

UNIVERSITY OF PORT HARCOURT



“HELLO AND GOODBYE: MY CURTAIN CALL”

VALEDICTORY LECTURE

By

PROFESSOR EMMANUEL CALVIN EMASEALU
Dip., B.A. (Hons.), M.A., Ph.D. (Ibadan) Cert. (Colorado)
fta, fsonta, hsonta, fdgn, fnal
Department of Theatre and Film Studies, Faculty of Humanities

VALEDICTORY LECTURE SERIES

No. 46

June 11, 2026

University of Port Harcourt Printing Press Ltd.
University of Port Harcourt,
Port Harcourt, Nigeria.
E-mail: uniport.press@uniport.edu.ng

© Professor Emmanuel Calvin Emasealu

VALEDICTORY LECTURE SERIES NO. 46
DELIVERED: June 11, 2026

All Rights Reserved

Designed, Printed and Bound By UPPL

PROGRAMME

1. GUESTS ARE SEATED

2. INTRODUCTION

3. THE VICE-CHANCELLOR'S OPENING REMARKS

4. CITATION

5. THE VALEDICTORY LECTURE

The lecturer shall remain standing during the citation. He shall step on the rostrum, and deliver his Valedictory Lecture. After the lecture, he shall step towards the Vice-Chancellor, and deliver a copy of the Valedictory Lecture and return to his seat. The Vice-Chancellor shall present the document to the Registrar.

6. CLOSING REMARKS BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

7. VOTE OF THANKS

8. DEPARTURE

Table of Contents

Part One: Introduction 1

1.i	Preamble -----	1
1.ii	My Academic Sojourn-----	2
1.iii	Acknowledgements -----	2
1.iv	University of Port Harcourt I Thank You-----	4
1.v	Will I Miss the Department of Theatre and Film Studies!-----	5

Part Two: Unicorns in Uniport:

	My Vision -----	6
2.i	From Plantation to Unicorn: Reimagining the Faculty of Agriculture Through the Okomu Oil Model ----	6
2.ii	Turning the University of Port Harcourt Press (UPPL) into a Unicorn: Lessons from Oxford University Press ----	7
2.iii	Establishing the Centre for Creative Technology and Performance Innovation (CCTPI): A Potential Unicorn ---	15

Part Three: Reflections on the State of Affairs in Uniport 18

3.i	Submissions by Select Uniport Valedictorians -----	18
3.ii	Review of the Curriculum in the Department of Theatre and Film Studies -----	20
3.iii	The Integration of SIWES into Theatre Arts Training -----	22
3.iv	Recruitment of Additional Staff and the Provision of Improved Facilities for the Department of Theatre and Film Studies-----	22
3.v	Establishing a Faculty of Creative and Creator Economies -----	23

Part Four: My Final Words 23

4.i	Addressing Antisocial Behaviour Through Student Engagement-----	23
4.ii	Improving Hostel Accommodation and Student Welfare -	26
4.iii	Reforming the Community Service Programme -----	27
4.iv	Rethinking the NYSC Scheme Using the CCSU Model---	30
4.v	Institutional Partnerships for Sustainable Societal Development -----	31
4.vi	Union Membership: A Sine Qua Non -----	33
4.vii	Strengthening Unity Among University Unions-----	33
4.viii.	Rethinking the Retirement Age of Professors-----	34
4.ix	Strengthening Staff Interaction and Intellectual Community -----	35
4.x	Engagement with Professional Associations -----	36
4.xi	Expanding Academic Influence Through International Engagement-----	27

Part Five: My Last Bow ----- 37

Part 1: Introduction

1.i Preamble

Vice-Chancellor, members of the Governing Council here present, members of Senate, esteemed colleagues, students, family, friends, great thespians, gentlemen of the press, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, I request permission to operate on the protocol that has been firmly established by the Vice-Chancellor.

Dear God, all I have to say is “Thank you.”

Song:

“What Shall I Say unto The Lord? All I Have to Say Is
Thank You, Lord. (twice)

Thank you, Lord, Thank you Lord, All I have to say is
Thank you, Lord.”

Vice-Chancellor, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, this song of gratitude to God can be described as an opening glee in the theatre. It is to commit this moment to the able hands of God. In like manner, we shall have intermissions and a closing glee during this lecture.

I stand before you all to take my curtain call and say “Hello and Goodbye” as I bow out gracefully from the service of the Unique University of Port Harcourt. This is a moment of acknowledgement, of gratitude, and of transition.

I will miss the University of Port Harcourt.

Reciting Uniport anthem:

“On the green low lands and swampy plains
Of the new Calabar River stands

The University of Port Harcourt
A citadel of learning and excellent education
A home of academic enthusiasts
Searching, searching for knowledge and wisdom.”

I recall with nostalgia entering the competition that produced the anthem of the University of Port Harcourt during the tenure of office of the 7th Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Joseph Ajienka. In that competition, Prof. Udoidem came first, Prof. Ugochindo came second, and I was the second runner-up. Prof. Udoidem and Prof. Ugochindo are now on the 7th floor, and I am joining them. To God is the glory.

1. ii My Academic Sojourn

Vice-Chancellor, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, my academic journey from Saint Paul’s Seminary, Benin City, Saint John’s College, Fugar, both in Edo State, to the University of Ibadan was transformative. From my early days in the University of Ibadan Performing Company to my long years at the University of Port Harcourt, I have lived theatre as actor, director, teacher, scholar, and mentor. I encountered theatre not just as performance, but as knowledge, as discipline, and as a way of seeing the world. For me, the theatre is a sacred space where life is examined, contested, and reimagined. Theatre chose me as much as I chose theatre.

1. iii Acknowledgements

Vice-Chancellor, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, I must thank the benevolent people who have influenced me on my life's journey. Professor Dapo Adelugba was my teacher, my mentor and my benefactor. Professor Bode Sowande’s Odu Themes Theatre Company offered me the platform to cut my teeth as an actor. Professor Femi Osifisan’s Kakaun Sellah Theatre Company equally honed my acting skills. I thank

Professor Wole Soyinka, with whom I collaborated and toured Switzerland, South Africa and Lesotho with his play, *King Baabu*. I am grateful to Dr Ndubuisi Nwafor-Ejelinma for providing me with a background in theatre for young persons and for facilitating my trip to Spain for a CISV programme. I thank Professor Hyginus Ekwuazi, Mr Laolu Oguniyi, and Professor Muiyiwa Awodiya. I particularly recognise Senator Andrew Uchendu, a distinguished UI alumnus, an elder statesman, a former Pro-Chancellor of the University of Port Harcourt, and an exemplary leader. I thank the British Council for sponsoring my trip to London for a workshop on theatre directing. I thank UNICEF for providing me with the opportunity to use theatre to confront challenges in some Nigerian communities. I thank UNAMID, UNESCO, NUC, and NDDC for the opportunity to render service in their organisations.

I am eternally grateful to Professor Ola Rotimi, my mentor, who saw my potential as a consummate theatre artist while I was a student at the University of Ibadan, and encouraged me to apply for a job at the University of Port Harcourt upon graduation.

