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UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY: FORWARD LOOKING POLICIES BASED ON PAST EXPERIENCE

BY

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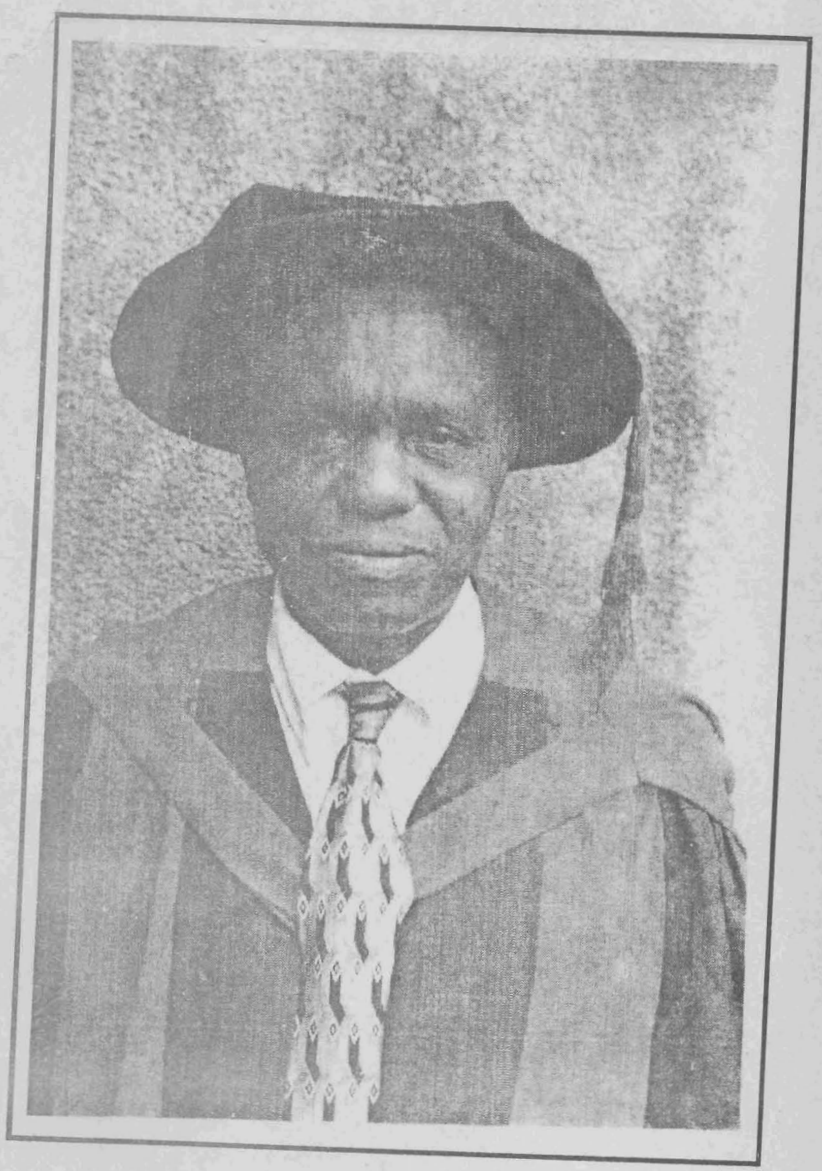

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Introduction

The importance of the role of a university in a society cannot be over-emphasized. The role must be in consonance with economic, political, social, educational and cultural developments of a society. The role must be reviewed from time-to-time, not only to cater for societal needs and aspirations from one generation to another, but also to solve today's world's problems in order to provide a solid foundation for the solution of future problems. In order to prevent the university system from collapse in achieving its objectives, a continuous assessment of its role must take place from time-to-time.

Furthermore, the university system is an essential ingredient for the sociological, cultural, technological, political, economic and educational developments of any nation. It is also an essential catalyst for individual development mentally, intellectually, emotionally, physically and psychologically. It is indeed an eye-opener to one's self-realisation and identity in terms of one's potentialities, abilities and capabilities. Any nation that *fails* to cherish its university system, develop it to its optimum level, enhance it to an enviable level, develop it as a centre of excellence and also fails to improve it and evaluate it from time-to-time for the progress of humanity, is a dying nation. As a result, university policy planning and administration must not only take into consideration today's needs, but also look far ahead into future societal needs.

Further still, a university is a change agent. As the beliefs, values, norms, mores of a society change, a university system must adapt itself to those changes. As the economic, educational, technological, political, cultural and societal needs of a society change, a university system must restructure itself to be in tune with those needs. A university system that fails to change with the changes in its society, is, indeed, a static system.

No social system remains stagnant forever. It must continually change. It must also continually move. The movement and/or the change may be consequent upon the changes in the economic, educational, technological, political, cultural and societal needs. A university system that fails to change may pay the price of folding up. This observation of mine is supported by Grilo (1983:136), when he stated thus:

> *Those universities which will not go through this process of change, and which will not adapt themselves to the necessities and render their service required to justify their presence and be capable of answering the challenge put to them, will not survive.*

Furthermore, Kohlberg (1972: 449-196) observed that:

> *If the world is to prosper, I see no escape for us as academics but to turn our attention to facilitate the growth of its people. To find the motivation for this endeavour, we may need to turn inward at the same time we look outward.*

Based upon all the above, what form should university governance in Nigeria in the twenty-first century take? Before this question can be answered, we need to probe into our past governance policies, examine the current policy practices, and based upon the past and present policy practices, come out with what our governance policies should be in the twenty-first century. These are addressed as follows.

Student Admission

The Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board in Nigeria was established by an Act (No. 2 of 1978) of the Federal Military Government

on 13th February, 1978. On April 29, 1978, the first nationwide Joint Matriculation Examination took place. Candidates were placed in all the existing universities then, based on their expressed preferences and the level of their performance in the examination.

Before the establishment of Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) in 1978, the existing universities then adopted the following admission policies. The preliminary students, that is those who would spend from four to seven years for basic degree and professional courses, were required to have a minimum of five credits at the school certificate level including English Language and/or Mathematics, depending on the course of study, after which they would face a preliminary examination to short-list them for university admission based on the level of their performance in the examination. The direct entry students were required to have a minimum of two passes in the General Certificate Examination of the University of London at the Advanced Level, including three passes in the General Certificate Examination Ordinary Level, and/or a minimum of two passes in the Higher School Certificate Examination, and three passes in the school certificate examination. This category of students would spend from three to five years in the university for basic degree and professional courses, depending on their course of study.

