



August 30, 2022

For Immediate Release

PETITION

REVERT THE DECISION TO ABOLISH THE JCR SYSTEM IN KNUST WITH IMMEDIATE EFFECT

With reference to the new directives of the University Council on matters of resolving the issues of student-hall clashes on campus, communicated to the student populace with a release referenced KNUST/UC/12, the Speaker of the KNUST Students Parliament House, Rt. Hon Sulemana Shamuna summoned an emergency consultative student-leaders' meeting chaired by the secretary of the SRC, Miss Benedicta Tiwaa Amankwa on Sunday 28th of August, 2022. Upon a critical analysis of the issues of current happenings on campus and the respective responses from the University management, all student leaders at the said meeting arrived at the following resolution;

The recent clash on campus is an act we as student leader condemn on any day, by this we commend the University management of their swift response in mitigating these clashes within the short period of time. The University Council of KNUST has been a council that responds swiftly and timely to all student matters and find smart solutions to mitigate all student-related issue before and amidst their happenings. In the release referenced KNUST/UC/12, the Council in six (6) numerical bulletins, communicated to the University space their decision after considering the fact-finding committee reports on the current disturbances on campus among others was abolishing of the JCR system at the residential halls to which we as student leaders differ from and call for an immediate reconsideration of that decision to the betterment of the university environment, for this guarantees no long term solution to the problem at hand.

The relevance of the JCR system at the University's halls of residence can never be underestimated on any day, and this has been duly recognized by the University handbook that serves as the main source of guide to the university student drawn from the statutes of the University. Chapter three, (Administration of the University) page 8, subsection two (Students' Participation in Administration of the University) of the KNUST STUDENTS GUIDE AND CODE OF CONDUCT states that "…Students Participate actively in other areas of the administration of the University through their representatives serving on Academic Board, The Welfare service Board, College, Faculty and Departmental boards, Residence Committee, Library Committee and on the Hall councils."

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This is a non-debatable fact that the JCR system plays a very crucial role in the university administration and hence must not be abolished on the basis of student clashes.

Furthermore, KNUST is a multi-talented University that prides on her ability to provide extra curriculum activities such as Sports, Debate competitions, Art exhibitions and many more. This is usually done on hall basis. The university of recent years prides it self with great performances in GUSA games and, National and Pan African Debate Championship and we state unequivocally that, it took the JCR system to identify talents, train them and present them for these competitions from which such glories were drawn from.

Also, the decision to abolish the JCR system is also a decision to disarm the SRC which the University Guide and Code of conduct termed as the official mouth piece of the University students. The SRC and the Local NUGS thrives on resourceful representation from these JCRC's and hence, we don't believe that, abolishing student leadership is the best solution to student problems. Our questions on this are that, is Management scrubbing student representation at hall level totally? Are the Halls going to be run by only the senior staff? If NO are the students going to be represented on the Hall Councils? If YES then abolishing the JCR system is needless in our bid to solving the issues of Hall clashes.

Moreover, abolishing the JCR system will mean abolishing the Cadet cop establishments of the University. The Cadet Cops play a major role in ensuring a serene and secured environment at the hall levels, aside that, the Cadet helps is security at various campus programs including University organized programs. The Cadet Cops assist hall security by regularly Patrolling the Halls and handling other student security issues at its primary level. The Cadet also plays a major role in times of admitting students to campus, so to ensure adequate security for the vulnerable ordinary fresher reporting to school. The Cadet is part of the JCR and their roles in the University is a tall list and hence abolishing the JCR system will mean to deliberately open the students most importantly the Freshers, to security threats.