To the glory of God, I am a Fellow of the National Association of Nigerian Theatre Arts Practitioners (NANTAP), a Fellow of the Society of Nigerian Theatre Artists (SONTA), which also conferred on me, Honouree of SONTA, one of its most prestigious awards, a Fellow of the Directors' Guild of Nigeria (DGN), and a Fellow of the prestigious Nigeria Academy of Letters (NAL). I thank the awarding professional institutions for the honour of admitting me into their various Colleges of Fellows. I believe that these fellowships are in recognition of my modest contributions to theatre in theory and practice. I am profoundly grateful.

1.iv University of Port Harcourt: I Thank You

Reflecting on my service in the University of Port Harcourt, I thank Professor (Emeritus) SJS Cookey, during whose tenure of office I was employed in 1988. I thank the succeeding administrations for finding me worthy to serve as Hall Warden of Nelson Mandela Hall, providing students with mentorship, discipline, and welfare administration. I am grateful to have served on the Professional Ethics Committee, where I worked diligently to uphold institutional integrity.

I am grateful for the opportunity to have served as the Ag. Head, Department of Theatre and Film Studies from 2008-2010, providing academic leadership in staff coordination, curriculum strengthening and programme development. As Chairman of the Departmental Graduate Studies Committee (2012–2014), I actively engaged in graduate training, supervision structures, and the upholding of academic standards. I am grateful to have served as the University Orator for some years.

I thank Prof. Don Baridam, the 6th Vice-Chancellor of the University, for appointing me as Acting Director of the University Community Service Programme (2006–2010), where I focused on institutionalising service-learning, empowering students through practical engagement, and bridging the divide between the University and host communities through impactful projects. I thank Prof. N.E.S. Ale, who appointed me as Ag Manager at the University Printing Press (2018–2022), where I worked hard to strengthen production systems and enhance institutional visibility and documentation culture. I thank those who voted for me in the election of the Uniport Senior Staff Club, where I served as President from 2003–2005, focusing on staff welfare,

community building, and staff engagement. I chaired the team that drafted the Club's constitution.

I thank the University of Port Harcourt for granting me study leave with pay to pursue a Ph.D. at the University of Ibadan.

1.v Will I miss the Department of Theatre and Film Studies!

I will miss the Department of Theatre and Film Studies, where I have spent 38 years teaching, conducting research, and engaging in community service. I will miss the Department where love reigns. This theme of love is firmly established in the anthem of the Association of Theatre Arts Students nationwide, an Association of which I was a critical founding member in the 1980/81 academic session, while I was a Diploma 2 student and the PRO of ATAS at the University of Ibadan.

I respectfully request that my colleagues, students, and visiting theatre artists kindly rise to take our anthem.

Song:

“No one can say, no one can tell, the kind of love that binds us

The theatre arts people are great people, and the love that binds us all

The code of love that binds us, spirit, soul and body

We have become one, and so shall it be forever.

No one, no one can say, no one can tell, the kind of love that binds us.

The theatre arts people are great people, and the love that binds us all.

You may all kindly resume your seats. Indeed, I will miss the Department where love reigns.

Part 2: Unicorns in Uniport: My Vision

I believe in dreams because dreamers, like their dreams, live forever. I see unicorns in Uniport. I dream of unicorns for Uniport. What is a unicorn? A unicorn is a startup company with a valuation exceeding \$1 billion. I am convinced that some of our faculties have the potential to achieve this status, particularly as we rebrand Uniport as an entrepreneurial University. A few examples will suffice.

2.i There is a Unicorn in the Faculty of Agriculture

The rise of Okomu Oil Palm Company Plc in Edo State demonstrates how agriculture can evolve into a high-value, innovation-driven industry. Established in 1976 and listed on the Nigerian Stock Exchange in 1991, the company transformed from a plantation enterprise into a major player in agribusiness, industrial expansion, and export development, with ₦172 billion in revenue.

Okomu's sustained growth highlights the economic potential of modern agriculture. Its success was driven by large-scale production, strategic investment, value-chain integration, and industrial processing. This model shows that agriculture is no longer limited to subsistence farming but can become a centre for innovation, employment, and national development.

Beyond production, Okomu Oil created wealth through processing, refining, packaging, distribution, and export. The Okomu Oil example also demonstrates that modern agriculture thrives on technology, mechanisation, sustainability, and innovation.

The Faculty of Agriculture is doing good work. Occasionally, I see their cows around the campus, and I am optimistic that they will go into ranching very soon. I have bought fish, chicken and eggs from their farms. The Faculty of Agriculture can adopt the Okomu Oil model by repositioning itself as a hub for agricultural innovation, entrepreneurship, and technology-driven research to develop agribusiness clusters around crop science, food processing, biotechnology, renewable energy, smart irrigation, and climate-smart agriculture.

As a starting point, the Faculty, through the University, can lease land on a long-term basis to cultivate high-revenue cash crops such as cocoa, cotton, oil palm, shea butter, ginger, and rubber, which are essential for the automobile and industrial manufacturing industries.

By embracing the Okomu Oil principles, the Faculty can attract investment, strengthen food security, generate employment, and position itself as a leading centre for agricultural transformation and economic growth. I urge the University of Port Harcourt to rebrand the Faculty of Agriculture using the Okomu Oil Model by moving from plantation to unicorn, a position the University truly deserves.

Vice-Chancellor, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, we should not wonder what the business of a theatre artist with agriculture is. We are all concerned. We all live by bread, don't we?

2.ii There is a Unicorn in the University of Port Harcourt Press (UPPL)

The global success of Oxford University Press demonstrates that a university press can evolve far beyond a traditional

printing outfit into a world-class knowledge and digital publishing enterprise. Established over four centuries ago as the publishing arm of the University of Oxford, OUP has grown into the world's largest university press, operating across publishing, digital learning, academic journals, educational technology, dictionaries, online research systems, and global content distribution. (Wikipedia).

Oxford University Press reported a turnover of approximately £833 million (\$ 1 billion) in 2023/2024, with digital products and services accounting for a major share of its revenue. (Oxford University Press) Its growth demonstrates that the future of publishing lies not merely in printing books, but in building integrated ecosystems around knowledge production, intellectual property, digital learning, and global distribution.

The University Press can adopt a similar transformation model by repositioning itself as a technology-driven centre for publishing, research, commercialisation, multimedia production, digital archiving, e-learning, and intellectual property management. Rather than depending solely on printed textbooks, the Press can expand into online journals, digital libraries, educational applications, podcasts, documentaries, audiobook production, scholarly streaming, and AI-driven content systems.

A major lesson from Oxford University Press is the importance of value-chain integration. Beyond publishing manuscripts, OUP built global influence through editing, branding, educational services, digital platforms, licensing, language systems, academic databases, and international partnerships. In the same way, the University Press can evolve into a complete creative and knowledge-production ecosystem involving

design, translation services, digital marketing, educational technology, and global content distribution.

The OUP model also demonstrates that intellectual content can become a major economic asset. By digitising indigenous knowledge systems, local history, African literature, oral traditions, cultural performances, and scholarly works, the University Press can position itself as a leading African repository for the preservation and commercialisation of knowledge. Therefore, the University of Port Harcourt's publishing and printing outfit should be reorganised.

