NUC Ends Resource Verification Exercise To Law Faculty

Preparatory to a smooth take-off of the Bachelor of Law programme in the University, a team from the National Universities Commission (NUC), has concluded the Resource Verification exercise of the Faculty of Law to enable it make informed judgment on the state of the University's readiness to fully commence its fledgling Law programme, reports Otikor Samuel.

More on p.3

Side Bar

The Honourable Minister of Sports, Barrister Solomon Dalung, paid an unscheduled visit to the university last Thursday. Details next week.
—Editor

129th Inaugural

Nwauche Identifies Factors Responsible For Increase In Blood Cancers

By Obinna Nwodim

Poor health seeking behaviour, inadequate personal health care plan, irregular health checks and late presentation, have been identified as major factors militating against winning the battle on rising blood cancers cases in Nigeria. These were the findings of Professor Chijioke Nwauche of the Department Haematology, Blood Transfusion and Immunology in the Faculty of Basic Medical Sciences, College of Health Sciences. Nwauche, who shared his research findings with a large audience during the 129th Inaugural Lecture of the University held at the Ebitimi Banigo Auditorium, last Thursday, called for the establishment of a functional Cancer Research Institute in the University with generous provision for a Professorial Chair to address rising cases of blood cancers in Nigeria.

More on p.6
Vice-Chancellor, Professor Ndowa Lale, has expressed disbelief that knowledgeable staff of the University would allow themselves to be conned into signing away their hard earned money under the guise of servicing loan facilities procured on their behalf by the Unique UniPort Staff Choba Cooperative Investment Society (USICICS).

Regretting that such bad business decisions by Cooperative Unions on Campus were causing his administration sleepless nights that should be invested in more productive ventures, the Vice-Chancellor said that Management was prepared to deal with the issues once and for all to protect vulnerable staff from exploitation by banks and the leadership of such bodies that place profit over people.

"Bank interest rates are not usually presented to customers in a wholly transparent manner when loans packages are negotiated. It is obvious in this instance that our staff took what they thought was an 'easy loan', only to realize later that the repayment process is fraught with several unstate conditions that burden the loan beneficiaries. Unfortunately, banks are in business to make profit, meaning that customers who take out loan facilities must service such facilities," Professor Lale said, promising that Management would do everything possible to arrive at a consensus among the warring parties.

Blaming the UniPort branch of ECObank and Management of the Cooperative Society for making grave errors that were allowed to last for 18 months, Professor Lale promised that such costly errors would be speedily corrected to give all affected staff a breathing space. "What this transaction proves is that we need to learn the language of finance and banking, especially the fact that loan facilities should never be taken out for purposes of financing pleasures," the Vice-Chancellor advised staff of the University.

In a presentation entitled: Implementation of Amortization Repayment Schedule and Way Forward, a member of the Management Committee of the Cooperative, Professor Enowie Akpokodje, explained that the bone of contention was the repayment plan for the N3 billion loan facility obtained from ECObank Plc for on-lending to members of the Cooperative Society. He stated that the interest rate for the first year was erroneously spread over a period of 48 months, instead of the originally intended 12 month timeframe.

"The error was discovered about 18 months after the loan disbursement in April, 2014 and efforts by Management of the Cooperative to use the correct interest calculation to rectify the anomaly was stoutly rejected by a group known as 'Aggrieved Members',”

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By Williams Wodi

which resulted in the current crisis," adding that the Committee set up by the University Management confirmed the error and recommended the use of Loan Amortization Table to calculate the interest rate based on remaining balance.

Members of the Cooperative were asked to either agree to deduction of the balance of their debt in equal monthly payment for the four-year period of the loan facility, or further spread the repayment period to five years.

On the way forward, Professor Akpokodje proposed Loan Amortization repayment schedule, including investigation of alleged under-disbursement of loans and payment of cheques or cash into the private account of the former President of the Cooperative Society. He also suggested that the Bursary Department should print deductions from all loan beneficiaries to facilitate reconciliation of the records, promising members that all other issues would be addressed to their satisfaction, especially continuous debt recovery from non UniPort staff.

Defending ECObank against weighty allegations of colluding with Management of the Cooperative to shortchange loan beneficiaries, the bank’s Zonal Head in charge of Public Sector in the South-South, Mr. Ajemunor Osim, disclosed that ECObank engaged in what he described as “arms-length dealing with the Cooperative Society,” reassuring that Management of the Cooperative presented a different repayment schedule to the bank.

