

W'Bank Assessor Commends UniPort ACEs, Seeks Programmes Sustainability

By Letom Nnen and Williams Wodi
with Awajimoroiso Ekprikpo (Intern)

A World Bank Subject Matter Expert, Professor Gikiri Thuo, has commended the impressive accomplishments of the Africa Centre of Excellence in Oilfield Chemicals Research (ACE-CEFOR), calling for its

sustainability beyond the Bank's grants-making window. Professor Thuo made the commendation during an evaluation and impact review meeting of the Centre on the entire University.

Professor Thuo spoke when the ACE-CEFOR Centre Leader, Professor

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Minister of Communication and Digital Economy, Dr Isa Ali Ibrahim Pantami, has commissioned the Information Communication Technology Innovation and Incubation Park in the University of Port Harcourt. The building, which was commissioned on Tuesday, December 17, 2019, was donated to the University by the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) for use by the Centre for Information and Telecommunication Engineering (CITE) under the NITDA-2019 Intervention Project.

Speaking before commissioning the storey building, Dr Pantami recalled that the project commenced during his tenure as Director-General of NITDA, with his successor, Mr Kashifu Inuwa Abdullahi as his Technical Assistant at the time. The Minister disclosed that there are two of such intervention projects in Nigeria, one in the North with the other in the South. He added that the University of Port Harcourt was chosen for the project because of its strategic location in the South-South zone of the country.

"It gives me great pleasure to be here to commission this building, which is our modest contribution to the development of Telecommunication Engineering and Information Technology research in the University of Port Harcourt and higher institutions in this zone. Emerging telecommunication technology is one important area that Nigeria needs to be a

Minister Commissions NITDA Telecoms Engr Building In UniPort

By Humphrey Ogu

major player in the digital economy. If we successfully tap into this promising technology, by the time other countries wake up, Nigeria would be parading skilled manpower in digital technology to refloat its economy," he said.

"I wish to commend the Management of the University and the leadership of CITE for their wonderful synergy in the execution of the building that would house the Centre. I am pleased to know that this Centre has recorded so much

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VC Commissions New Lecture Hall Initiated By LCS Dept

By Otokor Samuel

Barely two years after laying the foundation stone for a 500-capacity lecture hall initiated by the Acting Head of the Department of Linguistics and Communication Studies, Dr Baridisi Isaac, the project has been commissioned for use. The self-help project which was completed in concert with students and other stakeholders in the affairs of the Department was commissioned on Friday, December 6, 2019 by the Vice Chancellor, Professor Ndowaale, who led other Principal Officers to the ceremony.

Speaking before he commissioned the building, Professor Ndimiele described the new lecture hall as a legacy project that has added to the University's landscape as part of his administration's success story. The leadership of the Department pleaded with Management to name the new building after world renowned linguist and philanthropist, Professor Kay Williamson of blessed memory.

"The realisation of this important project shows the unity that exists among staff and students of the Department of Linguistics and Communication Studies. When people are united in their vision, achieving a common purpose becomes easy, even in a resource poor environment like ours. I want to thank the students and the Acting Head of the Department for initiating this laudable project. Let me also thank one of our own, the Vice Chancellor of Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Professor Ozoemeki Ndimiele, for making generous contributions towards the completion of the project and for also promising to interlock the front view of the building," the Vice Chancellor remarked.

In his speech, Professor Ndimiele, who chaired the occasion, expressed satisfaction with the timely completion of the project. "I am glad to be back to my beloved Department to be part of the commissioning ceremony of this lecture hall today. I decided to personally grace this event, despite the fact that it is coming a day before our Convocation ceremony. My presence here is a show of the love I have for my Department and my beloved *alma mater*, the University of Port Harcourt. Let me thank my Acting Head of



VC, Prof Ndimiele, supported by his IAUoE counterpart, Prof Ndimiele (right), Registrar, Mrs Dorcas Otto (left) cutting the tape. Inset: The new Lecture Hall

Department for this wonderful initiative designed to create a more enabling learning environment for our students. When he approached me to support this initiative, I told him that it was going to cost a huge sum of money. I am happy that the project has finally been realised and is ready to be put into use for the benefit of our students," Professor Ndimiele said. He promised to provide solar energy to power facilities and interlock the front view of the building.

Also speaking, Dean of the Faculty of Humanities, Professor Femi Shaka, noted that the Acting Head of Department had initiated many projects in the Department through self-help efforts. Describing Dr Isaac as the *Doyen of HoDs* in the Faculty, the Dean advised other departmental heads in the Faculty and University to emulate the commendable example of the LCS helmsman.

In his address, Dr Isaac, disclosed that the idea to build the hall was conceived in 2017 during the tenure of

erstwhile President of the Linguistics and Communication Studies Students Association (LINCOMSSA), Godswill Peter.

"It is worthy of note that we completed this project in less than two years, while the actual ground-breaking ceremony was performed by our Dean on November 24, 2017. Construction work commenced on January 4, 2018 and the project was completed in August 2019," the Acting Head of Department recalled. He thanked the Vice Chancellor for allocating the parcel of land to the Department and for providing seats for the building. Goodwill messages were presented by Professor Philomena Ejele and Deputy Registrar (Information), Williams Wodi, including Charles Ito-Obong, who spoke on behalf of the students. The ceremony featured award presentations by the students to the Vice Chancellors of UniPort and IAUoE, Professors Ndimiele and Ndimiele, Dean, Faculty of Humanities, Professor Shaka, Dr Isaac, and Peter, including one of the Department's benefactors, Mr David Osuagwu.



VC, Prof Ndimiele (arrowed) flanked by Bursar, Dr Ayuwo (right), Resource Persons and Bursary Staff

In its determined bid to further equip relevant Line Officers with the right set of skills in public sector accounting, the Bursary Department mounted a two-day workshop on International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) Accrual Basis on Wednesday, December 18, 2019. The training held at the World Bank ACE-CEFOR Hall at the IPS Park. The event was organised by Adilfam Resources Nigeria with Eddy Ette and Company Chartered Accountants as key resource firm.