I served as the Director of the University of Port Harcourt Press Limited (UPPL) from 2018 to 2022. I met a mountain of financial, administrative, infrastructural, and legal challenges. With the support of the Board, I embarked on a deliberate process to reposition the Press as a more viable, productive, and sustainable enterprise.

One of our most significant wins was the stabilisation of staff welfare and operational morale. At the time my administration assumed office in 2018, staff salaries were irregular, staff morale was low, industrial relations were strained, and several machines had become dysfunctional. Through deliberate reforms, staff salaries became regular and consistent from April 2018 onward, restoring confidence, boosting productivity, and creating a more stable work environment. I introduced day and night shifts, which enhanced operational productivity and service delivery.

The management also recorded major achievements in infrastructural rehabilitation and modernisation. The entire Press building was repainted, leaking roofs were repaired, electrical systems were rewired, and security lights were

installed around the premises. A borehole and water storage system were installed to improve staff welfare and operational efficiency. Additional improvements included installing air conditioners, exhaust fans, ceiling fans, computer workstations, and modern office furniture across various operational units.

A major area of progress was the acquisition of equipment and the implementation of technological enhancements. The Press procured and installed a 150KVA soundproof generator to replace the obsolete 100KVA generator, thereby significantly improving power stability. Other major acquisitions included laminating machines, Direct Image (D.I.) machines, desktop computers, laptops, printers, and internet facilities, enabling uninterrupted 24-hour wired and wireless connectivity. Existing machines, such as the Kord 64, folding, stitching, and binding machines, were repaired and restored to functionality. These developments greatly enhanced the technical capacity of the Press.

We achieved another strategic breakthrough by establishing a dynamic Marketing Unit. The unit significantly improved UPPL's visibility, attracted printing jobs, and enhanced engagement with clients both within and outside the University community. The Press successfully executed major printing assignments, including answer booklets, GES books, file jackets, journals, conference materials, brochures, and institutional publications.

We also discontinued the practice of collecting money across the counter and introduced a direct bank payment system to promote transparency and accountability. External auditors were engaged to audit the Press's accounts, thereby strengthening financial credibility and institutional trust.

Despite inheriting heavy debts, my administration successfully repaid outstanding loans and consistently remitted the statutory 10% profit to the University.

A huge part of our focus was on human capacity development and staff expansion. Staff strength increased significantly with the engagement and conversion of temporary workers into permanent staff. There was an improved industrial harmony and cordial staff relationships.

Furthermore, the management initiated health registration processes for UPPL staff at the O.B. Lulu-Briggs Health Centre and improved welfare conditions, including the provision of a two-week annual leave.

UPPL also strengthened its academic and institutional relevance through collaborations with institutions outside the University, including Rivers State University, Federal Polytechnic Ekowe, and the University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital. In addition, the Press served as an important industrial training hub (during SIWES) for students of Linguistics and Communication Studies specialising in publishing and printing. These students received practical training in graphic design, editing, lithography, printing, finishing, and marketing operations.

I articulated and submitted to the university authorities a comprehensive business vision and expansion roadmap to transform UPPL into a modern, entrepreneurial, technology-driven knowledge enterprise. The vision included the establishment of UPPL satellite centres in Port Harcourt and Yenagoa, the procurement of four-colour printing machines, the establishment of flex banner production units and photo and video laboratories, the production of customised exercise

books and retail A4 paper, and the acquisition of publishing rights for specialised foreign and local books.

The financial summary when I handed over on April 12, 2022, is as follows:

Financial Summary:

Cash at Hand (with the F.O.)	951,407.00
Current Bank Balance @ 11/04/2022:	
1,692,232.17 + 40,000 (paid by Rotaract Club 12/04/22)	
=1,732,232.17	
Money owed UPPL (largely by the University)	
<u>16,810,000.00</u>	
Total	<u>19, 493,639.17</u>

With this impressive footfall and using Oxford University Press's global model, I saw UPPL on the road to becoming a Unicorn.

To achieve unicorn status, UPPL should transition from conventional printing to a fully integrated university press system. The Publishing Unit and the Printing Press should therefore be merged into a single, coordinated institutional entity responsible for academic publishing, digital publishing, printing, branding, content development, multimedia production, and intellectual property management. This integration mirrors the structure of Oxford University Press, where publishing, editorial services, educational products, digital systems, and global distribution operate within one coordinated ecosystem.

UPPL should aggressively embrace digital transformation. The future of publishing is increasingly driven by e-books, online journals, digital repositories, educational applications, audiobooks, podcasts, virtual learning systems, and cloud-

based publishing platforms. The establishment of a fully automated digital publishing system will significantly increase efficiency, reduce production time, and expand the Press's market reach beyond the University's physical boundaries.

UPPL should become the principal repository and distributor of the intellectual output of the University of Port Harcourt. All inaugural lectures, conference proceedings, journals, research monographs, departmental publications, technical reports, policy documents, creative works, and scholarly books should be centrally published, digitised, archived, and distributed through the Press. This will strengthen the visibility of the University's research contributions globally.

UPPL should develop a robust intellectual property acquisition strategy, such as the Oxford model. The Press should acquire publication rights to high-quality academic texts, professional manuals, indigenous knowledge materials, literary works, and educational resources across various disciplines. Such publications can generate long-term institutional revenue through sales, subscriptions, licensing, and digital distribution. The Press should establish a strong educational technology and multimedia division. Beyond printing books, UPPL should produce documentaries, educational videos, online courses, digital learning materials, animations, institutional documentaries, podcasts, branded media content, and virtual educational resources. This aligns with contemporary global trends where publishing institutions have evolved into multimedia knowledge enterprises.

UPPL should establish regional business and distribution centres in strategic cities such as Port Harcourt, Abuja, Lagos, and Yenagoa, as well as other educational hubs. Oxford University Press expanded globally through extensive

distribution and strategic partnerships. Similarly, expanding UPPL's operational presence beyond the University environment will significantly increase commercial opportunities and market penetration.

UPPL should become the official production and branding hub of the University. All university printing jobs, certificates, journals, brochures, exercise books, banners, convocation materials, project bindings, branded souvenirs, and institutional publications should be centralised within the Press in line with the **“Right of First Refusal”** policy already approved for UPPL by University Management. This will ensure consistent patronage, increased revenue generation, and institutional quality control.

The Press should establish a Creative Publishing and Media Innovation Centre for training students and young entrepreneurs in publishing, graphic design, editing, digital branding, multimedia production, creative writing, advertising, printing technology, and content management. This will transform UPPL into both a commercial enterprise and a skills-development hub within the creative economy.

UPPL should prioritise partnerships and collaborations with international publishing organisations, educational technology companies, development agencies, and global research institutions. Strategic collaborations with organisations such as Oxford University Press, Cambridge University Press, Elsevier, UNESCO knowledge networks, and digital educational platforms can provide technical support, visibility, training opportunities, and institutional credibility.

