

UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS



U. L. ARCHIVE

U. L. ARCHIVE

CONVOCATION SPEECHES
(JAN. 1983)

BY

PROFESSOR AKIN, ADESOLA
Vice-Chancellor

UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS

CONVOCATION SPEECHES
JANUARY 1983

U. L. ARCHIVE

By

PROFESSOR AKIN O. ADESOLA
Vice-Chancellor

Published by

The Information Unit,
University of Lagos,
Akoka,
Lagos.

(c) Akin O. Adesola.

ISBN 978-2264-38-5

**THE VICE-CHANCELLOR'S ADDRESS TO THE
CONGREGATION FOR THE PRESENTATION OF
PRIZES, AWARD OF NON-GRADUATE DIPLOMAS
AND CERTIFICATES AND CONFERMENT OF FIRST
DEGREES ON WEDNESDAY, 19TH JANUARY, 1983**

Right Honourable Chancellor,
Pro-Chancellor,
His Excellency the Governor of Lagos State,
Deputy Vice-Chancellor,
Your Excellencies,
Your Highnesses,
My Lords,
Members of Council and Senate,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is my great pleasure to welcome you all to the first of our two 1983 Convocation Ceremonies.

In particular, I wish to welcome, on behalf of this Institution, our Special Guest, His Excellency Alhaji Lateef Kayode JAKANDE, the Governor of Lagos State, who in spite of his very busy schedule, has found time to honour our invitation.

We appreciate your presence here; we thank you for your continued interest in this Institution and we continue in our strong conviction that you will not relent in your efforts to strengthen the ties between your Government and this Institution, and help to find lasting solution to many of our problems which touch upon our mutual interests, and about which you are already aware. We hope we can continue to count upon your co-operation and assistance.

We on our part will place at the disposal of your Government our expertise and resources for the improvement of the Community in which we are located.

This is the first of two congregations; this morning we shall present prizes for excellent performance, award non-

graduate Diplomas and Certificates, and confer 904 First Degrees in the Faculties of Arts, Engineering, Law and the Social Sciences. The breakdown of the First Degrees is as follows:

| | |
|-----------------------|-----|
| Arts..... | 280 |
| Engineering..... | 117 |
| Law..... | 182 |
| Social Sciences | 325 |

This represents about 54% of the total of First Degrees to be awarded this year.

In addition, a total of 102 non-graduate Diplomas and Certificates will be awarded in the Faculties of Arts and Social Sciences.

Of the four Faculties presenting candidates for degrees today, three are profession-oriented; they continue to contribute, through research and public service, their quota to National Development.

The fourth, the Faculty of Arts, continues to emphasise at the undergraduate level, broad-based liberal education and intellectual growth; it also offers training in a few professional areas such as translation and Cartography. Indeed, the Faculty has provided valuable service and assistance to various State Governments and Government Agencies. The Faculty also completed, during the last session, the necessary preparation for embarking on a four-year degree programme that would enable it to operate in accordance with the new National Policy on Education. The new four-year programme will involve, among other facets, the introduction of new International Languages such as Arabic, German, Portuguese and Spanish.

This University, as one of the oldest Universities in the country, is aware of its responsibilities in expanding its academic programmes and its student intake to reflect national needs. However, our facilities for staff and students continue to be increasingly inadequate as staff and student numbers

increase. We, on our part, continue to tackle the problem as best we can.

On student housing, efforts are being made to accommodate as many students as possible, and adjustments have been made in various Halls to allow for this. Our major problems in this regard are those of an urban University designed originally as preponderantly non-residential, but progressively providing accommodation to an ever-increasing number of students most of whom are from outside the City of Lagos.

We have endeavoured to adopt judicious measures in providing residential accommodation to as many students as possible, while ensuring some financial relief to students, and affording them the peace of mind which comes from having accommodation in their own right, rather than pandering to the financial whims of illegal "landlords."

For staff residential accommodation, we are aware that, since this is a facet of staff welfare enjoyed by University staff all over the country, if we are to attract and retain the right kind of staff, we should continue vigorously to scout for accommodation. This inevitably involves competing in the open market for accommodation at rather prohibitive rates. It is our plan to resume the erection of more University-owned housing units as soon as funds permit.

It is hoped that in the near future more staff will be able to build their own houses and live in them, thus easing the present pressure on the University. I believe a programme that will facilitate such an arrangement is currently under consideration, and consultations are going on between the Universities, the National Universities Commission and the Federal Government.

