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NUC Evaluation Team Praises UniPort On Students' Support Services



An assessment team constituted by the National Universities Commission has concluded a two-day working visit to the University during which it evaluated facilities and services that support effective learning and recreation for students, reports *Ethel Timi-Johnson*.

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Side Bar CAREER WORKSHOP

The School of Basic Studies holds a one-day Career Workshop and Exhibition for its students on Thursday, August 1, 2019 at the School Auditorium. Time is 10:00am
Details next Edition
Editor

161st Inaugural Ikimalo Tasks FG On Fertility Regulatory Bill

By Humphrey Ogu

Leading Obstetrician and Gynaecologist, Professor John Ikimalo, has called on the Federal Government to consult experts and other critical stakeholders to help review and pass the Nigerian Fertility Regulatory Authority Bill of 2012. Professor Ikimalo believes that the immediate review and passing of the long-awaited Bill would go a long way in standardising and regulating the practice of Assisted Reproductive Technology in Nigeria (ART). Professor Ikimalo who is Head of the Assisted Reproductive Technology at the University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital, disclosed that only Lagos State has so far domesticated the practice of ART. He urged the Federal Government and other States of the Federation to immediately follow suit to infuse sanity into the sector by addressing some of the ethical issues that may arise in the application of reproductive technology in Nigeria.



Describing infertility as a very serious issue amongst Nigerian couples, Professor Ikimalo submitted that ART has unlimited potentials to address most of the unnecessary tensions that result in premature dissolution of marriages and

suicidal thoughts—especially amongst women. He regretted that couples still rely on tradition and faith-based methods that compound the problems they seek to solve. He assured childless couples that “Sooner

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UniPort Wins Huawei ICT Academy Award

By Humphrey Ogu

The Centre for Information and Telecommunication Engineering (CITE) has won the 2018/19 Huawei Most Cooperative ICT Academy Award. Briefing a Correspondent of *UniPort News* on the cheering development in his office on Tuesday, July 9, 2019, Acting Director of CITE, Dr Bourdillon Omijeh, described Huawei Technologies (Nigeria) Limited as a leading Chinese global ICT and telecoms giant and solutions provider. "The company develops requisite manpower in ICT which led to the establishment of Huawei academies in partner universities. There are over 70 of such academies in Nigeria at the moment. University of Port Harcourt is the only institution in the country that has two of such academies. This is because of the uniqueness of the establishment of CITE and Information and Communication Technology Centre (ICTC) in the University of Port Harcourt. CITE has been very vibrant in achieving its mandate of training high level manpower and certification of candidates on Huawei technologies," Dr Omijeh disclosed.

He noted that the company usually gives *Huawei Most Cooperative ICT Academy Award* every year and UniPort was fortunate to win the 2018/19 edition of the coveted award. Dr Omijeh received the award on behalf of the University during an impressive ceremony which held at the Sheraton Hotel in Abuja. He disclosed that "Huawei is planning to build a Centre of Excellence in ICT in the South-South region of Nigeria next year. Our ultimate goal is to work very hard to attract the ICT hub to the University of Port Harcourt.

"We recorded more than 90 per cent success rate in

our first Huawei certification and examination, and the second batch of the programme is currently ongoing. We have also decided that the first 20 candidates who enrol into our MSc programme would receive the Huawei ICT training certification and other benefits, including employment opportunities," the Acting Director stated.

Meanwhile, admission into the 2019/20 MSc programme in Information and Telecommunication Engineering is currently ongoing. Application forms are available at the CITE office located on the 2nd Floor of the School of Basic Studies Building. Application forms could also be obtained online at www.citeuniport.com. Requirements for the admission include a Bachelor's degree with a minimum CGPA of 3.5 in any of the following: Electrical/ Electronic, Mechanical, Telecommunication, Industrial Engineering, Computer Science, Applied Physics,



Dr Omijeh (left) receiving the award

Maths/Statistics, amongst others. Candidates with CGPA of 3.0 with a minimum of two years relevant experience would also be considered.

UniPort Researcher To Release New Rice Variety In 2021

By Mercy Adeniji and Humphrey Ogu

Rice consumers in Nigeria will soon enjoy a new variety of the staple food on their family menu in 2021. A plant geneticist in the Department of Crop and Soil Science, Faculty of Agriculture, Dr Andrew Efiuse, broke the good news in an exclusive interview with *UniPort News* Correspondents in his office on Friday, July 12, 2019.

The ace researcher recalled that the rice project began with a proposal he sent to the Korea-Africa Food and Agriculture Cooperation Initiative (KAFACI) through the Alliance for a Green Revolution for Africa (AGRA). "The KAFACI project gave me a grant in 2016 which enabled me to release the rice variety for the upland ecology. They assisted me with the exchange of rice genetic and other culture-derived materials for evaluation. We have successfully completed a preliminary test at the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture, (IITA), Ibadan, and at the screen house in the University of Port Harcourt.

"In 2018, I embarked upon the development of about 126 varieties of rice and we selected the best four, following which we invited farmers, experts and seed companies to evaluate the selected varieties. At the

moment, our research is at the advance yield trial level and we are projecting that the new rice variety would be released by 2021," Dr Efiuse told our Correspondents.

"In 2020, four rice varieties would be nominated to the National Crop Varieties and Livestock Breeders' Registration and Releasing Committee, which meets twice in a year, thus, affording scientists and plant breeders an opportunity to examine their projects. As breeders, we develop new crop varieties and it is the responsibility of seed companies to take and multiply it for farmers, while the input of government is to provide an enabling environment to farmers through extension services," he explained.

Pointing out that rice breeders add value to crops and the food chain by developing new varieties, the consummate researcher said: "We are not only developing rice for consumption; we also develop it for industrial purposes in the form of flour and fortify it with iron. I need to state here that rice is a political crop because everybody is interested in it."