UPPL should build a strong online commercial presence by creating an e-commerce platform for books, journals, branded

materials, educational resources, and digital products. A modern university press must operate in the global digital marketplace, where scholarly materials and creative works are distributed electronically across borders.

The University should recognise UPPL not merely as a support service unit, but as a strategic, entrepreneurial and knowledge-driven institution capable of contributing significantly to internally generated revenue, institutional prestige, employment creation, and global academic visibility. The achievements already recorded in infrastructural development, technological acquisition, financial restructuring, staff welfare, operational efficiency, and strategic planning clearly demonstrate that UPPL has the foundation required to become a leading university press and creative knowledge enterprise in Africa. There is a unicorn in UPPL if the University applies the lessons from Oxford University Press.

2.iii The Centre for Creative Technology and Performance Innovation (CCTPI): A Unicorn

In my inaugural lecture, “*Let Us Play*,” I identified practical measures to position the University of Port Harcourt at the forefront of creative scholarship and digital innovation by establishing the Centre for Creative Technology and Performance Innovation (CCTPI).

We must understand that the future of global competitiveness no longer depends solely on natural resources or traditional industrial production, but increasingly on creativity, digital technologies, digital innovation, intellectual property and the ability to generate and commercialise ideas.

The CCTPI will derive its strategic relevance and long-term institutional significance from its role as a hub for creative

technology education and manpower development. It is within this global transition that the University of Port Harcourt can seize the unique opportunity to reposition itself at the forefront of 21st-century innovation.

Unique Uniport, be the first. The University of Port Harcourt is the first Nigerian University to introduce community service into its academic programme. The University of Port Harcourt is the first entrepreneurial Nigerian University. The University of Port Harcourt came first four consecutive times in the West African University Games (WAUG) from 2003 to 2018. In the Nigerian University Games (NUGA), Uniport also came first seven consecutive times from 2004 to 2022. This is a feat that no other University has achieved! Prof. Kenneth C. Anugweje, the former Director of the Sports Institute and the current Chairman of the Board of the Sports Institute, must be acknowledged for the phenomenal role he played in making Uniport the sports destination.

The University of Port Harcourt has produced a high percentage, if not the highest, of Nollywood stars. The University of Port Harcourt, the first in so many areas, can do it again by becoming the first Nigerian University to establish CCTPI, a Centre that will integrate theatre, film, design, and storytelling with new technologies, such as artificial intelligence (A-I), 3D animation, motion capture, AR/VR, digital scenography, and immersive media.

The question begs: **“How does Uniport turn CCTPI into a unicorn?”**

Professor Joseph Ajienka, a petroleum engineer and the 7th Vice-Chancellor of the University of Port Harcourt, has repeatedly reminded us that Nigeria's oil wells may dry up someday. But the well of our culture can never dry up. We

must tap into the vast resources of our cultural well. There are five steps to achieve a unicorn for CCTPI.

i. Establishing CCTPI as a Creative Technology Talent Hub for Training and Professional Certification

CCTPI should be strategically positioned as a centre of excellence for training and certifying highly skilled professionals in areas such as animation, game development, artificial intelligence, virtual production, digital scenography, computational storytelling, digital sound design, multimedia communication, etcetera. If done soon enough, it will be the first in an African University, another first for Unique Uniport. Through physical and virtual learning platforms, the Centre will aim to train thousands of young Africans annually and become a major supplier of creative technology talent to global industries.

ii. Prioritise Intellectual Property Creation and Ownership

The Centre should deliberately invest in the creation, protection, and commercialisation of intellectual property. Original characters, stories, animation franchises, educational games, digital cultural archives, virtual experiences, and creative software solutions should be developed and registered as institutional assets. Long-term economic sustainability will depend more on intellectual property ownership than on service provision alone.

iii. Develop a Pan-African Animation and Digital Content Studio

CCTPI should establish a world-class animation and digital content production studio dedicated to producing feature animations, television content, educational media, documentaries, cultural heritage productions, and digital

entertainment products for local and international audiences. Such a studio would position the University of Port Harcourt as a significant contributor to Africa's creative content industry.

iv. Create a Digital Heritage and Immersive Experience Platform

The Centre should develop virtual museums, digital heritage repositories, virtual theatres, immersive educational experiences, and interactive historical recreations using virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), mixed reality (MR), and artificial intelligence technologies. These products can preserve African heritage while generating proper revenue through subscriptions, licensing, and partnerships.

v. Establish a Creative Technology Venture Studio

CCTPI should function as an incubator and accelerator for creative technology startups. By providing mentorship, workspace, technical support, business development services, and seed funding opportunities, the Centre can nurture innovative enterprises in animation, gaming, educational technology, creative software, digital publishing, and cultural tourism.

Part Three: Reflections on the State of Affairs in Uniport

3.i Submissions by Select Uniport Valedictorians

Vice-Chancellor, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, recent valedictory lecturers have reflected on the Nigerian University education system and have made sterling recommendations to enhance its operations.

The 39th valedictory lecture titled "*Life Without Enzymes: A Mirage?*" was delivered on September 25th, 2025, by

Professor Michael O. Monanu. The lecture emphasises the need for improved research funding, modern laboratories, stable electricity, interdisciplinary collaboration, and stronger support for higher education in Nigeria to enable scientific innovation and reduce brain drain.

In the 43rd valedictory lecture of the University of Port Harcourt titled “*University of Port Harcourt: Then, Now and in the Future*,” Professor Ndowa E.S. Lale criticises the decline in standards caused by poor funding, political interference, weak leadership, brain drain, declining staff welfare, and disruptions from union strikes. He advocates measures such as merit-based administration, a stronger research culture, and entrepreneurial and technology-driven education to restore the quality and global relevance of Nigerian universities in the 21st century.

Professor Ayoade Oludayo Kuye, in his valedictory lecture titled “*From Curiosity to Contributions: Reflections of a Chemical Engineer Across Different Frontiers*,” the 45th in the series, which was delivered on May 21, 2026, advocates for the modernisation of Nigerian university classrooms into technology-driven e-classrooms and emphasises the importance of aligning curricula with global industrial standards and the NUC CCMAS reforms.

I align with these scholars’ submissions that there is a need to rejig the Nigerian education system in policy formulation and implementation to improve teaching, learning, research, and community service.

3. ii Review of the Curriculum in the Department of Theatre and Film Studies

As I posited in my inaugural lecture, “*Let Us Play*,” contemporary theatre and performance practices have become increasingly complex, requiring exposure to diverse fields such as philosophy, psychology, architecture, engineering, business, history, sociology, religion, and digital media. To address this complexity, a multidisciplinary curriculum is recommended to train well-rounded directors and theatre practitioners. Integrating these disciplines into theatre arts education will enhance interpretive depth, leadership capacity, contextual understanding, and creative adaptability. It will also equip students with the intellectual breadth, technical competence, and cultural literacy necessary for directing across diverse genres, media platforms, and evolving performance environments.

Furthermore, interdisciplinary training strengthens employability and fosters creative innovation in an industry increasingly shaped by technological advancement and global cultural flows. Table 1 below outlines recommended interdisciplinary linkages across Theatre Arts specialisations.

