



UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS, NIGERIA

2012 CONVOCATION LECTURE



Lecture Delivered By

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Under the Distinguished Chairmanship of

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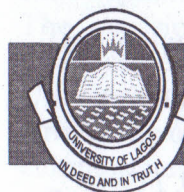
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TIME: 2:00 p.m.

VENUE: Main Auditorium, University of Lagos

**SUSTAINING UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS AS A
UNIVERSITY OF FIRST CHOICE AND THE NATION'S PRIDE**

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UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS

GOLDEN JUBILEE CONVOCATION LECTURE
NIGERIAN HIGHER EDUCATION: AGENDA
FOR REFORM

BY

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FEBRUARY 5, 2013



PROTOCOL AND INTRODUCTION

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Provost, College of Medicine,

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Members of Senate of the University

Members of Unilag Alumni Association

My Dear Students

Gentlemen of the Press

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen



Introduction

The occasion of the celebration of half a century since the establishment of the **first Federal University in Nigeria, the University of First Choice** and the University of Laureates, **the University of Lagos**, is an appropriate forum in which to evaluate the current state of affairs of the Nigerian higher education landscape and reflect on how it may be over-hauled to meet the challenges of the present and the future, hence the title of this lecture.

It is an indication of the high quality of teaching and learning in the University of Lagos that it has produced, from the ranks of its lecturers and former students, more laureates in both Science and Literature in the Nigeria LNG Prize than any other University.

Nigerian higher education includes all post-secondary education leading to a Diploma or degree. The higher education institutions include all universities, polytechnics, monotechnics, colleges of education and even professional health training institutions. It will be argued in this lecture that urgent policy reforms are required to re-position Nigeria for the challenges of the twenty-first century knowledge economy.

The 2006 population census revealed that only about 8.7% of the population aged 6 above had received higher education by 2006. By comparison, 17.78% had received secondary education. Sadly, up to 37.63 had received no education at all.

Over 2.5 million students are enrolled in over 500 such institutions and programmes in Nigerian higher education. In 2012, there were 106 colleges of education, 74 polytechnics, and 125 universities, with a total estimated enrolment of 2.5 million students. In addition, there were 113 monotechnics (i.e. technical colleges specializing in one area of study such as agriculture or health technology) and about 100 schools of nursing and midwifery and other professional training institutions, with an estimated enrolment of over 120,000 students.

Given Nigeria's estimated population of 158.423 million in 2010, the total estimated enrolment in higher education of 2,500,000 represents



a gross enrolment ratio of only 11.29% for 18-to 25-year-olds (whose population was estimated to be 22.137 million in 2010). In the case of universities, although some 40% of them are privately owned, the share of enrolment of the private universities is less than 10% of the total.

In terms of graduate education, less than 10% of all Nigerian students are engaged in postgraduate study, and most of these tend to be in the humanities and especially the social sciences, with very few graduate students enrolled in the sciences, engineering, or medicine (Jibril, 2003). Indeed, in some universities more than 50% of the graduate students are enrolled in business administration and related courses, responding to the needs of the labour market. Overall, while Nigeria's higher education sector is among the largest on the African continent, reforms are urgently needed—as this lecture will demonstrate—particularly in terms of curriculum, funding, governance, and access.

Historical Background

The first higher education institution established in Nigeria was Yaba College, which was opened in 1934 by the British colonial authorities to help with the production of middle level technicians. This was followed by the establishment of the University College, Ibadan as a degree-awarding College of the University of London in 1948. The Ashby Commission—which the pre-independence government established to advise on higher education for the new nation in 1959—recommended the upgrading of the University College to a full-fledged university in 1960, as well as the establishment of a university in the then capital city of Lagos and in each of the Northern and Eastern Regions. The Western Regional Government also proceeded to establish its own regional university at Ile-Ife. Thus, by 1962, there were five universities in Nigeria, which were joined in 1970 by the University of Benin. These six universities constitute what is known as the first generation of Nigerian universities. The second generation of universities consists of seven universities, which were established in 1975–1976 to ensure that each of the then

12 states of the federation had a federal university; two state universities were also taken over by the federal government in 1991 and 1992 to join the second generation club of universities. Although all the regional universities had by 1975 been taken over by the federal government, in 1979 states began to establish new universities of their own. The trend is still continuing, as there are now (in February 2013) 128 universities, of which 40 are federal (including one Defence Academy and one Open University), 38 state, and 50 private.

The Ashby Commission also recommended the establishment of four advanced teachers' colleges and polytechnics, which have continued to grow both in number and in enrolment to the levels stated earlier. Of the 106 colleges of education existing in 2012, 21 are owned by the federal government and 47 by state governments, while 58 are privately owned. Similarly, of the 74 polytechnics existing in 2012, the federal government owns 21 and state governments 38, while 15 are privately owned. Most of the 113 specialized colleges are Vocational Enterprise Institutions and Innovation Enterprise Institutions which are privately owned.

Access to Higher Education in Nigeria

As indicated earlier, only about 11.29% of the tertiary education age cohort is in tertiary institutions. This compares most unfavourably with some of the developed countries such as the USA where up to 82 % of the age cohort is in tertiary education. One of the indicators of under-provision in the Nigerian higher education system is the admissions crisis that occurs every year when the season for admitting students to the higher education institutions arrives. Administrators and senior academics in the universities literally go underground in order to avoid meeting desperate parents and guardians of prospective candidates who come to plead for the favour of having their wards admitted for their chosen course. Although the pressure in the polytechnics is also considerable, it is nowhere near the intensity of the pressure in the universities, especially the first generation federal universities and especially where professional



courses such as medicine, law, accountancy, pharmacy, engineering and business administration are involved.

Although there are well-known criteria for qualifying for admission to these courses, candidates invariably fail to qualify and yet are desperate to be admitted for their course of choice. Sometimes undue pressure is brought to bear on the officers of the university through notes sent by highly placed public officers. Sometimes, too, there are stories of money changing hands, especially where junior academics or members of the administrative staff are in a position to influence the admissions process. A similar phenomenon has been reported in the literature regarding South Korea (NCIHE, 1997) and Eastern Europe and Central Asia

When admissions are judged against applications, only a small fraction of those who apply, usually 10% or less, gets admitted.

The Crisis of Access: Some Explanations

The crisis of access to higher education as described above can be explained in several ways. First of all, the secondary school system is itself in crisis and is so inefficient that it can simply not deliver the required quantity and quality of candidates for the higher education system to absorb. All the tertiary institutions, except some of the specialized colleges such as the Innovation Enterprise Institutions, require five credit passes in the SSCE. These credit passes have to be in the right combination of subjects relevant to the desired course of study. In addition, the candidates have to score well enough in the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination to qualify for admission.

Access, Pipeline Issues and Related Issues:

While part of the problem is that the institutions cannot take on all the qualified candidates wishing to be admitted, an equally serious problem is the lack of good candidates who have the required number of credits in the required combination of subjects and who score well enough in the matriculation examination to be acceptable to the institutions. Although Nigeria was supposed to have 16 million students in secondary schools by the year 2008, the number enrolled was 5.8 million, which suggests that only 36% of the age cohort was

accommodated.

The system is, therefore, too small to guarantee the production of the kind of manpower that can be used as vehicle for rapid development. Science is indifferently taught in secondary schools and the schools often lack basic laboratory equipment and consumables. Little wonder then that only 9.29% of all the 1,369,171 candidates who sat for the West African Examinations Council Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination in 2008 obtained credits in 5 or more subjects, including English and Mathematics as can be seen from table 5 below:

Table 1: WAEC Examination Results 2008

Source: National Bureau of Statistics: Social Statistics 2009

Total No of Candidates	Total No with 5 credits and above	% of candidates with 5 credits and above
1,369,171	127,147	9.29

An analysis of the performance of candidates in the 2008 examination results in Mathematics and English Language reveals that on average 17% of all candidates failed Mathematics and 31% of all candidates failed English Language as indicated in the following charts.



