OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING ON TRIAL: EXPERIENCES FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF BOTSWANA

Kenneth Dipholo
Department of Adult Education
University of Botswana
dipholok@mopipi.ub.bw

Keneilwe Molosi France
Department of Adult Education
University of Botswana
molosik@mopipi.ub.bw

Abstract

Distance learning in Botswana is a relatively recent phenomenon. However, over the last few years institutions offering distance learning courses, in particular Botswana Open University and the University of Botswana (UB) have recorded phenomenal growth as evidenced by the number of courses introduced ranging from diploma to degrees at the masters level. Enrolment, especially at Botswana Open University has also grown tremendously despite challenges associated with the provision of learning by distance mode. The argument of this paper is that the provision of distance education in a dual mode institution like the University of Botswana is often riddled with problems and challenges that compromise quality. Equally, there is often too much emphasis on growth in terms of courses on offer and enrolment figures at the expense of the qualitative aspects especially at the initial stages of program commencement. Thus, there is a dire need to reflect on the qualitative aspect of education being provided if the objective of empowering learners with knowledge and skills for global competitiveness is to be realized. Achievement in the provision of distance and open learning should go beyond a mere offer of a plethora of courses to desperate clients and or the conferment of diplomas and award of degrees of questionable standards. Thus, policy, planning and management of distance and open learning demands creative ways to manage the education systems and maintain academic standards equivalent to those of the conventional systems.

Keywords: distance learning; distance education; distance and open learning; University of Botswana; Botswana.

1.0 Introduction

Over the last few years open and distance learning mode has gained popularity in most tertiary education institutions across the world. This trend is also realised in the Botswana education landscape where most tertiary institutions are now offering distance learning. In particular, Botswana Open University (BOU) and the University of Botswana (UB) have recorded phenomenal growth as evidenced by the number of courses introduced ranging from diploma to degrees at the masters level. Nevertheless, open and distance learning requires considerable planning and management due to its unorthodox arrangement, especially if introduced in a dual mode university many years after the face-to-face campus based education was introduced. Obviously, under such circumstances, a big challenge would normally be the need to re-organize and reset the university processes and structures to accommodate it. Hope and

Guiton (2006; p.7) comment that one of the key factors in the successful delivery of quality education programs in the distance mode is the creation of an enabling environment that promotes implementation. This is important so that the experiences of students in open and distance learning mode are as rich and fulfilling as the experience of those in the conventional mode. This paper however questions the quality of education offered through the open and distance learning mode at the University of Botswana. This paper argues that the provision of distance education by the University of Botswana since 1991 has lacked a clear framework or strategy for systematic mainstreaming or institutionalizing it as integral to the University's core business. As a result, distance education has remained neglected and visibly on the margins of the University's overall vision, hence it is faced with omnipotent challenges, especially of a management nature that subsequently undermines its quality. These challenges continue to haunt distance education even after the University formulated The Distance Education Mainstreaming Policy in 2005 precisely to integrate distance education throughout the University.

The paper opens with an introduction that gives a brief overview of distance education. It then provides a brief contextualization of the provision of distance education in Botswana, including a summary of some key points of the Distance Education Mainstreaming Policy of the University of Botswana. The next section of the paper discusses pertinent experiences in respect of delivery and management of distance education programs by the Department of Adult Education (DAE) and the Distance Education Unit (DEU) of the Centre for Continuing Education. The paper then discusses some lessons that could be learnt from the UB arrangement and proposals for overcoming some of the challenges.

2.0 Open and Distance Learning: A Global Overview

Open and distance learning has increasingly become a preferred means of enabling tertiary institutions to increase access to education and in the process respond to demands for equity of opportunity to participate in learning and meet the ever changing human resources needs occasioned by the pressures of globalization that requires people to be knowledgeable and possess skills that would allow them to function effectively in society (Hope & Guiton, 2006). Open and distance learning is a broad term but often applied to a variety of learning that takes place at a distance from the teacher/tutor/lecturer, often delivered through an array of media (Wiley & Hilton, 2009). The teacher and the learner are separated in time and space but the teacher still has to guide learners. Kogan (1987) clarifies that open learning is any form of learning that is adapted to the varying needs of individual learners, especially in terms of time, pace, place and topic of study.