Again, we state and emphasize that, no senior member of the Hall Council resides in the Halls and that it takes the JCR to respond to late night welfare, health and emergency matters. The JCR is the students first point of call to matters health complications and others pressing issues at odd moments. This also justifies the argument that, scrubbing student representation at the Hall level will only but expose the student to more danger and vulnerability. We wouldn't even want to engage further debate to justify any concept of "Other Halls like Hall 7 and SRC Hostel have no JCR and they are fine" what is the contribution of the no JCR halls to the University in security, what is their

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contribution to Fresher welfare? What is their contribution to University Sports activities? Are students in these Halls not having any problem? Aren't students in these Halls calling for a better representation? How many students reside in these facilities as against that of the Halls? What is the student-facility ratio of the Halls as compared to the No JCR Halls in and outside Campus. Answers to these questions are obvious and that, we don't believe in making a problem a culture on the basis that, others living in the same problem are fine.

To this effect we hold the stands that, abolishing the JCR concept will deepen the cracks of the KNUST student and also this approach promises no solution to the problem at hand. Abolishing these JCRs promises no long-term solution to the problem at hand and hence not the appropriate angle to tackle the issues at hand.



THE WAY FORWARD

We resolved after our deep-seated consultation and consideration of all matters surrounding this Clash, we have come to the realization that, scrapping the JCR system at all the Six Halls as a way to mitigate clashes among just two of these halls needs to be re-looked at. The problem of student clash is different from the JCR of these halls. It worthy to note that the JCR is in charge of the residents of these halls who are basically freshers, for which we hold the conviction that most of the perpetrators of this clashes are non-residents who are not under the JCR. How do we blame the JCR for this and as a result call for their dissolution. It is worthy mentioning that, the system becomes much explicit as the University management has always mentioned Alumni in these disturbances which the JCR has no command over the Alumni. This is to communicate that, there is a force beyond the Control of the JCR and thus abolishing the JCR does not translate into the dissolution of these forces. We are afraid to mention that, we see more danger in this approach than even the issue at hand.

We believe the University Management is aware of the Unity Hall and University Hall Traditional Councils, however the communiques from management on these issues seem to have been portraying as though nothing of such sorts exist and the open fight as also been bent towards the JCRs. If management continues to tackle these issues with principles without turning to face the reality on grounds, no amount of student structure abolishment can save the situation.

Our biggest question is that, now there are JCRs in these halls that can be called to answer question on these disturbances and yet we are still where we are today, if these JCRs are abolished, who do we question if the Clashes persist? Does abolishing the JCR stops the Clash? How many JCR members were part of the clash? In short, until the reality is tackled, we can't be assured of serenity. If tightening security is the way to go, until when will KNUST continue to be a security zone? We believe that, if the Council will side with us, we shall face reality and improvise a remedy concomitantly to wit the serenity of the University environment.

Having analyzed the situation, we bring forth the following recommendations as alternatives to the abolishment of the JCR system and this shall be a long-term solution;

- We recommend that the University Council reverts its decision to abolish the JCR with immediate effect.
- The University Council create a system at the Office of the Director of student affairs to recognizes these Traditional Councils and bring them to the discussion table.

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- The University should improvise intermediaries between these halls, in the form of games, socialization and many more to bring peaceful coexistence and fruitful rivalry.
- We also recommend that, University management established motivating programs like Annual Excellence Award scheme in these halls to foster positive competitions.
- After recognizing these councils, we believe that, they will be brilliant means to organizing Orientation programs to promote awareness and self-development ideologies among the members.
- We shall take charge to engage these councils, draft and check the enforcement of disciplinary undertakings, provisions and regulative instruments. This will help management in handling delinquent student behaviour much easier.
- We shall avail ourselves to carry on these engagements with these councils to make sure the best interest of the University is preserved.

These are the concise bulletins of our recommendations to management in handling these clashes. Beyond the recommendations we promise to avail ourselves for all student-management engagements that shall see to the lasting solutions of the current happenings in campus.

Thank You.

.....signed.....

Incumbent JCR Executives

CC:

Chancellor
Vice-Chancellor
Chairman of the University Council
Pro Vice Chancellor
Director of Students Affairs
Deputy Registrar (Academic)
Deputy Registrar (Student Affairs)
Deputy Registrar
University Relations Officer
Deputy Director of Students affairs
Committee of Hall Administration
Head of Security
GRASAG President
SRC President

