

## PROTOCOLS

It is with a heart of gratitude to God and infinite pleasure that I welcome you to the maiden convocation ceremony of Osun State University (UNIOSUN) for the conferment of first degrees on our pioneer set of students, and the conferment of honorary degree of Doctor of Letters (D.Litt.) on our distinguished Chancellor, His Imperial Majesty, Oba Okunade Sijuwade Olubuse II, the Ooni of Ife. I particularly welcome the Visitor to the University, the Governor of Osun State, the rebranded *ipinle omoluabi*, and by implication, the *first omoluabi* of the State, Ogbeni Rauf Adesoji Aregbesola. This is the second official visit of Mr. Governor to this institution and we are looking forward to many more visits.

I also welcome all our distinguished guests from various parts of the country including especially the representative of the Executive Secretary of the National Universities Commission and my brother Vice-Chancellors or their representatives and the Rectors of Polytechnics and Provosts of Colleges of Education both within the State and beyond.

More importantly, I welcome our graduating students who are making history today and their proud parents. I must say a word about the parents of this pioneer class. They have contributed in no small measure to ensuring that Osun State University is the institution that we are today. These are the individuals who decided to take a chance with us when we had practically nothing on ground except the goodwill and reputation of the founding fathers. They were ready to break the norms to invest in the future of their children. They demonstrated faith in a public institution that set out from the beginning to break new grounds in the running of public institutions in the country. Along with the pioneer students, these parents passed a vote of confidence in us. We do believe, given the feedbacks we have received over the past several months, that you have found your investment a worthwhile one. My prayer for every parent here is that you will enjoy the fruits of your labour over these ones and experience greater joy in their achievements in years to come.

Today, we are graduating 362 students in five of the eight colleges of our University, namely, Education, Human Resource Development and Lifelong Learning, Humanities and Culture, Management and Social Sciences, and Science, Engineering and Technology. The breakdown of graduands is as follows:

Education	24
Human Resource Development and Lifelong Learning	05
Humanities and Culture	92
Management and Social Sciences	191
Science, Engineering and Technology	50
Total	362

The breakdown of the class of degrees is as follows:

First Class Honours	09
Second Class Upper	167
Second Class Lower	176
Third Class	10
Pass	362



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an institution to take stock of its achievements, reflect on its with stakeholders. It is therefore important for me to share opments that have taken place in this University during the past forty-four months. One consistent feature of our activities during the past 44 months is that we have kept faith in all areas with our stakeholders, including our students, their parents and our proprietor – the Government and People of Osun State.

Osun State University has been developed as a six-campus conventional University operating a collegiate system. Our efforts during the past four years have concentrated on six major areas:

- Development of physical infrastructures that match the aspirations and needs of the institution and its academic programmes
- Raising and development of the human resources to manage and operate the institution
- Building the student population
- Development of the academic programmes and research
- Reaching to the national and international academic community and seeking to become a global player in the comity of world tertiary institutions; and
- Making our impact felt in the communities across the State and in our nation.

### **Physical Development**

Starting on virgin lands and pure forests and farmlands in six locations across the state, the University is now fully operational in all its six campuses. With an outstandingly judicious use of resources, the University has been able to provide solid physical infrastructures and matching equipment and facilities to ensure and enhance positive learning experiences for our students in all disciplines in all campuses. This is a major feat that involved the deployment of enormous financial resources by the State and local governments. Today we have 58 buildings of various sizes and capacity including the central administrative and college buildings, laboratories, libraries, health centres, guest house accommodation, ICT centres, stand-alone classroom buildings, and others in **all** our campuses. All our structures are purpose built and are permanent as the University has **never** at any time taken possession of any temporary structure. In addition, no campus has been developed at the expense of others, and all our campuses have the physical facilities required for functional discharge of academic and other services to their students. Currently, we have 13 projects being executed in the various campuses.

Two of our buildings, however, stand out: the “Ogunleye 3-room classroom Building” at Ipetu-Ijesa Campus and the University standard Block of Classrooms at Ifetedo Campus. The building at Ipetu-Ijesa was donated by Hon. Otunba Ronald Ogunleye, member representing Oriade in the outgoing Osun State House of Assembly, while the block of classroom at Ifetedo was donated by the Ife South Local Government community through their local government. It is just appropriate that we recognize and appreciate our benefactors in this important area of our development on an occasion like this and to appeal to potential benefactors who might wish to take a cue from this.

