of being implicated in the Red Terror, charges from which he had been acquitted earlier. The following day, the University was temporarily closed. Worse was yet to come. The university was reopened in early April and all faculty members were asked to sign new contracts – except 43 of them, who were given summary notices of termination. The dismissed staff included some of the most senior and capable members of the faculty: three professors, ten associate professors, nine assistant professors and ten lecturers. Ironically, the mimeographed letter of dismissal was signed by Duri Mohammed, who had done so much to steer the University through difficult times in the late 1970s and early 1980s. He had been appointed president for a second time, in conjunction with his ministerial portfolio at the Ministry of Economic Development and Cooperation.

This was arguably the worst crisis the University community has ever been forced to endure in the 50 years of its existence. It opened a new chapter in the history of AAU, when the heavy hand of the Government began to be felt. The restoration of the University's charter had been the main agenda of the elected University leadership. In the midst of the crisis described above, on 31 March to be precise, the Government had issued a proclamation designed “to provide for the re-organization of Addis Ababa University”. Ironically, one of the tasks assigned by the proclamation to the new five-person Board of Governors was “to draft the Charter of the University which regulates its future organization and administration and submit it to the Government”. But that draft never saw the light of day and the charter, always evoked as a prerequisite for the proper running of the University, has remained elusive up to now. Government policy in the post-1993 period could be characterized as one of “letting it wither away”.

Government interference had a ripple effect in the lower tiers of university administration as well. The appointment of college deans and research institute directors was traditionally based on the recommendation of faculty academic commissions or institute boards. These governing bodies

would nominate three candidates for the vacated position and the University president would appoint one of the nominees, almost invariably the person on top of the list. This practice has been violated since the mid-1990s and deans and directors have been appointed and dismissed directly by the president. Likewise, department chairmanship, which was assumed by members of the department on a rotational basis, became the prerogative of the higher authorities.

Nearly a decade elapsed before a new rapprochement between Government and University appeared to have set in. The university community was given yet another chance to elect its president. The Government selected Eshetu Woncheko from among the nominees submitted to it as the next president. He assumed office in June 2001. He selected his own vice presidents, this having been one of the conditions he set when he accepted the post. But, his tenure, which lasted only one year and a half, was only fractionally longer than that of the first elected president. This would suggest that the Government's apparent readiness to let the University exercise some degree of autonomy was half-hearted. He resigned in December 2002 in protest against too much government interference in the University. The event that sealed his resignation was a meeting of HEI presidents and board members organized by the Ministry of Education, when AAU was castigated in an orchestrated manner for failing to align with government (i.e. party) directives. Paradoxically, this series of events was preceded by the most sustained dialogue between the Government and the Higher Education community. In the summer of 2002, Prime Minister Meles had a month long discussion with members of that community when various ideas were freely aired and debated.

But the spirit of free discussion exhibited that summer did not extend to the safeguarding of the autonomy of the university, especially in the selection of its leadership. The two next presidents of AAU, Andreas Eshete (2003-2011) and Admasu Tsegaye (2011-2017), were both directly appointed by the Government. They in turn had free rein in the selection of their subordinates, with all the subversion of standard procedures and lack of accountability that such a process entailed. The Andreas presidency was notable, among other things, for the expansion of the PhD programs, the drafting of the first strategic plan, the formulation of the University's own version of BPR, the creation of centres dedicated to specific areas of training and research, and the enhancement of the tradition of awarding honorary degrees. The Admassu presidency witnessed, among other things, the continued expansion of postgraduate programs, the establishment of

income-generating enterprises, the formulation of the second five-year strategic plan, and heavy investment in infrastructure, particularly in the Main Campus.

Meanwhile, the charter, which had been a central concern of the University community, receded into the background. Nor was the dynamics of the evolution of HEIs particularly conducive to the resuscitation of the AAU charter. Increasingly, in the eyes of the governing authority (formerly the Ministry of Education, more recently the Ministry of Science and Higher Education), AAU became just one among many HEIs (now numbering nearly 50!) and could thus not claim separate treatment. It was governed by the series of HE proclamations that were issued in the past two decades. At least three of them have come to our attention: Proclamations No. 351/2003, No. 650/2009 and No. 1152/2019.

These proclamations give HEIs in general and AAU in particular varying, one could even say ascending, degrees of latitude in the performance of their functions. The 2003 proclamation in principle grants an HEI administrative autonomy, “subject to limitations provided by other laws”, whatever that may mean. Article 27 also stipulates that an academic staff member shall not be held “liable for his personal views and belief”. A clear departure from earlier legal instruments is the provision for any HEI to set up income-generating enterprises (Art. 48). Article 56 introduced the novel idea of cost-sharing by students. Part Five of the proclamation establishes the Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency (HERQA) and the Higher Education Strategy Center (HESC).

The 2009 proclamation goes one step further and stipulates that “Academic freedom shall be guaranteed to every institution in pursuit of its mission and consistent with international good practice” (Art. 16). Further, the proclamation grants HEIs institutional autonomy, without the legal caveat of the 2003 proclamation. That autonomy extends to the development and implementation of relevant curricula, the creation or closure of programs, and the setting up of its organizational structure and formulation of its rules and regulations (Art. 17). Moreover, it empowers the institution to nominate its presidents and vice presidents, members of the Board as well as “select and appoint leaders of academic units and departments”. The president shall be appointed after nomination by the Board while he in turn nominates the vice presidents for appointment by the Board (Art. 44). Probably most significant is Article 52, which stipulates that presidents shall be appointed from a list of nominees after the public advertisement of the vacant posts while vice

presidents have to compete for the post. As is well known, since 2018, presidents and vice presidents of all HEIs have had to compete for the positions, although the 2009 proclamation does not actually provide for it at the level of president.

The latest HE proclamation came out in August 2019. Although it is called “revised”, it is not clear what exactly the revisions are. Perhaps it lies in the guaranteeing of institutional autonomy in developing curricula and research programs and nominating the president and vice presidents (Art. 16), even if the development of curricula is qualified by the phrase “without prejudice to national interests and relevance” (Art 20.5). Article 40 also envisages the possibility (at some future date) of institutions themselves selecting students for admission. On the other hand, the exercise of academic freedom is guaranteed “based on the national laws” (Art. 31), which is more restrictive than the provision of the 2009 proclamation.

As of January 2020, the University has put in place a new governance structure. This is actually a revised version of the one formulated in 2012. The structure, which is being implemented after consultations with various units around the gaps and shortcomings of the prevalent system, creates new offices as well as reorganizing old ones and reorienting lines of accountability. With a view to fulfilling the University’s aspirations to be one of the leading research-based universities in Africa, an emphasis is given to the enhanced role of research institutes. The change is also intended to address the “rigid” and “backward” procurement and property administration system that has impeded efficient delivery of services. Among the objectives of the new system are: empowering the lower academic units, fostering participatory decision-making, expansion of University-Industry linkage and integration of graduate training and research. An important element of the new structure is the clear definition of the hitherto rather ambiguous community service mandate of the University, setting it quite apart from University-Industry linkage and technology transfer. According to the new structure, the University will have ten colleges and nine institutes, three of which combine teaching and research while six are exclusively devoted to research. Perhaps the least convincing aspect of the structural reform is the staggering number of directors that are put under either the President or the four vice presidents. One key informant has characterized the situation as one of “more generals than soldiers”.

6. Planning, “Strategic” or Otherwise

The first steps towards charting the future directions of the University were taken in February 1966 with the appointment of an eight-person high level international Advisory Committee. It recommended the drafting of a comprehensive plan encompassing budget, physical plant and academic programme. But planning for the future at AAU started in earnest in 1968 when a planning office was set up and a five-year plan was drafted in alignment with the country’s Third Five Year Plan. A more ambitious plan was formulated by its first Planning Officer, John Summerskill. A former president of San Francisco State University, he came to Ethiopia with Ford Foundation sponsorship and drew the famous *Blueprint for Development* (1970). The booklet began with a thorough survey of the history and current status of HSIU, and a number of the data used in this historical profile for the first two decades of the university is drawn from it. He then went on to draw a twenty-year plan (1970-1990) of expansion of facilities and programs for the university. As it happened, the eruption of the Ethiopian Revolution four years later disrupted a number of his prognoses. Yet, quite a few of his suggestions came to be realized.

The first important projection of the blueprint was the two-fold expansion of the university campus precincts to effectively occupy the whole Seddest Kilo-Arat Kilo axis, including the former headquarters of the Imperial Bodyguard right across the Main Campus³ and the areas around the newly built College of Engineering (the present AAiT). In short, the blueprint postulated, “all lands between Sidist Kilo and Arat Kilo should be reserved for educational and cultural purposes”. It also envisaged the introduction of graduate programs, with an anticipated graduate student enrollment of 2,000 by 1990 (out of a total student population of 12,000). Interestingly enough, the fields that were expected to feature in the forefront of this expansion were: “economics and public administration, education and educational administration, science with emphasis on biological, epidemiological, public health aspects, law and legal administration, and Ethiopian studies”. This was not exactly the way that graduate programs actually started in the late 1970s, although some of them have elements of the actual development.