I would, at this stage, wish to congratulate Professor Adeboye Babalola, professor in the Department of African Languages and Literature, on his receipt, recently, of a National Merit Award on October 1, 1982

"in recognition of his contribution to national development in promoting Nigerian image, culture, and reputation."

Professor Babalola, who joined this University in 1964, barely two years after its inception, has participated in, and contributed richly to, its administrative, spiritual and academic endeavours, and his scholastic and cultural attainments in his field are widely acknowledged within and outside the country. As an Institution, we are proud of this richly deserved national award to one of our distinguished members.

I wish to congratulate the 1981/82 Prize Winners for distinguishing themselves in their various disciplines, and it is my hope that they will apply the same dedication and assiduity to their later careers in life.

We are grateful to the companies and individuals from whom these prizes come, and we hope more people will emulate these donors, so that excellence can be rewarded as has been done today.

To those who received Certificates and Diplomas, it may be stated here that we attach great importance to your attainments in the context not only of middle-level manpower but also of professionalism. A number of you have achieved these qualifications as part of your refresher courses and we hope that the experience has proved quite useful.

I congratulate all successful candidates and wish them well in their endeavours outside this Institution of higher learning. We hope they will always regard this University from which they have thus benefited as their Alma Mater, a kind mother, and be its worthy representatives in words and actions, **in truth and in deed.**

The old saying that youths are the leaders of tomorrow is no idle expression, although it is so broadly stated that it conveys the erroneous impressions that all youths will become leaders. Some of them will certainly provide tomo-

row's leadership. Societies that take their future seriously care about the quality of succeeding generations of leaders and consciously identify, recruit and groom worthy individuals for the burden of leadership.

It seems to me that our society is failing in its obligation to ensure high calibre leadership for the period beginning in the year, 2,000 A.D. and that is only 17 years away! We seem to think that time and events can be trusted to throw up good, capable leaders, instead of bending over backwards for the crucial and monumental task of elite recruitment, socialisation and incorporation. Many adults continue to over-indulge themselves in the usual hypocrisy of some older generations, which manifests itself in slanderous charges against the youths. The youths are described, generally, as lazy, irresponsible, cynical, unpatriotic disrespectful, unruly, etc.

But the youths cannot be held guilty of these charges outside the context of societal values and adult examples; for they are in fact the mirrors through which adults see themselves reflected. If the youths are disrespectful and unruly, it is because adults have abandoned their parental responsibilities for the proper upbringing of their children in favour of money-making and egocentric activities. If they are cynical, unpatriotic, and avaricious, it is because the adult example they see everywhere teaches them nothing different, and offers them nothing better. If they appear irresponsible, could they be justly accused of having raised themselves? They did not design, or operate the structure of schooling, and that world of work which fails to take into account the multi-faceted dynamics of human developments; it is the adults who did, and still do.

The future of this country lies in our ability, and the will to re-think the way we train our children in this age of uncertainty and bewilderment. We deceive ourselves if we refuse to admit that we have failed in our parental roles. We have to pick up the pieces and rebuild anew. I know of no better way to begin than to reinstate the concept of "readiness" to the mainstream of our educational agenda. The

obnoxious practice of shunting under-age children through the school system in order to dump them on society as early as possible must end. I understand some parents even swear false affidavits of their "under-age" children to get them into the University early. This practice, sadly fashionable among those who are expected to know better, will, if unchecked aggravate the emotional problems among our students, and lead eventually to a general collapse of our economic and social organisations, as most positions of responsibility in them pass into the hands of University graduates who lack the requisite physical and emotional maturity to carry the responsibilities thrust on them so early by the society.

The demand for change and adjustment is great. Parents will have to reduce their money making activities in order to find time to pay close personal attention to the proper growth and development of their children. The trend towards greater impersonalisation of our schools will need to be halted. The home and the school have to reunite to remould the young, to guide them and prepare them for the various social roles which will later be open to them, including the critical roles of leadership. Genuine dialogue between the adults and youths can lead to clarification of purposes, enduring understanding and joint exploration of the unknown. In this process, the young will be afforded the opportunity to articulate their needs and interest, their perceptions of facts and issues, and the vision of what the world they will eventually take over and manage should be. The adults will reclaim their noble parental roles which have been sadly neglected over the past two decades or so. The process will gain from, and will be accelerated by, the replacement of a Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) with a Parent-Teacher-Student Association (PATSA) in our secondary and tertiary institutions of learning. PATSA is most likely to serve as a strong virile and effective bridge of understanding between the adults and youths. It will, at least, be a good beginning in the great dialogue we must conduct in the years to come.

