THE METHODIST UNIVERSITY COLLEGE GHANA

PRESS RELEASE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Authorities of the Methodist University College Ghana (MUCG) have restrained themselves from going public on the issue concerning the National Accreditation Board (NAB) directive to the University College to withdraw 1465 students admitted for the 2011/2012 academic year.

The delay in going public to explain our side of the story was due to the fact that the University College was making every effort to resolve the issue with NAB.

We wish to apologise to the Methodist Church, the students and staff of MUCG, parents/guardians and sponsors of the affected students, and the general public, for the delay in telling our side of the story.

2.0 BACKGROUND

In a letter dated November 8, 2010, the National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE) issued a directive on new admission requirements to the Universities.

The directive instructed the Universities to admit school candidates with grades A-D (for SSSCE candidates), and A1-C6 (for WASSCE Candidates). The grades E (for SSSCE), and D7 or E8 (for WASSCE) which had until the issuance of the NCTE directive been accepted for admission to the Universities were no longer to be accepted.

The directive was communicated to all tertiary institutions by NAB. We received our copy dated January 10, 2011 on January 24, 2011.

At the time the directive came, we (that is, MUCG, and many other private Universities) had already started the admission processes. Our advertisement for admission to programmes of the University College for the 2011/2012 academic year had gone out in December 2010. And we had received a number of applications in response to the advertisement. Our advertisement stated the following qualifications for admission:

grades A-E in three core subjects (including English and Mathematics) and three elective subjects for SSSCE candidates; grades A1-E8, in three core subjects (including English and Mathematics) and three elective subjects for WASSCE candidates; HND; DBS; Professional Certificates; Post-Secondary Teacher’s Certificate; RSA Stage III Certificate, and Mature candidates of 25 years or above with reasonable education and some work experience who were required to pass an entrance examination conducted by the University College.
The Conference of Heads of Private Universities of Ghana (CHPUG) found the new admission requirements ‘unprogressive’ and considered it vital for NCTE/NAB to review the requirements.

In a Press Conference organized on May 18, 2011, CHPUG indicated that it had submitted a Position Paper to the NCTE, and a petition to the Minister of Education. It also drew the attention of the NCTE to the implications of the directive for the Private Universities, and the youth. It proposed to the NCTE to allow D7 and E8 to be accepted for University admission, and to have the directive apply only to candidates who qualified for Ghana Government bursary.

The NCTE issued a press release in the May 24, 2011 edition of the *Daily Graphic* in response to CHPUG’s Press Conference to state that its General Council would take a decision on the matter the following month. MUCG therefore continued with the admission of candidates with D7 and E8 in the expectation that CHPUG’s petition would be upheld. NCTE, however, refused to change its mind. CHPUG also sought audience with the Minister of Education to discuss the NCTE directive, but this also failed.

From the beginning of the 2011/2012 academic year, the NAB started conducting academic audits of the Private Universities with the aim to enforce the NCTE directive. The Board sent a Panel to visit MUCG on February 23, 2012 to audit the qualifications of our students who had been admitted for the 2011/2012 academic year.

The University of Ghana, which is our mentoring university and which awards its certificates to MUCG graduates, at a meeting held on February 22, 2012 advised us, as well as other Private Universities affiliated to it, among things, to negotiate exit packages for the students affected by the NCTE directive.

On March 27, 2012, the MUCG Management met all students who had been admitted solely on the SSSCE/WASSCE who had not met the NAB admission requirements, and briefed them about the situation. Management announced to the students that their admission to MUCG was being withdrawn, and offered the following exit package: registration by MUCG to re-write a maximum of three failed subjects per student in the November/December, 2012 WASSCE examinations. The cost of registration was to be borne by MUCG; arrangement of remedial classes for the students, also to be paid for by MUCG. Experienced senior high school teachers who had rich teaching experience with WASSCE remedial classes were to be engaged to teach the remedial classes. Affected students who passed the November/December, 2012 WASSCE examinations and met the requirements for admission were to be re-admitted as fresh students in the following year.