"Everything we did was above board and in compliance with exist banking rules. Looking back now, we should have been more pro-active in our scrutiny of the modalities for disbursing the loan. The repayment schedule initially ran on auto-pilot which made us to allow the process to run without interference. But I want to assure you that we have rectified what went wrong and are prepared to move forward," Mr. Osim told the members.

Earlier in his address, Acting President of the Cooperative, Professor Boniface Igwue, disclosed that he too took office in the middle of a raging controversy, adding, "I inherited a confusing bundle of files that contained poor accounting and filing procedures which took time to sort out. We raised many questions and the Vice-Chancellor tried to wade into the matter with the hope of settling the contentious issues. There is no denying the fact that the Cooperative helped many members, but it is regrettable that the less than transparent management of the loan facility now threatens to cause confusion. It is my hope that we will pay our debt to the bank to enable us return to normal frequency. I want to assure all our members that there is no proven case of corrupt practice so far and we intend to keep it that way to enable the Cooperative Society to achieve the purpose for which it was established," he said.

At the end of a heated interactive process, the Vice-Chancellor announced the setting up of a joint Committee, comprising aggrieved Congress members, the Management Committee, ECObank and Management of the University to resolve all grey areas in the contentious loan deal.

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UniPort Mgt Wade's Into Staff Cooperative-Ecobank Loans Repayment Dispute

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Rottract Club Honours V-C For Impacting On Society

By Humphrey Ogu

I
n recognition of his contributions to the development of society, especially in building the capacity of students in the University system, the Rottract Club of University of Port Harcourt, which is the student wing of Rotary Club International, has conferred an award on the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Ndowa Lale.

Presenting the plaque to the Vice-Chancellor, on Friday, December 11, 2015, President of the Club, Ebiotu Desmond, said that the Rottract Club gives succour to the less-privileged in society. “Here in UniPort, we have an office opposite Nelson Mandela Hostel. We source funds through donations from well-meaning individuals and organisations that wish to impact on the lives of the less-privileged in society.

“We chose to honour the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Ndowa Lale, because of his solid contributions in the area of capacity building of youths in the University and society at large. He has done so much in contributing towards the welfare of people and growth of the University even before he became a Vice-Chancellor,” Desmond said.

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Receiving the awards on behalf of Professor Lale, Special Assistant to the Vice-Chancellor, Mr. Kingsley Wogwu, commended the Club for the recognition, stressing the importance of honouring and encouraging selfless service in society.

"Let me on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor, express gratitude to you for the recognition. I will convey the award and your message to him. I also encourage you to do more to make the society a better place through support for the less-privileged and recognising selfless service and genuine contributions to the growth of society," he advised the Club.

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Speaking at the Exit Meeting in the Vice-Chancellor’s Committee Room after a painstaking verification exercise last Tuesday, leader of the team, Professor Muhammed Ladan, who disclosed that the team was in the University to verify necessary resources for the commencement of the programme, classified such resources under three broad categories.

“We are neither a probe panel nor an accreditation team; our job was to sight and verify written claims made by the University of Port Harcourt to the National Universities Commission under three categories which are human, material and physical resources. We went round the facilities and from what we saw, we think they are reasonably okay for the initial commencement of the Law programme here,” Professor Ladan said, praising the University on the effort it has made so far in putting the right facilities on ground to realise the programme. He was particularly pleased that the University has equipped the Faculty of Law with current resource materials in the Library and also recruited high calibre teaching and non-teaching staff for the take-off of the programme.

Professor Ladan, who observed some grey areas that needed to be improved upon to facilitate full accreditation to run a full-fledged Faculty of Law that could compete favourably with the existing 54 Law Faculties in the country, tasked the emergent Faculty to update its journal holding and provide more Library Assistants and Porters to ensure close monitoring of the rich materials in the Library.

Responding, the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Ndowa Lale, who earlier welcomed the NUC team members to the University on Monday, expressed gratitude to them for their frank observations and recommendations aimed at improving what the University had already put on ground over the years in anticipation of final approval for the commencement of the programme.