Declaring open the workshop which kick-started on Tuesday, December 17, 2019, the Vice Chancellor, Professor Ndowaale, commended the resource persons for accepting to share their wealth of experience with staff of the Bursary Department. He also commended the participants for availing themselves of the opportunity offered by the workshop to update their knowledge on new trends in public sector accounting profession. Professor Ndimiele charged them to make proper use of the knowledge they gained from the workshop.

"This home grown training is very important to staff of the Bursary Department. This is because many staff erroneously believe that training programmes are important and worth attending only when they are taken outside the country. In today's digital setting, we don't need to travel abroad to acquire new skills. I have ensured that things are done properly under my watch and this training is part of our capacity building programme," Professor Ndimiele told the participants, advising them to

apply what they were taught in their job performance.

Addressing participants that comprised Heads of Unit, Finance Officers and other key personnel of the Department with the theme: *Fostering the Application of IPSAS and e-Bursary Solution System*, the Bursar, Dr Felicia Ayuwo, commended the Vice Chancellor, Professor Ndowaale for approving the training. "We delayed this workshop to enable us source the right set of resource persons that would adequately train our staff. The essence of this training is to keep the staff of Bursary Department abreast of emerging trends in International Public Sector Accounting (IPSAS) Accrual Basis," Dr Ayuwo told participants.

In his presentation, one of the resource persons from Eddy Ette and Company Chartered Accountants, Mr Emmanuel Kayode, described Fair Value as "the amount for which an asset could be settled between knowledgeable and willing partners in an arm's length transaction." He described the primary issue in accounting for revenue as determining when to recognise

revenue. Mr Kayode further recommended that cut-off revenue should be accounted for in the period it relates in line with proper accounting procedures.

Bursary Dept Trains Line Officers On IPSAS Accrual Basis

By Letom Nnen

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Ogbonna Joel led him and the Subject Desk Officer at the National Universities Commission, Mrs Patricia Eromosele, on a courtesy visit to the Vice Chancellor, Professor Ndowa Lale on Friday, December 20, 2019.

"We have observed certain admirable things going on here that can serve as models for other Africa Centres of Excellence. We saw buildings, properly equipped e-libraries and many other achievements that have made the ACEs here good examples for others on the continent. I am hoping that there would be sustainability beyond the World Bank support. We are challenging you because we know that this University has the installed capacity to do more than you are doing at the moment," Professor Thuuo told the Vice Chancellor. He called for participation of more female staff and students in the leadership hierarchy of the two ACEs.

Responding to some of the concerns raised by the evaluation team, the Vice Chancellor, Professor Ndowa Lale, explained that the University was already in the process of fashioning out functional modalities and partnerships to sustain the ACEs beyond the World Bank sponsorship. "I can assure you that we are making frantic efforts to sustain the ACE-CEFOR and the new Africa Centre of Excellence in Public Health and Toxicological Research (ACE-PUTOR). We are already improving their activities beyond the World Bank's recommended benchmarks. For instance, the ACE-CEFOR has acquired international certification which has added to the quality of instructions on offer there. Despite the strike actions that occasionally cripple academic activities in Nigerian Universities, programmes offered at the two Centres have never been affected, a factor that has enabled the students to graduate in record time. We are already in liaison with relevant industry players to sponsor students in the form of grants, scholarships and endowments. Some major companies and government agencies are donating

W'Bank Assessor Commends UniPort ACEs



VC, Prof Lale (clockwise), Centre Leader, Prof Joel, his Assistant, Prof Etela, QAQC Director, Prof Agbagwa, Deputy Registrar (Info), Wodi, NUC Subject Desk Officer, Mrs Eromosele and Assessor

buildings and equipment to our Centres and Institutes. Just recently, the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA), donated a fully-equipped building that has strengthened our graduate programmes in Telecommunications Engineering and Information Technology. Italian oil giant, Agip has promised to make some donations to the University, while an indigenous firm, Belema Oil, has already donated a hostel to us," the Vice Chancellor disclosed. Earlier, Professor Joel who is also Dean of the Faculty of Engineering, had described the ACE-CEFOR as a high performing Centre of Excellence that is living up to the high benchmarks of the World Bank. "We have graduated over 50 doctoral candidates since we opened our doors to students from all over Africa. We have been lucky to have full support from the Management of the University. We are drivers for sub-Saharan Africa in ACE

manpower development on Oilfield Chemicals Research and this fact has been acknowledged by many of our stakeholders. Over 60 internationally-rated Professors and experts supervise our students, with very robust industry synergy that has enabled us to use their cutting-edge facilities for high-impact research. Our success in CEFOR has given birth to the new ACE-PUTOR." Professor Joel told the assessment team.

The Deputy Registrar, (Information), Williams Wodi, gave the visitors an abridged history and achievements of the Centre and the University at large. Also in attendance were the ACE-CEFOR Assistant Director, Professor Ibisime Etela, the Director of Quality Assurance and Quality Control, Professor Ikechukwu Agbagwa and the Special Assistant to the Vice Chancellor, Mr Kingsley Wogwu.

Registrar Commends, Charges Faculty Officers On Enhanced Productivity

By Mercy Adeniji
and Letom Nnen

The Registrar, Mrs Dorcas Otto, has commended Faculty Officers for their uncommon dedication to duty in their various Faculties and the University at large. She encouraged them to position themselves for enhanced service delivery in the coming year to justify the continued existence of the Forum. Speaking during the 2019 End-of-Year get-together organised by the Forum at the Governing Council Chambers on Friday, December 6, 2019, Mrs Otto expressed gratitude to God for a successful year. She expressed gratitude to members for their contributions towards the growth of the Registry Department and the University at large.

