

UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA, NSUKKA
OFFICE OF THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

**AN ADDRESS OF WELCOME BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR,
PROFESSOR BENJAMIN C. OZUMBA, TO THE ALUMNI OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF MECHANICAL ENGINEERING, UNIVERSITY OF
NIGERIA, NSUKKA, DURING HER MAIDEN ALUMNI HOMECOMING
ON FRIDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2018 AT THE FACULTY OF
ENGINEERING DRAWING HALL**

Principal Officers of the University here present

The Chairman of the occasion, Engr. Benjie Ezeagwu

MD/CEO, Nelson-Benjamin Limited, Enugu

MD/CEO, Tuwal Limited

Dean, Faculty of Engineering, Professor O.V. Ekechukwu

Deans of Faculty/Directors of Institute/Centre

The Keynote Speaker, Engr. Thomas Emetoh

Distinguished Professors and other Academics here present

Distinguished Emeritus Professors

Heads of Academic and Administrative Unit here present

Staff of the Department

Illustrious and Distinguished Tharmac Alumni

Lions and Lionesses

I am glad to welcome you to this occasion and wish to express my joy over your willingness and commitment to answering the call. It is very important to remember home and to remember those who laboured to impart knowledge to you. You can attest to the fact that knowledge is power. Without the knowledge you acquired while you were here as undergraduate or postgraduate students, you may probably not be where you are today. The Department and the University in general have not relented to impart similar knowledge to your successors even today, although not without challenges.

You can look around to discover that a lot of changes have taken place since you left. While you may be glad in some ways you may also be surprised that not much have been done depending on the perspective from which you view it. Several Administrations have passed with each solving its peculiar problems and challenges. This Administration is barely 4 years old and having noted the enormous challenges facing us when I came on board, **I resolved to return this University to its pride of place as a research institution and centre of academic excellence.**

In 2014 I launched my five-point strategic plan. The Visioning/Strategic Planning Sessions involved all the stakeholders in the University with a view to laying the foundation for the University's strategic agenda for five years. With the emergence of a new Governing Council of the University of Nigeria in 2017 under **Chief Mike Olorunfemi as Chairman and Pro-Chancellor, a new enthusiasm was ignited to work vigorously to get the University of Nigeria to be globally visible.** It is necessary to recognize the fact that **catapulting the University of Nigeria to this enviable position has come with a lot of hard work and commitment.** It involves working relentlessly and injecting the culture of excellence in all spheres of the University system, ranging from academic matters to infrastructure development.

Prior to 2014, the University had a backlog of programmes/courses requiring accreditation. Most Faculties and Departments had no accreditation. They survived by paying penalties to the National Universities Commission (NUC). **Today, the story is different, all the over 100 academic programmes running in this university are fully accredited.**

We all know what it means to have a University having all her programmes fully accredited. That is the real number one **UNIVERSITY!** Please take note of the following under the present dispensation:

- Faculty of Vocational and Technical Education (FVTE) and Faculty of Basic Medical Science (FBMS) have been created.
- Four institutes have been established.
- Distance and e-Learning programmes established and accredited by the NUC.

- Academic curricula of different programmes in the University have been revised to reflect current global realities including engineering.
- Mechatronics Engineering programme has been established in this Faculty.
- The culture of timely release of results has been entrenched.
- A Revised and Updated Yellow Book for appraisal of academic staff is now in place.
- Improved Webometric Rankings and the latest ranking of the University of Nigeria among the best in the world by Times Higher Education global ranking of Universities.
- Instituted payments as incentives for publication in Thompson Reuters Impact Factor Journal.
- Established the UNN Business School for Executives in Industry and Commerce. You can take advantage of this.
- Established a Lion Science Park.
- Established a Professorial Chair in Mathematics
- Established academic linkages for international collaborations across continents.
- Established UNESCO International Center for Biotechnology.
- Staff today enjoy regular and prompt payment of their salaries
- Cleared the backlog of promotion for stagnated staff.
- Promotion of unprecedented number of Lecturers to the professorial cadre.
- Re-activated the conferment of the title of Emeritus professor.
- Training and sponsorship of staff to conferences and workshops (locally and internationally) through TETFund interventions.
- Sports promotion as staff health packages- the WAUG 2015, UNGA2 2017
- Hosted successfully- the summit of Vice-Chancellors of Universities in Africa (COVIDSET)

The list is unending. Staff welfare is not overlooked. There is massive employment across the University to solve the problem of lack of manpower. Many young academics are granted overseas study leave under various university approved scholarships. This is to enable us inject the best brains into our teaching system. All these account for the relative peace that pervades the campuses of our university.

Infrastructure Development:

- Most inherited uncompleted projects at Nsukka, UNEC, and Ituku/Ozalla campuses are receiving attention. While some await commissioning, some others have reached advanced stages and nearing completion.
- Renovated students' hostels and upgraded their toilet facilities.
- Sunk boreholes and facilitated water reticulation, especially at UNEC that had no water for years.
- Purchased water tankers to beef up water supply
- Embarked on road reconstruction and drainages on the campuses
- Purchased and installed new power generators on the campuses for improved power supply.
- Institutionalized environmental greenery for healthy living
- Installed security cameras to beef up security of lives and property

Trade Unions/SUG Relations

- Maintained a good rapport with the Trade Unions
- Re-invigorated, institutionalized and maintained a good rapport with student Union Government. For the first time, the SUG of both campuses have official and branded buses of their own.
- Instituted and promoted the policy of one- student-one laptop initiative with a view to having a 21st century compliant students
- Introduced policies to enhance efficient management of examinations and the processing of students' results thereby sparing students the agony of waiting for long period for their results to be computed.

Distinguished ladies and Gentlemen, the catalogue of successes in the past four year plus, is unending .They merely speak volumes of how diligent we have been working as a family since 2014 when I assumed office as the 14th Vice-Chancellor of this University.

For many of us who have international experiences in university management, you can agree with me that universities are not solely funded by the government. In fact, about 60 – 75% of the funds that enter those universities for research and development come from the industry and her Alumni and that is why at University

of Nigeria, **we are encouraging our departments and units to establish linkages with the industry and their alumni.** I am personally impressed with the theme of your Homecoming and the initiative of the Head of Department and members of staff to organize this maiden edition of the homecoming. **I commend you also who have remembered to return home to join hands with us to build your Alma Mata.** As we work towards restoring the dignity of man, **we will strive to restore the dignity of the University of Nigeria!**

Once more, welcome back to the **Lion's Den.** Safe journey when you go back.

Thank you for listening

Prof. Benjamin C. Ozumba

Vice-Chancellor