“From your Exit Report, I now understand the daunting challenges facing any university hoping to establish a Law programme and why it has taken us this long to start this crucial programme. However, with all the sacrifices we have made so far, we are optimistic of securing the necessary approval to commence the programme. I want to thank you for the forthright observations you have made for the improvement of what we have on ground. We will not rest on our oars to improve on our facilities with the stated aim of becoming one of the finest Law Faculties in the country,” the Vice-Chancellor told the team.

The Resource Verification exercise took the team round the temporary and permanent structures of the Faculty where it sighted teaching and non-teaching staff and also inspected physical structures for the proposed Departments of Private and Property Law, and Public Law.

Other members of the Resource Verification Team were Professor Olayiwola Oladele of Osun State University, who advised the Faculty to improve its Nigerian Weekly Law Report stock, and Mrs. Lilian Oparango, a Legal Officer with the NUC.

Also present at the meeting were Principal and other senior officers of the University; including the pioneer Dean, Professor Kaniye Ebeku, Acting Dean, Professor Ifibio Okala, Professors Alasewel Muzan, Ovunda Okene, Dr. Theodore Okonkwo and Mrs. Esther Joe.

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UniPort, Elano Investment Sign MoU On Training

By Ethel Timi-Johnson

The University of Port Harcourt has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Elano Investment Limited on the training of 12 persons on Catering and Hospitality Management.

Speaking shortly after the signing ceremony which held at the Faculty of Management Sciences Library, Deputy Vice-Chancellor in charge of Administration, Professor Anthony Ibe, who restated Management’s commitment to ensuring a hitch-free training programme for the beneficiaries, expressed hope that the relationship between the University and the company would be sustained.

In her address, Director of the Entrepreneurial Centre, Dr. Edwinah Amah, disclosed that the proposed training programme would be jointly undertaken by the Centre and the Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management in the Faculty of Management Sciences, describing it as the first of its kind. “We promise to put our best in providing quality training that would transform beneficiaries of the package into skilful employers of labour. It is a six-month training programme and certificates would be issued on to participants on their successful completion of the training programme,” she remarked.

Deputy Managing Director of Wider Perspectives Limited and Consultants to Elano Investment Limited, Mrs. Edughom Hanson, noted that the MoU signed by the company would cover tuition and other entitlements. “These persons would be trained under the Youth Empowerment Scheme programme of Elano Investments Limited,” she stated, adding that the choice of the University of Port Harcourt was as a result of the entrepreneurial drive of the Institution.

“As Consultants to Elano Investment on behalf of Chairmen of the Board of Directors and Education Committee, respectively, Gomba Okanje and Professor Walter Ollor, we congratulate both parties and believe that beneficiaries of the training programme would be nurtured to become better people with capacity to impact meaningfully on the development of society,” Mrs. Hanson said.

Prof Ibe, DVC, Adm

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MSF To Support UniPort Battle Gender Violence

By Humphrey Ogu

Efforts aimed at mitigating the psychological and health effects of sexual violence on rape victims has received a major boost following an emergent partnership between emergency health providers Medicines Sans Frontiers (MSF) and the University of Port Harcourt.

Discussing its mission to authorities of the University, representatives of MSF, also known as Doctors Without Borders, said the team was charged by the University to seek ways of collaborating on tackling the physical, psychological and health challenges associated with sexual violence in tertiary institutions and the State.

"Medicines Sans Frontiers is an international humanitarian medical organisation, which has been in Port Harcourt since 2005. Most of our activities focused on traffic accidents at the Trauma Centre located in Teme Hospital until we ended the project in 2013. Early in 2015, we focused on post-violence violence," MSF Field Coordinator, Imri Schattner explained, adding that the current project has to do with gender-based violence.

Schattner, who disclosed that MSF had opened a clinic to handle cases of sexual violence at a Rivers State Ministry of Health facility located at the Orogbum Health Centre, Port Harcourt, said patients were treated with utmost confidentiality, adding that the agency also handled reports of cases from police stations.

Lauding the Rivers State Deputy Governor, Dr. Ipalibo Banigo, for her unwavering support for MSF activities, Schattner stressed the need for partnership with the media and educational institutions in sensitising the populace on the menace of sexual violence. He noted that a good number of rape victims seen at the facility were people between 18 and 25, mostly of males on females and paedophiles. "We have seen 190 cases since last year and because of our attachment to the facility, most rape victims do not present themselves to us. So, we need to do more in the area of sensitisation to let people understand that they need help.

