



## THE QUEST FOR WORLD-CLASSNESS: LESSONS FOR NEWLY CREATED PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN GHANA

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**ABSTRACT:** *There is a growing trend globally, among institutions of higher learning to either claim to be world-class Centers of Excellence or to aspire to be. Evidence of the quest for world-classness by these institutions abound in their strategic mandates, vision, and mission statements. Public universities in Ghana are no exception to the rule, and there seem to be a close competition between so-called traditional universities and newly created ones for world-classness albeit through vision and mission statements. This study sought to examine successes chalked by three selected traditional universities in Ghana and the coping strategies initiated by two recently established ones in their quest to distinguish themselves as world-class centers of excellence. The study adopted the exploratory research method or approach. Relevant documents reviewed included the Act of Parliament establishing the regulator of tertiary education in Ghana; the Acts of Parliament establishing the five selected public universities for the study; strategic mandates, vision, mission statements, core values and reports from the selected public universities. The findings revealed a rigorous criteria or performance indicators prescribed by globally renowned league tables, notably the Times Higher Education World Universities Ranking League. It further revealed that the traditional universities, have featured prominently on world league tables on the basis of global reputation for research, quality of conference papers, citation impact score and number of international collaborations or linkages created, while the newly created ones are yet to make an impression. Thus, the study recommends the prioritization of benchmarked practices.*

**KEYWORDS:** World-Classness, Centers of Excellence, Public Universities, World League Tables, Ghana.



## INTRODUCTION

As changes happen worldwide and quickly in higher education, the establishment of World Class Universities (WCU) becomes a supreme global requirement (Al-Alawi et al., 2019; Alhazmi & Yahmed 2017). Hence, governments should put more effort into constructing world-class systems that provide a wide range of good quality higher education institutions with distinctive missions, (Salmi, 2016). Marginson (2007) identified a conscious effort among universities to establish their presence through world league platforms or ranking exercises. According to Watson (2006) ‘world-classness’ is an obvious feature; you know it when you see it. He also notes that renowned institutions stand a greater chance of being categorised as world-class than emerging ones. Additionally, university stakeholders use rankings to influence their accreditation decisions, financing, sponsorship, and employee recruitment. Besides, they believe that rankings help to build their institutional reputation and position. On the other hand, students are using rankings to “shortlist” their universities' choices (Hazelkorn, 2013).

The Times Higher Education which undertakes the world university ranking annually is arguably the only global university league table to judge research-intensive universities across all of their core missions; teaching (the learning environment); research (volume income and reputation); citations (research influence); industry income (knowledge transfer) and international outlook (staff, students and research). ([www.timeshighereducation.com](http://www.timeshighereducation.com)). Altbach & Balán, (2007) argues that the debate about world-class higher education is important. But it might be that the energy and resources of universities “should be focused on more realistic and perhaps more useful goals” and that in many less-wealthy countries, it might be more appropriate to focus on building world-class departments, institutes or schools.

Contributing to the discussion on managerial challenges in public universities, Professor Clifford N. B. Tagoe, former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ghana enumerated issues of autonomy; governance, leadership and management efficiency; students’ and staff issues, and academic matters; funding, internationalisation, world-classness and ranking as some of the obvious challenges of university administration and management in West Africa, (Tagoe, 2013). He lamented poor university ranking (only 14 out of 200 West African universities were found in the top 100 African universities -July 2013 webometrics) and the increasing pressure on public universities to cope with the global academic environment.

In the recent past, institutions of higher learning across the globe have either claimed world-classness or have been categorised as such. In Ghana, the trend is no different as most public universities including newly established ones such as the C.K. Tedam University of Technology and Applied Sciences (CKT-UTAS) and the Simon Diedong Dombo University of Business and Integrated Development Studies (SDD-UBIDS) but to mention a few, have clearly spelt out in their vision statements their quest to distinguish themselves as world-class institutions of higher learning.

However, as can be deduced from empirical evidence espoused by several scholars, attaining world-classness is an extremely difficult task. This is even more pronounced given the rigorous criteria or performance indicators prescribed by globally renowned league tables, notably the Times Higher Education World Universities Ranking League. The responsibilities imposed on institutions of higher learning as a result of such criteria are varied and demanding as indicated earlier. For instance, both SDD-UBIDS and CKT-UTAS cannot compete favourably with other

well-established universities in respect of learning environment (lack of state-of-the-art infrastructural facilities), and international outlook.

It is against this background that this Study was conducted to explore the success stories of selected traditional public universities in Ghana and the coping strategies of newly established ones. Furthermore, the literature on world-classness in Ghana in particular and Africa as a whole remains underdeveloped. This study will thus help close the gap. The rest of the work is organised as follows: The second section was devoted to the review of relevant literature on the main theme of the study-the quest for world-classness, while the third segment focused on the methodology employed for the study. The next part details the findings and discusses the same, whereas the fifth section draws a conclusion and makes appropriate recommendations for Management's decision-making.

