

UniPort Weekly

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Vincent Identifies Fault Lines In Nigeria's Healthcare Delivery



Ways of making quality healthcare delivery accessible, affordable and acceptable to the generality of Nigerians formed the crux of the 2nd Professor Kenneth Diete-Koki Memorial Lecture held at the Ebitimi Banigo Auditorium, last Tuesday.

In a well-received presentation, Guest Lecturer, Dr. John Vincent, identified high cost of hospital services, inappropriate use of pharmacological agents, reports

Otikor Samuel

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Side Bar

Centre for Conflict and Gender Studies held an Orientation exercise for its Graduate Students last Thursday. Details next week.

~Editor

US Embassy Lauds UniPort Partnership

By Obinna Nwodin

The United States Embassy in Nigeria has commended the fraternal institutional relationship that has developed between it and the University of Port Harcourt over the years, pledging that the Embassy would continue to explore other areas of cooperation with University.

This commendation was made by the Public Affairs Officer of the United States Consulate in Nigeria, Mrs. Dehab Ghebrea, when she led a delegation from the Embassy on a Courtesy Visit on the Vice-Chancellor in his office on Thursday, February

10, 2016.

Mrs. Ghebrea, expressed joy that the University has taken advantage of the Fulbright programme which provided opportunity for scholars to advance their knowledge, stating that the Fulbright Alumni Association played a great role in encouraging other academics to participate in the programme. According to her, the establishment of the *American Corner* in the University has also been of immense benefit to both staff and students, disclosing that the delegation was in the University to interview

candidates that applied for the Mandela Washington Fellowship programme introduced by President Barack Obama to raise a new leadership class in

Africa.

"Beneficiaries of the fellowship would be taken through various academic and

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ACU Announces 2016 Early Career Academic Grant

By Mercy Adeniji

The Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) has announced its 2016 Early Career Academic Grant for suitably qualified Academic Staff, who are less than ten years from the start of their employment.

A statement made available to *UniPort Weekly* by the Assistant Director of the Centre for Research Management and Development (CEREMAD), Dr. Olufemi Adesope on behalf of the Director, Professor Alice Nte, disclosed that for eligibility, prospective applicants must be employed in an academic role by an ACU member Institution and must be undergoing a Ph.D Programme.

"Applicant must not have previously studied, worked or attended an academic Conference outside their



Prof Igbo Joe
DV-C, Academic

home region. The Conference to be attended must be a recognized Academic Conference in a field relevant to the applicant's area of expertise.

Applicant must provide evidence of Submission/Acceptance of a paper or poster presentation, or other communications with the Conference Organisers. The grants must be used to participate in a Conference between 1 July, 2016 and 31 December, 2016 and the maximum amount of each grant is 2000 GBP."

The statement added that interested applicants should visit the Centre for Research Management and Development Office, School of Graduate Studies Building, between February 15 and March 5, 2016 for further information on the grant.

STUDENT WORLD

We Can Combat Corruption With Intellectual Weapon ~Uranta

As the Nigerian Government continues to wage war against corruption, the question on the lips of observers is: Can Nigeria win the war? IWARIMIE URANTA, a Doctoral Candidate in the Department of Political and Administrative Studies is optimistic that the cankerworm can be defeated with intellectual weapon. He spoke with Correspondent, HUMPHREY OGU:

Iwarimie Uranta is a budding scholar with a burning passion to contribute to the betterment of society through scholarship. His interest in tackling the problems of Nigeria began in his Undergraduate days when he submitted a project work entitled: *The Dialectics of the June 12 Crisis*, for his Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) degree

to the Institute of Education, University of Ibadan.

When he enrolled into the Master of Science degree programme in the Department of Political and Administrative Studies in the University of Port Harcourt, Uranta devoted his time to finding a lasting solution to the Niger Delta crisis. His research culminated in a Thesis entitled: *The Nigerian State and the Niger Delta Crisis*.

When Uranta returned to the University of Port Harcourt for his Ph.D, he specialised on Political Theory and Methodology, focusing his intellectual energy on the problem of corruption in Nigeria. He has completed a Dissertation on *Aristotle's Idea of Property and the Problem of Corruption in Nigeria*, supervised by Professor Eme Ndu.

What does he hope to achieve with his latest research endeavour? "The objective of the research is to explain the problem of corruption in Nigeria and to address it, using a fundamental theory in Political Science. This *Mean Theory* propounded by Aristotle explains how moderation in property acquisition can help to provide a contraceptive against further reproduction of the Nigerian corruption syndrome," he pointed out.

"Aristotle said that if we moderate the tendency of property acquisition and redistribute the wealth of society for the general good of everybody, society will be better off," he said, adding that corruption cannot be explained outside the issue of economic marginalization, because when a few people acquire so much wealth, others are marginalized, thus, raising social tension.

"In my research, I found out that the problem of corruption in Nigeria was a result of indiscipline by the Nigerian political elite class. Because they are not able to discipline themselves in terms of property acquisitive tendency, they accumulate more wealth than is

necessary, impoverishing others in the process," Uranta disclosed.

Expressing optimism that the war against corruption in Nigeria can be won if his recommendations are implemented, Uranta, who listed Psycho-normative Approach and the State Regulatory Approach among his recommendations against corruption in his study, explained that Psycho-normative Approach has to do with affecting the psyche of the people so that they can appreciate the futility of primitive acquisition of wealth. He explained that the State Regulatory Approach requires government to initiate programmes that can objectively reduce the craze for material acquisition that alienate the majority of Nigerians, calling for a contributory development fund and the strengthening of anti-corruption agencies.

