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# The SOCIOSCOPE

A Publication of Faculty of the Social Sciences, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

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## How I became ESUT VC and the journey so far

**Prof Okolie, ESUT VC**

*The Enugu State Government appointed Professor Aloysius-Michaels Nwabugwu Okolie as the Vice-Chancellor (VC) of the Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT) with effect from Monday, April 4, 2022. Until his appointment, Prof Okolie was the Dean, Faculty of the Social Sciences, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. He was also a former Chairman, University of Nigeria Nsukka Chapter of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU). In the last week of July, 2022, the renowned international scholar and researcher with 108 publications to his credit, spoke with some members of the editorial board of Socioscope in his office at Agbani.*



### **Congratulations on your appointment as the Vice Chancellor of ESUT. What does this appointment mean to you?**

Thank you so much. I warmly welcome you to ESUT. I will say that my appointment is by the grace of God. It is very important for us to underscore how God was able to allow the grace to manifest. The appointment came at a time when we were not really optimistic that it would happen. There were over 30 applicants for the position. But for the first time, the visitor of the university felt that he has encountered somebody who he felt would make a difference. So in spite of all the hiccups, he stood his ground and did the right thing. Probably if I have not become Dean of Faculty, I would not have become the VC. I was thinking about becoming Head of Department of



Political Science in UNN, but my name was removed from the list. It was at that time that I started thinking about running for an elective position. God uses people in various ways as instruments of change. I met an ESUT that is remarkably different from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Here in ESUT, you could do things without formalizing them. So we looked at the situation and felt that University is Universal. Therefore certain basic principles must be enforced.

I told them that I am an abnormal person when I came. As an academic evangelist, I will make sure that nobody will be denied the position that he/she merited in ESUT. Directors will be appointed based on competence and not where they are coming from. Any good leader must be selfish in appointment – your preoccupation should be to appoint the best hands who will record successes in their places of operation which will translate to your success.

Payment of salaries is the right of staff and not a privilege. The primary responsibility of any VC in ESUT for now is to make sure that he/she is paying salaries. But we are going to overcome that. We are going to find some alternative, major alternative source of income for ESUT. We came here and met almost a crisis situation. So what we tried to do is to find out that why we do not have financial resources. We have seen that everywhere is leaking in terms of finance coming in and drainages of the finance. So we have started blocking the loopholes. For instance we are not going to have person to person contact on the issue of processing transcript. Everything will be 100% digitalized beyond what UNN is doing. We are going to the level of digitalizing certificates. In fact after this year, before convocation next year all graduating students that will be involved in convocation will collect their certificates on Monday preceding the Saturday convocation. We met almost 18000 unsigned certificate. We have signed up many of them. The primary responsibility of a VC is to advance the welfare of staff and students and to provide a conducive atmosphere for the university to strive. I think it will sound simple. But the implementation is what will be different between one vice chancellor and another. So a VC must be thinking. If knowledge is wealth and we have a university that is a bastion of

knowledge, why is that bastion not creating wealth? In engineering faculty at ESUT, we are talking about going to the level of fabrication and getting them to do that thing they are known for. ESUT Engineering fabricated the mace you see at the national assembly. ESUT has been on top. So what happened?

I summoned current and 3 parts deans of engineering here to reprimand them. I said it is no longer business as usual, and we are going back to the old order. We have gone to the faculty of agriculture.

By the time we spend one year here, we must be feeding people with fowl and fish.

I am working on creating two faculties and I want to create the faculties without creating problems. So I want to drop two faculty buildings before I will pronounce the faculty. One will be health sciences. Here we still have social sciences and humanities as one faculty. The combination is awkward. So I will separate the two. I want to give another building to the social sciences. The old building will remain as faculty of arts. I want to erect a senate building. I have gone to Abuja to find a way, but what is delaying that is because they said ESUT has so many buildings they have not completed. I have gone to defend all the abandoned projects in Abuja with my team. We have defended all of them successfully. In fact TETFund has approved money for the completion of the iconic building for the Faculty of Pharmacy. I have just given directive yesterday to put smart boards in all the faculty buildings and in some departments.

So let them beg again for another UNN person to come to ESUT as VC after my tenure. That's is our primary goal.

**Given that ESUT is a state university, are there some elements of political influence or some powers that come to be upon you in making appointments?**

I really need to thank God who made it possible for the actors to know what is acceptable at this time. They gave me 100% free hand. I have to thank the visitor for this because he understood my kind of person and he brought me here. When Awgu people went to thank the governor of Enugu state for the appointment, he said, "You do not know the son you have". But it is likely that when you come into a system you will see some cleavages and factions. The critical point is to make sure that you are seen as not coming from a particular area but administering.

**When you are in a position to change things positively, you become an abnormal person.**





I don't have interferences.

**You have mentioned an achievement that concerns staff. What are some of the things you have achieved within these few months regarding the welfare of students?**

We came in here and discovered that they don't have student union. The previous administration banned the students from meeting and part of the reason was the fear of conducting SUG elections in the violence prone area. But we knew that if we must move forward the major stakeholders who are the students must be carried along. So within two weeks of assumption of office, we made some changes in the managerial level in terms of managing students and we conducted the SUG elections and inaugurated all the officers. And I really need to appreciate the students because they thought they are seeing the correct person and they are cooperating appreciably as far as I am concerned. For the first time since the past **18 years**, we started exam and ended it as scheduled. The time table was strictly followed by lecturers in administering exams. We have released some funds to bring their vehicle back to the road. We have had orientation. We are now working on the green lawn where they call 'love' garden. We are working with MTN to have a free browsing zone for the students. I have signed collaboration with CLEEN Foundation, and *Oluaka* in Owerri. In *Oluaka* the students of ESUT will be going for their SIWES. I have gone to Abuja to discuss with somebody with a view to finding out the possibility of bringing down an ultra-modern mechanic, automated and digitalized centre here so that those in mechanical and electrical engineering will have practical experiences. It will be a demonstration centre. The place will be maintaining all the university vehicles. We have now mandated all contractors to allow students from civil engineering and other related departments to be brought into their sites to see the practical things they are being taught in class. I want to instill technology in all spheres of human endeavour such that whether you are in psychology there must be technology that will activate your innovation.

We have attracted people that will give scholarship. For example in Law Faculty, we got people that would be giving scholarship of 1.5 million naira each. Few days ago I was at the students' park. I saw the state of infrastructure there and we have given a marching order for the inclusion of the road as part of where we are going to renovate using the state government. I have some classrooms and auditoriums that are leaking. Three of them are under renovation/roofting as we are speaking now. The era where lecturers prevent students from graduating will be over. We have NEEDS Assessment project abandoned that would have taken care of over 840 students. So immediately I came in here, I started

**It is not a question of Okolie. It is a question of UNN. Our image is at stake.**

finding solutions and I am happy to report that I have brought a vendor that have taken over the structure. It will be completed in six months. We have brought in people under BOT who are building hostels within the campus. Part of the crisis we usually have with host community is being insensitive. By September, 20 persons from the four neighbouring communities will be employed full time here. Yesterday I have equally set up a special committee to do a kind of survey of all boreholes here and see the area coverage for each boreholes. I will look for funds so that we can sink more boreholes. By the time we pass through that we will now move towards the water to wealth project. We want to have table water and vehicles that can convey water to town to make money for the vendors under public private partnership (PPP). I am already thinking equally to expand the scope of entrepreneurship here. What I intend to do is to sign memorandum of understanding (MOU) with shoe makers, tailors and other people in Aba to come to ESUT. Students could come in there to learn it directly and once they learn it you begin to see that people will become self-employed.