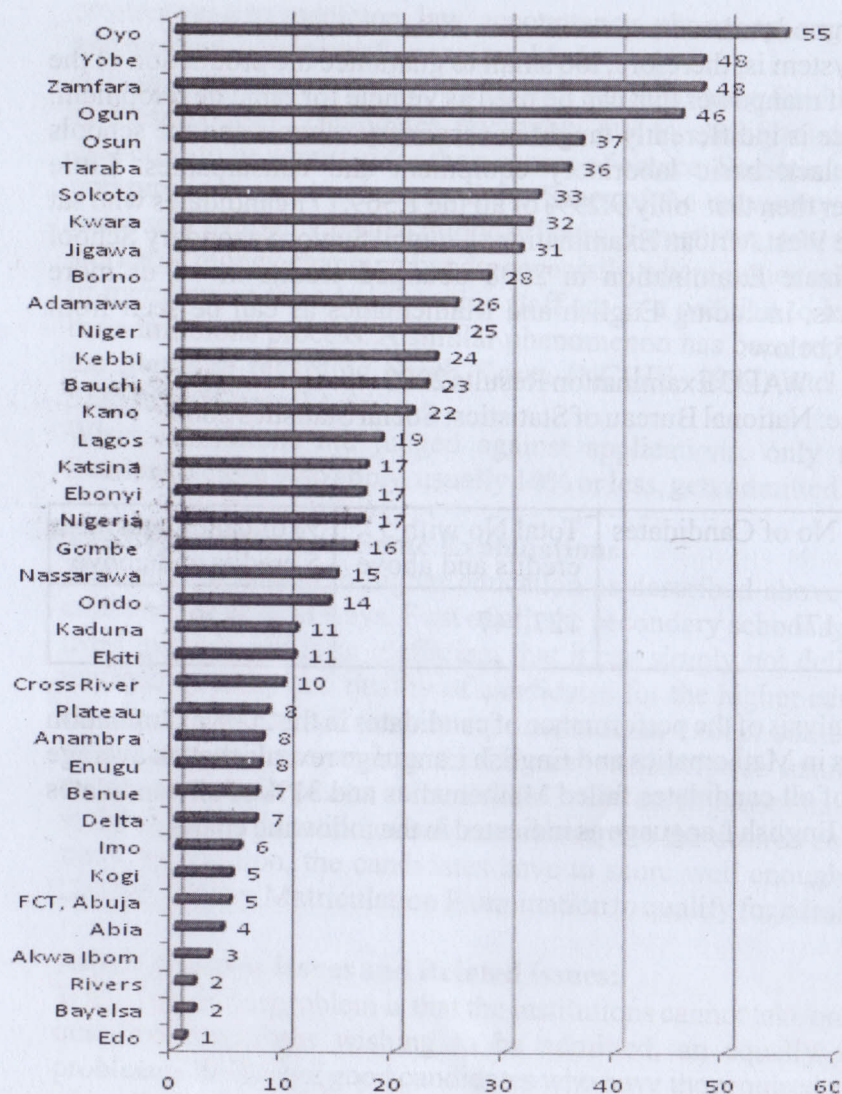


Figure 1: Percentage of Students Failing WAEC Mathematics by State 2008:
Source: National Bureau of Statistics

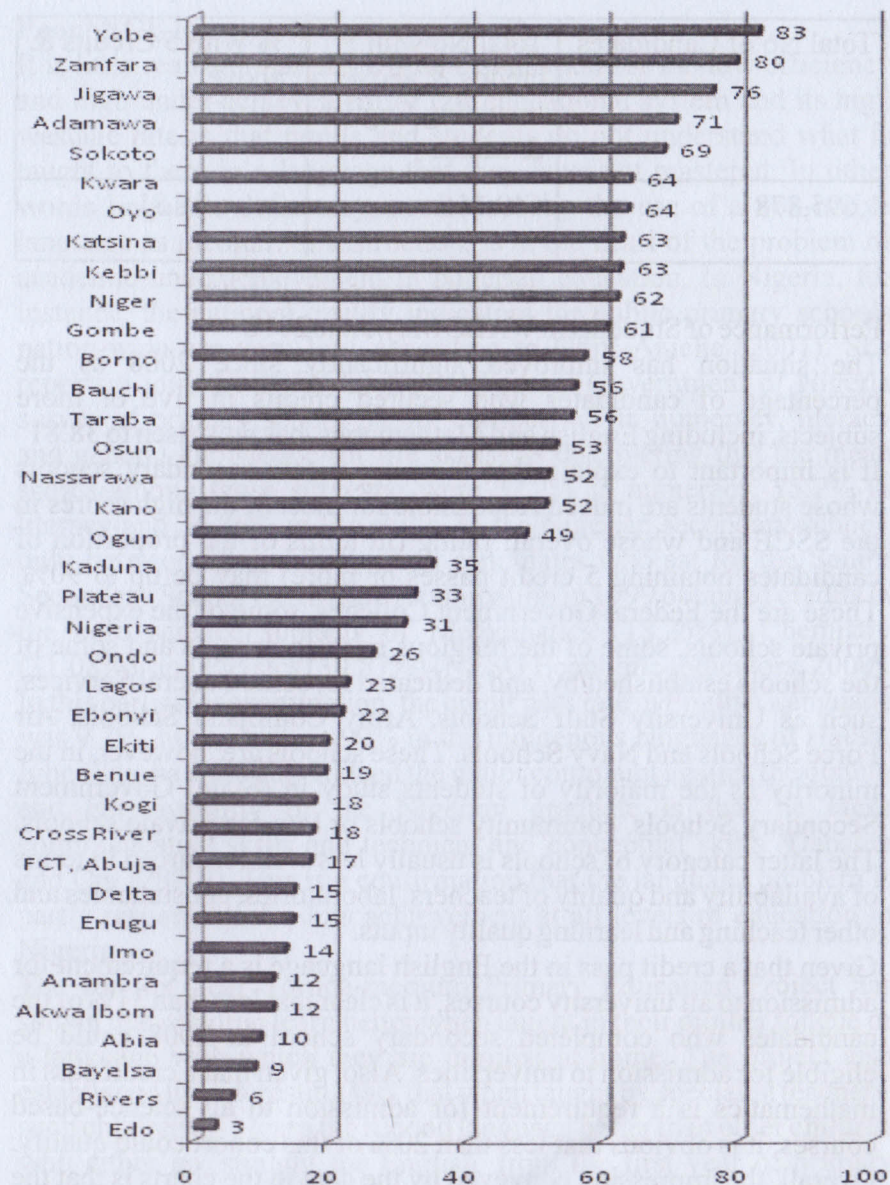


Figure 2: Percentage of Students Failing English Language by State in WAEC 2008. Source: National Bureau of Statistics



Education in Africa (ADEA) and the UNESCO Institute for Education reported under the title *Optimizing Learning and Education in Africa – the Language Factor: Stocktaking Research on Mother-Tongue and Bilingual Education in Sub-Saharan Africa* which consistently confirm that the quality of learning is better in the mother-tongue or its equivalent. As part of this study, Alidou (2005) reports that

Studies from South Africa, Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Ghana, Ethiopia, Malawi, Namibia and Tanzania show that pupils having benefited from bilingual instruction perform better in examinations at the end of primary schooling than pupils from traditional schools.

Heugh (2005) also reports, as part of the same study, that in Apartheid South Africa, between 1955 and 1976 when the medium of instruction up to the 12th grade was the mother-tongue, school leaving pass rates were almost twice as high as after 1976 when English became the medium of instruction. Although this result should be interpreted cautiously in view of the many complexities surrounding the policies of the Apartheid government in South Africa, it is also interesting that even the score for English Language was twice as high during the mother-tongue medium period than during the English medium period. Finally, the study concludes that 'bilingual education and the use of local languages are decisive factors in the quality of learning' and that

...better results are obtained with the so-called additive model, which begins teaching the fundamentals in the mother-tongue or the language that serves as such and maintains the use of this language as long as possible (the studies speak of a minimum of six to eight years) (Ouane 2005).

