

August 16, 2016

Dear SMC University Students and Alumni,

Recently, many of you have seen a lot of media speaking to the credibility of SMC University and its graduates.

While you are reading the below lines, a coordinated legal effort within Ghana and the US has been initiated: *“fake”*, by dictionary definition relates to something as being *“not true or real: meant to look real or genuine but not real or genuine”* – thus mentioning SMC and their alumni, who spend years on thorough research to complete an accredited program, in such a context shall be treated and acted upon as attempted slander, duress and defamation.

As you are learning about scholarly writing at a global level, as well as ethical research, can you see the many flaws in the arguments of the accreditation challenge that is far from the truth, in a report by Dr. Prosper Yao Tsikata and Dr. A. Kobla Dotse. Media wars are often quite political, as many of you have witnessed. Below are some facts concerning the paper and facts concerning SMC University.

The publication on Pulse.com.gh titled, “Gifty Anti, IGP, Hassan Ayariga and others indicted in fake doctorate degree scandal”, is a media article based on false information. In order to maximize readership and revenues, publishing controversial issues without complete information, has been common practice in many parts of the world. This particular publication house chose to published an article based on one single report without questioning whether it contains false judgments that are far from scholarly, of which is has many.

The article mentions a number of institutions, including SMC University. The facts concerning SMC University are clearly distorted, and the statements made concerning the Swiss accreditation and the U.S. accreditation are incorrect as well.

Swiss Accreditation: From a historical perspective, the Swiss government provided no options for accreditation for private universities until 2015. Despite that, 20+ private schools have been **operating legally in Switzerland** for many years, offering high quality education programs. Recently, Swiss law was amended to enable accreditation of private universities, but only in theory. In practice, the thresholds and criteria for eligibility have been directly adopted from state-controlled facilities, leaving little to no room for small or specialized providers, let alone distance learning institutions in the near future. Most of the private and world-renowned business schools like IMD had to early resort to programmatic accreditation to ensure its quality and credibility.

To date, out of 45 institutions listed on the official Swiss government information portal (<https://www.swissuniversities.ch/en/higher-education-area/recognised-swiss-higher-education-institutions/>), three appear to be privately owned, with all of them either operating in cooperation with state universities, conferring non-Swiss degrees or having a far-reaching historic background built around a physical presence.

U.S. Accreditation: ACBSP has the same exact accreditation rights as AACSB and ABET. These accreditation organizations have global presence and are widely known for quality standards that are comprehensive and demand the highest programmatic standards on a global level. Universities like Southern New Hampshire University, The Ohio State University, Temple University, and many other world renowned high quality universities have these accreditations. To challenge the credentials and underlying quality frameworks of any of these accreditation bodies or the accredited schools that have been in existence for many years is an act of utter ignorance. Further insights can be seen in appendix A.

When looking at the report which is the basis of the above mentioned article in pulse.com, most qualified scholars would be able to see the major flaws in the methodology. Many of you who's taken the research methods course can see the numerous issues. This report would not even pass as a graduate research class assignment, much less as a scholarly paper from two people holding PhDs. When students complete a PhD program, one of the common requirements of reputable PhD programs is the practice of ethical research. Those with advanced degrees, like a PhD, should have the ability to critically assess a phenomenon from a scientific perspective. This means that scholars would assess a phenomenon from multiple perspectives before drawing conclusions. Instead of following ethical principles of research, this report in question fails to apply many aspects of proper qualitative research standards. For doctoral candidates beginning the dissertation research stage, this is an example of what never to do from an ethics and research methodology perspective.

Such an article from the two PhD individuals reflects poorly on their institutions and seeks to sensationalize improperly on Ghanaian scholars. It claims phrases like "minimize harm" and "seek the truth"; in contrast, their report clearly violates these principles. If the quality of education was at the core of people holding doctorates, why not have a scholarly panel assess the basic fundamentals of scientific research that PhD holders should have mastered? Reading such a comparison between the dissertations of those mentioned in the article and those who published the report would be most interesting. Assessing the quality of education of terminal degree programs may come from validated dissertation research as the foundation, not unethical challenges from a poorly researched and biased report.

When exploring the facts about SMC University Alumni, many nations in many parts of the world validate the University degree with various leadership roles in higher education from the United States and Canada to Europe and Asia to the Middle East (see appendix B).

