

**INAUGURAL ADDRESS DELIVERED BY SEN. GEN. IKE
NWACHUKWU, CHANCELLOR AND CHAIRMAN, GOVERNING
COUNCIL, UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA, NSUKKA, TO THE
UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY ON WEDNESDAY, 24TH JULY, 2024**

Distinguished Members of the Governing Council, our revered Academic and Non-Academic Staff, and our articulate and cherished Students; The Lions and Lionesses.

Today marks a pivotal moment as we embark on a journey towards providing sublime leadership and elevating the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN), to new heights of academic excellence and innovation.

Our vision for the university is anchored on the principles of academic integrity, probity, inclusivity, universality and transformative collaboration.

COMMITMENT "TO RESTORE THE DIGNITY OF MAN"

In line with our university's motto, "To Restore the Dignity of Man," we recognize that academic excellence thrives in an environment of accountability, transparency, equity, justice, peace, and probity. (for emphasis).

There is therefore, zero tolerance for truancy among our staff and students. Regular class attendance by students, punctuality and accessibility by staff, and prompt attendance to issues are pivotal to the learning process and realization of the lofty goals of our dear university.

We value and cherish the welfare and well-being of our staff and students. As such, we shall prioritize this towards achieving the lofty goals and missions of our university. Through rigorous monitoring and supportive interventions, we will ensure that every student and staff fully embrace their academic responsibilities.

By prioritizing students' welfare and fostering a culture of responsibility, we aim to create a robust educational environment where all members are committed to excellence towards restoring and upholding the dignity of man.

ZERO TOLERANCE FOR SEXUAL HARASSMENT

We unequivocally declare zero tolerance for sexual harassment. The safety and dignity of every member of our community are paramount. We will implement robust policies and support mechanisms to prevent harassment by guaranteeing and fostering an environment where all can flourish without fear or intimidation.

ZERO TOLERANCE FOR CULTISM

We recognize the deleterious effects of cultism to academic excellence. As such, unequivocally denounce this destructive behavior which undermined our core values of integrity, inclusivity and academic excellence in the university system. Cultism does not only jeopardize the safety and well-being of our students; it equally undermines the conducive learning environment that we strive to maintain.

As a Governing Council, we pledge zero tolerance for cult activities on our campuses. We are committed to implementing robust measures, including enhanced security protocols, awareness campaigns, and disciplinary actions, to eradicate cultism and crime in our campuses completely.

STUDENTS' ASSESSMENT OF LECTURERS' PERFORMANCE

In our commitment for transparency and sustained improvement, we will introduce structured mechanisms for students to assess the performance of their lecturers. This initiative will empower the students to provide valuable feedbacks on the quality of teaching, course contents relevance, attendance at lectures, punctuality, expertise and competence.

The feedbacks gathered will be meticulously analyzed and used to recognize and reward lecturers who demonstrate exemplary teaching practices and students' engagement. Additionally, we are determined to stop the unlawful

extortion of money from students through the sale of lecture handouts, project supervision, unapproved books etc. by lecturers.

Consequently, punitive and disciplinary measures will be taken on any staff or lecturer found culpable in this regard to ensure a fair, productive and ethical environment.

By fostering a culture of accountability and integrity, we aim to create a more positive and effective learning environment for all students.

AWARDS FOR BEST PRACTICES IN PERFORMANCE

To incentivize excellence and innovation in teaching, we will institute awards for lecturers who consistently receive high ratings from students' evaluations. These awards will not only celebrate outstanding educators but also serve as catalysts for sharing best practices across departments. By fostering a culture where effective teaching is both recognized and rewarded, we aim to elevate the overall quality of education in our university.

Additionally, we are committed to encouraging and supporting staff training and development. This will ensure that our educators have access to the latest teaching methodologies and resources. We will also intensify effort to improve the welfare of our staff, knowing fully well that their well-being is pivotal to their productivity and optimal performance.

Educators sponsored by the government in the university who fail to return to the university after the completion of their trainings will be appropriately sanctioned.

It is our belief that this comprehensive approach will create a more motivated, skilled, and contented faculty to drive our university towards a greater academic success.

PARTNERSHIPS WITH THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY

Recognizing the transformative power of collaboration, we will actively seek partnerships with the business communities. These collaborations will enrich our academic programmes, provide practical learning experiences,

and stimulate cutting-edge research towards the transformation of our nation and the world at large.

We hope to concertedly foster innovations and entrepreneurship to engendering regional development and global competitiveness.

ENGAGING ALUMNI FOR SUPPORT AND NETWORKING

The University of Nigeria (UNN) Governing Council is keenly aware of the invaluable contributions that our esteemed alumni can make to the institution. We are dedicated to actively engaging them for both intellectual and financial support, recognizing their potentials to drive our academic mission.