Nigerian linguists should therefore actively campaign for the use of the mother-tongue or its equivalent as medium of instruction for at least the nine years of basic education, with English being introduced as a subject from the fourth year of primary school. This policy, if adopted, would necessitate the development of many languages,

including the compilation of dictionaries and grammars and the development of appropriate technical vocabulary as well as stimulate the development of literature in the languages and promote their use.

Teachers and the Low Efficiency of the Pipeline

Nigerian education is in crisis principally on account of teacher quality and quantity deficits. At the basic education level, according to the *Education Roadmap (2009)* as of 2009, 38.75% of the teachers did not possess the NCE or higher qualification. At the senior secondary level, as of 2009, 21.6% of the teachers were not qualified to teach at that level. In Polytechnics and Colleges of Education only 44% of the required teachers were available around the same period and the shortfall of required teachers in the Universities was 39%. In addition, over 60% of the teachers in Universities were junior academic staff whose proportion should not exceed 45%, thereby indicating a shortage of senior and more experienced lecturers. Similarly, over 40% of lecturers in the Polytechnics did not possess the Master's degree, which is the minimum qualification for teaching at that level. In addition, according to the *Nigerian Education Sector Diagnosis: a Platform for Re-Engineering the Education Sector (2007)*, 94% of Professors in the Nigerian University System are not professionally qualified teachers. Also, 32% of all lecturers in Nigerian Universities had no teaching qualifications as teacher trainers in 1999/2000. Little wonder then that our educational system is characterised by low quality output and inefficiency as illustrated by the low performance levels in the national senior secondary school examination, for instance.

According to *Nigerian Education Sector Diagnosis (2007)*, in 2000, the NCCE found that 56.5% of basic education teachers it sampled taught all subjects but their specializations were 8.2% English, 7.8% French, 3.6% Mathematics and 1.1% Primary Science, so it is obvious that the sciences are short-changed.

Teaching Is a Low Esteem Profession

According to the *Education Sector Status Report (2003)* in the year 2000, 80% of the secondary school students surveyed did not wish to



go to a College of Education to pursue an NCE course. In the 2000/2001 Matriculation Examination, only 22.49% of the available places in the Colleges of Education could be filled through the direct entry route owing to a shortage of qualified and interested candidates. This has forced the Colleges to admit most of their students through the pre-NCE or Remedial route, thereby lowering the quality of intake even further. According to Isyaku (2000), by 1996/97, up to 54% of the students admitted to the Colleges of Education came through the Pre-NCE route. This has serious implication for quality as the requirement for admission to the Pre-NCE course is simply three passes in the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination.

The NCE certificate, which was originally designed to address the problem of critical shortage of teachers at the junior level of the Nigerian secondary school system in the 1960's, appears to have outlived its usefulness. It was later envisaged to be the minimum teaching qualification for the primary school, although, in the public (ie Government) schools, this is yet to be attained. It is worthy of note, however, that the more expensive and better-run private primary schools do not, as a matter of policy, recruit NCE or other non-graduate teachers. However, because Governments fail to recruit the products of the colleges of education who hold the NCE certificate to teach in their primary schools or even in their junior secondary schools, there are thousands of unemployed NCE holders all over the country. Their plight helps to discourage others from seeking admission to colleges of education, hence the shortage of candidates referred to earlier.

In the 2001/2002 academic year, only 2.2% of the candidates who took the University Matriculation Examination applied to study education, compared to 25.8% for administration and 20.3% for social sciences. When candidates who apply to other Faculties are rejected, they are then sent to Education and end up as reluctant teachers. People come to teaching only when they cannot find something else and they leave as soon as an alternative job becomes available. The low esteem of the profession is a consequence of low pay, poor conditions of service, poor career progression prospects

and poor prestige. Several States have not yet implemented the TSS fully and in some cases graduates of 30 years' standing are still stagnating as middle-level officers in the service.

In 2008, the National Commission for Colleges of Education commissioned a survey of the condition of service of primary and secondary school teachers nationwide. The result of the survey was summarized as follows:

'... the condition under which they serve the nation requires tremendous improvement in order to make their working environment a place that has the capacity to provide and enhance greater confidence, motivation, commitment and appropriate task performance facilities to ensure an acceptable quality of teaching and learning. The findings indicate that teachers have very low public recognition and they do not have respectable and acceptable office accommodation. Teachers appear not to have access to instructional materials or ICT equipment for their work. They also appear not to have much support for professional development and training.

The Quality Matrix

For Nigerian education to improve its quality, teaching must be made the profession of first choice through attractive remuneration, welfare and conditions of service, including working environment, tools and facilities as well as career growth and prospects. The crisis in Nigerian education is a crisis of teachers as evidenced by the mass failure in the senior secondary school national examinations. The significant difference in the level of performance of students in elite and ordinary secondary schools in the SSCE can be explained with reference to the quality of teachers and teaching in the two types of schools.

The fundamental problem of teachers and teaching in Nigeria is that it is now the profession of last resort and quality cannot be found or sustained where only those who have no other choice join the teaching profession. Efforts to raise the quality of teachers through in-service training are half-hearted and even when successful amount to a waste as the trained teachers are likely to migrate to



better non-teaching jobs at the first opportunity

In order for us to raise the quality of teachers and teaching in our educational system, we must first raise the status of the profession to become the destination of first choice by raising the salary of teachers at all levels to at least 10% above their counterparts in the civil service, and by improving the conditions of service to achieve parity with, or superiority over, similar and competing professions.

The NCE programme was a child of necessity as it was introduced in Nigeria in the early 1960's to address the critical shortage of teachers in junior classes in secondary schools. The programme has paid its dues as I can personally attest to the high level of professional competence of some of the early products of the NCE Colleges who taught me even in my final year in the Grade II Teachers' College. However, the trend world-wide is for the Bachelor's degree to be the minimum academic qualification for teaching even in the nursery school. Additionally, there is considerable evidence to suggest that the quality of the NCE product is now very low. We should therefore give serious consideration to abolishing the NCE programme and making the Bachelor's degree *and* a postgraduate teaching qualification the minimum requirements for entry into the profession and for teaching at the basic level of education.

The numerous Colleges of Education all over the country should then be converted to produce Professional Diploma in Education for untrained graduates willing to join the teaching profession or Postgraduate Diploma in Education to be accredited by the Teachers' Registration Council.

Distance Education

The National Open University of Nigeria now has over 120,000 students on its register while the National Teachers Institute has some 80,000 students on its NCE by distance learning course. This flexible, relatively cheap and more efficient mode for the delivery of education has not yet been fully deployed to address Nigeria's deficit in access to higher education. The two distance learning institutions have, between them 8% of the entire enrolment of all the tertiary education institutions put together. So, the potential exists for many

more students to be reached through this flexible learning mode. However, the two institutions and others must move away from printed learning materials to digital media and create fully interactive digital and web-based platforms for qualitative learning to take place.

The Case for the Expansion of the Higher Education System

The structure of the Nigerian education system is skewed, with 24 million pupils at the primary school level, 6.5 million at the secondary level, and only 2.5 million at the tertiary level. Thus, in order to move from a gross enrolment ratio of 11.29% at the tertiary level, the number of pupils transiting from the primary to the secondary school levels will have to be substantially increased, and the efficiency of the secondary school level will also have to improve substantially.

The target we should aim at is an enrolment in higher education of at least 20% of the age cohort by the year 2020. According to the National Population Commission (NPC) (1991), the 18-to-25-year-old cohort was 22.1 million in the year 2010, so 20% of that will be 4.42 million. This amounts to almost a twofold increase in the size of the higher education enrolment over the next seven years. Although this may look ambitious, with the benefit of hindsight, we now know that while the Ashby Commission thought that its enrolment projections were revolutionary, they turned out to be conservative and to have been outstripped by the actual size of the enrolment growth. This may well turn out to be the case here as well.