From April 1978 to date, students gain admission into Nigerian universities through the Universities Matriculation Examinations (U.M.E.), being conducted by JAMB. There is nothing wrong with having a national uniform admission policy, but what I observed to be wrong with UME is that in recent times, the policy has been fraught with a lot of problems some of which are cultural and political in nature. Cultural in the sense that it is not uncommon nowadays to hear of cases of some parents going to the JAMB office in Abuja to influence through bribery the scores of their children, so that those children may enter for the courses of their choice.

We do not have to conduct an empirical study to substantiate this. Our contemporary culture, being a culture of corruption. This is what happens every year. For example, a man brought one "Alhaja" to me in year 2000, to assist with the admission of her son. The son got well over 200 but not up to the cut-off score for his proposed course of study. The "Alhaja" on hearing of the cut-off score lamented: "If I had known, I would have asked them in Abuja to inflate the score more, and I would have paid them more money". Some of the candidates, who have high scores to enter the university, did not have them based on their UME performance. Some scores were bought. Such students will surely enter the university, but at the end of the Rain Semester examination in their first year, they are shown the way out of the university, when they score below one grade point average.

Another problem of UME policy is the preferential and/or differential policy that designates certain parts of the country as disadvantaged areas. This policy is political in nature, and should be discontinued. This policy too has given many of our children, who would have been admitted but could not, due to the policy, a lot of frustrations, seeing those who scored less than them being admitted. It is indeed unfair to the prospective students in some parts of the country, with higher scores in the UME, not to be given admission into the university, while others in the so-designated disadvantaged areas with lower scores have the opportunity of being admitted. This, indeed, is academic apartheid in disguise.

In the 21st century, in as much as Nigeria remains one and the same country, a uniform admission policy that gives equal opportunity of university admission to all prospective students, irrespective of gender and State of origin, should be evolved. My advice to the so-called disadvantaged students in the disadvantaged areas is for their parents to tell them to sit down properly and study to pass their examinations creditably. If a uniform

policy that does not discriminate could not be evolved, let every university set her own admission criteria.

Above all, we must never forget that a university is a meritocratic organisation and not a democratic one. If meritocracy applies to the academics, why should it not apply to the students?

The University Curricula and their Relevance to Societal Needs

The needs of the society should determine the curricula of a university. The curricula must also be reviewed from time-to-time, to fit into the changing needs of the society. University curricula that do not constantly take into consideration the needs of the society, are, indeed, useless curricula.

Furthermore, a university curriculum should be reviewed from time-to-time to fit in with the constantly changing employment patterns. The constant review will not only take into consideration the changing needs of the society, but also will reduce graduate unemployment. It has been observed that universities, at times, are too rigid curricula – wise, and also do not usually take into consideration changing needs of the society to modify their curricula. For example, Teichler (1983:45) observed that:

> *Universities are frequently blamed for not taking into account sufficiently the changes in technology, society, and culture in their structural, curricula, and organizational decision-making. This criticism was especially pronounced in regard to increasing problems of graduates to find a job and to utilize their acquired knowledge.*

A policy relating to reconstructing the curricula from time-to-time, in terms of teaching and learning, should be evolved. There should be a new

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A policy relating to reconstructing the curricula from time-to-time, in terms of teaching and learning, should be evolved. There should be a new

orientation regarding the organisation and structure of teaching and learning. New courses of study should be developed from time-to-time, based upon the needs of the society. As courses and/or programmes are found not meeting societal needs, they should be phased out. A policy relating to inter-disciplinarity in teaching should be formulated. Dealing with the importance of the reconstruction of curricula in higher education,

Ritter (1983:7 & 8) stated that:

> *Taking into consideration the uncertainty of employment prospects of their graduates, institutions of higher education should therefore reconsider curricula, teaching and learning in two respects: they should develop approaches for preparing systematically for problem solving by a direct confrontation of scholarly approaches and practical tasks; and they should prepare for familiar jobs on different levels of the status hierarchy thus preparing graduates to survive better on the labour market and to enable them improve on their jobs.*

In the 21st century, every Nigerian university should be allowed to develop her own curricula for undergraduate academic and professional programmes. The curricula must be revised from time-to-time, possibly every five years. The curricula must also be relevant to societal needs. Universities should not only prepare students for civil service employment, but also prepare them for private self-employment different from the traditional white collar-jobs, which do not allow the students to fully explore their innate capabilities to the optimum level. In other words, we should develop curricula that will enhance flexibility and creativity in all fields of human endeavour.

Research Policies That Should Be Addressed

In the 21st century, Nigerian universities should adopt a new orientation towards their research efforts. Besides academic members individual research efforts to improve teaching and learning, and also for professional growth, researches that will assist in solving man's problems, and also that will make the environment a better place to live in, should be embarked upon. The 21st century should therefore witness more researches into: (a) solving atmospheric pollution and water pollution; (b) minimizing soil destruction; noise pollution and the extermination of flora and fauna species.

Researches into: (a) human medicines; (b) the world economic system; and (c) the solution of the problems of unemployment in general, and that of graduate unemployment in particular. More research is also needed into the fields of teaching and learning. For example, it has been observed by Grilo (1983: 128) thus:

> *Within the system of higher education, research modifies and permanently transforms the attitudes of the teaching body, of the researchers, and of the students, and simultaneously contributes towards the advance and modification of the universities. It is still research, which is greatly responsible for change within the programmes and methods of teaching.*

Research policy of international cooperation should be formulated and encouraged from time-to-time. This will encourage international cooperation in the field of education. There should also be a policy that will establish good relationship between the Nigerian universities and the industries. For example, Grilo (1983:132) has identified the importance of international research organisations as follows:

The international research organisations are centres of great importance owing to the enormous contacts which they allow to be established between scientists and are, above all, useful for the smaller countries which they do not have access by any other means to the sophisticated equipment which is necessary nowadays in the scientific fields. As national funds diminish, between these institutions and international organisations will very probably gain more and more in importance.

Furthermore, in Nigerian universities of the 21st century, interdisciplinarity in research should be encouraged. The possibility of joint appointments by university lecturers should also be looked into either for teaching only and/or for research purposes. Right now, Nigerian universities have linkages with overseas universities. Why can we not have linkages with other Nigerian and African universities beyond the routine sabbatical appointment?

