

Addis Ababa University

Consolidated and Classified Strategic Planning Issues

July 2006

Preface

In order to guide its activities in a systematic and accountable manner and to timely respond to any uncertainties that it may face at various levels of carrying its functions, Addis Ababa University (AAU) formed in January 2006 a Steering Committee chaired by the President to elaborate a strategic plan for the University.

One of the major steps taken by the Steering Committee was to organize a series of six consecutive retreat workshops to engage the staff and the students of various faculties and schools in discussions that identified internal and external issues. The workshops involved a total of 450 – 500 people. Each workshop was organized to include manageable number of academic staff, administrative staff and students that come from related disciplines.

The reports from the retreat workshops, after being consolidated into four groups (including Health Sciences, Professional Schools, Natural Sciences and Social Sciences & Humanities), were distributed to the university community for validation. Staff (both academic and administrative) and student meetings were held throughout the university during the period June 15 – 18, 2006 to consider the consolidated reports and forward additional issues not covered in the reports. The reports of the validation meetings were submitted to the Office of Strategic Planning and Reform (OSPR).

This report contains issues identified in the retreat workshops and the validation meetings and consolidated classified by the Office of Strategic Planning and Reform (OSPR).

Consolidated and Classified AAU Strategic Planning Issues

I Internal Issues

1 Governance and Internal Autonomy

A Strengths

- Willingness of the leadership to carry out reform in governance and internal autonomy
- Availability qualified manpower to carry out the desired reform
- Availability of study materials on various issues
- Senate Legislation in the process of being amended
- The legislation of higher education proclamation
- Establishment of ICT infrastructure to assist in improving information management system

B Weaknesses

- Lack of clear statements on visions, missions and goals of the University
- Absence of university of charter
- Lack of institutional capacity for strategic planning
- University leadership perceived as not being accountable to the academic community
- Inadequate participation of the University community in decision making
- Lack of Internal autonomy of Colleges and Faculties within AAU
- Lack of institutional memory
- Lack of managed public relation

2 Administration/Management

A Strengths

- Establishment of ICT infrastructure to assists in improving work flow and accountability
- Availability qualified manpower to carry out the desired reform
- Availability of study materials on various issues
- Existence of large Faculties with high potential (e.g. FBE, Faculty of Education, etc.)
- No mis-management of fund despite low staff salary and job insecurity

B Weaknesses

- Lack of an efficient administrative system (including finance and purchasing)
- Lack of a rigorous system of regular review and accountability
- Lack of capacity to administer block grants and other financial resources
- Centralization of financial, administrative and procurement services
- Lack of coordination and communication among functioning units
- Lack of policy and procedure manuals fit for autonomous university
- Non-involvement of Faculty expertise in administration/management (e.g. FBE in management and finance)

3 Academic Administration

A Strengths

- Dedicated and qualified academic staff who are willing to assume academic leadership

B Weaknesses

- Elongated vacant post of the AVP
- Lack of managerial skill of most academic administrators
- Engagement of most academic administrators in routine operations, thereby being denied opportunities to think strategically
- Lack of administrative support
- Inappropriate job assignments (e.g. Associate deans engaged in class scheduling, a task that can easily be performed by an administrative assistant)
- Lack of academic staff participation in nominating candidates for academic administration

4 Material Infrastructure and Resources

A Strengths

- Large infrastructural resources, including ICT infrastructure
- Large Faculties with considerable material infrastructure and resources

B Weaknesses

- Poor physical infrastructure such as lecture halls, audio visual facilities; Internet facilities; standby generators; workshops and maintenance center
- Lack of master plan for the physical expansion and development

5 Income Generation

A Strengths

- Existence of potential for income generating activities (e.g. specialized laboratories, museums, printing press, health services)

B Weaknesses

- Revenue generating potential not adequately identified
- Lack of planning

6 Administrative and Support Staff

A Strengths

- Educational opportunities for administrative staff
- Existence of dedicated staff with experience

