

2-DAYS :RCEES STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Event Details: Day 1

Date: 28 February 2024

Time: 1:45 PM

Location: RCEES Auditorium, UENR

External Attendees:

- ProREG - (Germany)
- Bui Power Authority - (Ghana)
- Tino Solutions - (Ghana)
- Infra Futura - (Ghana)
- SunFarming (Germany)
- PURC - (Ghana)
- Prof. Ing. Osvaldo Romero, SRH Berlin - (Germany)
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- Ing. Harold Eseku (Online) - (Ghana)
- Dr. Stefan Wolf (Online) - (Germany)
- The Brew-Hammond Energy Centre (Ghana)

Internal Attendees (UENR):

- Pro-Vice Chancellor
- Prof. Francis Attiogbe, Dean, School of Engineering
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- Ing. Prof. Samuel Gyamfi, Dean, School of Energy and Deputy Director (RCEES)
- Rev. Ing. Prof Eric Ofosu-Antwi, Deputy Director (RCEES)
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- UENR (Staff and Students)
- RCEES Staff

The gathering preceded with registration and networking of various stakeholders and participants between **12:00 PM and 1: 00 PM-**.

Programme commencement: 1:45 PM: The RCEES stakeholder engagement started at 1:45 pm with a word of prayer by the master of ceremony Mrs. Abigail.

Opening and welcome Address by the Deputy Director of RCEES - Prof Samuel Gyamfi

He welcomed all participants and stated the purpose of the stakeholder engagement as;

- One of the ways of sharing ideas on how to make impact in Ghana and Africa.

- Taking the next step into the future of energy and making development impact in West Africa.
- By working collaboratively and creatively as a team eager for a lasting sustainability impact and to challenge the status quo in making the world a better place for the next generation.

Introduction of Speakers

The master of ceremony introduced the various stakeholders after the welcome address.

Welcome Address by the University Management.

On behalf of the Vice Chancellor and the University Leadership, the welcome address was done by the Acting Pro. VC - Prof. John K. M. Kuwonu

- Emphasized on UENR'S commitment to making professionals for positive change and the prospect of deepening the collaboration of the stakeholders to create a broader and sustainable future for all by working together.

Solidarity Message from the World Bank - Ing. Harold Eseku

- He wished the intended target of the engagement to be achieved to foster a conducive environment for academia-industry collaboration.
- He also mentioned that his doors are open to us, and we can count on him whenever he is needed by RCEES.

Presentation by Host Institution (RCEES) - Rev. Prof. Ing. Eric Ofosu Antwi

- He mentioned that this engagement happens to be the maiden program to show the world how far RCEES has gone with its activities and operation.
- He presented the objectives of ACE impact project and RCESS's success stories, educational programs and challenges encountered so far.
- He stated that the establishment of the center was because of a response to World Bank Call to establish 44 centers of excellence in the parts of African region. RCEES-UENR is one of the 8 centers in Ghana and started operations in 2019.
- He presented on the background of RCEES, partnerships, research areas, grants and projects run at the center-RCESS.
- He mentioned that the objectives of the ACE Impact project were to provide less expensive postgraduate education opportunities for Africans through the establishment of postgraduate education centers.
- Also, the centers of excellence are mandated to fast-track the increase in postgraduate education within Africa by enhancing the capacity to deliver high level training to solve developmental issues, providing scholarships for both local and 25% of international students within the African region and 40% females. To enhance the capacity to provide

research to solve developmental challenges. To foster partnerships within the African region.

- He emphasized how the structure of RCEES is geared towards positioning the ACE center-RCEES for a better future.
- He proposed to the stakeholders that they help in procuring equipment and completing the laboratories at the center.
- He stated the importance of partnering with other institutions to depend on each other's strength through mobility programs. It is essential to enhance governance and management through monitoring, evaluation and administration to foster transparency for project planning and implementation.
- RCEES has impacted the university with governance and capacity building of staff in terms of research and grants.
- The most challenging issue is with the number of scholarships available to applications received in a year.

