

**OPENING ADDRESS OF THE PRO-
CHANCELLOR AND CHAIRMAN OF
GOVERNING COUNCIL, SENATOR PRINCE DR
OLANREWAJU TEJUOSO AT THE INAUGURAL
COUNCIL MEETING HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS ON
TUESDAY, MAY 4, 2021**

The Vice Chancellor, Professor Oluwatoyin Ogundipe,
FAS

The Federal Government Appointed Council Members

- Dr Aminu Ahmed,
- Chief Chinedum Adindu,
- Dr. Elizabeth Titi Uvoh-Gardner and
- Comrade Mustafa Salihu,

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic and Research,
Professor Oluwole Familoni,

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor Development Services, Prof.
Ayodele Atsenuwa,

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor Management Services,
Professor L. O. Chukwu,

Other Council Members representing Senate,
Congregation and Convocation,

Persons in Attendance by the virtue of their portfolios,
Ladies and Gentlemen!

Let me start my address to these respectable members of the new Governing Council with a quote by Plato; "*The Beginning is the Most Important Part of the Work*". The reason we decided to hit the ground running quickly with this inaugural meeting barely two weeks after our inauguration and I appreciate members for making out time in their diaries to attend the meetings today and tomorrow.

I count it a great honour to be called to serve our great University at this auspicious time in the life of University of Lagos, my Alma-Mata, the "*University of First Choice*"

and the Nation's Pride." I accepted this call to service because I see it as another opportunity to develop our Public Institutions which I did meritoriously in the Ogun State cabinet of 2011-2015 as a commissioner in the ministries of special duties (power and water resources), environment and that of youth and sports and at the National Assembly as a Senator from 2015 to 2019 and in many other community services to date.

Many of you distinguished Council Members from the University of Lagos Community may not know that my relationship with the University of Lagos is as old as the University itself. My father, His Royal Majesty, Oba Dr. Adedapo Adewale Tejuoso, Karunwi III, Oranmiyan, Osile Oke Ona Egba, Abeokuta Ogun State, served as a house officer at the Lagos university teaching hospital, (LUTH) from June 1964 – 1965 and as a senior officer till September 1966. During this time, I was enrolled into the University of Lagos Staff School and proceeded to Igbobi College in 1974. After my secondary school I returned to the University of Lagos, College of Medicine in 1981 to study Medicine and graduated to become one of the youngest Doctors as at then in Nigeria at the age of 21.

Why this brief story? You will all believe with me that I am not an alien to an Institution where I spent over 12 good years of my early adulthood to form the character and distinctive pillar that shaped my life achievements. It is therefore gratifying that the Visitor to the University, President Muhammadu Buhari appointed me as the Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of the Governing Council of this University. I am keen therefore, to leverage my long standing relationship with the University of Lagos to support further development and growth of the University. I do not underestimate, nor will I shy away from my responsibilities of this pivotal role. We are in the midst of particularly challenging times not just for University of Lagos but for all universities in Nigeria. Charting a successful path through the next few years is going to require the dedicated and steadfast efforts of everyone in this room and the entire academic staff. As Henry Ford, the founder of Ford Motor Company once said, "If

everyone is moving forward together, then success takes care of itself”.

Over the years and even in today's environment our universities have been subject to various levels of change both financially and academically. It is a natural human reaction to view change in a negative light – to see it as demolishing something valuable and I think in the specific case of universities, as diminishing strong, traditions and customs.

I have that same tendency to think like that but I must admit also to viewing change as something that is inevitable and natural. Since the birth of planet Earth, 4.5 billion years ago, the Earth has never stood still except as recorded in the holy books. Numerous events occurring everywhere at all times combine to effect constant change in the world around us.

It is a common human expectation as well as a common human failing to consider the current status quo as the natural order of things. This is a wrong perception to have and in rejecting change, you ignore the basic fact that other things have changed too, rendering what was the status quo unsustainable.

I prefer to see embracing change as an opportunity rather than a threat; and that's why I am excited about the future of this university and working with you.

I have come to you all with an agenda entitled “1C for 3C” meaning **One Council for Cooperation, Creativity and Consolidation**. This agenda shall form the bedrock of my operations and dealings with the various organs of the University that I am expected to relate with, under the Acts establishing our dear University.