Given the present size of the secondary school subsector, for the next three or four years only between 1.6 million and 1.9 million candidates will constitute the potential intake into higher education annually. We should therefore begin to prepare other potential higher education students from outside the secondary schools. There are thousands of secondary school dropouts who have not been able to secure the magical five credit passes in the SSCE or to pass the JAMB matriculation examination. State governments should mount



intensive remedial programs for such people immediately. There should be provision for 10,000 such students in every one of the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory, so that beginning in 2014, there will be at least 740,000 such students in the remedial programs nationwide every year. Some educationally disadvantaged states may not, of course, be able to mobilize up to 20,000 students a year, but then some of the educationally advanced states may be able to mobilize multiples of that number annually, so the numbers should even out overall. State governments should provide this service free to their citizens and should be responsible for the payment of the registration fees for the external examination to be taken by the candidates at the end of the course. It is hoped that at least 500,000 candidates will be successful in both the GCE examination and the JAMB matriculation examination annually, and thus provide additional candidates for the higher education institutions to admit.

The case for the expansion of the Nigerian higher education system is predicated upon the demands of the knowledge economy. At the present time, with only 11.29% of the relevant age cohort enrolled in higher education institutions, and with only 2.62% of the population having achieved a postsecondary education by 1991 (NPC, 1991), Nigeria is ill-equipped to participate in the knowledge economy. It was predicted as far back as 1977 that for it to survive and grow, every society must provide access to higher education for between 12% and 18% of its relevant age cohort and that providing access to less than 12% of the cohort to higher education would threaten the future of that society in a globalized and knowledge-based world economy (Perkins, 1977). It has also been suggested (Sadlak, 1988) that within the last decade, 40% of all jobs in the developed economies would require at least 16 years of schooling, i.e., higher education. It is instructive that none of the OECD countries had a gross enrolment ratio below 30% by the close of the last century. Indeed, according to UNESCO (2009), the United Kingdom had a tertiary gross enrolment ratio of 60 in 2007/2008 while the ratio in the USA in the same period was 82. Nigeria's gross tertiary gross enrolment was just about 10% then. Similarly, the Asian Tigers had gross enrolment ratios of between 11% (Malaysia) and 43.5% (South Korea) in 1995, according to the Dearing Report (NCIHE,

Country	Primary GER	Secondary GER	% Enrolment in TVE	Tertiary GER
Switzerland	103	93	32	47
UK	101	170	51	60
USA	100	95	7	82
Nigeria	99	37	2?	10

Table showing the comparative GER at the three levels of education between some developed countries and Nigeria

The World Bank (2002) has gathered extensive evidence to indicate the strong relationship that exists between investment in higher education, research, and development on the one hand, and economic growth on the other. However, it is emphasized that investment in tertiary education and in research and development on its own may not necessarily translate into higher economic growth. In order for such an investment to yield the required dividend, it must be made within the context of a national innovation system (described as an appropriate macroeconomic framework, innovative firms, adequate infrastructure, and other factors, such as access to the global knowledge base). The extent to which investment in manpower development impacts economic growth, as well as the returns on investment in education for individuals and the society, have been well researched in the economics literature, though there is hardly any unanimity on conclusions.³

It has been suggested by some observers that human capital is, in this knowledge economy, more important in contributing to the wealth of nations than produced assets or natural capital. According to Serageldin (2000), human/social capital now accounts for 59% of wealth creation in low-income countries (67% in high-income countries), compared to produced assets (21% low income and 16% high income) and natural resources (20% low income and 17% high income). This dramatic reversal of economic theory has been brought about largely by the role of information and communications



technology (ICT) expertise in the knowledge economy.

Thus, while the increasingly knowledge-based economies of countries like India and the United States are estimated (and expected) to rise, Nigeria's is expected to continue to decline owing to a downward trend in oil prices and the possible discovery and development of alternative sources of energy.

It is therefore a global trend that higher education systems are rapidly moving from elite systems, where only a small percentage of the population (usually less than 15%) has access to higher education, to mass systems, where the participation rates range from 15% to 40%.⁴ The massification of higher education systems is closely correlated to a country's strategic positioning for global competitiveness. However, in view of the linkages between the three levels of education, the expansion of the higher education system has to move in tandem with the expansion of the two lower levels, especially the secondary, from which the higher education system recruits its intake.

The Case Against Expansion

There are valid arguments against the expansion of the Nigerian higher education system. For one thing, it is legitimate to argue that if funding and quality are so poor given the present (relatively small) size of the system, how much worse would they both be in an expanded system? It is equally legitimate to question the rationale for expanding the system further to produce more graduates, when Nigeria's economy already seems incapable of providing employment to the relatively few products of the higher education system.

The issue of graduate unemployment can be explained in terms of the political economy of Nigeria. The public sector—which in the first two decades following independence (1960–1980) employed some 80% of the graduates of higher education—is no longer expanding, and is, in fact, contracting. The government has also withdrawn from large-scale commercial activities and is privatizing or has already privatized, major public utilities such as telecommunications and power. As a consequence, there are very few new openings in the public sector. The private sector, which in other countries is the major

employer of skilled manpower, has yet to find its proper bearing in Nigeria. Most of the industries are foreign-owned and rather small or are mere assembly plants with only marginal linkages to local producers. Owing to political instability, no substantial new investment has come into the country from outside in the last 20 years until recently, when the telecommunications sector was deregulated and some foreign companies came to open shop. Also, many wealthy Nigerians who made their money as public officers are afraid to invest the money at home for fear of possible confiscation and/or prosecution. Instead, the funds are hidden in Dubai, South Africa, Europe and the United States. But the absence of institutions that can absorb the new graduates of an expanded higher education system should not discourage us from expanding the system.

At the present time, there is no connection between the number of graduates produced by Nigerian universities and the needs of the economy. The table below shows graduate out-turn in 2005 in Nigeria

Faculty	% of Graduates in 2005
Administration	10.6
Agriculture	5.8
Arts	8.5
Education	10.8
Engineering /Technology	13.2
Environmental Sciences	4.1
Law	4.1
Medicine	6.9
Pharmacy	1.2
Sciences	21.7
Social Sciences	11.7
Veterinary Medicine	0.7

Table 7: Graduate Out-turn by Faculty 2005. Source: National Universities Commission



Government policy is explicit that the conventional federal universities should aim at an enrolment mix of 60:40 in favour of science-related courses and that federal universities of technology should aim at an enrolment mix of 80:20 in favour of science-related courses. Government policy also states that the federal polytechnics should aim at an enrolment mix of 70:30 in favour of science and technology-related courses (National Policy on Education, 2004). Although there are no such quotas for the college of education sub-sector, it is instructive that 40% of the Federal Colleges of Education (i.e. 8 out of 20) are designated as technical and are only allowed to teach technical and vocational subjects. However, the implementation of these policies has been half-hearted. The federal universities (conventional and technological) had a combined average enrolment ratio of science to arts of 51.6:48.4 in the 2004/2005 academic year. Now the target of an enrolment mix of 60:40 in favour of science has been achieved system-wide, though there are still individual universities that are lagging behind.

Since education is a commodity which is partly demand-driven, it would be in order for government to create the appropriate policy environment for the economy to be production-driven rather than service-driven so that the graduates of science-related disciplines would be highly sought after by employers and be better remunerated than other graduates, or if they choose to set up their own businesses and small-scale enterprises, they should not only have access to credit on reasonable terms but also be assured that their products would enjoy government protection from unfair competition from abroad.

The example of the Asian Tigers has shown that once a nation empowers its people with the right technical and entrepreneurial skills, and provided that the policy environment is supportive in terms of easy access to micro credit and protection and support for small scale industries, they can actually create jobs for themselves and drive the engine for the growth of the nation's economy. This, of course, means that the expanded system will be providing a new type of higher education, quite distinct from what has been on the menu up



to this point in time.