Also speaking, MSF Medical Team Leader, Kiera Sargeant, disclosed that they have a team of Doctors, Nurses and Counsellors, who are ready to offer free medical services and counselling to rape victims seven days a week, advising that victims should call MSF on: 09033555455 for immediate assistance. "Pain from physical injury lasts for one or two weeks, but psychological trauma lasts for years and requires clinical remedy," she noted, adding that the agency has been seeing many cases and needed to collaborate with reputable institutions to create awareness about its services.

"We provide emergency healthcare for victims of sexual violence," she explained, listing Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), Sexually-Transmitted Diseases (STD) and traumatic injury as cases handled by the agency. She advised rape victims to seek medical assistance within the first 72-hours to guard against HIV, sexually-transmitted diseases and counselling.

Responding, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration), Professor Anthony Ibe, who stood in for the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Ndowa Lale, commended the MSF team for proposing to collaborate with the University in fighting the menace of sexual violence in Nigeria. "Let me assure you that the University is ready to collaborate with you to provide succour to victims of sexual violence, especially where such cases occur in tertiary institutions. We also hope that MSF would offer capacity training for staff of the Health Services Department to enable them treat rape victims," Professor Ibe said.

Welcoming the MSF team to the O.B. Lulu-Briggs Health Centre, Acting Director of the Health Centre, Dr. Chiwe Ezirin, regretted that most victims of sexual violence do not report for assistance, saying: "We will appreciate if your organisation would help train our health personnel on handling trauma cases arising from sexual violence."

On his part, Deputy Registrar in charge of Information, Williams Wodi, who took the visiting team round, observed that it would be mutually beneficial to the University and society, if MSF would give awareness talk to students of the University to equip them as dependable partners in the fight against sexual violence. Highlight of the visit was a facility tour of the OB Lulu-Briggs Health Centre and exploratory talks on best ways of forging a mutually-beneficial partnership.

Other members of the MSF team were Assistant Field Coordinator, Clifford Standfast and Outreach Officer, Afolayan Daniel.

Educational Mgt Fetes Graduate Students, Inaugurates Alumni Exco

By Ethel Timi-Johnson

As a way of encouraging academic excellence and forging closer interaction the Department of Educational Management in the Faculty of Education organized an Interactive Departmental Summit for Lecturers and Graduate Students on January 21, 2016 at the International Students' Centre, University Park.

Speaking at the historic event, representative of the Vice-Chancellor and Dean of the Faculty, Professor Lawrence Igwe, described the gathering as the first of its kind in the Faculty, commending the Department of Educational Management for initiating such an important forum to address issues bothering on academic excellence and welfare of Graduate Students.

The Dean, who spoke extensively on the Overstay Policy of the University and its implications for Graduate Students, advised them to strive towards timely completion of their programmes within the stipulated timeframe.

In his address at the occasion, Acting Head of Department, Dr. Nathaniel Abraham, noted that the Summit was aimed at bringing the students to interact with their Lecturers in an informal setting to ventilate issues bothering on their programme. "We want to evaluate where we have failed and where we got it right. The whole idea is to see how we can make your stay here as memorable as possible.

Our aim is to ensure that on graduation, you would happily return as Alumni to contribute meaningfully to the development of the Department and your Alma Mata," Dr. Abraham told the Graduate Students.

The Acting Head of Department, who commended the Lectures for working tirelessly to impact knowledge on the students, also praised them for choosing the University and the Department as their preferred destination for graduate studies. "We have come up with the tradition of interacting with our students to address some of their concerns by building a solid relationship with that would last beyond their programmes here," he remarked, urging the students to work hard so as not to be affected by the Over Stay Policy of the University and plagiarism check on their research work.

Highpoint of the event was the inauguration of a seven-man Interim Executive Committee for the newly-inaugurated Departmental Alumni Association. In his remarks, pioneer Interim President of the Association, Dandyson Jaja, called for support from members to achieve the objectives for which the Association was formed, describing the emergent Alumni Association as a platform to move the Department to enviable heights in the Faculty.
AHS Old Boys Salute V-C, Presents Him With 2016 Calendar

By Humphrey Ogu Association, assuring them of his resolve to make the Association proud in any position he may be privileged to occupy. The President was accompanied on the visit by the General Secretary of the Association, Elder Lucky Ati and another member, Mr. Samuel Ogbugbo, who is also Special Assistant to the University Bursar. The Association also used the opportunity to present copies of the 2016 Calendar to the Vice-Chancellor.