B Weaknesses

- Lack of well qualified managerial staff
- Non-competitive salary
- Lack of a comprehensive staff profile
- Lack of rules and regulations governing hiring and promotion of support staff

- Lack of articulated policies and procedures with well-defined roles and responsibilities
- Lack of training scheme to develop adequate staff to meet university's needs
- Lack of appropriate career structure for technical staff, including maintenance staff
- Lack of appropriate incentives and benefits packages for administrative staff (e.g. transportation services, model school, medical benefits)
- Inadequate job security and employment status
- High proportion of contract staff
- High ratio of administrative staff to academic staff
- Absence of Workers Union

7 Academic Staff

A Strengths

- Existence of growing graduate training programs, some of them at Ph.D. level, for upgrading the qualification of staff.
- High Ethiopianization of faculty in some areas
- Existence of dedicated staff in some Faculties despite low salaries
- Existence of highly qualified staff in some areas
- Existence of inventive staff in some fields

B Weaknesses

- Non-competitive salary,
- Lack of incentive system (e.g. transport services, model school, medical benefits, research leaves, research money and programs, establishment of tenure system, etc.)
- Lack of favorable environment for the academic staff to provide consultancy services in the university
- Lack of active staff development scheme
- Over-reliance on part-time academic staff
- Failure to keep pace with progress in the field
- Low level (in number and quality) of research and publication
- Low level of senior staff and staff with terminal degree
- Lack of involvement of the staff outside class with students and the wider community
- Failure to retain qualified staff in professional schools
- High degree of inbreeding
- Absence of tenure system
- Lack of appropriate policy on recruitment of expatriate staff of Ethiopian origin
- Lack of appropriate policy on using retired (former) staff to serve the University in various ways
- Lack of pedagogical training of beginner lecturers
- Lack of commitment of academic staff to the university
- A system of teacher evaluation that calls for improvement
- Poor staff/student interaction
- A non-functioning Teachers Association

8 Undergraduate Programs of Study

A Strengths

- Comprehensive university (i.e. with diversified programs)
- Existence of large areas of strength (e. g. basic sciences, health sciences, technology, etc.)
- Comparative advantage areas such as performing and studio arts, music and linguistics
- Existence of diversified graduate programs that support the undergraduate programs
- Existence of continuing education program with large number of students
- A large undergraduate enrolment
- Existence ICT infrastructure which assists in improving the quality of education and research

B Weaknesses

- Few trans-disciplinary programs
- Insufficient cross-listing of electives and minor programs
- Lack of honor undergraduate programs
- Curriculum not responsive to national imperatives and goals (e.g. No programs on human rights, federalism, urban policy, food security, natural hazard monitoring, energy and HIV AIDS education)
- Absence of distance education system
- Few apprenticeship and internship programs
- Lack of proper integration and upgrading of educational programs in recently acquired institutions (e.g. Medical laboratory technology)
- Duplication of programs
- Lack of Institutionalized program reviews at regular intervals
- Poor English language proficiency of students and academic staff
- Insufficient use of ICT for creation/distribution of knowledge and for teaching/learning
- Absence of general education programs to equip the students with general knowledge and competency in specific areas.
- Teaching-learning process which is not student-centered, student friendly, disabled-conscious and gender sensitive.
- No tracer studies to evaluate performance of past graduates
- Deteriorating quality of teaching (due to, for instance, large classes, poor material conditions, deployment of unsatisfactory expatriate staff, absence of innovative methods of teaching, etc.)
- Unsatisfactory arrangement or set up for science education program
- Curriculum design not demand driven and not dynamic
- Lack of explicit and organized quality assurance system
- Lack of support system

9 Graduate Programs & Research

A Strengths

- Diversified graduate study programs (144 masters, 12 clinical specialty, 1 specialist diploma and 30 Ph.D programs)
- Graduate program expansion initiative