It would be recalled that Dr Efiuse and his team had in 2013, developed and released rice varieties known as UPIA 1, 2 and 3. Describing the distinguishing features of these varieties, the foremost plant breeder said: "They are long grains of Grade A that is high-yielding and resistant to some economic abiotic stress factors such as iron, toxicity and drought. The University of Port Harcourt, IIRI and AGRA (UPIA) varieties are of high cooking quality of medium to high amylose content that meets consumers' preference of Nigeria. They possess good agronomic traits such as resistance to lodging, early and medium maturity period and acceptable height; and they respond positively to fertilizer application. These traits enhance their integration into the Nigerian farming system."



Prof Uduumakuwu

Uduumakuwu Heads UniPort News Editorial Board

A new Chairman has been appointed to head the Editorial Board of *UniPort News* and *Unique UniPort* magazine run by the Information, Publications and Public Relations Unit of the Vice Chancellor's Office. He is Professor Onyemaechi Uduumakuwu of the Department of English Studies in the Faculty of Humanities. The appointment which takes immediate effect is till further notice.

The letter of appointment was personally signed by the Vice Chancellor, Professor Ndowa Lale, said that Professor Uduumakuwu would "preside over Editorial Meetings and offer advice on the publication of contents, including layout and design of the publications as may be deemed necessary."

The Vice Chancellor congratulated the new Editorial Board Chairman and looked forward to a cordial working relationship with him.



Dr Efiuse

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VC, Prof. Lale and new Commander, CSP Udez

W-C Pledges Support For New IGP Unit Commander

By Letom Nnen

The Vice Chancellor, Professor Ndowa Lale, has assured the newly deployed Commander of the Inspector-General of Police Monitoring Unit, Alau, Mr Alex Udez of continued support in the discharge of his duties to the University and its host communities. Professor Lale gave the assurance when Mr Udez paid him a familiarisation visit at the Committee Room on Wednesday, July 17, 2019. He commended the efforts of men of the Unit in checking the rising crime rate in the University and its environs since they commenced operations in the neighbourhood.

"I want to commend the men of the IGP Monitoring Unit for helping to secure the University and our neighbouring communities. I can readily confirm to you that crime rate has gone down within the University and its environs; but more still needs to be done to rid the area of criminal activities. Let me assure the new Commander of continued support that would enable the IGP Monitoring Unit to discharge its functions in an effective manner. We are committed to ensuring that the excellent working relationship we established with your predecessor, Assistant Commissioner of Police, Ben Igwe remains intact. I can assure you that you will have a wonderful stay here and I want to thank you for hitting the ground running. I am hopeful that you would be

promoted in the same manner the Nigeria Police authorities elevated your predecessor before he was redeployed. It is in our collective interest to ensure that this University enjoys full security on your watch," Professor Lale told the new Commander. Earlier, Mr Udez, who is a Chief Superintendent of Police, had commended the Vice Chancellor on his fatherly role as host of the IGP Monitoring Unit, urging him to extend the same support that was accorded his predecessor. "I want to thank you for all the support you gave to the Unit before I arrived here, and it is my hope that the University would intensify such support under my watch. I was briefed by my predecessor of all the support you gave to this Unit since its inception. I came here to pledge my loyalty to you and to passionately appeal for continued collaboration to enable me discharge my responsibilities in the area of sustained crime fighting. This is a collective responsibility which I cannot successfully discharge without full support from the Management of the University and the general public," Commander Udez said. He was accompanied on the visit by the Assistant Superintendent of Police in charge of Administration, Mr Yakubu Mohammed. Also present were Principal and Senior Officers, including the Chief Security Officer of the University, retired Chief Superintendent of Police, Mr Osarolo Sanday.

NUC Evaluation Team Praises UniPort

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Former Vice Chancellor of the University of Uyo in Akwa Ibom State, Professor Akameren Essien, who led the delegation, disclosed that the visit was in line with the Commission's guidelines on the provision of quality support services for students in all Nigerian universities. He described the exercise as a pilot project involving 78 universities in the country.

"The team was mandated to inspect facilities and observe services in 10 major areas. Our interaction with students of this University was very commendable. We have pointed out a few lapses that need to be corrected and it is our hope that corrections would be made to facilitate learning. We recommended the automation of medical records at the University Health Centre, including the expansion of existing facilities and recruitment of adequate medical personnel to cater for the growing student population," he said. Professor Essien praised the Management on what he described as a beautiful campus landscape, excellent library services, and outstanding sporting and recreational facilities in the University.

Receiving the team members at the Exit

Meeting which held at the Vice Chancellor's Committee Room on Monday, July 8, 2019, Deputy Vice Chancellor (Administration), Professor Regina Ogal, expressed delight at the inclusion of the University in the NUC pilot project. "We have noted your observations and we know that the exercise is for the benefit of our students. We will try as much as possible to improve on our facilities within available resources, while striving to consolidate on areas of strength such as our excellent sports institute and facilities," the representative of the Vice Chancellor said. She further commended the team for turning in a detailed report within such a limited timeline.

Areas covered by the NUC team included counselling and human development centre and services, health services, Student Affairs Department, entrepreneurship studies, application, communication, sports facilities, academic planning, Registry services, support for indigent students, students' registration and accommodation, amongst others.



Principal Officers in a roundtable meeting with the NUC team and others

VC Approves New Sandwich Hostel For Use

By Otikor Samuel

Satisfied with what he saw after an unscheduled inspection of ongoing construction work at the new Sandwich students' hostel project site at Choba Park, the Vice Chancellor, Professor Ndowa Lale, has given provisional approval for the facility to be put into use. The move would save the University from spending about N10 million each year on renting accommodations for Post-NCE students outside the campus, which has been the standard practice before the inception of the Lale-led administration. The Vice Chancellor also directed that all academic activities slated for the 2019/2020 session should henceforth hold in Choba Park to reduce the inconvenience faced by Sandwich students who previously commuted to the University Demonstration Secondary School for their lectures.