A major problem we have here is electricity. A long term and short term strategy was immediately developed. First, within one month of assuming office, I brought an additional feeder to this place. The long term was to go through the ministry of power to see if they can drop a 330 KVA substation to the university. I have approved that the two coaster buses owned by the university should be used as welfare bus. They don't need to make returns to the university. The buses will be taking workers to Enugu and back at minimal cost. We have reinvented the spirit of punctuality among staff of ESUT. People are now coming to work. They have no option not to work.

**Some of these achievements appear to be centred on the main campus at Agbani. Are there some impacts that you have made in other campuses such as the medical school?**

In the college, there was no supply of electricity when I came. The power has been restored the same night as I promised. I equally met a college that have been having a major crisis because they were unable to graduate their medical students. It was a major issue because they admitted beyond the quota. They have gone to many people for assistance. His Excellency, the governor, would have helped them to solve it, but at least they would have started solving it for the governor to know that they have the capacity. What probably happened was that he didn't see enough fire coming from the place in terms of the solution. So what I did was to call the registrar of regulating body in Abuja, booked an appointment with him and called the provost of the College to accompany me to Abuja. After our visit, the registrar has approved that the induction should take place. And we have agreed, formally and informally that we are going to work on our quota. It is very



disheartening that for over twenty decades of this university, their quota for medicine is 50. So by the grace of God I will move it to 150. We are very optimistic that the Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria is going to increase the quota. By 1<sup>st</sup> July we equally had the induction of Medical laboratory scientists.

I have, through the governing council, employed over 70 staff for the medical school because their major problem is staffing. The provost just came today for the adjunct component of staffing. The wage bill will be nearly thirty million naira in addition to what we are paying already. But we must find a way of making sure that we are paying. One thing about being a good administrator not necessary being a good VC is that you must get up from your seat and go to the point of disputation. You don't continue writing. Most of the things are not settled by writing and you must be sensitive to phone calls. During the weekend, I received a call that a head of department in a particular department has been holding mature students for five years. The matter was settled here yesterday too. There are so many panels and committees ongoing now and all of them are aimed at sanitizing the system. It might interest you to note, even though on the negative side, that this place has never had convocation since 2017. So I intend to break that yoke. I want to hold a convocation November this year.

**Is it that the previous administrations were not interested in having the convocation?**

You may not really blame them. It is about tenacity. It is about understanding the correct thing to be done if it involves resources. I am not thinking about resources because I will generate the resources for the convocation. The renovation and furnishing of the Vice Chancellor's office is at no cost to the university. I am giving 2014 model Highlander car to my five principal officers at no cost to the university. In fact the cars will arrive from the USA at the end of this month. So it is a question of your understanding the potentials you have and how to harvest them. I have a wonderful team. That was what God already provided waiting for me.

**So you didn't appoint them, you inherited them?**

I inherited them, but I got my DVC, last month. The rest were here before I came. They are a very faithful team. All of them are doing very well.

**Sometime ago the state government decided to decentralized ESUT following the original master plan. What is the current situation?**

Our university has not considered this. But you know when a visitor signed something that is a kind of policy, you have no option than to implement it. I have to admit that for now it is not on our table. What should have been the medical school at Igbo-Eno in Nsukka has been licensed to operate as State University of Medical and Applied Sciences (SUMAS). The decentralization is

already a policy and it is a good policy if it is effectively done because assuming if we have a campus in all the senatorial zones in Enugu state, it takes education down to the grassroots. But if it is not properly planned to achieve its intended purpose, you will see that definitely it will be counterproductive.

**Some state universities are not often serious with international collaborations and linkages. Do you have any plans to make ESUT have these benefits?**

**As I speak to you now we have done a lot of things at no cost to the university.**

Yes, I am already working with Iowa University for collaboration. I think I am attracting more collaborations these days than some federal universities. For instance, we have been included as a centre of excellence for Royal Academy of Engineers and I have just received an equipment worth 75000 pounds. We are among the six universities selected as demonstration universities for solar power generation.

**It appears that after you came and left, the trend of unopposed deanship candidates is about being the norm in the Faculty of the Social Sciences.**

Let me be honest with you, what happened was by the grace of God. I am aware that two candidates were in the race before I came. Some of them were asked to contest for deanship by some senior professors. I declared for deanship election on inspiration. Remember the story I told you. I was to be head, but some people said you cannot, not that you are not qualified but to show you we own the world. I was under pressure from friends and council members to petition them but I did not do so. I woke up one morning and told my wife that since they could not give me appointive position, is there anything wrong in going for elective position where their hands will not reach? Because it was an appointed time by God, I never had any one-on-one discussion with anybody or phone discussion with the other deanship contestants. I just discovered that on the last day, I was the only person that submitted the nomination form. If such a thing happens and they misapply it by poor result you block the road. When I came in, there was a kind of seeming vacuum, but I was happy that before I left we had agreed that this is the direction we are going. In the midst of not receiving any kobo from the university all through, we were able to achieve what we did by the grace of God. So people are now becoming wiser that you vote for people based on what they have to drop on the table for the development of the Faculty.

**So it will be a good development for the faculty to move in this direction?**





Yeah, it will be a good development. Begin to beg people who are eminently qualified and have something to offer to vie for the position of Dean. There are people that will be there as Deans and I will not think about coming in for any form of assistance to the faculty because I know that anything you bring there will be embezzled. The important thing is that the next person who is coming has something to offer. That should be the guiding principle in the faculty and I am happy for that.

**You have already raised the bar at the Faculty of the Social Sciences in terms of excellent performance. What is your advice to the incoming dean?**

I have discussed privately with Prof Ike E. Onyishi in my house here in Enugu. There could be more critical and better direction which he could take beside what I have take. He should feel free to bring his personality and ideas to bear. But the important point is to sustain what we have started building and complete where we have not finished. So I advised him that the seats in the Faculty of the Social Sciences hall must be completed. I can assist in getting people to donate money so that we can complete the number of seats in that hall. I have already concluded arrangement for refurbishing the entire Russwurm building. I completed the ceiling work. It

**Let the Faculty of the Social Sciences live by example. Begin to reject people who have no business being on the deanship seat.**

remains the painting. I did a sketch that will cost us 12 point something million to modernize the faculty

quadrangle so that when you enter there you will feel that you are in a place of learning. We must do something on getting more auditoriums and staff offices. I was willing

to reintroduce physical and virtual library in the faculty. So I think he should pursue infrastructure and he should pursue content.