The blueprint also recommended the construction of “at least two more classroom facilities”, similar to the one that was already put in use in 1965 (now known as the Old Classroom Building)

³ Failure to pursue this idea vigorously soon after the Revolution resulted in the building being appropriated by the Development Campaign Office and subsequently the Ministry of Economic Development and Cooperation.

and the merger of Building College and Engineering College into a Faculty of Technology. It urged the expansion of the Kennedy Library, as it was destined to be “the nation’s most important library”. Perhaps the most important projection of the plan was the decentralization of HSIU to create offspring universities in the provinces – the University of Alemaya in the east⁴, a university in northwest Ethiopia (Gondar), the University of Asmara in the north, University of Southern Ethiopia at the strategically located Shashemene (not Hawasa!) and the University of Western Ethiopia (at a site yet to be determined). It also recommended areas of special focus for the different universities. Thus, for example, Alemaya was to focus on agriculture while developmental studies would form the thrust of the university at Gondar. Decentralization was urged not only horizontally but also vertically, with deans of faculties being empowered to recruit their staff and manage their budgets.

The blueprint identified the following three important missions of the University:

- “to establish roots in Ethiopian history and culture”;
- “to be the cutting edge for economic and social change in Ethiopia”; and
- “to serve as a major unifying force in the Empire”.

With regard to the first mission, while it appreciated the work already done by the departments of Ethiopian Languages and Geography, the Law School and the Institute of Ethiopian Studies, the blueprint argued that a lot still remains to be done to inculcate the concept of nationhood among students. The second mission, it emphasized, could be realized not only through the envisaged College of Social Sciences and Development Administration, which it endorsed and elaborated upon, but through a coordinated approach involving also medicine and public health, education, public and business administration and engineering and building technology. As far as the third mission is concerned, it put forward its argument in the following terms: “In years ahead, there will be forces – from within and without – trying to divide Ethiopia. Now is the time for the University to make a concerted effort to serve the peoples of all regions. This is the central reason for the plan to regionalize the University”.

⁴ As a matter of fact, according to Summerskill, the Emperor had instructed the Board of Governors as early as 1969 “to study and submit to Us ways in which it [i.e. Alemaya College] could be raised to a University level”.

The blueprint also underscored the importance of staff development and staff welfare. With respect to the latter, it urged the University

to give thought to adequate salary scales and benefit programmes to its staff. Studies should be undertaken to determine the costs of medical and hospital insurance programmes, life insurance, and a University retirement plan. It will be increasingly important to have the kind of salary and working conditions that will retain highly-trained Ethiopians in University positions.

With respect to research, while it commended the work being done by the Faculty of Law, the Institute of Ethiopian Studies, the Geophysical Observatory and the Institute of Pathobiology, the blueprint lamented the fact that research is otherwise left to individual orientation and motivation. To show the inadequacy of research funding and the administrative bottlenecks that have been a permanent feature of university research, it cited the findings of Sir Gordon Sutherland, who had undertaken an investigation on behalf of UNESCO in 1969 and recommended the doubling of the allocated research fund and the removal of “the excessively tight central control” of research expenditure, even for those funds generated from outside the university. “If research is to flourish,” the expert’s report concluded, “it is vital that central control of detailed expenditure (which has been previously authorized), and over-centralisation of control, should be reduced to a minimum”.⁵ The Sutherland report concluded by recommending the creation of a central research fund in science and technology, the “abolition of detailed central control of purchasing and of petty restrictions”, the launch of MA/MSc and PhD programmes, and the award of prizes and scholarships to reward outstanding academic achievements.

There is no record of central planning after the 1970 blueprint for development. The next major planning exercise that we encounter is the AAU Strategic Plan of 2000-2004 EC (i.e. 2007/8-2011/12). Clearly oblivious of the *Blueprint*, the plan is described as “the first attempt by AAU to chart its future direction towards transforming itself [in]to [a] predominantly graduate and research institution”. The plan was drafted after an elaborate process of consultations through a series of six consecutive weekend retreats in May and June 2006. The activity was coordinated by a 16-person Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) and involved 450-500 people. The Committee also

⁵ How little things have changed over time, one is bound to conclude!

held consultations with international partners, representatives of Emory University (Atlanta, Georgia) and various university presidents. The inputs of various stakeholders, professor emeriti, government officials and employers were solicited and panel discussions organized.

The strategic plan highlighted a number of what it called “strategic issues” (read challenges?), including lack of internal autonomy of colleges and faculties, absence of institutional memory (something with which this Committee has had to grapple a great deal!), inefficient administrative system (particularly in finance and purchasing) and centralization of financial and procurement services, non-competitive salary of both academic and administrative staff, and high ratio of administrative to academic staff. On the positive side, the 2003 HE proclamation is hailed as guaranteeing “academic freedom and institutional autonomy”.

Top on the list of the Strategic Objectives is the creation of “a chartered self-governing university with a focus on graduate study and research”, the acquisition of a charter being set for 2008 at the latest, i.e. within a year of the beginning of the Strategic Plan! The plan also envisages the establishment of fourteen centres of excellence, including Institute of Peace and Security, Institute of Federalism, Institute of African Studies and Centre for Human Rights. It is worthy of note that these centres were duly established.

There was a gap of about four years before the second known Strategic Plan came out, covering the period 2008-2012 EC (2015/16-2019/20). It is said to be guided by the government’s latest educational policy, strategy and program and its second Growth and Transformation Plan. The SP goes on to identify four Strategic Themes, each with a long list of Strategic Objectives, and to draw Strategic Maps, which give a visual illustration of the implementation of the Strategic Objectives under the four selected themes. Monitoring and evaluation, which will be based on monthly and quarterly reports of performance, was to be conducted by the Office of Strategic Planning. With regard to the resources required, the plan anticipates an annual 10% increase in government budget allocation, rising from 1.8 billion birr in 2008 EC to 2.6 billion in 2012 EC – a figure which represents not much of an increase over the budget earmarked for the first SP.

The first thing to note about both Strategic Plans is their length and excessive detail. The goals set out are so many that it is humanly impossible to achieve even half of them. No effort appears to have been made to focus on the essentials rather than giving a catalogue of all issues raised during the deliberations. Monitoring and evaluating implementation of the plans would thus constitute a

formidable challenge. We are not in possession of any such evaluations to gauge how many of the ambitious promises have been met. A final evaluation of the second plan is expected to be carried out soon. A random check of the enumerated objectives would show that, noble as those pledges were, not many of them have been achieved.

An indirect assessment of the implementation of the plan is provided from the minutes of the extended deliberations that were held by the University in March 2017.⁶ Among the strong points cited during the higher leadership meeting chaired by the president were: growth in community engagement, decentralization of administration, modularization, the extensive building program at the Main Campus, the absence of any disturbance (ባለፉት ስድስት ዓመታት በዩኒቨርሲታችን ውስጥ ምንም ኩሽታ አልተሰማም), expansion of the graduate programme and digitization of the library and the Registrar Office. On the minus side were highlighted lack of motivation of academic and administrative staff (including the former's concentration on consultancy work), the highly frustrating purchasing and financial administration system, the poor quality of University graduates and particularly their lack of practical skills, the low state of University-Industry linkage, the deplorable state of toilet facilities, failure to constantly update the University website, the lack of health insurance (despite running the premium hospital of the country), and gender insensitivity (in spite of the formulation of gender policy). Given all these weaknesses, the meeting concluded, the University can only be graded somewhere between low and average, lower than the grade of between average and high recently given it by the Board.

Discussions held at the lower tiers of administration focused more on problems rather than achievements. These included: bias against administrative staff, application of cost-sharing to children of staff when they should have been exempted, poor communication between the higher leadership and the University community, and the alarming state of the quality of education. This general assessment of the University and its various units were followed by assessments of individual employees, with the concerned individuals trying to acquit themselves and giving themselves a grade (low, average, high or very high), to be endorsed or modified by the audience.

⁶ This is a lengthy document (running to 364 pages). What is given here is a very brief summary.

7. Infrastructure

As is to be expected, AAU has witnessed a significant expansion of infrastructure in its sixty years of history. This has been particularly noticeable in the past few years. UCAA started operation with an old Italian building, now located on the southern edge of the Arat Kilo campus. That building housed the classrooms, the offices, the library and the museum that constituted the core of what eventually developed into the famous IES Museum at the Sidist Kilo campus. Similar old buildings in the northern part of the campus housed the dormitories and the cafeteria. In between the two structures was the football field which also served as the main venue for the various activities of the College Day.

Around 1965, a new building was erected facing the Arat Kilo square to house the College of Engineering that had previously shared premises with the Technical School at Mexico Square. In 1969, the college moved to its new state of the art building at Amist Kilo, giving the University a third locus. The building that had housed it at Arat Kilo was subsequently dedicated to the Freshman Program. Sometime in the late 1970s, a new building complex was erected to house the various departments as well as the library of the Faculty of Science. While this eased considerably the space shortage of the faculty, the fact that it was erected on the football field deprived the university as a whole its iconic center. The field had been the equivalent of the quad of an American university, the vibrant center of campus life.

The main campus at Seddest Kilo was inherited from the Guenete Le'ul Palace, which was the residence of Emperor Haile Sellassie until he moved to the Jubilee Palace in 1961. Thus, the structures were not particularly suited to university operations. Thus, it was necessary to build a new classroom building, which became operational at the beginning of the 1965/66 Academic Year. This was followed by the inauguration of the majestic and state of the art Kennedy Library in 1967. The next major building to be constructed was the College of Social Sciences building, which was inaugurated in 1981. It took over the name of the first classroom building opened in 1965 as the New Class Room building (NCR), while the former had to be content with the designation of Old Class Room building (OCR). Even earlier, there has been the expansion of dormitory facilities with the construction of new buildings and a second cafeteria in the northwestern wing of the campus. Christmas Hall, the old cafeteria, has had its own history as the

platform of so many heated student gatherings in the 1960s and 70s and the venue of the annual graduation ceremonies until very recently.