Speaking when he led Principal Officers on an inspection visit to the new hostel facility on Monday, July 15, 2019, the Vice Chancellor disclosed that he provisionally approved the use of the new hostel to afford students in their final year an opportunity to feel the pulse of the project to which they made contributions. Professor Lale directed the Security Unit to deploy personnel to the hostel to provide security for the occupants.

"I am convinced that final year students can comfortably stay here within the remaining period of their study this year. That will enable those who are close to graduation have a feel of the building before they leave. The engineers should take note of the few observations we pointed out to make the facility habitable for the students. Let me specially thank the Acting Director, Dr. Gospel Kpee for robustly driving the project to realisation. This project was abandoned at the conception stage

and it is to Dr Kpee's credit that the hostel is almost ready for occupation under his watch," the Vice Chancellor stated.

It would be recalled that the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Administration), Professor Regina Ogal, had led the Management team on a preliminary inspection of the project on Tuesday, July 9, 2019 on the Vice Chancellor's behalf. While commending the Acting Director on his commitment to the realisation of the project, Professor Ogal had pointed out some deficiencies that needed to be rectified before the arrival of students. She had promised that Management would revisit the site to ascertain the extent of implementation of recommendations made during the first inspection before granting final approval for the building to be finally put into use.

"I am quite impressed with the extent of work done so far. This is a legacy project that would add to the facilities we have on our campus. I am highly delighted that the Acting Director has judiciously utilised available funds to get the project to this level of completion," she said. In his address, Dr Kpee recalled that the idea of building the hostel was mooted by the leadership of the Unit in March 2016 in concert with the Executive of the Sandwich Students' Association.

"The Vice Chancellor laid the foundation stone of the hostel project on Thursday, September 22, 2016. Construction work which resumed in March, 2018, was abandoned at the foundation level in July, 2018. In December 2018, we returned to site with the assistance of Management and the Vice Chancellor, but real work actually commenced in January 2019," Dr Kpee recalled. He expressed gratitude to Management for supporting the project to completion.



VC, Prof. Lale (2nd right), flanked by DVC (Admin), Prof. Ogal, Act. Director, Post-NCE Unit, Dr. Kpee, Univ. Librarian, Dr. Susan Umecover (left), Registrar, Mrs Dorcas Odu, DVC (Acad), Prof. Tadeo Fawehinmi, Barr. Dr. Felicia Aboye and SAVC, Mr Kingsley Wogwa (right)

Mgt Pledges Support For PWSC's Research Effort



DVC (Acad), Prof Fawehinmi (seated centre), flanked by Emeritus Prof Okeke (left), Mr Promise Simeon (right) and members of the PWSC

By Letom Nnen

Management of the University has commended a body known as Physics History Series Creation (PWSC) for engaging in robust research efforts aimed at simplifying physics textbooks for students of tertiary institutions in the South-East and South-South regions.

Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic), Professor Hakeem Fawehinmi, who received the group on behalf of the Vice Chancellor, Professor Ndawa Lale, on Friday, July 5, 2019, urged its members to continue in the direction of popularising the subject amongst students at the

secondary and tertiary levels of education. Professor Fawehinmi also promised that the Management would encourage the sale of the Association's books in the University, provided they conformed with established benchmarks for the teaching of Physics.

"Judging from the calibre of persons in the Association, we have no doubt that the textbooks will be of high standard. These are the types of books we would like our students to read, and I can assure you that Management would be willing to give you the necessary support, not just in producing, but also in sustaining the project to reach a wider audience. Luckily, our Vice Chancellor is an ardent supporter of good causes such as the one you are

now. We do not just write the popular handouts that generate quick money; the books produced by the Association are well-researched and of very high standards. We are soliciting your cooperation because some universities do not allow locally-produced textbooks to sell in their institutions. Our appeal to you and other Vice Chancellors is that when we recommend standard laboratory equipment that universities must have to produce sound physics graduates, you should endeavour to implement such recommendations," Professor Okeke said. He promised that the Association would donate copies of all the books written by PWSC to the University library.

Chinese Confucius Teaching Point Commences Admission

By Otiok Samuel

The newly-commissioned Chinese Confucius Teaching Point in the University of Port Harcourt has commenced admitting the pioneer set of candidates into the HSK Certificate programme. The Teaching Point is expected to run the Certificate programme for a minimum of three times a year.

Coordinator of the programme in the University, Professor Chukwuegu, made the disclosure while conducting a Correspondent of *UniPort News* on a facility tour of the old Administrative Block in Delta Park on Thursday, July 11, 2019.

Professor Chukwuegu disclosed that it was only Nanmudi Azikiwe University, Akwa and University of Lagos that currently run accredited Centres for the teaching of Mandarin in collaboration with the Confucius Institute, Hanban, which is the only licensed institute in China mandated to supervise the teaching of the language all over the world.

"China is the new destination because of the abundant opportunities in business and Information and Communication Technology. Having established itself as the global business hub, China wants its language to be studied to strengthen understanding and cultural exchange. The Confucius Teaching Point in UniPort will award Chinese Language Certificate (HSK) to candidates who pass the required levels of examination which is in six categories. The questions will be set from Hanban, while the examination will be written in our Centre here. Candidates who pass the sixth stage examination will be awarded the Certificate

of Proficiency in Chinese Language," Professor Chukwuegu disclosed.