Table 1: Interdisciplinary Linkages across Theatre Arts Specialisations

Theatre Specialization	Relevant Disciplines/Courses to Borrow
Directing	Philosophy, Psychology, Education, Literature, History, Religion, Media Studies
Playwriting	Philosophy, Literature, History, Sociology, Religion, Psychology, Linguistics
Scenography/Set Design	Architecture, Civil Engineering, Visual Arts, History, Interior Design

Lighting Design	Physics, Electrical/Electronic Engineering, Computer Science(lighting software), Technical Theatre
Sound Design	Physics, Sound Engineering, Electrical/Electronic Engineering, Music Technology
Costume Design	Fine Arts, Fashion Design, Textile Design, Cultural Studies, History, Anthropology
Makeup Design	Chemistry (for safe use of products), Cosmetology, Visual Arts, Anatomy
Acting	Psychology, Philosophy, Religion, Education, Literature, History, Linguistics
Theatre Management	Business Administration, Finance, Accounting, Marketing, Human Resource Management
Theatre-for-Development (TfD)	Sociology, Development Studies, Public Health, Education, Political Science
Dance and Movement	Physical Education, Human Kinetics, Anthropology, Music, Psychology
Dramaturgy/Theatre Criticism	Literary Theory, Philosophy, History, Media Studies, Sociology
Stage Management	Business Studies, Project Management, Logistics, Information Technology
Technical Design(Props, Rigging, Automation)	Mechanical Engineering, Mechatronics, Material Science, Architecture
Theatre Architecture	Architecture, Acoustics, Urban Planning, Interior Design
Multimedia Theatre/Digital Performance	Computer Science, Animation, Web Technology, Film Studies, Digital Media Production
Medical Theatre/Drama Therapy	Psychology, Medicine, Social Work, Counselling, Public Health
Tourism & Cultural Theatre	Cultural Studies, Tourism, Anthropology, International Relations
Advocacy Drama/Legal Theatre	Law, Political Science, Ethics, Sociology

3. iii Integrating SIWES into Theatre Arts Training

I also recommended in my Inaugural lecture that the Theatre Arts curriculum be redesigned to formally incorporate the Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES). This initiative will provide students with practical exposure to professional directors, technical crews, performance companies, media houses, and production studios. Through such hands-on training, students will acquire essential competencies in camera operation, lighting, sound, editing software, multimedia tools, and virtual production. These skills are increasingly central to contemporary theatre practice.

Beyond technical proficiency, SIWES also fosters vital professional skills such as communication, teamwork, leadership, and time management. By immersing students in real-world production environments and diverse directing practices, SIWES will bridge the gap between academic training and industry expectations, ensuring that graduates are skilled, confident, and industry-ready. With SIWES, theatre arts students would easily navigate the industry when they graduate.

3.iv Recruitment of Additional Staff and the Provision of Improved Facilities for the Department of Theatre and Film Studies

Out of 26 members of staff in the Department of Theatre and Film Studies, 6 have transferred to the Department of Film and Multimedia Studies in the Faculty of Communication, and 4 have transferred their service to RSU and IAUE in Port Harcourt. This development has adversely depleted the staff strength. The workload on the remaining 16 members of staff is quite strenuous. In the last staff recruitment exercise, only one lecturer, a graduate assistant, was recruited. The number of students in intake is ever-increasing. As a result, the facilities

have become grossly inadequate. This is an area the University must look into because of the serious health implications for staff members.

3.v Establishing a Faculty of Creative and Creator Economies

In my inaugural lecture, I have recommended the establishment of a Faculty of Creative and Creator Economies, with four core departments: **Performing and Cinematic Arts** (theatre, film, directing, screenwriting, and multimedia storytelling); **Digital Content and Creator Platforms** (podcasting, influencer strategy, content design, and monetisation); **Creative Enterprise and Innovation** (branding, intellectual property, cultural economics, and business models); and **Technology for Creative Expression** (animation, projection mapping, post-production, and emerging digital production technologies). Such a faculty would position Nigerian universities to produce graduates equipped to thrive in the rapidly expanding global creative economy.

Part Four: My Final Words

Prof. O.J. Odia, who retired from the Department of Medicine, College of Health Sciences, delivered the 19th valedictory lecture titled “When the Heart says Goodbye” on Tuesday, 27th April, 2021. Using his title loosely, I will say that as my heart says goodbye, these are my final words.

4.i Addressing Antisocial Behaviour Through Student Engagement

As Assistant Hall Warden and later as Hall Warden of Nelson Mandela Hall, I confronted one of the most sensitive challenges facing tertiary institutions in Nigeria: cultism and student violence. In the late 80s and early 90s, cult-related

activities posed serious threats to student safety, academic stability, and peaceful coexistence within the university environment.

I believe that many students involved in cult activities are often searching for identity, belonging, recognition, direction, or emotional support. Rather than relying solely on punitive measures, intimidation, or force, I believe that a more human-centred and engagement-driven approach should be adopted to curb cultism. Consequently, I considered dialogue, mentorship, guidance, and constructive engagement as essential tools in addressing the problem during my tenure as Hall Warden.

I approached the Dean of Student Affairs, Dr Edet Akpaskan, and proposed that the university intentionally introduce positive engagement initiatives to redirect students' energies toward productive and responsible living. The proposal emphasised that students should not merely be controlled, but guided, inspired, and empowered.

Following this intervention, we invited students of Nelson Mandela Hall to Permanent Site Hall and encouraged them to desist from antisocial behaviour such as cultism and embrace responsible living. We created opportunities for open interaction, orientation, mentorship, and positive social integration. The aim was to restore confidence, reduce hostility, and promote a healthier campus culture.

This experience strengthened my belief that educational leadership must combine discipline with empathy. Young people respond more positively when they feel heard, valued, guided, and included. Sustainable behavioural transformation often emerges not only from punishment, but from mentorship, dialogue, and constructive engagement.

The intervention eventually evolved into the Abuja Monitoring Group (ABUMOG), inspired by ECOMOG, the ECOWAS Monitoring Group. The idea behind ABUMOG was rooted in the philosophy of vigilance, guidance, mentorship, peer influence, and collective responsibility within the student community.

ABUMOG functioned as a student-oriented monitoring and intervention framework designed to encourage discipline, peaceful coexistence, responsible conduct, and early identification of behavioural concerns within the university environment. The concept recognised that students themselves could become active participants in promoting order, accountability, and positive campus culture.

One night, there were rumours that cultists planned to attack King Jaja hostel, a female hostel in Delta Park. Some students from Nelson Mandela Hall wanted to set up camp in Delta Park to avert impending danger. I advised against such an action because it could create chaos. Instead, Uwasomba, Nelson Mandela Hall Chairman, one other student, and I monitored the campus throughout the night, moving between hostels on motorcycles to ensure peace.

The lesson here is simple: university authorities must not distance themselves from students. Students are our children. We must understand their language, their pains, and their challenges.

The initiative represented an innovative attempt to create a support-driven monitoring structure rather than a fear-driven system. It sought to encourage peer responsibility, strengthen communication between students and authorities, and reduce

the social conditions that often fuel cultism and antisocial behaviour.