Let me assure you that I shall be a Pro-Chancellor who presides over a united house with cohesion of purpose that is targeted at engendering unwavering cooperation, innovative creativity in all facets of the University Community to enable us as a Council build on the works of the founding-fathers of our great University and take it to an enviable height. It is important to reiterate that this present Council under my leadership by the grace of God

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Almighty, shall be known as "1C for 3C".

It is on this note that I solicit for the support and cooperation of every Council member in formulating policies and procedures that will promote peace, industrial harmony, academic stability and staff welfare, judicious management of the scarce resources of the institution as well as use our respectable influences in the society to draw social investment to execute laudable and landmark projects that can underscore our performances during our tenure.

I would not accommodate dichotomy in Council in any form, but I will ensure **ONE-COUNCIL** irrespective of whether appointed by Federal Government, Senate, Congregation or Convocation. This **COUNCIL** as one, has the responsibility to achieve the **3Cs** together.

Mr Vice-Chancellor, Council members, I stretch my hands to you all today for cooperation, integration, dedication, nobility, actions and performances that will lead to outstanding delivery of our mandates as a Governing body saddled with the responsibility of stabilizing the polity in the university system and supporting to build a University of our dreams that will be globally competitive. The university community is also encouraged to follow the appropriate established channel of communication to reach the Council. We shall be very fair and do justice to every matter based on the merits and according to the Act establishing the University of Lagos. Today universities are being ranked in global league tables which, whatever one thinks of their validity, increasingly have an effect on enrolments. We are living in the digital information age. There are rankings for everything from car safety to which country cooks the best jollof rice! A student can just Google to see the University of Lagos' ranking both nationally and internationally. According, to the respectable, The UK Times Higher Education University Rankings for Nigeria 2020, we are third behind University of Ibadan and Lagos State University, who are first and second respectively. We must put the pieces of the jigsaw in place to be the best university in Nigeria, in name and nature. It's an

ambitious plan but that is why we are here, because we are ambitious.

In addition, regulatory constraints also threaten to hamstring our public institution as we attempt to compete with private institutions – so it is not a level playing field. In part, due to this, the university landscape will continue to be competitive in the years ahead. Therefore, it is vital that we generate and implement out-of-the-box ideas to keep up and do better than our peers.

I look forward to our Retreat Program where I will be able to outline the full Agenda of the Council to the Vice-Chancellor and his Management Team as well as understanding pretty much, the vision and objectives of the Vice-Chancellor and his Team to enable goals alignment and unidirectional focus that will make us together achieve our **Goal 1C for 3C**.

Let me kindly give you a little anecdote...

At the entrance gate of a university in South Africa, the following message was posted for contemplation.

“Destroying any nation does not require the use of atomic bombs or the use of long-range missiles. It only requires lowering the quality of education and allowing cheating in the examinations by students...”

Patients die at the hands of such doctors...

Buildings collapse at the hands of such engineers...

Money is lost at the hands of such economists and accountants...

Humanity dies at the hands of such religious scholars...

Justice is lost at the hands of such judges...

“The collapse of education is the collapse of the nation”.

We must continuously ensure and be seen to be the benchmark of quality, integrity and honesty to give students, their families and other key stakeholders confidence and trust in our institution. If not, we might as well close the university and go home.

The University of Lagos has a proud history of preparing leaders for both the public and private sectors and subsequently across all industries, whether it be in

business, civil service, healthcare and academia to name a few. If we are all prepared to be open minded and put our best foot forward, I can't think of any Nigerian university in a better position and better placed to succeed.

Let me appreciate the Vice-Chancellor and his Management team for the giant stride of ensuring continuous academic learning in spite of the COVID-19 pandemic. The adoption of virtual delivery of teaching and examination has strengthened our position as the "*University of First Choice and Nations Pride.*" Worthy of mention is the various research grants won by the University, emphasizing its leadership position in academic research.

I wish to reiterate that all hands must be on deck to support the agenda 1C for 3C to build a 21st Century compliant University that everyone in Nigeria and Africa will be proud of before the expiration of our tenure.

I trust that the service I am now expected to provide, God helping us, as Pro-Chancellor and Chairman, which I'm truly honoured to give, will be worthy and reflective of this great university.

Let me once again thank his excellency, the President and Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of Nigeria, President Mohammadu Buhari GCFR and the Honorable Minister of Education, Mallam Adamu Adamu for the confidence reposed in us.

It is on this note I welcome every member of Council to this first Council meeting under my Leadership. I wish us all happy deliberations.

Long-live University of Lagos

Long-live Federal Republic of Nigeria.