The Coordinator stated that the Centre would provide opportunity for business people in China, advising young people seeking placements in Chinese companies to avail themselves of the opportunity. "The Teaching Point is for staff, graduates, students and those who have business interest in Chinese and South-East Asia," the Coordinator said. He stated that the application fee could be obtained on the payment of a non-refundable application fee of N15,000.00 into Access Bank account number 0789877459 in favour of the Confucius Teaching Point, assuring prospective candidates of the Centre's commitment to quality training of Chinese Mandarin.

"A visit to the Teaching Point which is furnished with state-of-the-art classrooms, offices, halls, laboratories, library, kitchenette and dining room, including waiting areas, will convince anybody that we are into serious business. Nothing in the Teaching Point is below international standard. The training is beyond merely studying Mandarin, as we have built in the Chinese culture into the curriculum to broaden the knowledge base of our students. We hope to take-off in September,"

Professor Chukwuegu told our Correspondent.



State-of-the-art desks in a classroom. Prof Chukwuegu, Coordinator



Provost, CHS, Prof Siminalayi (centre), flanked by Profs Wakwe (right) and Ebong (left)

Colleagues, Ex-Students Eulogise Ebong, Wakwe At Retirement Event

By Humphrey Ogu

It was a harvest of encomiums as the Board of the College of Health Sciences held its 3rd Valedictory session in honour of two retiring academics, Professors Omotayo Ebong of the Department of Pharmacology and Victor Wakwe of the Department of Chemical Pathology. The well-attended event took place at the auditorium of the Faculty of Basic Medical Sciences on Wednesday, July 17, 2018.

Speaking on behalf of the Vice Chancellor, Professor Ndawa Lale, Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic), Professor Hakeem Fawehinmi, expressed appreciation to the Provost of the College, Professor Iyosun Siminalayi, for organising the Valedictory session for the two retiring professors. "I wish to thank the Provost and his colleagues for packaging this event to mark the retirement of these erudite scholars, who were my teachers in this College. The Vice Chancellor has asked me to wish you well and to express our collective gratitude to you for the meritorious services you rendered to the College and University of Port Harcourt," Professor Fawehinmi said.

In his address, Provost of the College, Professor Siminalayi, declared: "Our senior colleagues and my teachers have earned our collective respect by leaving their little corners of the world better by the large number of doctors and other graduates they trained. We are happy that

the two eminent scholars attained the Biblical 'three score and ten' years and are still strong and healthy, even as they take leave of us today. The two scholars succeeded because they prepared adequately for their succession before drawing the curtain on their services."

Other scholars who paid glowing tributes to the retiring academics included the Dean of the Faculty of Basic Medical Sciences, Professor Arthur Chumere, Professors John Ikimado, Daye Seleye-Fubara, Acting Head of the Department of Pharmacology, Dr Udem George and her counterpart in the Department of Chemical Pathology, Dr Nkoye Ntuen.

Former students of Professors Ebong and Wakwe, such as Professors Chituru Orlawene and Datonye Dapper, including Drs Ken Wariso and Hamilton Oparum, also took turns to praise their ex-teachers for their impactful teaching and mentorship. The Board of Management and Staff of University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital (UPTH), Rivers State Branch of the Nigerian Medical Association (NMA), and the UPTH Chapter of the Association of Resident Doctors, were among organisations that extolled the virtues of the two professors.

Responding on behalf of her colleague, a visibly enthused Professor Ebong expressed gratitude to the College Board for the honour done to them, promising to keep in touch with their erstwhile colleagues, even in retirement.

The Institute of Natural Resources, Environment and Sustainable Development (INRES) and the National Water Resources Institute (NWRI), Kaduna, have agreed to mount a joint postgraduate degree programme in integrated water resources management. The agreement was the outcome of a roundtable discussion on the proposed collaboration which was hosted by the Institute at Delta Park on Wednesday, July 10, 2019. INRES Director, Professor Ben Ndakwu (now late), told UniPort News that the training would target field experts with diverse knowledge and operational capacity required

National Water Resources Institute To Partner UniPort On Graduate Programme

By Ethel Timi-Johnson

to proffer lasting solutions to complex environmental and water-related problems that require managerial competencies that are in line with global best practice.

"The proposed partnership between the two institutions will produce synergy and skilled personnel for the emergent Water Resource Centre. The National Institute of Water Resources recognises that INRES has the capacity and resolve to drive the management of natural resources and environmental issue in a sustainable manner. The National Water Resources Institute which is the training hub of the Federal Ministry of Water Resources will partner us in logistic and other critical support, including curriculum development," Professor Ndakwu said. He described water resources as an area of mutual interest for the collaborating institutions which have the requisite manpower and reach to deliver on the partnership.

In his presentation on the administrative structure and activities of NWRI, the Executive Director, Professor Emmanuel Adanu, disclosed that the Institute was established in 1985 to undertake training and research in all aspects of water resources and advise government on issues pertaining to water resources management. "We also host the Regional Centre for Integrated River Basin

Management of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), covering 15 West African countries. We believe that by collaborating with UniPort as a Centre of Excellence in water pollution, we can jointly address these problems," Professor Adanu said. Members of the team had earlier paid a courtesy visit on the Vice Chancellor at the Council Chambers, where they were received by the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic), Professor Hakeem Fawehinmi, who assured them of the University's total commitment to the speedy realisation of the proposed partnership.

"I can readily assure you that our University is better placed to drive this collaborative effort. We are very experienced in forging functional partnerships with the industry and academia and this one will not be different. INRES has the requisite personnel with unlimited capacity to maximise our own part of the partnership. Everybody knows that water is life and the need for this important collaborative effort cannot be over-emphasised, especially in this era of environmental pollution that threatens our water sources," Professor Fawehinmi assured the delegation.

Also present was a three-man delegation led by the Chief Executive Officer of the Foundation for Conservation of Nigerian Rivers, Dafe Irikofe.