Above all, research in Nigerian universities of the 21st century, should not be for research sake in terms of the notion of 'publish or perish', but instead must be in terms of benefits to the society.

Student-Academic Staff Relationships

The importance of good relationships between the students and their lecturers in university governance cannot be over-emphasised. Good relationships between the students and their teachers will: (a) benefit both the students and their teachers; (b) enhance academic staff performance and vitality; (c) enhance staff-students interactions both within and outside the classroom: and (d) enhance informal students academic staff contacts.

Student-academic staff relationships can take place in the context of teaching and learning. Such relationships can occur in the area of students' feedback in the form of students' evaluation of teachers' teaching competence. The teachers, in turn, can make use of the results of students' evaluation to improve upon their teaching competence. Such improvement will benefit both students and teachers in their teaching-learning endeavours.

In a study, Akinola (1992), found: (a) that the relationship between academic staff and students was not very cordial; and neither was it excellent; (b) that academic staff were not easily accessible to students; and (c) were not willing to help students at times; (d) that communication between students and academic staff was not very effective; and (e) that lecturers should be more helpful; cordial; considerate; humane; patient; accessible; and accommodating in their dealings with students. They should also show a sense of concern to student problems; treat the students as mature people; have specific contact hours with students; not to aim at frustrating students; learn how to relate better with the students both in academic and outside of academic matters; and should not be biased in their relationships with the students. There should be a forum for social gatherings occasionally for lecturers and students.

Based upon the above, the following recommendations are made to Nigerian universities of the 21st century for implementation purposes to enhance the relationship between the students and academic staff: (a) both the students and academic staff should strive towards establishing very cordial and excellent relationships between and among themselves; (b) academic staff should endeavour to make themselves easily accessible and/or approachable to students; (c) academic staff should endeavour to always show the spirit of willingness to help students, especially in academic matters outside of the classroom whenever they are approached by the

students for such help; (d) efforts should be made by both the students andacademic staff to see that the communication between them is always very effective; (e) efforts should be made to establish a forum for social gatherings occasionally for lecturers and students; and above all, (f) both thelecturers and students should endeavour to always explore ways and means on how to improve the relationship between and among themselves.

Staff Evaluation

Staff evaluation is a crucial issue in personnel decisions. In the university system in Nigeria, both academic and non-academic staff are evaluated as regularly as possible, possibly every year. There are several purposes for evaluation. Among them are: (a) noting for good performance; (b) commendation for excellent performance of duty;

(c) demotion for poor performance of duty and/or for cause; (d) regularisation of appointment; (e) withholding of annual salary increment in case of poor performance of duty; (f) renewal of contract appointment; (g) warning for a grave offence or misdemeanour; (h) retention of appointment; (i) confirmation of appointment (tenure); and (j) termination ofappointment for cause.

Academic Staff Evaluation

In many Nigerian universities, if not all, in the past, academic staff evaluation for promotion purposes was mainly based on research and publication. It was a matter of 'publish' or 'perish'. This assessment criterion has been abused to a large extent in the sense that many academic staff, instead of striving after quality in research and publication, usually run after the number of papers that could be produced within the shortest

time possible. Publication has therefore become a game of numbers. Such a practice will not augur well for the future of Nigerian university system as far as the maintenance of academic standards is concerned.

In recent times, many Nigerian universities have developed evaluation criteria, which are not mainly based on research and publication. In some universities, the percentage (%) for research and publication out of a total of 100% might be between 30% and 50%, while in others, it might be between 50% and 60%. For example, at Obafemi Awolowo University, the percentage for research and publication is 50%, while at the University of Lagos, it is 30%. Besides research and publication, other criteria that are usually put into consideration among others are: (a) academic and/or professional qualifications; (b) number of years of professional experience; (c) academic and/or professional status; (d) responsibility post; (e) professional conference attendance; (f) university service; and (g) community service.

All these criteria, besides research and publication, are weighted accordingly. Despite the fact that promotion is no longer mainly based on research and publication, some academic staff, if not many, still run after the number of publication to the detriment of 'quality' in publication. Nowadays, it is not uncommon to find some young academic staff, if not many, patronising local journals and some Nigerian 'mushroom' publishers to have as many numbers of publications as possible within the shortest time possible. Nowadays, many academics do not engage in the practice of publishing overseas, because publication locally has, indeed, become friendly – relationship – oriented.

Furthermore, nowadays, some academics lack focus in their research and publications. As a result, their area of specialization is very difficult to place during the review exercise.

Based upon all the above, what policies should guide academic staff evaluation for promotion purposes in Nigerian universities in the 21st century? The following evaluation programmes should be developed, and their results should be used to evaluate academic staff in addition to research and publication. They are: (a) students evaluation; (b) colleagues (peer-group) evaluation; (c) heads of departments evaluation; (d) self-evaluation; and (e) dean's evaluation.

(a) ***Students Evaluation:*** Students should evaluate their lecturers teaching performance every semester, and the evaluation results should be used as part of the criteria to assess lecturers for promotion. Should the lecturer's evaluation result be found to be too poor or outrightly negative, for two years consecutively, the lecturer should be warned to improve. If the result is still the same in the third year, he/she should be relieved of his/her duties. There actually was a time in this university when the idea of students evaluation was mooted on the floor of Senate. Senate set up a committee to look into it, but the idea was eventually killed more for financial than other reasons.

(b) ***Colleagues and/or Peer-Group Evaluation:*** Colleagues should evaluate their colleagues teaching performance every semester through classroom visitation, and the result of the evaluation be used as part of the criteria for promotion.

(c) ***Head of Department Evaluation:*** The Head of Department should evaluate his/her lecturers teaching performance every semester, and the evaluation results be used as part of the criteria for promotion.

(d) ***Self-Evaluation:*** Lecturers should self-evaluate their

teaching performance every semester, and the results should be used as part of the criteria for promotion. But the extent to which this type of evaluation could be objectively done, remains a problem. I wonder, for instance, which lecturer will be honest or foolish enough to score himself /herself negatively.

(e) ***Dean's Evaluation:*** Through classroom visitation, the Dean of the Faculty should evaluate his/her lecturers teaching performance every semester, and the result of the evaluation be used as part of the criteria for their promotion.

