

Higher education in our public universities faces a serious challenge posed by competing forces aligned to either the teaching or non-teaching staff. The latter, comprising senior management and support staff, was found to be more influential in, among others, allocation of funds and procurement of goods and services. The unions representing the two groups have also grown so powerful that either can disrupt the running of the institutions. How do you plan to deal with the two groups so that there is minimal disruption of the academic calendar and to ensure the two groups work in harmony?

Recent experience has shown us that staff unions are not enemies of university leadership. We are, therefore, duty-bound to lend a listening ear to staff grievances that may arise from time to time. This should go a long way in reducing industrial action by staff and attaining a fairly predictable and tranquil environment for the attainment of university objectives.

The Constitution of Kenya affords all citizens the freedom to associate, to express themselves and to picket peaceably and unarmed. To the extent that the unions accord with the dictates of the law, they are free to represent the interests of their members.

Student accommodation, management of finances and procurement of goods and services are handled by staff with the necessary professional training. Similarly, teaching, learning and research functions of the university are managed by staff with the necessary qualifications. Therefore, there is space for all staff to play their rightful role in advancing the university's mission without encroaching on the provinces of others.