Chancellor, Sir, Pro-Chancellor, His Excellency the Governor of Lagos State, Your Excellencies, My Lords, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish you all a happy, and prosperous New Year and I thank you for your attention.

Professor Akin. O. Adesola
Vice-Chancellor
University of Lagos.

Wednesday, January 19, 1983.

**THE VICE-CHANCELLOR'S ADDRESS TO THE
CONGREGATION FOR THE PRESENTATION OF
PRIZES, AWARD OF NON-GRADUATE AND
POST-GRADUATE DIPLOMAS AND CERTIFICATES
AND CONFERMENT OF FIRST AND HIGHER
DEGREES ON THURSDAY, 20TH JANUARY, 1983**

Mr. Vice-President, representing the Visitor,
Chancellor,
Pro-Chancellor,
Pro-Chancellors, Vice-Chancellors of other Universities,
Deputy Vice-Chancellor,
Executive Secretary, NUC.,
Your Excellencies,
Your Highnesses,
My Lords,
Members of Council and Senate,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is my pleasure, honour and privilege to welcome you all to this occasion, the second and final in the series of our 1983 Convocation Ceremonies.

We welcome the Vice-President, Dr. Alex Ekwueme, representing the Honourable Visitor. We are grateful to Mr. President, our Visitor, that he delegated the Vice-President to represent him when he found that, unlike in 1981 when he graced our Convocation Ceremonies with his august presence, he could not make it this year. We cherish, with gratitude, the memories of Mr. President's visit.

Mr. Vice-President, himself an academic and a technocrat, is no stranger to this community where we have always had the pleasure of receiving him whenever he had time to honour our invitations. We recall with gratitude the wonderful role he played as Chairman and Chief Launcher, when our Alumni Association launched its Endowment Fund for the erection of a Postgraduate Hall, as well as his personal generous donation.

We are delighted to see our Right Honourable Chancellor, who, inspite of his state of health, has endeavoured to be present at these Ceremonies. His visits to us are rare but precious. We are immensely encouraged and animated by the feeling that we can always count on the active fatherly support and guidance of a man of his eminence and experience.

Our distinguished Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of Council, Chief Dennis C. Osadebay, is both a hospitable host, and a welcome guest. His statesmanlike and sympathetic approach to our problems, and his untiring efforts to contribute both individually and as Chairman of our Council to the welfare of this Institution, are laudable and shining examples to us all who have had the privilege of working with him.

We rejoice with you, parents and guardians of our graduands on this great occasion when your self-sacrifice and the efforts of your children have yielded high dividends culminating in the award of various honours today. We hope that the satisfaction and joy of today and the achievements of tomorrow will more than compensate for the sacrifice of yester years.

We have among us today several highly distinguished men and women, and although it is not our tradition to recognise them individually at our Convocation, I would like to welcome Chief A. Y. Eke, Nigeria's Ambassador to the U.S.A. and a former Federal Minister of Education, but better known and recognised in academia as the first Registrar of the University of Lagos. Although Chief Eke has since been given various appointments by higher authorities, we in the University of Lagos are pleased to accord him today, his proper enviable honour and title of U.A.P. (Unilag Alumnus Parent).

It is also my pleasure to welcome back into our midst a former Vice-Chancellor of this University, Professor J. F. Ade. Ajayi who, in his modest note to me informed me he

is attending this Convocation as a *parent*. We are delighted to note that his offspring has the privilege of being a direct beneficiary of his father's input to this University.

At the Convocation Ceremony held here yesterday, there was a presentation of prizes, award of non-graduate Diplomas and Certificates, and the conferment of First Degrees in the Faculties of Arts, Engineering, Law and the Social Sciences.

Today, there will be presentation of prizes, the award of non-Graduate and Post-Graduate Diplomas and Certificates, and the conferment of First and Higher Degrees in the Post-graduate School, the College of Medicine, and the Faculties of Business Administration, Education, Environmental Design, and Science.