The past two decades have witnessed an unprecedented expansion of infrastructure. Prominent among the buildings erected in this period are the Mandela School of Journalism, two new buildings in the College of Natural Science and Computer Studies, the Eshetu Chole building in the Faculty of Business and Economics, a new building in the Addis Ababa Institute of Technology, dormitories, the disability-sensitive Registrar's Office and the complex of buildings fronting the campus known as the Forum, to cite only the more prominent ones. The last-mentioned has not been without its controversies, however, overshadowing as it does a national monument, that of the Martyrs of Yekatit 12! Not to speak of the challenges that such a high rise building would pose in times of power outages.

8. Campus Environment

There is no doubt that the academic and social environment at AAU has progressively deteriorated. Just as academic standards have declined over time, student engagement in extra-curricular activities has also been increasingly minimal. The first two decades of UCAA and HSIU were characterized by a vibrant and invigorating student engagement ranging from the literary to the political. As expressed in Bahru Zewde's *Quest for Socialist Utopia*, "life on campus was rich in cultural life and extra-curricular engagement. The objective, explicit or implicit, was to produce the all-round personality – the agile athlete, the eloquent orator, the incisive debater, the accomplished poet and the inspiring leader". The student council had two officers (dubbed "presidents") entrusted with the task of promoting sports and cultural activities. The Debating Society in particular was one of the most active societies on campus. The sports and cultural activities attained their climax on "College Day" (later renamed "University Day"), when the best three poems in a poetry contest were read, the best (i.e. all-round) student/personality of the year was recognized and "Miss University College Day" was paraded on a float.

The College Day poems, which were initially benign, became increasingly critical of the political order. This was a reflection of the growing radicalization of the students. The moderate University College Union (UCU), which was confined to the Arat Kilo campus, was replaced in 1966 by the more militant University Students Union of Addis Ababa (USUAA), which brought all students

of the capital under one umbrella organization. The semi-academic *News and Views* gave way to the decidedly political *Struggle*. After 1965, when students had come out onto the streets with the slogan of “Land to the Tiller”, annual demonstrations for one cause or another became almost ritual. It is common knowledge that university students, with the active support particularly in the early 1970s of high school students, were the main harbingers of the 1974 revolution.

There were, in addition to the largely political student organizations, professional associations catering to the professional needs of the students. The achievements of the Ethnological Society have already been noted. In addition to its scholarly *Bulletin*, members of the society were instrumental in the collection of cultural artifacts which came to constitute the backbone of first the college and subsequently the IES ethnological museum. Other disciplines also had their professional associations – law, business administration, political science, history, to mention only a few of them. The literary magazine *Something*, which was jointly run by students and staff, was of such a high standard that it had international circulation and exchange arrangements with similar reputable journals like *Penpoint* of Makerere University.

In contrast to the vibrancy and independence of the 1950s and 1960s, the university came under increasing regimentation during the Darg and EPRDF periods. The impact of the Marxist-Leninist doctrine on the curriculum has already been noted. In addition, the Darg imposed the numbing weekly “discussion forums” on all civil servants, including university staff, who had lost their unique academic status after incorporation into the newly established Commission for Higher Education. As if that were not enough, they were subjected to more extended indoctrination during the summer breaks, depriving them of the crucial block of time to do research. The independent student organization was replaced by a branch of the Revolutionary Ethiopian Youth Association (REYA), which was a subsidiary of the Workers Party of Ethiopia (WPE). The party’s unit (basic organization) on campus acted as a watchdog on the university administration.

After its brief honeymoon with the University, EPRDF also began to show its commandist face. As described above, the first act that opened a dark chapter in the history of the University came with the dismissal of 43 faculty members, followed a few months later by the firing of a number of heads of administrative divisions. The relatively free teachers’ association and its organ, *Dialogue*, ceased to exist. The student body, which had been a united force for change, particularly in the imperial era, was fragmented along ethnic lines - a situation that has persisted to this day.

Some students made a brave effort to give the student body an organization and a voice. Around the year 2000, a student council was established, although some students refused to be affiliated to it. In any case, the council's independence was suspect. Not only were some of the leaders affiliated to the EPRDF, but it also operated under the shadow of the police presence on campus, which had been a constant feature of University life since 1993. About the same time, students also started a newspaper called *Hilina*, which came out somewhat intermittently until it ceased publication some four years later.

Despite all the restrictions, students continued to struggle for an independent union and press and the withdrawal of the security forces. In this respect, the confrontations that took place in April 2001, which subsequently spilled over into urban riots, is worthy of note. The events resulted in the closure of the University for some time and the arrest of Prof. Mesfin Wolde Mariam and Dr. Berhanu Nega, who had addressed the students a few days before the disturbances and were thus charged with instigating the whole unrest.

EPRDF presence in University life became particularly evident after the fateful 2005 elections. Shell-shocked by its near loss of power, it decided to neutralize all independent voices, including civil society, political opponents, journalists and academics. Staff were subjected to yearly marathon sessions combining elements of discussion and indoctrination. Control, avoidance of any surprises, was the guiding principle. This control attained its climax with the extension of the *and le'amist* ("one-for-five") principle from the party structures and the civil service to the University. Supposed to be a mechanism for mutual cooperation, it was tantamount to spying and informing on one another. The political cadre language of "rent-seeking", *gemgema* (assessment), "narrow nationalism", "chauvinism" and "deep reform" crept into University deliberations. This becomes quite evident from a reading of the extensive discussions held in 2017 by the University staff at both central administration and college levels, already cited above. While some genuine efforts were made to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the University at all levels, the discussions had a distinctly political flavor about them.

Chapter 4

Perceptions of the Current Situation at AAU

1. Introduction

The main aim of this chapter is to indicate the major problems of AAU and the suggested corresponding solutions. It is a synthesis of the data generated through the various group discussions with representative faculty and students and interviews with relevant stakeholders. The relevant stakeholders included current AAU faculty, current/past AAU officials, current AAU students participating in undergraduate, graduate and continued education programs (including those with disabilities⁷) and administration staff (central and college/institute-level), and employers of AAU graduates (both private and public sector). As appropriate, the study employed quantitative and qualitative consultation techniques. These included key informant interviews (KIIs) with eleven employers, thirty-eight focus group discussions (FGDs), interviews with two former presidents and two former vice presidents, and structured questionnaire-based survey on student satisfaction.

In addition to the discussion with different stakeholders, the study committee made site visits to teaching and research facilities of three colleges and one institute (College of Health Sciences, College of Natural and Computational Sciences, Addis Ababa Institute of Technology, and College of Performing and Visual Arts) as well as the dormitory and canteen conditions at the main campus (Sidist Kilo). The site visits showed the conditions of the campuses and gave the study committee firsthand impression of the problem within the university.

In addition, a student satisfaction survey was conducted using the instrument customized for this particular purpose. The survey covered teaching learning conditions, social issues, transportation facilities, health services, library and bookstore services, and ICT services provided by Addis Ababa University. The data collection method employed was self-selected

⁷ Participation of students with disability was limited due to lack of cooperation from the office that support disabled students.

sampling where an email invitation was sent to current students of the University whose email addresses have been registered in the Integrated Student Information Management System (iSIMS). The sample distribution and sample size of student responses were reviewed from the perspective of gender, program type, program-level and college and found to be sufficient and representative.

The analysis presented covers six dimensions of satisfaction analysis by students from undergraduate and postgraduate level at different program types. The survey received 2,043 adequate responses from all colleges and institutions, which is deemed sufficient to make the analysis. The report can be found in its entirety in Annex X.

This chapter thus describes the data obtained through the FGDs and the student satisfaction survey under the following six thematic areas, and concludes with Elements of the Way Forward as expressed by the FGD participants.

1. Teaching and Learning
2. Research
3. Community Service
4. Governance and Management
5. Environment
6. Cross-Cutting Issues

2. Teaching and Learning

2.1. Admission, student reception, orientation and records administration

The current practice is for the Ministry of Science and Higher Education (MoSHE) to assign students to all universities across the country. This has two drawbacks. First, when the Ministry assigns undergraduate students, it does not take the staff size and resources of universities into account. Second, it is a common occurrence that students assigned to a particular department may have neither the interest nor the talent in the field they are assigned in.

Once the new students come to campus, orientation is given at college level for one day only. This is not enough to learn about the campus where they will spend four or five years of their

life. Furthermore, orientation is insufficient, as it is limited to heads or representatives of the departments promote their department but and rarely tell incoming students about skill development or the challenges and opportunities of campus life. It was also noted that there is no orientation schedule for MSc and PhD students.

One critical area that most FGD participant students complained about is the process of registration and record keeping. This is partly due to the malfunctioning of online registration and the difficulty of e-registration for those students who do not have basic computer skills. Furthermore, services for students with special needs is not given due consideration. Some students have the perception that staff at registrar offices are neither supportive to nor positive towards newly coming students during the registration process.

Regarding record keeping, some anomalies have been reported, such as failure to get grade reports on request, delay in the supply of student copies and mix-up of students' records. In some cases, the submission of grade reports is delayed, and, at times, grades are to be found nowhere due to poor recording system.

