

Sonu should elect right leadership

AS we spearheaded the return of Sonu after the democratic space was opened by the Narc win in 2002 general election, I and other members of what we called students transitional council or the 17 man committee had a dream of Sonu existing as a stable student organisation with leadership that could always embrace dialogue and diplomacy as the best way of problem-solving.

Some of the immediate issues we prioritised were to make sure that the academic programme of the university is not interrupted unnecessarily because of strikes and such kind of reasons.

After being elected, our team emphasised on use of dialogue to reach a consensus with the administration and students without necessarily compromising the rights of the later. Our activities were scheduled as per the strategic

plan that we unveiled during the day we were sworn in.

We had ups and downs including a few of our officials being corrupt, however, our achievements involved the most important and very touchy issue of loan increment for the students and internship money for nursing students.

Through dialogue the communication between students and administration was beneficial to all members of the University of Nairobi community. We believed that such kind of co-existence was good both to students and administration.

We protested the murder of Dr Odhiambo-Mbai, Bomas Draft stalemate, among many others, but always tried as much as we could to avoid confrontational protests. We always came out as winners.

However, it is unfortunate that our successors abandoned our way of dealing

with issues and went back to the days of tackling issues by first going to the streets that backfired.

It is now another time of the year that Sonu elections are nigh and the great challenge that faces students as a community is electing leadership that is focused and issue-oriented.

It has been unfortunate that past Sonu elections have been conducted along tribal lines rather than issues.

I am strongly convinced that all those students who vote wrongly and those who abstain from voting have learnt the hard way of electing weak leadership.

It is tricky for incoming leadership considering the kind of situation the university is going through. Leaders must be people of integrity and of exposure. Student leaders should be people of authority and people who are able to predict actions and their

consequences. Student leaders should be focused and able to negotiate without necessarily causing trouble for self and others.

An able student leader is one who is ready to warn or advice his friends against involvement in criminal activities.

To be on the safe side the leader must be well versed with the university calendar and almanac, which contains everything that governs the day to day running of the university. Ignorance of rules is sometimes suicidal to any individual. Students must come out to elect a people who know that university problems are settled in the university itself and not on the streets.

An intelligent leader knows the repercussions of violent strikes to the country's economy.

To be a celebrated student leader you need to be consistent, assertive, careful,

and principled and of all virtues you must be a good listener. As the students of the University of Nairobi approach elections in April they must understand that the kind of leadership they elect should be in unison with their priorities at the university.

The main challenge in leadership is always putting in consideration that every action has a reaction with greater magnitude, and everything has its own reward whether good or bad.

It is, therefore, imperative for University of Nairobi students to vote responsible leadership. If Sonu leadership is given to wrong people there is a great likelihood that the union will be disbanded again this time round.

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