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Makerere varsity wants Law School closed

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The Makerere University vice-chancellor, Prof. Barnabas Nawangwe has recommended the indefinite closure of the School of Law over failure to conduct lectures.

In a report which made rounds on social media yesterday, Nawangwe said it is only the School of Law which is yet to conduct lectures since the second semester opened on January 19, 2019.

The dossier dated February 11, 2019 and submitted to the University Council chairperson, Lorna Magara, was giving the status report on the situation at the university and steps taken to resolve the impasse and stabilise the institution.

In the report, Nawangwe said all the colleges have since resumed full teaching including partial teaching at the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences with exception of School of Law where teaching has not been reported.

"The continued defiance by the School of Law, meaning that the students will not be taught for a fourth week running is likely to lead to a deterioration of discipline among the students with unforeseen consequences," a section of the report reads.

"Given the position taken by the School of Law to defy authority and incite the rest of the university to follow their bad example, it is recommended that the school be closed indefinitely."

He also recommended that staff from the school hand over university property and students return home as they await further instructions.

By press time last evening, members of the University Council, the institution's supreme governing organ with the legal mandate to enforce the closure, were in a closed door meeting discussing the report, according to Dr Muhammad Kiggundu, the acting university spokesperson. Kiggundu said the council would announce its decision on the issue after the meeting.

Makerere University joint staff associations went on strike four weeks



Students of computer science in a lecture room at the College of Computing and Information Sciences at Makerere University, Kampala yesterday. Photo by Timothy Murungi

BETWEEN THE LINES

■ Nawangwe recommended that staff from the school hand over university property and students return home as they await further instructions.

ago. This followed the suspension of the chairpersons of the academic and administrative staff associations (MUASA and MASA). The National Union of Educational Institutes (NUEI), Makerere Chapter is also taking part in the strike.

NUEI, which is 63 years old, is a voluntary and democratic workers' organisation catering for all non-teaching staff (both administrative,

technical and support staff) working in education institutions in Uganda.

The suspended leaders are Dr Deus Kamunyu Muhwezi, the MUASA chairperson, Bennet Magara and Joseph Kalema of MASA.

The administration argues that they were suspended for misconduct, indiscipline and involvement in acts that breach the terms and conditions of their employment.

Most of the academic and administrative staff at the university have rejected calls by the management asking them to return to work, demanding that the suspended leaders be reinstated.

The students who reported to the university on January 19, have for the past four weeks been wandering about the university premises with

some attending few or no lectures at all.

Earlier yesterday, Prof. Nawangwe wrote to Prof Bernard Bashaasha, the principal of the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences (CAES), ordering the commencement of teaching immediately, maintaining that there was no official communication to the management or council regarding the staff strike, as required by law.

In a letter dated February 12, 2019, Nawangwe said, "Failure to commence teaching is a college decision based on a purported strike by MUASA. Members of staff who use the excuse of a strike to stay away from work are simply absconding from duty."

"Given the misleading pronouncements by a section of staff, I give this last advice to staff of CAES that there is no strike. This is, therefore, to require all staff to resume duty with immediate effect," Nawangwe stated.

Meanwhile, a cross-section of the students have demanded that management extends the current semester, since it is a promotional one.

"We are spending a lot of money coming for lectures, but some lecturers have not turned up. So, management should think of compensating us by extending the semester," said Simon Mugabi, a student of Bachelor of Science in Education.

Derrick Kamanzi, a third-year student of Bachelor of Social Work and Social Administration, said this being the second semester, which is a promotional one, it requires triple efforts to ensure they achieve the required grades.

When contacted, Dr Kiggundu said the proposal to extend the semester for the benefit of the students would be considered.