4. ii Improving Hostel Accommodation and Student Welfare

Student welfare must never be treated as a peripheral issue within the university system. It should occupy a central place in institutional planning because the quality of student life directly affects learning outcomes, character formation, productivity, emotional stability, and overall academic success. I recall making an unscheduled visit to Nelson Mandela Hall during my tenure as Hall Warden. What I encountered was deeply troubling. The living conditions in which many students resided were far below what is expected in a modern university environment. Hostel facilities constitute a critical component of the educational experience.

The environment in which students live inevitably shapes their attitudes, values, behaviour, and academic performance. Students who live in overcrowded, poorly maintained, insecure, or unhealthy environments are more likely to experience stress, frustration, poor concentration, and diminished academic engagement. Conversely, students who reside in clean, safe, conducive, and well-managed facilities are better positioned to develop positive study habits, healthy interpersonal relationships, and a stronger sense of belonging to the university community.

Accommodation also plays an important role in socialisation. Hostels are miniature societies where students learn tolerance, cooperation, leadership, conflict resolution, responsibility, and communal living. If the hostel environment is dysfunctional, these developmental opportunities are undermined. If it is

properly managed, it becomes an extension of the classroom and contributes significantly to character development.

Universities must therefore move beyond seeing hostel accommodation merely as a logistical necessity. Student residences should be viewed as strategic investments in human development. Regular maintenance, adequate security, reliable water supply, stable electricity, internet connectivity, sanitation facilities, recreational spaces, and effective welfare systems should be considered essential rather than optional.

The university system must deliberately create an environment where students feel valued, protected, and supported. Student welfare extends beyond accommodation to include healthcare, counselling services, mentorship opportunities, safety measures, and mechanisms for addressing student concerns. A university that takes student welfare seriously creates conditions for academic excellence, social stability, and institutional pride.

Ultimately, the quality of a university can often be measured not only by the strength of its academic programmes but also by how well it cares for its students. Our students deserve environments that inspire learning, nurture growth, and prepare them for responsible citizenship.

4. iii Reforming the Community Service Programme

I served as Director of Community Service at the University of Port Harcourt. This is a Year Two programme run across all faculties and academic programmes in the university. As Director, I would say I changed the face of community service. I made several recommendations and proposals. The model where students simply sweep streets or paint curbs does not amount to much.

My position is this: communities should benefit meaningfully from the university's presence in their environment. Academic knowledge is not confined to classrooms and journals; it can actively contribute to community development, behavioural change, and national growth.

For instance, science teaches us that two AS genotype individuals should not marry because of the possibility of having SS children. Students in fields such as Biochemistry should take such knowledge into communities and educate people about genotype compatibility.

The library system is another example. How exactly are communities benefiting from the library? We should have mobile library programmes that bring books directly to communities. These books could focus on public health, politics, education, civic awareness, and other relevant issues. By bringing books to the people, we help transform their outlooks, philosophies, and ways of thinking.

Theatre Arts also has a role to play. We have what is called community theatre. It is theatre in its most socially responsive form, because of its direct engagement with people at the grassroots level. Unlike conventional entertainment-oriented theatre, community theatre is designed to educate, mobilise, enlighten, and empower communities through participatory performance and collective dialogue.

As a community service initiative, community theatre creates a bridge between the university and society. It enables students, researchers, and theatre practitioners to engage directly with local communities in addressing social, cultural, environmental, political, and developmental challenges. Through drama, music, dance, storytelling, role-play, and

interactive performances, complex societal issues can be communicated in simple, relatable, and culturally appropriate forms.

Community theatre has proven particularly valuable in areas such as public health campaigns, voter education, conflict resolution, environmental awareness, gender advocacy, youth empowerment, literacy promotion, and peacebuilding. Its participatory nature encourages community members not merely to watch performances, but to contribute ideas, share experiences, and collectively seek solutions to common problems.

Universities can therefore use community theatre as an important extension and outreach mechanism. Through field productions, participatory workshops, educational campaigns, and development-oriented performances, theatre becomes a practical tool for social transformation and public engagement. Students also benefit immensely by gaining real-life experience in communication, leadership, cultural research, problem-solving, and applied creativity.

Many years ago, UNICEF invited me to Ebonyi State to help address harmful social practices through theatre. Older men were marrying very young girls, 13 or 14 years old. Such practices often lead to health complications like Vesicovaginal Fistula (VVF), which severely affects women's health and well-being. The late Prof. Ekeke worked on sickle cell. His recommendations should be used. This is why academic disciplines must take awareness campaigns into communities. Universities should influence society positively through community engagement and community theatre.

4.iv Rethinking the NYSC Scheme Using the Reinvented Uniport CCSU Model

By extension, there is a compelling need to fundamentally rethink the operational structure of Nigeria's National Youth Service Corps (NYSC). While the original objectives of national integration and inter-ethnic understanding remain commendable, the current deployment system often fails to maximise graduates' professional capacities. In many cases, highly trained professionals are posted to assignments that do not maximise the benefits of their academic background or specialised training. Medical doctors, for instance, could be assigned to community health engagements while lawyers could be posted to areas where their legal expertise would be fully utilised. The NYSC programme should be organised in a way that will not limit productivity, reduce professional impact, or weaken the scheme's developmental potential. Rather than merely deploying graduates randomly, the NYSC should be repositioned as a structured national development and community service programme driven by professional specialisation and societal needs.

The University of Port Harcourt's community service model offers a practical example of how professional expertise can be effectively aligned with community development. Through this model, participants contribute directly to society using the knowledge and skills acquired in their respective disciplines.

Under a revised NYSC framework, medical doctors and health practitioners could establish or join temporary community health outreach centres during service, particularly in underserved rural areas where access to healthcare remains limited. Such initiatives would support preventive healthcare, public health education, maternal care, disease screening, and community wellness campaigns. Similarly, law graduates

could provide legal education, civic awareness, mediation services, human rights advocacy, and community legal support, especially for vulnerable populations with limited access to legal representation.

Graduates in engineering and technology could assist with community infrastructure, renewable energy projects, water systems, digital literacy, and technological innovation. Agricultural graduates could support local farmers through extension services, climate-smart agriculture, food-processing education, and agribusiness training. Theatre, communication, and media graduates could engage communities through advocacy campaigns, participatory theatre, behavioural change communication, and public enlightenment programmes on issues such as health, peacebuilding, environmental sustainability, and voter education.

Such a restructuring would transform NYSC from a routine posting exercise into a practical instrument for national development, professional engagement, and grassroots empowerment. Communities would benefit directly from specialised services, while graduates would gain practical experience within their professional fields. This would also strengthen the relationship between higher education and societal development by ensuring that academic training translates into measurable community impact. Revisiting the NYSC in this manner would restore its developmental relevance in contemporary Nigeria.

4.v Institutional Partnerships for Sustainable Societal Development

Every academic discipline is relevant to the larger society. Therefore, Uniport staff should not operate in isolation from society but should actively engage with stakeholders,

organisations, alumni, government agencies, and well-meaning individuals to effect change.

