



Transcripts: Makerere deserves accolades

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THE graduation ceremonies at Makerere University, which kicked off on January 18, ended on Friday. The 60th graduation ceremony was unique in the history of the university. For the first time, academic transcripts were given out on graduation day and that will be the trend from now on.

Prof. Venansius Baryamureeba's assumption of office as Makerere's vice-chancellor has come at a most opportune time when the oldest university's image was becoming an intolerable embarrassment nationally and internationally. Students and parents had riled against the continued delay of transcripts in vain and many had lost out on employment and opportunities for further studies just because Makerere could not deliver.

With the new system, that will be a story of the past. But more importantly, it means that under Baryamureeba and his team, Makerere's image is gradually but surely being salvaged. Stories abound of how painful and frustrating it was for students who returned to Makerere from distant up-country places for their transcripts. Thanks to the new system, that will be no more. Not only will the students get their transcripts the day they graduate, they will not have to mill about at Senate Building because the system will be decentralised to faculty level to avoid congestion.

This demonstrates that with focused leadership, change is not only possible but an actual reality. Another positive innovation is the pilot project to start study centres up-country "to take Makerere to the people". If the project succeeds in Fort Portal and Jinja, more areas will benefit from it.

However, the issue of transcripts and certificates needs to be handled with the strictness it deserves, going by what has been happening in the past. In July 2006, the Makerere Senate found evidence of forgeries of both transcripts and certificates.

This must not be allowed to happen again as Makerere gets a fresh start.

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