Open and distance learning has been found to help open opportunities for tertiary education because of its flexible nature. As observed by Biao (2012) the emergence of open and distance learning was motivated by the inability of numerous qualified candidates to access regular tertiary education. Many developing countries like Botswana face the challenge of ensuring access to learning for a majority of people, especially those living in the periphery. In the case of Botswana for instance, it could be argued that the country's huge size of 582 000km2 with a relatively low population with many people living in dispersed settlements that makes little financial sense to provide traditional education, presents a perfect motivation for distance education because of its inherent capacity to defy the constraints of remoteness. Open and distance learning offers flexible learning opportunities largely because it relieves learners from the constraints of time and space and can be delivered anywhere (UNESCO, 2002). Thus, distance learning ensures that large numbers of learners are enrolled into institutions at cheaper rates compared to the

conventional means and as such has become a serious alternative to the standard classroom environment (Discenza *et al*, 2002).

However, even though the required expectation is that open and distance learning should be as rich and solid as the on-campus learning, it has been observed that mostly higher education institutions offer open and distance learning on an add on approach to the traditional learning mode (UNESCO, 2016). Offering open and distance learning as an 'add on' may move away institutional interest to the on-campus learning as it is seen as the core (Gillborn & Youdell, 2000). In this case, where resources are limited priority can be given to the latter. However, given the additional resources needed to develop open and distance learning courses, the expectation should be an enhanced learning experience, not a weakened substitute for traditional classroom (UNESCO, 2016, p.6).

Another challenge faced by open and distance learning in most African contexts concerns acceptance and recognition. Pityana (2004) noted that there is scepticism about the quality of graduates and qualifications produced through the open and distance learning mode. This view of open and distance learning may be influenced by the fact that it is mostly not offered as the core but as an 'add on' or perhaps just that people are more used to on campus learning therefore attaching 'second best' label to open and distance learning.

3.0 The context of provision of distance education in Botswana

Educational development in Botswana has its basis in the 1977 National Policy on Education and its revised version of 1994 – The Revised National Policy on Education (Republic Of Botswana, 1994). However, it should be noted that the 1977 National Policy on Education placed more emphasis on the quantitative aspect through the expansion of the education system. As a result, there was massive expansion of school facilities at all levels (Tau, 2002). While the 1994 Revised Policy on Education shifted emphasis on issues of the quality of education provided, it nevertheless avoided compromising issues of access, hence the Policy identified, among others, priority areas of:

- Access and equity, given the prevailing imbalances between regions and gender in terms of access to educational opportunities.
- Cost effectiveness/cost sharing in financing education

In line with these priority areas, the Government of Botswana established the Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning (BOCODOL) in 1998 which was transformed into the Botswana Open University in 2017. Botswana Open University (BOU) is a semi-autonomous distance education institution tasked with the responsibility to improve access to learning opportunities on a nationwide scale. Botswana Open University started its operations in the year 2000 then as BOCODOL with an enrolment of 2, 081 which comprised of junior and senior secondary education levels (www.bou.ac.bw). The institution has now grown to be recognised as one of the best open and distance learning institutions in Botswana and beyond. Currently BOU boasts of a 47% output, with a total of 38 undergraduate and graduate programmes and 27 short courses (www.bou.ac.bw).

Another institution that offers distance learning in Botswana is the University of Botswana. The University of Botswana (UB) decided to increase access to its programs by utilizing the distance education mode in 1991. The UB was aware that it was falling far too short of meeting the needs for university-level

education and that it could not do so adequately as long as it used the full-time, campus based education alone (Tau, 2002). To that end, the Distance Education Unit was established within the Centre for Continuing Education (CCE). Through this model, UB aimed at liberalizing access to its programs through a more cost-effective way. However, the decision to offer distance education at UB lacked a clear framework for mainstreaming distance education into UB processes. As a result, the provision of distance education at UB operated under an unclear system that inhibited the development of both the quantitative and qualitative aspects. Its introduction was approached in a casual fashion (largely informed by a desire to increase student numbers) such that it was perhaps incumbent upon the system to see how it can fit itself into existing university structures. This approach set in motion a pattern of systematic neglect of distance education to this day. Even when the UB enacted the Distance Education Mainstreaming Policy in 2005, efforts to re-orient established behaviours and re-align administrative processes to accommodate distance education have been muted and un-spirited.

