

## **DEVELOPING A RESPONSIVE HUMAN CAPITAL FOR GROWTH - A FORWARD LOOKING PROGRESSIVE APPROACH BY UPSA**

In 2008 the University of Professional Studies, Accra saw the urgent need to develop both the capacity and capabilities of its existing staff without undermining the continuity, stability and decorum of the labor force at the time.

The university as a forward looking and progressive institution recognized the need to break out of the outdated tendencies of sponsoring its staff on traditional 3-4 years residential programmes that take staff away from the job at a time when it could not employ new staff and needed continuity while still developing new academic credentials needed to reposition the university.

Recognizing the need to innovate and re-invent itself, and based on its values of integrity, respect and service, the university embraced the new trajectory of acquiring higher knowledge while contributing to the service of the institution. Long before the world adopted the sustainable development goal of "ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" (SDG 4), the university saw the need to embrace lifelong learning, as a strategy to address its staff development needs. Life-long Learning, change and technology offered a unique opportunity for the university to resolve the paradox of developing its staff credentials, while allowing for continuity of their services.

Lifelong learning is defined as "all learning activity undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competences within a personal, civic, social and/or employment-related perspective" (Commission of European Communities, 2001). It is often considered learning that occurs after the formal education years of childhood, where learning is instructor-driven – pedagogical to adulthood, where the learning is individually-driven – andragogical. '

To deploy the lifelong learning staff development strategy, the university sought online and blended learning institutions that were credible and could provide value for money, within the flexibility required by the university. One of the institutions that the university stumbled upon was the Swiss Management Centre University. However, as an institution that has hemmed its values on Scholarship with Professionalism, the university saw the need for due diligence before settling on an institution and endorsing it for its staff.

The university therefore sought verification on the credibility of SMC first from the National Accreditation Board, the institution mandated to establish equivalences and the credibility of academic institutions in a letter dated 18<sup>th</sup> April, 2008 on the subject cross-checking the credibility of SMC. In a response to the request in a letter-dated 27<sup>th</sup> May, 2008, the NAB confirmed the credibility of the SMC. (See Appendix A). The University did not end there but continued to seek clarification from the Swiss Embassy in Accra in a letter-dated 18<sup>th</sup> April, 2008. The Response from the Swiss Embassy in a letter dated 23<sup>th</sup> May, 2008( is also attached ) indicated the SMC is a credible institution in Switzerland and accredited

by four different institutions including the European Council for Business Education (ECBE), the Central and East European Management Development Association, the Swiss Multimedia Association and the Swiss Federation for Adult Learning. Adding that information on these institution could be found at [www.swissmc.ch/about](http://www.swissmc.ch/about) swiss management centre/accreditation membership, which the university verified (See Appendix B). Also see <http://worldranking.blogspot.com/2009/09/swiss-management-center-smc-mba.html>

Based on the initiative and due diligence of UPSA, many more( about 47) other well meaning Ghanaians have gone through the rigour and have obtained doctoral degrees with a completion time of (4.79 years), while others took five to seven years to complete their doctoral programme with SMC. Out of this number six (6) are from the University of Professional Studies alone, where others have still not completed their programme with SMC after 5 years. The management of UPSA have full confidence in the staff who obtained their qualifications from SMC, which is accredited by ACBSP, a global programme accrediting body recognized by CHEA and shall continue to encourage them to contribute their best and continue to stand tall in the midst of the uninformed malignment, often spurred out of envy and mischief. The University urges all those on the programme to continue to focus and complete their hard earned credible degrees.

When ignorant minds are not awoken to see beyond their set ways, often anchored in disbelief and lack of open-mindedness, it is characteristic to question inventiveness granted that such disbelief is not steeped in malice or subjectivity. Suffice it to say, learning is no longer confined to the traditional brick-and mortar classroom setting but takes place throughout life and in a range of situations. Kolb an iconic education theorist argues "Learning requires the resolution of conflicts between dialectically opposed modes of adaptation to the world. Conflict, differences, and disagreement are what drive the learning process. In the process of learning, one is called upon to move back and forth between opposing modes of reflection and action and feeling and thinking" to embrace new realities.