The breakdown of today's awards, by Faculty, may be briefly stated as follows:

| | |
|--|-----|
| Non-graduate Diplomas | 559 |
| Post-graduate Diplomas and Certificates | 88 |

For the award of First Degrees, the following are the details:

| | |
|---|-----|
| College of Medicine..... | 147 |
| Faculty of Business Administration..... | 241 |
| Faculty of Education | 220 |
| Faculty of Environmental Design | 23 |
| Faculty of Science..... | 169 |

Taking the two Convocation Ceremonies together, we would, by the end of today's ceremony have conferred a total of 1,704 First Degrees made up of

| |
|----------------------------------|
| 23 First Class |
| 281 Second Class, Upper Division |
| 966 Second Class, Lower Division |

| |
|-------------------------------------|
| 290 Third Class |
| 9 Pass degrees, plus |
| 135 non-classified Medical degrees. |

In the area of higher degrees, the following are the figures:

| |
|--------------------------|
| 14 Doctorate Degrees and |
| 263 Masters Degrees. |

Since its inception in 1962 and its graduation of the first batch of students in 1965, by the end of today's ceremony, the University of Lagos shall have awarded a total of:

| |
|-----------------------|
| 12,539 First Degrees, |
| 868 Masters, |
| 74 Doctorates. |

In addition to the above figures, a total of 661 Post-graduate Diplomas and 5,017 non-Degree Diplomas and Certificates shall have been awarded to-date.

A few years ago, the Federal Government, through the National Universities Commission made funds available for the master planning of Nigerian Universities. After arduous processes and close collaboration with our Master Planning Consultants, I am happy to announce that this University's master plan has now been completed, with specific zones for various developments and programmes. Relevant to the multi-faceted activities of an institution of higher learning, among others it contains academic, residential, recreational and commercial zones.

It is our determination to ensure that this campus is developed into a well-integrated, balanced and infrastructural self-sustaining municipality. Of our 1,000 acres, about two-thirds is swamp; and while some other Universities have so much land that they could afford to have satellite campuses, the only such possible extension of the campus that we have is the lagoon, and I am sure no one here would wish us into the lagoon, which, in any case is already earmarked for further development of our Marine Sciences and Oceanography.

Some of our academic and administrative units literally have no roofs over their heads and are squatting in cramped physical facilities. Thus, they have performed their functions in very difficult circumstances. With the completion of our master plan and the provision of an action plan, we should provide some more facilities to several more units as soon as the funds are available.

At this stage, I would like to acknowledge the assistance and technical expertise given to us in this endeavour by two of our professional Faculties – the Faculties of Engineering and Environmental Design. Their involvement in the preparation of the master plan and the implementation of aspects of the action plan has been invaluable.

We have, of necessity, continued to make modest restructuring and expansion. The Faculty of Environmental Design records the establishment of three departments of

- (1) Architecture
- (2) City and Regional Design and
- (3) Building Technology

and the Faculty of Business Administration established a new department of Industrial Relations and Personnel Management.

Our student population has risen from 131 in 1962 to:

1,941 in 1970, and
12,800 in 1982

and it currently stands at well over 13,000 after the recent admissions exercise.

One of the ways in which an institutional landmark may be observed is to catalogue, from its inception, the institution's aspirations and achievements, problems and prospects. This we intend to do in the very near future when circumstances in the University are more appropriate. Further,

landmarks have to be seen in perspective and in the context of contemporary events. In this context, I shall return to the role of Universities a little later. I shall, in the meantime, mention the progress of a few developments designed to make life on this Campus a bit more comfortable.

In terms of physical development, a few of our projects are progressing according to schedule. For instance, the Second Access Road, designed to ease the serious traffic congestion into and out of the Campus, and to provide an alternative access from another part of the city, is underway. A Central Administration Block, meant to house all sections of the Administration currently scattered over the Campus in space urgently needed for academic purposes, should be ready for occupation before the end of this year.

Many more projects, some of which were mentioned here last year, have had to be suspended until the financial situation in the country, and therefore in the University, improves. In this regard, the Senate and Council of this University have not relented in their efforts to ensure that our potential revenue yielding Units are enabled to generate enough income not only to be self-sustaining but also to assist the University in some measure with an alternative source of funding. Thus, recently, the administrative structures of our Guest Houses, Conference Centre and the Continuing Education Centre were closely scrutinized, streamlined and restructured for greater efficiency, and to facilitate their progress as income generating ventures.