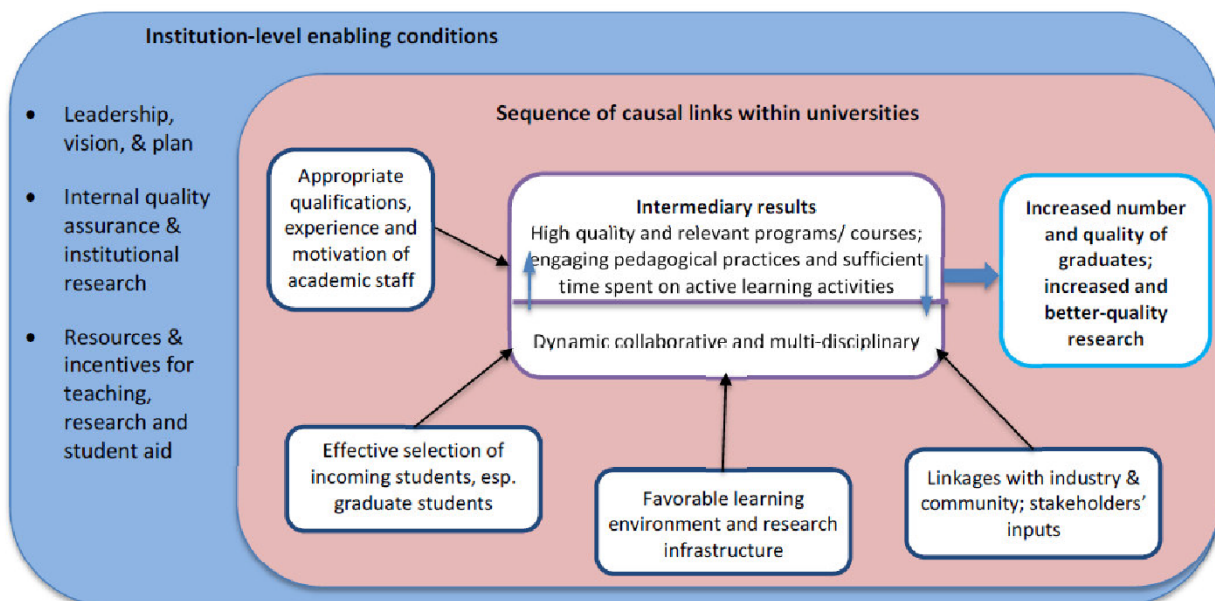
## LITERATURE REVIEW

This section explored previous works of scholars on the theme of the research. It focused mainly on secondary data which were sourced from scholarly journals, articles, books, Acts of Parliament, and reports. The importance of reviewing the literature is to evaluate what has already been done in the area under study and to determine any gap for the purpose of filling the gap. This provided support or established the framework for the study.

### Theoretical Framework

The study drew heavily from Salmi's Theory of Change for producing well-qualified graduates and high-quality research Salmi (2014) as well as the Higher Education Ecosystem and World Class University, also postulated by Salmi (2011).

### Theory of change within higher education institutions



*Source: Salmi, 2014*



According to Salmi (2014), the theory of change involves two dimensions; First, it identifies institutional-level factors that affect the performance and sustainability of higher education institutions by directly influencing their mode of operation. Second, it models the inputs and intermediary results that, according to the literature and international experience, lead to better graduates and research.

The most important dimensions in the causal chain explaining the performance of any higher education institution include the following aspects (Salmi, J.,2014):

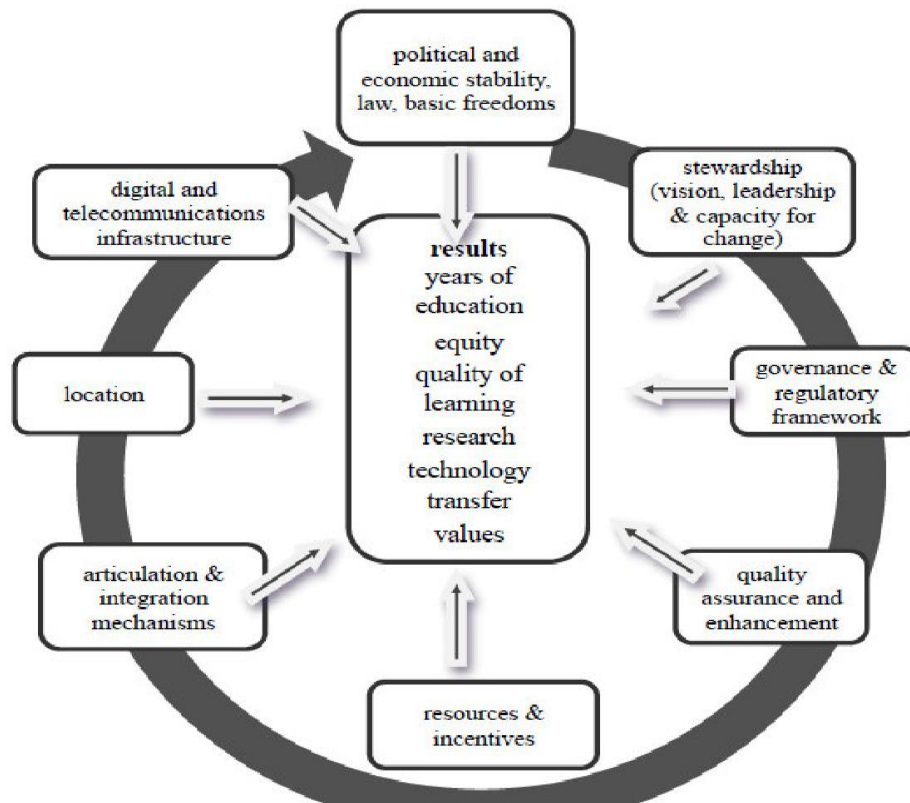
- Academic preparation and motivation of incoming students;
- Qualifications, experience and motivation of academic staff influenced, in turn, by Institutional recruitment policies, faculty development programs and incentives systems;
- Existence of close linkages with employers and the community to improve the relevance of students' learning experiences and ensure that university research is oriented to the resolution of priority economic and social problems; and
- Favourable learning environment and research infrastructure.