4.0 The Distance Education Mainstreaming Policy of 2005

The University of Botswana acknowledged the strategic importance of distance education in expanding access to education and increasing opportunities and levels of participation in tertiary education. This goal resonates well with Vision 2036. Vision 2036 is precisely a national manifesto that reflects statements of intent; an ambitious national statement of long-term goals to be achieved by the year 2036 (Republic of Botswana, 2016). Among other things, the Vision espouses on ensuring prosperity for all and improved human social development. These pillars can surely be fulfilled through opening access to educational and learning opportunities for all through open and distance learning. Specifically, The University of Botswana came up with initiatives such as a document called *A Strategy for Excellence: University of Botswana Strategic Plan 2016 and Beyond* as a framework for, among others, expanding access and participation in tertiary education (University of Botswana, 2016). It should however be noted that the provision of distance education at the UB predates the aforementioned guiding document. It was thus realized that there was need for a specific strategy for cascading distance education across the University structures. Thus, UB developed the Distance Education Mainstreaming Policy to promote widespread implementation of distance education across the University with a view to facilitating '*the integration of distance learning into the institutional culture, as a strategic tool and means to provide greater access to tertiary education*' (University of Botswana, 2005: p.4). The Policy states that '*the rationale for mainstreaming of distance education is to exploit the potential of distance education is widening access to UB educational and training programs and achieve its strategic growth targets in more cost-effective ways*' (UB, 2005; P.7).

In recognizing that distance education has remained marginal and isolated, the Policy thus sought to transform it from its marginal and separate status and integrate it into the University vision, mission and value statements (UB, 2005). The Policy further details the structure for the provision of distance education in such a way that the scope of accountability is clearly demarcated. For instance, the Policy specifies that ownership of distance education programs at UB is by academic departments whereas the Center for Continuing Education (CCE), through the Distance Education Unit (DEU) is the administrative focal point for all distance programs and is accountable for all program management and delivery process, and provision of learner support services (UB, 2005).

However, while the present arrangement is informed by prevailing circumstances, in particular, the provision of distance education in a dual mode institution, it has tended to be problematic to the extent that it inhibits growth and compromise quality. The present arrangement does not enable distance education to reach its full potential as there seems to be widespread mistrust and backstabbing by key stakeholders. Overall, there is a casual approach to the provision of distance education starting right from the top management. Whereas the Distance Education Mainstreaming Policy addresses relevant issues such as the relationship between stakeholders, and issues of accountability and responsibilities, implementation has lagged behind so much that one would be excused to believe that the Policy does not exist because role players continue to operate in an unhealthy competitive fashion where authority patterns are not clear cut, though duties have been specified.

5.0 The case of Diploma in Adult Education and Diploma in Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) Management

There is no single universally accepted model for efficient provision of distance education but at least two models often stand out as the most prominent among others. These are single-mode institution's model and the dual mode set up (Perraton and Lentell, 2004). Single mode institutions are founded to provide either face-to-face education or distance education. Such institutions therefore do not mix the provision of face-to-face and distance education. The one strong argument in favour of the single mode set up is that they have loyalty to the type of education they provide. They also battle against scepticism to achieve real standards and professionalism (Perraton & Lentell, 2004; p.117).

On the other hand, dual mode institutions are designed to provide both on and off-campus education. The choice of the dual mode organizational structure is premised on a deliberate attempt to make distance education as good as conventional education. There is however a contention that open and distance learning remains in the periphery of the institutions business and is treated as inferior to the conventional system. As explained by Muyinda (2012) in many dual mode institutions, open and distance learning students have often been treated as second class students who can only be helped after university staff has attended to the conventional students. Perhaps, this is one but many of the reasons why open and distance learning qualifications are often looked at as inferior. At the UB for instance, the open and distance learners are not offered the opportunity to assess their courses and lecturers through the Student Evaluation of Courses and Teaching (SECAT) as conventional students do.

Under the dual mode set up, distance education programs are initiated by individual departments while a central administrative unit is set up to coordinate the activities (Perraton & Lentell, 2004). For instance, the Department of Adult Education (DAE) initiated both the Diploma in Adult Education and Diploma in NGO Management by distance mode in 2003 and 2006 respectively. It thus retains the traditional task of designing and teaching courses offered under these programs. The Department of Distance Education (DEU) of the Center for Continuing Education is responsible for administrative responsibilities of the programs. On face value, this arrangement is clear and unambiguous and perhaps should not be problematic since there is a clear division of responsibilities. However, the arrangement has experienced numerous problems that have negatively impacted on growth and the quality of education provided. Some of the problems include the following:

6.0 Organizational crisis

Over the years it appears that the DEU retained both the administrative and the pedagogical powers even though these powers are supposed to be shared by the two departments. Ideally, the DAE as an academic department is supposed to deal with the academic and teaching component of their programmes while the DEU deals with administration. However, the DEU seems to exercise such a powerful function as to regulate what academics do. Essentially, there is too much administrative control that disempowers or relegates the academic role of the DAE to that of a back-up unit whose role in the success of the program is marginal and negligible. For instance, while the development of course materials is a function of the DAE, the DEU seems to be having a strong under-hand in determining what the academics should be doing. For example,DAE staff is directly responsible for developing materials and in cases where external experts have been contracted to develop the materials, DAE has to ensure that the materials are of an acceptable quality through the process of approving outline and content of the modules. In other words, DAE is responsible for developing and enforcing quality assurance measures. However, on the other hand, DEU retains authority for approving payment for work done such that sometimes what DAE has approved can be questioned by DEU. Under normal circumstances, procedures for payment of work done must be appreciated by all parties in such a manner that everyone satisfies his/her part to minimize delays in settling claims. Thus, it would seem that this matter has very little to do with procedures for authorizing payment but is more a case of mistrust and covert bad blood between the two departments. Whatever the case is, DEU excessive administrative control of the process inhibits innovation in that it does not promote quicker, flexible and more effective way of responding to the needs of learners. Due to this organizational crisis, some courses had been without modules because some DAE staff members resolved that they were not going to write any modules because of the delays they endure when they have to be paid by staff at the Distance Education Unit at CCE.

Another organizational crisis concerns recruitment (selection and hiring) of the teaching staff. In most cases, in dual mode universities such as the University of Botswana, teaching staff is drawn from the conventional teaching/ academic unit. This is the case at UB with DAE staff also teaching the DAE distance education programmes. This is meant to keep up the quality that is being given to the on-campus learners. However, now the teaching staff can be anybody who has applied and found to meet the requirements on the advert for teaching. Unfortunately, even though the DAE queried this arrangement, it has stayed to this far even though it appears advertising is not working as expected. At every start of the semester, full time teaching staff who have not responded to the advert are always asked to go and teach because there is no one in the classroom and students are waiting. This affects quality teaching and learning in that while the DEU are still running around looking for someone to teach, student's time is lost and on the other hand the teaching staff schedule is disturbed.

7.0 Inconsiderate scheduling of classes

In a similar fashion, while teaching or tutoring is mainly done by DAE staff (there are some external tutors), it is nevertheless the responsibility of DEU to schedule classes/tutorials and examinations and this has tended to once more give DEU too much power to control and direct the activities of academic staff. For instance, whereas the Distance Education Mainstreaming Policy requires that residential sessions be pre-scheduled and included in the overall academic calendar (Almanac), DEU sometimes slots residential sessions on different dates from those provided in the almanac without consulting DAE. Re-scheduling of

events is not the problem per se, but re-scheduling that is done without consulting the teaching staff is. Also, sometimes teaching time tables are sent to the teaching staff the night before they are supposed to teach. If a lecturer queries their time slots, they are just told to go and discuss with the students and see if they can re-schedule. Again, even though the DEU knows that at UB we don't normally work on weekends, they continue to schedule classes for weekends and ignore the fact that teaching staff are adults with other responsibilities that can make teaching on weekends difficult if they are not alerted on time. This affects quality because one has to be prepared to teach. Lecturers don't just appear before students without preparing themselves. Inconsiderate scheduling of classes is also noticed on the learner's side. For instance, a learner can have back to back classes from 8am till 6pm. This has the potential to compromise the quality of learning as asserted by Collins (2004). Is it assumed that with such a packed schedule adults will learn effectively?

8.0 Teaching materials

Although all over the world the open and distance learning platform is changing due to technology, the University of Botswana has not yet adopted the online route for its open and distance learning programmes, only print materials are still used. The unfortunate thing is that print materials are not regularly reviewed and as such out-dated. As indicated by Biao (2012) Information Communications Technology (ICT) based strategies have greater positive impact on the open and distance learning platforms.