"I am privileged to evaluate the outstanding performances of our Faculty Officers in the field and I can tell you that the University community deeply appreciates the leadership roles you play in our various Faculties and I am proud that you have held forth so far. Let me thank you all for your contributions and hope that you would return in the 2020 to do even more. I wish to remind us that what we have been doing is part of our preparation for greater responsibilities in future. It is, therefore, important that we continue to sharpen our skills on the job, because learning never ends, especially in a University environment. I wish you all a Merry Christmas and resounding success in all you do in the coming year," the Registrar told the officers. Also speaking, Chairman of the Forum and Deputy Registrar (Academic Affairs), Dr Agatha Ataga,

commended the Registrar for her unique leadership style and for creating a conducive environment for members of the Forum to operate. Dr Ataga assured the Registrar that they would continue to put in their best to support her in the performance of her official functions.

In his presentation entitled: *Coping with Stress*, a Lecturer in the Department of Human Physiology, Dr Chibuike Obiandu, described stress as a type of reaction the human body goes through under pressure. He told the gathering that stress could cause the victim to act in strange ways, warning that it could ultimately lead to death in extreme cases. Dr Obiandu recommended that staff should engage in regular exercises, positive thinking and continuous self-development, including healthy eating, as basic stress-coping strategies.

A major highpoint of the get-together was the presentation of gift items to Mrs Otto and some outstanding officers for their dedicated services to the Forum and the University.



Registrar, Mrs Otto (arrowed), flanked by the Faculty Officers

CELTRAS, ATUSCO Train Campus Shuttle Drivers On Safe Driving Skills

By Ethel Timi-Johnson

The Centre for Logistics and Transport Studies in concert with campus shuttle operator, ATUSCO Investment Limited, has ended a two-day training programme for drivers who ply the various routes in the University.

Declaring open the training which held at the CELTRAS office at the University Park on Thursday, November 28, 2019, Deputy Vice Chancellor (Administration), Professor Regina Ogali, regretted that most shuttle drivers had refused to abide by the approved traffic regulations and plying only designated routes. She described the training as very important as it would expose the drivers to modern driving skills.

"As human beings, we need to learn new things on a daily basis to update our knowledge pool and I believe you will learn from this training programme. Don't just be in attendance to fulfil all righteousness, but try to take away something that would help to protect you and other road users in and outside the campus. This training is useful because it would differentiate you from other commercial drivers outside the University; it is also good for the drivers, our staff and students. There must be sanity on our campus after this training," she told the drivers, expressing hope that over-speeding and other unsafe driving practices would end after the training.

In her address, Acting Director of CELTRAS, Dr Gladys Emenike, disclosed that the training was organised to expose the drivers to traffic rules and regulations in the

operation of campus shuttle services. "We mounted this training programme because times have changed and the drivers must likewise change with the times in their business operations in this University. Driving techniques of the 1950s are not the same as the driving skills required of drivers today. It is my belief that after this training, the University will see visible changes in the driving skills of drivers who ply campus routes," Dr Emenike remarked.

In his remarks, Chairman of ATUSCO Investment Company Limited, Mr Levi Atuzie, noted that the maiden training programme was designed to restore sanity in the operation of the University shuttle system. "I am very confident that the benefits of this exercise would be multi-dimensional to both the drivers and our customers who are mainly staff and students. I, therefore, plead with the Management of the University to approve that this training programme be organised on a regular basis to keep campus drivers abreast of standard driving practices and ethics, especially in a very sensitive environment such as

the University community," he said. Mr Atuzie promised that the drivers would comply with approved loading and discharging points to ensure free flow of traffic on campus. In his presentation entitled: *Causes, Effects and Prevention of Road Traffic Crashes*, Mr Michael John of the Rivers State Route Commander of the Federal Road Safety Corps, described road traffic accidents as major causes of deaths, injuries and damage to property. He noted that human factor accounted for 90 percent of road crashes, blaming drivers for overloading, over-confidence, over-speeding, loss of concentration, fatigue and driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs. "As preventive measures, drivers should obey traffic rules and regulation to stay alive; and ensure that their vehicles meet minimum safety standards," he advised.

In the second presentation, National President of the Driving School Association of Nigeria, Jide Owatunmise, stressed the need for drivers to understand that a university environment comprised mainly young people with habits that could distract them from proper concentration while using the roads. He also stressed the need for the drivers to be safety conscious to ensure maximum protection of lives and property. Highpoint of the training was the presentation of certificates to participants at the end of the exercise.



DVC (Admin), Prof Ogali (arrowed), Resource Persons and participants

Belema Oil Donates Hostel To CHS, Usmanu Danfodiyo Varsity

By Humphrey Ogu

Indigenous oil servicing giant, Belema Oil Producing Limited has extended its trademark philanthropy to the University of Port Harcourt with the donation of a hostel project valued at N32, 505,019.23. As a mark of its seriousness, a cheque for the proposed hostel project has already been handed over to the Contracting firm, Kobahitein Nigeria Limited for the immediate commencement of construction work. The handover ceremony took place at the company's Port Harcourt head office on Friday, December 13, 2019. Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto State, also received a cheque for N44, 852,019.75.

In his opening remarks, Director of Production and Engineering of Belema Oil, Mr Mufaa Welsh, who spoke on behalf of the President/Founder of Belema Oil, Dr Tein Jack-Rich Jr, said: "I want to appreciate and welcome you to our head office in Port Harcourt for the official signing of the contract for the commencement of the hostel projects in the two benefitting universities. We

operate on a community-based model that is inclusive and sensitive to the interest of all stakeholders in and outside our operational area," Welsh said.