Presentation: Building Network of Experts in Renewable Energy - Dr. Stefan Wolf

- During his presentation, he made mention of how German education is mostly based on technical training to provide skills and practice-oriented experience for students to help prepare them adequately for the job market. And encouraged RCESS to take inspirations from strategy to help provide jobs for students and the country at large.
- He mentioned that RCEES could also collaborate and invite industry experts to provide practical lecture for students and faculty members to understand the needs of the industry and how to align themselves to solve the needs and grab the available opportunities in the industry.

The second session of the event preceded a coffee break and photo sessions.

Presentation: What Industry Expects from Academia- Bui Power Authority

Mr. Wisdom Ahiataku-Togobo presented on what industry expects from academia;

- He encouraged the academia to partner with the industry for mutual benefits.
- He admonished academia to be proactive in their dealing and engagement with the industry for opportunities.
- He advised that academic research and internships should be geared toward solving industry-based challenges, objectives, purpose and mission to promote sustainable collaboration.
- The industry needs people who have technical hands-on experience, and academia would need to build such capacity and ensure that teaching models lead to this aspect.
- For internships, industries are open to adults or students to take the internship opportunity, and the industry expects that during the internship, interns should identify the challenges, the gaps, and come up with innovative research topics.

- Industry also expects the lecturers to be part of it. Sometimes they expect lecturers, even if it is one minute, to come, stay with them, understand the challenges so that academia can tailor the teaching and research topics to be able to address the challenges that industries have.
- Then when it comes to internship, industries open the adults or students who come and they take the internship, and we expect that whilst we are doing the internship, we should identify the challenges, the gaps, and come up with innovative research topics.
- In that case, we also expect the lecturers to be part of it. Sometimes we expect lecturers, even if it is one minute, to come, stay with us, understand our challenges so that you can tailor your teaching and tailor your research topics to be able to address the challenges that we have.
- There are funding opportunities from international bodies like GIZ, AHK, etc. and local banks that academia can take advantage of. He encourages academia to team up with industries to submit proposals. And states how the RCEES program was done together with the university and that made it possible for us to secure funding.

Presentation: What Academia expects from Industry- Prof. William Oduro

- His presentation was based on the following components: concept, existing model, and examples of renewable energy.
- His submissions were geared toward how the industry can collaborate with academia in terms research to provide research methodologies and results that would provide significant impacts for the industry and its operations.
- After presenting various examples of how some international industries have collaborated with various international institutions to build research labs that is might to benefit both stakeholders in health, vehicles, electricity, etc., he believes industries in Ghana and outside can do something similar for the Ghanaian universities and research institutions.
- He encouraged industry to provide essential funding support for research works, publications and patents of academia. And provide practical experience for interns during internships period.
- He stated that the academia expects industry to fund cutting-edge technologies and laboratories to enhance research and lab works by going beyond academia budget.
- There should be industry collaboration on applied research that are directly applicable to the industry needs through funding and active participation.
- Promote innovation and technology transfer from the industry, examples hub innovation creation funded by the industry to promote start-ups and entrepreneurship among students and lecturers.
- Academia expects industry to provide insights into emerging trends, skills requirements and knowledge gaps in the workforce.
- Academia expects the industry to provide career opportunities for students and graduates through “career fair” programs and other initiatives that transitions the of graduate movement from academia to industry.

- Academia is geared toward societal impact and sustainability and entreats industry partners to share these values and collaborate on projects with positive impact on society and environment.
- Academia seeks long-term meaningful partnership with the industry for benefits through continued involvement in research and development and shared roles.
- Academia expects constructive feedback between the industry to bring about skilled graduates, research relevance, educational programs relevant to the industry and academia.
- Academia expects ethical and responsible conduct from the industry and vice versa to ensure trust between both partners.

