

Address by the Acting Vice-Chancellor, Professor Oguntola Jelil Alamu, at the Media Briefing towards the combined Fourth and Fifth Convocation Ceremonies of Osun State University, Osogbo, Nigeria on Friday, 4th March, 2016

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to this media briefing which is one of the activities lined up to mark the combined fourth and fifth convocation ceremonies of Osun State University. The maiden convocation for the conferment of first degree and award of prizes was held on May 21, 2011 and the second convocation ceremony took place on July 21, 2012 while we had the third convocation ceremony on March 29, 2014. By the grace of God, the fourth and fifth convocation ceremonies will hold on the 8th and 9th March, 2016, when the University would be conferring first degrees on three thousand one hundred and sixty-four (3164) students from six Colleges for the two graduating set.

College/Faculty	2013/2014 Graduands	2014/2015 Graduands
Agriculture	28	55
Education	95	249
Humanities & Culture	160	273
Law	-	40
Management & Social Sciences	551	850
Science, Engineering & Technology	394	469
Total	1228	1936

Breakdown of the class of degrees is provided below:

Class of degree	2013/2014 Graduands	2014/2015 Graduands
First Class Division	27	24
Second Class Upper Division	282	568
Second Class Lower Division	660	991
Third Class Division	251	340
Pass	8	13
Total	1228	1936

Activities lined up for this convocation commenced yesterday with the Commissioning of the Central Research Laboratory by the Visitor to the University, Ogbeni Rauf Adesoji Aregbesola, and the Convocation Play titled “Midnight Hotel” written by Professor Femi Osofisan and directed by Professor Ameh Dennis Akoh.

Other major activities include Convocation Lecture, titled *Sustainable Tertiary Education in Post-Oil Nigeria* to be delivered by Prof. Michael O. Faborode, Secretary General, Committee of Vice Chancellors of Nigerian Universities on 7 March, 2016; The Convocation Ceremony and Award of First Degrees (2013/2014 graduating set) on March 8, 2016 as well as Investiture of Chancellor and Award of First Degrees (2014/2015 graduating set) on March 9, 2016.

This year's convocation is uniquely laced with an epoch making installation of a female Chancellor for the University and production of first set of Law graduates.

It is a rare privilege, to address the Press today as the Acting Vice-Chancellor of Osun State University after my appointment into that position on the 3rd February, 2015 by the Professor Gabriel Olawoyin-led Governing Council. I return all glory to the Almighty God for his mercies in granting us a peaceful University, where all stakeholders are now consciously working together to make UNIOSUN a unique institution committed to the pursuit of academic innovation, skill-based training and a tradition of excellence in teaching, research and community service.

As a University, we appreciate the indefatigable Visitor to Osun State University, Ogbeni Rauf Adesoji Aregbesola; the Governor of the State of Osun. His strong passion for education and an uncommon regard for University autonomy, evident through academic freedom accorded Osun State University under his leadership, will remain indelible in the annals of University education in Nigeria.

I am delighted to report that our graduates are already making us proud. First class products of Osun State University are completing their postgraduate programmes with distinction in foreign Universities. In 2015, OLOJIDO, Oluwatoyin Esther bagged distinction in M.Sc. Accounting and Finance from University of Leeds, while ODESANMI, Oluwatosin Racheal also came back with distinction in M.Sc. Analytical Chemistry from Loughborough University. This testimony is a fulfilment of the global competitiveness of our graduates, as enshrined in the Vision of Osun State University. It gladdens my heart to report that the University successfully completed 2014/2015 academic session promptly without any form of interruption in our academic calendar. This manifested in prompt mobilization of over three thousand students from combined 2013/2014 and 2014/2015 sessions for the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) in 2015. The stable calendar aided successful admission of our pioneer graduates from the College of Law into the Nigerian Law School in October, 2015. This is a rare and remarkable feat in the history of

Law programmes in Nigerian Universities. We were able to achieve this through the grace of God and maximum cooperation of all stakeholders including the Visitor to the University, the Governing Council, Staff Unions (NASU, NAAT, SSANU and ASUU), and members of staff, students and the Parent Forum.

To ensure that our University remains focused, we committed ourselves fully to implementation monitoring and evaluation of the University 2012 – 2016 Strategic plan. The 2014/2015 academic session witnessed the resuscitation of Entrepreneurial Training for the final year students in line with the mission of the University. I am delighted to inform you that most of the graduands will be collecting two certificates by the end of this ceremony – the Bachelors' degree certificate and the Entrepreneurship skill set Certificate.

Since the last convocation ceremony in 2014, Osun State University has continued to make progress in teaching, research, community service, physical and infrastructural development, development of academic programmes, staff training and development as well as linkages and partnership locally and internationally.

It is significant to note that Osun State University has become a member of the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU). The University also signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with research institutes, professional bodies, corporate organizations and other Universities in Nigeria, USA, Republic of Korea, Germany, UK, Canada, Benin Republic, as well as Mexico. All agreements have built into them capacity building for our staff and many provide for staff-student exchange in addition to research collaboration.

The University partnered with ExxonMobil and has benefited in a donation of a fully furnished Geoscience Laboratory comprising four workstations and a power generating set. Schlumberger also assisted by donating operating PETREL software for the Workstations. The facility, commissioned in October 2015, has been found invaluable for teaching and research; and more importantly for bridging the gap between University training and practical job skill set in the oil and gas sector.