All the above forms of evaluation could be done through the use of questionnaires.

If the evaluation techniques are objectively carried out, their results could be used as part of the criteria to evaluate academic staff. Unfortunately, in the literature, each of the techniques mentioned above, has been found to have advantages and disadvantages. For example, Miller and Haase (1967), in their study, found that teachers trained with access to student appraisal improved significantly than those without. Akinola (1990:29&30), in his study, found that university students were willing to evaluate their teachers teaching effectiveness, and that teaching effectiveness should be considered first in promoting university teachers. Ryder (1970), stated that some scholars have observed that students rating may be influenced by the grades previously earned from teachers. Hodgkinson (1971), supported classroom visitation by colleagues on the ground that it provides substantial data for clinical and statistical interpretation, which in turn encourages improved teaching and helps to establish criteria for assessment.

Furthermore, among the scholars that raised objections to classroom

visitation are the following. Gage (1961:19) argued that, "when the teacher knows he is being watched by someone whose opinion will determine his promotion or salary, his performance may depend on his nerve than on his teaching skill." With regard to self-evaluation, Centra (1972), found that teachers generally evaluate or describe their teaching somewhat differently from the way it is evaluated or described by their students. That there was also a tendency for teachers as a group to give themselves better ratings than their students did. Selding (1984:15 & 16), concerning Head of Department evaluation, has observed that it is not unknown for a promotion and tenure committee member, even a chairperson (Head of Department), to thumb through personnel files seeking negative information on which to hang an adverse prejudgement. Above all, Akinola (1991:69), in his study, found that evaluation procedure at Obafemi Awolowo University, was full of subjectivity, politics, lobbying, discrimination, nepotism, intrigues, dishonesty, multiple standards, oppressions, repressions, and unrealistic criteria. In the 21st century, Nigerian universities must find a way of rising above all these petty and unacademic practices.

Non-Academic Staff Evaluation

In recent times, in many Nigerian universities, administrative and technical staff are evaluated annually. But in terms of promotion, they are promoted every three years. In the 21st century, promotion of administrative and technical staff should become more rigorous. Their promotion should be strictly based on the quality of their job performance, rather than the satisfaction of the three years policy. Heads of administrative and technical units/departments/directorates, should endeavour to be much more sincere in evaluating their staff. It is not uncommon to see some heads of departments/units giving positive evaluation to some of their staff

with whom they have established friendly relationships, whether those staff members perform their duties well or not, and giving negative evaluation to other staff members who perform their duties well, but are not in their good books. Promotion should be strictly based on merit, and not on friendly relationships.

Administration of Student Affairs

The importance of adequate administration of student affairs cannot be over-emphasised. As a result, the welfare of the students, is the well-being of the institution. Any act of levity by the institutional management in handling students affairs, may throw the institution into a very chaotic situation. A chaotic situation is a crisis situation. If a crisis situation is mis-managed by the institution's management, the life of the institution may be seriously disrupted, the aftermath of which may not augur well for the: (a) students; (b) staff; and (c) management. If care is not taken, the Government too may have her own share of the price of the disruption.

Student welfare system is an aspect of student affairs. In recent times, in many Nigerian universities, if not all, students welfare system has not been adequately taken care of. For example, in many residential universities, halls of residence are not adequately provided for the students to live in. In some institutions, Obafemi Awolowo University is an example, the rooms in some halls of residence which were designed to house two students, are now housing as many as five, or six times that number. The students' halls of residence have become slums so much so that the institution's management is having sleepless nights about the congestion. The halls are also not adequately maintained. Some of them are dirty and stinking as decaying goat meat. Obafemi Awolowo University is not unique in this situation. An excursion round some halls of residence at the Nigerian

Premier University, the University of Ibadan, will tell us the same story. Some of these halls of residence do not wear new coats of paint for as long as twenty years. Plumbing, electrical and other facilities in these halls, are in a state of permanent disrepair.

Furthermore, in many of the Nigerian universities, adequate health facilities are not provided. The facilities, in terms of infrastructure, and equipment and drugs, are grossly inadequate. Many of the Health Centres lack modern medical equipment. Due to inadequate funding from the Government, obsolete equipment could not be replaced. Many of the Nigerian universities Health Centres, have, indeed, become referral centres for the prescription of drugs alone.

Provision of transportation system, is another aspect of students affairs administration. In many of the Nigerian universities, if not all, there is no adequate provision of transportation system for students use, especially the off-campus students. The major cause of this inadequacy is inadequate funding from the Government.

Counselling services for students are not adequately provided in many Nigerian universities. Some institutions have students Counselling Centres in name only. As a result, many a university undergraduate in Nigeria does not know why he or she is in the university. Many of them do not have a sense of direction as far as their choice of course of study is concerned, and also their intended future career. Any wonder that many of our undergraduates are frustrated? I dare say that many of them would have preferred to leave, but for the disease of paper qualification syndrome.

Further still, some institutions, if not all, do not have adequate students recreational facilities, if they have at all. The establishment of students recreational parks for students use for leisure and relaxation and fun after their lectures, especially in the evenings, is indeed foreign to many Nigerian

universities, if not all.

The management of students' unionism in many Nigerian universities has become somewhat like a game of cat and rat between the student union and the management. The 'cat' represents the students union, and the 'rat' is symbolic of the management.

Based upon all the above, what policies should Nigerian universities adopt for the successful administration of students affairs in the twenty-first century? Nigerian university system should adopt policies relating to (a) adequate provision of halls of residence, with their facilities and equipment; (b) adequate maintenance of the halls of residence, their facilities and equipment; (c) adequate provision of Health Centre infrastructures, with their facilities, equipment and drugs; (d) adequate provision of students transportation bus system, especially for off-campus students; (e) adequate provision of students Counselling Centres, equipped with facilities and equipment, including well qualified and professionally trained counsellors, to provide adequate counselling services for students; and (f) adequate provision of students recreational parks facilities for students use for leisure and relaxation and fun in the evenings after their lectures Policies relating to adequate management of students unionism should be adopted by the institution's management. The relationship between the Students Union and Management should not be a game of 'cat and 'mouse'.