Panel Discussion (Industry needs and Challenges) by Bui Power, PURC, Academia, and ProREG and Moderated by Prof. Joseph Oppong Akowuah

The panel discussion involved Mr. Wisdom Ahiataku-Togobo (Bui Power), Mr. Patrick Antwi (PURC), Prof. William Oduro (Academia) and Prof. Ing. Osvaldo Romero (ProReG). The key insights from the discussion were;

- How to break the gap between the theory knowledge and practical
- Academia should engage with the industry to know their objectives, operations and how the collaboration can positively impact both parties
- There should be an MOU or agreement signed by both parties to ensure smooth collaboration and supervision.
Academia should follow up with industry to identify their challenges and provide solutions to the identified problem (i.e. Academia being proactive in their dealings with the industry).
- There should be mutual contribution in terms of financial cost and benefits involved because the cost and benefits analysis and funding are one of the challenging aspects of collaboration and developing academia.
- Institution should provide students with all they need to learn during their internship period (from supervision to mentorship)
- The industry expects academia to provide students with some level of technical or soft skills for employability.
- There should be an overhauling of the academic system, where academia can take advantage of modern technologies, funding windows through proposals and grants.
- Industry leverages on existing platforms to make technical contribution and inputs in research works either as supervisors or external examiners.
- Students or graduates should be trained to start their own businesses after school to serve as a major contribution to the development of the country and not wait on the government and private sectors for employment.
- The role of the government is to provide support for both the collaboration of industry and academia.
- Internship students are encouraged to submit reports after their internship period on the identifies challenges observed and identified in the industry.

- Academia must contribute in such a way they have profits, and the industry is also going to benefit from the partnership.
- Identified specific technical skill sets required to get opportunity in the industry should be included in the academic curriculum for ready employability.

The conclusion was that both academia and industry need each other for development, employment and progress. Hence there is the need to take the discussion to the next level for better future implementation.

Questions and Answers: This was moderated by the master of ceremony- Mrs. Abigail

Closing Remarks and Closing prayer was done by the Director of RCEES Rev. Prof. Ing. Eric Ofosu Antwi

6:00 PM: Day-1 of the RCEES Stakeholder Engagement ended.

RCEES STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT: 2-DAYS

Event Details: Day 2

Date: 29 February, 2024

Time: 9:10 AM

Location: RCEES Auditorium, UENR

External Attendees:

- ProREG
- Bui Power Authority
- Tino Solutions
- Infra Futura
- SunFarming
- PURC
- Solar Taxi
- SWISS Embassy
- UNEP
- ATU
- KITE
- SRH Berlin
- Prof. Ing. Osvaldo Romero
- Ing. Harold Eseku (Online)
- Dr. Stefan Wolf (Online)
- DAAD (Online)
- Prof. Shahid Qureshi (Online)
- Erwin Hinojosa (Online)

Internal Attendees:

- Prof. Francis Attiogbe
- Prof. William Oduro
- Ing. Prof. Samuel Gyamfi
- Rev. Ing. Prof Eric Ofosu-Antwi
- Brew-Hammond Energy Center
- KNUST Staff
- CEBI
- UENR (Staff and Student)
- RCESS Staff

9: 10 AM: Day-2 of the RCEES stakeholder engagement started with a word of prayer by the master of ceremony Mrs. Abigail.

Presentation: Building Entrepreneurship Mindset and Opportunities by Prof. Shahid Qureshi (Gift University, Pakistan).

The key insights from the presentation were;

- Promoting entrepreneurship mindset to pursue opportunity irrespective of resources adds value, meaning and purpose.
- The possibility of pursuing an entrepreneurial opportunity with limited or minimal resources.
- The university and RCEES can promote and develop entrepreneurship mindset through proactiveness, calculated risk taking and innovativeness.
- Ensure students can learn about 10-30 skills before graduating from the university to help graduate students who are already entrepreneurs and are capable of fending for themselves after school and not wait on external sources for employment.
- Encouraged everyone to be like William Kamkwamba, a 13-year-old boy is expelled from his beloved school, when his family is unable to pay the tuition. He sneaks into the library and learns how to construct a windmill to save his village from a famine (making use of the limited resources at our disposal to provide solutions to problems of society).
- He encouraged the Universities, RCESS and everyone to adopt the Effectual Perspective (i.e. starting with the means available and learning how to work with small things) instead of focusing on the Traditional Perspective (which has to do with starting with something big)
- His concerns were the universities not appreciating different potentials of students but standardizing the grading process and advocates for a more engaging academic content and looking beyond the assembling line.
- He also advised that students should focus on learning skills rather than memorizing things for examination.