**Would you want to leave a message to members of the university community in ESUT and UNN?**

For ESUT here, I appreciate their support and cooperation. I appreciate their sacrifices because it is not easy to work with me. When I came in here, in the first two months, we can have management meeting three times a day. They were overstressing themselves. We were able to immediately stabilize and lay the foundation on which we are building. So I appreciate all of them. And I promise them that I am going to give them selfless and open leadership where there will be not only accountability, but also a university of invention, a thinking university, and a university that can generate fund and manage the fund internally, in a transparent manner and they will be seeing the glory of God at work. For my faculty in UNN, I plead with them to understand the situation we have found ourselves in and support the incoming dean. No dean can actually succeed in everything in the world. Give him the maximum support, give him the maximum contact, and as much as possible obey him. If loyalty is guaranteed, we can be rest assured that he has troops that will support him. For the university community, let us think right, let us look at our university with passion. Let us put in our best. Let us as much as possible minimize factions. The main thing is that we are academics, and we must support academically minded people and harvest their ideas towards making the University of Nigeria, greater. We deserve better and I think that through our collective efforts, we shall get to a higher height where people are anticipating that we should be.





## A Brief Report on Department of Economics, University of Nigeria Nsukka

### from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2020 to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2022

I thank God for the privilege to serve as the Head, Department of Economics, University of Nigeria Nsukka, for the past two years. During this period we have focused on quality teaching and research in order to raise world class scholars and economists that will be nationally and globally recognized. We have actively motivated our students to be able to observe, understand and critically analyze data on the multifarious socio-economic problems of the world and Nigeria in particular, so as to effectively contribute objectively to solving economic problems. Our young staff members and students have also been supported to acquire more skills that aided them in understanding theories, methods and philosophy of economic and policy analysis, through the various seminars and workshops we have held as a Department. We were able to graduate over 150 postgraduate students (MSc and PhD) within this period. This is quite remarkable. Again, during this period some of our staff members also got promotions, scholarship opportunities and research grants. This has enabled our Department to be well recognized both nationally and internationally.

Other programmes and Projects Executed by the Department during this Period

**Hosting of the first Virtue International Conference:** We held the first virtual international conference as a



Department from 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> February, 2022. The conference, held in conjunction with the Centre for Contemporary Economics and Allied Research, Department of Economics, UNN, attracted scholars and participants from different continents of the world, thus enhancing the visibility of our Department and the entire University.

**Development of a new website for the Department:** For the first time, the Department got a new website that is very interactive and user-friendly. The project was supported and funded by some of our Alumni members and it has become a source of information dissemination from the Department to the larger society.

**Construction of an overhead tank for the Department:**

A new overhead tank was constructed behind the departmental building to ensure that all the toilets, washrooms and the entire department are always kept clean. Our Alumni members also supported and funded the construction. The project was so impressive that it attracted the attention of the Vice Chancellor of the university who commissioned it on the 25<sup>th</sup> of March 2021.



**Landscaping, asphaltting and**





**beautification of the Departmental environment:** One of the biggest achievements of the current administration is landscaping of the department with asphalt overlay. The asphalt overlay was topped with a world class car park marking and planting of royal palms that beautified the entire departmental environment. This project was also facilitated and funded by my former classmates (NESA Alumni Set, 2001). By God's grace, we made huge contributions and sacrifices to give the Department a new outlook that has enhanced the ambience of the entire environment. The Vice Chancellor and his team also commissioned the project on Thursday, 24th February, 2022, amidst pomp and pageantry, while commending the Department for being a trail blazer!

**Repainting of the Departmental Building and Other Repairs:** During this period, we also embarked on series of repairs on the Departmental building. Many of the roofing sheets and ceiling boards that fell off before this administration took off were repaired and fixed. We also repaired some of the offices that had leaking roofs and electrical faults. At the end, the entire Departmental building (Ansah Goldie Building) was beautifully repainted, thus giving us a brand new edifice that is so convivial for teaching and learning.

**Journal of Economics and Allied Research (JEAR):** During the last two years, we have ensured the continuous and timely publication of our Departmental journal, the Journal of Economics and Allied Research (JEAR). This journal, published under the Centre for Contemporary Economics and Allied Research, Department of Economics, UNN, has greatly afforded our staff, postgraduate students and other researchers from across the globe the opportunity of publishing their research outputs for the benefit of humanity.

**Conclusion:** I thank God for the privilege to serve in this capacity. I also thank the Vice Chancellor and the Dean for the confidence reposed on me to work with them. I also appreciate our staff members, students and the leaders of various committees in our department who worked assiduously to ensure that we achieved maximum results. May God bless our Department, Faculty and the University of Nigeria as a whole.

Dr. Emmanuel Nwosu  
Head, Department of Economics  
UNN.



## Fellowship Award:

Visiting Research Fellow,  
Institute of African Studies,  
University of Bayreuth,  
Germany.

**M**y motivation for this fellowship is the opportunity it offers for scientific exchange and research engagement with a cohort of research professors, research fellows and faculty members. The fellowship is a platform to advance my unrelenting desire to fully exploit and develop my research skills, gain more research experience and interact with renowned scholars and distinguished intellectuals from different parts of the world. I aim to leverage this platform to attain academic excellence and contribute tangibly to global scholarship, and in return offer quality research mentorship to other colleagues. The title of my project is Migration Control and Biometric Technology in West Africa. The aim of this project is to understand the nexuses between (im) mobility of people and migration regimes across West Africa and its complex interactions with the prevailing biometric technology in the region.

Dr. Victor Chidubem Iwuoha  
Senior Lecturer, Department of Political Science/  
School of General Studies  
University of Nigeria, Nsukka.





## Department of Geography

**P**rofessor T.C. Nzeadibe was appointed the Head of the Department of Geography at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN) August 2021. He doubled as the Associate Dean of the Faculty of the Social Sciences a position he has held since August 2020 before becoming the Acting Dean following the appointment of the Dean as the Vice-Chancellor of Enugu State University of Science and Technology in April 2022. The Department of Geography

**CONFERENCES:** The Association for Israeli Cultural Studies led by Prof. I.A Madu in collaboration with Population, Environment and Development Research Group, University of Nigeria Nsukka held the 2nd International Conference on Israel's Development and Sustainability Experience 2022. The theme was "Mainstreaming the Environment into Sustainable Development" and was held February 2 – 4, 2022. The Council of Association of Nigerian Geographers (ANG) approved our hosting of the 62<sup>nd</sup> Annual ANG National Conference 2022 (ANG-UNN 2022) by Department of Geography, UNN. The approved theme is "Climate change, disease pandemics and Insecurity: The Geographical Perspective".

**PARTNERSHIPS AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS:** The Department is collaborating with the Ministry of Aviation to mount a Training for Graduate Meteorologists in the Federal Ministry of Aviation. Former Head of Department, **Professor P.O Phil-Eze** was appointed as the MD, Anambra State

Erosion, Watershed and Climate Change Agency (ANSEWCCA). The Department received a printer from the Class of 2004 led by Emmanuel Terungwa Osu, who graduated with First-Class in 2004. He is an entrepreneur and currently the founder and CEO of Debutch UK limited and Jahga UK limited. The Department is currently reaching out to other alumni for support.



