

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S SPEECHES AT THE 2020 FOUNDERS' DAY

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#1 in Nigeria and West Africa; #7 in Africa
Top 500 in the Times Higher Education World Universities Rankings 2021

DAY 3: NOVEMBER 17, 2020

**ADDRESS BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR, PROFESSOR A. IDOWU OLAYINKA, ON
THE OCCASION OF THE 2020 CONVOCATION, 72ND FOUNDATION DAY
CEREMONY, AWARD OF DOCTORATE DEGREES AND CONFERMENT OF
HONORARY DEGREE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN ON TUESDAY, 17
NOVEMBER, 2020**

*The Visitor to the University of Ibadan, His Excellency, President Muhammadu Buhari GCFR,
President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria*

His Excellency, the Executive Governor of Oyo State, Engineer Seyi Makinde

The Honourable Minister of Education, Mallam Adamu Adamu

*The Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of the Governing Council of the University, Nda Waklek,
Joshua Mutka, mni*

His Royal Majesty, Oba Saliu Adetunji, Aje Oguguniso I, the Olubadan of Ibadanland

*The Executive Secretary, National Universities Commission, Professor Abubakar Adamu
Rasheed. FNAL, MFR, mni*

*Her Excellency Prof. Sarah Anyang Agbor – Commissioner, Human Resource, Science and
Technology, African Union*

Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps

Members of the Governing Council

Vice Chancellors of other Universities

Deputy Vice Chancellor (Administration)

Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic)

Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research, Innovation and Strategic Partnerships)

Registrar

Bursar

University Librarian

General Officer Commanding 2 Mechanized Division, Nigerian Army, Ibadan

Commissioner of Police, Oyo State Command

Director, State Security Services

Provost, College of Medicine

Provost of the Postgraduate College

Deans of Faculties, & of Students

Dr. Mahama Ouedraogo – Director, HRST

Prof. Kassa Belay – Rector, Pan African University

Prof. Esther T. Akinlabi – Director, PAULESI

Directors of Institutes
Members of Senate
Members of Congregation
Heads of Departments
President & Members of the University of Ibadan Alumni Association
Members of the University Community
Gentlemen of the Press
Celebrated Graduands of Today

Ladies and Gentlemen

Today is the 72nd Foundation Day Ceremony of the University of Ibadan and Convocation for admission to Doctorate Degrees of the University and award of Honorary Degrees. It is a great honour and privilege for me to welcome you distinguished personalities and very important citizens to University of Ibadan and the 72nd Foundation Day ceremony. The University has marked its 70th anniversary with pomp and pageantry with a number of activities since the Foundation Day ceremony in 2018 and up till November 2019.

In the next thirteen days I will be exactly five years in the saddle as the 12th Vice-Chancellor of this great institution, signifying the end of my tenure. It is therefore important for me to state here that this will be the last Foundation Day ceremony I will be attending as Vice-Chancellor.

I like to warmly welcome our Visitor, His Excellency, President Muhammadu Buhari, GCFR, who in the last one and a half years commenced his second term in office. We wish His Excellency good health and wisdom to successfully navigate the ship of the nation.

I also heartily welcome His Excellency, The Governor of Oyo State, Engineer Seyi Makinde, who has been very supportive of this institution.

I also like to heartily welcome the Minister of Education, Mallam Adamu Adamu, I commend you for your exemplary leadership as Minister of Education.

I must also welcome the Minister of State for Education.

I wish to express my appreciation to Professor Abubakar Adamu Rasheed, *mni*, *MFR*, *FNAL*, the Executive Secretary of the National Universities Commission (NUC) a focused and dedicated supporter of University education in Nigeria. Let me warmly thank you for the recent meeting of the Board of the National Universities Commission, which was held here at Ibadan in honour of the Chairman of your Governing Board, our highly referred father and mentor, Professor Emeritus Ayo Banjo.

I am delighted to welcome our Chancellor, His Eminence Alhaji Sa'ad Abubakar, III, CFR, *mni*, the Sultan of Sokoto, who has been a great pillar of support to our University.

I like to use this opportunity to welcome His Royal Majesty, Oba Saliu Adetunji, Aje Oguguniso I, the Olubadan of Ibadanland. We thank you most sincerely for the cordial relationship between the "Town and Gown".

I like to also welcome colleague Vice-Chancellors and Registrars from other Universities, Former Vice Chancellors and retirees from this University, members of the University of Ibadan Alumni Association, Captains of industries and all other invited guests.