The programs of SMC University are accredited by ACBSP, which carries U.S. government recognition: <http://acbspsearch.org/Home/Details?instId=Inst3140>. SMC University also has been registered with the National Accreditation Board in Ghana (NAB) since 2012. The NAB has extended this registration for all current students through July 2018. If anyone is concerned with the quality of the programs, they are welcome to take a look at the graduates' dissertations. SMC University dissertations coming out of the quality programs would stand up to global standards of research. These are the simple facts.

More specifically, here is a high level summary of SMC University's achievements in Ghana:

- Consistently donates funds to charities like the Osu orphanage when holding residencies
- Offers scholarly writing and research workshops that are highly needed. When SMC learned of the challenges in scholarly writing and the fact that most students had no course or teaching in scholarly writing, we offered many writing/dissertation workshops to help Ghanaian students
- Collaborates with alumni to create Ghanaian based theories that advance the nation
- Creates profound experiences in residencies, unlike any other classroom, to develop key skills
- Successfully graduated 47 doctorates who lead many organizations and have consistently published in international journals

For current students or those who have graduated from SMC University's programs, rest assured that these issues were raised by two individuals who don't live in Ghana and who have chosen to create chaos with highly biased information, through a media organization that is willing to create conflict to garner more attention for its own profits. Unlike the Pulse, the reputable media in Ghana has already issued a formal apology with the headline "WE ARE SORRY" from all of the mischief that these two individuals have caused. Staff and faculty at SMC University will be doing our utmost to meet the new requirements set forth by NAB in the coming years. We are currently working with various institutional accreditors within Europe. Ghana is a nation of great interest to SMC University, and the faculty and administration have worked tirelessly to help many people develop their potential. That will not change, no matter what political challenges are presented.

Dr. Ted Sun
Vice Chancellor
SMC Faculty & Administration

Appendix A:

Established in 1989, ACBSP gained recognition by the U.S. Department of Education in 1992. This continued through 1996 when the U.S. Department of Education made the decision to recognize only those agencies that impacted the distribution of federal funding, withdrawing the recognition for more than fifty accreditors, including prominent bodies like the AACSB. As a consequence, in 2001 ACBSP became the first business program accreditor to be recognized by the US Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), currently in effect until renewal in 2021.

ACBSP accreditation relies on the below standards and criteria, clearly indicating that while being a programmatic accreditor, institutional aspects and sustainability are being covered, measured and vital to an institution seeking to maintain accredited status for their programs.

- Leadership
- Strategic Planning
- Student and Stakeholder Focus
- Measurement and Analysis of Student Learning and Performance
 - Learning Outcomes Assessment Program
 - Reporting Results and Trends
 - Selection and Use of Comparative Information Data
 - Continuous Process Improvement
- Faculty and Staff Focus
 - Human Resource Planning
 - Employment Practices
 - Faculty Qualifications, Work Load, and Coverage
 - Faculty Deployment
 - Faculty Size and Load
 - Faculty Evaluation
 - Faculty Operational Procedures, Policies, Practices and Development
 - Scholarly and Professional Activities
- Educational and Business Process Management
 - Education Design and Delivery
 - Management of Educational Support Service Processes and Business Operation Processes
 - Enrollment Management

Appendix B:

Examples of SMCU Alumni working in higher education institutions in other nations (not a comprehensive list).

Name	Positions	University	Nation
B. Fleming	Executive director of student affairs	Mount Royal University in Calgary	Canada
Amina Beecroft	Assistant Professor	Mount Royal University in Calgary	Canada
R. Smistad	Associate Professor , Chair of the Bachelor of Business Administration	Mount Royal University in Calgary	Canada
I. Gvozdanović	Lecturer	Zagreb School of Economics and Management	Croatia
V. Murtezaj	Assistant Professor Diplomacy and Leadership	IESEG School of Management	France
E. Coustas	Fellow	Academy of Nursing of South Africa	South Africa
B. Robert	Faculty – Business	Al Ain Colleges; Higher Colleges of Technology	UAE
W. Minhas	Faculty – Business	Higher Colleges of Technology	UAE
F. Habib	Faculty – Business	Higher Colleges of Technology	UAE
B. Stetar	Executive Director, Graduate Business Programs/Associate Vice President - Outcomes and Assessment	Southern New Hampshire University	USA
C. Moos	Interim Dean of the School of Business	Missouri Southern State University	USA
J. Carter	Lecturer / Researcher	Naresuan University International College	Thailand