The question must also be asked: what is the alternative to educating a greater number of the higher education cohort? At present, the dropouts from this cohort provide most of the army of urban unemployed youth who are used by the disgruntled elite to carry out violent inter-communal riots. The Boko Haram insurgency is but a manifestation of youth unemployment and disenchantment with a system that appears not to offer them any future. If the young people had better access to higher education and better employment prospects, perhaps they would not be such an easy prey of the mischief-makers.

The arguments put forward earlier in favour of expansion are so compelling that unless Nigeria wishes to postpone its development for another generation, the country's leaders must proceed with a comprehensive reform effort immediately. However, funding arrangements will have to be overhauled to drastically reduce dependence on the public treasury in order to run the higher education system. Quality is, of course, closely related to funding. It can be argued that if the required human and material resources can be mobilized outside the public treasury, it is possible to maintain and even improve quality simultaneously with expansion.

Funding

Funding for public tertiary institutions has consistently fallen short of their actual needs, thereby constraining their ability to expand their facilities and recruit competent local and international teaching staff who would improve the quality of education in the system.

According to the report of a committee recently set up by the National Universities Commission "in the 2006/2007 academic session, there was an average shortfall of N1.16 billion in recurrent allocation to federal universities. From 2005 to 2008 there were shortfalls in government's allocation to the federal universities. A similar trend was observed for the state universities". Indeed the percentage shortfall in funding Federal Universities was 24.6 in 2003 and 43.5 in 2004, indicating an unacceptably high financing gap which has serious implications for quality. For the period 1990-2001, the



recurrent grants released to the federal universities represented, on the average, only 58% of the funding levels recommended by the National Universities Commission. For the polytechnics, the average funding level over the period 1985–2001 was a little better, at 71% of the levels recommended by the National Board for Technical Education.

The table below, which is also from the NUC report, indicates the minimum levels of spending per student per discipline to guarantee the attainment of the prescribed minimum academic standards. It shows that in 2010, a minimum of N311, 977 needed to be spent for disciplines in the Humanities, Education and Social Sciences, while N564, 783 was required for Pure and Applied Sciences and N774, 618 for Veterinary and Human Medicine and Dentistry. The average unit cost should have been N507, 903 but the actual was less than N200,000, which indicates the size of the funding gap and therefore the enormity of the quality challenges.

Table 2: Minimum Unit Cost per Discipline for Full Accreditation Status

Discipline	Unit Cost 2010	
	N	US \$
Administration	311,977	2,066
Agriculture	564,783	3,740
Arts	311,977	2,066
Dentistry	774,618	5,130
Education	311,977	2,066
Engineering	564,783	3,740
Environmental Science	564,783	3,740
Law	311,977	2,066
Medicine	774,618	5,130
Pharmacy	564,783	3,740
Science	459,866	3,045
Social Science	311,977	2,066
Vet Medicine	774,618	5,130
Average Unit Cost	507,903	3,364

According to the report, “the recurrent allocation per student from 1990 to 2008 is computed in Table 3 below. Exchange rates as at the year of allocation were used for the conversion of naira to US dollars. In 2001 the actual unit release was US \$775 while the required unit allocation for programmes to operate at full accreditation status was US \$ 2,626. In 2007 the actual allocation per student was US \$1,274 while US \$1,975 was required. This reveals that the unit allocation had always been inadequate”.

Table 3: Recurrent Releases Expressed as Per Student Units of Spending from 1990 - 2008 (Federal Universities)

YEAR	RECURRENT RELEASE N	STUDENT ENROLLMENT	ACTUAL UNIT RELEASE N	ACTUAL UNIT RELEASE US \$
1990	641,570,950.00	168,534	3,807	515
1991	704,887,817.00	195,659	3,603	448
1992	2,244,173,126.00	215,777	10,400	1,049
1993	3,226,229,278.00	229,410	14,063	813
1994	3,405,345,420.00	241,936	14,075	630
1995	4,576,364,236.00	254,461	17,985	822
1996	5,924,050,010.00	260,020	22,783	1,041
1997	3,697,819,940.00	271,718	13,609	622
1998	7,295,447,523.50	281,742	25,894	1,183
1999	10,362,430,271.98	312,344	33,176	1,516
2000	28,206,218,865.91	359,190	78,527	913
2001	28,419,719,502.84	352,619	80,596	775
2002	30,351,483,193.00	431,996	70,259	627



2003	34,203,050,936.33	442,859	77,232	641
2004	41,492,948,787.01	456,763	90,841	704
2005	49,453,098,168.72	464,025	106,574	801
2006	75,400,267,475.00	489,766	153,952	1,184
2007	81,757,053,487.00	523,925	156,047	1,274
2008	90,752,590,641.00	558,084	162,615	1,084
2009	NA	531,631	NA	NA

(Source: Generated from NUC records)

Table 4, which is also from the Report referred to earlier, “compares public expenditure per student in tertiary education around the world in 2007. It is obvious from the table that Nigeria needs to improve on the unit cost of university education” in order to achieve the global gold standard. The Nigerian 2007 per student spending of US \$ 1,274 was only 12% of the rate in the United States of America

Table 4: COMPARATIVE PUBLIC EXPENDITURE PER STUDENT IN TERTIARY EDUCATION AROUND THE WORLD 2007

REGION	COUNTRY	UNITS COST US \$	REMARKS
Sub-Saharan Africa	Nigeria*	1,274	
	Angola	3,472	
	Benin	2,082	Includes student feeding
	Burundi	1,160	
	Cameroon	2,684	
	Chad	5,111	Includes student feeding
	Senegal	3,481	Includes student feeding
Central and Eastern Europe	Bularia	2,384	
	Czech Republic	8,181	
	Republic of Moldova	1,060	
	Ukraine	1,940	
East Asia and the Pacific	Australia	7,709	
	Japan	5,779	
	Republic of Korea	1,978	
	Thailand	1,429	
North America and Western Europe	Austria	17,041	
	Belgium	11,899	
	France	10,741	
	United Kingdom	10,060	



Some of the glaring implications of the yawning funding gap include relatively poor academic staff salaries structure (a full professor earns about \$3,000 a month) which can lead to moonlighting, brain drain, and academic corruption. Most of the universities have obsolete teaching and research equipment, and overcrowded classrooms and laboratories. These developments have profound impact on the self-esteem of most Nigerian universities and negatively affect their capacity to be active players on the international scene, hence their failure to feature in the world ranking of universities.

An important financing constraint in Nigerian higher education is the fact that the federal government restricts and regulates the capacity of its universities to generate revenue from tuition fees and accommodation charges. On average, tuition fees in Nigerian private universities range from US\$400 to US\$10,667 annually while tuition is free in all Nigerian federal universities. In the case of the state universities, no formal restriction is placed on tuition fees and the amount charged for out-of-state students can be as much as \$800 per annum.

However, the Tertiary Education Trust Fund, which manages the 2% tax that Nigerian companies pay specifically to help fund education, has created a special staff development fund which it gives to every public higher education institution in Nigeria for staff development and training. For the first time in decades, many of the institutions have now been able to send their lecturers abroad for higher degrees using this fund. The Fund is also introducing selective and focussed intervention to re-equip and re-tool the higher education institutions. Recently, for instance, it offered N1 billion each to six Universities, one in each of the six geopolitical zones, for this purpose. In 2005, ETF released as much as N2.025 billion to Federal and State universities as supplementary funding to facilitate the provision of academic infrastructure as can be seen from table 9

Table 9: ETF Allocations to Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) (N million) (2001-2006) (Source: NUC (2010) compiled from ETF Website www.etf.gov.ng).
* and ** are allocations to individual institutions

Year	Universities	Polytechnics	Colleges of Education	Monotechnics
2001	1,794	968	1,116	345
2002	3,244	1,643	1,743	448
2003	1,441	635	679	290
2004	1,516	61	740	285
2005	2,025	1,658	1,259	348
2006	45*	1,122	1,240	649
2007**	58.5	28.6	25.9	14.3
2008**	137	72.24	61.68	12.65
2009**	127	72.34	60.66	13.27

One of the critical actions to mitigate the funding constraints of the universities could be to allow them to charge fees in the exercise of full academic and institutional autonomy. Since most of the higher education institutions are owned by state and federal governments, these proprietor governments tend to provide most of the funding for these institutions. In addition to failing to



adequately meet the funding needs of these institutions, the governments—especially the federal government—restrict and regulate the institutions' ability to generate revenue from tuition fees and accommodation charges.