My Tenure Would Apply Economic Theory To Practice ~Robinson

By Mercy Adeniji

Three months into his appointment as Acting Head of the Department of Economics in the Faculty of Social Sciences, Dr. Monday Robinson, has commenced the onerous process of repositioning the Department as part of efforts aimed at quality service delivery. He is also working hard to put everything in place in time for the forthcoming accreditation exercise by the National Universities Commission in September as part of his transformation agenda.

"The Department is seriously preparing for the coming NUC accreditation and we are taking the matter very seriously. At our level of development and with the quality of personnel at our disposal, we will not accept anything below full accreditation. We only have to recruit additional academic staff to convince the accreditation team that we mean business. Our Econometrics Laboratory is up and working and our offices are in top shape. We need to purchase some vital office equipment and effect necessary renovation work to ensure ourselves ready for the exercise," the new headman disclosed.

Exchanging views with a UniPort News Correspondent on Monday, July 8, 2019, Dr Robinson disclosed that he assumed office as Acting Head of Department on April 4, 2019. "After taking over from my predecessor, Dr Godly Otto, whose tenure successfully ended in April, 2019, I resolved that as one of the pioneer Departments in this University, my goal would be to open a new frontier of practical application of knowledge into entrepreneurship aimed at transforming graduates of Economics into employers of labour. I also wish to consolidate on the achievements of my predecessors in office with the ultimate goal of transforming the Department of Economics into one of the best in Nigeria. I shall work strenuously to take the Department to the next level of high impact research, teaching and public service," the new Acting HoD told our Correspondent.

"The Department is already working on a template to produce an all-embracing book on practical theories in Economics. Our senior academics would hopefully make insightful contributions to the emergent book. Our *African Journal of Applied and Theoretical Economics* (AJATE) which is already running smoothly would be further strengthened on my watch. The Department has entered into a partnership with the University of Port Harcourt Business School to organise a conference before the second quarter of next year. We are also working at a Memorandum of Understanding with Oxford University, England in the area of research and exchange of staff and service," Dr Robinson disclosed.

The new Acting Head added that the Department has also constituted a Committee on health and fitness, noting that for staff to be able to function effectively, they must be physically and mentally sound. Dr Robinson expressed gratitude to his predecessors for making the Department the pride of the Social Sciences. "So far, I have enjoyed so much cooperation from my senior colleagues, including the administrative staff and I urge them to continue to support efforts aimed at taking the Department to new heights," he stated.



DVC (Acad), Prof Fawehinmi (arrowed), flanked by Prof Adanu (left), INRES Director, Prof Ndakwu (right), some Principal, Senior Officers and the visiting partners

Mgt Commends PenCom On Timely Retirees' Documentation

By Mercy Adeniji

The Vice Chancellor, Professor Ndowa Lale, has commended the National Pensions Commission for initiating the pre-retirement sensitisation enrolment early enough to enable affected public servants draw their entitlements on retirement next year. Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic), Professor Hakeem Fawehinmi, who received the members of the PenCom documentation team on behalf of the Vice Chancellor, Professor Ndowa Lale on Thursday, July 11, 2019, commended them for not waiting till the affected staff had left service before processing their papers. He also praised the Commission for simplifying the process for such category of staff who gave their best to the system.

"We are happy that this timely exercise will guarantee the retiring staff a source of livelihood on their retirement from many years of active service. We know that documentation and record-keeping are very important in public service and it is heartening that PenCom is documenting the affected staff in good time against next year. We promise to encourage you to ensure that the exercise is successfully

completed. Pension is a very important aspect of our life as public servants. We wish to assure you that Management would continue to give you the necessary support in the biometric capture of our staff," Professor Fawehinmi said.

Speaking earlier, leader of the National Pension Commission, Mr. Oluokun Oluhenga said: "We are here to verify and enrol Federal Government workers in Rivers and Bayelsa States due retirement in 2020. We are also extending the exercise to eligible staff who missed previous exercises. The main target is to collect biometric information needed for the computation of staff retirement benefits. At the conclusion of the exercise, a list of prospective retirees would be forwarded to the Federal Budget Office for capture in the 2020 budget".

Speaking on a sideline interview, a senior staff of the Pensions and Welfare Unit, Mr. Sunday Abonyi, disclosed that the enrolment exercise captured staff from ministries and parastatals, academic institutions, health and research institution, as well as paramilitary. Over 50 staff of the University were successfully verified in the just-concluded exercise.



DVC (Acad), Prof Fawehinmi (seated 3rd right), flanked by PenCom officials and some officers of the University

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Ikimalo Tasks FG On Fertility Bill



161st Inaugural Lecturer, Prof Ikimalo (arrowed) flanked by DVC (Admin), Prof Ogali (right), Registrar, Mrs Dorcas Otto (left) and other Professors before the Lecture

or later, every couple will be able to have the fruit of the womb."

Professor Ikimalo who was a former Head of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Faculty of Clinical Sciences, College of Health Sciences, made these remarks while delivering the 161st Inaugural Lecture entitled: "Searching for the 'Fruits of the Womb': Science and Technology Bridging the Gap" at the Ebbitimi Banigo Auditorium on Thursday, July 25, 2019.

The Frontline Gynaecologist and medical educator recalled that what is now known as normal conception through the union of sperm and egg was first observed by Oscar Hertwig and Beneden in 1875. "It is this conception which leads to the development of a foetus in the womb and the emergence of a baby at birth. That is the 'fruit of the womb' that we are talking about in today's lecture," he explained.

"In the world today, 10-15 per cent of the population in the reproductive age group are unable to achieve this natural process for the fruit of the womb. Again, it is this incapacity to obtain the fruit of the womb that is referred to as 'the gap' in this lecture," Ikimalo pointed out. He added that "this gap, which in reality is known as infertility, is the inability of a couple to achieve pregnancy within 12 months of regular and unprotected sexual intercourse.