- Initiation of reform of graduate study and research administration to enable effective planning and implementation of graduate programs and research
- Existence of regional (African) graduate programs in some areas
- Comparative advantage areas such as Ethiopian/African Studies
- Research in traditional medicine and tropical medicine
- Documentation of research output
- Existence ICT infrastructure which assists in improving the quality of education and research
- Existence of good opportunity for funding research

B Weaknesses

- Lack of adequate support (academic and non-academic) to graduate students (e.g. graduate (research) library, recreational facilities, eating facilities)
- Donor-driven research agenda
- Inadequate information system regarding funds for research
- Inadequate solicitation of research fund
- Poor utilization record of fund for research and lack of monitoring of utilization of fund for research
- Lack of incentives for research
- Absence of research centers of excellence in areas of national need (e.g. food science, water, energy)
- Lack of system for regularly updating research priorities, including identification of strategic research areas that deserve priority
- Poor research support services
- Absence of research policy handbook
- Graduate student admission based on CGPA only.
- Lack of teaching and research assistantship for PhD students
- Lack of block grants for the PhD research
- Lack of housing for graduate students
- Inadequate dissemination of research results
- Lack of linkages with industry
- Low tuition fees for graduate studies

10 Gender and Multiculturalism

A Strengths

- Establishment of the Institute of Gender Studies
- Student population with diverse cultural background
- Affirmative action for female students at admission point

B Weaknesses

- No programs for mainstreaming gender, multiculturalism
- Gender inequality with regard to access, academic staff positions, and managerial staff positions
- Regional imbalance in access for Ethiopians from peripheral and disadvantage areas
- Absence of university wide gender focal point
- Lack of multicultural tolerance among students
- Sexual harassment of female students (both by students and staff)

11 Students

A Strengths

- Availability of the services of School of Fine Arts/Yared Music School and Cultural Center for student cultural and recreational purposes
- High student preference to join AAU
- Motivated and in certain disciplines high caliber students joining AAU
- Student population with diverse cultural background
- Establishment of Community Work and Life Center

B Weaknesses

- Poor high school preparation of students
- Lack of differential remedial and sustainable support system for affirmative action students to enable them cope up with their university studies
- Program of studies and assessment not tailored to the strength and weaknesses of students
- Poor facilities in and outside the classroom for self-study
- Inadequate academic and non-academic counseling services to students
- Inadequate institutional support for disabled students
- Inadequate institutional support for needy student (for example, through establishment of welfare fund, summer jobs, part-time employment, etc.)
- Absence of career development and life-long education support
- Student services (dormitories, cafeteria and sanitary facilities) and physical and recreational facilities in need of upgrading and diversification
- Absence of strong support to student union and student association including student paper, student radio.
- Growing number of students not attending class regularly. (This is due to internal factors like evaluation system and due to poor quality of teaching or external factors like involvement of students with chat.
- Student discipline problems related with substance abuse
- Lack of system of in-campus student employment

12 University Support Services

A Strengths

- Ethiopian Study Library providing access to massive archival resources to researchers
- Existence of the Museum of Ethiopian Studies preserving history and culture
- Existence of the National Herbarium and Natural History Museum for scientific study
- Automation of the university library
- On-line access to journals
- Existence of ICT support
- Existence of AAU Printing Press and AAU Publication Press

B Weaknesses

- Library system inadequate to support teaching-learning and research in terms of books, journals, staff, physical facilities, use of ICT, etc.
- Lack of joint instruments' facilities

- Inadequate support services such as laboratories, field stations and vehicles for field work, and book centers
- Insufficient number of student/staff cafeterias
- Lack of information and orientation on on-line access to journals
- Absence of well-organized press to publish classics, out of market materials, and textbooks at affordable price.