Staff, Students Speak On Expectations For 2016

As the New Year gradually unfolds, UniPort Weekly Correspondent, ETHEL TIMI-JOHNSON went round to sample opinion on the expectations of staff and students for the New Year. Her findings are presented in this report:

CHIDI ELEE, SENIOR ACCOUNTANT, BURSARY DEPT

As a staff of the University, I am going to put in my best to ensure the growth of the University, especially in the Payroll Unit of the Bursary Department. I plead with the Vice-Chancellor to carry out grassroots supervision of all the Units in the University, using all the personnel in the various Units to check laxity. I also look forward to improving myself academically, because I believe that if I improve myself, I am also improving the standard of the University.

EMEDIONG JOHNSON, YEAR II STUDENT, PURE AND INDUSTRIAL CHEMISTRY

I really hope that we would write examinations and have our results published immediately. I hope reading materials would be made available early enough to enable us prepare for assessments and examinations. I also expect that this year, the University Administration would provide Public Address Systems in lecture halls to enhance the learning experience. I wish to commend the Management on the new direction the University is taking and pray that it continues to improve the quality of academics that would make our graduates competitive in the job market.

EMEMALADE, REGISTRAR'S OFFICE

I believe there would be better welfare packages for staff this year, not just monetary packages, but better work incentives that would motivate us to give of our very best. Staff should also be assured of safety in the workplace and should also be encouraged to bring up new ideas that would enhance service delivery in the University.

GABRIEL OGEDEGBE, YEAR II STUDENT, MEDICINE AND SURGERY

We need more lecture halls and teaching staff to accommodate the growing number of students admitted into the University. There is need to improve on students' welfare, especially in the critical area of hostel accommodation. I look forward to improving myself academically; because that is the primary reason I am here. I want to score good grades and graduate on time to enable me contribute my own quota to national development.
infections, inter and intra-cellular signalling and communication, haematostasis and blood clotting, as well as the health status and identity of an individual, as main factors responsible for blood to give life to the human body.

"We can rightly affirm that blood is the essence, bridge or alter of life in that both the spiritual and physical essence of life are united and expressed through the instrument of blood. We can safely conclude that blood is the vessel of life," he declared, stressing that the role of blood in the communion and sacred offerings of the spiritual life of man is universal in every faith, community and fraternal friendship. Professor Nwauche submitted that "investigative and therapeutic hospital practice is dependent on the analysis and use of blood and blood-products in the blood bank, haematology and other laboratory tests," pointing out that analysis of blood specimens yield protein and definitive data which contribute in conferring and restoring proud parentage and heritage, including identification criminal elements in the speedy dispensation of justice.

Haematologists, according to the Inaugural Lecturer, care for people who fall victim to disorders of the blood system, ranging from HIV/Sero-prevalence, Blood Cancers, Leukaemia, Sickle Cell Anaemia, Blood Transfusion and Coagulation Disorders, amongst other predisposing factors.

Professor Nwauche called for more enlightenment campaigns on the need for regular health checks and its incorporation into the National Health Insurance Scheme for effective treatment of blood cancers. He also called for the establishment of a Molecular Medicine Reference Laboratory to be incorporated into the proposed Cancer Research Institute to be charged with responsibility for molecular diagnosis and treatment of blood cancers to discourage medical tourism that gorges scarce foreign exchange.

He also called on government and other stakeholders to promote safe blood and would strengthen the National Blood Transfusion Service and operate on an efficient basis, stressing that an efficient Blood Bank service will ensure careful donor recruitment and selection that would incorporate the use of a cocktail of screening tests designed to filter potential donors that may have been infected by any of the Transmissible Infections (TTIs). Professor Nwauche, who's research interest include HIV/AIDS and transfusion medicine, haemato-oncology, neo-natal haematology and coagulation disorders, also advocated public enlightenment and health education of various segments of society with sufficient evidence-based information that will encourage behaviour and attitudinal modification that are critical to the control of blood cancer transmission, as well as institution of programmes that will promote sound reproductive health, gender behavioural change and adoption of low risk sexual practices.

On sickle cell disease and blood coagulation disorders, the Inaugural Lecturer who is also Director of the Centre for Malaria Research and Pharmacology in the University, identified adoption of preventive measures to curtail its spread, stressing that such preventive strategies should incorporate screening of new born babies, using high performance liquid chromatography (HPLC) and gene analysis, employing PCR-based methods in selected sites to ensure testability.

