

Understanding the Concept of the Modern-day Universities: The Role of the new University of Medical Sciences, Ondo.

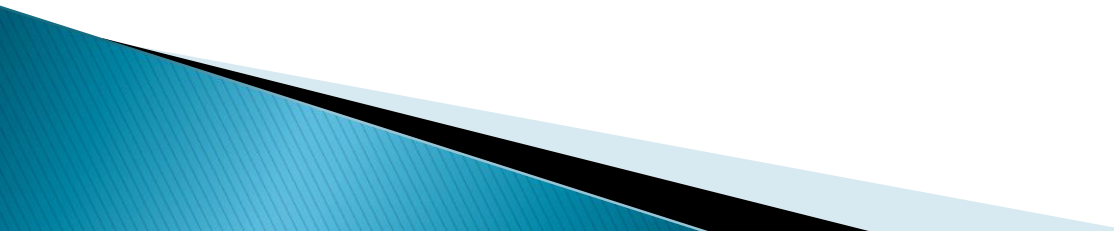
By

**Andrew Godwin Onokerhoraye, *JP, OON*
Professor Emeritus, University of Benin, Benin
City & Former Vice Chancellor, University of
Benin, Benin City.**

**Lecture Delivered at the Staff Orientation
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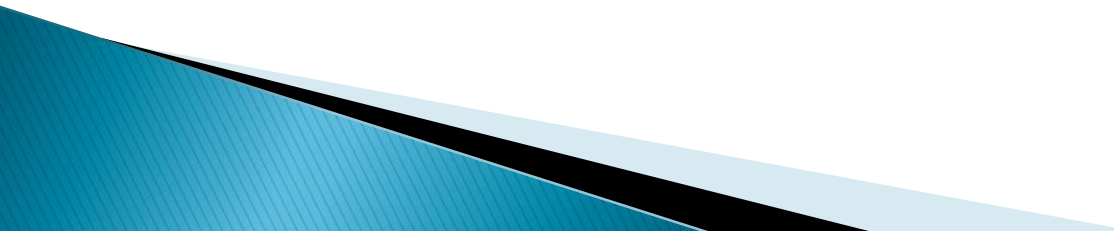


Outline

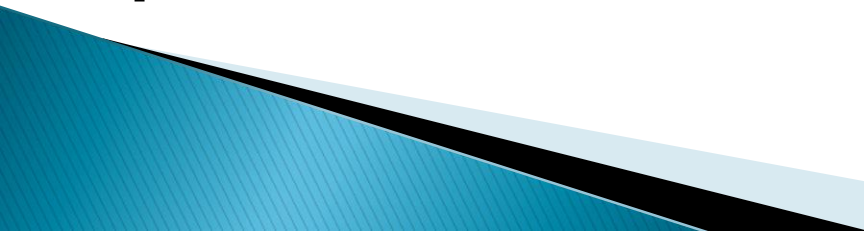
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Perspectives on Modern Universities

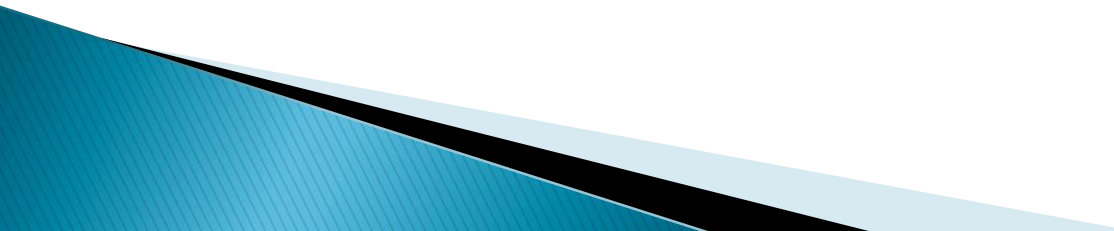
- ❑ The University in its medieval origin was an association of teachers and students motivated only by the desire for knowledge and understanding.
- ❑ It was an association, characterized by universality, in two senses; Universality arising from the dissolution of all artificial distinctions such as those of creed, race, ethnicity and colour that could occasion conflict and rancour; and

- Universality arising from the supremacy over space and time of the desire for knowledge**
 - Universities are therefore part of the enlightenment tradition, which, from the beginnings of modern times, spread the values of human reason, science, and education as the best means of building a stable society of free men on earth.**
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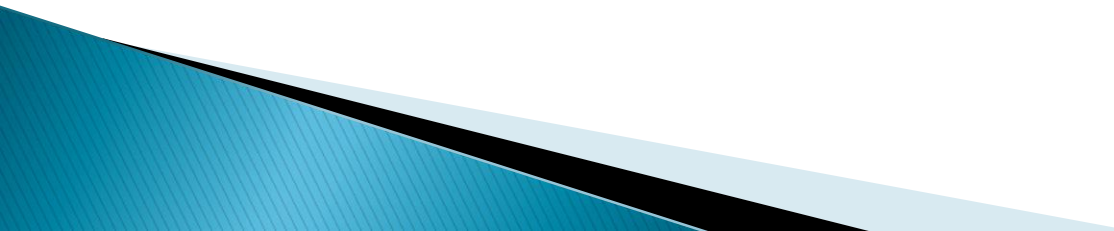
- ❑ **Universities, however, like most cultural and professional institutions, have two faces. The external face is the role its participants – academics, administrators, and students – may play for the benefit of society.**
- ❑ **The other side is the institutional arrangements and private benefits they secure for themselves. These two faces can be in harmony, or they may not. When they do, the institutions bring benefits to society, and society provides their members with resources, prestige and recognition. When they do not, the social benefits may still be significant, but society may not recognize them.**