The UN, EU, UNESCO among others recognize the role of life long learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, which is why it has become a key part of the Sustainable Development Goal, Priority number 4. The Commission of European Communities (2006) notes that life-long learning does not only enhance social inclusion, but also active citizenship, personal development, self-sustainability, as well as competitiveness and employability. The Commission further notes that the concept of lifelong learning has become critical with the emergence of new technologies that change how we receive and gather information, collaborate with others, and communicate in easy and more effective ways and how we live and work. In the past, letters were posted and required several days to reach a destination that is across boarders. Today, by click of a button in a split second one could communicate across the globe and even share videos. Yet some still expect that higher education should be done the same way it was done a century ago as they question the capability of technology mediated distance education, the key vehicle for life-long learning.

Technology has changed the way we live and do things in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, and it did not leave learning and education behind. Yet as usual, many who cannot adapt to change insist that education should be stuck in the old order of things and expect all to be tied to this system of inertia. As technology rapidly changes, individuals must adapt and learn to meet changing demands of work and professional life.

Kate Sweetman and Shane Cragun in a Harvard Business Review article entitled "Embracing Change Means Disrupting Your Day" (July 22, 2016) note *"Unless we can align ourselves in myriad ways with the many "newnesses" that change requires, we ourselves will be the grit in our gears, grinding against change instead of smoothly shifting forward into the spaces we all currently agree we need to inhabit — but only in theory. Why? Because our old approaches by definition cannot not create the new actions needed to move forward in different and more effective ways"*

When the speed train of change in higher education has passed by and is speeding on, others are still waiting in awe and veneration hoping that a locomotive is still waiting for them to onboard their archaic baggage. How long shall this wait be?

## References

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Kate Sweetman and Shane Cragun in a Harvard Business Review article entitled "Embracing Change Means Disrupting Your Day" (July 22, 2016) <https://hbr.org/2016/07/embracing-change-means-disrupting-your-day>, JULY 22, 2016, retrieved 04/08 2016

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In case of reply the number and date of this letter should be quoted

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27th May, 2008



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Dear Sir/Madam,

**RE: CROSS-CHECKING: THE CREDIBILITY OF SWISS MANAGEMENT CENTRE (SMC)**

We have received your letter dated 18<sup>th</sup> April, 2008 enquiring about the status of the Swiss Management Center in Switzerland.

Swiss Management Center is a private university which runs the following BBA, MBA, Executive MBA, and DBA programmes which can be followed either full-time in Switzerland, or part time via distance learning.

Our investigations confirmed that SMC is a credible institution in Switzerland and we advise that you contact one of the institutions they are accredited with for verifications of their status.

Yours faithfully,

For: EXECUTIVE SECRETARY  
COLETTE HUKPATI (MRS)  
ASSISTANT SECRETARY

③ SAR (Adm)  
PT tra

Fa.europe  
  
30/5/08

② Reg/E<sup>a</sup>  
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noted pb  
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Institute of Professional Studies (IPS)  
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**Attn.: Professor Joshua Alabi**

Your reference: JA/AKA/IPS/827  
Your message of:  
Our reference:

Accra, 23.04.2008

**CREDIBILITY OF SWISS MANAGEMENT CENTER (SMC)**

Dear Sir,

We have received your letter dated April 18, 2008 enquiring about the credibility of the Swiss Management Center (SMC) in Switzerland.

The Swiss Management Center is a private university which runs the BBA, MBA, Executive MBA, and DBA programs which can be followed either full-time in Switzerland, or part-time via distance learning.

SMC is accredited by 4 institutions including the European Council of Business Education, the Central and East European Management Development Association, the Swiss Multimedia Association and the Swiss Federation for Adult Learning. Information on these institutions can be found at [www.swissmc.ch/about\\_swiss\\_management\\_center/accreditations\\_membership](http://www.swissmc.ch/about_swiss_management_center/accreditations_membership).

Although the Swiss Embassy here in Accra is of the opinion that SMC is a credible institution, the Swiss Confederation and the Embassy in Accra are not in the position to recommend the authenticity of private institutions and we would advise that you contact one of the institutions they are accredited by for verification of their status.

You may also visit the website of SMC for more information: [www.swissmc.ch](http://www.swissmc.ch)

Yours faithfully,

For the Ambassador of Switzerland

Martin Saladin

Counsellor & Economic Advisor

① Res/PS  
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