

More uncertainty awaits Ba Isago Quantity Surveying students

They fear stalled accreditation processes might compromise their Quantity Surveying degrees.



Ba Isago university stall at the 2017 tertiary fair registering new students to the University Pic Kefilwe Monosi

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Uncertainty lingers for 142 disgruntled students studying for a Degree in Quantity Surveying at Ba Isago University as they have been toiling for three years for an unaccredited qualification and are now facing fears of being rejected by their industry regulator.

According to the university and the Botswana Qualifications Authority (BQA), the Degree in Quantity Surveying programme is undergoing accreditation, but at the moment students are boycotting classes as a way of protesting their programme's in limbo status. Students are complaining that they do not have adequate learning ma-

terials, they are being lectured by under-qualified trainers, there is lack of feedback on the accreditation process and they want to know if the Quantity Surveyors Registration Council (QSRC) will endorse them upon completion of their degree.

"We also believe Ba Isago may not be fit to offer this programme. We know that this programme is not ripe. It has many gaps, it lacks basic aspects like Construction Law. Why is BQA taking so long to give them a go ahead, maybe their submission was found wanting," one disgruntled student explained.

The student alleged that they have five lecturers but only two are fully qualified. He said the

rest are either managers or civil engineers who seem to have been hired because of their experience in the construction industry.

"The industry is already rejecting us, lending credence to the fact that the university is not fit to offer this program. For example, one student who we believed was the best had his application for a holiday attachment rejected by one company. Even though we thought he was good enough, he was deemed not fit by that company," said the student.

This is despite BQA Spokesperson Selwana Pilatwe-Koppenhaver telling *The Botswana Gazette* that, "in instances where a learning programme is from a regulated sector like engineering, health,

law, aviation and others, the arrangement is that the Education and Training Provider should first submit with the Industry regulator and only apply to BQA for learning programme accreditation after it has been approved/cleared by the Industry regulator to ensure that graduates meet industry needs."

Ba Isago University Director-Business Management Anamika Singh told this publication that QSRC has written to them, explaining that they are not yet ready to certify any programme because they are a newly formed body.

However, Ministry of Tertiary Education Spokesperson Silas Sehularo told *The Botswana Gazette* that the BQA processes or the arrangement is such that the industry regulator has to approve the facilitation of accreditation by BQA. Sehularo further said it is unlikely that BQA's processes will be affected as this has always been part of the process.

"Programmes have been accredited even prior to the inception of the professional bodies. It should be noted that the introduction of professional bodies does not nullify the process that has been used in the past where programs were evaluated and validated for accreditation. For example engineers

and architects as well as other cadres in the past have been certified before the inception of professional bodies," said Sehularo.

While Pilatwe-Koppenhaver did not want to speculate on Ba Isago's fitness to offer the Degree in Quantity Surveying programme, she said they have not received any complaints of inadequate learning materials. On unqualified lecturers Pilatwe-Koppenhaver said BQA evaluates teachers' qualifications and will not accredit a learning programme if this requirement is not met.

Ba Isago's Director-Business Management on the other hand confirmed that they have applied for the accreditation in 2015 and the validation took place in March 2016 and October 2016. Singh said they have submitted all necessary requirements to meet BQA standards for accreditation and are awaiting their response. She said the University already meets minimum requirements for accreditation.

When answering a question on their lecturers qualifications, Singh said the University has five fully qualified staff with Masters level qualifications and they hold vast experience. She concluded by saying the University is in constant dialogue with the students to reach amicable solutions.

BDP defy Khama and entrust Molefhi

GAZETTE REPORTERS

The Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) is a party at the crossroads. As it gears towards the 2019 elections against a seemingly relentless opposition, its intensifying factional battles threaten not only the sacrament succession plans but also the soul of the ruling party ahead of its July elective congress.

Party observers have discussed with

been allowed all along to push his "Go-Masisi" campaign with flat-caps and t-shirts," angrily stated one who was wearing the #ReNonofile branded t-shirt showing his support for Molefhi.

Information reaching this publication is that most of BDP MPs who want to see Masisi fall are reluctant to discuss a compromise. The Molefhi faction is said to have demonstrated its strength this past weekend as they dominated the council against Masisi.