APPRECIATION TO THE GOVERNING COUNCIL, MANAGEMENT AND STAFF

I like to use this opportunity to thank and welcome our Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of Council, Nde Joshua K. Waklek, *mni*, for his guidance, excellent leadership and outstanding role he has played in the University of Ibadan project.

Without the support and commitment of the Governing Council, to transform the University, our activities as management would be more herculean. I am therefore grateful to all internal and external members of Council.

I must express appreciation to my colleagues in Management; the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration), Professor Kayode Adebawale, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) Professor Adebola Ekanola, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research, Innovation and Strategic Partnerships) Professor Olanike Adeyemo, the Registrar, Mrs. Olunmi Faluyi, the Bursar, Dr. M. A. Alatise, the University Librarian, Dr. Helen O. Komolafe –Opadeji. I would also appreciate the Provosts of the College of Medicine and of the Postgraduate College, Professor Olayinka Omigbodun who is attending this programme for the first time as Provost, and Professor J. Olabamiji Babalola and his two deputies, all Deans and Directors, Heads of Academic Departments, Master/Mistresses and Wardens of Student Halls of Residence, Chairmen and members of various Committees of Council and Senate, all staff of the Registry, the Bursary, Audit, Academic Planning, University Health Services, Centres and Institutes, the Works and Maintenance Department, the Physical Planning Directorate, and the Security Unit . The four Staff Unions, the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) the Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities (SSANU), the National Association of Academic Technologists (NAAT), and the Non-Academic Staff Union (NASU) also deserve commendation for their support and cooperation.

I like to also use this platform to welcome my colleagues who have invested time and energy in sharpening the skills and research focus and ability of today's graduands. Let me also welcome and congratulate the parents, guardians, families and friends of our graduands. We appreciate your support and commitment for the realisation of the goals of today's graduands.

THE NEW NORMAL SITUATION

The entire world was rudely reawakened to the news of a new variant of Corona Virus from Mainland China in March 2020. The pandemic which was spreading like wild fire affected the whole world and the world is yet to fully recover from its attendant effects.

The Covid-19 pandemic has affected the University system positively and negatively.

Negatively, it has forced the closure of all schools. The lockdown prevented research activities, thus putting a stop to academic mobility, Training/Conferences and workshops were either stopped or postponed.

The COVID -19 pandemic is better addressed on the basis of Academic life, Teaching and Learning, Campus life and Research activities which were all badly affected.

Finances were badly affected as some issues settled by Internally Generated Revenue could not be addressed. Indeed, all Public Universities are now poor, because part of the IGR was determined by student payments for one activity or the other.

Positively, the pandemic has made the University system to be awakened to the new normal situation, however the Public Universities are yet to do anything serious yet.

CONGRATULATING THE GRADUANDS

I like to congratulate all graduands of today and to rejoice with attaining this important milestone in your pursuit of a higher educational degree. I am of the firm belief that you will be good ambassadors of University of Ibadan while making positive contributions to the growth and development aspirations of the Nigerian State.

There is no gainsaying the fact that the University of Ibadan has a pride of place in the higher educational development of the nation. It has invested in its Faculties for quality teaching and production of quality researchers, by building a time tested academic culture and tradition which it has continued to maintain and improve upon over the years.

I wish to again plead with Mr. President that the University of Ibadan be given a special priority attention in form of Special reconstruction and rehabilitation funds as well as increased allocation spread over a period of say ten years for the University to favourably compete with other top institutions not only in Africa but all over the world.

Last week Saturday, a total of 528 candidates received first degrees in various disciplines across all our Faculties. Your Excellencies, distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, on Monday a total of 220 persons were awarded Master degree certificates. In addition 89 Postgraduate Diplomas were awarded.

Today, 57 candidates, from various disciplines would be awarded the Doctor of Philosophy degrees. The Faculty of Education leads the pack with a total of 15 Doctoral graduands followed by Faculties of Arts and Sciences with 7 graduands each.

The others are Faculty of Technology – 5

Faculty of Renewable Natural Resources – 4

Faculty of Veterinary Medicine – 4

Faculty of the Social Sciences – 4

Faculty of Agriculture – 2

Faculty of Public Health – 1

Institute of Education – 3

Institute for Peace and Strategic Studies - 5

Moreover, 24 candidates of the Pan African University Life and Earth Sciences Institute (PAULESI) will also be admitted into the degree of Ph.D in their respective programmes.

