



VICE CHANCELLORS GHANA

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January 31, 2018

The Executive Secretary

Public Utilities Regulatory Commission

P.O. Box CT3095

Cantoments

Accra

Dear Sir / Madam,



CONCERNS OF PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES ON OPERATIONS OF UTILITY SERVICES

Reference is made to your letter dated January 8, 2018 on the above subject matter of even reference. We submit herewith our concerns for your consideration.

Our concerns are tailored towards the supply and billing of utilities. We are incapacitated principally to discuss the production, transmission and distribution of utility services which are considered purely within the domain of the utility providers.

Pricing

Our initial concern, as major consumers, is with the pricing. In our humble opinion, we should be given preferential treatment comparative to domestic consumers considering the national mandate of the universities: which is to produce the critical mass of human resource professionals needed for the socio-economic development of the country. The nation is not oblivious of the fact that the public universities are not profit making institutions. It is in this vein that the public education sector should be treated humanely in the billing system.

The universities have very sensitive laboratory equipment which react negatively to uncontrolled and unscheduled power curtailments. The Noghochi Memorial Institute at the University of Ghana has suffered a number of times in recent times from power outages.

There is currently a dark cloud over who is responsible for paying for the bills generated by the public universities from consuming utility services. This issue has drawn attention from government, parents, students and stakeholders but has not been resolved yet. We note that the

universities have two categories of residential students: those staying at the traditional halls of residence and those at the private halls of residence. While the students occupying private hostels pay for their utility services, their counterparts at the traditional halls of residence refuse to pay for same. Yet both share the usage of utility services at the lecture halls, laboratories and central administration.

We also note that the utility providers serve staff bungalows which are provided with pre-paid meters.

In view of this, a decision has to be taken on who is responsible for paying for the bills generated from consuming water and electricity in the university: Government, students, the university or a combination of some or all of these?

Metering

We also note that each university is given a bulk meter by the Electricity Company of Ghana or NEDCO/VRA. Again it is noted that internally, that is within the university campus, there are meters that have either been installed at the various departments/faculties or staff bungalows. The duplication arises when the provider issues a bill against the bulk meter and again issues a second bill for the internal meter which draws its supply from the bulk meter. That system of billing needs to be checked and rectified to avoid over-paying.

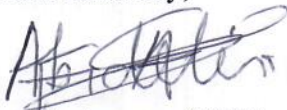
Public Education

Over the years, consumers are told that they have rights which have to be protected. Indeed, a sample will reveal that the consumers do not know their rights on billing, paying for those bills and the regulations that favour consumers. It is recommended that PURC should launch an education drive to educate consumers on their rights with respect to the provision and supply of utility services.

We would appreciate if these concerns are taken on board as you collate the concerns of the public to develop a policy of providing quality services to the public.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,



For Chairman of VCG

(Fidelis Abaare)

Head: Finance and Administration VCG