"At the end, if the recommendations made in this work are considered and we regulate the acquisition of property and material wealth, corruption will be reduced to the barest minimum," he said, noting that it takes people of impeccable integrity to fight corruption. Identifying political, economic, moral and physical corruption as different levels of the plague in Nigeria, Uranta said that political corruption operates at the executive, legislative and judicial arms of government, stating that if corruption is fought successfully at the political level, it would be easy to fight it at other levels.

On his assessment of the current onslaught against corruption by the Federal Government, Uranta, who observed "that corruption cannot be fought without integrity," said: "There is a noticeable improvement in the ongoing Federal Government's fight against corruption."

Uranta expressed satisfaction with the library stock in his area of specialisation and available e-library resources in the University. He, however, regretted that most students do not know about available e-library resources that could enrich their work. He also called for quick response to students, who submit their work for anti-plagiarism test. According to him, the anti-plagiarism test, which should be handled within a week, unduly delays the completion of students' work.



Mr Uranta

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Vincent Identifies Fault Lines In Nigeria's Healthcare

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unavailability of detailed registries, absence of actionable data on prevailing diseases, inadequate measures in harnessing social and environmental factors and non-implementation of simple public health procedures, as some of the major obstacles to effective healthcare delivery in Nigeria.

Explaining further, Dr. Vincent, whose paper was entitled: *Leveraging Drug Utilisation Research, Disease Registries, Social and Environmental Factors for Effective Healthcare Delivery in Nigeria*, also identified use of counterfeit drugs as a major challenge to the wellbeing of patients, averring that until punishment for trafficking in counterfeit drugs is increased and strictly administered, drug barons who profit from the blood trade will continue in business. He stated that the use of counterfeit medicines was estimated to yield about \$75 billion profit each year.

Vincent, who is a Senior Director at Pfizer Incorporated in the United States, pointed out that health service delivery would continue to fail if it did not get to the common people at the grassroots, averring that: "An effective healthcare system should be available, accessible, affordable and acceptable based on the quality of services offered. Thousands of Nigerians suffer and die from conditions for which effective interventions exist, such as diarrhoea, pneumonia and malaria, attributable to either under-utilization of existing services, or poor quality of existing services."

Dr. Vincent, who also stated the need to maintain reliable disease registries to keep information for managing data on patients, pointed out that the major lessons for healthcare planning and delivery all over the world, came to the fore following the recent Ebola outbreak, which according to him, reinforced the necessity for every country to have a core public health functionality to identify and stop emergent threats.

"The benefits of disease registries include using the information to track diseases, their distribution and progress, standardize and improve the quality of care and patient outcomes, increase public awareness, disease prevention and increase public awareness, disease prevention and accelerated innovations and knowledge gain. As a planning tool, disease registries provide essential data on the prevalence, as well as incidences of diseases and building blocks for predicting future trends of a disease in a population for effective resource allocation," the Guest Speaker said.



V-C, Prof Lale (3rd right) flanked by Guest Speaker, Dr Vincent, DV-C (Admin), Prof Ibe, Prof Nsirim (left) and son of the late Diète-Koki, Provost CHS, Prof Mato (right) and others

He further emphasised the need for "policy changes that encourage regular physical activity such as urban redesign to provide more walkways and bicycle lanes, minimizing use of escalators and improve public transportation, will reduce obesity, hypertension, and diabetes mellitus and coronary artery disease."

Dr. Vincent, who advocated the use of Geographical Information Systems in planning, design and evaluation of healthcare programmes, stated that use of mobile health technologies such as imaging technology could assist healthcare workers perform ultrasound imaging from any location and share images through cellular networks. "With advances in technology, mobile health technology should be driving healthcare delivery for developing countries," he explained.

Earlier in his speech, Vice-Chancellor, Professor Ndowa Lale, who extolled the pioneering effort of the late Professor Kenneth Diète-Koki, commended the Faculty of Basic Medical Sciences for initiating the Memorial Lecture as an enduring legacy. "In his lifetime, Professor Diète-Koki was a larger-than-life figure, who influenced the study of Physiology and trained those now carrying on his great legacy. The Faculty of Basic Medical Sciences and the College of Health Sciences should continue to celebrate this outstanding teacher, who mentored quality successors," the Vice-Chancellor told the gathering.

Chairman of the occasion and a leading Chemical Pathologist, Professor Nsirim Nduka, who recounted his encounter with the late Professor Diète-Koki on his return from the United Kingdom to take up appointment with the University, described the late Physiologist as instrumental to the setting up of the Basic Medical Science programme.

"His primary desire in this College was to impart similar knowledge of medical education he had experienced in the United Kingdom on every student that was to pass through the College," he said.

Others who spoke were the Provost of the College of Health Sciences, Professor Christie Mato and outgoing Dean of the Faculty of Basic Medical Sciences, Professor Iyeopu Siminialayi, who both extolled the virtues and contributions of the late Professor Diète-Koki to the advancement of medical education in the University.

Highpoint of the lecture was presentation of awards to founding Deans of the Faculty such as Professors Reginald Nwankwoala, Ethelbert Dede and Diète-Koki, who were honoured posthumously. Others were Professors Nelson Brambaifa, Omotayo Ebong, Blessing Didia, Victor Dapper, Hakeem Fawehinmi and Siminialayi.

V-C Tasks Fresh Students On Hard Work At Orientation Exercise

By Obinna Nwodin

Fresh students admitted into the University of Port Harcourt have been strongly advised to take advantage of the opportunity provided for them to improve their lives and be of benefit to both their families and society on graduation.