OUR STEWARDSHIP

ACTIVE ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT

The industrial action by the Staff Unions and the COVID-19 pandemic have made it difficult, if not impossible for public Universities to maintain an active academic environment. The Professorial Inaugural Lectures (PIL) had to be suspended at the inception of the strike by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), this was further compounded by the lockdown imposed by the government as a result of the outbreak of COVID-19. However, 10 inaugural lectures were held between November 21, 2019 and 5 March 2020.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND MEDIA SERVICES

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic Several students and postgraduate students have benefitted from the IT Skill enhancement and Digital Appreciation programmes. The IT skill enhancement has also been extended to willing members of staff at no cost to staff. The staff participation in the exercise had been encouraging from the report reaching my desk.

There is an on-going effort to reduce the turnaround time for processing students academic transcript to between twenty four and seventy two hours.

RANKING

As we are all aware, funding continues to be the greatest challenge facing the Nigerian University system and the University of Ibadan is not an exception in this regard. However, in spite of this debilitating challenge, I am exceedingly elated to report that our great University remains the first in the country, in West Africa and has now moved to the seventh in Africa as well as improved in the world ranking to the 401 – 500 category by the Times Higher Education for 2021. This, by any standards, is not a mean feat as the University was ranked in the 501 – 600 category just a year earlier. Therefore, I want to use this opportunity to congratulate and appreciate the University's dedicated and ingenious Faculty, Senate, Governing Council and other stakeholders in the UI project who have made these achievements possible.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND WELFARE

For the period under review, the Administration has continued to give support for attendance at conferences and workshops both locally and internationally, to improve staff capacity for enhanced performance, in spite of the lean resources available to the University up till February 2020, when academic mobility was affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Quiet a number of staff had requested for letter of institutional support to various institution for collaborative research or short term training programmes.

STUDENT MATTERS

Distinguished Audience, the Management continues to maintain a cordial relationship with the students. Student Union activities has resumed fully following the swearing in ceremony held for student representatives who won elections into various offices last year.

Student hostels were been renovated to make them more acceptable and habitable for students. Management had laid the foundation for a private hostel development, and has continued to partner with private developers who are interested in constructing student hostels, to further ensure conducive academic environment for our students.

CAMPUS SECURITY

I express my appreciation to the Chairman, Council Committee on Security, Professor A. K. Aremu, for his excellent performances. The administration will continue to provide the necessary support to the Security Unit in order to cope with the increasing security challenge on the campus.

Management has also enlisted the assistance of the Oyo State Police Command to support the University Security Unit in order to further address the issue of security on the campus.

ADDRESSING OUR CHALLENGES

This administration has continued to tackle challenges associated with providing a healthy, safe and conducive environment for sound education.

Power supply has been a major challenge nationwide, however, Energy/power supply is an issue which is beyond all the Universities, as it is provided by the government. It may be imperative for Universities to consider thinking of alternative source of energy supply.

As a matter of fact, the pandemic has thrown up new vocabularies and expressions in our lexicon we now presently in the era of “virtual” – viz: virtual learning, virtual meetings, virtual voting etc.

Internet connectivity is also a great challenge, steps had been taken to increase the bandwidth with a view to expanding internet access across the campus.

It is with the above in view that I specially appeal to the Federal government to increase the level of funding to Universities for quality research and ICT infrastructure development.

It is imperative to note that the learning in all tertiary institutions will no longer be business as usual. It is therefore important that we invest massively in ICT infrastructure and develop an adaptation to the new normal situation.

INTERNATIONALIZATION AGENDA AND LINKAGE PROGRAMMES

During the period under review the University was only able to receive some visitors both locally and internationally to foster cooperation and to strengthen the research focus and capacity of staff early in the year. It is instructive to note that the University has several active memoranda of Understanding with other Institutions both locally and internationally.

It is regrettable that the Covid-19 negatively affected academic mobility seriously across the world.

OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENTS AND HONOURS

- ✚ The Vice Chancellor was awarded the Grover E.Murray Distinguished Educator by the American Association of Petroleum Geologists (AAPG);
- ✚ The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration) Professor Kayode Adebowale was conferred with the Fellowship of the African Academy of Sciences;
- ✚ The Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research, Innovation and Strategic Partnerships was awarded the “Scientist of the Year 2020 in the Natural Sciences category of the Open International Competition by the International Achievements Research Centre, Chicago, USA”.