Also speaking, Vice President of the company, Dr Emmanuel Bekee, who is an alumnus of UniPort, expressed hope that the Contractors would meet the construction deadline and adhere to the standards specified in the contract papers. "Let me assure you that Belema Oil will closely monitor the progress of the project to ensure that all parties meet the schedule and high standards of our company. As you benefit from our donations, we expect you to also tell others what Belema Oil is doing in pursuit of its Corporate Social Responsibility to society," he added.

Responding to the philanthropic gesture, the Vice Chancellor, Professor Ndowa Iale, congratulated Belema Oil for growing so rapidly in so short a time of its existence. Represented by the Provost of the College of Health Sciences, Professor Iyepu Siminialayi, the Vice Chancellor commended the indigenous oil giant for its robust Corporate Social Responsibility practice.

"I don't think that there is anybody living in Rivers State who is not aware of what Belema Oil is doing to uplift our people in diverse ways. A few months ago, we applied to your company for assistance to increase hostel accommodation for our students and reduce the insecurity that comes with living off-campus. We are grateful that you responded very quickly and positively to our request. This donation will address many of the accommodation problems we face in the College of Health Sciences. We hope that this donation would mark a robust institutional relationship with Belema Oil Producing Limited," Professor Siminialayi hoped.

The Registrar, Mrs Dorcas Otto, was represented at the presentation ceremony by the Director of Personnel Affairs, Dr Dakoru Charles-Granville. Other members of the UniPort delegation included the Director of Physical Planning and Development, Mr Michael Ubom and Deputy Provost of the College of Health Sciences, Professor Angela Frank-Briggs.



A group photograph of delegates from UniPort, Usmanu Danfodiyo University and Belema Oil

447th Senate Meeting 2019

Senate Approves New Programmes, Second Semester Results

...As 37 Senior Academics Join Professoriate

By Otikor Samuel

Senate of the University has approved new doctorate degree programmes for the Centres for Logistics and Transport Studies (CELTRAS), Information and Telecommunication Engineering (CITE), Conflict and Gender Studies (CCGS), and Disaster Risk Management and Development Studies (CDRMDS), respectively.

The new approvals would empower CELTRAS to run the doctorate degree programme in Transportation Management/Logistics and Supply Chain, in addition to the Master of Science degree programme in Transportation Management/Planning and Postgraduate Diploma in Transportation and Logistics Management.

The Chairman, Professor Ndowa Lale, announced the promotion of 37 senior academics to the rank of professor across the disciplines. He urged the newly promoted professors to attend Senate Meetings, give academic leadership and mentorship to younger colleagues and students at all levels of the academia.

Senate granted the Centre for Conflict and Gender Studies approval to run the doctorate degree programme in Gender and Development Studies. The CDRMDS will commence the doctorate degree programme in Disaster Risk Management and Development Studies, while CITE will run a doctorate degree programme in Information and Communication Engineering, in addition to a novel Master of Science degree programme in Intelligence Control and Instrumentation Engineering.

The Offshore Technology Institute (OTI) was similarly granted approval to run the Master of Science degree in Energy Access and Renewal Energy Technology. The School of Public Health also received approval to run four

447th Senate in session

new Master of Science degree programmes in Community Health, Occupational Medicine, Public Health Nutrition, Health Promotion and Communication, and the Executive Master of Public Health (MPH), including the Postgraduate Diploma in Community Health.

The approvals were part of the decisions reached by the apex academic regulatory body at the 447th Extraordinary Meeting of Senate which held on Wednesday, December 18, 2019 at the Senate Chambers. The Meeting was presided over by the Chairman of Senate, Professor Ndowa Lale.

Senate also approved a request to merge the Biomedical Laboratory Technology and Physiology/Pharmacology Laboratory options in the School of Science Laboratory

Technology. It also granted a request for change of name from Microbiology/Virology Technology to Microbiology Technology. Senate further granted a request to change the acronym for the Master of Science Laboratory Technology programme from M.S.L.T to M.Tech.

It approved a proposal for the modification of the Master of Science degree programme at the Centre for Occupational Health, Safety and Environment (COHSE), formerly known as Environmental Technology and Management (ETM) now to be known as Environment and Safety (ENS). Senate also approved the modification of the Master of Science degree programme in Occupational Health and Safety and directed that the two programmes should be run on the Part-time mode of studies. Senate approved the change of nomenclature of the Postgraduate programme offered by the Centre for Public Health and Toxicological Research (PUTOR) from the PGD in Fertility Nursing Education to PGD in Fertility Nursing.

In his briefing, the Chairman of Senate, Professor Lale announced the reappointment of Professors Henry Alapiki, Iheanacho Akakuru and Morufu Oyebamiji as Executive Director of the University of Port Harcourt Foundation, Directors of the Exchange and Linkage Programmes Unit and Institute of Education, respectively. The Chairman also announced the appointment of Professor Oghonna Joel as new Dean of the Faculty of Engineering and reappointment of Professor Best Ordiniho as Associate Dean of the Faculty of Clinical Sciences. Newly promoted Professor Rosemary Ogu was appointed Chairman of the Sexual Harassment Committee, while petroleum industry guru, Dr Jude Amaefule was appointed Chairman of the Governing Board of Emerald Energy Institute.

Other appointments announced by the Vice Chancellor included those of Drs Balafama Alex-Hart and Dennis Eme as Acting Directors of the Institute of Maternal and Child Health and Centre for Geotechnical and Coastal Engineering Research, respectively. Drs Otu Ekenyong, Stanley Ukwueze and Desmond Nbete were reappointed as Acting Dean of Student Affairs Department, Associate Dean of the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences and Acting Director of Academic Planning, Research and Control Unit, while Drs Alwell Nteeghe and Kiale Nyiayaana were appointed Assistant Directors of Emerald Energy Institute and Centre for Conflict and Gender Studies in that order.

Drs Nkoyo Ituen, Ephraim Elenwo and Hyacinth Nwankwoala, were appointed Acting Heads of Department of Chemical Pathology, Geography and Environmental Management and Department of Geology, respectively.