Speaking on his research interest on malaria and blood interaction, Nwauche stated that the interaction of blood groups and malaria parasites in populations with different sickling traits and link between blood groups and different malaria parasites in Port Harcourt and other regions in the Niger Delta. He also discussed evacuation of sickle cell patients to Rivers State with particular reference to MDR 1 mutant genes due to their resistance to ACT and IPT p and IPT I prophylactic programmes in pregnant women and children, as his future research interest.

Immediate past Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture, Professor Ekemne Wokoma, has described her two-year tenure as a learning and rewarding experience that has greatly enriched her. Professor Ekemne, whose tenure came to an end on Monday, January 11, 2015, reviewed the performance of her administration, stating: "I took over the office as third Dean of the Faculty from Professor Love Akonne on January 8, 2014.

"On our watch as Dean and Associate, respectively, we made it our duty to carry staff and students of the Faculty along, so that they can benefit maximally from our tenure. The perception of our Faculty when Dr. Olufemi Adefope and I assumed office was unpleasant and we worked very hard to change such perception by ensuring that unnecessary acrimony and office politics were reduced to their barest minimum by running a transparent and open administration that everybody easily identified with. We allowed free expression of opinion at Faculty Board Meetings and we also tried to be objective and guided by laid down guidelines and extant policies," the erstwhile Dean told our Correspondent.

Speaking on her achievements in office, Professor Wokoma disclosed that: "between 2014 and 2016, we secured full accreditation for the Department of Forestry and Wildlife Management, received interim accreditation for Agricultural Economics and Extension, while Department of Fisheries is currently awaiting resource verification.

"We also received approval to admit students into the graduate programmes of the Department of Crop and Soil Science, and Department of Forestry and Wildlife Management, and also celebrated the 2014 World Food Day, signed a MoU with an organisation known as Food for All International, established the Faculty Graduate Studies Committee and opened a Farm Produce Sales Point at the Ebitimi Banigo Auditorium every Monday. Other achievements included introduction of a Faculty Information Bulletin, strengthening partnership with the RSDA Songhai Farm initiative and the Nigerian Agip Oil Company (NAOC), mounted several workshops for Faculty staff and students and also attended more external agricultural exhibitions," she recalled.

In a marked departure from the practice of just handing over some papers to her successor in the Dean's office, Professor Wokoma conducted the new Dean, Professor Ekekwe Erondo round the Faculty and Farm Facilities during which she took time to explain how things worked and future work plan. Professor Wokoma said that during her tenure as Dean, student enrolment in the Faculty increased from a paltry 40 in 2013 to 1,857, excluding the extra year students as she prepared to leave office. "The Faculty currently has over 90 full time academic staff; staff strength has been stable, the University of Port Harcourt was granted RUFORUM membership at the 11th Annual General Meeting attended by the Vice-Chancellor and Dean in August 2015 at Windhoek, Namibia. "Three members of staff benefitted from Intra-Africa Scholarship under RUFORUM partnership and have successfully completed their programmes. We worked with the office of the Vice-Chancellor to submit a request to the Nigerian Agip Oil Company to donate a Laboratory building to the Faculty with state-of-the-art equipment to enhance our research activities," she disclosed.

In his acceptance speech, the new Dean, Professor Ekekwe Erondo, expressed gratitude to staff of the Faculty for electing him into office, promising to justify the confidence reposed in him by fulfilling his campaign manifesto. "I thank the immediate past Dean for taking the Faculty to such enviable heights and I promise to continue from where she stopped to take the Faculty to even greater grounds. Although the Faculty is still a young one, we are all proud of what has been achieved so far and I hope that our collective effort will result in a stronger and more research-oriented Faculty on my watch, I shall be Dean for all staff and students and I am already taking your full support for granted as I assume office," he said.

By Mercy Adeniji

I Had A Rewarding Experience As Dean ~ Prof Wokoma

In his acceptance speech, the new Dean, Professor Ekekwe Erondo, expressed gratitude to staff of the Faculty for electing him into office, promising to justify the confidence reposed in him by fulfilling his campaign manifesto. "I thank the immediate past Dean for taking the Faculty to such enviable heights and I promise to continue from where she stopped to take the Faculty to even greater grounds. Although the Faculty is still a young one, we are all proud of what has been achieved so far and I hope that our collective effort will result in a stronger and more research-oriented Faculty on my watch, I shall be Dean for all staff and students and I am already taking your full support for granted as I assume office," he said.