As a consequence of the restrictions imposed by the federal government on the charging of fees in its institutions, some revenue sources are barely tapped by the universities; for example, student accommodation accounted for only 3.5% of all internal revenue generated by the federal universities in 2000. Similarly, rent on university property accounted for only 2.29% of all internal revenue, while income from consultancies was also poor, at only 5% of all internal revenue.

The inadequacy of funding in public tertiary institutions is further confirmed by the ridiculously low level of provision for overhead expenditure. In one first generation University, for instance, the electricity bill and diesel cost for generators exceeded the total allocation for overhead expenditure for the university for the year. However, a critical re-examination of the pattern of expenditure in the tertiary institutions is required in order to reduce waste and improve efficiency. For example, the hidden expenditure item under 'maintenance of Vice-Chancellor's residence' or similar euphemisms through which the Vice-Chancellor and his entire household are fed at the university's expense should stop immediately as the practice has never been officially sanctioned. Moreover, given the current level of remuneration of Vice-Chancellors, which is almost two and a half times the professorial salary, there is no justification for them to exert further pressure on the public treasury.

The Need for Funding Reform

Clearly, the Nigerian higher education system must be reformed to diversify its resource base if it is to deliver the quality output that the country needs to become a respected player in the knowledge economy of the 21st century. The government should deregulate the system and untie the hands of the universities and other tertiary institutions, allowing them to charge realistic fees for both tuition and

staff and student accommodation. The government should also improve the public funding of higher education institutions in order to meet the minimum staffing and facilities levels recommended in the minimum academic standards/benchmarks. This funding reform should be implemented in three phases as follows:

- Government should first commit itself to provide full financing for every approved programme and for approved enrolment levels at the rates per student recommended for full accreditation to be achieved. This means that funding levels will rise two and a half times immediately. This should mark the return to formula-based funding and henceforth university funding parameters should be respected by both the legislative and executive arms of Government and should not be subjected to manipulation or arbitrary cuts.
- Phase I should involve the full deregulation of staff and student accommodation charges and the re-introduction of minimal tuition fees so that the government's contribution is reduced to 75%; this should take place during 2013–2014.
- Phase II should run from 2014 to 2017 and should involve the raising of fee levels beyond the token levels introduced in phase I; by the end of the phase, the government's contribution should be reduced to 60% while internal revenue should rise to 40%.
- Phase III should run from 2017 onward and should involve a more aggressive revenue drive to reduce the government's contribution (which should continue to rise, nevertheless) to 45%.

Quality

The challenge of maintaining and improving quality in teaching, learning and research while expanding access is a daunting one. Already, the major quality indicator, the result of the accreditation of academic programmes in the universities, suggests the system is poor in quality and inefficient. Similarly, results from a study of the external efficiency of Nigerian universities (Dabalen and Oni, 2000) suggest that Nigerian employers find university graduates deficient in



communication skills, conceptual and analytical skills and technical proficiency even in their field of training. One major oil company claims that it spends up to \$12,000 to re-train and re-equip every Nigerian university graduate it employs.

According to the Education Roadmap, there is a 44% shortfall in the number of teaching staff in the universities. There are also too many junior academics and too few senior ones. There are also critical classroom, laboratory and equipment shortages across the system. These are the inputs that account for quality or lack of it, and they are all well below optimum levels. Quality cannot be improved without substantially increasing and diversifying the resource base for the system.

The challenge of relevance is also an important one. The comments of Nigerian employers cited above raise the issue of the relevance of the curricula taught in Nigerian higher institutions to the world of work. A major undertaking is therefore required to identify the skills that products of the higher education need in order to ensure that efforts of the training institutions are synchronised with the expectations of the world of work and the realities of the *information age*.

An analysis of the trends in accreditation results carried out by NUC (NUC 2008) reveals that while only 22% of the programmes earned full accreditation status in 1990/91, the percentage descended to 11% in 1999/2000 and then picked up in 2005/2006 to 45% and to 69% in 2007. Similarly, the percentage of programmes denied accreditation was 10 in 1990/91, 17 in 1999/00, 7 in 2005/2006 and 3 in 2007. It should be mentioned that by 2007, NUC had liberalized the teacher: student ratio from 1:20 to 1:30 in the Humanities, from 1:15 to 1:20 in the Sciences, from 1:10 to 1:15 in Engineering and from 1:6 to 1:10 in Medicine and Veterinary Medicine. This would appear to have 'improved' the results of the more recent accreditation exercises as can be seen from Table 8 below:

Year of Accreditation	No of Programs Accredited	Full Accred Status	Interim Accred Status	Denied Accred Stauts
1990/91	837	185 (22.1%)	572 (68.4%)	79 (9.5%)
1999/00	1119	128 (11.4%)	801 (71.6%)	190 (17%)
2005/06	1670	748 (44.8%)	810 (48.5%)	112 (6.7%)
2007	872	599 (68.7%)	247 (28.3%)	26 (3.0%)
May 2008	238	150 (62.8%)	85 (35.5%)	3 (1.3%)
November 2008	282	149 (52.8%)	119 (42.2%)	14 (5.0%)

Table 8: Trends in Accreditation Results 1990-2007

Source: NUC

New Policy and Guidelines on Cross-Border Higher Education

In line with the realities of the globalized world, the National Universities Commission, has produced Guidelines for Cross-Border Provision of University Education in Nigeria which creates a framework for the licensing, monitoring, evaluation and regulation of cross border provision in order to ensure the credibility, integrity and quality of this provision. The Guidelines recognise three different models of cross border provision, namely:

1. The Twinning/Articulation Model which is defined as an arrangement "in which foreign universities (recognized and accredited by competent authorities in their home countries) and an approved Nigerian university, collaborate to offer courses, enrich curricular content and pedagogy and / or offer joint degrees or dual degrees and articulation arrangement



involving study on host and home campuses'

2. The Branch Campus Model which is defined as an arrangement whereby "a foreign university follows the NUC standing procedure for the establishment of private universities, and establishes its campus anywhere in Nigeria".
3. Open and Distance Learning Model which "refers to the provision of quality academic programmes and courses leading to the award of degrees, without the constraints of time and space"

The Guidelines stipulate, among others, the following conditions for the recognition and licensing of such cross border provisions:

- i. There must be diplomatic relations between the home country of the university and Nigeria and there must also be a bilateral agreement covering the provision of education between the two countries.
- ii. The home country of the foreign university must subscribe to the principle of reciprocity in cross border education provision.
- iii. The university must be recognised in its home country and the programmes it seeks to provide must be recognised by the national accreditation agency in its home country.
- iv. The programmes the foreign university seeks to provide must be certified as meeting Nigeria's manpower needs.
- v. The partner university in Nigeria must be recognised by Government and must provide the physical facilities required to run the programme or programmes.
- vi. The foreign university must provide 30% of the academic staff required to run the programme or programmes.
- vii. The foreign university's curricula must meet the requirements of the Minimum Academic Standards of the National Universities Commission.

These Guidelines have the potential of opening up the Nigerian higher education space to quality providers who will add value to Nigerian higher education, internationalize it and give the education consumer a wider choice. However, given the experience of other

countries, offshore higher education providers need to be closely monitored to ensure that quality is not compromised and the Nigerian higher education consumer is not short-changed.