Technological Development

In the 21st century, Nigerian universities should encourage the use of new technologies. Universities have a great role to play in the application of new technologies for their teaching and research endeavours. In the 21st century, if we are to move from a predominantly agrarian society to

an indutrialised one, we need to make use of new technologies. For example, Grilo (1983:120) observed that "The growth and development of the industrialized societies in the post-war period can be said to be, in global and generic terms based, above all, on the process of the development and application of new technologies that took place during the same period".

Among the application of new technologies is the use of computer. Universities should endeavour not only to have training programmes in the use of computer, but also in its use for their administrative, teaching and research endeavours. Grilo (1983:133) has long foreseen the importance of the use of the computer in education for the Third World countries, when he said: "Even for the Third World countries, the time when information can represent a strong contribution to the development of educational techniques is not far off. In fact, the introduction of computer, apart from greatly benefiting such fields as in medicine, meteorology, and agriculture, its application in education will be the most important of all". But in a study, Akinola (1987: 473-474), has identified some limiting factors to the successful application of the computer in Nigerian universities. Among such factors were: (a) lack of provision of adequate facilities for the personnel to work with; (b) inadequate infrastructure to house the hardware equipment; (c) financial constraint; (d) the attitude of many Nigerians to computer application; (e) computer illiteracy; (f) maintenance problem; (g) inadequate staff development programme; (h) non-availability of adequate software to work with; (i) lack of enough computer time; and (j) government policy. Akinola's suggestion is that in the 21st century, many of these limiting factors should be addressed, to allow for a successful take-off of the use of computer in Nigerian universities.

Furthermore, Nigerian universities should and must contribute to the development of technology in various fields. Luckily, we already have

National Centre for Technological Management (NACETEM); and Technology, Planning and Development Unit (TPDU); and of course, Centre for Energy Research and Development (CERD) at Obafemi Awolowo University. Also, there are the Faculties of Engineering and Technology in many universities in Nigeria. All of these should cooperate and evolve small and medium scale technological appliances suitable for our environment. The priorities should be jointly worked out and determined by these various units in our universities of the 21st century.

Industrial Relations

The relations between the employers and employees of universities will have to be improved upon. For example, in a symposium (1985), it was observed that government particularly in the areas of funding cannot allow Nigerian universities to enjoy the traditional autonomy associated with universities, but there is no reason why this situation should necessarily place in jeopardy the essential features of academic freedom". It was also observed "that the threat to autonomy referred to above is placing some strains on the traditional relationship between employers and the employees in Nigerian universities". In the last ten years or so, a new additional problem has arisen namely, the three unions of Academic Staff Union of Nigerian Universities (ASUU), Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities (SSANU) and Non Academic Staff Union (NASU). How should the universities relate to them without apparent bias for one or the other? More importantly, how should the three relate to one and other without friction and jealousy? These are issues that will become more and more important in the coming years.

The Preparation of the 21st Century University Administrators

The type of preparatory training to give Nigerian university administrators and planners of the 21st century, should be one that will equip them well to face the challenges of the future. If higher education is a specialised field, then its administrators must have specialized training. Up till now, there is no such specialised training other than the acquisition of the first degree in any field. This, to me, will not do for the highly complex nature of the universities to come in the 21st century. They must be trained to learn to be flexible in approaching issues, and also be ready to change with the times. For example, Fast (1977:37 & 38) notes that "higher education administrators in the twenty-first century must be dynamic, flexible, and precise – able to work with people, anticipate and accommodate change and make decisions. He further emphasizes that educational leaders should be individuals "who are not afraid to take positions, to take risks, to develop new policies and to meet needs". Administrators of the future, according to Fantini (1981:214-218), must be anticipatory. Not only should they be concerned about the present and the future, but also must be wiling to share their responsibilities with junior colleagues in their institutions and with civic leaders in the local community.

Employment System, Especially Graduate Employment

In the 21st Century, there is need for an indepth study into the relationship between the Nigerian universities and the employment system. A study of that nature will bring about better employment policies. An aspect of any employment system is the length of working life. There should be policies for the training and retraining of people from time-to-time, to fit into the employment system that may be brought about by

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changes in social, economic, educational and technological development.

Follow-up research by various departments should be instituted as to whether their graduates are performing well and/or not-so-well in their various places of employment within the first five years. This feedback process will allow the departments or the universities in general to know whether they are providing adequate manpower training or not. It is also a good means of self-assessment.

Student-Administrative Staff Relationships

In higher education industry, especially the university system, students and administrative staff should endeavour to perceive themselves as partners working towards achieving institutional goals and objectives. The existence of cordial relationships between students and administrative staff is not only crucial, but also essential to the successful pursuit of institutional objectives.

There are various factors that could influence good relationships between students and administrative staff. Some of the factors include: (a) effective communication between students and administrative staff; (b) the willingness of administrative staff to attend to students' enquiries, problems, and/or matters; (c) easy accessibility and/or approachability of administrative staff to students when students have any dealings with administrative staff; and (d) cordial relationships between students and administrative staff. The existence of good relationships between students and administrative staff, will have positive spillover effects not only on academic performance of students, but also on their mental health.

In a study, Akinola (1992) investigated the types of relationships

existing between students and administrative staff at Obafemi Awolowo University, in terms of: (a) cordiality of relationships existing between students and administrative staff; (b) excellence of relationships existing between students and administrative staff; (c) accessibility and/or approachability of administrative staff to students; (d) willingness of administrative staff to attend to students in administrative matters; and (e) effectiveness of communication between students and administrative staff. The findings of the study revealed that: (a) the relationship between students and administrative staff was both 'cordial' and 'fairly cordial', but not 'very cordial'; (b) the relationship between students and administrative staff was 'fairly good' and 'good' respectively, but not excellent; (c) the administrative staff were 'fairly easily accessible', and not 'easily accessible' to students respectively; (d) the administrative staff were 'just wiling to attend to students', but not 'very willing to attend to students', and also 'attend to students grudgingly' in administrative matters; (e) the communication between students and administrative staff was 'fairly effective', and also 'effective' respectively, but not 'very effective'; (f) the administrative staff should be more ready, patient, friendly, cordial, approachable and accommodating in dealing with students, especially in listening to students' complaints; be more dedicated to their work, especially the junior ones; should always see students as their brothers and sisters, and as partners in educational progress working towards achieving institutional goals and objectives; (g) the senior administrative officers were found to be ready to attend to students' problems, complaints and matters more than the junior ones; (h) some administrative staff were found to be good and naturally affable, while some were found to behave as frustrated people and were unnecessarily annoying; and (i) the relationships between students and administrative staff need to be much more improved upon.