**Geography Department in photograph with Representative of Vice-Chancellor, Principal Officers of UNN and Aviation Ministry Officials**

has made some remarkable strides over the past one year in diverse areas such as research and publication, external engagements, fellowships, scholarships and grants as well as community service.

**AWARDS AND GRANTS:** On Wednesday 15th December 2021, Prof Nzeadibe won the prestigious International Science Communication Award received at The Conversation Africa 2nd Annual West Africa Science Communication Awards as the author with the most published articles from November 30 2020-October 31 2021. He also helped to establish the UNN-Virtual Food Sustainability Academy (VFSA) after winning the Transformation Acceleration Grant (TAG) from Swiss National Science Foundation (SNF) as part of a team to establish the Virtual Food Sustainability Academy (VFSA) along with Dr. Chinedu Mba also fro Geography Department, UNN. The University of Nigeria, Nsukka Virtual Food Sustainability Academy (UNN-VFSA) is based in the Department of Geography, University of Nigeria, Nsukka with Prof T.C Nzeadibe as the Project Leader.



**Training of Aviation Meteorologists at the Department's Automated Observatory**





**STAFF FURTHER EDUCATION AND RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP:** Dr Yemi Adewoyin won a Post-doctoral research fellowship in Population Health and Spatial Demography at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa. **Christopher Uche Ezeh** (Kwame Nkrumah University Ghana) **Chukwudi Samuel Ekwezu** (Universite de Lome, Lome, Togo), **Cletus Famous Nwankwo** (University of Leicester, United Kingdom), **Emeka Edwin Igboeli** (Xinjian Institute of Geography and Ecology, University of Chinese Academy of Sciences) and **Christopher Ihinegbu** (United Nations

of imbibing the culture of environmental stewardship and management in the students and the larger university community. A previous event led by the HOD, Prof Nzeadibe was covered by LION FM, UNN and posted on the Department's Facebook page for wide dissemination in the university community and beyond.

**IMPROVED GLOBAL VISIBILITY:** The Department has continued to raise its global visibility profile by consistently publicizing its activities and updating its social media handles. The HOD appointed a lecturer in the

Department, Mr. Cletus Famous Nwankwo, who is currently a Ph.D student in University of Leicester as its Social Media Manager. The HOD also appointed Mr John Mba Onuoha as Student Ambassador to support the



University - Institute for Environment and Human Security (UNU-EHS) and the University of Bonn, Germany) are currently on scholarship for their professional development.

**PHD SUCCESSES:** Ijeoma G. Nwosu, Romanus Ayadiuno, Godson C Asuoha and Christopher Ikeogu defended their doctoral researches.

**GIS TRAINING:** The Department organised a GIS training as part of the World GIS Day event and as part of the Corporate Social Responsibility of the Department to the University of Nigeria Community. The training was led by Chinedu Ogbodo and took place NOV 17 – NOV 19. The event which featured a Resource Person, Mr Ike Chukwualuka (a graduate of the Department) from EEDC, Enugu had 30 participants from 5 Faculties of the University of Nigeria. The Department continues to engage the academic community on GIS and other matters through videos on its social media handles.

**ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT:** The Department continues to organize activities in Environmental Citizenship and Environmental Action by Geography Students. This involves periodic clean up of the environment of the Faculty of the Social Sciences as a way

Department's engagement with external agencies, individuals and organizations. Follow us on **Facebook:** @unngeog [<https://www.facebook.com/unngeog/>] **LinkedIn:** <https://www.linkedin.com/in/geounn/> **Twitter** on: @geounn and our blog: <https://geounn.medium.com/>. **Dr Hyacinth Nnamchi**, a senior lecturer in the Department was the Lead Author in the (Working Group I – Chapter 2: Changing state of the climate system) for the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

**COVID-19 RESEARCH:** Researchers from the Department of Geography at the University of Nigeria have made a respectable modicum of contributions to COVID-19 research and policy with over 15 publications from diverse viewpoints in peer reviewed indexed journals. Researchers of the Department have also published OP-EDs on these themes in *The Conversation Africa* and other blogs.

**CHALLENGES:** Challenges of COVID-19 and the strikes of 2022 greatly limited opportunities for what we could do as a Department. The acute scarcity of funds to implement development projects is also a major challenge to the Department.

**DEAN**



## Department of Religion and Cultural Studies

By Chidinma Precious Ukeachusim (Ph.D) Member of the *Socioscope* Committee

In the past three years, under the headships of Ven. Dr. B.C.D. Diara (August 2019-August 2021) and Rev Sr. Dr Mary Jerome Obiora (1 August 2021 till date), both undergraduate and Post-graduate academic activities have been the focal point of excellence.

### Achievements of the Department of Religion and Cultural Studies

- 1) Through the Department of Religion and Cultural Studied, three degree awarding institutions are affiliated to University of Nigeria, Nsukka; namely  
(1) Trinity Theological College, Umuahia, Abia State  
(2) Spiritan International School of Theology, Attakwu, Enugu State and  
(3) West African Theological Seminary (WATS), Iyan Ikpaja, Lagos
- 2) Ven. Dr. Diara who was the Head from 1<sup>st</sup> August, 2019 till 1<sup>st</sup> August 2021 formed a committee that will engage the University administration for a building be raised for the Department. Rev Sr. Dr. Obiorah made some pro-active moves through the Building Committee and the Vice-chancellor has graciously allocated a piece of land to the Department for the building of a permanent Departmental building for the Department of Religion and Cultural Studies. Work has started on the site.
- 3) The Department has to its credit a bus which was purchased nine years ago but was refurbished by the past HOD, Ven. Dr. Diara and is still being maintained by the current HOD, Rev. Sr Dr. M.J. Obiora.
- 4) In February 2021, under the headship of Ven. Dr. Diara, the Department successfully held its first virtual International Conference. Earlier in the year 2022, under the headship of Rev. Sr. Dr Obiorah, the Department organized an International hybrid conference that attracted a high number of participants



from three continents: Africa, Europe and America. The Proceedings from the International Hybrid Conference have been published in Nsukka Journal of Religion and Cultural Studies Volumes 7 & 8. This Journal of the Department has been published this time both in hard copy and online.

- 5) The Department has robust and flourishing Postgraduate Programmes. Formally, the Department's Postgraduate Program is managed under five stress areas (Old Testament, New Testament, Religion and Society, Church History and African Traditional Religion), but recently, the Department's Postgraduate Program has improved to six areas by the inclusion of Religion and Conflict Resolution. In the past two years, the Department of Religion and Cultural Studies has graduated 25 MA students and 21 PhD students.
- 6) Rev. Sr. Dr Obiora, the current head of the Department has initiated a process that is working towards revising the contents of all Undergraduate and PG courses being taught in the Department to meet modern day scholarship in Religion and Cultural Studies.
- 7) A member of the Department made a donation that enabled the acquisition and installation of an alternative sustainable (solar) source of power for Department office.