Vice-Chancellor, Professor Ndowa Lale, who gave the advice while addressing the students at the 2015/2016 Orientation exercise held at the Convocation Arena, last Wednesday, urged the new students to be guided by the guidelines specified by the authorities of the University.

The Vice-Chancellor, who stated that the Orientation exercise was not just about exposing the students on the policies, regulations and guidelines that operate in the University, said that "the programme is meant to adjust your attitudes and values to the stringent academic standards specified by the Senate of the University for the award of degrees to Undergraduate Students," advising them to ensure that they can be found worthy in character and in learning at the end of their study in the University.

Professor Lale, also informed them that in a globalized learning environment, they can no longer pretend to be studying in a local setting, advised them to ensure that all they

did conformed with global best practice, assuring that: "This Administration has provided you with useful tools that would enable you achieve your goals as you join a highly select community of scholars who are dedicated to the search for specialized knowledge for the benefit of society."

He also advised them to carry out their activities with a high sense of responsibility in order to ensure that they successfully carry out their programmes. "Your new status as Undergraduate students require a high degree of responsibility and accountability by which you will be judged from now on," he said, adding that "every step you take and every move you make would, henceforth, be scrutinized by society that rightly expects so much from you as university Undergraduates."

Professor Lale, who promised that the authorities would do everything within their powers to provide a conducive environment for academic work, advised them to always show understanding when municipal services fail. "Let me reassure you that this Administration will do everything within its powers to provide you an enabling environment that would enable you explore your latent potentials to the full," the Vice-Chancellor assured them. He warned them against vices that could contravene the

rules and regulations guiding their conduct in the University, stressing that the authorities would not hesitate "to throw the books at you once you are found in material breach of extant rules that govern your status as students of this University."

In her welcome address, the Registrar, Mrs. Dorcas Otto, who congratulated the students on their admission, advised them to justify their new status by being studious and of good conduct at all times. She told them that the Orientation exercise was designed to enlighten them on the dos and don'ts of the University, adding that it was the responsibility of the authorities to ensure that they went through the programme without minimum hitches.

Presentations were made on *Bursary Services* by the University Bursar, Mr. Vitalis Alezi; *The Use of the Library and E-Learning* by the University Librarian, Dr. Susan Umeozor; *The Role of the Student Affairs Department in the life of the Student* by Acting Dean of the Affairs Department, Dr. Otu Ekpeyong; *The Student and Security* by the Chief Security Officer, Lt. Col. Reginald Isiguzo (rtd); *Health Services to Students* by the Acting Director, Health Services Department, Dr. Chinwe Ezirim; *Dress/Moral Code* by President of the University of Port Harcourt Women Association (UPWA), Mrs. Joy Lale; *Rules and Conducts Governing the Conduct of Students in Academic Matters* by Deputy Registrar (Academic), Dr. Agatha Ataga; *Prize-Winning Opportunities in the University* by Chairman, Senate Committee on Prizes, Professor Chukwudi Onyeaso and *Benefits of Entrepreneurship* by Acting Director, Entrepreneurship Centre, Dr. Edwinah Amah.

Other presentations included: *Code of Conduct for Students, Examination Malpractice and Related Matters* by Chairman, Professional Ethics Committee, Professor Frank Ugiomoh; *The Importance of Guidance and Counselling in the Life of a Student*, by Counseling Psychologist, Mrs. Loveth Jeremiah; *Quality Assurance and Service Delivery in the University* by Acting Director, Quality Assurance and Quality Control Unit (QA&QC), Dr. Ikechukwu Agbagwa; *Services at the Information and Communication Technology Centre (ICTC)* by Acting Director of the ICTC, Dr. Chidiebere Ugwu, as well as *The Role of Students in Campus Cleanliness* by Mrs. Mercy Ajienska, who represented the Acting Director of Campus Environmental and Beautification Service.



V-C, Prof Lale, addressing the new students at the orientation ceremony

Full Gospel Fellowship Institutes Sam Mbata Prize In Business Mgt

By Mercy Adeniji

The National Executive of the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship has instituted a Prize worth N2 million in honour of one of its foremost members and sponsors, Elder Sam Mbata. The Prize will go to the Best Graduating Student in Business Management in the Faculty of Management Sciences.

Apart from his abiding interest in the things of God, Elder Mbata, who hails from Eneka in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State, is an accomplished business mogul and a champion of many philanthropic causes that distinguishes him from other privileged Nigerians.

Briefing the Vice-Chancellor on the Prize, Regional Vice-President, South-South, of the Fellowship, Mr. Etiowo Andrew-Essien, extolled the sterling qualities of Elder Mbata, describing him as an exemplary Christian, philanthropist and business magnet, who still found time to honour God with his substance. "Elder Mbata is a true Christian, who has committed himself to joining hand with us to spread the gospel. He practises his business in line with Christian ethics and is a contributor to good causes. We, therefore, decided to institute this Prize to honour him in his lifetime and to also show an example to others that there is no conflict between success in business and serving God," the Vice-President told his host.

Receiving the team in his office, Vice-Chancellor, Professor Ndowa Lale, who extolled the exemplary qualities of Elder Mbata, expressed gratitude to the Fellowship for its total commitment to the propagation of the gospel of



V-C, Prof Lale (4th left) and members of the delegation

Jesus Christ. "I am very happy that you decided to endow this important Prize in honour of a very outstanding lover of the gospel and astute business man, and let me on behalf of the administration, promise you that this Prize will be administered in advancement of the purpose for which it was endowed by the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship," he assured the visiting team.