The affected students as well as their parents/guardians were informed by letter of the package. Teachers who were to teach the remedial classes were identified and contacted. The affected students were duly registered for the November/December, 2012 WASSCE examinations. The remedial classes commenced on April 23, 2012.
3.0 RECEIPT OF NAB AUDIT REPORT

On April 13, 2012, we received an NAB Audit Report dated April 11, 2012 which requested us to comment on the findings of the report by April 20, 2012. On April 16, 2012, we received another NAB Audit Report dated April 13, 2012 directing us to withdraw the students cited in the report for being unqualified for admission. We were further requested by the letter to communicate to NAB by April 30, 2012, the action taken by us on this directive.

4.0 OUR COMMENTS ON NAB’S AUDIT REPORT OF APRIL 11, 2012

On Monday April 23, 2012, we submitted by hand our comments on the NAB April 11, 2012 Audit Report. Senior Management of MUCG on that occasion also met Senior Management of NAB to discuss the NAB directive. On the same occasion, we also submitted to the NAB, the following documents for the Board’s consideration: a plea letter dated April 20, 2012, headed, ‘Plea for Reversal of Withdrawal Directive’, and a document dated April 24, 2012 containing a list of our students who had been admitted solely on SSSCE/WASSCE results for the 2011/2012 academic year whom we had withdrawn in compliance with the NCTE/NAB’s directive.

In the plea letter dated April 20, 2012, we urged the Board to set aside the instruction for the withdrawal of other students cited in the Audit Report (except those admitted solely on the SSSCE/WASSCE who did not meet the NCTE/NAB directive) on the following grounds:

i. The students were admitted under requirements implicitly approved for MUCG by NAB as, since its inception in the year 2000, applications for accreditation of programmes and subsequently approved by NAB, have always included in the accompanying documentation, statements of admission requirements to programmes of the University College.

ii. Accreditation Panels and NAB itself have had occasion to suggest changes in Programmes submitted for accreditation, for the purpose of improving the Programmes. Suggestions have included restructuring aspects of a Programme, changing course titles or course content, reduction of teaching load, improving physical or teaching and learning facilities, etc. On one occasion, a Panel for the Diploma in IT programme suggested the exclusion of pre-University certificates as entry qualification, which we duly complied with. On another occasion when MUCG advertised in the papers its intention to organise Remedial or Pre-entry courses and Qualifying Examination for admission for SSSCE holders to remedy any deficiencies that they may have, NAB promptly wrote to stop us from organizing such classes.

However, except for the above two observations, on no other occasion had any of the different NAB Panels that had vetted MUCG Programmes queried the admission requirements stipulated in our submissions, or the levels to which candidates were
to be admitted. In fact one Panel in the initial stages described the admission requirements as ‘adequate and comparable to similar higher education institutions in Ghana’, and awarded a maximum score to us.

iii. Besides the admission requirements specified in the various Programmes submitted to NAB, copies of MUCG’s Catalogue and Admissions Brochure have always been sent to NAB through its Accreditation Panels. The Board has never objected to or changed any details in the admission requirements stipulated in the relevant documents submitted to it, or published in the media.

iv. MUCG’s advertisements inviting applications for admission are published in the local newspapers. NAB in the past has read all such advertisements. On one occasion within two weeks of the first publication in the Daily Graphic, NAB wrote to MUCG to object to the advertised age of 25 years for Mature Candidates, and referred to MUCG’s initial accreditation documents in the year 2000 which stipulated 30 years. MUCG then wrote to seek approval.

v. Until the NCTE directive issued in November 2010, which were restricted to SSSCE/WASCE candidates, NAB had not brought to our notice, any admission requirements or levels to which students were to be admitted, which were contrary to, or superseded those stipulated in our Programmes approved by NAB.

5.0. ANOTHER NAB REQUEST

Following a request to us by NAB to submit a list of all students admitted for the 2011/2012 academic year to be considered by the Quality Assurance Committee of the NAB at its meeting to be held on April 26, 2012, we submitted the required list in a letter dated April 25, 2012. It was delivered by hand to the NAB on April 26, 2012. MUCG had been given the impression by NAB that the Quality Assurance Committee would scrutinize the submissions made by the Audit Panel to MUCG, together with the submissions the University College had also made. It would appear, however, that this did not happen.