### Challenges of the Department of Religion and Cultural Studies

- 1) Office accommodation is inadequate for the academic staff of the Department.
- 2) The Departmental general office space is small.
- 3) The dearth of classrooms affects the functionality of academic programs in the Department both for undergraduate s and post graduate students.
- 4) T h e Department needs sponsors to facilitate the building project that has been initiated.







## Achievements of Prof. Jonah Onuoha As The HOD of The Department of Political Science, University Of Nigeria, Nsukka (2019-2022)

By Prof. Jonah Onuoha, Ph.D. - Outgoing HOD



Under my watch as the Head of Department (HOD), the following achievements were recorded:

1. **A brand new Innoson 15-seater bus:** The Department reached out to Chief Innocent Chukwuma and the result was a donation of a brand new 15-seater bus. We remain eternally grateful to Chief Chukwuma, the Chairman of Innoson Groups, for this kind gesture.
2. **A brand new 500kva generator:** In an effort to ensure a constant power supply to the Department, aimed at boosting academic activities of staff and students, we reached out to our benefactors and benefactresses and one of them supported us with a brand new 500kva generator. Others also supported the Department with a brand new modern photocopying machine, printer, 5000cp stabilizer and a new projecting machine.
3. During the 2019 NUC accreditation exercise, the Department reached out to the University Management and this yielded a result that enabled us mount two new smart boards in two of our classrooms.
4. Since I assumed office as the HOD, the Departmental welfare programme has been very robust with many receiving their entitlements as and when due.

### List of other academic achievements:

1. Under my watch, the Department recorded full accreditation from the NUC; scoring over 80% in the exercise of 2019.
2. We have also successfully graduated over 15 Ph.D, 100 M.Sc. and 500 B.Sc. students,

respectively. The staff of the Department are highly appreciated for their cooperation in achieving these enviable results.

3. Under my watch, the Department successfully organized a first international conference. It is important to note that this was the first of its kind in over five decades since the existence of the Department.
4. The Department also recorded consistent publication of its journal, the *University of Nigeria Journal of Political Economy*. This journal was successfully launched online and can be accessed on <https://unjpe.com/index.php/UNJPE>
5. The Department equally recorded successful promotions of two persons to the rank of professor, 7 persons to the rank of senior lecturer and many others to the ranks of L1 and L2, among others. Meanwhile, the processes leading to promotion of about 7 others to the ranks of professor, reader and senior lecturer are at advanced stage.

### Challenges:

The major challenge was paucity of funds to run the Department. Everything the Department achieved under my watch was majorly through self-help and our ability to reach out to donors and friends of the Department. The incessant strikes of ASUU within the period of my administration on account of the federal government's failure to honour the agreement reached with the union also limited other plans I had laid for having a new Departmental building, which I believe the next administration will continue from where I stopped. The second international conference of the Department would have also been organized if not for the current strike. Hopefully, the next administration will continue at the end of the strike. The strike also stalled the processes leading to the approval of a new B.Sc. programme on International Relations developed by the Department.

I wish to appreciate the Vice Chancellor for considering me worthy of the appointment as the HOD, my colleagues for their support, and other staff and students of the Department for making these achievements possible. I wish the incoming HOD a successful tenure.





## Milestones of Prof Ike Onyishi as HOD Psychology

**P**rof Ike E. Onyishi was appointed as HOD of psychology for the 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 academic session by the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Charles Arizechukwu Igwe. Prof Onyishi mobilised resources within and outside the Department to improve facilities in the Department that enabled the Department to be reinstated from interim National Universities Commission (NUC) accreditation status to full status in 2021. More specifically he procured new items for the Department during his tenure and they include: **Samsung Split Unit Air Conditioner (2 Units); Office tables at the general office (4); Shelf at the HOD's office (1); Television at the HOD's office (1); Go TV decoder (1); Wi-Fi WLAN facilities at the Library, classrooms, and offices; Shelf at the library (2); Library Table (1); Work Tables at the Library (2); Shelves at the Laboratories; Office Chairs (20); Curtains at the HOD's office, General office, laboratories and the Psychological Services Centre; New hardcopy and e-copy books in the Departmental Library; Escape-Avoidance Rodent box at the Experimental Lab; Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory - 3 (MMPI-3). The MMPI was acquired through a collaboration of staff of the Department and University of Toronto, Canada.**



The Department of Psychology established collaborations/relationship with many leading institutions across the world during the headship of the Humboldt scholar, and they include: University of Pretoria, Rhodes University, and University of Toronto. By virtue of these linkages, staff members of psychology are currently visiting researchers/scholars (e.g., **Prof. Ike Onyishi**) or external examiners (e.g., Dr J. C. Chukwuorji) in these universities. During the two year tenure of Prof Ike Onyishi as HOD, staff made many breakthrough in research including: (1) International collaborations that resulted in publication of journal articles in highly ranked journals such as *Nature Communications, Journal of Experimental and Social Psychology, Scientific Reports, Psychological Science, Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, among others.* (2) Wining of the 2020 TETFund National Research Fund (Ike E. Onyishi is the Principal Investigator). (3) Postdoctoral programme at

the German Cancer Research Centre in Heidelberg, Germany (Rev. Sr. Dr. M-C. C. Onyedibe). (4) Collaboration with Centre for Translation and Implementation Research, College of Medicine, UNN to establish HealthySunrise Wellness Laboratory at our Psychological Service Centre (Co-ordinator: Dr. J. C. Chukwuorji) (5) Collaboration with the University of Toronto, Canada, that facilitated the procurement of MMPI-3 thereby making the Department of Psychology, UNN - the first institution in Africa to use the newly developed Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory-3 (MMPI-3) at the beginning of 2022 (Facilitator: Dr. T. C. Orjiakor). Evidence of the enabling environment for better resourcing and quality of research in the department can be seen in the Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) which was released August 15, 2022. Psychology department in UNN emerged in the





401 to 500 group globally and it was UNN's strongest base in the latest ranking.

Many academic staff members were promoted during his headship: Prof. John E. Eze, and Prof. Phillip C. Mefoh became Professors; Rev. Sr. Dr. C. C. Oyedibe, Dr. J. C. Chukwuorji, and Dr. T. C. Orjiakor were promoted to the rank of senior lecturers. Other members of staff were also regularised or promoted to various ranks. Rev. Sr. Dr. M-C. C. Oyedibe is currently on a postdoctoral programme at the German Cancer Research Centre in Heidelberg, Germany. Within this time, the Department improved her postgraduate programme in both quality and number. The Department graduated about 16 PhDs and about 30 MSc students. Out of these numbers, seven PhDs were obtained by academic staff of the Department.

#### Other Achievements

1. Improvement of facilities in the Department including remodelling and renovating of the HOD office, general Office, Experimental Laboratory,

Physiological Laboratory, Psychological Services Centre and classrooms.