In a sideline interview, Dean of the Faculty of Management Sciences, Professor Emeka Okereke, commended the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship for remembering Mbata, who he said had contributed so much to spreading the gospel and for other developmental strides in society, as well as positively affecting lives.

Professor Okereke recalled that the FGBMF

invited the Faculty of Management Sciences for a programme in Port Harcourt last year. "During the programme, they honoured Sam Mbata for his numerous contributions and they thought of what could be done to honour him for his good deeds and decided to institute a Prize in his name. Each year, the Best Graduating Student in Business Management will be awarded the Prize. What we want to do is to ensure that such a student is qualified, not just in character, but also in learning, including exhibiting an exemplary Christian life."

The presentation ceremony also had the General Manager, FGBMFI, Mr. Onoh Onoh, National Director, Professor Mike Onyekonwu and the Field Representative, Dr Jones Ayuwu, amongst others in attendance.

Friday, 12th February, 2016 marked yet another turning point for the Methodist Theological Institute, Umuahia, which has been affiliated to the University of Port Harcourt since June, 1999. As the University's delegation led by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), Professor Igbo Joe, packed into the bus for the much anticipated trip to the city of famous colleges and seminaries, everybody's thought was fixated on the infamous Oil Mill Junction on the Rumuokwurusi axis and the gridlock that rules the trading city of Aba.

With a Catholic prayer said by outgoing Chairman of the Local Affiliations Committee, Professor Iniobong Udoidem, we were guaranteed journey mercies on the unpredictable highway to *God's Own State*. Having elected to ride in his official vehicle, Professor Joe secured his own prayers for journey mercies through prolonged handshakes and pleasantries with Professor Udoidem and the personable Head of Department of Religious and Cultural Studies, Professor Christopher Ejizu – both Catholic Priests.

Apart from momentary delays by overzealous Police and Military personnel manning innumerable checkpoints along the Port Harcourt/Aba Road that is in dire need of total reconstruction, we arrived at Umuahia without incident or stint. As we arrived, the modest premises of the Seminary served as a grim reminder of the pioneering effort of the Rev Thomas Birch Freeman, who brought the Methodist Church to Nigeria in the 1800s. The Institute sits about three kilometers from the Abia Tower that mocked at Gothic architecture on the Enugu-Port Harcourt Express Way. The Express Way merely expressed the decrepit state of most Nigerian roads today under successive self-serving rulers.

A very warm Methodist reception by the affable Rector of

Methodist Seminary Matriculates 30 Students

By Williams Wodi

the Seminary, the Very Rev Okey Ogba, was all the adjustment we needed to settle into our new 'UniPort' environment. The Academic Procession was appropriately heralded by *Hymn 252*, which declared: *God is with Us*, a very reassuring statement under the searing heat that served as a grim reminder of the effects of climate change. The *Opening Prayer* was an invocation of the spirit of the 16th Matriculation on the 30 lucky students, who would earn the famous degree of the University of Port Harcourt from the rustic city of Umuahia. A near lachrymose rendition of the *University's Anthem* stood out from the *National* and *Methodist Anthems*; but it was a genuine effort at paying respect to Unique UniPort and we sarcastically applauded their combined effort.

In his welcome address, the likeable Rector traced the history of the Institute back to 1956 when the Methodist Church trained Catechists in what was then known as District Bible School. The Rev Norman Green was the pioneer Principal. It later metamorphosed into Methodist Lay Training Centre after the Nigerian Civil War. What is now known as MTI came on stream in 1979 when some puritanical Methodist Students pulled out of the famous Trinity (Union) Theological College, Umuahia to train Priests the Methodist way. The Institute was affiliated to UniPort in June, 1999. So much for history!

Very Rev Ogba declared that the Institute was still committed to the provision of "sound theological education through qualitative scholarship and personal examples of Faculty members." Reminding the Matriculants of their unique place in society, the Rector waxed lyrical: "God and Providence have made you extraordinary. You are unique students, undergoing unique training for a unique vocation and in a unique time."

In his charge to the students, the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Ndowa Lale, who spoke through the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), described the Institute as a source of pride to the University, promising to help it achieve its stated objectives of training morally sound church workers and giving direction to society. He urged the Matriculants to imbibe the Entrepreneurial concept, in addition to a strong spiritual upbringing.

"As you may be aware, Matriculation ceremonies are memorable since they mark the formal admission of students to membership of a given institution. It is, therefore, the beginning of a journey of students to higher academic achievements," he said.

"While it is exciting to matriculate as students of the University of Port Harcourt, it far more joyful and rewarding to complete your prescribed course of study and participate the Convocation Ceremony. You are strongly advised to dissociate yourselves from any form of anti-social activities that could bring shame to you and your families," he further admonished the students.

As a fitting finale, the College Choir also rendered an evocative *Anthem* that elicited generous applause from the audience that mostly comprised family members, friends and well-wishers of the ecstatic Matriculants.

The Registrar of the Institute, Very Rev Evans Onyemara, who shared the ceremonial lectern with Registrar of the University, Mrs. Dorcas Otto, brought the memorable occasion to a fitting close with the *Recessional Hymn 868*, which appropriately proclaimed in the second verse:

*While I ply the scholar's task
Jesus Christ, be near, I ask
Help the memory, clear the brain
Knowledge still to seek and gain*

The hymnist sure knows how to evoke God into an academic setting. A well-laid out lunch table completed the fraternal Methodist and African traditional hospitality from our very generous hosts. The return journey to Port Harcourt was far 'shorter' than the trip to Umuahia.