### **Human Resource Capacity Building**

One of our major tasks during the past four years has been the development of the human resource capacity that would deliver on the vision of making UNIOSUN a world class institution. We recognised from inception that one of the critical challenges facing the Nigerian university system today is the dearth of quality human resource to man the various segments of the sector. Old and new universities have had to compete for personnel from the same inadequate pool that keeps thinning out with the establishment of new private, state and federal government universities. The wisdom in the action of the defunct Implementation Committee charged with overseeing the take-off of the University in 2007 in establishing a Special Doctoral Staff Training Programme for the sole purpose of developing the academic personnel of the new university has been more than borne out in recent times.

at inception (16 academic, 47 senior non-teaching and 45 senior non-teaching and 204 junior staff) as at April 2011.

This is a remarkable progression which has sought to balance the increase in proportion of teaching to non-teaching staff. We are also fully conscious of the need to marry increasing staff population with the acquisition of relevant and appropriate human competencies required for maximal performance on the job. Hence, the regime of rigorous training and capacity building for all categories of staff that was commenced at the inception of the University has continued to this day. The University has invested millions of Naira in training and building up the capacity of its staff these past three years. The target is rather simple: to develop a quality workforce that would match its counterparts anywhere in the world. One consequence of our aggressive staff development programme is the drastic reduction in our dependence on adjunct staff, which we now use sparingly only in a few hardship areas.

Our Special Doctoral Staff Training Programme is now in its fourth year and the pioneer beneficiaries are already completing their programmes. Our expectation is that at the end of five years, majority of those on training would have completed their PhD programmes and join the workforce of the institution, armed with the appropriate qualifications, skills and knowledge required for them to perform optimally.

#### **Enrolment**

Our student population has increased from 596 in 2007/2008 to 1,848 in 2008/2009, 3424 in 2009/2010, and 4,762 in 2010/2011. Our enrolment and growth have been determined by NUC-approved carrying capacity and the availability of required facilities and infrastructure for productive learning. With an academic staff strength of 271, the University has achieved an overall student-staff ratio of 1:17.5, which compares favourably with prescribed NUC guidelines for staff-student ratios in most disciplines.

#### **Academic Programme Development and Research**

At inception, the University commenced academic activities in 15 departments in six colleges, which between them offered 28 degree programmes. The University has remained faithful to its original guiding principle with regard to academic programme development, i.e. think big, start small, increase gradually. Thus, as at the 2010/2011 session, programme offering has increased to only 33 in the eight colleges of the University. An important addition is the LL.B. programme for which the University received the approval of both the National Universities Commission and the Council of Legal Education to commence. It is instructive that both distinguished bodies commended the University for not commencing the programme illegally and for providing adequate facilities that would facilitate teaching and learning in a most conducive environment. In all our academic Departments and for all our programmes, we have continued to acquire and deploy state-of-the-art facilities and advanced technology to encourage productive and enjoyable learning experiences for our students.

Osun State University places a great premium on research, technology and innovation in output. Understandably, the first few months were devoted to developing the infrastructures for teaching and getting the University off the ground, during which period, less emphasis was placed on research. However, within six months of opening our doors to students, the University participated in the 2008 NUC National Research and Development Fair at which we showcased our solar-powered, single panel, multi-pole street light technology as well as our research on alternative road maintenance technology and low cost housing construction technology. In the months after, we have since developed our research profile greatly such that some of our research projects have won international research grant competitions, the latest being the College of Agriculture based, food security research on underutilised indigenous vegetables which won a \$3.1 million grant from the International Development Research Corporation (IDRC) of Canada. The research is being conducted



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the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife and the University of approved, over \$1 million is being expended at Osun State. Several senior and junior faculty of the Assistant Lecturer cadre, have won several international competitive research and training grants including The British Academy awards, the American Council of Learned Societies, the Third World Academy of Science, etc.

### **Outreach Activities**

We have sought to position ourselves at UNIOSUN as a global player in the world of the academia. During the past several months we have reached out to several important institutions in Africa, Europe and North America. We have running agreements on research collaboration and human resource development with the University of Delaware, Texas Southern University, Albany State University, among others in the United States; Buckingham and Essex Universities in the United Kingdom, and Kyungnam University in South Korea. We are also reaching out to institutions in West and other parts of Africa with a view to collaborating with them in the areas of joint curriculum development, students training and research collaboration. In addition, UNIOSUN has participated in several international meets and in this regard, I must mention our participation at the July 2009 UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education during which the University's model of multi-campus system and administration was presented as an example in best practices. We have since received several enquiries, both within Nigeria and from abroad, on how the system operates and the model has been commended as one that should be employed by developing countries seeking to provide tertiary education in underserved communities.