"It is high time the government stepped in to encourage, regulate and control the practice of ART in line with our local socio-cultural norms. It is my hope that the establishment of an ART

centre at the University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital will help us to catch up with modern technological advancement in order to further close the gaps for couples searching for the fruit of the womb," Professor Ikimalo told the audience.

"As ART centres proliferate and ethical challenges multiply, there is an urgent need for government to engage all principal stakeholders (religious, legal, community and scientific leaders, including bioethicists and ordinary citizens) in order to regulate and establish minimum standards with quality assurance in ART. Lagos State has set the pace. Other states should urgently follow suit," the 161st Inaugural Lecturer advocated.

"The major cause of infertility in both men and women in our environment is the damage to reproductive tract caused by sexually transmitted infections. It is, therefore, important to take public health measures to preserve the reproductive tracts of adolescent girls from damage caused by sexually transmitted infections and abortions," he advised policy makers.

He further recommended the integration of family life education into programmes run by institutions that offer public health education, abstinence and use of condoms, including the establishment of Youth-friendly Centres, and improvement of family planning uptake—all aimed at reducing unwanted pregnancies, especially among young people.

Professor Ikimalo who served as Dean of the

Faculty of Clinical Sciences, also called for the introduction of proper procedures for managing infertility at the various primary healthcare centres in the country. Such a move, in his opinion, would create better awareness of infertility management through the print, electronic and social media, amongst other avenues.

The ace Gynaecologist who has made solid contributions to research and training of younger academics, including the successful delivery of a baby via the In-Vitro Fertilization (IVF) method, expressed hope that cutting-edge developments in science and technology, would help in bridging the gap for couples searching for the fruit of the womb.

Deputy Vice Chancellor (Administration), Professor Regina Ogali, who stood in for the Vice Chancellor, Professor Ndowa Lale, praised Professor Ikimalo for his frontline role in efforts aimed at tackling the challenges associated with infertility. "My advice to couples searching for the fruit of the womb is that they should approach experts like Professor Ikimalo for verifiable solutions to their problems, rather than complicating their situation through patronising quacks and charlatans," she said. Professor Ogali announced that the 162nd Inaugural Lecture entitled: "We All Can Be Rich and Remain Sustainably So" would be delivered by Professor Chinedu Ezirim of the Department of Finance and Banking in the Faculty of Management Sciences on Thursday, August 29, 2019.

Pentecostal Pastorate Confab Opens In UniPort Tomorrow

By Ethel Timi-Johnson

The maiden edition of academic conference series for the clergymen with the theme: *Pentecostalism and African Pastoral Profile* will open at 10.00am tomorrow at the Ebbitimi Banigo Auditorium, University Park. The ground-breaking conference is facilitated by the Department of Religious and Cultural Studies in the Faculty of Humanities.

The two-day conference which is in honour of the General Overseer of Omega Power Ministry, Apostle Gift Chibuzor Chinyere, is in recognition of his widely-acknowledged role as a Crusader of Social Gospel, Icon of Education in Nigeria and trademark philanthropy.

A statement by the conference convenor and Acting Head of the Department of Religious

and Cultural Studies, Dr Ngozi Iheanacho, indicates that papers to be presented at the event would produce a *Festschrift/Tribute* in honour of Apostle Chinyere. "It is a project of academic documentary for outstanding ministers in Rivers State and we hope to widen the scope of this conference in future," the statement read in part. It added that the keynote address on the conference theme would be delivered by the Chief Medical Director of the University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital, Professor Henry Ugbona, who is a pastor in OPM.

Dr Iheanacho further disclosed that the conference which is expected to promote the Department's main academic thrust of advancing knowledge on African Pastorate and Contemporary Pentecostalism would have *Apostle Chibuzor Chinyere, Social Gospel and Neo-Pentecostalism* as its subtheme. A lead paper on *Neo-Pentecostalism in 21st Century Nigeria* would be delivered by a senior academic in the Department, Professor Wellington Wotogbe-Wenke. Other papers to be presented include *Pentecostalism and e-Ministry, Church Conflict, African Pastorate and Inculturation, Dreams in Pentecostalism, The Church and Social Welfare Institutions*, including *African Pastorate and Health Care*, amongst others.



OPM GO, Apostle Chinyere

Ag. HoD, RCS, Dr Iheanacho

GUIDE POST

APPOINTMENT

Professor Onyemachi Udukwu, Department of English Studies, Faculty of Humanities, appointed Chairman, Editorial Board of *UniPort News/Unique UniPort*. The appointment which takes immediate effect is till further notice.

Dr Julius Akani, Department of English Studies, Faculty of Humanities, appointed Assistant Coordinator, Chinese Language Centre. The two-year appointment which takes immediate effect will terminate on July 1, 2021.

PROMOTION

Dr Onyemachi Akomah-Abada, Department of Microbiology, School of Science Laboratory Technology, promoted Lecturer I, effective October 1, 2018.

Dr Sonny Inichibia, Department of Physics, Faculty of Science, promoted Lecturer I, effective October 1, 2018.

Dr Uduak Idoghor, Department of Curriculum Studies and Educational Technology, Faculty of Education, promoted Lecturer I, effective October 1, 2018.

Mr Joshua Isirima, Department of Biomedical Technology, School of Science Laboratory Technology, promoted Lecturer I, effective October 1, 2018.

Mrs Rebecca Adesope, Department of Curriculum Studies and Educational Technology, Faculty of Education, promoted Lecturer II, effective October 1, 2018.

Mr Idongesit Ekpo, Department of Pure and Industrial Chemistry, Faculty of Science, promoted Lecturer II, effective October 1, 2018.