Officials of UniPort and Seminary in a group photograph

ACE Ends Workshop On Revenue Generation

By Ethel Timi-Johnson

The African Centres of Excellence has ended has ended a Revenue Generation Workshop for two federal universities in the South-South: the Universities of Port Harcourt and Benin on Tuesday, 11th and Wednesday, 12th February, 2016.

The two-day Workshop which was organized for the Centre for Oilfield Chemicals Research at the University of Port Harcourt and the Centre for Reproductive Health and Innovation at the University of Benin, respectively, was held at the Emerald Energy Institute, University of Port Harcourt.

Speaking at the event, representative of the Vice-Chancellor and Deputy Vice-Chancellor in charge of Administration, Professor Anthony Ibe, commended ACE for packaging a Workshop aimed at ensuring sustainability of the Centres in the two institutions. "This is a wise move to equip participants with ideas that would ensure that their programmes and projects are sustained beyond the funding period by the sponsoring agency," Professor Ibe said, urging the benefitting institutions to put the knowledge acquired to use.

Facilitator of the Workshop and ACE Consultant on Strategy and Development for Higher Education, Xavier Michel, disclosed that the Workshop was aimed at improving the Centre's competences on revenue generation mechanisms.

"A rewarding strategy for revenue generation results in visible success, development of new projects and programmes. The Workshop highlights sustainable plans for the Centres to raise funds after exhaustion of the World Bank grants," he told the participants.



Facilitator, Mr. Michel (5th right) flanked by Deputy Centre Leader, Uniben, Prof Okojie, Director, CEFOR UniPort, Prof Joel (left) and other participants

"There is an obvious need to find other funding sources in preparation for embracing self-sustenance. One of the strategic plans of the Centres is to develop new ideas for revenue generation," Michel remarked, listing grants, short course and industry partnerships as potential sources of revenue generations that should be seriously considered by the Centres to sustain their activities. Describing revenue generation strategies as an interactive process, the ACE Consultant also stressed the role of leadership, ethics and accountability as key factors in revenue generation and transparent utilisation.

In her contribution, Deputy Centre Leader of the University of Benin Centre of Excellence in Reproductive Health and Innovation (CERHI), Professor Obehi Okojie, noted that the Centre was focused on developing modalities for reducing maternal mortality in the West African sub-region.

"CERHI seeks to train the next generation of leaders in reproductive health to promote interdisciplinary research, efficient service delivery and policy transformation needed to take care of African's growing population. It also aims at training students and technical experts in reproductive health, amongst other objectives," she explained.

In his contribution, Director of the University of Port Harcourt ACE Centre for Oilfield Chemicals Research (CEFOR), Professor Ogbonna Joel, restated the Centre's commitment to producing industry-ready graduates, providing a platform for quality training and research in oilfield chemicals and developing relevant technologies for local production of oilfield chemicals that would reduce the huge foreign exchange expended on the importation of such chemicals into the country. "We hope to become a Centre of Excellence in the production of Oilfield Chemicals in the Gulf of Guinea," he assured the participants at the Workshop.

Abo Assumes Office As Pharmaceutical Sciences Dean

By Mercy Adeniji

A new Dean has emerged to run the affairs of the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences for the next two years. He is Professor Kio Abo of the Department of Pharmacognosy and Phytotherapy. The newly-elected Dean took over from his long-serving predecessor, Professor Oleka Udeala, who successfully mentored the Faculty to maturity.

Speaking with *UniPort Weekly* in his office on Wednesday, February 17, 2016, Professor Abo declared his readiness to give his best to take the Faculty to the next level of intellectual and infrastructural development. Recalling the promises he made on the campaign trail, the new Dean disclosed his intention to focus attention on an integrated administrative structure that would have respect for due process and leadership by statutory committees.

"My plan is to create a good democratic set up in the Faculty and I want to usher in an atmosphere of sustained collaboration among the six Departments in the Faculty. I want to promote a strong and effective Departmental system in the Faculty. It is my intention to encourage innovative and cutting-edge research and development in pursuit of academic excellence through teaching, research and community service. I also want to create an atmosphere that would be conducive for international linkages and extension of such opportunities to all staff in the Faculty," he promised.

The new Dean, who was one-time Head of Department, further added that while in that position, "I was able to establish academic

linkages with Universities in Ghana and South Africa for collaborative research purposes. I also plan to establish a central Faculty Research Laboratory, where academic staff would conduct research that would promote the study of Pharmaceutical Sciences in the Faculty. I also plan to pursue clinical research with other relevant Departments in the University. For instance, we already have an ongoing research link with staff of the College of Health Sciences on the development of natural anti-diabetic

remedies.

As part of efforts aimed at taking the Faculty to greater heights, Professor Abo further revealed his intention "to review the current B.Pharm Curriculum which we have been running for the past 10 years in line with global best practice and to overcome some of the obvious challenges in the curriculum and also update aspects of pharmacy education and practice in the Faculty. I hope to rigorously pursue the establishment of a Postgraduate Diploma programme in Herbal Medicine for the production of quality herbal products in the proposed Institute of Natural Medicine."

The new Dean disclosed that the Faculty was on its toes to receive full professional accreditation from the Pharmacists Council of Nigeria in April. "We must do everything that is legally permissible to secure accreditation from the apex regulatory body of the profession. To that end, all Units and Departments are working in concert to ensure that we pass the coming accreditation exercise. We have already received the self-study form which we are completing and are ensuring that everything is put in place to scale the accreditation hurdle," Professor Abo told our Correspondent.