### Higher education ecosystem and world-class university

According to Salmi (2011), the best universities in the world, or in a country, do not operate in a vacuum. A full assessment cannot be made without taking into consideration some significant external factors of what could be called the higher education *ecosystem*. As illustrated in Figure 3, the main dimensions of the ecosystem include the following elements:

- **Macro environment:** The political and economic situation of the country, along with the rule of law and respect for fundamental freedoms among those who exert influence, in particular, on the governance of higher education institutions (selection of university leaders), their level of funding, academic freedom and safety for individuals;
- **Leadership at the national level:** Vision and strategic plan to shape and guide the future of higher education and the technical and political capacity to implement the necessary reforms;
- **Governance and regulatory framework:** Governance structures and processes at the national and institutional levels that determine the degree of autonomy, as well as accountability approaches;
- **Quality assurance system:** The institutional framework and the tools for assessing and encouraging the quality of research, teaching and learning;
- **Resources and financial incentives:** The resources available to fund higher education and the approaches used to allocate these resources;
- **Location:** The quality of the setting and infrastructure, which allows the university to attract top scholars and talented students, and finally;
- **Digital and telecommunications infrastructure:** The availability of a broadband connection.

## Factors determining university performance



**Figure 2. Understanding how the ecosystem influences the performance of top universities.**

*Source: Salmi, 2011b, p.336.*

Salmi, (2011b) notes that a significant new finding from the case studies is the weight of the higher education ecosystem in influencing the performance of universities seeking to achieve world-class status. The various features of the ecosystem—from the macroeconomic and political situation to key dimensions of governance to resource mobilisation and allocation to location and the digital infrastructure—have a strong effect on the ability of universities to make progress on the road to world-class universities.

### *Definition and Characteristics of World-Class Universities*

The Oxford dictionary defines world classness as “ranking among the foremost in the world; of an international standard of excellence.”, Altbach (2015) defines a World Class University as a “Top rank university based on excellence in research, academic freedom, a sense of intellectual excitement, governance (the academic community has control over the central elements of academic life), adequate facilities, and adequate funding.” Moreover, it is supposed to have a significantly ranked research output, excellent facilities, a name that exceeds the local boundaries, and a culture of excellence (Douglass, 2016).

World-Class universities have been described differently; some refer to "flagship universities" (Bunting et al., 2014; Douglass, 2014; & (Yonezawa, 2007), others use the term internationally recognised “research universities” (Levin, 2010); (Saaid, 2014), & (Rosovsky, 2014). At the



same time, (Marginson, 2007) Marginson (2012) uses "super brands" to refer to the top six universities in higher education rankings. However, the majority use "world-class university" (P. Altbach, 2005); (P. G. Altbach & Balán, 2007); (Salmi, 2009); Salmi, 2009; Rhee, 2011; Yang & Welch, 2012, Al-Alawi et al., 2019).

World-class universities were defined by Wang et al. (2013) as "Universities which produce transformational research outputs and develop a nation's competitiveness in the global knowledge economy." Salmi (2016) acknowledged the status of a world-class university based on international recognition.

The few scholars who have attempted to define what separates elite research institutions from the rest have identified several basic features—highly qualified faculty; excellence in research results; quality of teaching and learning; high levels of government and non-government sources of funding; international and highly talented students; academic freedom; well-defined autonomous governance structures; and well-equipped facilities for teaching, research, administration, and often student life (Niland 2000, 2007; Altbach, 2004; Khoon et al. 2005). "We can at least point to some relevant characteristics necessary for world-class status. Excellence in research underpins the idea of world-class—research that is recognised by peers and that pushes back the frontiers of knowledge. Such research can be measured and communicated. But if research is the central element, other aspects of a university are required to make outstanding research possible. Top-quality professors are, of course, central. And to attract and retain the best academic staff, favourable working conditions must be available. These include arrangements for job security—many countries call it tenure—and appropriate salaries and benefits, although academics do not necessarily expect top salaries. The best professors see their work as a "calling"—something to which they are committed by intellectual interest and not just a job," (Altbach, 2015).