Further, the University has recently set up a Central Consultancy Unit – "LUCONSULT". This Unit will constitute a focus for institutional consultancy endeavours and a channel for outreach to Government Agencies and the private sector for specialist problem-solving consultancies. Apart from encouraging professionalism, another advantage of this is the beneficial effect it will have on the teaching process; students will find in these projects activities and problems that will enrich their practical experience in their respective fields. I wish to record here that many aspects of this set up, including the place of the individual teacher

in the Department, in the Faculty, and in the University, have been exhaustively examined and adequate provisions made for their regulation.

In the University's quest for alternative or additional sources of funding, Council has also set up a Sub-Committee on Commercial Properties, to seek ways in which some of the University's property could be commercialized to advantage, without prejudice to the purposes for which the institution was established.

My reason for outlining these approaches is two-fold. First, they indicate this University's awareness that its developmental fortunes have, for a long time, been tied to the financing capacity of Government. Secondly, they show our determination to explore avenues for complementary sources of sustenance.

Indeed, the mores and ethos of the Nigerian society and the immensity of the funds involved in running a University are such that for a long time to come, Governments are likely to remain pre-dominant in the financing of higher education in Nigeria.

The Nigerian University System – problems and challenges of the next two decades

By tradition, the Convocation of the University of Lagos is held at the beginning of the Calendar year; this provides an opportunity to look back on the past year, and to look forward, with anticipation and hopes, to the year ahead. Events all around us have made it necessary and appropriate to look beyond the coming year further into the future – into the next two decades.

We have witnessed remarkable changes in individual Universities, as well as in the entire University System, which has expanded from one University only up to the 1950s to six in the 1960s, and 13 in the 1970s, and has 'exploded' into about 25 in the early 1980s (including Federal and State Universities), with the high probability of yet more to come before we close the chapter on the eighties.

The pros and cons of establishing more Universities have been widely discussed with the characteristic Nigeria's penchant for exercising fully his freedom of expression on almost any issue. I do not now wish to join in the debate which I, as a pragmatic, have already regarded as closed. But I cannot resist the urge to restate here the views which I expressed on this subject at a Convocation address shortly before the civilian administration assumed office in October, 1979. It was my view that the establishment of more Universities, like the creation of more States, was inevitable, and that I would prefer to see Nigeria's multi-million Naira spent on Higher Education, than on some other prestigious but less worthy projects that might otherwise appeal to the whims and caprices of politicians. I have had no reason to change my views.

Federal and State Governments have continued to establish more Universities, even in the face of a dwindling national revenue from oil, and a creeping global economic recession. And fear has been expressed in many circles about the ability of the Nigerian Universities to survive in the eighties let alone into the next millenium! One would expect that with the experience acquired in the process of building, 25 Universities and spanning three decades, the planning and operation of our Universities in the next two decades should not pose such serious problems. Unfortunately such problems as we face, or anticipate, are borne partly for fear, lack of confidence in ourselves and our institutions, and in particular, our inability to accept and face obvious realities. We must accept as a fact that no matter what our personal and "intellectual" views, we will have to look after several more Universities, and that means the sharing by many more of the limited national budget.

The Nigerian University must see its role as a member of the Post-Secondary Education team (even though its leader), and cannot ignore the existence and importance of our Polytechnics and Colleges of Technology in the scheme of things. The New National Policy on Education (in my view one of the most well thought-out comprehensive pro-

grammes on education ever produced in this country) should be our major tool for mapping the course of education in the next two decades; it also affords the Universities a unique opportunity to establish clearly defined, mutually beneficial, relationships with the secondary and other post-secondary institutions, to identify and counsel aspiring students for Higher Education, and to plan more realistically for the future educational goals of the nation.

The four-year degree programme is a logical conclusion and formalisation of a process which has been practised in various forms, if haphazardly, over the years in various guises - the preliminary year, 'remedial programme', IJMB, etc. Some of our Secondary Schools, already victims of acute staff shortage and poor classroom and laboratory facilities, had overstretched their limited resources to operate the sixth form, with predictably unimpressive results generally. All our Universities are now expected to take this extra burden off our Secondary Schools, and the results are expected to benefit the educational system. No responsible government can afford to face the verdict of history, by its failure to utilise the unique opportunities of the new nation's policy on education. And a few protestations here and there may reflect a genuine, if now belated worry about money, or at best a temporary political tactical withdrawal.