The new Dean expressed gratitude to all staff of the Faculty for voting him into office, promising not to betray the confidence reposed in him. "My colleagues voted for experience, integrity, diligence, innovation, harmony and stability and I hope to fulfill my campaign promises. I also hope to work with teaching and non-teaching staff of the Faculty, including students in the discharge of my responsibilities. I promise to listen to all shades of opinion in my determined effort to carry everybody along in the scheme of things," he promised.



Prof Abo, new Dean

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US Embassy Lauds UniPort Partnership

management programmes, as well as have the opportunity to meet with President Obama," adding that the idea behind the programme was to raise leaders with capacity to engineer positive change in the world. Also speaking, another member of the delegation, Mr. Bob Kerr, said that the Consulate was already negotiating with the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) to be part of the Fulbright programme, stressing that with the level of support the Agency has given to capacity building in higher education in Nigeria, a lot would be gained from the proposed partnership. Responding, a visibly enthused Vice-Chancellor, Professor Ndowa Lale, who noted that a lot of scholars from the University had benefitted from the Fulbright

scholarship, expressed gratitude to the US Embassy over the strong ties with the University over the years, adding that the establishment of the *American Corner* was one of the outcomes of the longstanding relationship.

"The establishment of the *American Corner* is a solid foundation that could define the future collaboration with both institutions. I commend President Obama's resolve to establish the Fellowship programme," he told the delegation, stressing that "it would impact positively on entrepreneurship, government and civil society. This is the right way to go in equipping our students and future leaders with the requisite entrepreneurial skills that they would require to survive in society," assuring

the delegation that his administration would do everything possible to strengthen the already existing ties between the University and the US Embassy in Nigeria.

In his speech, President of the University of Port Harcourt Chapter of Fulbright Alumni Association, Professor Ibitamuno Aminigo, who said that members had a solid network of scholars across the world, pledged their readiness to support the present administration to realize its vision.

Other members of the UniPort Chapter of Fulbright Alumni Association were also on hand to welcome the visiting delegation.



V-C, Prof Lale (4th left), flanked by Public Affairs Officer of US Consulate, Mrs Ghebreh, Registrar, Mrs Dorcas Otto (left), Mr Kerr other Principal and Senior Officers, Members of Fulbright Alumni Association and others

Rivers Gov't To Partner UPTH On Lassa Fever

By Ethel Timi-Johnson

(with Reports from Kem Daniel-Elebiga, UPTH Public Relations Officer)

The Rivers State Government and University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital (UPTH), have agreed to partner on efforts aimed at eradicating Lassa Fever from the State.

Making the disclosure during a visit to the Hospital, the State Commissioner of Health, Dr. Theophilus Odagne, who led a team from the Ministry, stressed the need for both parties to work towards tackling the Lassa Fever outbreak that has created panic amongst indigenes and other residents of the State.

"The Infectious Disease Committee of the State Ministry of Health and the UPTH would meet to deliberate on ways to tackle the Lassa Fever Virus," he stated, calling on the people to keep their environment clean to ensure that rats do not enter their homes.

Conducting the team round the proposed facility, Chief Medical Director of UPTH, Professor Aaron Ojule, noted that it was being reconfigured to tackle the new outbreak of Lassa Fever. "Although this is not configured to be an isolation facility, we will now have to reconfigure it for emergency use," he stated. Corroborating his view, the Head of Infectious Disease Unit of the Molecular Laboratory of the National Centre for Disease Control at the UPTH, Dr. Temitayo Awopeju, disclosed that the Laboratory has been configured to handle viral diseases such as Lassa Fever.

In a related development, the National Executive of the Paediatrics Association of Nigeria has commended the efforts of the Management and staff of the UPTH in patient cares. National President of the Association, Professor Adebisi Olowu, made the commendation when he led a seven-man delegation on a courtesy visit to the CMD, as part of activities scheduled for its Annual General Meeting in Rivers State.

Receiving his guests, Professor Ojule described the Paediatrics Department of the Hospital as a pacesetter in child health. "The Hospital Management gives serious attention to the Paediatrics Department, given its importance to the wellbeing of our children," he told the visiting delegation. Local Organizing Chairman for the AGM, Professor Edward Alikor, accompanied the National Executive on the visit.

Similarly, the University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital, as part of its core mandate, has conducted a Matriculation Ceremony for another batch of students in its School of Health Information Management.

Addressing the Matriculants, the CMD described the move as a fulfillment of the vision of the Hospital's founding fathers, adding: "Since the establishment of UPTH, we have craved for the training of a specialised workforce that would manage the nation's health sector."

Chairman of the Medical Advisory Committee, Dr. Charles Tobin-West, who chaired the historic event, assured the students that the programme would be accredited by the relevant regulatory bodies, adding that the Hospital Management would contact the West African Health Organization to improve the quality of training on offer to make it a Centre of Excellence.

Also, the Teaching Hospital has taken necessary steps to protect its staff from contracting infectious diseases in the course of attending to patients. To this end, the Clinical Services and Training Department, in collaboration with the Infectious Disease Committee, organised a two-day seminar on the control and prevention of such ailments amongst health workers. Chairman, Medical Advisory Committee (CMAC), Dr. Charles Tobin West, disclosed that the seminar was aimed at providing adequate information that would give



Prof Ojule, UPTH CMD

confidence to healthcare professionals in the performance of their duty.

Meanwhile, students of the Teaching Hospital School of Health Information Management marked their *Week* with several activities lined up to mark this year's celebration, including a football match and gala nite that preceded the Matriculation.

In the same vein, the Geneva-based International Medics Organization, has honoured the Chief Medical Director with a meritorious service award.