Academic freedom and an atmosphere of intellectual excitement are central to a world-class university. This means that professors and students must be free to pursue knowledge wherever it leads and to publish their work freely without fear of sanction by an either academic or external authorities. Some countries permit unfettered academic freedom in the nonpolitical hard sciences but place restrictions on it in the more sensitive social sciences and humanities. In most countries, academic freedom also extends to the expression of opinions by members of the academic community on social and political issues as well as within the narrow confines of professional expertise. The governance of the institution is also important. World-class universities have a significant measure of internal self-governance and an entrenched tradition, usually buttressed by statutes, ensuring that the academic community (usually professors, but sometimes including students) has control over the central elements of academic life—the admission of students, the curriculum, the criteria for the award of degrees, the selection of new members of the professoriate, and the basic direction of the academic work of the institution, (Altbach, 2015). Adequate facilities for academic work are essential—the most advanced and creative research and the most innovative teaching must have access to appropriate libraries and laboratories, as well as to the Internet and other electronic resources. With the increasing complexity and expansion of science and scholarship, the cost of providing full access becomes ever higher. While the Internet has meant some cost savings and has eased access to many kinds of knowledge, it is by no means a panacea. Facilities go beyond labs and libraries—staff and students must have adequate offices as well.



Finally, and central to the academic enterprise, adequate funding must be available to support the research and teaching as well as the other functions of the university. Not only is maintaining a complex academic institution expensive, but support must also be consistent and long-term. The cost of maintaining a research university continues to grow because of the increasing complexity and cost of scientific research (Altbach, 2015). Universities cannot benefit from many of the productivity increases due to automation—teaching and learning still generally require professors and students in direct contact. Funding is a special challenge in the present environment because governments are disinvesting in higher education in many countries.

Academic institutions are everywhere asked to pay for an increasing part of their budgets through tuition and fees to students, generating funds by consulting and selling research-based products, and other revenue-generating activities. The fact is that public support is necessary for research universities everywhere, (Altbach, 2015)

### *The Quest for World-Classness*

This is an age of academic hype, with universities of different kinds and in diverse countries claiming the exalted status of world-class—generally with little justification. Those seeking to certify “world-classness” generally do not know what they are talking about (Altbach, 2015). No one has figured out how to rank universities internationally, or even within countries in ways that are acceptable to the academic community or that can withstand serious critiques. There are many rankings of academic institutions—and these generally emphasise the characteristics relating to research university status. Yet, few of these have been conducted by official organisations or reputable research organisations, (Altbach, 2015).

Williams and Van Dyke (2007) opined that “In the past decade, the term ‘world-class university’ has become a catchphrase for not simply improving the quality of learning and research in higher education but more importantly for developing the capacity to compete in the global higher education marketplace through the acquisition and creation of advanced knowledge. With students looking to attend the best possible institution they can afford, often regardless of national borders, and governments keen on maximising the returns on their investments in universities, global standing is becoming an increasingly important concern for institutions around the world.” Altbach, (2004) asserts that despite its elusive description (“what is it?”) or ways of building world-class universities (“how does a country get it?”), there is anxiety among nations to have, at least, one WCU.

In the past decade, the development of world-class universities is high on the policy agenda of various stakeholders across the globe. Various reforms and development strategies at both national and institutional levels have been outlined and observed. This policy concern has also been reinforced and intensified with the proliferation of international league tables (Salmi, 2009; King, 2011). Moreover, as Yusuf, (2017) indicated, universities face continually changing and healthy competition in the education market; therefore, there would be transformation and challenges in the future educational system. Besides, they need to identify the proper means to advance their performance to develop and adapt new business models, structures, and systems to align with the transformation plan and ensure sustainability.

Accordingly, the higher education sector leaders are re-evaluating their strategy and policy to cope with worldwide dynamics, complexity, growth, and expenditure to co-create models of



World-class universities. At the same time, WCU plays an essential role in training scientists, professionals, high-level specialists, and researchers. Therefore, the economy needs this type of model to produce new knowledge that supports the national innovation system (Aturupane & Millot, 2009).

Moreover, to achieve the goal of building the university to a world-class level, the university has to adopt strategies in management and governance, funding, students' and researchers' talents attraction, infrastructure, research, and internationalisation, as argued by Boamah (2014).

### **Public Universities in Ghana**

The Regulator of tertiary education in Ghana-Ghana Tertiary Education Commission (GTEC) defines a University as “An educational institution designed for advanced instruction and research in several branches of learning, conferring degrees in various faculties, and often embodying colleges, schools and similar institutions” (Source: [www.gtec.edu.gh](http://www.gtec.edu.gh) ). A public university in Ghana denotes a university established by an Act of Parliament, owned, and funded partly or wholly by the Government of Ghana.

The Ghana Tertiary Education Commission is the product of a merger of the National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE) and the National Accreditation Board (NAB) under the new Education Regulatory Bodies Act, 2020 (Act 1023).

The objects of the Commission are to regulate tertiary education in all its forms with a view to promote:

1. efficient and effective administration and accreditation of tertiary education institutions;
2. principles of the provision of the consistent quality of service by tertiary education institutions;
3. advancement and application of knowledge through teaching, scholarly research and collaboration with industry and public sector; and
4. the development of appropriate human capital for the sustainable advancement of the national economy. (Source: [www.gtec.edu.gh](http://www.gtec.edu.gh))

Previously, based on the recommendations of the University Rationalisation Committee and the subsequent Government White Paper (1991) on the Report, three regulatory agencies, to wit, the National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE), the National Accreditation Board (NAB) and the National Board for Professional and Technician Examinations (NABPTEX) were established with unique mandates. NCTE was charged by law to advise the Minister responsible for education on the development of institutions of tertiary education and to formulate policies.