Division of Labour

Variations within our University system are inevitable and permissible, including level of development, areas of specialisation, and other characteristics. Harmonisation in our Universities is beneficial; strict uniformity is not desirable, and could be harmful. The establishment of disciplines outside the context of overall national objectives, can no longer be justified, as it leads to unnecessary duplication of efforts while essential areas are neglected. The designation of our Universities as centre of excellence, and recent establishment of Universities of Technology are steps in the right direction. "A key factor in our future growth is the application of science and technology to resource expectation. Developing countries are increasingly aware of this. The

training of scientific and technological personnel for practical works, the increase in scientific research capabilities through the encouragement of indigenous research potentials, the continuous updating of scientific materials to keep abreast of new theories and discoveries, will continue to challenge the developing country universities to new orientations. This may, indeed, pose problems of perception and definition for traditionalists among University men and women, but they will also offer point of departure for those who will see relevance as the touchstone of the University existence in late 20th Century society" - (Nettleford).

Manpower Needs

We cannot ignore the effect that population growth has in some Universities in developing countries generally, and is having on Nigeria in particular. Indications according to UN Reports are that the world population would increase by about 54% between 1975 and the year 2000, but the increase will be some 10% in Europe and 104% in Africa, while the total population of the developing countries will rise by 70%. This implies the need for a lot more school space for developing countries. And it presents a particular challenge for developing countries which must reserve their still meagre intellectual resources for the undergraduate training of their still youthful populations most of whom are too eager to emerge from their low socio-economic status through rapid social mobility via education and the acquisition of University qualifications.

The capability of our Universities to attract and retain good staff will constitute the biggest threat to their survival in the next two decades. The older Universities watch their staff leave to assume, in most cases, higher posts and responsibilities in the younger ones. There is urgent need for a reappraisal of the procedures and regulations governing staff training, and staff movements between Universities. A University is not happy to lose its staff, especially where, as is often the case, the staff has been a beneficiary of the "donor" University's training programme, with concomitant

investment of considerable sums of money. However, inspite of legal bonds entered into by the staff concerned, movements from their Universities have continued unabated, sometimes unceremoniously; bonds are broken with impunity, and with prospects of acrimony between University authorities.

There is general agreement that the present situation is unsatisfactory; some have suggested a 'standard compensation' by the "recipient" to the "donor" University, depending on how much had been invested in the staff's training; this has echoes of the transfer of star football players in the European or American Football Leagues; and those who have taken pains to study the magnitude and character of the problem believe this approach would not work. In fact, the "transfer fee" for some of our academic "stars" may prove too prohibitive for the limited purse of many of our Universities. For a long time to come, expatriate staff, carefully selected, will continue to play a meaningful role in our Universities' development, but such contribution will obviously be of limited value.

Postgraduate Programmes

It is gratifying to note that a fair number of our young graduates with good degrees are opting for Postgraduate Studies, and our Universities, especially the older ones, are responding to this challenge admirably. In the University of Lagos, the admissions into our Higher Degree Programme in the past 5 consecutive years are as follows:

| Year | No. | % Increase |
|---------|-----|------------|
| 1978/79 | 186 | — |
| 1979/80 | 235 | 26 |
| 1980/81 | 381 | 62 |
| 1981/82 | 499 | 31 |
| 1982/83 | 527 | 6 |

The formalisation of, and emphasis on, Postgraduate programmes, especially in Nigeria's older Universities, is a 'desideratum' for the future sustenance and healthy growth

of the Nigerian University system; the advantages have been often repeated: retaining our Postgraduate students in Nigeria with the beneficial effects on teaching of, and research into Nigerian subjects; saving foreign exchange and operating at lower costs, and improving capability to adapt and improvise. The obvious advantage of the Postgraduate programmes is that we would produce at reasonable cost, a significantly increase number of trained Postgraduates to take up faculty positions in our institutions of higher learning. And provided the conditions of service are reasonably attractive, especially relative to other sectors of the economy, the increased number of local Postgraduates as well as returnees from institutions overseas should make it possible for Universities to liberalise the movements of staff between Universities, and in fact facilitate such moves where required.

It would still be useful and desirable for our staff to gain post-doctoral exposure in Universities abroad, but these will be for specialised programmes and for shorter periods than the present 3-4 year period overseas for a trainee and his family. It is my view that by 1985 it would no longer be realistic for any University to reject any request for transfer to another Nigerian University by a member of staff on the grounds of the donor University's investment in his/her education. One would, of course, expect certain basic ground rules to be agreed upon, and the recipient University would be well advised to assess properly, and obtain useful information from the donor University on its prospective staff — if that University is not to become a dumping ground for some academic 'misfits'.