Why is the relationship not better than it is? Reasons could be cultural, economic and sociological, but more probably a combination of all.

Culturally, there is the gerontocratic organisation of our traditional society, in which the youths are supposed to always defer to the elders. Meanwhile, university education is based on meritocracy, not gerontocracy.

Economically, most undergraduates tend to see themselves as having a better economic future than university administrators and (even lecturers). Therefore, a kind of instinctive arrogance attends their posture towards administrative personnel, especially the junior administrative cadre. Complimentarily, the junior administrative cadre is also instinctively envious and therefore hostile to the students. They do not see themselves as being less intellectually endowed, only less lucky or lacking opportunity for self educational advancement.

Sociologically, we have to admit that university education in Nigeria is an elite creating institution, with all the economic privileges and political power accruing to that elite class. This means that if you do not have university education in Nigeria, you are condemned permanently to the lower and under-class. For instance, Bill Gates turned his back on university education in America when he dropped out from Harvard University in 1975. Today, he is not only the richest man in the world; he is also an employer of hundreds of graduates. Furthermore, and most importantly, it is inconceivable that any Professor can do any genuine research today without using Microsoft software. In Nigeria, Bill Gates will be regarded not only as a drop-out, but also a failure.

Based upon the above, the following recommendations are being suggested to Nigerian universities of the 21st century for implementation purposes, to enhance the relationships between students and administrative staff: (a) both the students and administrative staff should strive towards

establishing very cordial and excellent relationships with each other; (b) the administrative staff should always endeavour to make themselves very easily accessible and/or approachable to students; (c) the administrative staff should always endeavour to be very willing to attend to students matters, especially in listening to students' complaints, instead of attending to students grudgingly; (d) efforts should be made by both the students and administrative staff to see that the communication between them is always very effective; (e) efforts should be made to establish a forum for social gathering occasionally in the form of workshops, seminars, speeches and symposia for students and administrative staff, on student-administrative staff relationships; and (f) both the students and administrative staff should endeavour to improve the relationships between themselves;(g) lastly, we should find a way of de-emphasizing university education as an elite creating institution.

The Issue of University Autonomy and Academic Freedom

University autonomy and academic freedom have been age-long concepts for serious discussion and argument between and among academics, university administrators and the state, all over the world, as far as university system administration is concerned. In recent times in Nigeria, a debate on the "Bill on University Autonomy" has occupied most of the time of University Senates and the National Assembly. Based upon our past and present experience of university administration in Nigeria, what form should university autonomy and academic freedom take in the 21st century? In order to provide an answer to this question, let us have a look at what university autonomy and academic freedom mean.

Why is university autonomy necessary? The question cannot be answered until we answer a prior question which is what is a university

for? The modern university dates back to the renaissance in the 16th century. The origin of the modern university coincides with the arrival of the Age of Reason, in Western Europe. The renaissance university was set up to promote and protect reason, whereby a group of people, who were philosophers and scientists could gather and exchange information and ideas freely and without fear of political persecution or economic hardship. The corollary of this was also that reason should always govern political affairs and rulership. In other words, whereas prior to the renaissance, rulers ruled by tradition, now rulers should rule by reason. Hence, the need to protect those who know how to pursue reason and make it available to both rulers and the ruled. Hence, too, the concept of university autonomy. It is therefore no surprise that universities are freest in democracies and most unfree in fascist or military regimes. We are all witness to the fact that our university, Ife, was most free under the democratic government of pre- military era, and most unfree under subsequent military regimes.

University Autonomy Defined:

University autonomy as I understand it is for the universities to be completely autonomous in their day-to-day administration without any interference whatsoever by the Federal Government as far as Federal universities are concerned, by the State Government as far as State universities are concerned, and by the Proprietors as far as Private universities are concerned. This autonomy relates to: (a) determination of criteria for student admission; (b) student admission; (c) determination of school calendar; (d) appointment of staff and staffing; (e) determination of criteria for promotion of staff; (f) promotion of staff; (g) discipline of staff for cause; (h) discipline of students for cause; (i) teaching; (j) research;

(k) service; (l) appointments of Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellor(s), Registrar, Bursar and the Librarian, and their functions; (m) composition of Senate and its functions; (n) composition of congregation and its functions; (o) composition of convocation and its functions; and (p) funding, among other areas.

Dressel, *et. al* (1972:14), observed that university autonomy is essentially the freedom to use resources and to define and execute programmes consonant with institutional purposes. Autonomy according to him allows institutional differentiation and diversity. It permits the development of individual initiative and creativity. Especially it recognizes professional competency and its role in fulfilling the purposes of the university. He said that without any autonomy, the university probably could not exist as we understand the term, and that the university could not perform the essential functions that led to its creation. He concluded that autonomy is easy enough to define in the abstract, but it is difficult to deal with in the concrete, since its nature and extent vary in different situations.

Furthermore, Dressel, *et. al.* (1972:15) stated that universities seek autonomy for many reasons: (a) to gain freedom and flexibility in resource allocation; (b) curriculum planning; (c) staff promotion; (d) selection of academic staff and administrators; (e) to determine instructional practices and admission policies; and (f) to make decisions about research and educational programmes.

Academic Freedom Defined:

I see academic freedom as the intellectual freedom of a scholar to teach what he knows to be true in his/her field of competency, to inquire

freely into what he/she believes is worthy of academic pursuit in terms of research and publish the findings of the research as he/she sees it, freedom of speech and freedom of assembly, among others.

Some scholars have approached the definition of academic freedom from different perspectives. For example, Kirk (1955:1) referred to a distinguished editor, Mr. W.T. Couch, who sees academic freedom as a principle designed to protect the teacher from hazards that tend to prevent him from meeting his obligations in the pursuit of truth. According to Couch, the obligations of the teacher are direct to truth, and the teacher who, in order to please anybody, suppresses important information, or says things he knows are not true, or refrains from saying things that need to be said in the interest of truth, betrays his calling and renders himself unworthy to belong in the company of teachers. Kirk (1955:3) states that academic freedom is a security against hazards to the pursuit of truth by those persons whose lives are dedicated to conserving the intellectual heritage of the ages and to extending the realm of knowledge. According to him, it is the right to, or group of rights, intended to make it possible for certain persons (always very few in number, in any society, when compared with the bulk of the population) to teach truthfully and to employ their reason to the full extent of their intellectual powers. Finally, Murphy (1964:21) said that academic freedom is a right claimed by the accredited educator, as a teacher and, as investigator, to intepret his findings and to communicate his conclusions without being subjected to any interference, molestation, or penalization because those conclusions are unacceptable to some constituted authority within or beyond the institution.