- ✚ Professor Adeniyi Olatubosun, Former Dean, Faculty of Law was appointed Acting Vice-Chancellor, Kola Daisi University, Ibadan, Oyo State;

- ✚ Professor Grace Olusola Gbotoso, FAS, of the Department of Pharmacology and Therapeutics was conferred with the Fellowship of the African Academy of Sciences;

- ✚ The University of Ibadan was re-elected as chair of the Board of Management of the Consortium for Advance Research Training in Africa. Dr. Olufunke Fayehun of the Department of Sociology has been elected the Chair of the Board for 2021-2022, while Professor Akinyinka Omigbodun of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, College of Medicine, is the University of Ibadan CARTA Focal Person;

- ✚ Professor Oluwatoyin Odeku, Dean, Faculty of Pharmacy was appointed Humboldt Ambassador Scientist of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, Bonn, Germany for the period October 1, 2020 to September 30, 2023.

Huawei Global ICT Challenge

In today’s edition of The Punch (Lagos) is a story titled “**Buhari, NUC excited as Nigerian students win Huawei competition**” (<https://punchng.com/buhari-nuc-excited-as-nigerian-students-win-huawei-competition/>)

Barely six days ago, on 11 November, two Nigerian University teams comprising students of Huawei Global ICT Challengege University of Ibadan, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria and University of Port Harcourt emerged champions over 1500 teams from 82 countries to win the Network and Cloud technology categories of the Huawei Global ICT Challenge 2020. This was no mean accomplishment, given the digital disparity between African and the rest of the world. We congratulate the global champions Badiru Toheeb Adeniyi, Abideen Bolaji Olaide and Olubiyi Sulaiman Damilare of the Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering and their instructor Mr. Soji Adisa, the Assistant Director, Training, Research and Development at Information Technology and Media Services (ITeMS). It is important to note that this feat was made possible thanks to the proactive dispositions of the Head, Department of Electrical and Electronics Engineering, Dr A. R. Zubair and the Dean of the Faculty of Technology, Professor

Olaosebikan Fakolujo, who were ready to adjust schedules and grant legitimate concessions to enable the students participate in the six-week pre-competition training which overlapped the second semester of the 2018/2019 Session.

HONORARY DEGRRES AND FELLOWSHIP

It is my pleasure to announce to this gathering that the University of Ibadan will confer honorary degrees on four outstanding global citizens and icons. The honourees are people who have distinguished themselves in their various fields of endeavours. I need to point out that one of the honourees a distinguished Professor passed on last month, but the University is going ahead with the award.

The University of Ibadan is known to confer its honorary degrees and Fellowship only upon persons of notable intellectual, scholarly, professional or creative achievement or service to humanity consistent with the rich tradition of the Institution. In the light of this therefore, I felicitate with Lt. General Theophilus Yakubu Danjuma, GCON (Elder statesman, soldier-gentleman, entrepreneur and benefactor to UI); Dr Olayiwola Francis Fatona, FNAPE (Alumnus 1970, entrepreneur and benefactor to UI); Chief (Mrs) Comfort Ayodele Idowu (Matriach of the Nathaniel Idowu Foundation, a great benefactor to UI); and Mr John G. Counmantaros (Eminent industrialist and benefactor to UI).

COMMISSIONED PROJECTS

The following are some of the completed projects which had been commissioned since the last convocation programme:

- The Communication Laboratory of the Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering, Faculty of Technology;
- The Institute of Child and Maternal Health, College of Medicine;
- Construction of the Department of Mathematics laboratory;
- Department of Statistics
- Faculty of Public Health Building
- Institute of Education Building, along Sasa Road
- The new administrative building of the Distance Learning Centre along Sasa Road
- Pedestrian Walkway bridge across Awba River, Nnamdi Azikiwe Hall.
- Construction of New Piggery pen for Teaching & Research Farm.

MAJOR BENEFACTIONS.

The University of Ibadan has enjoyed goodwill and benefactions from individuals, groups and corporate organisations too numerous to mention. I use this opportunity to ones again express appreciation to all our benefactors private and corporate who have at one time or the other extended hands of fellowship to the University in cash and in kind. The various donations and awards had been duly acknowledged. May God bless you all.