University Funding

In recent times, Universities all over the world have come under increasing stresses imposed by competing claims, as well as by conflicting demands on their resources and financial stringency. In the past, Universities were allowed to grow unimpeded, and without being specifically accountable financially to governments or any other funding agencies. That period ended a long time ago, even in Europe and North America, and no Nigerian University ever enjoyed

that 'privilege'. Universities now face new requirements for planning, for demonstration of executive capacity, new accommodation to coordination and control, and demands for explicit national fiscal and administrative management.

The issue of relevance of the University to the Community, poses the biggest problem of definition and challenged; for even if it were possible to qualify education and research, how does one determine the scope and impact of public service implicit in that process. How do we define the Community — as a geographical entity such as the catchment area of the University, or is it the government, as represented by the politicians of the day?

Perhaps we should now pay greater attention to the tremendous effect that society and societal values have on the University; a common question is why the Nigerian multi-millionaire does not often endow his nation's Universities like his counterparts in North America and Europe. Historians and sociologists will no doubt have a field day answering that question. However one obvious factor is the Nigerian societal sense of values, and how this sense conditions the Nigerian rich in crystalising his concept of a "worthy cause". so long as society respects and even adulates the "nouveau riche" who spends his wealth on big parties, luxury cars, and 'wine, women and song', irrespective of the sources of his wealth, so long will it be difficult to get our wealthy Nigerians to spend their money on worthy and noble causes such as University endowment etc. However, I do not share the skepticism of those who think that the Nigerian rich is a peculiar breed, always incapable of supporting a worthy cause, devoid of humaneness, and doomed to materialistic extinction. Rather, I am very hopeful that in time, Nigerians will evolve a better sense of values that will encourage a new breed of Nigerians, who will be more inclined to spend their hard earned wealth for things that really matter, and for the improvement of their national Institutions.

Our Universities must seek continuously for an elevating and enabling relationship with society; they should serve as patrons of concerts, plays, art exhibitions, and public

lectures; such measures help to bring staff and students together in a social milieu; they also provide a forum for those outside our campuses to join us and promote shared interest in a civilised life. Unfortunately, where funds are low, it is the cultural activities of the University that tend to get the first axe!

Over the last decade, Nigerian universities and their administrators have lived in the throes of a financial drought. The current economic recession in the country has imposed more severe financial anaemia on us than we ever thought possible. We have been forced by circumstances to carry vastly expanded responsibilities even as the resources base has shrunk most rapidly.

As a consequence, there are individuals in the University system who have predicted a kind of armageddon for the Universities. Outside the system itself, there have been individuals, some of them eminent, who have not made serious efforts to show some understanding of the problems of the University. In my view, both the wailers inside and the detractors outside share a common affliction — despair!

Despair is an enemy. Ours is not the only society that has been, or that is currently under economic stress, for example, the British, the Americans and other nations have been in their third year of recession, yet their optimism, determination and faith in their ability to bounce back and overcome their difficulty has not flagged. To say this does not imply that all is well with the nation. Indeed there is a lot that needs repairs, reconstruction or even re-thinking.

On the surface, the future of our Universities may appear bleak; they come under increasing pressure for expansion, and for greater relevance and accountability — from all and most of all from politicians, the universities dwindling finances notwithstanding.

The patience of University staff will be sorely tried by those whom they are apt to regard as "comfortable armchair critics". However, it would be a serious error on the part of

Universities to adopt a defeatist, aggressive, and protectionist stance. It is a fact of life that governments are made up of politicians. We must also accept that we have to make, and live by, budgets for the institutions as a whole, and for the numerous services and programmes in the Institution.

We would need to re-examine new approaches and consolidate tested ones, in an effort to check expenditure, and to consider new management techniques, which may involve cost analysis, before embarking on any meaningful policy change; use of computer-based data processing, re-ordering of priorities, and re-allocation of men and material resources. And perhaps most difficult and yet essential is the need to move along this narrow tortuous path with a consensus within our own academic community; for, let us face it, many academicians are only interested in their research, and social welfare for themselves and their families, and hardly bother to think about how the University is financed.

It is perhaps a sad reflection on the state of preparedness of our universities for promoting their own welfare that in the 4th year of our first experiment in the Presidential System of Government, we are yet to develop a satisfactory working relationship with the National or State Assemblies, and an effective lobbying power is virtually non-existent, even though we share several common problems. We need to improve on our team efforts, and thus silence some of our critics who are apt to judge us by the actions of a few individualistic colleagues that mill around the "corridors of power" for their own ends.