I served as Chairman of the Parents and Teachers Association (PTA) of Nigerian Navy Secondary School, Borokiri, from 2010 to 2015. My vision went beyond routine administrative responsibility.

With this conviction, I led my team to acquire a car dedicated to strategic outreach and institutional engagement that would usher in growth and development for the school. A young man, a lady, and a driver were employed, and their mandate was to visit organisations, agencies, and individuals to solicit material and infrastructural support for the school's development. Rather than depend only on Government funding, we successfully attracted significant support for the school from institutions and individuals.

MTN provided classroom seats in all the classrooms, thereby improving the learning environment and reducing the burden on students. The Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) donated a generator, which greatly improved power supply and operational stability within the school environment. In addition, the Rivers State Government donated over 120 computers, an intervention that strengthened digital learning and students' exposure. These interventions collectively transformed the educational environment of the Nigerian Navy Secondary School. Beyond the physical resources themselves, they demonstrated the power of leadership, strategic networking, institutional visibility, and community engagement.

The experience reinforced my belief that educational administrators must think beyond conventional management practices. They must become mobilizers, facilitators, and bridge-builders capable of connecting institutions with opportunities for growth and development. I encourage Uniport staff to engage in impactful community service programmes.

4.vi Union Membership: A Sine Qua Non

I appeal to you all still in service not to leave your Union because the Union is your pillar of strength.

I was wrongly dismissed from the service of the University under Decree 17 of 1984, a decree that could not be challenged in any court of law in Nigeria. What was my offence? I was dismissed during a staff audit while I was absent from the University. Where was I? On study leave with pay at the University of Ibadan!

But ASUU, under the Branch leadership of Dr. (now Prof.) Lucky Akaruese and the national leadership of Asisi Asobie fought, and the unjust and obnoxious decision was rescinded. This is one of the reasons that my commitment to the union has been total. Do not leave or neglect your union. Pay your dues. Serve in committees. Attend meetings regularly and contribute to deliberations. The union makes you strong.

4.vii Strengthening Unity Among University Unions

As I take my curtain call and bid you all goodbye, I strongly advocate that the unions, ASUU, SSANU, NASU, etc., should come together again under one umbrella because there is always a distortion in the university academic calendar each time an industrial action occurs. The situation is further compounded when, for instance, ASUU meets with the Federal

Government, and a package is negotiated solely for ASUU. Thereafter, other unions begin making their own demands, thereby creating further disruptions to the academic calendar. This should not be. After all, the members of the different unions work in the same institution, buy from the same market, and rent houses from the same landlords. The unions should bargain together because their voice is stronger when they act as one. When the Professor gets a raise of ten naira after a struggle, let the office clerk get his five naira if that is what is due him. The divisions among the unions can create distrust.

4.viii. Rethinking the Concept of Retirement

In countries like America, from where we borrow many of our academic models, Professors often continue working until they voluntarily retire due to declining health or for other personal reasons. In Nigeria, Professors are statutorily retired at age 70. Academics should simply go home, perhaps to their villages, to sit around drinking palm wine (diluted with cheap gin for enhanced “*shack*” effect). Professor Chidi Maduka, for example, who retired from the Department of English Studies, frequently came to the University Press to publish one thing or another. That always inspired me.

Understandably, some Professors may become weak and choose to step aside. But Professors who have the strength to continue should, perhaps, organise themselves into a league under the National Universities Commission to ensure they remain productive after retirement. Retired Professors still have relationships with their protégés and mentees. They should use those networks to continue writing and producing books. These books would be useful across Nigerian universities, the West African subregion, the African continent, and even globally. Professors still have so much to contribute. They should not simply be left waiting for death.

4.ix Senior Staff Club: Strengthening Staff Interaction through Intellectual Engagement

During my tenure as President of the Senior Staff Club, I became increasingly concerned about the nature of interactions among university staff. While the Club provided an important social platform, I observed that many gatherings were largely recreational. Staff members met frequently to socialise, relax, and spend leisure time together. While such interactions are valuable, I felt that something important was missing.

The university is fundamentally an intellectual community. It exists to generate knowledge, stimulate critical thinking, encourage innovation, and advance society through scholarship and research. Consequently, interactions among staff should not be limited to social engagements alone. There should also be deliberate efforts to cultivate intellectual exchange, professional dialogue, and interdisciplinary collaboration.

This concern led me to ask a fundamental question: Beyond social gatherings, where is the intellectual conversation? Where are the opportunities for scholars from different disciplines to engage one another, exchange ideas, challenge assumptions, and collectively explore solutions to societal problems?

Universities thrive when intellectual communities flourish. Some of the greatest discoveries, innovations, and scholarly breakthroughs in history emerged not from isolated work but from conversations among colleagues. Informal discussions often generate ideas that eventually become research projects, publications, patents, policies, and transformative initiatives.

I therefore advocate for a more balanced culture within the Senior Staff Club—one that combines social interaction with

intellectual engagement. Staff members should have opportunities to participate in seminars, colloquia, book discussions, policy dialogues, leadership conversations, and interdisciplinary forums. Such engagements encourage intellectual vitality and strengthen the culture of scholarship within the university. When academics, administrators, and professionals from different units engage constructively, barriers are broken down, mutual understanding is enhanced, and collaborative problem-solving becomes possible. The university functions more effectively when individuals understand one another's challenges, strengths, and contributions.

I strongly believe that university staff must engage one another meaningfully, not merely as colleagues occupying the same institution, but as members of a shared intellectual enterprise. They should reason together, learn from one another, challenge one another constructively, and contribute collectively to the advancement of knowledge and the development of society.

A truly great university is not defined solely by its buildings or budgets. It is defined by the quality of its intellectual community. When scholars engage one another actively, ideas flourish, innovation thrives, and the institution becomes a genuine centre of excellence. Strengthening staff interaction is therefore not simply a social objective; it is an academic and developmental imperative.

4.x Engagement with Professional Associations

There is a need for staff members to engage more actively with professional associations. As of today, I am the only Fellow of the Nigeria Academy of Letters in the entire Faculty of Humanities at the University of Port Harcourt. That is not encouraging. We must encourage our academics to belong to

professional associations and rise within them not merely as members, but as distinguished contributors. Such recognition elevates both the individual and the university's reputation.

4.xi Expanding Academic Influence Through International Engagement

I encourage members of staff to see the United Nations as an avenue for sabbatical leave as the UN offers an excellent opportunity to showcase one's professional capabilities and mouthwatering remuneration. I enjoyed the opportunity to spend a sabbatical year in Sudan between 2016 and 2017, where I used theatre as an outreach tool in Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps to preach restoration, transformation, and change. The projects were well received and were recorded and uploaded to YouTube. Members of staff are encouraged to seek sabbatical appointments abroad as this will create global visibility for Uniport.

Part Five: My Last Bow

I will miss the Snooker Board section of the Senior Staff Club, ably led by the Team Captain, Professor Blessing Didia and the Acting Team Captain, Professor Otu Ekpennyong.

Song:

Snooker Board, Forever (3 times)

Snooker Board, Forever, and ever, forever!

This is the refrain of the anthem I composed for Snooker Board.