Senate rectified results approved executively by the Vice Chancellor and other new results from the Faculties of Agriculture, Education, Engineering, Humanities, Law, Management Sciences, Pharmaceutical Sciences, Science and Social Sciences, including the School of Science Laboratory Technology, College of Health Sciences and School of Graduate Studies.

Senate had directed affected Departments to submit all outstanding results on or before the close of work on Friday, December 20, 2019. It further directed that the last Semester results must be uploaded latest January 10, 2020. The Chairman expressed gratitude to members of Senate for their sense of duty, especially in supporting a smooth academic session in 2019, wishing them a more productive 2020.

Prepare For Big Opportunities, Google Facilitator Charges Basic Students

By Mercy Adeniji

Students in the Basic Studies programme have been charged to leverage on available digital opportunities offered by online search engine giant Google to enhance reading and learning in their various subject matters to excel in their studies.

Speaking during an event organised by the Basic Studies Unit which aimed at exposing students to the limitless possibilities offered by the search engine giant on Saturday, December 14, 2019, Google Digital Skills Facilitator from Growth Tribe Africa, Tope Adeosun, commended the leadership of the Basic Studies Unit for the opportunity to interact with students of the University. "Google is here to train students in the Basic Studies programme on how to take advantage of the digital economy to enhance their career choices. In this age, it is not just what you studied in school that would launch you; rather, you need to learn Google digital skills to enable you fit into the new global economy and society. Google has trained over 10 million people across Africa with the stated goal of helping close the digital knowledge gap on the continent, improved

employability and job creation since this programme began in 2017. If you don't want to remain jobless, you must learn digital skills," Adeosun tasked the students. Earlier in her remarks, Director of the Basic Studies Unit, Professor Ekanem Wokoma, commended the students for embracing the programme *en-mass*. She disclosed that the essence of the event was to prepare the students for future careers. "I am happy at this opportunity for our students to train with Google skills. It is a rare opportunity for them to learn from Google experts who have a lot to offer our students. It is important for students to know what Google can offer them through the various available packages," the Director said.

Also speaking, Assistant Director of the Unit, Dr Joseph Amiebibama, disclosed that "at the Basic Studies Unit, we are out to give our students the best with support from the Management of the University. This programme will hopefully complement what we are already doing in the Unit to equip our students with requisite knowledge and digital skills that would enable them to perform well in their academics."

Prof Ekanem (3rd left), her Assistant, Dr Amiebibama, Google team members and others

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accomplishments within such a brief period of its establishment in the University. This laudable collaboration between the University, Industry and Government is the way to go as we embrace the new digital economy that is generating wealth and prosperity for people in other parts of the world," the Minister said.

On his part, the new NITDA Director-General, Mr Abdullahi, noted that the Federal Government has identified Information and Communication Technology as a major driver of its reform and economic diversification agenda. "I want to urge the Management of the University to ensure that the building is put into good use to justify the investment made by NITDA here. It is my hope that this partnership would serve as an effective bridge between the academia and industry players with a view to creating opportunities for youths in the emerging digital economy," he added.

Earlier in his welcome address, the Vice Chancellor, Professor Ndowa Lale, described the speedy completion of the project as an indication of total commitment on the part of NITDA and the Contractor, Messrs Oakland Construction Company Ltd. Said he: "Our gratitude knows no bounds today as we commission this important building in this University, which marks a double celebration for us—the appointment of the erstwhile Director General of NITDA as a Minister and commissioning of the building today.

"With the realisation of this project, we are certain that the Memorandum of Understanding between the University of Port Harcourt and NITDA on the commencement of the Master of Science Scholarship Scheme, which is expected to take effect from the 2020/2021 academic session, is already in accelerated motion. This potentially lucrative enterprise is a novel development that has, once again, proved the capacity of the University of Port Harcourt to break new grounds in line with its core mandate of teaching, research and public service," he added.

Minister Commissions Telecoms Engr Building



Minister of Communication and Digital Economy, Dr Pantami (4th right), flanked by NITDA DG, Mr Abdullahi (right), VC, Prof Lale (left) and Principal Officers of the University. Inset: NITDA building

Also speaking, Acting Director of CITE, Dr Bourdillon Omijeh, expressed gratitude to the Minister of Communication and Digital Economy, Dr Pantami, and the Management of NITDA for approving the donation. He recalled that CITE was established on January 29, 2014 to train requisite personnel to harness the limitless benefits of the emergent digital economy. He added that the Centre was already running the Master of Science degree and Postgraduate Diploma programme in Information and Telecommunication Engineering. He listed recruitment and training of high level manpower in Telecommunication Engineering, building a Centre of

Excellence in ICT, and bridging the skills gap between industry and the academia, as some of the core mandates of the CITE.

Dignitaries who delivered goodwill messages at the event included the Seventh Vice Chancellor, Professor Joseph Ajenka, Co-ordinator of the World Bank Africa Centres of Excellence in Oilfield Chemicals Research (CEFOR), and Dean of the Faculty of Engineering, Professor Ogbonna Joel, including the Coordinator of the World Bank Africa Centres of Excellence in the University, Professor Onyewuchi Akaranta.