2. Successfully organized the first Departmental virtual conference in 2020.
3. Successfully organized the 2021 Departmental Home Coming and conference
4. Publications of volumes of the Nigerian Journal of Psychological Research (2020-2022) and hosting of the Journal's website (www.njpsyresearch.com).
5. Review and printing of the Department of Psychology Students' Handbook
6. Developing and printing of Students' Workbook

Although it was a very challenging period due to the COVID-19 pandemic and frequent strikes by university workers in the country, Prof Onyishi achieved a lot during the period. He appreciates the support of members of staff of the Department during his tenure. We wish him a successful tenure as he moves to a higher office as the Dean, Faculty of the Social Sciences, UNN.

## Biennial Report [August 2020 – August 2022] from Department of Public Administration and Local Government.

The Department of Public Administration and Local Government (PALG) has recorded some modest achievements under the leadership of Prof Uche Nnadozie, within the period under review. These achievements can be categorized into two areas of Academic and Infrastructural development.

#### (A) Academic Development

We succeeded getting the Post-Graduate School to get back the departmental admission average to 3.50 which was where we were before being forced to 4.00 that made us to loose candidates to sister departments. This increased our Postgraduate intake that had dropped drastically. The Department also increase the Postgraduate seminars to be held at least once in three weeks due to backlog of students waiting to present their seminar papers.

Similarly, the Department increased the number of external defense to enable us graduate more of our Postgraduate students who had almost overstayed in their programmes. In a concerted effort to enhance Postgraduate students' research skill and quality scholarship, the Department organized a mandatory One-day Postgraduate Workshop held on 28<sup>th</sup> October 2021. Seasoned and international erudite scholars from

various aspects of research were brought as resource personnel in order to sharpen the research skills of our Post-graduate students in different areas of research.

At the undergraduate level, the Department got the approval of the University Management to enable our undergraduate students to undertake a field trip to relevant government agencies having equally gotten the invitation of such public institutions to allow our students to have the practical experiences of the workings of these institutions of government.

Equally worthy of mention here was the successful visit of the National University Commission (NUC) for Resource Verification exercise in the Department that was held between 12<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> September, 2021. This resulted to the establishment of a new undergraduate programme in the Department – Local Government and Development Studies. The Department equally used that visit to improve and upgrade the Departmental Digital Library and internet services within the Department and its environs.

#### (B) Infrastructural Development

The first major challenge in the area of infrastructural deficit of the Department when the current management



of the Department was the complete breakdown of our sewage system which necessitated the closure of every toilet in the building, a decision taken by the first Departmental Board meeting held under the leadership of the current HOD. This drastic step was taken because the blockage of the piping system which resulted to wastes coming out of toilet pipes in the frontage of the departmental building. The contractor was immediately contacted and thanks to the University management that released the needed fund. This enabled the contractor to finish the work which he started in 2018.

Other infrastructural development which the current leadership of the department was able to undertake was to beautify both the frontage of the department and the office of the Head of Department. In this regard and due to the lean resources of the department, the Head of Department tried and succeeded to get some of our Postgraduate students especially those of them in key government institutions such as the National Assembly to key into the Infrastructural Development Plan of the Department. Worthy of mention in this regard was the beautification and the facial upliftment of the frontage of the Department which saw the construction of a new quadrangle sitting structure for the relaxation of our students during non-lecture periods. In order to complete the total transformation of the frontage of the Department, the whole frontage of the Department was tiled. All these have transformed the Department into a beautiful and befitting place conducive for learning and research.

To complement that of the external beautification was the

upliftment of the office of Head of Department and its adjoining rooms including the General Office of the Department, the door to the HOD office was changed from a wooden to a beautifully designed iron door. Furthermore, a new and befitting designer's blind curtains replaced the old cloth ones inside the office, while new cloth curtains replaced the old and worn-out curtains in the adjoining offices. While the tiling of the Departmental frontage and the construction of the new quadrangle sitting arrangements was undertaken by Honourable Simeon Atigwe, a PhD student of the Department and sitting member of The National Assembly, the entire upliftment of the Office of the HOD and its adjoining offices was sponsored by another PhD student and a United State based businessmen, Mr. Ifanyi Onochie.

### **Challenges of the Department**

This brief write-up cannot be completed without mentioning some of the challenges facing the Department. These challenges are mainly centred on two major areas that need urgent attention. The first is the threat that flooding poses to the survival of the Departmental building during rainy seasons. This problem if not adequately addressed is capable of bringing the whole building down. Fortunately, the issue has been brought to the attention of the University management that has promised to look into the matter. The second challenge is the urgent need to refurbish the two major Auditoriums of the Department as well as other adjoining classrooms. A visit to these auditoriums and classrooms shows that their seats, fans, doors and







**M**y tenure as HOD commenced in July 2020 and has come to an end in July 2022. For the time I served as HOD, I was able to attain some achievements despite being challenged by the pandemic and two rounds of strike action by the academic and non-academic staff unions of our university. These achievements included:

1. I gave a facelift to the general office and infrastructure of our department, focusing on remodeling and expansion, construction of conference tables, and office tables and chairs for non-academic and academic staff, and

## Achievement and challenges as HOD Social Work

### 2020 -2022

converting an empty space into an office accommodation that accommodated some of our staff. In addition, we procured a brand-new photocopier, and some equipment to enhance office production.

2. I inherited a backlog of postgraduate students due to finish their programmes or for proposals. So, I facilitated their graduation and proposal presentations. This adds to the efforts I made in ensuring timely conduct of postgraduate external examinations and graduation of both PhD and MSc students.
3. As the pandemic bit deeply, through collective efforts of the staff of the Department, the fieldwork model was redesigned to overcome the challenges of the pandemic, and still providing value to the students.
4. Considerable number of academic and non-academic staff were promoted under my administration, as we guided them through their entries for promotion, and made timely submissions of their entries to the appropriate authorities, leading to several promotions of staff.



5. Staff were mobilized to ensure that challenges of the undergraduate students were speedily addressed to facilitate timely graduation. And so, in the 2020/2021 academic session,

we graduated 95% of undergraduate students, of which 8 made First Class, inclusive of a visually impaired student.

6. On human resources, I encouraged collegiality among staff, and extended collaborations to our alumni with hopes that they become more fruitful in the coming months and years.
7. With the digital space, we successfully moved staff meetings online (Zoom), especially during the pandemic, and I prioritized timely e-mailing correspondence, encouraging staff



and students to do more of emails.

8. Finally, under my leadership, we successfully completed processes toward the NUC accreditation, and succeeded with securing full accreditation in 2021. Areas noted by NUC for improvement have been passed to my successor.

### My tenure was not without challenges. Some of them included:

1. We conflicted with other lecturers from other departments over lecture spaces, as we do not have any designated classroom or a building.
2. Office challenges still persist, leading to some of our staff making serial complaints and squatting around, which may have implications on their productivity.
3. We need a departmental branded bus to help convey our students to their several fieldwork agencies.
4. With the presence of more non-academic staff and an expanded staff population, there is need to consider more expansion of the departmental office or the acquisition of any building with improved spaces.
5. Funding is a challenge too, as there are lots of needs facing constrained finances.
6. The pandemic and strike actions constrained my planned achievements for the Department.