Five days after our meeting with the Executive Secretary and his team on April 23, 2012 a front page publication was carried by the Daily Graphic edition of April 28, 2012 indicating that 1,465 students of MUCG admitted for the 2011/2012 academic year were unqualified for admission and were to be withdrawn. It is worthy of note that the publication appeared in the newspaper when the April 30, 2012 deadline given to the University College by NAB had not yet expired, and NAB was yet to receive for study, our comments on the Audit report to withdraw the 1,465 students which was submitted on time on April 30, 2012. This caused quite a stir among MUCG students, and great embarrassment to MUCG.
6.0. **NAB’S DECISION ON OUR COMMENTS/SUBMISSIONS**

The issues we had submitted to the NAB (including relevant supporting documents) were to be considered by the NAB at the Board’s meeting held on May 22, 2012.

We received a letter dated May 28, 2012 from the NAB on May 31, 2012 conveying the Board’s decision directing us to withdraw the 1,465 students who had not met the admission requirements. We were also to cease advertising our programmes for the 2012/2013 academic year admissions, and not to admit fresh students until we had complied with the directive. This was inspite of our detailed comments and explanations on the findings of the Audit report and plea letter.

It needs to be pointed out that the NAB’s latest repeated directive to us to withdraw the 1,465 students dated May 28, 2012 had come when the 2011/2012 academic year had ended. The instruction therefore to withdraw students who had already completed one full academic year of study posed a tremendous challenge for the University College. It was likely also to cause the affected students devastating psychological and emotional trauma. Indeed most of these students might find themselves permanently traumatised.

NAB’s continued demand that we should withdraw the same 1,465 students without any variation to the number even after an NAB Emergency meeting held on May 22, 2012 had studied our comments on the Audit report and other submissions would seem to suggest that our comments and submissions were not considered at the Board’s Emergency meeting. The Executive Secretary of NAB has himself formally communicated to us that admission requirements for mature students are determined by mentor institutions, and not NAB. Mature students admitted by MUCG for the 2011/2012 academic year were admitted on the basis of admission requirements approved by our mentor institution, University of Ghana, namely, 25 years and a pass performance in an entrance examination conducted by MUCG. It should be apparent therefore that the names of 389 mature students included in the NAB’s list of 1465 students were not ‘unqualified’ and those students should not be withdrawn.

The list also includes 150 HND students whose case the NAB Executive Secretary had indicated was yet to be considered by the Board. They should therefore not form part of the 1,465 to be withdrawn.

In pursuit of the resolution of the outstanding consequences of the directive to withdraw the students, MUCG has submitted another formal plea, this time to the Chairman of the NAB for a suspension of the directive in the hope that the case of MUCG will be considered by the Board at its meeting scheduled for the end of June, 2012.

7.0. **MUCG’S COMPLIANCE WITH DIRECTIVE TO WITHDRAW STUDENTS**

After extensive consultations both within and without, MUCG was advised to submit one more request for suspension of the NAB directive. MUCG should seek legal action only as
a last resort. With the NAB ban on advertising and admitting fresh students the University College felt compelled to comply with the NAB directive and accordingly wrote to withdraw the admission of all students affected by the NAB directive. Following the issuance of the letters of withdrawal to the affected students MUCG made a further request to NAB to suspend its directive and lift the ban. The request, restating MUCG’s side of the story, was copied to the Minister of Education. As a result of these steps, NAB has lifted the ban on advertising and admitting fresh students for 2012/2013 (vide NAB letter to MUCG dated Monday, July 9, 2012).

8.0 MEETING WITH MINISTER OF EDUCATION

The Minister of Education convened a meeting with the MUCG Principal, Executive Secretaries of NCTE and NAB, and the Deputy Minister of Education on June, 2012. The outcome of the meeting was stated in a communique issued by the Minister dated 11th July 2012. The Following are the main decisions and directives by the Minister addressed to all Universities and University Colleges, and to the NAB.