- Donation of Fabrication Laboratory (FABLAB) equipment by the French Embassy. This is valued at about Euro25,000. The Fablab commissioned on 13 October 2020. Value is about 25, 000 Euros.

- In France during the 1st wave of the COVID 19 epidemic, there was a lack of protection masks for health workers, and some companies, like Decathlon, some start ups and fablab thought and designed an alternative solution to fabricate some protection masks for them in transforming snorkeling masks to protection masks. For that, they fabricated a specific adaptor to put in the snorkeling mask that is in which we also put an air filter in order to transform this mask into a protection mask. Consequently, the French Embassy has donated to our university 60 snorkeling masks, with some adapters and filters that can be used as whole protection masks for health workers (nurses, doctors etc.) for their medical mission for the response of COVID 19 epidemic.
- There was initiation of collaboration between UI and six other universities in Nigeria with the French Embassy in Nigeria on the Innovation and Adaptation to Climate Change Project in April 2019 with the visit of Dr Emmanuel Nymphas to the University of Grenoble, France and a number of other meetings in Abuja, Nigeria. Six other researchers from UI were subsequently nominated to take part in the research project, which is still ongoing. Total project cost is €30, 000.
- There is opportunity for 2-3 PhD students from UI to work on atmospheric pollution/ environmental pollution /environmental health science, etc, during some short scientific stays in France. This is a component of the ongoing AIRACC project spearheaded by the Embassy of France in Nigeria.
- The French Embassy has offered assistance to develop a **French Resource Centre** in our University at our Department of European Studies, faculty of Arts
- T.Y. Danjuma Foundation made a donation of three hundred and Forty two Million Naira (N342 million) towards the Oladipo Akinkugbe Kidney Research Centre in the College of Medicine.
- Construction of the Mosobalaje Oyawoye e-library in the Department of Geology facilitated by Dr. Olayiwola Fatona, Alumnus 1970.
- Building of an Atmospheric Physics Laboratory for the Department of Physics was facilitated by Senator Professor Ajayi Boroffice (UI Alumnus), the Deputy Majority Leader of the Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the Asiwaju of Akokoland.
- Donation of 1,289 titles/volumes of recent publications in various disciplines by Mr. Abas Braimah .
- The hand over Otunba Tuwase National Paediatric Centre (OTNPC) to the University of Ibadan by Otunba (Dr.) Michael Subomi Balogun.

OBITUARY

I wish to commiserate with the families of some of our serving/retired members of staff and students who passed on since the last Convocation ceremony.

They are:

- Venerable Professor Sofowora, a Retired Professor of the College of Medicine
- Professor O.O. Tewe, of the Department of Animal Science
- Professor T.G. Adegoke of the Department of Social Work, Faculty of Education,
- Professor Oladipo Akinkugbe, a retired Professor of the College of Medicine,
- Professor Adetoye Faniran, a retired professor of the Department of Geography, Faculty of the Social Sciences
- Mr. Victor Adegoroye, a retired Acting Registrar of the University;

- Professor Matthew Olufemi Kayode, a retired Professor of the Department of Economics;
- Professor D. T. Okpako, a retired Professor.
- Dr. Fadekemi Omobola Oyewusi, of the Department of School Research and Media Technology.
- Honourable Olusegun A. Owoade, member of the Governing Council.

CONCLUSION

Let me conclude this address by once again congratulating our graduands. You have worked tirelessly to earn this deserving honour. Some of you who were products of this University are already familiar with the high expectations from you. For those who were receiving the degree and joining the University of Ibadan family for the first time today, I encourage you to join the Alumni Chapter closest to you and play active role.

With good hands to work with at all levels and exceptionally brilliant, intelligent, smart, innovative, creative and entrepreneurial students, since 1 December 2015 and sustained by the Almighty God, I have been inspired to give my best to this university during the last five years; perhaps I could have done much more if we had had a lot more resources and it's time to say goodbye. This, I do with a heart full of gratitude, having been given a unique opportunity to serve this great institution in the capacity of Vice-Chancellor. When I came here as an undergraduate some 43 years ago, it would have been a figment of my imagination that some day in the future I could have an opportunity to lead this citadel of learning. But here we are. To God alone be the glory, honour and adoration.

Let us all continue to join hands to support the University of Ibadan, a national heritage and a truly world-class institution.

Thank you and God bless you.

Professor Abel Idowu Olayinka
Vice-Chancellor