Representative of the organization's Regional Director for Africa, Taye Martins, said the award was in recognition of Professor Ojule's passion of service to the medical profession and humanity.

Receiving the award, an elated Professor Ojule, who described the award as an outcome of teamwork, assured the organization that the Teaching Hospital would continue to deliver quality service to her numerous clients and stakeholders. "I know it wasn't a one man show; it is a combined effort from the Management and Staff that achieved this memorable feat. I would like to dedicate this award to all Staff and Management of the Hospital," he remarked.

GUIDEPOST

APPOINTMENT

Dr. Hamilton Oporum, Department of Medical Biochemistry, Faculty of Basic Medical Sciences, College of Health Sciences, appointed *Coordinator* of the Department. The appointment which takes immediate effect terminates on February 1, 2017.

Professor Julian Osuji, Department of Plant Science and Biotechnology, Faculty of Science, appointed *Director, Local Affiliations*. The appointment which takes immediate effect is until further notice.

RESUMPTION FROM SABBATICAL LEAVE

Professor Ibitamuno Aminigo, Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, resumed duty from *Sabbatical Leave*, effective February 2, 2016.

Dr. Friday Nwafor, Department of Theatre and Film Studies, Faculty of Humanities, resumed duty from *Sabbatical Leave*, effective February 9, 2016.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Professor Roseline Konya, Department of Animal and Environmental Biology, Faculty of Science, granted a one-year *Leave of Absence*, effective December 22, 2015 to December 21, 2016.

RESIGNATION

Dr. Emmanuel Nwokolo, Department of Animal Science, Faculty of Agriculture, resigns from the services of the University, effective December 31, 2015.

STOPPRESS

BAN ON WILD CELEBRATIONS BY FINAL YEAR STUDENTS

The attention of the University Management has been drawn to the wild celebrations by final year students at the end of their last examination. Managements has frowned at the emergent practice of throwing satchet water bags, mud and all manner of objects at each other, thereby littering the environment and creating public scenes, in place of a more dignified celebration achievement by final year students.

“One visiting the scene after such wild celebrations would mistake our University as a battle ground where students lack respect for constituted authority and no regard for quality of their environment,” the statement signed by the Registrar, Mrs. Dorcas Otto said, warning of dire consequences for students that may wish to repeat the distasteful performance.

In the light of the above, the University Management has directed that henceforth, such wild celebrations should cease as it portrays the University in a bad light. This is for the information and strict compliance of all affected students.

BEWARE OF FRAUDSTERS

A statement released by the National Youths Service Corps (NYSC), has warned the general public, particularly prospective Corps Members to disregard the activities of some hackers requesting them to make payments for preferential postings or to change their postings. According to the release, postings to States will be done at the appropriate time.

Prospective Corps Members are, therefore, advised to ignore any message directing them to link up or enter their login details, as well as choices made during their online registration. Please do not pay money for NYSC posting.

V-C RECONSTITUTES LOCAL ACCREDITATION C'TTEE

Professor Julian Osuji of the Department of Plant Science and Biotechnology, Faculty of Science, has been appointed Chairman of the University-Wide Local Accreditation Committee (UWLAC). The appointment which takes immediate effect is until further notice.

Other members of the Committee are as follows:

1. Prof. Ogonna Joel -Faculty of Engineering
2. Prof. E.C Wokoma -Faculty of Agriculture
3. Prof. H.B. Fawehinmi -Faculty of Basic Medical Sciences
4. Prof. F.O.Shaka -Faculty of Humanities
5. Prof. S.O. Oluwuo -Faculty of Education
6. Prof. B.F. Nwinee -Faculty of Management Sciences
7. Dr. Peter Kpolovie -Academic Planning, Research and Control Unit
8. Dr. P. Aziagba -Library

The Registrar is to appoint a Secretary to the Committee.

The Committee's Terms of Reference (TOR), include advising Management on matters of accreditation, liaising with Faculties/Departments with respect to preparation for accreditation exercises, liaising with relevant organs of the University and external organizations for purposes of acquiring information with respect to matters of accreditation, to submit regular reports where necessary to Senate through the Vice-Chancellor and any other relevant issues not covered above.

Valentine: A Festival Of Obscenities

By Williams Wodi

For some inexplicable reasons, we allowed the Valentine's Day to pass off quietly this year in our newsroom. Not even the young ladies in their early marriages remembered the crazy love festival that brings the city to a standstill on February 14 each year. The men couldn't be bothered either. This piece would, therefore, never have been written, but for some strange happenings that fouled up Cupid's designated day.

In our dot.com age, love is an illusion. The concept of loving and being loved has been shamelessly commercialized in a utilitarian society that worships wealth and manufactured fame. So, are the millions, who engage in the endless motion of expressing love on February 14 each year mere dreamers or genuinely in love? The answer is blowing in the air, but a certain musician warns us not to fall in love with dreamers—yes, lovers are starry-eyed dreamers.

The first incident that motivated this piece was a stormy outrage that resulted in a *fatwa* issued by some Pakistani Mullahs against the celebration of Valentine's Day in that strict Islamic country. The bearded Mullahs had declared the Day as an imported western profanity that should no longer be celebrated in a strict Islamic setting. They went ahead to decree horrendous punishment against any true follower of Prophet Mohammed who failed to follow the austere prescriptions of Islam on February 14.