UniPort Elevates 37 Academics To Professoriate

By Otokor Samuel and Williams Wodi

The University of Port Harcourt has elevated 37 senior academics to the rank of professor. Those promoted were made to pass through the very stringent criteria set up by the Senate of the University for the promotion of academics to the professoriate. The promotions were approved at the 171st Meeting of the

Others included: Rosemary Ogu (Obstetrics and Gynaecology), Ngozi Iheanacho (Religious and Cultural Studies), Lucky Onotai (ENT Surgery) Ngozi Okeke (Surgery), Kennedy Wariso (Medical Microbiology), Betty-Ruth Iruloh (Educational Psychology), Uche Chineze (Educational Management), Zabbey Nenibarini (Fisheries), Folasade Ajayi (Animal Science), Leton Akinola (Animal Science), Emmanuel Obuah (History

and Diplomatic Studies), Eugenia Mbanefo (Linguistics), Aniefiok Udoudo (Linguistics and Communication Studies), Kilipoye Aaron (Political and Administrative Studies), Caroline Mbonu (Religious and Cultural Studies), Francis Minimah (Philosophy), Olufemi Omitola (Oral Pathology and Biology), Chidiebere Ugwu (Computer Science), Helen Imafidor (Animal and Environmental Biology), Regina Onwuchekwa (Radiology), Dele Adegboke (Foreign Languages and Literatures) and Solomon Larinde (Forestry and Wildlife).

A further breakdown of the promotion exercise shows that seven of the new professors are from the Faculty of Humanities, Faculty of Social Sciences got one, Faculty of Science has four, Faculty of Education got two, while the Faculty of Engineering added one professor. Others are: Faculty of Agriculture has seven; Faculty of Clinical Sciences got twelve, while the Faculty of Dentistry added three new professors to its ranks.

Congratulating the newly promoted professors, the Vice Chancellor urged them to be prepared to take on added academic and administrative responsibilities in their various Faculties and the University. "Having attained this enviable height in your academic pursuit, we expect you to give academic leadership and be regular in Senate Meetings. You are expected to be in the forefront of teaching, research and public service, and mentor younger academics and students," Professor Lale charged the newly promoted professors.



Prof Mwendaga Jibo, Pro Chancellor



Prof Lale, VC

Governing Council of the University which held on Tuesday, December 10, 2019.

Vice Chancellor, Professor Ndowa Lale announced the promotion of 37 senior academics to the professoriate at the 447th Senate Meeting held on Wednesday, December 18, 2019. Those promoted are: Babatunde Nuga (Crop and Soil Science), Sunday Ikiensikimama (Petroleum Engineering), Charles Tobin-West (Preventive and Social Medicine), Ngozi Orazulike (Obstetrics and Gynaecology), Chinyere Pedro-Egbe (Ophthalmology Surgery), Olamimeji Akadiri (Maxillofacial Surgery), Mary Iwundu (Mathematics/Statistics), Innocent George (Paediatrics and Child Health), Omobolanle Adio (Surgery), John Ojule (Obstetrics and Gynaecology), Gabriel Oladipo (Human Anatomy), Eka Essien (Biochemistry), Udensi Udensi (Crop and Soil Science), Henry Ijeomah (Forestry & Wildlife) and Abiodun Arigbede (Restorative Dentistry).

REPORT SEXUAL HARASSMENT TODAY

Have you ever been harassed or blackmailed by sexual predators? Did you feel abandoned and left to live through the experience in silence? Did you feel vulnerable and powerless before a "powerful" official? The *Steering Committee on Sexual Harassment* will give you justice under strict confidential cover. All sexual predators will be identified, named and shamed. Don't keep quiet! Report all unwanted cases of sexual advances to the Committee. Be bold! We are here to help you to regain your dignity.

Call our help line: 08164120009, 07010300350. Email: uniportshresponse@gmail.com
Join us to end sexual harassment today!

GUIDE POST

APPOINTMENT

Professor Julie Umukoro, Department of Theatre and Film Studies, Faculty of Humanities appointed *Focal Officer for Goals, Model Research Initiative Workshop*. The appointment which takes immediate effect is until further notice.

RENEWAL OF APPOINTMENT

Mrs Roselyn Efiuvwere, Examinations and Records Unit, Registry Department, granted one-year *Renewal of Contract Appointment*, effective November 24, 2019 to November 23, 2020.

SABBATICAL LEAVE

Sabbatical Leave
Professor John Enemugwem, Department of History and Diplomatic Studies, Faculty of Humanities granted one-year *Sabbatical Leave* to the Department of History and International Studies, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Federal University Otuoke, Bayelsa State, effective September 2, 2019 to August 31, 2020.

Dr Mercy Ijeanacho, Department of Food, Nutrition and Home Science, Faculty of Agriculture granted one-year *Sabbatical Leave* to the Department of Human Nutrition and Dietetics, College of Applied Food Science and Tourism, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, Abia State, effective October 1, 2019 to September 31, 2020.

Dr Christopher Ochonogor, Department of Linguistics and Communication Studies, Faculty of Humanities granted one-year *Sabbatical Leave* to the Department of English and Communication Studies, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Federal University Otuoke, Bayelsa State, effective October 30, 2019 to October 31, 2020

Dr Maureen Nwakiya, Department of Mathematics and Statistics, Faculty of Science granted one-year *Sabbatical Leave* to the Department of Statistics, College of Physical and Applied Sciences, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, Abia State, effective August 1, 2019 to July 31, 2020.

Dr Kingsley Okengwu, Department of Geology, Faculty of Science granted one-year *Sabbatical Leave* to the Department of Geology, Gombe State University, effective October 1, 2019 to September 30, 2020.

STUDY LEAVE

Miss Tamunoigoni Tamunodienye, School of Graduate Studies, granted three-year *Study Leave with Pay* to enable her to pursue a Master of Science degree in International Trade and Economics at the International School, Yunnan Minzu University, China, effective September 1, 2019 to August 31, 2022.

EXTENSION OF STUDY LEAVE

Dr Egbe Etowa, Department of Agricultural Economics and Extension, Faculty of Agriculture granted five-month *Extension of Study Leave* to enable him conclude a postdoctoral Research Fellowship at the University of Ottawa, Canada, effective November 1, 2019 to March 31, 2020.

Mr **Iniobong Charles**, Department of Biochemistry, Faculty of Science granted *Extension of Study Leave with Pay* to enable him submit his PhD thesis and attend a *viva voce* examination at the University of Nottingham, United Kingdom, effective, October 1, 2019 to September 30, 2020.