- **Affected HND Students**: should be kept (i.e. be allowed to continue with their studies), by the University Colleges “for a period, not exceeding one academic year, while ensuring that such students take steps to make good the defects in their grades in the SSSCE/WASSCE core subjects before they graduate”.

- **Mature students**: Mentor institutions should take their affiliate University Colleges through their own admission procedures before permitting the University Colleges to admit mature students. The offer is for one academic year, with effect from the 2012/2013 academic year.

- **Other unqualified students**: Affected University Colleges should organize remedial classes for the affected students and register them for WASSCE examinations at the institutions’ expense. Those who pass the examinations are to be re-admitted to continue with their study programmes. The offer is valid for a period not exceeding one academic year, 2012/2013.

- **Universities/university colleges** that have not yet been visited are to take pre-emptive measures based on the foregoing directives.

- **NAB** was directed to publicize the applicable entry requirements to all tertiary education institutions in Ghana, in consonance with the Tertiary Education Accreditation and Establishment Regulations (L.I. 1984) 2010.
9.0. ACTION TAKEN BY MUCG TO ADDRESS THE SITUATION OF STUDENTS AFFECTED BY THE WITHDRAWAL

MUCG has since taken action to address the issue of withdrawals:

i. **Mature students**

MUCG has sought clearance for students who were admitted through the Mature Students procedure in 2011/2012 and were, therefore, not unqualified. The University of Ghana, MUCG’s mentor institution, has given that clearance for those admitted as Mature students but were **wrongly listed as unqualified by NAB**. These number **389**.

ii. **HND Students**

In accordance with the Minister’s communique, affected HND Students i.e., students with HND certificate who do not have the requisite credit passes at SSSCE/WASSCE, will continue with their study programmes. Those willing to do WASSCE remedials will be offered a package by MUCG to do so at MUCG’s expense.

iii. **Other Students**

The bulk of this category of affected students hold DBS, University and other Diplomas, and professional qualifications like RSA III, CIM, CIA etc, and Teacher’s Certificate “A”. Those who are 27 years and above can migrate to the Mature students mode and write the Mature Students Entrance Examination. Those who are successful will be re-admitted to continue their study programmes from where they left off.

Those who are below the age of 27 and have defects at SSSCE/WASSCE will be offered a package to take remedial classes and re-write the examinations.

**Packages offered**

a. **For SSSCE/WASSCE remedial**

- MUCG will pay for remedial classes and register the students with WAEC up to a maximum of three subjects to re-write the SSSCE/WASSCE Examinations in November-December 2012.

b. **For those migrating to Mature students mode**

- They will take access course free of charge and will not pay a fee for the Mature Students’ Entrance Examination.
Remedial classes are in progress, preparing affected students for the WAEC 2012 Nov-Dec examinations. Successful students will be re-admitted when the results are out in February–March 2013. Those who cannot take advantage of the offer now will start classes in the near future to write the WAEC examinations some time in 2013.

10.0 OUTSTANDING MATTERS

We might add that there is currently a certain amount of uncertainty about admission requirements into tertiary institutions as can be seen from advertisements placed in the newspapers by various University Colleges/tertiary institutions.

In view of the far reaching implications of the NCTE/NAB decision on entry requirements, it is suggested that extensive and wide-ranging consultations should be held by NCTE/NAB to arrive at a consensus that addresses the need to provide available access and opportunity to all those who could benefit from exposure to University education.

11.0 MUCG’S CONTRIBUTION TO EDUCATION

For the information of the general public, MUCG was established by the Methodist Church Ghana and affiliated to the University of Ghana in October 2000 having received accreditation by the National Accreditation Board in August 2000.

It started modestly with 213 students sharing facilities with Wesley Grammar Senior High School in Dansoman. With annual subvention and regular financial support from the Methodist Church Ghana, MUCG now spreads over three campus located in Dansoman, Tema, and Wenchi.