NAB had responsibility for the accreditation of both public and private institutions with regard to the contents and standards of their programmes. The Board determined, in consultation with the relevant institution, the programme and requirements for the proper operation of that institution and the maintenance of acceptable levels of academic or professional standards. Determination of the equivalence of diplomas, certificates and other qualifications awarded by institutions in Ghana or elsewhere was also conducted by NAB. NABPTEX remains





responsible for formulating and administering schemes of examinations, evaluation, assessment and certification for professional bodies, non-university tertiary institutions and private institutions. (MoE, 2010).

## METHODOLOGY

This study utilised the exploratory research method or approach. Relevant documents reviewed included the Act of Parliament establishing the regulator of tertiary education in Ghana; the Acts of Parliament establishing the five selected public universities for the study; strategic mandates, vision, mission statements, core values and reports from the selected public universities. The findings were discussed qualitatively.

## FINDINGS

**Table 1: Evolution of Public Universities in Ghana**

S/N	Name of University	Date of Establishment	Designation/Re-designation as a full-fledged Public University
1.	University College of the Gold Coast which was renamed University of Ghana, Legon	1948	Act 79, 1961
2.	Kumasi College of Technology which was renamed Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi	1952 1961 1998	Government Ordinance on 6th October 1951 Act of Parliament Act 559
3.	The University of Cape Coast	1962 1992	PNDCL 278
4.	University for Development Studies, Tamale	1992	PNDCL 279
5.	University of Education, Winneba	1992	Act 672, 2004
6.	University of Mines and Technology, Tarkwa	2004	Act 677
7.	University of Health and Allied Sciences, Ho	2011	Act 828,
8.	University of Energy and Natural Resources, Sunyani	2011	Act 830
9.	University of Professional Studies, Legon	2012	Act 850,
10.	Ghana Institute of Management & Public Administration	2004	Act 676
11.	Ghana Telecom University College Ghana Communication Technology University	2020	Act 1026



12.	The University of Environment & Sustainable Development	2015	Act 898
13.	C. K. Tadam University of Technology & Applied Sciences	2019	Act 1000
14.	Simon Diedong Dombo University of Business & Integrated Development Studies	2019	Act 1001
15.	Akenten Appiah Menka University of Skills Training & Entrepreneurship Development	2020	Act 1026

Source: Compiled by Authors, May 2022

## University of Ghana

### Vision

*“Our vision is to become a “World Class research-intensive University”.*

Its mission is captured as

*“We will create an enabling environment that makes the University of Ghana increasingly relevant to national and global development through cutting-edge research as well as high-quality teaching and learning.”*

The core values are:

- *Integrity*

*We will demand the highest standard of ourselves to earn the trust of others.*

- *Commitment*

*We will be committed to knowledge generation that positively impacts the lives of those within and outside our university community.*

- *Respect*

*We will provide others with a world-class experience that demonstrates our value for the diversity and contributions of the members of our community.*

- *Loyalty*

*We will demonstrate a strong resolve to give back selflessly to our university.*

In a press release published on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2020 on its website captioned “UG Retains Top Position in Times Higher Education (THE) Rankings,” the University of Ghana touted its success story as follows: “According to the recent release of the [Times Higher Education Rankings](#), University of Ghana retains its top and enviable position as number one (1) in Ghana and 20<sup>th</sup> on the continent.



*In Africa, the University of Ghana is ranked 20th and is also ranked within the 800 – 1,000 band on the global scale.*

*Almost 1,400 universities in 92 countries were included in this year's rankings, with the assessment based on 13 carefully calibrated performance indicators that measure an institution's performance.*

*The performance indicators are grouped into five areas: **Teaching** (the learning environment); **Research** (volume, income and reputation); **Citations** (research influence); **International outlook** (staff, students and research); and **Industry Income** (knowledge transfer).*

*The University rankings are to be distinguished from the Impact Rankings which show how the global higher education sector is working towards the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).*

*The University of Ghana also ranked second in Ghana in this year's THE Global University Impact Rankings.*

*University of Ghana's ranking was driven by contributions to Good Health and Well-Being, Zero Hunger, No Poverty, and Partnership for the Goals.*

*Congratulations to all members of the University community who continue to put in a lot of work to ensure the University of Ghana's sustained image not only in Ghana and West Africa but maintaining a strong presence globally." Subsequently, in another release dated 14<sup>th</sup> February 2022 captioned "UG is Ghana's top University on the Webometrics January 2022 Rankings and the World Scientific Index for 2022," the University of Ghana once again celebrated another success story as follows:*

*"The University of Ghana (UG) has been ranked the best tertiary institution in Ghana in the January 2022 Webometrics Rankings and the World Scientific Index for 2022 by the Alper-Doger (AD) Scientific Index.*

*Webometrics places the University of Ghana as **first in Ghana, 11th in Sub-Saharan Africa and 1,121 in the world** - out of 31,000 Higher Education Institutions from more than 200 countries:*

*[https://www.webometrics.info/en/Ranking\\_africa/Sub\\_saharan\\_Africa.](https://www.webometrics.info/en/Ranking_africa/Sub_saharan_Africa)*

## **Kwame Nkrumah University of Science & Technology (KNUST)**

### ***Strategic Mandate***

*The Act establishing the University defines its mandate, which essentially is to provide higher education, undertake research, disseminate knowledge and foster relationships with outside persons and bodies. The strategic mandate of the University is derived from Science and Technology in its name.*