September 30, 2020.

Mr Othobong Thomas, Department of Physics, Faculty of Science granted a six-month *Extension of Study Leave with Pay* to enable him conclude his Doctoral thesis at the University of Nottingham, United Kingdom, effective August 1, 2019 to January 31, 2020.

STATUTORY RETIREMENT

Dr Joy Olisa, Department of Mathematics, Faculty of Science, proceeds on a *three-month Pre-Retirement Leave*, effective, September 26, 2020, preparatory to her Statutory Retirement from service on December 26, 2020.

Dr Caroline Ariole, Department of Microbiology, Faculty of Science, proceeds on a *three-month Pre-Retirement Leave*, effective, August 19, 2020, preparatory to her Statutory Retirement from service on November 19, 2020.


Newly Qualified Doctors, Dental Surgeons Relive Medical School Experience

A total of 43 newly qualified Medical Doctors and 17 Dental Surgeons were inducted into the profession by the Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria (MDCN) at the 45th Induction Ceremony during the 40th Anniversary Celebration of the College of Health Sciences which took place on Tuesday, December 3, 2019 at the Ebbitimi Banigo Auditorium. Correspondent, MERCY ADENIJI, spoke to some of the ecstatic Inductees on their journey through Medical School. Please read on:

NNAMDI OBIDIGBO,
Dental Surgeon,
Valedictorian

My journey through the University of Port Harcourt is a worthwhile and memorable experience. I can attest to the fact that we received quality training from our lecturers, which has equipped us to face the world today with confidence. The journey was a tough one, but we scaled through because of the commitment of our teachers and Management of the University, who gave us the enabling environment to succeed in our studies.

I received awards as the Best Graduating Student in Oral Pathology and Oral Medicine, Pharmacology and Preventive Medicine. I couldn't have achieved this feat without the prayers and financial support of my parents and friends. I was at the verge of giving up at some point, but in my Part 6, the fire was rekindled again in me to plod on to the end. My advice to our junior colleagues is to press on and not give up because the future is bright and only those who remain focused will taste success.

A black and white portrait of a man with short, dark hair, wearing a dark suit jacket, a light-colored shirt, and a patterned tie. He is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. The background is a plain, light color.

ENDALINE NWOSU, Dental Surgeon



I am happy to have received an award as the Best Graduating Student in Internal Medicine and I feel so grateful to God Almighty and my parents for supporting me throughout my stay in the University of Port Harcourt. It was a very stressful journey, but it turned out to be very rewarding at the end of the day. I am happy to have finished well, alongside my colleagues. My advice to those we are leaving behind is that they should work hard and remain focused on God and their studies, and never give up on their dreams to become skilled Dental Surgeons, whose skill sets are in very high

demand in Nigeria and elsewhere.

SPLENDOR EDHEKA,
Dental Surgeon

I am so grateful to God for being part of those inducted as Dental Surgeons. The journey was stressful and we faced so many challenges, but we succeeded by God's grace. If I am to rate the training we received here, I would give it 98 per cent pass rate. All our lecturers brought out the very best in us. I am deeply appreciative of my lecturers, because without them and the effort of the University Management, we would not be here to celebrate our accomplishments. I am also grateful to my parents for their love and financial support throughout my undergraduate days. My advice to our junior colleagues is that they should work hard and always involve God in all they do if they hope to succeed in professional practice.

BONAVENTURE EGINI, MBBS

I feel so great because today is a defining moment in my life. I have been waiting for this moment and I am very delighted that it is finally here. We faced many challenging moments, but with God, hard work and prayers from our families and friends, we surmounted every obstacle and became eligible to be inducted into the medical profession.

My advice to the doctors is that they should not give up even if they are at the crossroads; they should rather remain focused, prayerful and hard working. My gratitude goes to God Almighty, my parents and friends for their prayers, love and support throughout my stay in the University of Port Harcourt. The students we are leaving behind should follow our footsteps by working hard to be inducted into the profession like us.

Two Years After Dismissal Council Exonerates, Recalls Nwaoma, Ewa, Iwezor To Duty

By Otikor Samuel

Two years after their summary dismissal from the services of the University on allegations of gross misconduct, the Governing Council has rescinded its decision and recalled Mr Franklin Nwaoma and Mr Edighoman Ewa of the Works and Services Department, and Mr Allison Iwezor of the Department of Physical Planning and Development.

The cheering news was contained in separate letters to the affected staff dated December 19, 2019 and signed by the Registrar and Secretary to Council, Mrs Dorcas Otto, copies of which were made available to *UniPort News*. The Registrar disclosed that the recall of the trio followed their exoneration by the report of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) on allegations of poor professional judgment levelled against them.

“Council at its 171st Meeting held on Tuesday, 10th December, 2019 considered the Report of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) in respect of your alleged involvement in the collapsed Department of Fisheries Building in the University of Port

Harcourt. It notes that the Report of the EFCC did not find you culpable in the matter. Council, therefore, directed that you be recalled to duty and reinstated, and all emoluments paid to you, effective from the date of your suspension from duty, that is 7th July, 2017, prior to your dismissal from the service of the University with immediate effect as per our letter dated 10th November, 2017," the separate letters by the Registrar to the trio read in part.

Consequently, Messrs Nwaoma and Ewa have been recalled and reinstated as Chief Engineer and Quantity Surveyor in the Works and Services Department, respectively; while Mr Iwevor has been recalled and reinstated as a Principal Architect in the Department of Physical Planning and Development.



Nwaoma



Ewa



Iwezor

Next Edition **ENGINEERING RETREAT**

The Faculty of Engineering held a Retreat for Heads of Department and Units to reposition the Faculty for enhanced productivity on Wednesday, January 8, 2020.