By establishing strong connections with our alumni, we aim to create a robust network that offers students unparalleled opportunities for academic advancement and career development. These efforts will include organized events, mentorship programmes, and partnerships that leverage the expertise and resources of our alumni. Thus ensuring that both current and graduate can thrive in their academic and professional pursuits.

CREATION OF UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA VENTURE CAPITAL

We will be embarking on a transformative initiative to launch a 'Venture Capital Fund' dedicated to commercializing our brightest ideas. This we hope to achieve by partnering closely with our esteemed university. We aim at identifying and supporting projects with significant commercial potentials in strategic sectors such as business innovation and technology.

This Venture will not only provide financial backing but will also enhance crucial mentorship, access to networks, and resources essential for startups to thrive. Through workshops, competitions, and events, we hope to cultivate a vibrant culture of entrepreneurship within the academic community.

INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT FOR FUTURE EDUCATION STANDARD

To support our academic ambitions, we will prioritize infrastructural development that meets evolving educational standards. It is our belief that modernizing facilities and digital infrastructure will create an environment conducive to cutting-edge research and innovative teaching methodologies.

This investment will not only lay the foundation for sustained academic growth and excellence but will also facilitate the beautification of our learning environment. By enhancing the aesthetic and functional aspects of our campuses, we aim to inspire students and faculty alike, fostering a more engaging and motivating atmosphere for education and innovation.

DECENTRALIZATION THROUGH THE CREATION OF COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS

In line with our commitment to academic excellence and innovation, we will explore the possibilities and opportunities of the introduction of a decentralized structure with a Collegiate System. Further consultations with and the cooperation of all the relevant stakeholders in the university will be required in this regard.

This decentralization is geared towards promoting a quicker decision-making process that is tailored to the unique needs of each discipline, enhancing academic focus and administrative efficiency.

This model will empower faculty members within each college or school and foster a sense of ownership and dedication to academic excellence. It will equally enhance the students' experience by offering personalized support services and extracurricular activities tailored to their fields of study.

However, while embracing decentralization, we recognize the need for careful coordination to ensure consistency in academic standards and institutional goals across all units. Our governance structure will evolve strategies to support this decentralized model and ensuring clear lines of authority and effective communication channels.

EMBRACING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

Artificial Intelligence (AI) integration is crucial for staying relevant in the global competitive milieu. As such, we will work to integrate Artificial Intelligence (AI) into the fabric of our university thus positioning UNN as a leading AI hub in the country and potentially across Africa.

By incorporating AI into our curriculum, we are preparing our students for the future job market and establish UNN as a pioneer in AI education.

Our objectives include enhancing the curriculum to equip students with essential AI skills, solidifying our reputation as a leading AI institution, and improving operational efficiency through AI-driven automation and data analysis.

ESTABLISHING AN ADVISORY COUNCIL

The University of Nigeria (UNN) Governing Council intends to establish an Advisory Council made up of mainly members of its Alumni and the diaspora to enhance inclusive decision-making and strengthen the university's governance. This Council will also include representatives from the academic staff union, the non-academic staff union, and the students' union.

By integrating diverse perspectives and expertise, we aim to ensure that our decisions reflect the needs and aspirations of the entire university community. This initiative will foster greater collaboration, transparency, and mutual support which will ultimately enrich the governance of UNN and promote a cohesive and progressive academic environment.

APPOINTMENT OF PRINCIPAL OFFICERS

Addressing the significant responsibility at hand, the university Governing Council is fully aware of its duty to appoint an acting Vice-Chancellor and subsequently a substantive Vice-Chancellor for this university, we are committed to achieving this by adhering strictly to the provisions of the law.

The position of the Vice Chancellor will be openly advertised to invite qualified applicants.

We will follow due process and ensure that our decisions are equitable, fair, and just.

CONCLUSION

Together, as colleagues on the Governing Council and members of the UNN family, with a shared vision, commitment, and unwavering determination, we can make our university stand out as a beacon of academic excellence, cultural pride, and ethical leadership.

We will end this address by acknowledging the honour done to us by the President, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR, in appointing us to serve as your Pro Chancellor and the Chairman and Members of the Governing Council of this very first full-fledged Nigerian university.

We look forward to collaborating closely with each and every one, through dedication and support, to realize our collective aspirations to make UNN the very best tertiary institution in our clime and one of the very best in the world.

Thank you.

Sen Gen Ike Omar Sanda Nwachukwu GCMG CFR COM psc + mni fniia.

Pro Chancellor and Chairman of the Governing Council.

University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

24th July, 2024.