### **Vision**

*To build on KNUST's leadership as the premier science and technology university in Ghana and to be among the top ten Universities in Africa.*

### **Mission Statement**

*KNUST exists to advance knowledge in science and technology by creating an environment for undertaking relevant research, quality teaching, entrepreneurship training and community engagement to improve the quality of life.*

### **Core Values**

*KNUST is committed to attracting and developing excellent staff and students in order to contribute towards the achievement of the goals, targets and directions that the government has set for higher education. The following cherished values characterise the work and life of the University and are ingrained in all those who pass through the University.*

*In fulfilling the Vision and Mission of the University, the following Core Values would be adhered to:*

#### **Leadership in Innovation and Technology**

*We endeavour to maintain and strengthen our position as the premier Science and Technology University in the country leading in generating and exchanging new knowledge in innovation and technology and offering service to government, industry and society.*

#### **Culture of Excellence**

*We strive to be the best and maintain a commitment to continuously improve upon our status in all our undertakings - research, teaching, entrepreneurship and service - for the development of society.*

#### **Diversity and Equal Opportunity for All**

*We ensure an environment of understanding and respect for cultural diversity and equal opportunity among students and staff. We uphold academic freedom in our quest to advance the frontiers of knowledge and in our attempt to attain self-development.*

#### **Integrity and Stewardship of Resources**

*We are dedicated to exhibiting the highest standards of professional ethics and integrity, efficient utilisation of resources and a culture of accountability and responsibility in all our operations.*

For their part, the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science & Technology reported their success story on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2020 on the University's official website as follows: **“KNUST Maintains Its Envious Position as The Best University in Ghana and the 12th Best University in Africa”**:



*Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Kumasi has for the second successive time been ranked the best University in Ghana and the 12th best University in Africa, according to the **US News and World Report rankings for 2021**. The University ranked 14th best University in Africa last year.*

*KNUST is thus, ranked ahead of all public and private universities in Ghana to secure the topmost position as the best University in Ghana; the University is also placed ahead of over 40 Universities in Africa such as; the University of Casablanca Hassan in Morocco, the University of Makerere in Uganda, Ain Shams University in Egypt which occupied the 13th, 14th and 15th positions respectively with the University of Ghana placing 24th in the ranking.*

### ***KNUST Ranked 12th Best University in Africa***

*KNUST obtained a global score of 48.2, as against 42.4 last year, a global reputation for research at 1,075, an improvement on last year's score of 1,044, a regional research reputation of 20 and 1,522 publications. The University also published over 1,323 books, presented over 1,564 papers at various conferences and obtained a normalised citation impact of 16 and a total citation of 945.*

*Additionally, KNUST secured 1,336 publications that are among the 10% of most cited papers, 852 per cent of total publications that are among the 10% most cited, 885 highly cited papers that are among the top 1% most cited and 166 per cent of highly cited papers among the top 1% most cited.*

*In terms of collaboration, KNUST had 477 international collaborations relative to the country and 23 international collaborations.*

*This latest ranking places KNUST as the best and most prestigious University in Ghana.*

*The U.S. News & World Report is a multi-platform organisation based in Washington D.C. which is in the business of ranking and evaluating universities based on their research performance and its ratings by members of the academic community around the world. (Source: [www.knust.edu.gh](http://www.knust.edu.gh)).*

## **University of Cape Coast (UCC)**

### **Vision Statement**

*To be a university with worldwide acclaim that is strongly positioned for innovative teaching, research, outreach and professional development.*

### **Mission Statement**

*The University of Cape Coast is an equal opportunity University uniquely placed to provide a quality education through the provision of comprehensive, liberal and professional programmes that challenge learners to be creative, innovative and responsible citizens.*

### **Core Values**

***Excellence:*** *UCC seeks to pursue excellence through the creation of standards in teaching, intellectual inquiry, engagement and professional practice.*



**Empowerment:** *UCC offers opportunities to its employees and products in a manner that empowers them to be agents of change.*

**Equal Opportunities:** *UCC strives to provide equal opportunity and access to quality education and services to all categories of persons regardless of colour, creed, ethnicity, gender, social status and physical ability.*

**Ethical behaviour:** *UCC upholds acts of honesty and responsible behaviour and holds its members accountable for their actions and conduct in a way that promotes the integrity of the person and the image of the University.*

In a press release published on the University's official website on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2021 UCC touted their success in world rankings as follows:

**[Performance of UCC In Her Maiden Appearance in the 2022 Times Higher Education World University Rankings](#)**

*The University of Cape Coast (UCC) in Ghana has been ranked as the best University globally for research influence. UCC was ranked the number one university in Ghana and West Africa. UCC is also among the top five universities in Africa.*

*This enviable feat was released on the Times Higher Education website which featured the 2022 World University Rankings.*

*The 2022 World University Rankings included more than 1,600 universities across 99 countries and territories, making them the largest and most diverse university rankings to date.*

*The ranking is based on 13 carefully calibrated performance indicators which provide the most comprehensive and balanced comparisons, trusted by students, academics, university leaders, industry and governments.*

*The performance indicators are grouped into five areas: Teaching (the learning environment); Research (volume, income and reputation); Citations (research influence); International outlook (staff, students and research); and Industry income (knowledge transfer).*