Presentation: SUNFarming by Erwin Hinojosa

- He presented on SUNFarming (a family-owned business established in 2004) operations as an EPC service provider, that operates and invest in their own operational assets-based systems on the use of solar energy in agriculture in Germany and other part of the world.
- He believes that the Solar-Agri Systems concept could be adopted ongoing Ghana as there exist an ongoing MOU between Bui Power Authority and SUNFarming. He entries the university to come onboard as partners of the ongoing project to be suited at Bui.
- Their intention for the MOU is to employ the expertise of the universities to make the agri solar farming a success, that is to know what crops to grow under the PV panels.

Panel Discussion: Building Entrepreneurship Mindset and Opportunities by Tino Solutions, Stella Futura, Solar Taxi, CEBI and Moderated by Dr. Prince Antwi-Agyei

The panel discussion involved Mr. Reginald Djimatey (CEBI), Mr. Rapheal Sarpong (Infra Futura), Mrs. Abigail Twenewaa (Solar Taxi) and Dr. Stephanie Solal (Tino Solutions). Some key insights from the discussion were;

- Nobody was born an entrepreneur but individuals who are now entrepreneurs accepted the challenge of becoming entrepreneurs by finetuning their mindset to accept challenges and to make the most out of it.
- Ability to see the problem as an opportunity and ceasing it. Not necessarily inventing something new but providing impact-driven solutions to existing challenges by carefully studying the business environment and adding value.
- Entreats young rising individual and faculty members to have positive attitude and approach toward opportunities, collaborating with teams, birth good ideas that is impact driven and aligns with the global picture. Build the ideas, manage and grow the ideas.
- Entrepreneurship mindset requires you to be able to identify a problem and be solution driven.
- It was also suggested that the environment which we find ourselves needs to be understood and make use of the resources it provides.
- Although funds and resources are limitation for start-up or young entrepreneurs, it is important to be smart, manage what is available and build on it, be confident, hardworking, create visibility, and understand the importance of human resources and develop the intrapreneurship approach.
- It was identified that start-up failures are due to the difficulties growing and sustaining them, hence there is the need to build resilience, network, start in a bit and grow, hardworking and giving oneself the time to build strong and trusted entity.
- Having objectives or targets, integrity, being professional, undertaking mentorship programs, being focused, adaptability and having good communication skills is relevant in the growth of a start-up as an entrepreneur.
- However, it will be best to sell the business ideas to potential business entities if the need be.
- It was also suggested that we tackle the aspect of proposal writing in accordance with some SDGs. By so doing we can then attract the green fundings available for those prospects.
- We should be able to also sell the ideas we have as a Center to attract funding out there.
- As a Center it was advised that we remain professional, resilient, hardworking, have targets and be keen on achieving them.
- How can we transition from university to business?
- The transition can be done by first integrating entrepreneurship into the school's curriculum as an avenue for students to have a fair idea about entrepreneurship
- We all cannot be entrepreneurs, this is because not everyone is willing to pay the price of becoming an entrepreneur; however, it can be included in the curriculum of the Ghanaian university education to help those who are willing to make the sacrifices involved in entrepreneurship for them to be able to sail through.

The second session of Day-2 was preceded by a long network break and a Coffee Break

Presentation: Funding Opportunities for Research and Innovation by DAAD

- The presentation was done by Felix from DAAD-GHANA, where he provided several research funding opportunities for BSc. MSc. PhD and Fellows.