Now that we have been able to satisfy ourselves with the two concepts defined above, what form should university autonomy and academic freedom take in Nigerian universities in the 21st century? In order to answer this question, I submit as follows:

(a) Complete autonomy should not be granted to the Nigerian university system by the Federal Government. Due to human frailties, the universities will abuse complete autonomy to the regret of the entire nation.

(b) The Bill on Autonomy if and when passed, should retain certain autonomous areas of functions to the universities, while some other areas are to be under Federal Government controls.

(c) In the governance of university system, there are two concepts of autonomy. The first is 'procedural autonomy', while the second is 'substantive autonomy'. Berdahl (1971:16) has clearly distinguished between procedural autonomy and substantive autonomy. He said procedural autonomy may be curbed by State controls imposed in the interest of good management without threatening the substantive autonomy or academic freedom. He opined that many persons who have looked at State controls have taken a much more serious view of their implications. His argument is that essential fairness in interpreting and imposing controls is of more importance than whether a particular control is, in itself, right or wrong. He said that by fairness (whatever that may mean, and certainly it will be controversial) the public interest and the substantive autonomy of the universities will

be protected. Perhaps the real point (also expressed by Bendahl) is that since interference is inevitable, it should at any rate be confined to proper topics and controls should be expressed in a fair and sensitive fashion.

(d) The Bill on Autonomy should be amended from time to time based on certain situations and/or exigencies.

(e) No university system can achieve complete autonomy. I have reviewed a lot of literature on 'University autonomy'. Out of scholarly modesty, permit me here to say that I have never come across anywhere in the literature where a university system anywhere in the world, whether in Europe, America or Asia, has achieved complete autonomy.

(f) Debate, argument and/or discussion on 'university autonomy' will never end. It will continue to recur like a recurring decimal. And, of course, Bendahl (1971:V) said-". The issue of university autonomy will never be finally resolved. It can only be lived with".

(g) By a further submission of mine, here I would like to state that no university system anywhere in the world can achieve financial independence. Dressel (1972:13&14) was in support of this submission by saying that complete autonomy would require complete financial independence on an unattainable state. He observed that even those universities that have approached financial independence usually have been unable to curb their aspirations and maintain programmes within assured income. He said university autonomy will not be achieved through financial independence, and neither can autonomy in the university involve complete isolation from society or from politics.

According to him, both private and public universities must continually interact with donors and public officials, whose attitudes may have significant implications for university support and aspirations. He stated further that autonomy ultimately depends upon a social assumption that the university's role is to search for truth and that it can effectively perform broader services to society only if it possesses some degree of autonomy. According to him, autonomy inevitably involves responsibility, continual negotiation, and firm confidence between the university and those who support and benefit from it. He concluded that the continuing need to interpret and fight for autonomy is the greatest security against its abuse.

(h) Since no university system will always achieve financial independence, he who pays the piper, dictates the tune. This indeed is a naked truth we must all learn to accept. The 'piper' is the University, and the dictator of the tune is the Government and/or Proprietor/Proprietress.

(i) With regards to 'academic freedom', there are limits to its exercise. As a result, policies pertaining to the limitation of academic freedom in the 21st century should be evolved from time to time, especially when the academics show signs of abusing the freedom in certain areas. The academic community should recognize that academic freedom, like most other freedoms, has its limits. In an ideal situation, such limits are imposed by responsibilities commonly agreed upon, not by fiat from above. For example, Dressel (1972:19) observed that we might begin by drawing a sharp distinction between the right of the university to determine the broad

general directions of its research programme and the right to tell the individual investigators at a particular point in time what they can and cannot do.

Funding

Funding has always been a very crucial issue in university governance anywhere in the world, and it will continue to be so *ad infinitum*. In the oil boom era in Nigeria of the seventies, spreading into the early eighties, Nigerian universities, especially the federally owned ones, were adequately funded in terms of capital and recurrent expenditures. During the period in question, many gigantic buildings of very marvellous architectural designs, especially in the then University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University), sprang up and were successfully completed in time and to time. Among such projects were: (a) the senate building; (b) library; (c) the Faculties of Science, Education, Administration, Law, and the Social Sciences; (d) Moremi hall, the Postgraduate hall and Ladoke Akintola hall. If these buildings could talk, they would indeed do so by doffing their hats to endorse this submission of mine. In the same seventies and early eighties, Obafemi Awolowo University Commercial Farm and the Teaching and Research Farm, were model farms in terms of commerce and research. What about the environmental beautification of university grounds then, in terms of regularly well-mowed lawns, and the well-set beautiful shrubs and flowers? The period under discussion, was a period when many professors and lecturers usually kept late nights in their offices and laboratories, to do serious research and experiment, due to adequate provision of good lighting system in the academic area. It was a period too when students in Federal Universities enjoyed meal subsidy. I also remember that in many departments at Ife, academic staff usually enjoyed

regular distribution of stationery to them by their departments to enhance their job performance. The period too was a period when staff salaries, allowances and other emoluments were regularly paid.

Today, in our universities, whether federal or state, what do we witness in terms of funding? The answer is simple: things have fallen apart, and the centre no longer holds. Some would in fact say that there is no longer any centre! What we witness today in our universities is gross inadequate funding, in terms of capital and recurrent expenditures. I need not go over the endless list of inadequacies that we suffer from inadequate funding.