### **Community Outreach**

As a community-based tertiary institution, we have always sought to impact our societies, particularly the good people of Osun State in all the communities in which we are located. We have challenged our researchers to at all times engage in research activities capable of yielding results that would impact on the lives of the people in our communities. Hence, most of the inventions of our Centre for Alternative Energy and Rural Technology have concentrated on technologies that could be understood and appropriated at the grassroots. The waste-to-wealth project involving the conversion of waste water sachet nylons to polycrystalline ceiling materials is one that not only rids our streets of the menace of pure water sachets that also block our drains, but also provides environmentally and pocket friendly ceiling materials for which we are now at an advanced stage of obtaining patent. We have also trained engineers from our local governments in Osun State in road mending techniques that are both cheap in terms of cost and effective and long lasting. Our College of Agriculture has engaged in extensive extension services, bringing much new knowledge on farming techniques and preservation to our people.

At the most basic level, the presence of our students in all the communities in which we are located across the State has continued to impact those communities considerably. The contributions of our presence to the local economy are quantifiable but the local trader, the local landlords, the market women, are all feeling the positive impact of our presence in their localities. When these are added to those we provide employment for and take off the streets either directly as staff of the University in its various units and departments – academic and non-teaching, who now number in hundreds, or through the service providers, the cleaning companies, the security outfits-- there is absolutely no doubt that the University is impacting the economy of Osun State positively. We believe we are also set to do even much more in the years to come as our enrolment base expands and our carrying capacity increases to enable us to take in more students both at the undergraduate, sub-degree and postgraduate levels.

### **Looking Forward**

It is only appropriate at this juncture to pause and reflect: what next for UNIOSUN? This phase in the development of the University is indeed important, coinciding as it were with a number of important internal and external developments capable of impacting on the direction of the University in the

respond to these developments in a creative way that would but also position it to be a major player in the provision of in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

In my welcome remarks at the September 21, 2007, ceremony when the University was formally handed over to the proprietors by the defunct Implementation Committee and in my address to the inaugural meeting of Senate on November 5, 2007, I pointed out that UNIOSUN was emerging into the national educational landscape at a period of momentous developments in the sector and that for the institution to be relevant, it must be able to respond creatively to the challenges of our times, while seeking to overcome the limitations that were bound to confront a university emerging at this point in our national development. I also challenged my colleagues that we must never hamstring ourselves by the perceived challenges; rather, we should seek to exploit the opportunities presented in every challenge to make a mark in the tertiary education sector in this country. Forty-four months after, I believe UNIOSUN has tried within the limits of resources available to it and within those identified constraints to carve a niche for itself in the Nigerian tertiary education landscape. Today, UNIOSUN has become a household name, the *Ajantala* of the Nigerian university system. But the challenge is to sustain the achievements while expanding into hitherto uncharted territories and conquering new frontiers.

Internally, one major next step is the full and proper activation of the internal democratic processes and governance structures. After four years of operation, we have matured to the stage where we should trust our normal administrative and governance processes to run without let as provided for in the laws establishing the University. Of course, the new operators would make their mistakes, which hopefully would neither be fatal nor injurious to the overall survival of the system but rather would strengthen internal commitments to the institution.

Secondly, after four years of running the current course offerings that have seen the take-off of all the campuses, it is time we moved not only to consolidate but also to expand our academic programmes into new and exciting programmes that would address the critical challenges of development and technological innovation and advancement in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. At inception, our dictum with regard to academic programme development was simple: "Think Big, Start Small, Increase Gradually". Clearly we have increased gradually and we should still stick to this approach but it is time we were more enterprising. During this second phase of the development of the University, we should move from the familiar to the novel. UNIOSUN should demonstrate the innovativeness that will mark it out as a centre where certain unique courses are being offered in this country.

Thirdly, again after four years of providing good education with all the necessary enabling facilities, the University and its leadership should review its processes with a view to expanding enrolment. Expanding enrolment would require steps in a number of directions. The first is through making our institution more accessible to interested and qualified applicants from across all the lines of social and economic divides. Secondly, with the support of the Government, the institution should expand its facilities for teaching and learning as well as teaching spaces in order to make a justifiable case for increased carrying capacity that would permit it to admit more students into its programmes. Finally, on the matter of enhancing enrolment, the University should be looking at ways of attracting subscription from non-traditional sources. In this regard, the enrolment of our first foreign student, a Cameroonian, in the 2010/2011 session, was a step in the right direction. UNIOSUN should seek ways of increasing its visibility in the West African sub-region with a view to attracting patronage from potential students in the region. If Nigerians are traveling to Ghana in droves to attend universities, it suggests to us that regional mobility in the provision of tertiary education is already a living phenomenon, and it is one that we should plug in to.