2.2. Delivery, advising and assessment, program launch

2.2.1. Course Delivery

Course delivery at AAU is of two types: parallel and modular. Faculty FGDs revealed that modularization has a problem of content gaps emanating from improper module design whereby teachers are not free to add any content beyond the given ones. This has resulted in courses with disproportionate work load on students and shallow content that ultimately results in sub-standard graduates.

When analyzing students' perception of the course workload (Table 1), 35.7% (or 377 out of 1055) of the MSc/MA students and 23.1% (or 45 out of 195) of the PhD students believed that the workload on students was not appropriate, and 66.8 % (or 411 out of 765) of respondents in the undergraduate program were generally dissatisfied with the workload.

Program Level	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Total
BSc/BA	60	294	260	151	765
MSc/MA	116	562	269	108	1055
PhD	45	105	35	10	195
Total	221	961	564	269	2015

Table2: Course Workload against Program Level

Students' employability as well as innovation requires that the teaching learning be supported with practical activities. Looking into the availability of laboratories and workshop facilities at Addis Ababa University, however, 63% of the students were dissatisfied. In most colleges and departments, necessary inputs such as chemicals, laboratory equipment, machineries, musical instruments, art tools etc. were disproportionately low and not available on time. Most undergraduate students do not have the opportunity to conduct lab experiments on their own at all. They were only made to watch while laboratory (workshop) staff demonstrated. The other challenge in course delivery was unavailability of electronic learning platforms in many departments and colleges. Furthermore, faculty FGDs noted that Addis Ababa University has not focused on building its capacity by providing suitable and sufficient laboratories and workshops for its students. Weak engagement of students in practical learning environment has sapped student motivation to inquire.

Faculty FGDs reflected this attitudinal change in students. They said that students had a tendency to look for and depend on ready-made handouts, PPTs or e-material. The culture of reading books seems to have been very much eroded. Students rather prefer to engage in social media even during lectures. Faculty FGDs pointed out that lack of English language proficiency (reading, listening and writing) was amongst the biggest deficiency of students, as they could not understand lectures and take notes effectively. It has become very common to see MA/MSc/PhD students without the requisite command of the English language. They, thus, resort to plagiarism to write term papers, theses or dissertations.

However, the perception that students have of themselves is very different from their instructors and employers. Looking into the language of instruction used at all levels, it can be seen that 79% of respondents at undergraduate level, 90% at graduate level(MA/MSc)

and 94% at PhD level are satisfied with the language of instruction used by teachers. The question that comes to mind is: “How can students appreciate the language of instruction if they cannot understand lectures and take notes and the hiring companies state that new graduates are not able to communicate in English?”

In most FGDs, students expressed their frustration with the old system of teaching, lecture and assignments. They do not like to attend class. They said that course materials delivered by some teachers were old, not updated from year to year, and/or that they used power point presentations directly downloaded from the Internet. Students went as far as saying that there are cases in which some teachers use notes that are as old as 30 years! This demonstrated lack of motivation in professional development by the academic staff. In some departments, course materials were distributed to students towards the end of the course, without any corresponding lectures. Students at Arts School complained that they are not provided with model working materials, and this has made it difficult for them to follow instruction.

Faculty FGDs identified large class size as a major hurdle in evaluating students properly. They stressed overcrowding of classrooms made interactive teaching difficult. Furthermore, most students commented that classrooms were not convenient for learning. They were not clean, chairs were broken and not comfortable, white boards were damaged, and classes were distracted by outside noise disturbance.

Moreover, faculty FGDs revealed that the new policy followed by the university acted as a disincentive for teachers to carry lecture overload. Instructors are now expected to take up to 18 hours per week (12 normal + 6 Overload). Despite the attachment they have for their profession, absence of recognition and incentives created dissatisfaction among faculty members and a considerable number of them were giving up the profession. Faculty complained about opening of new programs without properly assessing the capacity of the department, thus resulting in high teaching load to existing faculty members.

Faculty also emphasized that their overloaded stemmed from the university’s recruitment procedure that prevented timely hiring of new or par-time faculty. On the other hand, some FGD participants said that just as there were overloaded academics, there were also faculty who were relatively idle. For instance, following the 70:30 policy, a large number of students

enrolled in AAiT. As enough teachers were not available, more instructors were recruited. When student enrolment decreased in recent years, faculty were left idle.

When analyzing satisfaction on quality of teaching learning with respect to program level (Table 2), the proportion of students who were either “Very Satisfied” or “Satisfied” was 59% (462 out of 783) for undergraduate program, 75% (799 out of 1063) for MSc/MA students and 75% (148 out of 197) for PhD level students.

Satisfaction	BSc/BA	MSc/MA	PhD	Total
VerySatisfied	66	194	39	299
Satisfied	396	605	109	1,110
Dissatisfied	228	199	41	468
VeryDissatisfied	86	60	8	154
Not Applicable	7	5	0	12
Total	783	1,063	197	2,043

Table 3: Quality of Teaching Learning by Program Level

The satisfaction of students with teachers’ knowledge of subject matter increased from BSc/BA to PhD level significantly. The number of respondents who were either very satisfied or satisfied with the teachers’ knowledge of the subject they taught was 69%, 86% and 90% for 1st, 2nd and 3rd degree programs, respectively. This might be one of the possible reasons why teaching learning conditions scored relatively higher than some of the other issues covered in the satisfaction survey.

2.2.2. Assessment and Advising

Under the current admission policy of the university, large class size is prevalent. This makes it difficult for teachers to apply continuous assessment system as anticipated by the university. Many of the teachers are unable to apply continuous assessment because of the very poor English skills of students. Even those teachers that attempted continuous assessment did not exercise it on a regular basis.

Thus, practice of continuous assessment is rare in most cases. They prefer to apply the previous assessment methods; i.e. mid and final exams, many times repeating previous set of exam questions. This practice demotivates better performing students from working hard.

As regards to grades, students think that the AAU grading system is more stringent compared to other universities.

Data from various consultations indicated that thesis quality at the upper levels has plummeted to the level of B.Sc./BA projects. Students copy paste from the Internet without referring to books and conducting any further reading. It is evident that teachers also accept such theses without proper follow-up and checking. Thesis purchase from the market, cheating and plagiarism have become chronic problems at AAU; it has reached a point where reversing it seems nearly impossible. In addition to this, graduate students are busy with part time jobs to earn additional income and this has resulted in delays in their graduation. The study has uncovered that there are cases of MSc and PhD students staying on campus for more than 4 and 8 years, respectively.

The other concern raised by student FGDs is the qualifying exams for PhD students. Under the current practice, AAU is offering two types of exams: entrance and assessment. They think that, once they pass the entrance exam, the second exam is redundant and time-consuming.

As can be witnessed from the survey, satisfaction level of undergraduate students on accessibility of teachers was lower when compared to that of masters and doctoral level students, with a satisfaction percentage of 55%, 64% and 71%, respectively.

However, when we turn to accessibility of teachers by Program Type (Table 4), the satisfaction level of Distance and Continuing education students is 59% while that of regular students is 63%. In view of the fact that regular students have the possibility of seeking assistance from their teachers during working hours, the satisfaction on accessibility of teachers should have been even higher than 63%.

Student FGDs pointed out that availability of advisors for undergraduate students is not a problem, but students are not fully aware of the rationale of advisement. Some think that course advisors are there only to help them with adding or dropping courses. Others view advisors as only people who are assigned to sign on registration slips.

Satisfaction	Distanceand Continuing Education		Regular	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
VerySatisfied	80	14%	267	19%
Satisfied	269	46%	626	44%
Dissatisfied	183	31%	367	26%
VeryDissatisfied	59	10%	167	12%
Total	591		1427	

Table 4: *Accessibility of Teachers by Program Type*

Students FGDs indicated that advisors sometimes tend to assess their advisees rather passively, resulting in failure to distinguish between original research result and copied or downloaded ones. Moreover, proper guidance is rarely available across colleges and departments, and students are unethically challenged during defense. In contrast, there are a significant number of humble, responsible, impartial and considerate advisors. Large number of students would be observed overcrowding these advisors. FGDs also revealed that proportion of advisees to research advisors was very high.

Timely guidance and adequate feedback is one of the typical problems of advisors mentioned in all student FGDs. As a result, students' time is often wasted and this has a negative effect on the entire process. Although there is a good culture of communication in some colleges, there are equally poor practices elsewhere. Some students have strong complaints about advisors not responding even to their emails.

With regard to graduate research, students feel that they are not doing problem-solving research. They commonly do research merely for academic fulfillment. Students feel irrelevant courses are given while relevant ones are either not available or omitted. In many departments, courses are postponed to the following semester or year after students have registered for them. This, the students assert, is mainly due to lack of staff to teach the course. As a result, students are forced to stay on campus for an extended period. In addition, Ph.D. candidates complained that foreign currency limitation of AAU has deprived them of the opportunity to send their manuscripts to journals with high impact factors, or to undertake research visits to universities abroad.

2.2.3. Program launch

Faculty FGDs expressed dissatisfaction on the following points. AAU is overburdened with diverse programs well beyond its capacity. There are cases where Department staff do not know the type and number of programs that are running in their department. Programs are launched without sufficient staff consultation and prior assessment survey of need and capability. There are also times where programs are launched to satisfy a few individual faculty members or individuals external to the university. There are departments that started MA, MSc and PhD programs without having even an assistant professor or faculty with a higher rank. In addition, there is no periodic and systematic review of the launched programs. Curriculum harmonization of undergraduate program has also prevented the university from having a more effective program review process.