Prof Wokoma, Immediate past Dean
Engineering Faculty Opens Ombudsman’s Office

By Otkor Samuel

The successful conclusion of the 2014/2015 academic year, while wishing them well ahead of the new semester. She advised them to continue in the tradition of rendering quality service that would help reposition the Faculty to discharge its core mandate to all stakeholders in its affairs, expressing hope that 2016 would usher in a new era of growth. Also speaking, Faculty Office, Dr. Mite Nghe, advised staff of the Faculty to refrain from involving themselves in acts that were capable of pitching them against extant rules governing the terms of their employment and bringing the Faculty to disrepute.

As we resume work in 2016, we should reflect on our strengths, challenges, opportunities and threats to prepare us for enhanced service delivery to the Faculty in particular and University of Port Harcourt at large. We will no longer condone staff who flout orders or those who engage in acts capable of bringing the Faculty into disrepute in the New Year,” the Faculty Officer warned, promising improved welfare that would motivate staff to give of their very best to the accelerated growth of the Faculty.

UniPort Student Wins NM/N/Unilever 2015 Award

By Mercy Adeniji

A further proof of the quality of training she received from the University of Port Harcourt, an ex-student of the Department of Marketing in the Faculty of Management Sciences, Miss Mercy Dike, has won the 2015 National Institute of Marketing of Nigeria/Unilever PLC Best Student of the Year Award.

Exchange views with UniPort Weekly in his office, last Tuesday, Acting Head of the Department of Marketing, Dr. Chinudo Ogbuji, said the objectives of the programme was to expose students of Marketing in tertiary institutions to the profession and also motivate them to strive towards creativity, excellence and a competitive spirit.

Outlining the modality for the award, Dr. Ogbuji disclosed that two final year students from each tertiary institution in the country offering Marketing competed for the prize. The coveted award was presented to Miss Dike in a ceremony held in Lagos on Tuesday, November 24, 2015 at Golf View Hotel; GRA Ikeja. He further told our Correspondent that the colourful event was attended by captains of industries, media practitioners and members of the academia amongst other dignitaries.

“At the final stage of the competition, our student Miss Dike, beat five other contestant from the University of Nigeria Nsukka, Adekunle Ajasun University, Babcock University, Federal Polytechnic, Nekede and Benue State University, to emerge the overall winner,” a visibly enthused Acting HoD revealed, describing Miss Dike as the first student from the University to win the coveted award since its inception in 2005.

“The competition is organised by the National Institute of Marketing of Nigeria (NM/N), but sponsored by Unilever Plc. The competition is executed in two phases; the first phase is the written test, in which contestants are evaluated on three broad subject areas namely, Marketing Theory, Marketing Practice and Case Analysis. Based on their scores in the written test, the best five contestants are invited to an oral interview, which ultimately culminates in the award ceremony involving the final winner. The prizes, which range from cash, book donations and automatic employment for the overall winner, are usually made available by household goods giant Unilever Plc. Following her spectacular victory, our student has been given automatic employment by the company and is already enrolling in a one year mandatory training programme in readiness for her placement,” Dr. Ogbuji disclosed.

The Acting HoD also added that “by this feat, our student has not only put her name down in the annals of history as the first to achieve this rare feat from this University since the competition started in 2005, but she has also positively projected the image and reputation of the Department of Marketing, Faculty of Management Sciences and University Port Harcourt at large,” noting that this feat could not have been possible without the unprecedented support of the University Management and the Faculty.

“My advice to other students is that hard work pays, it also pays to be confident and courageous in whatever they are doing. It pays for students to read beyond what they are taught in the classroom. They need to be academically, morally, socially sound, including in written and oral communications. Your ability to balance all aspects of life is what matters, and so I urge students to bridge themselves to face the daunting challenges in a new knowledge economy that requires brain workers, rather than those who flaut bogs certificates,” he advised students of the University.

DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY AND ENVIRONMENTAL MGT
WEATHER OBSERVATORY

FOR PORT HARCOURT AND ENVIRONS FOR SUNDAY, JANUARY 31 – SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 06, 2016.