- He mentioned how the number of students have increased over the years as against a decrease in research funding.
- He was sad to share that Ghana happens to be the least country to benefit from some of the research funding opportunities because the applications that come through are few. He therefore entreats Ghanaians to take advantage of such opportunities.
- He made mention of funding opportunities such as DAAD, Alexander von Humboldt foundation, Green Talent etc.
- He mentioned an excellent strategy that gives funding of around five hundred and thirty-three million per year for top class research within higher education institutions.
- He mentioned that in Ghana there are institutions called the University of Applied Sciences that offer practical oriented programs with funding coming from their cooperation with industry.
- Within DAAD, there is what we call University Business Partnership Funding programs where universities together with reps from Germany with business entities i.e industries being part of a consortium solely to encourage research, training and enhance the link between academia and practice.
- He also mentioned the four centers in Germany that offer funding for research and every year they make callouts for research options, individual funding possibilities and so on. These centers are; Helmholtz Association, Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft, Max-Planck-Gesellschaft, and Leibniz Association.
- He also proposed there are funding opportunities within DFG and we can access them on their website i.e. dfg.de
- We can access funding opportunities in DAAD Ghana by going on their website; DAAD-Ghana.org
- Research clusters with funding opportunities; ResearchinGermany.de or research-in-germany.org, and there are options like chemistry, cellular molecular biology, geoscience options among others.
- Funding options are available on the page www.Funding-guide.de
- He made mention of a call for application where applicants are to pitch their ideas at the falling walls lab of DAAD Ghana. For more information go onto their home page DAAD-Ghana.org

Presentation: Effective Collaboration among Academic and Research Institutions by Prof. Ing. Osvaldo Romero

- He mentioned that leaders who do not collaborate are not serving the long-term interest of their system members.
- He stated that there should be a collective impact framework for effective collaboration.

Panel Discussion: Fostering Effective Collaboration among Academic and Research Institutions. Moderated by Prof. William Oduro

The panel discussion involved Prof. Ing. Osvaldo Romero (SRH Berlin), Dr. David Ato Quansah (Brew Hammond Energy Centre) Dr. Emanuel Nyantakyi (RCEES) and Mr. Abbey (ATU) and moderated by Prof. William Oduro. Some key insights from the discussion were;

- Ensuring sustainable collaboration, coordination and cooperation between academic and research institutes.
- Having a committed group to nominate a lead to spearhead the presentation of the suggested contributions to higher body (Government).
- Issues of sustainability of already funded and completed projects were raised and require selfless team and leadership. And the extent to which collaboration is needed for a project.
- The take home was that “Collaboration is better than Competition.

The third session of Day-2 was preceded with a Coffee Break

Presentation: Funding Opportunities for Research and Innovation by SWISS EMBASSY

Andrew Boamah Asare a representative of SECO shared on,

- how the organization contributes to promoting electricity access in Ghana from the Net Metering Program.
- The operations of the SWISS EMBASSY through the government of Ghana to fund and develop projects in Ghana.
- However, he stated that the SWISS EMBASSY and SECO do not work directly with institutions and advice the institutions to align their activities with that of the national development goals and plans.

Panel Discussion: Building Effective Partnerships with Development Organizations by UNEP, SWISS EMBASSY, KITE. Moderated by Prof. Amos Kabobah

The panel discussion involved Mr. Andrew Boamah Asare (SWISS EMBASSY) Thomas Kankam (UNEP) and Ishmeal Egyekum (KITE). Some key insights from the discussion were;

- The institutions align their activities with the development goals of the country.
- There should be the existence of strong, dynamic and entrepreneur leaders.
- The institutions must deliver the skill set and competence required to be considered for any opportunity by development organizations.
- There must be structures put in place that are transparent and accountable.
- RCEES to find ways to improve its visibility and recognition by attending events, and the use of social media platforms.
- RCEES to be strategic in its planning and ensure the plans are flexible and consultative.
- Encourages RCEES to build a good reputation with the funding agencies in order not to be blacklisted and build technical personnels for funding support.

Future Collaborations Rev. Prof. Ing. Eric Ofori Antwi

The director of RCEES mentioned the need to strike industrial relationship. He plans to extend a call in May to take the event to the next level.

Vote of thanks

The vote of thanks was done by Dr. Gifty Serwaa Mensah. The Director of RCEES, Rev. Ing. Pro. Eric Ofori Antwi gave the closing remarks and said a word of prayer to end the Day-2.

6:30 PM: Day-2 of the RCEES Stakeholder Engagement ended. The event ended with a trip to Bui Generating Site by the stakeholders and participants on Friday, 1st March, 2024