2.3. Resources

Faculty FGDs emphasized that resources are scarce to meet the needs of the students admitted every year and that of the programs. Basic services such as dormitories, classrooms, offices, and library and laboratory premises are insufficient. Logistic support, such as vehicles for student fieldwork, is practically non-existent. Building expansion is underway in different colleges. AAiT, that took 12ha of land for expansion, is one of them but there is no sign of starting the construction.

Admin FGDs said that the university procurement system is based on least price bid policy. The implementation of this policy has many problems. In the first place, it does not encourage procurement of quality brands and durable items. Secondly, procurement time is commonly at the end of the fiscal year. While this is pursuant to the government procurement process, it does not conform to scientific and academic equipment purchase requirements. As a result, the procurement process has been and continues to be an impediment to the timely and effective acquisition of goods and services.

2.3.1. Teaching (classroom environment, workshops, labs)

Faculty FGDs complained that the university has great shortage of resources such as workshop facilities, books, computer labs, art tools and vehicles. Some colleges/institutes do not even have proper offices for their academic staff. Faculty believed that a huge number of

students were admitted and many programs opened without any significant improvement of facilities and allocation of adequate resources. Maintenance of workshop material is very costly, often much higher than the purchasing price of the equipment. Skilled technicians who can maintain equipment are not available at all. The University does not have a proper maintenance system. Training opportunity for maintenance is mostly not available and, when available, the right personnel is not chosen to be trained. The few well trained technicians could not be retained by the University due to low salary scale and poor human capital handling.

Faculty also stress that, along with all these hurdles, workshops and labs are not enough to accommodate the increasing number of students. As indicated previously, shortage of classrooms is very critical and those that are available have many problems. Walls, windows, and roofs of most classrooms are damaged and need maintenance. There is great shortage of chairs and tables and students are usually moving chairs from one classroom to another during lecture hours. The study team was able to corroborate the claim by the FGD during its site visit.

2.3.2. ICT and Administration

The faculty FGDs revealed that, in some colleges, there is e-learning infrastructure in a few classrooms. However, AAU still remains way behind the e-learning technology (i.e. smart classrooms) which is common even in third generation universities in the country. Computer labs are stuffed with old and obsolete computers with low computational capabilities. This has forced faculty to offer only theoretical courses to their students. In other departments, the use of computers and ICT services is even worse, resulting in absence of essential services. There is high downtime of internet services and computer maintenance is practically non-existent.

Faculty complained that the administration procedure is the biggest bottleneck in maintenance services. Finance and procurement departments have lengthy processes of withdrawing funds and settling expenses. The most serious complaints relate to purchasing of poor quality items.

Technology is central to today's education system and the use of technology is considered central to improving educational systems in many countries. From this perspective, it can be seen that 46% of undergraduate students were not satisfied with the use of technology at AAU, followed by 62% of Master's students and 54% of Ph.D. candidates. In comparison with the university's aspiration to be ICT-driven, its technology usage in teaching learning is way below the acceptable level.

For technologies in use by the university, it is observed that 54% of the students are dissatisfied with the quality of the technological facilities provided by AAU. These technological facilities include the computing devices provided.

Satisfaction surveys showed that 58% of students were satisfied with the availability of services, such as online student service, powered by electronic systems, and 56% were satisfied with the availability of technological services and internet connectivity. With the advancement in technological services and the educational landscape being closely linked with internet connectivity, the 44% level of dissatisfaction of students with respect to internet connectivity is alarmingly high.

However, the different aspects of the service provided by the library are much appreciated by the students. Satisfaction rate of the availability of materials and the service ranges between 73% and 83%. About 50% of students are satisfied with electronic resources and journal subscriptions of the library services, while the overall university library service is considered to be 74% satisfactory by the students.

The overall student satisfaction is computed by clustering using four possible groupings, a new range of satisfaction is computed rather than the crisp satisfaction put in the survey questionnaire. Accordingly, the satisfaction level is computed based on the K-Means clustering algorithm using four possible groupings. Based on this clustering approach, the responses of the students with regard to their satisfaction towards the various services within the university are shown in Table 5.

	Cluster1	Cluster2	Cluster3	Cluster4	Total
Mean Overall Satisfaction Centroid	1.75	2.33	2.79	3.36	
Count	295	749	700	299	2043
Percentage from Total	14%	37%	34%	15%	100%
Overall Satisfaction Range	1.00-2.04	2.04-2.56	2.56-3.07	3.07-4.00	
SatisfactionLabel	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	

Table 5: Mean Based Overall Satisfaction Cluster

Based on an overall satisfaction level computed using the average satisfaction score per respondent, it was found that 51 % of the students were either “Very Dissatisfied” or “Dissatisfied” with the university services, while the remaining 49 % fall within the range of satisfaction.

2.4. Quality of Graduates

Faculty FGDs indicated that comparison with inland universities is not feasible because these universities are still dependent on AAU on all aspects of the teaching learning process. By contrast, comparison with outside universities depends on the measurement criteria of universities across the globe. Hence, AAU must put itself for comparison with a clear set of criteria that boosts its performance.

The FGDs asserted that students these days could score better grades than in the old days, whereas they are graduating with lower confidence and capability. The curriculum revision made ten years ago has had a negative impact on knowledge and skills of the graduates. When the curriculum changed and the duration of study was reduced from 4 years to 3 years, the freshman program was eliminated, and students' communication and analytical capacity diminished.

Employers assert that graduates are good in their theoretical knowledge. All come with basic knowledge in their area of expertise. However, some employers are not satisfied with the theoretical knowledge of graduates of universities across the country. According to employers, graduates completely lack practical skills. Even university internship programs did not give them sufficient experience. On the other hand, new graduates are more conversant with digital technology than previous graduates.

Vice presidents commented in their FGDs that AAU has improved in quantitative terms as the number of professors, students, programs and research outputs have shown an upward trend over the last few decades, but the quality of graduates has been compromised. Graduates are geared to individual work more than team work. Due to this, some employers indicated that they had to offer different types of training that can enhance the graduates' teamwork skills. Graduates of all universities including AAU are weak in presenting themselves to clients and colleagues, and incompetent in business language. Most participants in the KI interview agree that the national harmonized curriculum lacks the communication skills development that the industry needs. Likewise, graduates are extremely poor in English language proficiency, both oral and writing. Ninety percent of the respondents replied that new graduates are not able to communicate proficiently in English.

Employers commented in KIIs that graduates do not have the necessary training to be independent, critical and analytical; many of them are slow learners at their workplace, lack issue prioritization, and dislike tight environment and challenges. Rather than learning from tough and challenging work environments, they tend to prefer shortcuts and they give up easily.

When it comes to problem solving, most employers confirmed that graduates were below the acceptable level, but some graduates had good creativity and innovation skills. However, graduates do not settle in one department and nurture their creativity and innovation.

Most employing companies have the feeling that new graduates are unethical and lack discipline. Concerning loyalty and belongingness, a few graduates are good. However, many graduates always look after their advantages rather than giving priority to the interest of the company. This type of ambition is unhealthy to industries. All companies have the view that graduates' ability to work in a multi-cultural environment is very good.

3. Research

3.1. Resources (funding, labs, field trips, consumables)

Deans' and directors' FGDs revealed that AAU is highly constrained by shortage of laboratory premises and consumables/facilities, vehicles, funds and appropriate advisors. Available laboratories are teaching labs for undergraduate students and lack capability to accommodate scientific research. In relation to this, skilled technicians are not available in the lab to maintain these instruments because this has funding implications. In addition, absence of field vehicles for those departments or colleges that require field research has highly constrained the graduate research programs. The satisfaction survey of students shows that 57% are dissatisfied with the availability of transportation service for field visits and extracurricular activities. In addition, 63% of the students are either very dissatisfied or dissatisfied with the availability of laboratories and workshop facilities within the university for research and course work.

3.2. Faculty Research

Faculty FGDs clearly showed that internal research funds available at AAU are either thematic or adaptive research types while external research funds are of collaborative types. FGDs demonstrate that research at AAU is beset with many problems. Some of these are:

- Fragmentation of research (research not being carried out up to its goal) and duplication of research in multiple colleges
- Shortage of staff who can write winning proposals. Since there is no regulatory mechanism to detect proposal overlapping, the interest of researchers to write proposals is lost.
- Research reports are not applied, but shelved.
- Government finance utilization procedure is too bureaucratic, inefficient and ineffective. Secondly, fund release is time-consuming because every budget release could not be executed without the signature of a higher official. There is no decentralized system.

- Mostly, the procurement procedure of the university discourages researchers from performing research activities. To begin with, the procedure is lengthy and time-consuming and it is usually done at the end of the year. Secondly, the bidding procedure is low price oriented and does not consider quality and durability. Thirdly, there is no suitable system for foreign purchase.
- In thematic research, financial settlement is bureaucratic, and this has scared researchers off as it takes more of their time than the research itself.
- Research does not seem to be a national priority. This may be the reason why the budget allotted for research is very low; i.e. 0.08 % of GDP compared to other countries that allot 2-4% of their GDP for research.

Faculty FGDs further stated that AAU has low institutional capacity to administer research. In the first place, the University lacks the infrastructure and facilities needed by the various colleges to conduct research. Moreover, ICT services do not give satisfactory support to research activities. For research completed after all the hustle, dissemination of research output is very low for many colleges.