In Dansoman, the University College has three faculties: Business Administration, Social Studies, and Arts and General Studies. The Faculty of Business Administration offers degree programmes in Business Administration with specializations in Accounting, Banking and Finance, Human Resource Management, Marketing and Management Studies. These programmes are offered at Day and Evening sessions while a Weekend programme has been recently added to the Business Administration programmes in Dansoman in response to demand. The Faculty of Social studies offers degree programmes in Psychology, Economics, Mathematics and Statistics, and Information Technology. The Faculty of Arts and General Studies offers degree programmes in Religious Studies and Ethics, Music, English Studies, and French. Also offered on Dansoman campus are MBA, MPhil degree in Guidance and Counselling, Mathematics and Statistics.

The Tema campus, for the moment, concentrates on Evening programmes leading to degrees in Business Administration being offered on the Dansoman campus. The Wenchi campus houses the Faculty of Agriculture, and is supported by Agribusiness Development Centres (ABDCs) located in Akyem Swedru, and Yeji. The Faculty offers degree and
diploma programmes in Agriculture. Plans are far advanced to also mount a degree programme in Nursing at the Wenchi campus.

In its twelve years of existence, MUCG has admitted no less than twelve thousand (12,000) degree students, not counting diploma and certificate students. Yearly admission has grown steadily from the initial 213 students to some 2,450 and the current enrolment covering all programmes offered on our three campuses is around 6,100. More than half of our students are workers and the female student population is a little more than male. Out of this studentship, about 4,200 have graduated with first degrees (including 334 first class honours, and 993 second class upper). Some 220 students have graduated with MBA and MPhil degrees. These graduates are working in various establishments with many of them already holding high responsible positions.

Physical infrastructural development is proceeding steadily and we should soon have three four-storied classroom blocks (one new) at Dansoman campus, one classroom block at Tema campus (brand new) and commodious classroom space in Wenchi. These complemented by additional Administrative and Library facilities provide, all in all, quite impressive campuses for such a young institution.

12.0 SUMMARY

The NAB treated MUCG very unfairly for the following reasons:

i. The qualifications used in admitting students to MUCG over the years have been known to NAB. The qualifications, i.e., entry requirement including DBS and other professional requirements, have always been stated in applications for accreditation of programme to be run by MUCG.

ii. NAB had never, before the 2012 Audit, queried DBS as a qualification for admission to degree programmes at MUCG. The impression created by NAB that MUCG admitted unqualified students is therefore not correct.

iii. On the contrary, programmes have been accredited, and some have even been re-accredited, and Certificates of Programme Accreditation issued several times over.

iv. The NAB’s list of qualifications for admission into tertiary institutions as published in the Ghanaian Times on July 15, 2012, which excludes DBS, is the only comprehensive list ever sighted by MUCG in its twelve years existence.

v. The persistent repetition by NAB in the media that MUCG has admitted 1465 unqualified students even after the University of Ghana had informed it that 389 out of the 1465 were admitted as Mature Students and were, therefore, qualified, raises questions as to NAB’s motives.
vi. The intervention by the Hon. Minister of Education, which permitted holders of HND with deficiencies in their SSSCE/WASSCE grades, to continue with their study programmes but remedy the deficiencies before graduation, should be extended to the other affected students as well, to enable them continue with their study programmes but make good the deficiencies before graduating.

13.0 CONCLUSION

MUCG wishes to assure the general public of its continued commitment to the high ideals and the vision and mission of its Founding Fathers and Mothers. To the hierarchy and members of The Methodist Church Ghana; past, present and future students and staff of MUCG; parents/guardians and sponsors; well-wishers and admirers; and the nation at large, we renew our pledge to deliver quality higher education coupled with positive Christian spirituality and values for the good life.

We further pledge to continue steadfastly to provide the needed support to supply the human resource requirements of the nation under our motto of Excellence, Morality and Service.

We wish to take this opportunity to say thank you to the thousands/millions of all categories of well-wishers of MUCG who have been with us all along, for their personal and telephone calls, text messages, pieces of advice, patience, encouragement, support, and unflinching faith and prayers. The sovereign Lord God of Justice and the Lord of our storms will take us through.

For Quality Education, you can trust the Methodists!

August 17, 2012