Our staff have continued to make indelible marks in their research and other activities winning competitive international research grants and bagging notable awards and securing high profile appointments. Details will be provided in my Convocation address on the 8th and 9th March, 2016 by the grace of God.

Within the last one year, twenty-nine (29) academic staff bagged PhD degree from Nigeria, South Africa, Malaysia and the United Kingdom. This University has another set of twenty-nine (29) academic staff currently at advanced stage of their Ph.D programmes in Kenya, South Africa, Malaysia, Mexico, USA, United Kingdom, New Zealand, Australia and Germany. This has tremendously improved the quality of the Faculty and has translated to globally competitive graduates from this university.

Our students have also been excelling both in national and international competitions. In 2015, UNIOSUN team led other universities and bagged first position at the National debate and quiz competitions of the Students' Leadership Development Tournament (SLEDT) held at the University of Ilorin. Details of the remarkable feat, honours and accolades in the wallets of our students will be unveiled in my Convocation Address.

Osun State University continues to sustain its reputation as an Institution established to promote academic and moral standards. Few months ago, the University presented six programmes for accreditation by the National Universities Commission (NUC). I am happy to report that all the programmes got Full accreditation. With these results, all the thirty-two (32) matured academic programmes run by the University have full accreditation status. The University also had full accreditation status from professional bodies such as COREN, ICAN and TOPREC.

The National Universities Commission (NUC) recently granted approval for us to mount and run courses leading to the award of Postgraduate Degrees and Diplomas. Consequently, applications have been invited from suitably qualified candidates for admission into full-time postgraduate programmes (in the 2015/2016 Academic Year). With the approval of the Governing Council, the University also runs the Interim Joint Matriculation Board (IJMB) Programme, and we have commenced NUC approved Part-Time degree Programmes in eleven (11) disciplines.

Distinguished friends from the Press, Osun State University will continue to unfold policies to support the 'Change Initiative' of the Federal Government, and we shall continue to provide the platform for intellectual discourse of these change policies. To this end, I must commend the activities of our Colleges and Faculties that have continued to organise series of distinguished lectures on topical issues. One that easily comes to mind is the distinguished personality lecture of the Faculty of Law, held on the 20th January 2016, titled: "Justiciability of Social and Economic Right in Nigeria" and delivered by an erudite lawyer and human right activist Mr. Femi Falana, SAN.

The University has continued to invest on physical infrastructure. Apart from the Central Research Laboratory, which was commissioned yesterday, there are ten (10) major building projects under construction. Four of the structures are nearing completion and would be ready for commissioning in the next couple of months.

Deployment of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in the University is currently witnessing a substantial leap. We engage in online fee collection and automated staff payroll system. I am happy to inform you that the era of e-Council, e-Management, e-Senate, e-registration and e-payment has not only come to stay in the University, it had assisted immensely in checking leakages and saving money for the University.

The major challenge facing government institutions today is the dwindling of financial resources. I am pleased to report that the newly established Advancement Office is already repositioning the institution for better funding through endowments, income from intellectual outputs like patents and innovative business ideas. The larger society is now becoming part of the funding of UNIOSUN. Corporate organizations, Individuals, enterprises and corporation are partnering with us in funding the university. The Advancement Board of UNIOSUN was inaugurated last week (25th February, 2016); I wish to use this medium to congratulate members of the Board and appreciate their willingness and commitments; under the Chairmanship of Mallam Yusuf Alli (SAN), towards aggressive execution of this arduous task.

With a committed Governing Council and the crop of professionally and academically qualified hands at the disposal of Osun State University, the institution has registered the **UNIOSUN Integrated Ventures Limited**. This is a commercial enterprise poised to utilize in-house human and material resources to raise the IGR base of the university with the aim of evolving a University that will be self-sustaining any moment from now. It is heartwarming to witness the take-off of the Uniosun Water factory; whose product will soon dominate the market.

I cannot but extend our gratitude to our benefactors who have rendered assistance in one way or the other. The list is endless. Ladies and Gentlemen, we will continue to appreciate you all and we urge philanthropists from various fields to come and partner with us in the development of this citadel of learning. This clarion calls also go to our Alummi, parents and all stakeholders.

I must congratulate and profoundly appreciate our Visitor, Governor Rauf Aregbesola and the State Government in general, members of the House of Assembly under the leadership of the Rt.

Hon. Najeem Salaam; Executive Secretaries of all Local Governments, the Chancellor of Osun State University, Mrs. Folorunso Alakija as well as the Governing Council members under the leadership of Prof. Obafemi Ajibola. I appreciate the former Visitor to the University, Prince Olagunsoye Oyinlola, the pioneer Pro-Chancellor, Prof. Peter Okebukola as well as the immediate past Pro-Chancellor Professor Gabriel Olawoyin, SAN. You will always be remembered for upholding our core values of integrity, accountability, ethical behaviour, transparency and shared governance. I appreciate members of Management, Senate, Congregation, staff and students as well as the Parent Forum. Together, we will make UNIOSUN stronger.

I congratulate our happy graduands, who have been found worthy in learning and character after years of rigorous academic activities. I urge you to move on to the next phase with greater determination to make your own positive mark on the sand of time. Immense gratitude to our friends, gentlemen from the Press, for being there for us all the time. Please make it a date with us again on the 8th and 9th March, 2016 for the award of degrees to our happy graduands and the installation of the first female chancellor in the history of public Universities in Nigeria.

I thank you all for your rapt attention.