*The University is also ranked number one globally in terms of field-weighted citation impact (research influence). No University in Ghana has ever achieved this position since the annual rankings commenced nearly two decades ago and are among the top 301-350 Universities globally.*

*UCC is the highest-ranked new entrant out of the 138 universities that made their debut in the 2022 global universities ranking league.*

*The Times Higher Education World University Rankings are the only global performance tables that judge research-intensive universities across all their core missions: teaching, research, knowledge transfer and international outlook.*

*This year's ranking analysed more than 108 million citations across over 14.4 million research publications and included survey responses from almost 22,000 scholars globally. Overall, about 430,000 data points from more than 2,100 institutions were collected. (Source: [www.ucc.edu.gh](http://www.ucc.edu.gh))*



## **C. K. Tadam University of Technology & Applied Sciences (CKT-UTAS)**

### **STRATEGIC MANDATE**

*The strategic mandate of the University is to produce high-calibre graduates capable of transforming society and fostering relationships through integrated technology and applied sciences. Our graduates are in effect expected to be agents of change by virtue of the quality of training provided by the University.*

### **VISION**

*The vision of the university is to become one of the leading universities in technology and basic and applied sciences in the world.*

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

*The Mission of the university is to provide quality higher education, research, knowledge generation and dissemination with emphasis on basic and applied sciences and mathematics for the socio-economic development of Ghana and beyond.*

### **CORE VALUES**

**Integrity** – *The university believes in the quality of academic honesty and high moral standards.*

**Stewardship of Resources** – *Staff and students together are expected to take good care of resources, and be prudent and accountable with the management of same.*

**Creativity** – *The university is committed to the use of original ideas in the creation of new things.*

**Innovation** – *To facilitate its mission of transforming society the university will always provide new ideas and products.*

**Equity and Inclusiveness** – *The university grants equal opportunities for all with no one discriminated against as a result of gender or disability.*

**Excellence** – *In all its dealings, the university will be outstanding, discharging its mission with distinction.*

## **Simon Diedong Dombo-University of Business & Integrated Development Studies (SDD-UBIDS)**

### **Vision**

*To be an internationally acclaimed centre of excellence in higher education.*

### **Mission**

*To provide quality teaching, learning, development-oriented problem-solving research and innovative practical training to qualified and capable persons and institutions.*



### **Core Values**

#### *Excellence*

*SDD-UBIDS is committed to delivering the highest quality products and services through dedication, continuous improvement and focus on client needs.*

#### *Innovation*

*SDD-UBIDS encourages its staff and students to constantly trust their ability to be critical and creative and to persist in finding new solutions to problems with their workshop.*

#### *Integrity*

*SDD-UBIDS seeks to pursue honesty, fairness, and strong moral values in its decision-making processes and professional work.*

#### *Collaboration*

*SDD-UBIDS endeavours to interact and work together with other individuals, groups and organizations with recognizable strengths to achieve a collective goal and promote leadership and growth.*

#### *Sustainability*

*SDD-UBIDS desires to demonstrate a strong ability to sustain its teaching, learning and research programmes by actively ensuring the protection, enhancement and preservation of its human, social, economic and environmental resources to maximise their benefits.*

#### *Professionalism*

*SDD-UBIDS strives to succeed in its mission by adhering to high ethical principles and professional standards that are consistent with its mandate.*

#### *Transparency and Accountability*

*SDD-UBIDS seeks to promote transparency and accountability by ensuring that information about its processes and outputs is easily accessible to all stakeholders.*

#### *Inclusiveness*

*SDD-UBIDS seeks to create an environment that respects and embraces diversity and provides equal opportunity to all.*





## DISCUSSION

The University of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science & Technology, and the University of Cape Coast are the so-called traditional universities in Ghana; they were established several decades before any other public university was established in the country. For instance, the University of Ghana was first established in 1948 as a University College affiliated with the University of London and later as a full-fledged university with the power to award its own degrees in 1961 by an Act of Parliament (Act 79). On the other hand, the C. K. Tedam University of Technology & Applied Sciences and the Simon Diedong Dombo-University of Business & Integrated Development Studies both of them former campuses of the University for Development Studies were established in 2019 by Act 1000 and 1001 of the Parliament of Ghana respectively. As can be inferred from the findings, all five public universities under consideration have expressed unambiguously, their quest to attain world-class status, but only three-the traditional universities, to wit, the University of Ghana, the University of Cape Coast and the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science & Technology have featured prominently on world league tables. The remaining two-C. K. Tedam University of Technology & Applied Sciences and the Simon Diedong Dombo University of Business & Integrated Development Studies are yet to make an impression on the world university ranking tables. This reaffirms the assertion by Marginson, (2007) that there was a conscious effort among universities to establish their presence through world league platforms or ranking exercises and Watson (2006) that renowned institutions stand a greater chance of being categorised as world-class than emerging ones. More so, the traditional universities' success stories emanated from a global reputation for research, quality of conference papers, citation impact score and several international collaborations or linkages created. This resonates with the view expressed by Douglass (2016) that a world-class university is supposed to have a significantly ranked research output, excellent facilities, a name that exceeds the local boundaries, and a culture of excellence. Additionally, the recognition attained by the traditional universities in respect of their research output also reaffirms the institutional level factors responsible for improved performance and sustainability of higher education institutions identified by Salmi (2014) in his "Theory of change for producing well-qualified graduates and high-quality research," especially the aspects that relate to a favourable learning environment and research infrastructure.