## Milestones of the Head, Department of Sociology and Anthropology



(2021-2022)



By Kelechi Okpara

**P**rofessor Christopher U. Ugwuoke was appointed the Head, Department of Sociology & Anthropology, University of Nigeria, on August 01, 2021 by the Vice Chancellor Professor Charles Arinzechukwu Igwe.

**Achievements:** Following his appointment as the Head of Department, Prof Ugwuoke personally sponsored a sumptuous Departmental team bonding meeting for all staff of the Department during which he requested for inclusive board season to help move the Department forward. He went on to restructure Departmental Committees' formations by introducing key responsibility areas. Such areas include

Postgraduate Committee to improve the standard of Department postgraduate programme and make the process, swift and efficient. This move led to the graduation of over 10 doctorate and many masters' students within his one year in office.

He revamped the Departmental Welfare Committee which has further improved staff welfare activities in the Department. He equally created the Disciplinary/Ethical Committee to enhance ethical work behaviours. He is the first Head of Department to Chair an International Collaboration between the Department of Sociology & Anthropology and Graduate Institute of Development Studies, National Chin Cheng University, Taiwan. The collaboration has resulted to International Public Lectures and exchange opportunities for graduate students of the Department and Faculty at large. His

commitment to innovation and expansion further materialized obtaining operating approval of a new programme in the Department, namely Security Studies; a programme he had been instrumental in the design and formation prior to his appointment as the Head of Department. During his tenure, two Senior Lecturers in the Department have embarked on postdoctoral fellowships to Prestigious Universities in America and Asia, which has further enhanced the visibility of the Department at the International arena.

In the recently concluded accreditation exercise, Professor Ugwuoke led his Department through an intense and resource demanding accreditation preparation, which changed the physical and interior outlook of the Department. This among other things earned the Department the status of full accreditation. Since his tenure, staff-student relationship in the Department has notably improved professionally, through the instrumentalities of the Ethical Committee that maintains inclusive adherence to the University rules and regulation.

**Challenges:** Two major challenges have continued to decelerate the progress of the Department. First is poor funding because the Department in recent times operates solely on self generated funds which are most often, personal resources of the Head of Department. The University since the recent tenure is yet to provide relevant stationeries and equipments for official running of the Department. Yet, these responsibilities have continued to be performed by the HOD. The second challenge is that of insecurity. The Department has on several occasions experienced burglary attacks. The most recent of such attack, affected negatively the interior equipments put together prior to the last accreditation exercise. These thefts have badly affected almost all the offices in the Department making it hard for staff to leave their files and gadgets in their offices. Responding to the burglary attacks, the HOD has on more than one occasion brought the issue to the attention of the University Security Department. However, nothing tangible has been recorded as fresh attacks have been noticed.





# Acting Deanship: A Memorable Experience

**Prof Nzeadibe**

*Thaddeus Chidi Nzeadibe is Professor of Environmental Management & Sustainability in the Department of Geography, and a Senior Research Fellow at the Resource and Environmental Policy Research Centre (REPRC), University of Nigeria, Nsukka. He previously served as Chairman of the Faculty of the Social Sciences Postgraduate Committee and Representative of the Faculty on the Board of the School of Postgraduate Studies. He was the Associate Dean of the Faculty of the Social Sciences from August 2020 until April 2022 when he was appointed as Acting Dean. The Socioscope team had an interaction with him in July 2022 about his experiences on the job.*

**You became the acting dean of the Faculty of the Social Sciences, UNN following the appointment of Prof Aloysius-Michaels N. Okolie as Vice Chancellor of Enugu State University of Science and Technology. Did you see your appointment to this position coming?**

I did not see it coming. My intention ab initio was to work with Prof Okolie till the end of his tenure as his associate dean, and I could go back to my base at the Department of Geography where I am currently the Head of Department. So when Prof Okolie was announced as VC of ESUT, I met him and he said that I should get prepared to be the acting dean. For me it took some time to adjust my mindset and eventually it became a reality. One morning he called me on phone that he had met the Vice Chancellor and that I would soon receive a letter to that effect. My acting deanship took effect on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2022.

**When it was announced, how did you feel when you were given the appointment letter?**

I saw it as a huge responsibility on my shoulders. I was under the tutelage of Prof. Okolie but he had very big shoes which I had difficulty fitting into. I tried to adjust to be able to meet up. It has been an exciting experience. I have been involved in some very important meetings and a whole lot of experiences have been acquired. Perhaps, such experience can help in future. I will bank them for now and deploy them to solve our problems around here when the time comes.

**We will like to know some of your key achievements within the time you have been in charge of the affairs of the Faculty.**

I was part of most of the achievements recorded under Prof

Okolie. I give him the credit for giving me that opportunity to work very closely with him. He discussed many of the decisions he made with me, and I made my own inputs and eventually they were successful. I was part of the team for the visits to the former senate president, His Excellency Senator Anyim Pius Anyim who came to deliver a lecture. I was also part of the team that visited



High Chief Dr Jude Ndudi Ozah, the *Isagba* of Ogwashi-Uku Kingdom. Dr Ozah made an offer to donate a building of 50 professorial offices to the Faculty. Beyond that, I have had one or two other things which we were able to do. For example, it was under my tenure as Acting Dean that we had visitors from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) led by Professor Dina Balabanova.

Being in the largest faculty in the university has given me the opportunity to play at the highest level in the University management.

She came with Prof. Eleanor Hutchinson and some of our faculty members like Charles Orjiakor, Aloysius Odii, Divine Obodoechi and Godstime Eigbiremolen. We received them and we had very fruitful discussions. We are also working hard as the faculty Guest Editor of the *Journal of Asian and African Studies* to publish the Special issue this year. That particular project is very important to me because the project itself is indexed by Thomson Reuters and it will be a very good opportunity for some of our colleagues

who sent in papers to get published at that level. Within this period, the faculty was also seriously recognized among the top 400 faculties of the social sciences around the world. It shows that researchers in our faculty are doing very well publishing in very top journals. If you see their ranking on AD-Scientific, and scival scopus you will see that a whole lot of our researchers are listed in those indices. Furthermore, within the period of my acting deanship we also had some important appointments. Prominent is our immediate past Dean who has started work as the Vice Chancellor of ESUT. Also Prof P. O. Phil-Eze of Geography Department was appointed the Managing Director/Chief



Executive Officer of Anambra State Erosion, Water and Climate Change Agency. Within this period, we have also supported our colleagues that applied for professorial positions. People who have been going on study leave or trips have been coming for approvals. We have been treating their matters promptly.

*What are the likely expectations of the faculty from the appointments that were given to our colleagues outside the university?*

On the 27<sup>th</sup> of May 2022, I led a 25 man team from the faculty to visit out dear vice chancelor Prof Okolie at ESUT. We know that UNN is an older university than ESUT, so we will give him all the necessary support in the areas of capacity building, training, publications, accessing research funds, grants and fellowships. He was quite open to more collaborations with our people here in UNN. For Prof Phil Eze, I have forwarded his documents to the university. As time goes on we will also reach out to him and see areas we can work with him to ensure that he succeeds in his office.