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reflections on the way forward for the University and our point that I have made a number of times in recent weeks, Government in Osun State it is imperative that the University should align its priorities with the vision and mission of the new Government for the State particularly in the area of tertiary education. During the first courtesy visit made by the Management team of the University to the new Governor upon his assumption of office in November 2010, we pledged our support for the new Government and for its programmes to enhance the quality of life of the people of Osun State. During the next couple of months, it is imperative that the University must make its impact felt by deploying its knowledge and expertise in all the areas of the six-point integral action plan of the new government. We have always affirmed that the University must be relevant to its environment; as an institution owned by the Government and People of Osun State, we pledge our support towards the realisation of the good programmes of this Government for this State. We do expect the State to take advantage of what the University has to offer in terms of expertise, services, knowledge and skills.

### **Appreciation**

At this stage and before I give the last words, it is just appropriate that I appreciate the individuals and institutions that have made this day possible. The first appreciation is to God because time and again, God has demonstrated that He is on our side. Without doubt, it is God that rules in the affairs of men and it is He who makes all things possible. To Him alone be all the glory. Next, are the Government and People of Osun State. Over the past four years we have received tremendous support both at the official and personal levels from individual Osun State indigenes who have encouraged this unique project. To all our Local Governments who have supported us with funds, please accept our gratitude for your investment in the future of our children and the future of tertiary education in this State and country. Together, we can move the sector even further.

Coming back home, words fail me in expressing gratitude to the Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of Council, Professor Peter Okebukola, OFR, for whom the UNIOSUN project has become life itself. In his own peculiar way, he has trained, led, encouraged, chastised, supported, sacrificed all that is humanly possible, all to ensure that we as an institution do not fail the good people of Osun State. Sir, we are unable to reward you in the measure you have served. No human led organisation can but God can and He will. Professor Okebukola is at the head of a peculiar group of people that was constituted into the Council of the University. UNIOSUN Council has been a tremendous source of support and all the members have been sacrificial in their commitment to ensuring that the University moves forward all the time and is achieving its goals.

I appreciate greatly my pioneer colleagues in the Management, including the Principal Officers and the Provosts of the Colleges. Theirs was a difficult and challenging task, setting up structures in virtual jungles. The Osun State University system would remain perpetually indebted to you all. To the best of each person's ability and sometimes beyond the call of duty, these individuals worked to place their various colleges on the pedestal they are standing now. Of course, every effort and sacrifice has its reward. Little wonder, a few days from now, one of these Provosts, Professor Samson Adedoyin would be assuming office as the pioneer Vice-Chancellor of Samuel Adegboyega University, the University of the Apostolic Church in Nigeria. We wish him every success in the new assignment and pray that the Lord will sustain and support him. I also wish all the outgoing Provosts the very best as they leave us to return to their various institutions. For those who would be retiring finally, we wish you blissful time and God's immense blessings.

Finally, my gratitude goes to all members of staff of the University. The UNIOSUN Staff operates like a family: we have our quarrels and we make up. Staff members of all categories have been fantastic in their attitude and commitment. Without their support we cannot be here today. But I like to challenge everyone: there is still so much to do ahead. We need to raise our standards and develop ourselves into world class scholars who can hold our own anywhere we find ourselves in the world.



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facilities that have been made available for research rather than for entertainment. And, we should learn to invest in ourselves by making use of the facilities more effectively and be productive in our research and in all the areas of our service to this great institution.

#### **Last words**

My last words go to the pioneer graduating students. Once again, I congratulate you and I rejoice with your proud parents. You are UNIOSUN's first fruit and proof that a public institution in this country can work. Your graduation today is evidence that we have not laboured in vain over you. My challenge to you is that you should go out into the world and prove that you are ready to take it on. From your first year, I have challenged you to position your mind for leadership of your society. Go out there and offer leadership to your world. If you do not lead, you stand the risk of being misled by others. I challenge you to be worthy ambassadors of Osun State University anywhere you may find yourself in the world. Please go out there and make us proud of you. I am convinced that with the training we have given you, you have been equipped with the tools that will enable you to succeed in the world. But to that I add my prayers for you that in life you will succeed beyond measure and beyond your imagination. Your parents who have invested so much to train you will never have cause to regret over you. I pray that everything you lay your hands upon legitimately shall prosper and it shall be well with you.

The Visitor, Your Excellencies, the Chancellor, the Pro-Chancellor, and the distinguished audience, I thank you for your attention.

**Professor Sola Akinrinade**

**Vice-Chancellor**

May 21, 2011