Available evidence also suggests that the higher education ecosystem has provided a conducive environment for public universities in Ghana, especially the traditional ones to perform creditably in world ranking exercises. For instance, Ghana has been relatively stable politically since the inception of the 4<sup>th</sup> Republican constitution in 1992, following decades of military adventurism. Tertiary education gained significant attention from successive governments and donor agencies; the establishment of the Ghana Education Trust Fund (GETFund) in the year 2000 (Act 581) witnessed an improvement in the provision of infrastructure in tertiary institutions across Ghana. The establishment of the National Council on Tertiary Education (NCTE) in 1993 (Act 454) and its sister institution-the National Accreditation Board (NAB) in 1993 (Act 317) both of which were merged to form the Ghana Tertiary Education Commission in 2020 provided the framework for regulating the quality of teaching, learning and research in tertiary institutions through a rigorous process of accreditation and reaccreditation of academic programmes. On their respective campuses, the five public universities under consideration and many others have established Directorates of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance to regulate, monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and research, (Source:



[www.ug.edu.gh](http://www.ug.edu.gh) [www.ucc.edu.gh](http://www.ucc.edu.gh); [www.knust.edu.gh](http://www.knust.edu.gh) [www.cktutas.edu.gh](http://www.cktutas.edu.gh) [www.ubids.edu.gh](http://www.ubids.edu.gh) ). Additionally, they have established research centres or academic centres of excellence, some of which have been at the forefront of research of a national character such as the collaborative effort between the Government of Ghana and the Noguchi Memorial Institute and the West Africa Center for Cell Biology of Infectious Pathogens (WACCBIP) of the University of Ghana in the fight against the COVID-19 Pandemic in 2020. This reinforces the view expressed by Salmi (2014) that “the best universities in the world, or in a country, do not operate in a vacuum. A full assessment cannot be made without taking into consideration some significant external factors of what could be called the higher education *ecosystem*.”

The study also uncovered certain potential benefits of world-classness, including:

- *A world-class status has the huge potential of increasing a university’s visibility to an audience of academics, prospective students and parents, donor agencies, development partners, and prospective employers. For instance, world-class institutions of higher education are listed on league tables such as the Times Higher Education World Universities Rankings and on websites of other prominent research institutions and/or magazines, thus enhancing their visibility.*
- *It helps position an institution of higher learning for collaboration with like-minded organisations as well as for funding opportunities in respect of ground-breaking research activities.*
- *Benchmarking a university against local and international institutions will help gain a perspective of the Higher Education system in the world, i.e., how other universities are performing in relation to teaching, research and community service.*
- *Attaining world-classness will help a university to make strategic decisions about future planning; it serves as a measure of the management efficiency of universities.*
- *A world-class status will help boost the international profile or image of a university.*

## CONCLUSION

Attaining world-classness has become an imperative among competing public universities or institutions of higher learning globally; the mandate and vision statements of most public universities in Ghana resonate with the quest to attain world-classness. A world-class status also confers enormous benefits. However, attaining world-classness is an extremely difficult task; the rigorous criteria or performance indicators prescribed by globally renowned league tables, notably the Times Higher Education World Universities Ranking League makes it nearly impossible for newly established public universities in Ghana to compete favourably with older and/or well-established ones.

Against this background, the Researchers make the following recommendations for consideration by newly created public universities in Ghana:



## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Assemble a Team of Scholars (both academic and administrative senior members) who will serve as Mentors to lead, inspire, and motivate others to undertake research and publish outcomes in world-class journals in various disciplines and in line with the mandate of the university in question. A realistic target of 1500 papers can be earmarked within a period of 5 years. This is more than the requirement for participation in the Times Higher Education World Universities Rankings. The focus should be on carving a niche in the area of research influence.
- Attract and retain high-calibre academic and administrative staff and faculty.
- Creation of a vehicle-the Directorate of Integrated Research, Policy Advocacy and Consultancy services, the establishment of Centers of Excellence, or world-class schools to drive university-wide research efforts, to attain the ultimate goal of world-classness. The Directorate could have a department dedicated to Grants and Projects. The study espouses an integrated research approach and also recommends policy advocacy as a more holistic measure to enhance the quality and visibility of the university globally.
- Establishment of a Journal with a focus on themes that align perfectly with the mandate of the university. This Journal should be of ‘Scopus’ status and can compete favourably worldwide.
- Institutionalization of public lectures; this would include inter-faculty/school lectures to highlight integrated research outcomes. The university can also distinguish itself by instituting a flagship academic event which will attract academicians, industry players, international collaborators, development partners, and policymakers/politicians.
- Making a conscious effort to attract funding, boost IGF, build state-of-the-art infrastructure including robust ICT connectivity and increase student enrollment locally and internationally.
- Creation of linkages, collaborations or synergies with like-minded local and international institutions to boost teaching, learning and research.
- Conduct a Public Relations (PR) Campaign which will bring to the fore, ground-breaking research activities of members of the university community as well as enhance the visibility of the university.



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