Lessons to be learnt

Problems of distance education in a dual mode institution

The provision of distance education in a conventional dual mode institution is complex and challenging. Significantly, it requires re-ordering of priorities, changing institutional cultures, re-alignment of rules, administrative regulations and decision making processes. The literature on open and distance learning argues that in a dual mode set up, the open and distance learning programmes and students are not given equal priority as those of the conventional learning (Muyinda, 2012). This suggests that great care should be taken when an institution is operating as a dual mode institution so that quality assurance is ensured for all the programmes. It must be appreciated that change is itself challenging and at times involves 'trial and error' since there can be no absolute policy guidelines or clear models to guide action (Hope & Guiton, 2006). Nevertheless, Hope & Guiton (2006) propose that for effective management of change, organizations should understand who is involved in what and as well articulate the attitudes and behaviors necessary for success.

Lack of role clarity

Nonetheless, some writers such as Perraton & and Lentell (2004) have argued that administration structures of conventional institutions are not best suited to the development and management of distance education. Their argument is that distance education involves a number of quasi-industrial processes that would best be obtained within a corporate culture that adheres to production schedules. The assumption is that the needs of distance learners are best served through institutions teaching wholly at a distance. It is also being argued that assigning the same lecturers to both on-campus and distance learners is disadvantageous to distance learners because overworked staff tended to use the available time for face-to-face teaching and ignore distance learners (Perraton & Lentell, 2004).

BOCODOL is a prime example of a single mode institution which is focused on the provision of distance learning. But even then, it is being cautioned that reliance on part time staff has structural deficiencies in that such staff may not consider themselves as key stakeholders (owners) of the program and may hence put very little effort (Perraton & Lentell, 2004).

Inadequate institutional support

Thus, in spite of the brilliant Distance Education Mainstreaming Policy, at the apex of the structure the UB management postures as a benevolent guardian intent on expanding access to university education through a paternalistic approach through the provision of distance education. The intransigent attitudes associated with traditional universities create unintended lack of support from management. It is thus, very doubtful if top management have the right attitudes that distance education is important and valuable beyond just maximizing student numbers and generating more profit for the UB (Discenza *et al*, 2002). As indicated by Muyinda (2012) for open and distance learning to survive in a dual mode institution, there should be great support from those who make decisions in the institution, they should appreciate the role played by open and distance education in opening access, and not only a way of making extra income for the institution.

Poorly managed implementation of the Distance Education Mainstreaming Policy

DEU seems to recognize and delight in its strategic importance in the provision of distance education at the UB and seems to take full advantage of this to show off their power. As has already been discussed, DEU has responsibility to schedule tutorials and in doing so they are not obliged to consult academic departments. Whenever tutorials are scheduled at the same time when on-campus classes are on-going, lecturers are advised to navigate through problems related to clashes in teaching and shortage of classrooms for distance learners.

These issues may seem petty and insignificant but in reality they have profound impact in the growth and quality of distance education. The groundswell of mistrust and or bad blood between DAE and DEU reveals that the Mainstreaming Policy has had limited impact in terms of rationalizing roles and responsibilities in respect of the provision of distance education.

9.0 Overcoming the challenges

Program ownership

Academic departments, DAE in this particular case, still give distance education a marginal and separate status which unfortunately reinforces the perception that distance education is a second-rate alternative used to offer a shadow of education while withholding its substance (Perraton & Lentell, 2004). As an illustration, it is noted that whenever there is a clash/overlap between a distance education class and a face-to-face on campus class, lecturers feel obliged to give priority to face-to-face schedule and if they ever opt to honor the distance education class at the expense of the on-campus class, that would perhaps be

premised on extra-ordinary sympathy for 'the isolated visitors' or 'weekend learners[1] rather on a legitimate call of duty.

DAE staff must therefore undergo self-introspection before pointing accusing fingers at the DEU. There is need for attitudinal changes within the DAE to positively embrace their distance education programs and promote the same degree of their acceptance and recognition as established face-to face programs. Presently, it seems as though the distance education programs are a burden culminating in a general hostility towards them. Commitment to distance education programs is compromised when senior members of staff do not show willingness to teach distance education courses, especially in instances where there are no junior staff members with the requisite competencies to teach particular distance education courses. It will be unfortunate if teaching distance education courses is used as induction for junior staff.

Monetary incentives and other rewards

However, it is equally significant to reward those who teach at a distance handsomely and it is my considered view that the present remuneration rates may not be attractive to motivate professors and senior lecturers to teach distance education courses and this makes it difficult for distance education programs to benefit from the intellectual wealth of the department or UB in general. Discenza *et al* (2002) opined that many universities have been successful with monetary incentives to encourage professors to teach distance courses. Other non-monetary incentives such as prospects for promotion should equally be recognized.