13 **Sports and Extracurricular Activities**

A Strengths

- Large number of students, giving the university a high potential to excel in sport competition
- Existence of Cultural Center

B Weaknesses

- Poor sport facilities
- Weak extracurricular activities
- Lack of staff-student extracurricular activities

II External Issues

1 Threats and opportunities presented by the advent of international environment

A Threats

- Brain drain by universities and organizations abroad, and international organizations and resident NGOs, by attracting qualified personnel /human power/ from the University
- Franchise universities, distance education, and internationally funded hospitals attracting qualified staff and students from the University
- Globalization as a threat to the growth of local knowledge
- Growing rapidity of change in knowledge thereby creating pressure to keep up with international trend
- Pressure for international accreditation and the consequent marginalization of the unaccredited
- Tendency for research to be donor-driven

B Opportunities

- Availability of internships, joint appointments and sponsorships from international organizations and resident NGOs
- Opportunity for the University to be transformed from a consumer to a provider of distance education by exploiting comparative advantage in local knowledge.
- Expatriate staff recruitment
- Research and training funds from donor agencies
- International trend in higher education
- Access to information
- Partnership and networking with other universities
- Major trends across disciplines and emerging disciplines

- Emerging markets (e.g. IT)
- New and rapidly changing IT and its impact on teaching and research
- Opportunity to develop strong graduate programs in comparative politics, international relation and diplomacy, taking advantage of the location of such organizations as AU and UNECA in Addis Ababa

2 Autonomy and relationship with regulatory entities

A Threats

- The role assumed by regulatory entities in negotiating and accepting external funds compromising autonomy of the University (e.g. Ministry of education as pertains to World bank funds; S &T Agency as pertains to Sida/SAREC projects)
- Current relationship with Ministry of Education not allowing sufficient autonomy in the areas of curriculum design, admissions, and expatriate employment. (e.g. the imposition of teachers education curriculum)
- Inability of the University to formulate differential salaries and academic merit pay without external intervention.
- Financial & procurement regulations (e.g. foreign purchase)

B Opportunities

- Opportunities to influence policies of the regulatory bodies because of the high level manpower the university has
- Putting the relationship between the University and MoE in compliance with the higher education proclamation
- Massification of education, particularly higher education by the government
- Government investment in higher education, particularly graduate education and research
- Investment of Ministry of Capacity Building in reform programs in the professional disciplines
- Higher education proclamation as an asset for academic freedom and institutional autonomy
- Accreditation of higher education institutions, standardization of higher education and quality control of higher education to enhance quality of higher education
- Budget
- Autonomy to develop income generating schemes

3 Engagement with Other Stakeholders

A Threats

- Poor pre-university preparation of students and curriculum of preparatory program
- Private higher educational institutions as threats (e.g. attracting qualified staff)
- Sponsorship of low quality candidates for postgraduate studies, particularly for studies leading to academic career
- Corruption emanating from external sources (e.g. purchasing)

B Opportunities

- Creating opportunity for graduates of AAU to meet professional and technical profiles
- Opportunities for community service, training and consultancy

- Sponsorship of programs, students and professorships by private companies, alumni and professional associations
- Opportunities for external assessment (e.g. assessment of services; peer evaluation; self assessment, etc.)
- Opportunities for internship and outreach programs
- Networking with emerging universities and colleges
- Public private partnership (e.g. joint appointments, joint facilities, etc.)
- Revenue generation
- Enhancing the quality of higher education in private higher educational institutions

4 Public Engagement of the University

A Threats

- The threat of the university being stigmatized as elitist, as a luxury, etc
- The threat of the university being socially irrelevant
- Image of exclusively adversarial relationship with the public
- Negative image of the university for inefficiency in its dealings with the public

B Opportunities

- Increasing the social relevance of the University
- Significant professional contributions at national level
- Opportunity in conflict resolution
- Preservation of national heritage
- Serving as a catalyst for political and social changes
- Assisting newly emerging universities
- Admission of large numbers of students with special needs
- Dissemination of research results; Contractual research
- Vigorous research programs aimed at addressing economic condition of the country
- Opportunity to influence legislations and policy making , improving the quality of public debates, etc.
- Contribution to national development through, for example, revival of national service by students and staff.