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Dr. Gladys Emenike
Acting HoD

Dr. Prince Mmom
AG. Director, (CDRMD)
UniPort, RSUST Agree To Partner On Institutional Growth

By Williams Wodi

History was made last Tuesday when the Vice-Chancellor of University of Port Harcourt, Professor Ndoma Elele led a high-powered delegation to pay an official visit to his counterpart, Professor Blessing Didia at the new Senate Chambers of the Rivers State University of Science and Technology, Nkpala, Port Harcourt. 

The visit was aimed at forging closer institutional relationship between the two sister universities that provide specialized manpower for Rivers State, the Niger Delta and the rest of Nigeria.

Welcoming his august guests, a visibly enthused Professor Didia expressed excitement at the visit, commending Professor Lale for returning an earlier visit he paid him shortly after assuming office last July. He also expressed hope that the growing institutional ties would mutually benefit researchers and administrators in both universities.

“On assumption of office here, I met a strong and dedicated team of academics and administrators, that are capable of running a first-rate university anywhere in the world. Our Registry, Bursary, Library and other arms of the University are working well and I can declare with a high degree of certainty that RSUST is working well because we are working very hard here. This landmark visit will further rekindle my commitment to the development of this University and I am very happy that people here are fully committed to my vision of building a world-class University that has capacity to proffer solutions to many of the problems facing the Niger Delta region and beyond,” the Acting Vice-Chancellor told his guests.

Listing his achievements within his short tenure to include refurbishment of Radio RSUST, with a new television station in view, a new Computer Science Laboratory, recovery of the Nimi D. Briggs Hospital from a private proprietor, reconstruction of the dilapidated Senior Staff Club, rehabilitation of Staff Quarters and Student Hostels, promotion of deserving staff, amongst others, Professor Didia also disclosed that his administration organized a highly-commended and well-patronised Forgiveness and Reconciliation Service that enabled the once combative institution to shed its troubled past and face the future with renewed confidence under divine guidance.

In his own remarks, Professor Lale, who was a member of the RSUST Governing Council up till May 2012, told his host that he had mixed feelings stepping into the Campus, expressing delight that the once illusive peace had returned to the pioneer University of Science and Technology in the country to the delight of all stakeholders in the affairs of the institution.

“This is actually my second visit to this great University after I left in less than pleasant circumstances that I wish to keep in the past and I am very happy at the pace of development going on here. Your Acting Vice-Chancellor, Professor Didia, is one of the kindest human beings I have ever met and I am pleased that RSUST can be where it is today under his able leadership. As a Council member here, I helped to introduce some important innovations that undoubtedly laid the foundation for a new beginning in this great institution and I am very proud of my modest contributions to that process,” the visiting Vice-Chancellor told his host.

Commending his counterpart for providing purposeful, honest and transparent leadership that the University community has enthusiastically responded to, Professor Lale called for more support that would enable him take RSUST to greater heights.

I can assure you that we are very proud of your monumental achievements here in such a short period and it is our hope that you will continue to make Unique UniPort very proud through greater contributions to the institutional growth of our beloved RSUST,” he said.

Professor Didia had earlier taken his guest and his entourage on a facility visit of the University, including the iconic Law Faculty that compares with the very best in the country. The visitors were later taken to the new Senior Staff Club that was under lock and key before Professor Didia took office, where the President, Professor Ken Akpanwomar praised the emergent partnership between the two sister institutions.

“I wish to use this opportunity to express the gratitude of members to our personable and visionary Vice-Chancellor for giving the Club a facelift that has resulted in increased patronage. One ‘strong man’ woke up one morning, locked up this Club and pocketed the key without sensitivity to the welfare needs of the University community and it is in the grace of God that Professor Didia was appointed to this exalted position and the difference has been clear ever since he arrived here,” the President said.

In the UniPort entourage included the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration), Professor Anthony Ibe, Registrar, Mrs. Dorcas Otto, Bursar, Mr. Vitalis Aliez, University Librarian, Dr. Susan Umeozor, Director of the Sports Institute, Professor Ken Anumweje and Special Assistant to the Vice-Chancellor, Mr. Kingsley Wogwu. The Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor of RSUST, Professor Boma Orawari, Registrar, Mrs. Constance Odumab, Bursar, Mr. Kennedy Abraham and University Librarian, Dr. Blessing Aihuzua, including Provost of the College of Medicine, Professor Raphael Orumabou, Deans and other senior officers of the University were on hand to receive the August guests.

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