Limiting flexibility

It is common to argue in favour of distance learning on account of its flexibility especially for working learners. However, there are tendencies to abuse the flexibility of the system particularly where learners do not abide by set timelines for submission of assessment work, knowing that they will not be penalized for submitting after deadlines have passed. This does not help in generating interest and commitment to work. There must be a limit to flexibility to ensure that learners abide by University rules governing their studies.

University of Botswana Management

The management of the University of Botswana should actively monitor accountability in the provision of distance education. Management must be seen to be providing the necessary institutional support to enhance acceptance and recognition of the distance education system. Significantly, Management must push for immediate implementation of all aspects of the Mainstreaming Policy, with specific emphasis on revamping the structures for the management of distance education to maintain academic standards equivalent to those of the conventional system. This will go a long way in advertising distance education programs especially in terms of the acceptability of its qualifications within the national system of educational credentials (Dodds & Youngman, 1994).

Residential/tutorial sessions

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[1] I call them visitors because they report for residential sessions that normally last for not more than 7days at any given time. They may as well be called weekend learners

It has become customary to schedule distance education tutorials at the commencement of every semester (for first residential sessions) followed by second residential sessions normally during the short break. This was perhaps an attempt to ensure that learners are given due academic advisement without competing for time and space with face-to-face classes. Whereas this was thoughtful, it nonetheless perpetuates the stereotype that distance education has a separate inferior status. Perhaps the scheduling of distance education tutorials and examinations should be integrated into the University wide-time table generation system to avoid clashes and as well as to give it due recognition as an integral mode of delivery. This will also address instances where staff teaching distance education courses are asked to accommodate learners in their offices for tutorials because all classrooms have been allocated to face-to-face classes. The arrangement will also go a long in promoting predictability and certainty.

Distance Education Unit

DEU must concern itself with administering distance education programs and leave academic responsibilities to academic departments. This can be possible if the provision of distance learning is modelled on a more flattened and less bureaucratic structure that would enable information and power to flow horizontally. Such a structure would allow role players to be more accountable and operate more effectively and efficiently. They must organize induction training for all staff taking up distance education courses to generate awareness and participation in distance education and also organize annual retreats where they can sit with tutors and other stakeholders to exchange views and create rapport and collegiality so that every role player takes responsibility for the success or failure of the programs.

UB/BOU collaboration as a long term option

UB boasts of the intellectual wealth of its academic staff especially in terms of delivering tertiary level programs. Until 2009 when Botswana Open University was given permission to develop and offer tertiary-level programs, UB was the dominant force. With the establishment of BOU, the open and distance learning platform in Botswana has changed. BOU has shifted toward technology-based or e-learning which are constantly reviewed. As has been previously noted, UB is still behind on the issue of technology for open and distance education programmes and can benefit a lot from BOU.

Also, as has already been highlighted, BOU depends largely on part time staff to teach its various courses at all levels. This reliance on part time staff is structurally deficient in that such people may simply use the part time work as a means of making more money, in which case there is limited commitment and interest in the success of the programs. Whereas the UB boasts of a pool of academics who can competently teach tertiary level courses, BOU boasts of advanced on-line technology for their programmes it will be in the interest of the nation for UB and BOU to collaborate and optimize the use of limited resources as both are public funded universities. Consequently, this collaboration will ensure that distance education not only exist to improve access to learning opportunities but to provide quality education to the learners.

10.0 Conclusion

Whereas the University of Botswana has committed itself to expanding access to education and increasing opportunities and levels of participation in tertiary education through among others distance education, planning and management of the system is engrossed in debilitating attitudes that compromise standards and manufacture a degraded product. This half-hearted approach to the provision of open and

distance education creates overall negative perceptions about the system and effectively qualifies it as second-rate.

This paper has highlighted that the existence of the Distance Education Mainstreaming Policy has had limited impacts precisely because key stakeholders right from the apex downward cannot walk the talk. Thus, the integration of distance education into the overall University Vision, Mission and values is un-spirited and paternalistic. At the departmental levels, both DAE and DEU consider themselves entirely distinct and independent of each other so much that they compete in offering distance education programs instead of pooling limited resources to maximize returns, hence the need for a flattened structure that allows power to flow horizontally.

There is therefore a dire need for attitudinal changes throughout all structures with a role in the provision of distance education. Policies and other relevant documents are in place but implementation has disappointingly lagged behind. There is need for management to push necessary changes through established cultures and behaviours in order to give distance education its rightful place within the University system.

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