Interviews with VPs have indicated that, although the volume of research is big, it still requires greater emphasis to achieve its long-term goals. The procurement and finance procedure has become a bottleneck, causing many researchers to lose interest and the research quality to decline over time.

3.2.1. Procurement

Faculty FGDs showed dissatisfaction in procurement procedures. Faculty noted that government policy gives sole priority to the least priced item purchase system, not quality and other criteria. Research projects require purchase of items with certain performance criteria. Unfortunately, the purchasing process does not take that into account. Thus, purchased items might not fit the needs of the researcher. Most faculty have complained about the purchasing process as a major obstacle to conducting research.

3.2.2. Asset Management system

Admin FGDs commented that it is a very common trend for academics to receive new laptops or computers without returning the older ones. One faculty member may thus end up owning more than one laptop while others are shorthanded for their teaching requirements. Likewise, if a photocopier is malfunctioning because of a minor problem, the officers would purchase a new one rather than maintaining the old one. Similar scenarios have resulted in loss of many university assets that could otherwise have been useful.

4. Community Service

FGD participants have varying understanding of the meaning of community service. In some departments, community service is equivalent to consultancy or outreach. For some, community service is something to be given to communities freely while for others this service must be remunerated. Community services rendered by different faculty in the university include, but are not limited to, legal, teaching, and laboratory support, hand wash campaign, language testing, policy dialogue and entertainment services.

Staff members of College of Law and Governance normally provide free legal services to many people, including regions. The services include legal appearance in court (as attorney), awareness creation, advising etc. Likewise, the School of Performing Arts is offering entertainment service to different segments of the society, including student reception, HIV secretariat and Federal police. Many AAU faculty, for example, contribute to the countrywide reform by participating as task force or board members at various levels, and by sharing expert opinion on mass media. These engagements must be recognized at institutional level, and AAU should acknowledge faculty that render such service.

One of the gaps that is hampering this activity is the varied understanding of community service. AAU has to develop the culture of community engagement. The University has not been able to give as much service as expected, even to nearby communities. This is mainly due to the tax law, financial law and other restricting governing laws. Overall, the university has untapped potential to provide community service but it is not supported with clear guidelines and policies.

5. Governance and Management

5.1. Leadership (Character, Circumstances, and Features)

AAU is huge, with big colleges, institutes and schools with a cumbersome management structure. FGD participants have the perception that the AAU top management could not give the required quality leadership due to the size of the university, as well as the heavy hand of the government on various issues. Participants from top management have explained that it is very difficult to say that AAU is working without interference. AAU did not even have the freedom to set its own academic calendar. AAU was not allowed to retain its honor students for teaching. But, the Ministry of Education was assigning graduate assistants from elsewhere based on its own criteria, mostly in favor of affiliated party members, over the last years. There was direct interference in the university from the government side on the opening and running of some programs. Many FGD participants had serious comments on the current University proclamation that does not give the Senate ultimate authority in the University.

Faculty FGDs mentioned the recent attempt of BPR implementation to create a lean management with greater decentralization. On the contrary, it formed many directors under four VPs, creating a heavy central management organ with a large office infrastructure, resource utilization and more centralization of power under the university leadership. Furthermore, there seems to be no policy for resource mobilization and utilization, even if there is an assigned office to handle this issue in the AAU structure.

Most FGD participants feel that AAU has an entrenched culture of arrogance at a higher level of management that needs to be corrected with proper staff/customer handling training. AAU management at all levels did not have transparency and openness and this needs to be properly addressed or appraised.

Research resource mobilization, utilization, and decision take a long time due to the excessively centralized system and top heavy nature of the management. Thus, it is very difficult to utilize research grants, both from internal and external sources, due to the centralized and excessive control system.

According to the discussion in one FGD, the major problems related to the delivery of smooth and efficient administration at AAU stem from its long hierarchy, lack of accountability, lack of shared and devolved responsibility, absence of delegation of authority, insufficiency of staff development plan/schemes and poor image of the university.

There has been a good initiative of adopting semi-autonomous structure and decentralization of the university at AAiT and EiABC since 2009. But now things have gone back to the cumbersome previous system. Currently, there is a success story in full-decentralized management at College of Health Sciences. However, the Black Lion Hospital's accountability is not yet clear, i.e. whether it is under the Ministry of Health or AAU.

Faculty FGDs commented that starting from the Derg period until very recently, politically assigned managers or party officers held the top positions in the university structure. There is no clear leadership philosophy with shared common vision. Lately, university positions are being held on a competitive basis. The more mature and experienced senior academics in the university are not willing to apply for the management positions to avoid exposing themselves to government interference.

Serious lack of understanding between academic and administrative staff is affecting the overall performance of the university. Some academics do not consider administrative staff as partners in their work. However, some colleges can be cited as exemplary in having a good relationship between academic and administrative staff under the capable leadership of their deans.

5.2. Autonomy – Fund generation

According to the FGDs, there is no uniform internal fund generation and utilization procedure given to all colleges. Each college has authorization to generate and utilize funds from research and consultancy service with a given percentage shared with the central university administration. This has presented divergent impressions among client organizations as they work with multiple colleges under the AAU name but with varying overhead percentages.

Over the years, infrastructure development of other universities has been highly supported by the government while AAU did not get the share it deserved. Many outstanding problems

have not been resolved partly because of budget shortage. Three years ago, AAU needed nearly 2.1 billion to finalize infrastructure developments that it had started. However, the capital budget allocated was only 645 million, to be shared among maintenance, furniture and similar budget items. With such budget shortage, less attention is given to maintenance activities, which in turn has compromised the proper functioning of most of the existing facilities of the university.

5.3. Human Resources

Admin FGD participants said that AAU did not have a uniform personnel management system and working procedures for all colleges/faculties. The HR evaluation does not consider performance for career development. Nonexistence of accountability and staff control mechanism has resulted in overall weak control of AAU's human capital, both academic and administrative. This creates the impression that AAU is rewarding laziness. For example, some academic and admin staff discharge their duties and responsibilities to the satisfaction of AAU, while others perform very poorly, and yet all are paid their salaries at the end of the month without any question and accountability for inefficiency and ineffectiveness.

They also complained that the AAU salary scale and benefit package is very low compared to other government offices. It also has lower benefit packages compared to other similar universities in the country. The working environment, including office, toilets and housing, has become a major source of complaint. New employees work in the university only until they study and finalize their second/third degree and then leave the university. This demonstrates failure by the management to create a sense of belongingness among staff.

Furthermore, administrative staff seriously complained about the big disparity on salary and benefits package between academic and administrative staff. This is mainly because the salary and benefits package for academics is governed by the Ministry of Education scale while that of the administrative staff is governed by Ministry of Civil Service scale.

All participants of the FGD disclosed that the recruitment, promotion, and transfer of staff lack uniformity and betray a high degree of discrimination in implementation due to lack of transparency. Experience is never considered and no horizontal promotion is implemented.

For example, an associate professor who has worked for 15 years is paid the same salary as an associate professor who has just been promoted. Senior academic staff are leaving AAU in search of better pay and recognition. For instance, last year alone, 10 professors have resigned.

Similarly, academics in some colleges receive their overload and part-time payments after a long delay. Because of this, they sometimes refuse to teach extension classes. On the other hand, there are some good examples, such as the School of Commerce, where even external teachers are paid on time. This is a good practice that has to be emulated by other colleges.

It was stated that there is no institutionally driven professional development scheme at AAU. Professional development, such as attending seminars and short term training, is driven mostly by the personal effort of individuals in the departments and faculty.

5.4. AAU compared with other universities

The vice presidents' FGDs revealed that AAU is making visible improvements in terms of program diversity and graduate and research outputs, making it among the top 10 universities in Africa.

The FGD participants stated that comparison with universities inside the country can only be relative. These universities still need and get strong support from AAU in many ways. AAU faculty handle a good share of their graduate courses, play a decisive role in examining theses and dissertations, and teach most of their young faculty in the AAU Ph.D. programs. Therefore, AAU has still a big footprint on these universities, rendering such comparisons rather untenable.

Regarding international universities, the comparison is usually done using diverse criteria. For instance, some institutions emphasize web access while others put the accent on international student reception. Thus, unless the ranking institutions calibrate their measurement criteria, it is difficult to take the rankings at face value.

When AAU is viewed from the point of view of the number of its professors, its programs and its graduates, an improvement is observable. By contrast, when viewed from the point

of view of the quality of its graduates, it is the opposite. When we examine graduates' employability skills, the data shows a declining trend.

5.5. Materials Management

Admin FGDs revealed that AAU's material management system is very poor and maintenance procedures for the university's equipment and furniture are very weak. There is resource wastage (redundancy), material that can be used in a pool (such as a printer, copier, etc.) are bought for each person.

According to students FGDs, many of the dormitory buildings are very old and have not been maintained for a long time. This lack of maintenance is partly because of the year-round use of the building by regular and summer program students. The student dormitory is also overcrowded; a room designed to accommodate four students is now serving eight students (i.e. double its capacity). This assertion was confirmed by the site visit made by committee members. New buildings (e.g. the ones constructed by Flinstone in the College of Veterinary Medicine and Agriculture) sometimes fail to meet the required standard. The newly constructed buildings (such as B-102) have their toilets leaking within one year of service.