Mr Tamunobola Solomon, Department of Crop and Soil Science, Faculty of Agriculture, promoted Assistant Lecturer, effective October 1, 2018.

Dr Millie Horsfall, Central Library, promoted Librarian I, effective October 1, 2018.

REVIEW OF STATUS

Dr Ohinna Nwadin, Department of Political and Administrative Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, granted Review of Status from Lecturer II to Lecturer I, effective May 15, 2018.

Dr Blessing Odagwu, Department of Plant Science and Biotechnology, Faculty of Social Science, granted Review of Status from Assistant Lecturer to Lecturer II, effective October 1, 2018.

STUDY LEAVE

Mrs Doughter Amadi, Acquisition Unit, Library Department, granted a two-year Study Leave with Pay to enable her pursue a Diploma programme in Library and Information Science at the Captain Elechi Amadi Polytechnic, Rumuola, Port Harcourt, effective 2018/2019 to 2019/2020 sessions.

Mr Okechukwu Edeh, Department of Mechanical Engineering, Faculty of Engineering, granted a three-year Study Leave with Pay to enable him undertake a Doctoral degree programme in Transport Systems at Cranfield University, United Kingdom, effective September 1, 2019 to August 31, 2022.

Mr Ohinichi Nnorom, Department of Mechanical Engineering, Faculty of Engineering, granted a four-year Study Leave with Pay to enable him undertake a Doctoral research programme in Mechanical Engineering (Material Option) at the University of Manchester, United Kingdom, effective September 1, 2019 to August 30, 2023.

Dr Sandra Ofori, Department of Internal Medicine, Faculty of Clinical Sciences, College of Health Sciences, granted a three-year Study Leave with Pay to enable her undertake a Doctoral degree studies on Health Research Methodology (Cardiovascular Clinical Epidemiology) at the McMaster University, Canada, effective September 1, 2019 to August 31, 2022.

EXTENSION OF STUDY LEAVE

Mr Chikaodu Onu, Department of Civil Engineering, Faculty of Engineering, granted a one-year Extension of Study Leave with Pay, effective February 27, 2019 to February 26, 2020.

Don't Run Away After Graduation, Don Advises Medical Students

By Humphrey Ogu

Foremost Gynaecologist, Professor Celestine John, has charged medical students to jettison the idea of leaving for other countries after graduation, describing the practice as an unpatriotic act. Professor John gave the advice in a lecture entitled, "The Brain Drain of Medical Doctors in Nigeria: Economic Implications and Recommendations," at a symposium organised by the Port Harcourt Medical Students' Association (PMSA) to mark its 2019 Annual Health Campaign. The event held at the Amatu Braide Auditorium on Wednesday, July 10, 2019. Speaking through the Head of Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART) at the University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital, Professor John Ikimalo, the Guest Speaker defined brain drain as the emigration of highly qualified personnel from one country to a more conducive location. He regretted that the emigration of best brains to other climes usually depletes the workforce in countries that lose their skilled personnel.

"Whatever skills you acquire in this country, stay back and use them here for the good of our people. Brain drain is a very serious problem. It is unpatriotic for you to leave your country and go abroad to develop other countries. You can go and acquire the skills outside the country, but you need to come back to help develop this country," advised the students. Professor John emphasised the need for government to tackle the challenges that make brain drain attractive to highly-skilled medical practitioners and other

professionals.

Earlier in his opening remarks, Dean of the Faculty of Humanities, Professor Femi Shaka, noted that "because of our socioeconomic challenges, young medical doctors migrate to other countries where they are less appreciated, despite their skills. It is always better to stay back in your country, where you are better appreciated by your own people."

A major highlight of the event was the 2nd edition of Professor Datonye Dapper Debate Competition on the topic, "Brain Drain Phenomenon in Africa: A New Slave Trade?" At the end of the keenly contested debate, Medical Students from UniPort emerged victorious over their sparring partners from the Faculty of Law, Rivers State University.

The result of the British Parliamentary System debate style was announced by leader of the Panel of Judges, Lucky Uboh Imaokop. At the end of the debate, the Opening Opposition won first position. The Opening Government took second position, while third position went to the Closing Opposition. The Closing Government took fourth position.

Also present at the event were the sponsor of the Debate Series, Professor Datonye Dapper and Deputy Director of the Centre for Research Management and Development, Professor Olufemi Adesope. Provost of the College of Medical Sciences, Rivers State University, Professor Raphael Orumambo, was represented by Professor Blessing Jaja. Other participants included students of Olobo Premier College and pupils of Holy Trinity Educational Centre, Choba.



Prof Ikimalo (4th left), flanked by Profs Dapper, Adesope (right), some staff and the competitors from UniPort and Rivers State University

Stop Press

Alapiki Heads ACE-CEFOR Academic Board

Professor Henry Alapiki of the Department of Political and Administrative Studies in the Faculty of Social Sciences, has been appointed Chairman of the Academic Board of the World Bank Africa Centre of Excellence in Oilfield Chemicals Research (ACE-CEFOR).

The letter that conferred the appointment to Professor Alapiki and dated June 14, 2019, was personally signed by the Vice Chancellor, Professor Ndowa Lale. The two-year appointment which took effect from the date of appointment will terminate on June 2, 2021.

Other members of the Board included the Coordinator of World Bank Centres of Excellence in the University, Professor Onyemachi Akaranta, Deans of the School of Graduate Studies, Faculties of Engineering and Science, ACE-CEFOR Centre Leader and his Deputy, Directors of the Institute of Petroleum Studies and his counterpart at the Centre for Occupational Health, Safety and Environment. Acting Directors of the Centre for Gas, Refining and Petrochemicals, Centre for Petroleum Geosciences and Offshore Technology Institute were also appointed to serve on the Board.