One vital area of our national life which merits re-thinking is the management and utilisation of manpower resources in all theatres of life — economics, politics, public administration, science and technology, research and technology, research and development, the arts etc. The nation's ability to maximise the benefits derivable from its human resources hinges most significantly on the relationship between academia and the bureaucracy — the two largest reservoirs of knowledge and professional competence in the Republic; that relationship ought to be characterised by cooperation and mutual respect; not by suspicion and antagonism.

In spite of all their imperfections, the University remains the bastion of hope for the nation's survival, it lives on, and for knowledge, since knowledge is indeed the very matrix for the future society. The University also offers an exciting and sensitive balance between individualism and collective interdependence; between creativity and production; between idealism and realism; between felt commitment and formal authority; and even between the frivolous and the serious; the sacred and the profane.

Universities are basically flexible and resilient organisations, difficult to destroy from outside, but not unsusceptible to self-destruction; if our Universities are to survive and thrive in the next two decades and beyond, they will need not only more money; they will have to demonstrate all the resilience, flexibility, ingenuity, objectivity, unity and self-preservation that they alone can muster and sustain.

Finally, a word to our graduands. We congratulate you on your successes and achievements leading to the conferment of various awards on you today. We wish you every success in all spheres of life. You are our ambassadors and you must strive to be worthy ones. It is your duty to project the good image of your alma mater in the best way possible at all times. You must remember that your good name will be a source of pride to us and that your success is the success of the University of Lagos as well.

Mr. Vice-President, Chancellor, Sir, the Pro-Chancellor, Your Excellencies, Your Highnesses, distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, I thank you, one and all, for your attention.

Professor Akin O. Adesola
Vice-Chancellor
University of Lagos

Thursday, January 20, 1983.

BREAK – DOWN OF FIGURES

1. Admission into Higher Degree Programmes in the Last Five Years:

| Year | No. | % Increase |
|---------|-----|------------|
| 1978/79 | 186 | — |
| 1979/80 | 235 | 26 |
| 1980/81 | 381 | 62 |
| 1981/82 | 499 | 31 |
| 1982/83 | 527 | 6 |

2. Student Population over the years

| Year | Number |
|-----------|-------------|
| 1962 | 131 |
| 1969/1970 | 2394 |
| 1980/1981 | 12,365 |
| 1981/1982 | 12,800 |
| 1983 | 13,000 plus |

3. Total No. of Unilag degrees and Diplomas from 1965-82

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|--------------------|
| First Degree | : | 12,539 |
| Masters | : | 877 |
| Doctorates | : | 75 |
| Postgraduate Diplomas | : | 661 |
| Non-degree diplomas and certificates | | 5,017 |
| | | <hr/> 19,169 <hr/> |

4. 1983 Breakdown of First Degrees Awarded according to classes

| | | |
|-----------------------|---|-------------------|
| First Class | : | 23 |
| Second Class (Upper) | : | 281 |
| Second Class (Lower) | : | 966 |
| Third Class | : | 290 |
| Pass Degree | : | 9 |
| Non-classified | | |
| Medical Degrees | : | 135 |
| Total | = | <hr/> 1,704 <hr/> |

Addendum

Alumni Association

Earlier on in this address, I referred to an undertaking by the Alumni Association of this University to donate to the University a Postgraduate Hall, as its contribution to our Postgraduate training efforts. Last night, at the Alumni Reception, I received a most pleasant surprise when the National President of the University of Lagos Alumni Association, on behalf of the Association, presented to me a cheque as first instalment of its donation for the Alumni Postgraduate Hall in the sum of ₦100,000.00 (One Hundred Thousand Naira).

In addition, some Alumni of the University have offered their professional services, free of charge as Consulting Architects, Engineers etc. for a rapid execution of this project, the foundation stone of which was graciously laid by Mr. Vice-President some months ago.

On behalf of the Entire University, I thank the Alumni Association of this University for the wonderful gesture. I wish to assure them that the Postgraduate Hall project will proceed on schedule, and should reflect in its every facet, the spirit of true partnership and mutual confidence that has characterised the relationship between the University and its worthy Alumni.

UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS



U. L. ARCHIVE

U. L. ARCHIVE

CONVOCATION SPEECHES
(JAN. 1983)

BY

PROFESSOR AKIN, ADEBOLA
Vice-Chancellor