From the Faculty FGDs, it was clear that the management office buildings and student dormitories have leaking roofs. The buildings do not have running water, and the pipelines are not correctly installed. The buildings constructed by the contractor have many outstanding problems of quality. Some buildings, due to lack of proper maintenance (e.g. leaking roofs) are deteriorating very fast. It is feared that Eshetu Chole building is about to fall apart. A good deal of machinery that could have been salvaged with a minimum of maintenance is out of use.

The most dramatic case of neglect is that of the Yared Music School auditorium. This state of the art auditorium is in a limbo state for the simple reason that the finishing touches could not be administered. As a result, roofs are leaking and the custom-made furniture that has been imported is stored under conditions that could do lasting damage to it. The handover of building from the contractor was made before it was finalized. Proper completion of the task has taken more time and energy than expected. This has resulted in many inconveniences,

not to speak of the failure to use a facility that could have significance beyond the University. Currently, a tender release to other contractors is in process.

5.6. Grievance Handling

Both admin and student FGDs revealed that there are separate discipline and grievance handling mechanisms for students and staff. There is a guideline and a committee composed of teachers, student council members, and admin staff to handle student disciplinary cases. There is also a central discipline and grievance handling committee for all academic and administrative staff to handle cases that are above the personnel management at each campus.

According to the observation and opinion of students' FGD participants, the university does not have the inclination to listen to student's opinions or give serious attention to their problems and concerns, even in cases of sexual abuse. Students state that nearly all the disciplinary measures taken are in favor of academic or administrative staff. For a minor disagreement between a student and a teacher, the student could be severely penalized. Due to this, most student FGDs participants explained that they fear to bring their grievances to the college or department officials. They are worried that they would be reprimanded if they appeal for a replacement of an incompetent or irresponsible teacher.

Some disabled student FGD participants said that they did not know where to file their grievances. Furthermore, the grievance handling staff do not understand the psychology of disabled students; the committee members are not friendly and willing to hear their basic problems and are sluggish in responding to their grievances.

Students said in the FGDs that no disciplinary measures are taken against students exposed to addiction. Students are using drugs openly and this has had a negative effect on non-practicing students. They also acknowledged that some students come to the university with pronounced ethnic attitudes. In some colleges, disciplinary measures are given ethnic interpretation.

Admin FGDs expressed dissatisfaction with the handling of disciplinary or grievance issues associated with personal relationships of individuals. The AAU disciplinary committee is also seen (by many) as a mechanism for 'revenge' on and 'discrimination' against employees

not liked by the management. When workers file their grievances to the committee, there is no timely response. As a result, staff are forced to take their own university to court..

6. Environment

6.1. Working Environment

Most of the participants in the different FGDs argued that the campus-working environment is generally very bad. This was in reference to facilities, supplies, and the overall management. The relationship between the academic staff and administration staff is not good. Sometimes, there are signs of ethnic-based antipathies. Relationships tend to be based on political rather than on academic affiliation.

Participants in all of the FGDs seriously complained about toilet facilities in most colleges, with very few exceptions. The toilets are almost universally characterized as very embarrassing. However, there are some bright spots, like IDR, which has rebuilt and refurbished the old registrar office to highly acceptable standards.

Faculty FGDs raised the issue of frequent power interruption in most colleges. This disrupts lecture schedules and has an even more injurious impact on labs, where material stored in refrigerator/incubator is affected. Some colleges have recognized the problem and installed backup generators. In other colleges, a huge capacity standby generator is installed, but it is connected to only a few offices. On the main campus, there are generators that are not functioning due to a minor maintenance issue.

Due to the resource management issues raised earlier, classrooms in most colleges are substandard. Classes are not conducive for teaching in most colleges. Classrooms are old, ceilings are leaking and chairs are broken. It should be noted that the classroom situation varies from college to college. For example, in the Art school, the toilets, classrooms, and offices are very clean. The classrooms are fully equipped with ICT services.

PhD students in many colleges lack sufficient and proper facilities for conducting their research. They do not have sufficient workspace, chairs, a space to meet, other working facilities such as ICT service, and a stable electricity supply. They do not have online access to the reputable journals they need for their research; in some instances, they are not even

aware of the available online and electronic resources. These issues have made administration and follow-up of PhD programs difficult in these colleges.

In the area of service delivery, deans, directors and administrative staff are spending most of their time on student service than on improving the quality of education. Many of them are spending their allocated fund on student cafeteria, dormitory and other services, which do not constitute the core processes (i.e. teaching and research). Students also complain that they do not have on-campus services such as barber shop, women hair salons, shoe polish, and small shops to purchase some personal supplies. There is no photocopier access inside most colleges.

6.2. Student Life

The food budget allotted by the government is very low and the cafeterias are serving very poor quality food. The cost-sharing fund is also considered very low and insufficient; on top of that, there is a delay (up to 3 months) in the fund transfer.

Student dormitories are generally very old. Dormitory services are poor, making student life on campus difficult. The bed and mattress in these dormitories have deteriorated from long years or service. The lockers and door keys are not working properly, thereby exposing property to theft. As per the student satisfaction survey data (Table 6), 61% (572 out of 943) of the students are dissatisfied with the quality of the dorms as well as the facilities therein. Similarly, most students (about 65%) are dissatisfied with the maintenance of dorms and related facilities.

	Count	Percent
Very Satisfied	86	4.2
Satisfied	285	14
Dissatisfied	298	14.6
Very Dissatisfied	274	13.4
Not Applicable	1100	53.8
Total	2043	100

Table 6: *Quality of Dorms and Facilities at Dormitories*

There are student lounges in most colleges but they are not functioning well and they are expensive. Neighboring communities complain of liquid waste discharged from some colleges of AAU (e.g. AAiT and EiABC). On the other hand, the neighboring community has a negative influence on some college campuses, specifically through drug-related problems such as chat chewing spots along the fence of the colleges (EiABC and CHS Sefereslam campus).

The clinic service is highly unsatisfactory with poor examination facility and drug supply; on top of that, patient handling in some of the clinics is unethical. There is provision for prescription refund of not more than ETB 50.00 after purchase. Expenses incurred above this ceiling causes additional burden on student life on campus. Availability of medication and the overall healthcare service resulted in the highest level of dissatisfaction in this category, with an average of 61% and 55%, respectively. Service by healthcare staff as well as the availability of emergency health service are both sources of dissatisfaction among students, scoring 53%.

Over 55% of the student FGD participants are not happy with the campus recreation environment. Gymnasiums and sport fields are not available in many campuses. There are television rooms to watch football matches but with limited functionality, and students are obliged to watch the matches off-campus, with all the inconvenience that that entails. With respect to sport activities and services, it is observed that many of the students (more than 55%) are dissatisfied with the service provided. Student dissatisfaction was very high regarding availability of inter-university (76%) or inter-collegiate (71%) sports competitions. As can be seen from the satisfaction survey, 75% of students are dissatisfied with the various parameters of recreational services provided by the University. The dissatisfaction is the highest (78%) for concerts and recreational events on campus.

Regarding student engagement in club activities and other extracurricular events, they are relatively content (55%) with the quality of inter-student relationship. The satisfaction rate is below 50% for availability of various clubs (30%), availability of extracurricular activities (26%), and the representativeness of the student council (45%).

6.3. Relationships

During the FGD with administrative staff, they revealed that the relationship between faculty and support staff is not sufficiently cordial. They resent the designation “support staff” and stated that some faculty do not understand that the admin workers are important for the success of the faculty. This has created a big divide between the teaching and administrative members of the university community.

The student-to-student relationship is generally good, compared to other universities, except for the weak interaction between students of different departments. However, the connection of the students with the community is weak. Some students who have their own political agenda sow divisions and weaken the relationship among students. Because of the prevalent ethnic tension in the country, mistrust has developed among students.

Chapter 5

Summary and Recommendations

Summary

The previous chapters have documented both the rich history of Addis Ababa University and the serious challenges that it has faced in the past decades. These challenges have seriously dented the reputation of what is the nation's flagship university. The focus of the chapters has been to delineate what the successes and failures of the university have been, and whether the promises it augured for the nation have been fulfilled.

The Revitalization Study Committee began its work by identifying longstanding issues that have led to the current state of the university. It examined these issues within the new realities of higher education in the 21st century and envisaged what must be done to align the university with the contemporary reality of higher education so that it could serve better the nation's interests.

Among the prominent issues that underlie the current state of the university are: the rapid expansion of the higher education system in the country; the acceleration of enrollment to guarantee access; the lack of differentiation of the higher education institutions; the serious decline of the quality of the incoming students; the disengagement of the faculty; the meager resources available to accomplish the mission of the institution; and the governance structure that inhibits independence and is incongruent with the realities of successful institutions.

The lack of a general education program (what was previously the Freshman Program) has contributed to the production of graduates who have limited understanding of their country and the wider world, restricted as they are to their chosen field of knowledge. It is gratifying that, since the Committee started its work, the Ministry of Science and Higher Education has reintroduced the Freshman Program. It is to be hoped that AAU will build on this encouraging start to institute an even broader general education program. In

successful research universities, an effective general education (GE) program typically encompasses the first two years of an undergraduate program.

In Chapter One, we presented the rationale for the establishment of the Revitalization Study Committee by the AAU Governing Board. The Committee set out on its assigned task by framing a conceptual framework for its investigation and formulating an elaborate Code of Conduct that was to govern its deliberations and activities. The methodology it followed in its investigation included data collection through review of the pertinent literature, consultations with stakeholders, benchmarking of successful universities and conduct of a student satisfaction survey. It concluded with a list of the main challenges it faced, prominent among which is the dearth of organized institutional data that so seriously hampered the Committee's work.

