CSA Advocacy & Campaign Mobilisation

Consolidated Report on Student Perspectives

University of Cape Coast

1. Purpose and Scope

As part of the CSA Advocacy & Campaign Mobilisation ambassador task, I engaged students at the University of Cape Coast in discussions built around the five CSA advocacy priorities: Access & Quality Education, Inclusivity & Diversity, Innovation & Sustainability, Democracy & Governance, and Research & Capacity.

The goal was not simply to present these priorities, but to listen: to find out which priorities matter most to students here, what specific challenges they face, and what practical changes they would like to see. This report brings together the group discussion outcomes and several individual student submissions gathered during the exercise, then compares them to draw out the common threads and the differences.

2. Findings by Priority Area

2.1 Access & Quality Education

This was the most frequently raised priority across all submissions.

- **Challenges:** Rising costs of fees, learning materials and accommodation (especially around Science, Amamoma and Ayensu); overcrowded lecture halls, with classes often exceeding 100 students; limited access to laboratory equipment during peak periods; and a curriculum that some feel is not keeping pace with industry standards.
- **Student solutions:** Flexible/tiered fee payment plans; more university-managed accommodation; subsidised digital course materials and data packages; smaller class sizes where possible; regular review and updating of curriculum content; and prioritising construction of lecture halls over administrative offices, paired with better timetable scheduling to ease overcrowding.

2.2 Inclusivity & Diversity

Students framed this priority around one idea: admission should mean full participation, not just enrolment.

- **Challenges:** Older buildings without reliable ramps or lifts, limiting access for students with disabilities; and financial hardship affecting distance-learning students and those from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- **Student solutions:** Retrofit older buildings with functional ramps and lifts; provide sign-language interpreters at major university programmes; and offer targeted bursaries and financial support.

2.3 Innovation & Sustainability

Students saw this as an area of untapped opportunity rather than crisis.

- **Challenges:** A gap between classroom knowledge and real-world application; visible energy wastage and plastic waste with little campus recycling; and student-led ideas stalling due to lack of funding, mentorship and workspace.
- **Student solutions:** Innovation and entrepreneurship hubs offering mentorship, workspace and small grants; stronger recycling and clean-energy campaigns; and embedding innovation/entrepreneurship components across all academic disciplines, not just business programmes.

2.4 Democracy & Governance

This priority drew the strongest reactions and was ranked critical in the main discussion.

- **Challenges:** Students feel major decisions on fees and policy are communicated only after they are finalised; and there is a persistent perception that the SRC does not consult students before acting, with some feeling that SRC projects serve the executives' legacies more than the wider student body.
- **Student solutions:** Semesterly open engagements between University Management and students; transparent SRC elections through secure digital voting; stronger student representation on administrative and policy committees; and regular consultation, through surveys, open dialogues, or online forms each semester, before projects are implemented.

2.5 Research & Capacity

Three separate submissions converged on the same underlying issue: research exposure comes too late and is too exclusive.

- **Challenges:** Research opportunities are perceived as accessible mainly to postgraduate students and faculty; undergraduates get little exposure to research methods, grant writing or academic publishing; and in practice, research is treated as important only from Level 400 onward, when final-year projects begin, so students reach that stage without knowing how to search databases or review literature.
- **Student solutions:** Undergraduate research assistantships alongside faculty and postgraduate researchers; workshops on research methods, grant writing and publishing; a structured mentorship system linking undergraduates with more experienced researchers; and introducing research clubs, seminars and skill-building from the early years of university rather than waiting until the final year.

3. Comparing the Cases: Similarities and Differences

3.1 Similarities

- Access comes late or to the few: whether it is research opportunities (reserved for postgraduates), lecture hall space (insufficient for growing numbers), or decision-making input (given after decisions are made), the same pattern repeats: something important is available, but not early enough or not to everyone.
- Consultation over control: across Democracy & Governance and Research & Capacity especially, students are not asking to take over decisions; they want to be asked and heard before decisions are finalised.
- Preference for structured, ongoing solutions: nearly every solution proposed is a system (mentorship programmes, semesterly engagements, recurring workshops) rather than a one-time fix, suggesting students want sustained change, not a single gesture.
- Infrastructure is a recurring bottleneck: lecture halls, accommodation, and accessible buildings all point to the same root cause of physical capacity not matching student numbers.

3.2 Differences

- Nature of the problem: some issues are physical/infrastructural (lecture halls, accommodation, ramps), while others are procedural (SRC consultation, timetabling) or developmental (research skill-building over time). These need different types of solutions and different timelines.
- Institutional vs individual framing: the main group discussion described issues at the level of the whole student body, while individual respondents (Bernice Boateng, Roda Sintim) personalised the same themes through their own department or lived experience, adding sharper detail (e.g., offices being built instead of lecture halls; SRC legacy projects).
- Urgency: Democracy & Governance was flagged as the most critical priority overall, but for Research & Capacity, the concern was less about urgency and more about timing and sequencing, that is, when in a student's academic journey the opportunity should begin.
- Scope of solution: some fixes are within reach of the SRC or student associations alone (surveys, research clubs), while others require university management investment (new buildings, accommodation, curriculum overhaul).

4. Key Takeaways

- All five CSA priorities are relevant to UCC students, but Democracy & Governance and Access & Quality Education carry the most urgency right now.
- The clearest, most actionable win is better and earlier consultation: through surveys, semesterly forums, and transparent elections, most of the trust gap around governance could be narrowed without major capital investment.
- Research & Capacity needs a shift in timing, introducing research skills from Level 100 rather than Level 400, more than it needs entirely new resources.
- Infrastructure-related concerns (lecture halls, accommodation, accessibility) will need longer-term institutional investment, but interim steps like timetable scheduling and retrofitting can ease pressure sooner.
- Across every priority, students are asking for the same basic thing: to be included, consulted and given room to grow, consistently, and from the start of their university journey rather than only at the end.