One irreverent woman who railed from behind her black veil, declared Valentine an embarrassing anachronism in an Islamic society, where people should be fully preoccupied with their *Koran*, rather than pandering to a sinful hedonistic cultural practice that has no place in a theocratic setting. Love, she further argued, should be on display every day, and not on a particular day. Another zealot advised adventurous young Pakistanis to go to their *Madrasa* schools to memorise the Holy Book, rather than seeking momentary pleasure on the streets. These threats were real because you could suffer a cruel death for sundry reasons in countries with names that end with ...*stan*, including if your beard was not long and scruffy enough. Women could be stoned to death for refusing to totally disappear behind the veil.

Another incident was the stone-age cruelty visited on a male admirer, who was beaten black and blue for daring to tell a female army officer that she looked beautiful on Val's Day. The vengeful female officer simply mistook the complement as a sarcastic way of mocking at her evident ugliness. The poor admirer instantly learnt the difference between beauty and the beast on the streets of Lagos. The third coincidence was the appointment of a Minister for *Happiness* and yet another for *Tolerance* by the ruler of the United Arab Emirate in the build-up to Cupid's Day. Don't ask me their job descriptions.

Churches did not fail to respond to the anticipatory wayward ways of their younger members on February 14. They hurriedly packaged programmes aimed at keeping them in the church while the madness lasted on the streets. For instance, my own Chaplain, the cerebral Venerable Saturday Nbeta, emblazoned an eye-turning banner right at the entrance into the premises of *Our Saviour's Chapel*, Interdenominational targeted at the vulnerable members of his Congregation right here on Campus. The invitation message on the flex banner was very explicit: “Sex is good...but”. He did not fail to promise a mouth-watering “suya nite” to his younger parishioners, who yelled approvingly as he prepared to say the benediction.

Other roadside churches took the matter to aridulous level that does not merit further commentary here. Never mind what happened after the romantic prayer sessions,

including the sad confession of a 'Pastor', who admitted to raping an under-aged female parishioner in the heat of Valentine prayer and revelation sessions. The 'Man of God' was straight-talking enough to totally exonerate the 'devil' from his amorous liaison.

Sharp divisions have since emerged as to the propriety or otherwise of the yearly sentimental moment of madness. The social media weighed in by devising every trick in the book to satisfy the cravings of a high tech-savvy generation that is drunk on emotional oxygen. Smitten by Cupid's arrow, the social media has progressively revolutionized the interactive capacity of Nigerian youths on an unimaginable scale. Today, love is a cheap commodity that is on offer for a fee at the stock exchange.

Crazy dress codes the left little (in some cases nothing) to the imagination defined the last Valentine's Day. Some Love-struck ladies had too many “special ones” by their side on that red and pink day. there was simply no method in this raging madness that inexplicably ceased the imagination of young people, including some oldies suffering from infantile regression. Making outlandish fashion statement was taken out of this world.

In a meltdown *change* economy, passionate gift items came in measured little packages that spoke volumes about the dwindling sizes of most pockets. Gifts of scented red roses packaged in attractive wrappings are fast losing their fascination with the ladies, who now insist on a measurable material statement on Val's Day as a classic symbol of love. Inexperienced star-struck teenagers spoke the language of love in wild action that was out of synch with the puritanical motivation of the Patron Saint of Love in the Roman Empire.

The original fairy tale took root in the Roman Empire about 279 AD under Emperor Claudius II, who didn't want men in his expensive kingdom to marry like himself.

He was afraid that coital bliss would weaken their ability to defend Rome. Claudius had his own wife though, including numerous concubines that attended to his insatiable romantic appetite. Wholesale hypocrisy? Yes: Enter Bishop Valentine, who called the Emperor's bluff by arranging



CLAUDIUS
41-54AD

secret weddings. Well, the defiant Bishop got into big trouble with the mighty Emperor, who decreed a jail term to punish such an infraction. Restless in jail, the Bishop wrote a “love letter” to the daughter of his jailer; signing off with: “Your Valentine”. The Emperor couldn't take such an effrontery; Valentine had to be put to a cruel death on February 14.

Till date lovers wear red on Val's Day to signify the blood that was spilled in defense of love. Valentine's Day would have quietly passed off, but for King Henry VII of England, who elevated the martyred Bishop to the Patron Saint of Love and declared Valentine's Day a Public Holiday in 1537.

So then, “What's Love Got to Do with It?”, as Tina Turner famously asked her fans. Sam Cooke's hit record: “*Cupid*” graphically summarises the plight of lovers on Valentine's Day:

Cupid, please hear my cry

And let your arrow fly

Straight to my lover's heart for me...

There's danger of me losing all my happiness

For I love a girl who doesn't know I exist

I rest my case folks. A very belated Val's Day.



38th CHS Induction Ceremony

A total of 50 Medical Doctors and three Dental Surgeons took the Physicians' Oath at the 38th Induction Ceremony of the College of Health Sciences, University of Port Harcourt, held at the Ebitimi Banigo Auditorium on Thursday, January 21, 2016. Our Cameraman, MITCHEL EBI-EKIYOR captured the pictorial highlights as shown below:



Principal Officers and other guests rise for National and UniPort Anthem



DV-C, Admin, Prof Anthony Ibe reading the V-C's speech



Provost, CHS, Prof Christie Mato, welcoming guests to the induction



Representative of Registrar of MDCN, Dr, Mandah Chijioke, performing the Oath-taking ceremony



DV-C, Admin, Prof Ibe, having a handshake with one of the new Doctors



Chief Medical Doctor of UPTH, Prof Aaron Ojule, advising the new Doctors



5th V-C, Emeritus Prof Nimi Briggs, giving his goodwill message



The new Medical and Dental Surgeons taking the Physicians' Oath



Some of the Doctors affirming the physicians' Oath



A cross-section of parents, guardians and relatives at the event