**There are no short cuts. You must pass through the furnace of fire to come out as the finest of gem.**

*Let us talk about the visit by the team from the LSHTM. Is there any plan for continuity in terms of this collaborations or linkages at the faculty level?*

They came on an exploratory mission. We were able to showcase what we can offer to them. They emphasize the area of qualitative research, GIS, and all that. We told them that people are on ground and that people are really doing well in these areas. Some of our faculty members have worked with these guys from LSHTM: Prince Agwu, Aloysius Odi and Charles Ojiakor in collaboration with Prof Obinna Onwujekwe. So, they know we have the capacity. What we will now do is to formally make a proposal to them. I believe it is going to be successful going by what they told us. In fact when we met with the DVC Academics, Prof Johnson Urama, he was also excited that we brought these guys to UNN.

*What are the challenges you may have experienced during this time of your leadership of the faculty?*

The strike has made all the workers in the faculty to be away. I have been the only one coming the office, running all the errands and doing every other thing to ensure that things are moving on. Sometimes I have to go to the Vice Chancellor's office to collect mails, treat them and return them.

*After the Acting Deanship what next?*

I will go back to my department because I will be spending

one year as the Head of Department by the end of July 2022. By God's grace I still have some time to put into the department headship. I have a few ideas which I want to implement to see how I can make the department move forward. For example we have a national conference of Association of Nigerian Geographers (NANG) which will take place this September 20-24<sup>th</sup> and the process is in top gear. This is the first time that conference is taking place in South East in the past 38 years and that time was under the great Prof G. E. K. Ofomata when he was HOD several years ago. I had to go to Abuja and make a presentation to the National Council of the Association in December last year to be given the hosting right. We have been receiving abstracts and sending letters of acceptance and a lot of Nigerian and foreign scholars are expressing enthusiasm to visit Nsukka. We are spreading our networks to see how we can make this succeed despite the strike and other challenges. There are some other projects which we had in mind. For now I want to still keep them under wraps so that by the time they materialize we should be able to talk about them more freely.

**If you are not useful you cannot be used. So if you want to be mentored make yourself useful.**

*You have been successful in general when it comes to securing grants from funding agencies and other organizations. What are the factors responsible for this much acclaimed results?*

I don't know what you mean by being successful. I have attempted a few research grants and to the glory of God I was able to win some of them. If there are such opportunities, you take them. You reach out. So you just have to groom yourself and build up yourself to get these funding opportunities. If there are opportunities for training, apply for them. See how things are done by other people. At least try out your hands until somebody tells you that this is not good. Have a positive outlook. You might send out five applications and only one might be successful, and that successful one will compensate for the rest. When you see opportunity calling on you, apply first. They may say that this is the only person applying from a developing country, why don't we give it to him/her. I do not joke with my Google scholar and research gate profile. You do not know who is looking at you. I have gotten external examiner to not less than five South African universities for PhD and a university in UK. I am a visiting scholar in the Waste and Society Chair, University Of Western Cape, South Africa. They were the ones that contacted me. So if you are not visible you simply vanish. So please, visibility should be our watchword.





***How can other members of the faculty who are interested in the visiting researcher fellowship at the Nordic African Institute pursue it?***

I make it a point of duty that each time they advertise I share it on the faculty platform. I expect those who are interested to reach out to me. I still have one or two contacts over there in the Nordic. There are at least four research clusters at the moment in the Institute and you must ensure that your work fits into one of them. Go to their website and then checkout the people that are there, what they are doing, the kind of work they do so that your work can fit into their research programme. By the time you have a competitive proposal I believe it will fly. The opportunity to visit the Nordic was for me a high point of my career because I had the opportunity to traverse the entire Nordic region: Sweden, Norway, Finland and other places. Some of these things are things you do not fold you alms and wait for them to fall into your hands. It is important to make some efforts.

***What do you think we need to do as faculty members to build the level of mentorship that is required in our faculty?***

Mentorship is a two-way process. If you are in a pit you raise your hand and somebody up there will pull you out. When you are inside the pit and you do not raise your hand it is most likely that nobody will raise you up. So the mentee needs to show willingness to be mentored and that involves a lot of sacrifice on your own part. On the side of the mentor, you have the responsibility to bring up that person. My late supervisor, Prof Anyadike, once told me that you are mentoring somebody at the level of PhD

supervision, you are replicating yourself in that person. So the person needs to be humble and be willing to learn. We need to improve our culture of mentorship in the faculty but at the same time mentees need to show the willingness to learn. A former DVC once said “*Blessed are those who are used for they are useful*”.

***We would like to know what you would love to do better based on your experience as an associate dean and as an acting dean, if you are given an opportunity to come back the second time as the Dean of the Faculty.***

I would like to answer it this way. For now I want to focus on Geography Department, and by the time we get to the bridge we will cross it.

***Do you have any advice for the incoming Dean that will be elected in terms of running the faculty and leveraging on some of these achievements?***

I will prepare my handover notes in the next few days so that I will tell him where we stopped and then point out some deliverables which he can follow up with. Beyond that, we meet as often as possible at informal level so that if there are any challenges or issues I will make my inputs. I will give my support for his administration to succeed. I must mention that he has been a very good colleague and collaborator and a mentor too. He has made his impacts and he is somebody we look up to. I believe that he will provide a strong and qualitative leadership to the faculty. For me, it is an opportunity to also support a star to shine brighter in our faculty.







## Rev. Sr. Maria-Chidi Onyedibe, PhD.

Postdoctoral fellow under Professor Karen Steindorf, (Head of Dept), Physical Activity, Prevention and Cancer C110. German Cancer Research Center (DKFZ). Foundation under Public Law, Im Neuenheimer Feld 280, 69120 Heidelberg, Germany

### RESEARCH PROGRAM: CANCER RISK FACTORS AND PREVENTION SPECIFIC THEME: *Physical Activity*,

#### Prevention and Cancer

- Our research program is focussed on identifying risk factors (primary prevention), improving early detection and screening methods (secondary prevention), as well as methods to prevent the progression of disease and enhance quality of life (tertiary prevention).
- We specifically investigate the protective effects of exercise and physical activity on cancer risk (primary prevention), as well as on oncologic therapy and cancer prognosis (tertiary prevention).
- In addition, our studies focus on the prevention and treatment of quality-of-life-related

outcomes such as fatigue, sleep problems, cognitive problems, pain and depressive symptoms on a broader, also beyond-exercise perspective.

**Motivation for the postdoc:** Cancer patients are weighed down by several psychological issues that impair their quality of life. I am motivated by a desire to improve the quality of life of cancer patients in Nigeria and thus reduce the overall mortality rate.

**Next step after postdoc:** Continued evidence-based research on health-related quality of life among cancer patients and survivors in Nigeria.



The Socioscope is a quarterly publication of the Faculty of the Social Sciences, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Correspondence should be addressed to the Editor-in-Chief through email: johnbosco.chukwuorji@unn.edu.ng or WhatsApp +2348039655344