Details next edition
Editor

WISEcrack

What the New Year brings to you will depend on what you bring to the New Year

VERN MCLELLAN

Pioneer Mechatronic Students Produce Solar-Powered Tricycle

By Otikor Samuel and Letom Nnen

As part of the requirements for graduation in Mechatronic Engineering, seven students of the pioneer class of the defunct Department of Mechatronic Engineering have produced a solar-powered tricycle. Speaking to *UniPort News* Correspondents on Monday, December 2, 2019, during the test-running of the vehicle ahead of the students' project defence, leader of the group, Owu-Esan Osabor, disclosed that the team decided to fabricate a non-fossil fuel tricycle to reduce the emission of carbon

dioxide which is hazardous to human health. He further described the operational cost of the solar-powered tricycle as minimal compared to the traditional fossil fuel-powered vehicle.

"The aim of this new product is to replace the conventional vehicles used around the vicinity of the University, using solar energy to power mobility on campus. We replaced the internal combustion engine through a direct current motor connected to the axle through a single differential gear," the team leader explained. Mr Osabor disclosed that the tricycle would be battery-powered and rechargeable with no combustion engine

component. The team leader further stated that the group partnered a Port Harcourt-based firm known as Remtronic Industrial Automation under the lead supervision of Dr Mohammed Ojapah to achieve the feat.

Reacting to the development, pioneer Acting Head of the defunct Department, Dr Tobinson Briggs, expressed delight that the students he nurtured on their admission into the University five years ago had made him and the University proud through their creativity and innovation.

"I am highly elated seeing my products graduating with the production of a solar-powered tricycle. We admitted this set in 2014 and I encouraged them from the outset to acquire practical skills in the industry to complement classroom theory. The company subsidised the industrial training for the students. Two other groups worked on a model elevator and an automated conveyor-belt, respectively. Out of about 30 students admitted into the pioneer class, 21 of them successfully completed the programme," Dr Briggs explained.

Disclosing that the Department would follow due process in patenting the new invention, Dr Briggs said that plans were afoot to produce two more vehicles aimed at demonstrating the commercial application of the technology.

Other students in the team are Ikiroma Ibim, Ibitamuno Daniel, Nwaimo Chigaemezurum, Amasiatu Athan, Omoruemu Oghenechuko and Korubo-Owiye Daminabo.



The students. Inset: solar-powered tricycle

Following a very competitive bid, the Department of Mechanical Engineering has secured funding from the United Kingdom-based Department for International Development (DfID) for the development of a new graduate programme in Energy Access and Renewable Energy Technology. The workshop which attracted energy experts from the academia, industry, government agencies and students held at the Offshore Technology Institute, ETF Engineering Building, University Park on Thursday, December 12, 2019.

In his opening remarks during the NEEDS Assessment Workshop, Dean of the Faculty of Engineering, Professor Ogbonna Joel, who represented the Vice Chancellor, Professor Ndowa Lale, commended the DfID for approving the partnership. "Today, we are looking at renewable energy which is the energy of the future. There is general agreement that Nigeria's crude oil will finish at some point in the near future; but the good news is that renewable energy sources—solar, water and wind—will always be there for us to exploit. To do so, it has become necessary for us to tap into the energy of the future. This is where the DfID partnership becomes very critical. Our interface on the partnership will help us to make progress on alternative sources of clean energy," Professor Joel said. He urged staff to replicate what they are doing in their various Institutes and Centres in their parent Departments to ensure that all students get the same quality.

In the keynote address, the Acting Head of Department, Dr Mohammed Ojapah, commended the Vice Chancellor, Professor Ndowa Lale and other stakeholders for their contributions toward the development of the programme in the University. "We know the challenges faced by officials in

UniPort, DfID Partner On New Graduate Programme

By Letom Nnen with
Chidinma Chukwu (Intern)

this part of the country, especially in energy availability. This workshop is entirely dedicated to finding a sustainable solution to this intractable problem that is critical to development in other sectors. We want to go deeper into collaboration with industries and government agencies to ascertain what they want, the type of graduates and skills they want and to structure a suitable curriculum that would address the identified skills gap," he said.

Unveiling the structure of the proposed MSc programme earlier, the UniPort Chapter Partner Team Leader of Transforming Energy Access Learning Partnership (TEA-LP), and Assistant Director of the Offshore Technology Institute (OTI), Dr Endurance Diemuodeke, disclosed that only University of Port Harcourt secured funding from DfID to mount the programme in the whole of West Africa. He also disclosed that the programme would run for eighteen months, twelve of which would be devoted to teaching and research, while the remaining six months would be devoted to internship. He also stated that the multidisciplinary programme would run in three modes: namely, Full-time, Part-time/Distance learning and Part-

time/Sandwich. Dr Diemuodeke further disclosed that the programme would be driven on the OTI platform, adding that 30 per cent admission quota would be reserved for female applicants.

In one of the presentations entitled: *Industry-Academia Relationship*, the 7th Vice Chancellor, Professor Joseph Ajenka, commended the Department for its high level of preparation before floating the programme. "You need to understand the structure of the industry you want to partner; otherwise, you will not have the right kind of partnership. You also need to segregate and segment the industry clearly to enable you know who you are partnering. You need to understand the peculiarities and public goals of the proposed industry partners," he stated.

Other presentations included: *Off-grid Energy Solutions (Financing, Design, Installation and Operation)* by Prince Ogaga, *Catalyst for Rural Electrification* by Dr Victor Osu, *Off-grid Project Management and Finance Mechanisms* by Muyi Lawal, *Off-grid Project Energy Solutions and Gender Mainstreaming* by Simisola Sobowale, *Aligning Curriculum with Teaching Methods* by Professor Ayode Kuye and *Survey Results* by Joy Abraham-Igweomoh. It would be recalled that the Senate of the University approved the new programme at its 447th Meeting which held on Wednesday, December 18, 2019.



A group photograph of the Resource Persons and participants

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