

Ref No.:.....**CL.16**.....**16th February 2023****PRESS STATEMENT****UPDATE ON NEW RESIDENTIAL ARRANGEMENTS AND
MATTERS ARISING**

In the afternoon of February 14, 2023, a group of about 100 persons claiming to be students of the University of Ghana and continuing students of Commonwealth Hall, invaded the University of Ghana campus and embarked on an illegal procession. The group eventually converged at the entrance of Commonwealth Hall and attempted to forcibly enter the Hall. In the process, they attacked the University Security and the Police Officers who had been stationed there. In the ensuing violent confrontation, the police officers were able to stop the group and arrested eighteen (18) members of the group. Our checks confirm that some of the members of the group are not students of the University of Ghana. We are informed that those who were arrested were subsequently arraigned before an Accra Circuit Court.

The purported intention of the group was to enforce an order of the High Court, Accra presided over by Justice Francis Obiri against the University. There have been two orders of the Court in relation to injunction applications filed against the University relating to the New Residence Policy of the University.

On January 6, 2023, the University received an *ex parte* order restraining the University from among others, implementing a decision of the University on a residence policy dated October 26, 2022. The University wishes to reiterate that it had not implemented a ‘residential policy decision’ dated October 26, 2022. The University has and continues to maintain, both in and out of court, that it is implementing a decision of the University Council, communicated by its notice dated December 14, 2022. The University Council is a body set up by law to among others “*do or provide for any act or thing in relation to the University which the Council considers necessary or expedient in its capacity as the governing body of the University.*” The membership of Council includes representatives of students and faculty.

In any case, by the time the *ex parte* order was made, indeed before the action was even filed, the University had already implemented its new residential policy. All students of Mensah Sarbah and Commonwealth Halls who were affected by the changes in the residential policy were given the opportunity to register for accommodation in the UGEL Halls. By the time the order was made, almost ninety

percent (90%) of the said students had accepted residency in the re-assigned halls while about eighty (80%) of the students have actually paid and taken up residence in the re-assigned halls. Financial support was available for students who genuinely had difficulty in paying the residential fees charged for the UGEL Halls.

In spite of the difficulty in comprehending the *ex parte* order, as it related to a decision that did not exist, upon receipt of the order, the University immediately stopped further allocation of rooms at Commonwealth Hall out of the abundance of caution.

The second order of the Court by the same judge was obtained on February 9, 2023 and served on the University on February 14, 2023, the same day that the illegal procession and breach of peace by the group took place. The second order was cast in similar language as the first and referred to a particular decision of the University's 'Residence Board' made at a meeting of October 26, 2022. Again, the University has explained that it has not implemented a decision of the Residence Board on residency of students dated October 26, 2022.

On the day that the second order was made, the University instructed its lawyers to appeal against the order and to apply to stay enforcement of the order. That application of the University was served on the lawyers of the students the same day. The University believes that that order should not have been made at all having regard to all the facts that were made available to the Court.

The University has been advised by its lawyers that while the application of the University to stay the injunction order is pending, the order of injunction of the High Court may not be enforced. In any case, an order is certainly not enforced in the violent and lawless manner in which the group acted.

The security agencies have restored calm on campus, and teaching, learning and research continue.

Students are again reminded that the University Statutes and Student Regulations provide channels for seeking redress, and that the University will not countenance any violent conduct. Any student who attempts to disrupt the peace on Campus will be dealt with according to the laws and regulations of the University.

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REGISTRAR

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