Funding Pattern in the 21st Century:

What should be the funding pattern in Nigerian universities in the 21st century? My answers to this question are stated as follows: (a) the governments (federal and state) should provide adequate funds yearly for their institutions for both capital and recurrent expenditures; and (b) the institutions themselves should embark on self-reliance projects of various forms to generate money internally to supplement governments efforts. The universities could invest in national and international corporations and companies in the form of capital shares, as many universities in other parts of the world, especially the British and American Universities have done. In order to provide quality education for our students, we need money to do so. In my extensive review of literature on Economics of Education, I have never come across where higher or university education is completely free anywhere in the world, Britain and the United States of America inclusive. In the United States of America, university students pay in-state and out-of-state tuition and other fees. In Britain, university students, both indigene and foreign, pay tuition and other fees. The erroneous belief in the political jargon of free education in Nigeria, of which we have been

ignorantly intoxicated, especially free education in Federal Universities, should henceforth stop in the 21st century. As a result, my proposal to the Nigerian universities, especially Federal Universities, is that students should be made to pay adequate tuition and other fees from year to year and from time to time, that are commensurate with the services the institutions are providing. Educational institutions are providers of educational services. The students are the buyers of those services. Why should the students not pay adequately for what they are buying? Based on national economic constraints, tuition and other fees should be reviewed from time to time to reflect the reality of economic situation.

Furthermore, Nigerian universities that are yet to introduce parking fees, however little it might be, for the use of vehicle parking lots/spaces, should henceforth introduce it. The staff, students and visitors, should pay for making use of the parking spaces. Nigerian universities use money to maintain their institutional grounds. People should pay for making use of those grounds. Above all, in the 21st century, Nigerian universities should explore all avenues to generate internally as much money as possible, to supplement governments' financial efforts for adequate funding of the institutions.

Managing Staff and Student Crises

Nigerian universities in recent times have been engulfed in a perpetual state of staff and student crises, to the extent that normal academic calendar is very difficult to achieve by some if not many institutions, due to the disruption of academic session as a result of the crises. It is not for us here to go into the causes, nature, form and effects of the crises, which have in the past led to destruction of lives and institutions' property. What we are concerned here with is how staff and student crises should be managed in

our Universities in the 21st century. In order to answer this question, we need to know first the different approaches that could be employed in managing staff and student crises in higher institutions.

There are different approaches that could be employed in managing staff and student crises. Some of these approaches have been clearly identified by Oyebade (1997: 80-90) as follows: (a) coercive approach; (b) emergency approach; (c) negligence approach; (d) committee and/or commissions approach; and (e) family dialogue approach. These approaches are explained as follows.

The coercive approach is indeed a confrontational one whereby the institution's management and/or the government bring into the campus the police and/or the army to quench the crises. We have all learnt a lot of lessons from the use of this approach. The approach has led to the loss of many students and staff lives and the destruction of institutions' property. It has led to the closure of some institutions for long periods of time. The emergency approach deals with the closure of the institution at the least sign of serious disturbances by staff and/or students. This approach I see as postponing the evil day. The negligence approach is ignoring the crises by the management. This, by itself, does not solve the problem. The committee and/or commission's approach is setting up a panel of inquiry to probe into the causes, nature and form of the crises (possibly after many killings of staff and students) and destruction of institutions' property might have occurred, come up with findings in form of a report, and make recommendations to prevent similar occurrences in the future. From my experience of university governance in Nigeria, we do not have to conduct an empirical study to conclude that many commissions' reports never see the light of day. The super-powers usually suppress them, especially if they are seriously implicated in the reports. This approach, by itself, is indeed a waste of time, a waste of human resources, energy, and a prodigal

waste of financial resources of the nation. The family dialogue approach is an approach whereby the management, staff and students come together as members of the same family to discuss what might have caused the crisis, and explore ways and means to end it and prevent or forestall re-occurrence. The family dialogue approach, as I see it, is a very productive and also a very promising one to resolve staff and student crises. But to what extent can it be achieved in the Nigerian context, a country where the super-ordinates (leaders) usually see the subordinates (followers) as very ignorant of the situations leading to the crises, and the subordinates by themselves usually see the super-ordinates as very bossy and oppressive.

Based upon the above, what policies and/or strategies should therefore be employed in managing staff and student crises in the 21st century? My suggestions are as follows. The preventive measures and/or approaches should be used as much as possible. By this I mean, immediately the institution's management and/or the government see that a crisis situation is in the offing, efforts should be made to bring together parties to the crisis situation to iron out the differences and find a solution to prevent it being blown up. The parties will come together as a family to discuss and find solutions to prevent the occurrence of a crisis. In this form of approach, there is no master and also no servant. Institution's management can evolve some policies that will regularly bring together the management, staff and the student union executive (possibly quarterly), to discuss not only issues that could lead to a crisis situation, but also matters that could enhance institution's growth and development to achieve its goals. The management can also attend staff and student union meetings as regularly as possible to share its views with the unions on topical issues of institutional governance. Such attendance at meetings will also enhance good relationships between the management and the unions.

Conclusion

To conclude this lecture, I would like to quote Belasco (1990:2) who said:

> *Organisations are like elephants – slow to change. Over the past decade I've consulted with, studied, and managed a wide-range of organisations. My experience tells me that organisations are like elephants – they both learn through conditioning.*
>
> *Trainers shackle young elephants with heavy chains to deeply embedded stakes. In that way the elephant learns to stay in its place. Older elephants never try to leave even though they have the strength to pull the stake and move beyond. Their conditioning limits their movements with only, a small metal bracelet around their feet – attached to nothing.*
>
> *Like powerful elephant, many companies are bound by earlier conditioned constraints. "We've always done it this way" is as limiting to an organisation's progress as the unattached chain around the elephant's foot.*
>
> *Success ties you to the past. The very factors that produced today's success often create tomorrow's failure.*

Mr. Vice-Chancellor, the Nigerian university system should learn from Belasco's note of warning. The Nigerian university system is a replica of the Nigerian nation, which is as slow as an elephant. The system should free itself from its traditional and conventional conditioning nature, and move forward. Based upon its past and present experience, it must be forward looking in its governance policies in the 21st century, so that the

very factors that produced today's success, may not herald tomorrow's failure. The past was a good teacher that had identified policies that had been successful and those that had failed. The present should be a better teacher to lead us into a glorious future in the successful formulation and implementation of our university system policies. Hence, the topic of this lecture – "University Governance in Nigeria in the 21st Century: Forward Looking Policies Based on Past Experience".

Above all, in a lecture of this nature, all governance issues cannot be addressed due to time constraints. What I have been able to do is to touch upon some of them.

Mr. Vice-Chancellor, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, thank you very much for listening to this lecture, which I have delivered today, to inaugurate the first Chair of Higher Education, at Obafemi Awolowo University, in the Department of Educational Administration and Planning, Faculty of Education.

Thank you.

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