Also seconded to the ACE-CEFOR Academic Board were Chairmen of Graduate Studies Committee in the Departments of Petroleum and Gas Engineering, Chemical Engineering, Geology, Microbiology, Pure and Industrial Chemistry, Plant Science and Biotechnology, and Environmental and Civil Engineering. The Vice Chancellor directed the Registrar to appoint a Secretary to the Board.

UDPS To Run Creche, Nursery School

The University Demonstration Primary School (UDPS) has received approval to commence a Creche and Primary School at its present location. The approval to open its doors for kindergarten education would enable the leadership of the UDPS to expand the school's foundational educational activities.

The proposal which was approved by the Vice Chancellor, Professor Ndowa Lale, was conveyed in a letter dated July 10, 2019, and addressed to the Chairman, Board of Governors, Professor Joyce Akaninwor. The letter was signed by the Registrar, Mrs Dorcas Otto.

"I refer to your letter dated 24th April, 2019 on the above subject and to inform you that the Vice Chancellor, Professor Ndowa E. S. Lale, has approved the request of the Board of Governors, University Demonstration Primary School, to establish a Creche, Daycare and Nursery School in the UDPS, which will be funded from Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) of the School," part of the letter read.

Principal Officers, Associates Mark V-C's Fourth Anniversary In Office

By Humphrey Ogu
and Letom Nnen

It was a moment of backslapping; clinking of glasses and reflections as some colleagues, friends and well-wishers converged in the Vice Chancellor's Office to pour accolades on Professor Ndowa Lale as he marked four successful years on the hot seat. The occasion offered some of those who gathered an opportunity to acknowledge God's grace in the life of the Vice Chancellor as he entered his last year in office. Although Professor Lale actually clocked four years on Saturday, July 13, 2019, the brief, but impressive ceremony took place on Monday, July 15, 2019.

In her opening remarks, the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Administration), Professor Regina Ogali, commended Professor Lale for four years of purposeful and courageous leadership that has kept the University on the right track, despite all the numerous distractions aimed at diverting him from attaining a "wholesome and prosperous University" which he declared in his Inaugural Address on July 13, 2015.

"Under the present dispensation, we now commence lectures at the inception of a new semester and the ongoing certificate verification is meant to ensure that all categories of staff actually possess the academic credentials they declared at the entry point. We are happy that these two things are happening in the administration of Professor Lale. It is our prayer that God would strengthen you to successfully complete these important assignments aimed at sanitising the University. It is natural that the inception of an administration would witness some turbulence, but the Vice Chancellor admirably navigated his way through the turbulence. We anticipate that the last year will also be turbulent. Our prayer is that God should protect and guide you to finish well just as you started," Professor Ogali said.

In a brief exhortation, former Chaplain of Our Saviour's Chapel, University of Port Harcourt, Venerable Saturday Nbete, who took his texts from Psalm 124 and Exodus 10:1, praised God for guiding the Vice Chancellor through the past four years. Venerable Nbete advised him to exercise more caution in his decision-making processes in the



V.C. Prof Lale assisted by his wife, Joy, cutting the anniversary cake

remaining days of his tenure.

"You have faced many challenges and you may still face more daunting odds. God will help you surmount every obstacle on your way. We want to encourage you not to be scared in the remaining days. Even if everybody abandons you and you know that your decisions are in the overall interest of the

University, go ahead and make them. Strive to leave great legacies behind and know that God is on your side and will see your administration to a successful end," the Man of God charged Professor Lale.

Also speaking, the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic), Professor Hakeem Fawehinmi, commended the Vice Chancellor for achieving 100 per cent accreditation of programmes during his tenure. He pledged continued support to the administration as it begins to wind down. "It has been eventful four years and we intend to continue supporting you until you reach the finish line. We want to thank you for your purposeful, courageous and sacrificial leadership," Professor Fawehinmi said.

In his response, the Vice Chancellor commended all who came to show solidarity with him. Professor Lale attributed his success to a supportive team that stood by him, despite all the irritating distractions from his few detractors. "I want to thank all of you for your wonderful support. I am extremely grateful to God who has sustained me to wade through these four years, because the job of a Vice Chancellor is quite stressful in Nigeria today. Sinister forces are plotting against you and doing everything possible to pull you down. The bad news is that you know they are plotting to pull you down."

"I want to thank all Principal Officers and the rest of you for your unconditional support, including my dear wife for her prayers. I count on your support to enable me pull through this last year. I will try not to let down all those who identified with me. I will continue to represent you very well and I want to plead for the same support in the remaining period so that we can finish on a successful note and handover a healthy University to the next administration," Professor Lale said.

Goodwill messages came from former Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic), Professor Igbo Joe, former Registrar, Mrs Matilda Nnodim, current Registrar, Mrs Dorcas Otto, University Librarian, Dr Susan Umecozor, Deans of the Faculties of Humanities and Management Sciences, Professors Femi Shaka and Barisua Nwinea.

Others who paid glowing tributes to the Vice Chancellor included the Director of Quality Assurance and Quality Control Unit, Professor Ikechukwu Agbagwa and the Director of Sports Institute, Professor Ken Anugweke who proposed the anniversary toast. Drs Ovunda Ihunwo and Edward Imo livened the gathering with comedy snippets. The highlight of the event was the cutting of the Anniversary Cake tagged: *The Journey So Far* which was supervised by Mrs Hadeze Fawehinmi.



Prof Lale (4th left), his wife, Joy, Principal Officers, former DVC (Acad), Prof Joe (3rd right) and Dean, Faculty of Humanities, Prof Femi Shaka (right)



Former OSC Chaplain, Venerable Nbete giving a brief exhortation

Prof Lale, wife and some Senior Officers