

Call For External Probe At Unam

IN the wake of the unions taking the University to task, there are a number of issues only an external inquiry will probe to make reasonable and just conclusions and recommendations for the line Ministry or the Government to take corrective measures.

I am not surprised at the stand of the Minister on problems experienced by Unam, and the financial predicament it is in, when the following are happening at Unam.

- * There is no equal treatment of Namibians vs non-Namibians as far as salaries, condition of service are concerned even though many have the same qualifications.

- * New appointees are better salaried than experienced colleagues.

There are redundant top management and senior administrative staff, which should be viewed as ineffective and exploitative regarding the current scenario.

- * Costly international trips are undertaken and there is no evidence of any benefit to the university.

- * Foreign colleagues receive relocation fees in cash including spouses and children, gratuity, cartage of household effects at the beginning and end of contract, 100 per cent housing loan etc. Thus hiring non-

Namibians is more expensive in the long-term than adjusting the offers made to Namibians.

- * There are huge difference between salaries of academic and administrative staff. The university's functions should change from teaching to administration.

- * Too many sectional heads. How can one be a head in a section of two staff members?

Some of the other problems include. Furniture bought for expatriates is not re-used or auctioned. We are led to believe it is stored; the Unam village for expatriates is a waste

of money; the faculty of education is too big with too many departments; there is duplication of ineffective security services.

The operation and existence of Unam Foundation is questionable. There are redundant sports and cultural officers, redundant Heads of Departments, Deans, Professors and highly qualified academics for a mostly undergraduate university with few masters students, with one to two doctoral students.

Most academics are doing consultancy work, teaching part-time at the Polytechnic etc. If one

teaches only 5 hours a week, there should be lot of time to earn extra money. The number of students does not justify number of hired experts. The outsourcing of printing is about N\$4 million; staff development is a dismal failure at Unam. Almost all departments, faculties are 'foreignised'. Generally teaching is of a low standard. Role and management of the University farm is dubious. Even farm workers employed as Unam employees working for individuals are paid out of Unam coffers.

Logically, how can

Namibian taxpayers money be used to further the interest of a few, and feed the salary and expenditure bill of non-nationals, or be misappropriated and mismanagement by a few individuals? Why are we afraid of a full scale external probe? Are we hiding something? Are we afraid that mistakes made will be uncovered and individual images tarnished? If one makes a mistake, acknowledge and rectify it. I'm of the opinion it will make us grow stronger and be much more effective, rather than denying errors made which will eventually result in disintegration of this university.

There is a brain drain at

Unam of qualified Namibian intellectuals who are joining Government for better paid jobs.

Other tertiary institutions like Namcol, Colleges of Education, Polytechnic of Namibia, do not have this image and are better managed than Unam. Contract employees from outside our borders are aging academics, mostly retired or retiring. We need recently graduated energetic experts with new ideas and vision for educational reform, curriculum and instructional design and the will to teach. The Faculty of Education should be wholly Namibianised because of the pool of Namibian professionals involved in education, from which lecturers can be drawn.

Worried, UNAM