

**ACHIMOTA SCHOOL STAKEHOLDERS' WORKSHOP  
HELD AT THE MENSVIC HOTEL, EAST LEGON  
30th MARCH, 2016**

**REPORT OF GROUP 1: STUDENT QUALITY/ADMISSIONS  
CHAired BY PROF IVAN ADDAE MENSAH**

**The workshop objective:** To identify the different challenges faced by the school and develop the mechanisms for the different stakeholders (including OAA) to tackle these.

Based on the two presentations on the school's academic performance, one by the headmistress and the other by Prof. Addae Mensah, the group considered the following under- listed challenges of the school and suggested various solutions:

- A. STRUCTURAL PROBLEM** (a consequence of both the internal and external environments that the school operates in). The group noted that
- i.** The school was still able to hold its own and compete with her peers in turning out several top level students who were able to gain admission into high profile courses such as medicine, engineering, pharmacy etc. in both universities in Ghana and abroad
  - ii.** The overall performance of the school with regard to the percentage of students who met the minimum criteria for admission into all tertiary institutions in the country including the universities and polytechnics, was however below par when compared with the performance of her peers.

The group concluded that:

1. the admission standards of the school were considerably lower in comparison to the peer schools that routinely excelled and this accounted for observation ii above.
2. Achimota school, by virtue of her proximity to the seat of government and her attraction as the school of choice, faced undue pressure from powerful

entities and had become, more or less, a "dumping ground" for less qualified but well connected candidates.

3. whereas Achimota's peer schools were able, one way or another, to reject students whose scores fell below the standards acceptable to them, this did not seem to be the case in Achimota.
4. as a consequence of the large numbers admitted, class sizes were very large and therefore tuition was compromised.
5. these problems have impacted negatively the quality of the school's output at the WASSCE progressively over the past decade or so.

**B. INSTITUTIONAL PROBLEM** (a problem associated with how the school is governed and relates to its different stakeholders). The group arrived at the following conclusions:

- a. that unlike the faith based schools which have patrons that exert strong influences on the running of their respective schools, Achimota school being non-sectarian is an "orphan".
- b. that outside the statutory governance structure of the faith based schools, there is a two tier informal but powerful structure, being the old students and the hierarchy of the particular sect that the school belongs to. These entities have control over the management of those schools and are able to influence government policy including admissions and appointments.
- c. that the Achimota school management has not fully recognized the role that the OAA can play to improve the overall welfare of the school, neither has it positively sought that patronage that will intervene at policy level, thereby being exposed directly to the more negative external influences.

**C. POLICY PROBLEM** (a problem arising from different types of national policy). The group's findings are that:

1. the uniform application of government policy makes it difficult for Achimota to impact its ideals of the three Hs namely **Head, Heart and Hand**

by which students will come out from that school who have fully participated in extra-curricular activities and moral education without compromising academic excellence.

2. this being the objective of true Achimota education, the time duration of training must be re-examined as it is too short to achieve excellence.

## **PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS**

The group suggested the following as possible solutions to the question of improving the admission process, student quality and final results of the school.

That the relationship between the school management and the OAA must be strengthened to enable the OAA to fill the advocacy role as obtains in the sectarian schools is obvious.

The group believes that the current administration has to recognize the positive correlation between the administrations of the peer schools, their faith patrons and old students and the final output of their schools. It is this closeness which makes it possible for many of these schools to invariably come ahead of Achimota school year after year. It is not the sole effort of their school managements that make it possible. Recognition of this fact will go a long way in assisting the school's management and Board to work towards subsequent improvement of the quality of students admitted and the final output.

Therefore, whereas the OAA is ready and available to help, it is the administration that should positively invite it to intervene to deflect any unhealthy pressure that will be brought to bear on the administration. The formal and informal relationships between the OAA and the school administration must be strengthened with dispatch.

The group further recommends, that in addition to what effort the administration is currently making to impact positively on the school's results, it should make it a policy to re-examine the students, upon admission, to reclassify them according to their aptitudes. To that extent, a general test must be administered to all fresh students, not necessarily to reject any of them, but to counsel and guide them, into disciplines that reflect their true capabilities. This will make teaching and

learning easier and beneficial to all and impact positively on the school's overall performance.

The practice of year group members with certain specialized skills or knowledge to organize occasional public lectures or workshops for students and teachers must be revisited or re-instituted if it is no longer going on.

The OAA, PTA and year groups are ready to partner Achimota school management to rise to the top where they belong.