I belong to the Choba Academic Research Initiative, CARI. I will miss CARI.

Song:

Change is the only permanent thing in life

Research can offer meaningful change

CARI is the home of research

That is how we roll in CARI.

How do we roll?

CARI, CARI, CARI, CARI, CARI

CARI

CARI, CARI, CARI, CARI,

CARI

CARI, CARI, CARI, CARI,

That is how we roll in CARI.

How do we roll?

I composed this anthem for the Choba Academic Research Initiative, CARI.

I will miss UFC. Dr Hamilton Oporum, our leader, Prof. Edache, the HOD, PSB, and other members of the UFC family. I will miss you all.

Chant:

UFC! Uniport! UFC! Uniport! Uniport! UFC!

One Game! Football without violence!

One Game! Football without violence!

I am told you did not bring our songbook to this event.

Therefore, we shall 'la-la-la' two of our songs:

Song 1:

La-la-la-la-la-la-la... In heaven there is no...

Song 2:

La-la-la-la-la-la, La-la-la-la-la-la: Thank you, my Prof. for shaving...

UFC! Uniport! UFC! Uniport! Uniport! UFC!
One Game! Football without violence!
One Game! Football without violence!

I thank my compatriots of the Urhurun-Uneme Development Association led by Mr. Andrew Johnson.

I thank the Rotary Club of Choba Uniport, led by its President, Dr. Adekunle Sofolabo.

Song:

My Rotary is here in Nigeria
My Rotary starts right here with me
True Rotary is international
But Rotary starts right here with me!

Refrain:

O come! O come! (2 times)
O come and share Rotary with me!

I thank the Edo Uniport/UPTH Staff Association, led by Prof. Godwin Omokhua, Poolside, led by Prof. Chima Onuoha, etc.

I will not fail to acknowledge my beloved Father, Chief Johnson Akhator Emasealu, who will be 93 years old on August 29, 2026. I thank the entire Emasealu family.

Vice-Chancellor, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, every theatre practitioner knows that a curtain call is not an end because the play does not die. It lives on in memory, in influence, and in those who continue the performance.

I hereby take my last bow as I transition into the next phase of my life. I thank you all!

CITATION ON



PROFESSOR EMMANUEL CALVIN EMASEALU
Dip., B.A. (Hons.), M.A., Ph.D. (Ibadan) Cert. (Colorado)
fta, fsonta, hsonta, fdgn, fnal
Department of Theatre and Film Studies
Faculty of Humanities

Professor Emmanuel Calvin Emasealu, born in Erhurun-Uneme, Akoko-Edo LGA, on June 15, 1956, is an esteemed scholar and theatre practitioner whose illustrious career at the University of Port Harcourt spans over three decades. He earned his Diploma, B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. from the University of Ibadan between 1979 and 2000. Professor Emasealu's remarkable academic journey is marked by three authored books, two inspiring plays, and more than fifty impactful scholarly journal articles and book chapters. His visionary leadership led to the launch of three notable journals: *The CRAB Journal of Theatre and Media Arts*, *Nollywood Practice*:

Journal of the Directors' Guild of Nigeria, and *EGOR: Journal of Theatre and Performance Arts*. He is also the pioneer editor of *The CRAB Plays*, which has four volumes of ten plays each.

Professor Emasealu's commitment to scholarship is evidenced in his extensive supervision of undergraduate projects, master's dissertations, and doctoral theses. He has demonstrated exemplary academic leadership, serving as Head of the Department of Theatre and Film Studies (2008–2010) and Chairman of the Graduate Board of Studies Committee (2012–2014). He has also served as an external examiner to several universities, participated in NUC accreditation panels, and assessed professorial candidates across Nigerian tertiary institutions. Professor Emasealu delivered the 212th inaugural lecture of the University of Port Harcourt titled "Let Us Play."

Professor Emasealu is a consummate community theatre practitioner and a visionary director. His directing credits are in short, feature, and documentary films. His stage plays include the NLNG award-winning *Grit*, written by Obari Gomba, which was staged as the convocation play during the 2024 University of Port Harcourt convocation ceremony. His passion for theatre for young people led to the establishment of the Uniport Children's Theatre (UCT) in 1989, a platform that has nurtured young minds.

An active participant in global and national intellectual engagements, Professor Emasealu has contributed as a keynote speaker, presenter, facilitator, and resource person at numerous conferences and workshops. These include SONTA conferences across Nigerian universities, the Afrocreation-sponsored acting workshop at the University of Legon, Ghana (1989), the British Council workshop on play production in London (2010), the 2023 UNESCO National Policy Dialogue

on Sustainable Development Goals and Cultural and Creative Industries in Lagos, and several NDDC workshops in Port Harcourt, Agbor, and Uyo.

His two sabbatical engagements further reflect his global impact. At Niger Delta University (2005/2006), and later in El-Fasher, Sudan (2017), where he served as a Public Information Officer with the United Nations–African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID), he deployed theatre and film as tools for communication, peacebuilding, and social transformation.

He has also served as a trainer and facilitator at international film festivals, including the Arusha African Film Festival (Tanzania), Nile Diaspora International Film Festival (Uganda), and Lola Kenya Screen Cinematography Workshop (Kenya). Locally, he has served as a juror, head of jury, and facilitator at major cultural events such as the Abuja Carnival, CARNIRIV, the Benin City Film Festival, the Calabar Carnival, and the Kano Indigenous Languages of Africa Film Market and Festival (KILAF).

Professor Emasealu has distinguished himself as a mentor to many industry leaders, including Ovunda Ihunwo, Edward Imo, Sunday Edum, Faith Aminikpo, Ejike Asiegbu, Bob-Manuel Udokwu, Hilda Dokubo, Francis Duru, and Daniel Kpodoh. His artistic excellence is further evidenced in his collaboration with Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka on *King Baabu*, staged in Switzerland, South Africa, and Lesotho, and his lead role in Femi Osofisan's television series *The Visitors*.

Beyond academia, Professor Emasealu has championed transformative initiatives as Director of Community Service, inspiring student skill development and fostering meaningful university-community collaboration. His creative spirit is

evident as the second runner-up in the University of Port Harcourt anthem competition. He has excelled as University Orator for some years, Director of the University Printing Press, and has strengthened education by serving five years as PTA Chairman at the Nigerian Navy Secondary School, Port Harcourt.

Professor Emasealu's leadership is celebrated through his tenure as President of the Senior Staff Club (2003–2005), 10th President of Rotary Club of Choba–Uniport (2020), Assistant Governor of Rotary District 9141 (2022–2023), and his esteemed recognition as a Paul Harry Fellow (Stage 7).

Ladies and gentlemen, I present Professor Emmanuel Calvin Emasealu, the father of Dr. Victoria Emasealu and Miss Georgia Emasealu, a devoted husband to Professor Helen Emasealu, Fellow of four esteemed learned societies - NANTAP, SONTA, DGN, NAL - and recipient of the SONTA Lifetime Achievement Award, to deliver the No 46 Valedictory Lecture of the University of Port Harcourt.

Professor Owunari A. Georgewill
Vice Chancellor