The challenge of information and communication technology to Nigerian higher education is a critical one. In order to remain relevant, all institutions of higher learning must link up to the internet and ensure access to it for all their staff and students round the clock.

Private Participation in Nigerian Higher Education

As stated earlier, in December 2012, there were 125 Universities in Nigeria, of which 50 were private; 74 polytechnics, of which 15 were private; and 106 colleges of education, of which 38 were private. In the university and colleges of education subsectors, these private institutions accounted for only 3% and 0.03%, respectively, of enrolment in 2003. However, the participation of the private sector has grown from nothing in 1999 to an enrolment of 21,459 in 2003 in the university subsector. By 2010, enrolment in the private universities had exceeded 100,000.

According to studies by the World Bank, there is a strong positive relationship between the growth of private universities and the charging of fees in public universities. In *Constructing Knowledge Societies* (World Bank, 2002), the authors provide a broad comparative analysis of private growth in the higher education sector.⁵ For example, they note that in Portugal, "private universities have expanded in less than a decade to represent 30% of tertiary institutions, and they enrol close to 40% of the student population" (p. 68). In Cote d'Ivoire, "private universities enrol 30% of the student population" (p. 69), while in Iran and Japan, private universities (which were introduced in 1983 and 1991, respectively) now enrol more than 30% and 35% of their respective student populations. The book then proceeds to suggest that in countries like Nigeria, expansion of private institutions of higher learning can be expected only when fees are re-introduced in the public universities.

The Nigerian public has been sceptical about the ability of private institutions to provide good quality higher education. However, given the track record of the private sector at the lower levels of the



educational system, this scepticism would appear to be unfair. The regulatory agencies have been attuned to their responsibilities of closely monitoring and guiding these private institutions towards the attainment of acceptable standards. Happily, the indicators coming out of the initial quality assessments of the new private universities suggest that on the whole they are better positioned than public universities to deliver quality instruction. The results of the first accreditation exercise conducted for the private universities by the National Universities Commission show that none of their programs was denied accreditation (compared to the public universities, where 13% of their programs were denied accreditation a few years ago).

The private universities appear to have brought a breath of fresh air onto the Nigerian higher education scene. Because of their small sizes and the fact that tuition and other fees are charged, they have been free from student riots, staff strikes and student violence, which are all disruptive features of the public universities. Their presence on the scene is likely to make it easier for public universities to re-introduce tuition and other fees in order to be able to compete favourably with the private universities in the future.

The governance models and structures of private institutions appear to be different from those of public universities. Although, like their public counterparts, each private university has a vice chancellor and a governing council, that is where the similarity ends. All but one of the seven oldest private universities are owned by individuals (sometimes hiding behind a religious organization) who keep breathing down the vice-chancellor's neck and practically making all the major management decisions, much in the same way as the proprietor of a private secondary school turns the headmaster a glorified clerical assistant. The one exception is a university that belongs to a network of 23 other universities around the world owned by the same religious organization. The real battles in higher education will be fought in the near future when the proprietors attempt to interfere with academic grading or other aspects of the academic freedom of the faculty.

The Brain Drain and its Impact on Nigerian Higher Education

The loss of highly trained Nigerian professionals to the industrialized economies and other countries that pay higher wages and provide better working and living conditions poses a serious threat not only to Nigerian higher education but to the long-term development of the country as a whole. It has been reported, for instance, that there are up to 3.25 million Nigerians in the United States alone, of whom some 174,000 are information technology professionals, 202,000 medical and allied professionals, about 50,000 engineers, and 250,000 other professionals, including university lecturers.⁶ This trend is not unique to Nigeria, as Wolfensohn (2005) reports that only about 20% of sub-Saharan Africans educated abroad return home, the rest staying on in the country of study. Although Nigerian university salaries have improved tremendously over the last five years, working and living conditions are still inferior to what is obtainable abroad, hence the reluctance of many Nigerian academics in the Diaspora to re-locate back to Nigeria.

Challenges Facing the Academic Profession

The academic profession in Nigeria faces several challenges. As noted earlier, the most important challenge is that of attracting and receiving adequate remuneration, which can guarantee a decent standard of living for the academic and his family; this should compare favourably with what is obtainable elsewhere in Africa. Although salary levels have increased several times in the last fifteen years in nominal terms, owing to inflation and the continual loss of value of the Nigerian national currency (the Naira), in real terms the improvement is only about 25% of the 1998 levels. As a consequence of this poor level of remuneration, there is a continuous flood of skilled university teachers out of the country and also into the more lucrative sectors of the Nigerian economy. The internal brain drain to the oil industry and the banking sector by brilliant new graduates—who then earn up to three times what the university would have paid them as graduate assistants—is alarming to the academic profession, as it means that there is no new blood coming into the profession to replace the aging



senior academics in the near future.

Ultimately, this is but a manifestation of a bigger crisis, the crisis of system funding highlighted earlier in this lecture. Since, for the foreseeable future, public universities (especially federal universities) will continue to dominate the system, funding must be reformed and deregulated so as to diversify the resource base of these universities and reduce their dependence on the unpredictable and unreliable public treasury.

One of the consequences of this funding crisis is that equipment and facilities in the universities, colleges, and polytechnics have become obsolete or non-functional, while classrooms and laboratories can no longer accommodate the ever-increasing numbers of students. The academic staffing ratios continue to deteriorate below optimum levels (a few years ago the staffing levels were only 36% of what was optimally required). The cumulative effect of all these inadequacies is that the quality of Nigerian higher education continues to decline while academic corruption continues to prosper. Incidents of financial extortion and sexual harassment are on the rise, although few have been brought to public view.

Militant Unionism

In the last two decades, Nigerian universities have become notorious for the frequency of disruptive strikes which are embarked upon by the radical Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU). Owing to the Government's failure to discharge its obligations to the universities voluntarily, the Union has discovered that only strikes compel the Government to improve funding and conditions of service in the universities. As a consequence, six months are lost to strikes every three years, with attendant consequences on the stability of the academic calendar and therefore of quality. This is expected to continue until the funding and governance issues are sorted out between Government and the universities.

Academic Corruption

Nigerian universities are increasingly becoming notorious for academic corruption, such as plagiarism, grade-fixing in return for

financial or sexual favours, sexual harassment of female students by male lecturers and other unwholesome acts of corruption. The root causes of these vices can be traced to inadequate funding which makes the universities unable to attract the best and unable to sack the worst lecturers because of severe shortages of academic staff. It is therefore expected that once funding improves to the levels recommended, better quality academics should be attracted to teaching and staff discipline should be better enforced.

Finally, the problem of student secret cults and the violence their members perpetrate on campuses in some parts of the country is a serious threat to the security of both staff and students on such campuses. Quite a few members of faculty have been killed by such violent students, while student-on-student violence is a daily occurrence in some universities.

State of Research and University-Industry Partnership

Most of the research that is carried out in Nigerian higher educational institutions takes place in universities. Academic staff are required, as part of their contract, to carry out research and to publish the results of such research as a pre-condition for career progression. However, in the face of poor funding and even poorer management of research funds by the universities, and in the face of inadequate research infrastructure in the universities and an almost total lack of interest on the part of the local private sector in sponsoring or utilising the results of university research, only basic research of the publish-or-perish type tends to be carried out in Nigeria. As a country, Nigeria is yet to define its national research agenda and spending on research and development is among the lowest in the world as a percentage of GNP. Since not as much emphasis is placed on research in polytechnics and colleges of education, even less of it goes on there than in the universities.

Business and industry contribute very little to the funding of research in Nigeria because Nigerian companies are too small to invest in research while the multinationals tend to invest only in their country of origin. Nigerian companies have also shown a general lack of



interest in the activities of Nigerian universities as was evident when NUC organised a Stakeholder Conference to review the curricula of universities. Very few of the industrialists invited attended the Conference and even they were passive participants.