Chapter Two addressed the core question that the Committee posed at the outset, i.e. what are the attributes of a successful university. It did this by focusing on the central institution of the 21st century, i.e. the research university. Prerequisites for the success of a research university are sustained funding and a conducive working environment, international linkages and strong connectivity in communications. Academic freedom and institutional autonomy are fundamental to the thriving of a research university. The theoretical discussion was followed by case by case examination of some institutions in the Third World who are meeting the challenges of establishing world-class universities. A detailed benchmarking study was done by Committee members, selecting for the purpose three universities in the United States, four universities from Asia and Europe and two African universities.

Chapter Three provided a historical survey of AAU from the establishment of its parent college, UCAA, in 1950 to the current period. The period saw phenomenal expansion in the student population, disciplinary spread, and tiers of programs. However, this growth was accompanied by an alarming decline in quality. While research has been promoted by both the faculties and the research institutes, it has often suffered from lack of coordination and social purpose and has been beset by a constrictive administrative framework. Community service has been a regular feature of AAU, ranging from the Ethiopian University Service to the university-industry linkage. But, there is still lack of conceptual clarity and clear guidelines about its exercise. There is expansion of infrastructure, albeit it in a rather haphazard manner and without a system of proper maintenance. Perhaps the greatest change in the history of AAU has been its transformation from a chartered organization to one directly under the Ministry of Education, with the attendant loss of

institutional autonomy and academic freedom. The campus environment has also changed from one of a vibrant cultural and political forum to a listless milieu with a divided student body.

Finally, Chapter Four reports on the findings of the consultations Committee members held with various stakeholders of AAU (students, faculty, high officials and employers), selected site visits, and a student satisfaction survey. The picture that emerges is rather grim and overwhelmed even those of us who were prepared for the worst. In the sphere of teaching learning, it identified outstanding problems in student admission, reception and orientation as well as records management. There were problems with the modular delivery of courses, the conditions of the classroom, teaching overload as well as assessment and advising. There was a strong feeling that AAU is overburdened with a multiplicity of programs. There is also a general scarcity of resources as well as mismanagement of those that are available.

Likewise, research suffers from scarcity of resources and a highly cumbersome procurement system. While some units of the University are rendering valuable community service, there is a great deal of room for improvement. The lack of institutional autonomy was strongly felt, as was the top heavy nature of management. While there has been encouraging infrastructural development in recent years, end products have tended to be faulty for lack of proper monitoring. The salary and benefit package for academic staff is not competitive while that for administrative staff is even worse. The working environment is characterized by sub-standard dormitories and catering facilities as well as toilets that are an embarrassment to such a prime institution.

On the basis of the above findings, the Committee makes the following recommendations to revitalize the University. Recommendations are made in the different categories that have informed this report and are listed in order of priority.

Recommendations

Governance

The University should

- 1. Strive with all energy to regain its academic freedom and institutional autonomy. There is total unanimity among students, faculty, administrative heads and the highest officials on this point. Only then can AAU have the operational independence and flexibility that could help it attain the kind of global competitive standing that it**

merits. One sure way of achieving this is to elevate it to a **legally chartered institution** so that it can govern itself with relative independence in setting its own policies and practices in such key areas as **setting higher admission and matriculation standards;** faculty tenure, promotion and compensation; resources management (both financial and human) and the selection of its leaders at all levels.

2. **Cascade this autonomy to lower units** (college, school, department) so that they could operate with the independence and flexibility that is required to achieve excellence. **Shared governance**, the kind that places faculty at the heart of the university, has the advantages of enabling an environment where meritocratic selection system flourishes and fostering accountability and transparency.
3. Ensure that there is **adequate and sustained funding** that comes from government, public and private organizations, through the funding of contract research, through services it can provide to the community, and in the form of endowments and donations from alumni and stakeholders.
4. Develop an **efficient and durable strategy for internal revenue generation** by improving the efficiency of the already established PLCs as well as creating new ones,
5. Work to **regain the confidence of the public and its own community**. It is, therefore, imperative that the positive initiatives promised in the new organizational structure are fully implemented. It should, however, revisit the **proliferation of directors** that has been the subject of universal critique.

Teaching and Learning

The university should

1. Have **up-to-date laboratories and workshops, teaching facilities supported by information technology, access to global knowledge, and large interdisciplinary research teams** which provide the foundation for teaching and research at the highest possible level.
2. **Develop an adequate salary and benefit package to its staff, both academic and administrative.** Faculty must enjoy conditions of employment that will permit them to do

their best work. Serious efforts should also be made to ensure that payments for overtime and part time work are made expeditiously.

3. **Remedy the woeful state of English language proficiency among most students and some faculty members** by strengthening the English language course given in the Freshman programme and even considering restoring the old Sophomore English, as well as programs to improve the English language proficiency of faculty.
4. **Address the problem of faculty that are often under-qualified, lack motivation, and are poorly rewarded.** Achieving the goal of excellence in education requires outstanding faculty, high quality teaching and other instructional activities, and availability of good libraries, laboratories, and other pertinent facilities as well as highly prepared and motivated students.
5. **Critically review and evaluate its current programmatic landscape and explore which of its programs are better offered at many of the country's newer universities or simply eliminated.** Doing so would help the university streamline its programs and free up resources that are badly needed to elevate the quality and competitiveness of the rest of its programs. Universities which try to be all things to all people usually degenerate into mediocrity or end up being “diploma mills”.
6. Develop new standards for **faculty accountability and academic competency.** The university must select all its staff based on a meritocratic system where enlightened leadership is sought, relevant skills are desired, the presence of vision is paramount, and where positions are filled free from outside political manipulation. The university should go even further and establish awards for excellence in teaching and research.
7. Identify and reemphasize **the importance of technology acquisition and diffusion.** A modern society's needs are multifaceted and change very rapidly. In addition, a knowledge creating university must have individuals at the forefront of their discipline along with modern technology imperative for such purposes. No society can ignore the new realities.
8. The university should **internationalize its community and programs** through curriculum reform, student and faculty exchange, and productive partnerships with other prestigious universities, particularly in the industrialized world.

Research

The University should

1. **Learn from the experiences of world class research universities described in this Report to gain greater clarity of the concept.** It should mobilize adequate funding to encourage both faculty and student research.
2. Remove the administrative bottlenecks that have hampered research activity and **develop an efficient and conducive procurement and accounting system.**
3. Ensure that academic research is **aligned with stakeholder interests and national priorities.**
4. Explore and/or perfect strategies for fostering **thematic, interdisciplinary and collaborative research.**
5. Address the problem of **low funding for postgraduate research, external examiners and visiting professors,** as well as postgraduate student participation in international conferences.
6. **Integrate research,** both faculty and postgraduate student, **with the learning process.**

Community Service

The university should

1. **Clarify the concept** and **set clear guidelines** as to the manner of its exercise.
2. **Strengthen the center** created for the purpose and seek the necessary funding to carry out tasks in this sphere.
3. **Foster the study of society's cultures and values** with a view to providing a forum for examining its problems and identifying appropriate solutions, as well as inculcating its values in the new generation.
4. **Continuously develop strong and well-defined links to all sectors of the Ethiopian economy.** The material contained in the benchmarking segment of the report provides clear examples of how that might proceed.
5. **Develop strategies to form partnerships** with alumni, governments, the private sector, civil society, and the local and international communities.

Management

The university should

1. **Attend expeditiously to the serious maintenance issues observed in the various campuses.**
2. Honor the **functional independence of the University Registrar.**
3. Develop strategies to **manage university resources effectively and efficiently.**
4. Forge a **healthy rapport between the administrative and academic wings** of the university so that the former could not become an obstacle to the university's core activities nor the latter harbor resentment at being marginalized.
5. **Address the serious problem of institutional memory** by assigning a dedicated office for the collection of essential documents and/or using the university website to store important documents.
6. Have **inspiring and persistent leaders, a strong strategic vision, a philosophy of success** and excellence and a culture of constant reflection, organizational learning, and change.

Environment

1. **Take immediate steps to ameliorate the deplorable state of classrooms, office space for staff and the toilets** to create a conducive working environment. The recent landscaping work done in the Seddest Kilo campus is a positive example of the kind of steps that could be taken.
2. **Attend to the serious complaints raised concerning dormitory and cafeteria facilities.** Concrete steps can be taken to implement this and the preceding recommendation by setting up a task force for the purpose.
3. **Creatively adapt the general education courses** that have now been introduced in the Freshman year to defuse the ethnic balkanization so prevalent on campus. One possibility is establishing a center where society's cultures and values can be studied and developed.
4. **Revive university wide cultural activities** such as the annual University Day, intra-mural sports competitions, poetry recitals and dramatic performances to encourage dynamic and healthy interaction among students. This should include the creation of a vibrant academic atmosphere on campus by organizing and facilitating academic seminars, including

interdisciplinary seminars, and public lectures by prominent academics either by inviting them or taking advantage of their presence in the capital .

5. **Encourage the formation of student as well as faculty professional associations** so that students would deepen appreciation of their chosen disciplines while also interacting along multi-ethnic lines and faculty foster their chosen profession and sharpen their professional expertise.
6. **Bring a lasting solution to the frequent power outages** by installing and maintaining dependable and powerful generators.

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Amharic

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