However, there is a lot of cooperation between the multinational oil companies and Nigerian universities in the area of research, joint training and funding of professorial chairs and scholarships related to the oil industry. For example, according to a professor who works for Shell, "Shell currently has a number of intervention programs in several tertiary institutions in Nigeria amongst which are:

- I. Annual Summer Schools for students (60 students from Geosciences + 60 from Engineering undergo a one week knowledge-update programme.
- ii. Summer forum for lecturers (designed to appraise lecturers of current innovations in technology
- iii. Establishment of Centres of Excellence.
- iv. Sabbatical Attachment for university lecturers and 12-month Research Internship for graduate students
- v. Professorial Chair programme that involves sponsorship of professors in relevant disciplines at various universities along with their research assistants and provision of teaching and research infrastructure
- vi. University laboratory and Library upgrade"

Shell currently spends about N1 billion annually to service these initiatives. The Petroleum Technology Development Fund, PTDF, is also coordinating another initiative to promote university-industry cooperation in the oil and gas sector. Meetings were held early in 2010 at PTDF offices in Abuja at which NUC and some of the key industry players, such as the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation, NNPC, Shell, Mobil and others were represented. The Committee agreed to recommend the following strategies to identify the needs of the universities and attract stakeholder intervention:

- I. The Universities should be requested to identify & tabulate areas of need and submit same to the NUC, which will harmonize and present these to the DRIVERS committee as part of issues for discussion with industry.
- II. These needs should include (but not be limited to)
Ways to foster the movement of experienced hands from the industry to the academia and the sharing of information between the industry and academia.
Infrastructure, skills, and competencies

Recruiting experienced Nigerians in the Diaspora into the Nigerian education system.

Training programs that would add tangible value to technical education and facilitate the transfer of technology into the education system.

- III. Two way sabbaticals between institutions of higher learning and the industry should be strongly encouraged as a means of enhancing practical knowledge and building hands-on experience.

IV. Train-the-Trainer programs should be vigorously pursued as specific intervention through internships, short courses on industry innovations, seminars etc.

V. Centres of Excellence in core aspects of engineering and geosciences as well as environmental technology should be the focus for interventions.

VI. A specific communication mechanism or platform should be developed to nurture and sustain the collaboration between the OPTS, the DRIVERS conglomerate and the beneficiary institutions of these initiatives.

If these initiatives bear fruit, they will impact significantly upon the quality of research and training in Nigerian universities especially in the oil and gas discipline. Similar initiatives are required in other fields.



Conclusion

For the expansion and re-structuring of the Nigerian higher education system to justify their enormous costs, they have to be carried out as part of a reform package which should have components dealing with the curriculum, funding and governance, among other issues. The graduates to be turned out into the labour market by the expanded system will have to be equipped with multiple life skills rather than facts and figures, and will have to be imbued with the entrepreneurial spirit and be ready to create their own jobs rather than expect these to be available on demand. This means that institutions of higher learning, especially the traditional universities, will have to come face to face with reality and stop pretending that there is no connection between what they teach and the world of work, or if there is, that connection is none of their business for they exist in an esoteric world that prides itself on its lack of relationship with reality.

Secondly, it is simply not possible for the system to be expanded as we have proposed above under the current funding and governance arrangements. Already quality has been declining largely because Government has been unable to discharge its funding obligations fully and yet has been unwilling to de-regulate the system so that other stakeholders can discharge theirs. The Federal Government, while substantially increasing its per student spending to meet at least 75% of the agreed academic costs of the students in the institutions it owns, should allow the institutions to consult their students, their parents and other stakeholders so that reasonable fees can be charged to make up for part of the 25% of the academic costs which Government cannot meet. Non-academic costs should be fully recovered from students but, as a corollary, there should be many scholarships, bursaries, grants and possibly student loan schemes to ensure that students are assisted to continue with their education and rescued from dropping out on grounds of poverty.

The governance arrangement will also have to be overhauled. True autonomy will have to be given to the institutions of higher learning. This will entail Government withdrawing from any active participation in decision-making, especially as this relates to the

appointment of the chief executives of the institutions. However, the appointment of members of the Governing Councils should be the joint responsibility of the institutions and the proprietor governments. The institutions should set up transparent processes of generating nominations from the campus and local communities of potential members of such councils who are willing to serve the institutions selflessly, and who will not look upon the institutions as sources of additional income for themselves. Such nominations, which should always be in excess of the number of available vacancies on the councils, should then be sent to the proprietor government for vetting and approval. The Ministry of Education or the relevant regulatory agency should also set up an effective monitoring unit to evaluate the performance of councils and their key members from time to time.

Finally, the reform package can only be effective if the right macro-economic environment exists. In other words, we must as a nation, and especially as a Government, get our acts together. The production of highly skilled and entrepreneurial graduates who cannot access micro-credit to start off their own enterprises, or who cannot sell their goods and services because of unfair competition

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PROFESSOR MUHAMMAD MUNZALI JIBRIL,
FNAL, FNESA, FNIM, FLAN, OFR
PRESIDENT, NIGERIAN ACADEMY OF LETTERS (NAL)
FORMER EXECUTIVE SECRETARY,
NATIONAL UNIVERSITIES COMMISSION (NUC) &

Brief Bio-Data of Prof. Muhammad Munzali JIBRIL

He was born on 15th September 1951. He attended Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria where he earned BA Hons Degree in English and Arabic.

- 1 January 1971 to August 1975: Grade II Teacher, Kano Local Education Authority (service transferred to Bayero University, Kano). This was my first teaching job in a primary school and later in a teacher training college
- 2 August 1975 to September 1976: Graduate Assistant in English, Bayero University, Kano.
- 3 October 1976 to September 1977: Assistant Lecturer.
- 4 October 1977 to September 1982: Lecturer II.
- 5 October 1982 to September 1984: Lecturer I.
- 6 October 1984 to September 1989: Senior Lecturer.
- 7 October 1989 to September 1991: Professor of English, Bayero University, Kano.

He also received Graduate Certificate in Education in 1974 before he went to University of Leeds, **United Kingdom**, where he earned MA Degree in Modern English. He proceeded to Lancaster University, United Kingdom in 1982, where he obtained a PhD in Linguistic. He has attended top Executives Leadership Programme in various Universities including Manchester Business School, University of Manchester, 17th-21st September 2007

He has expertise in translation of English, Arabic, Hausa, higher education management and policies, language policy in



developing nations and area of new Englishes.

Career: He has been a University teacher and manager for the last 41 years, with teaching experience in Nigeria and Saudi Arabia and management experience at all levels in the university culminating in my appointment as Executive Secretary of the National Universities Commission of Nigeria from 1996 to 2001. He was, at various times, Head of the Departments of English at BUK, Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Islamic Studies, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and Dean of the Postgraduate School. He was also Provost of the Nigerian Defence Academy, Kaduna between 1992 and 1996. He retired from BUK in December 2006. From January 2007, he worked as a freelance higher education consultant until November 2010 when the Federal Government appointed him to coordinate the transformation of the Nigeria Police Academy in Wudil to a degree-awarding institution. The degree programmes are expected to commence in April 2013.

Publications: He has published over 40 articles, chapters in books and books both in his academic area of specialisation (English Language and Linguistics) and more recently in higher education. He has established himself as a respected expert on Nigerian and West African higher education.





UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS, NIGERIA

2012 CONVOCATION LECTURE



Lecture Delivered By

Professor Munzali Jibril FNAL, FNESA, FNIM, FLAN, OFR

President of Nigerian Academy of Letters
Former Executive Secretary
National Universities Commission (NUC)

Under the Distinguished Chairmanship of

Chief Wole Olanipekun SAN, OFR, FClarb

Pro-Chancellor & Chairman of the Governing Council,
University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria

DATE: Tuesday, February 5, 2013

TIME: 2:00 p.m.

VENUE: Main Auditorium, University of Lagos

**SUSTAINING UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS AS A
UNIVERSITY OF FIRST CHOICE AND THE NATION'S PRIDE**