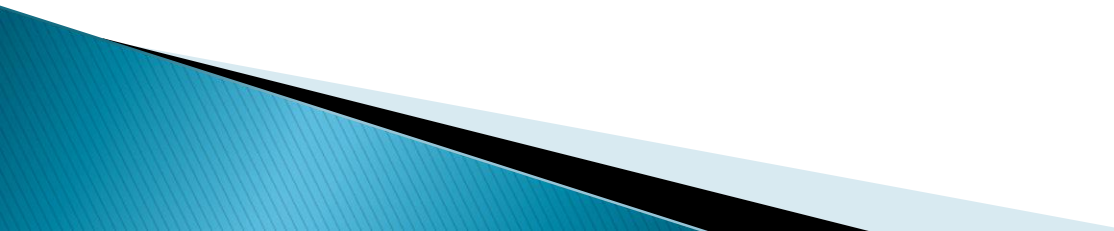
- ❑ The introduction of modern universities in developing societies, in Asia, Africa and Latin America, was conceived and justified in terms of the transformations they would bring, through the benefits of rationality, democratic values and modern technology.
 - ❑ They are potentially the most capable institutions in their respective countries because universities are often the only national institutions with skills, the equipment, and the mandate to generate new knowledge through research, or to adapt knowledge for the solution of societal problems.
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The modern University in Nigeria cannot aim at less. Indeed, the University in Nigeria, right from its beginning in the colonial period, was designed to fulfil this basic purpose.



Universities and the Transformation of Societies

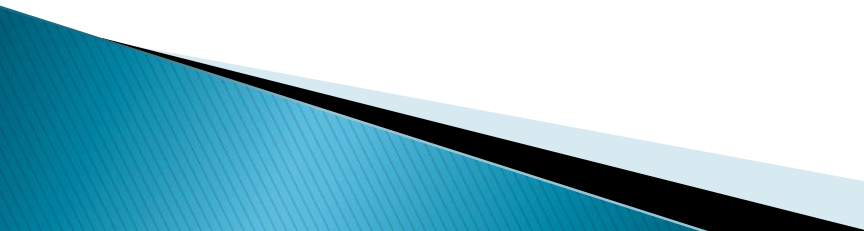
- ❑ In many parts of the world, Universities have played major roles in the transformation of societies that had experienced some kind of profound economic, social or political changes in their recent history.
 - ❑ In this context *transformations* generated by Universities can be viewed along the following dimensions:
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- I. the economy:*** the formation of human capital;
 - II. the polity:*** the creation and sustenance of state and civil institutions; the selection and socialisation of political and social elites;
 - III. the social structure:*** the basis of social stratification, the extent and mechanisms of mobility for different groups; and
 - IV. the culture:*** the production and dissemination of ideas.
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- ❑ **The role of Universities in human capital development, research and technological innovation has thus been acknowledged over the ages. All over the world today and since the period of ancient civilizations investment in University education is recognized as a critical component of national development efforts.**
 - ❑ **The role, which the Universities should play in the development aspirations of African countries, has always been discussed among governments, donors and University institutions themselves.**
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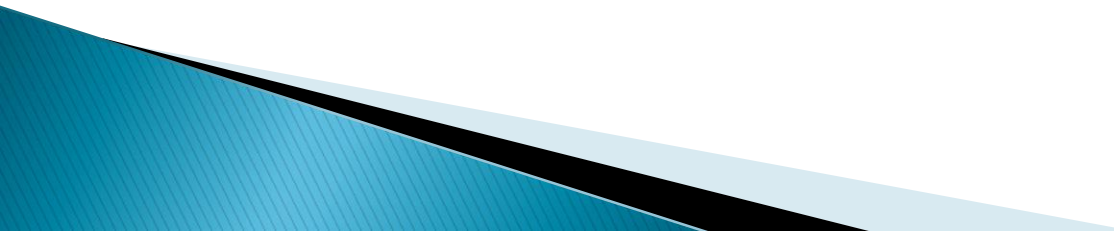
- ❑ This was the origin of the notion of the developmental University defined as a University whose work and mission were directed towards the attainment of concrete and demonstrable development goals.

Brief History of University Education in Nigeria

- ❑ The history of University education in Nigeria started with the establishment of University College Ibadan (UCI) in 1948. UCI was an affiliate of the University of London.
 - ❑ In April 1959, the Federal Government set up the Ashby Commission to advise it on the higher education needs of the country for its first–two decades.
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- ❑ Before the submission of the report, the Eastern Regional Government established its own University at Nsukka (University of Nigeria, Nsukka in 1960). The implementation of the Ashby Report led to the establishment of University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University) in 1962 by the Western Regional Government, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria in 1962 by the Northern Regional Government and University of Lagos (1962) by the Federal Government.
- ❑ In 1970, the University of Benin was established by the Midwestern Regional Government. The 6 universities established during this period 1960—1970 are still referred to as Nigeria's first generation Universities.

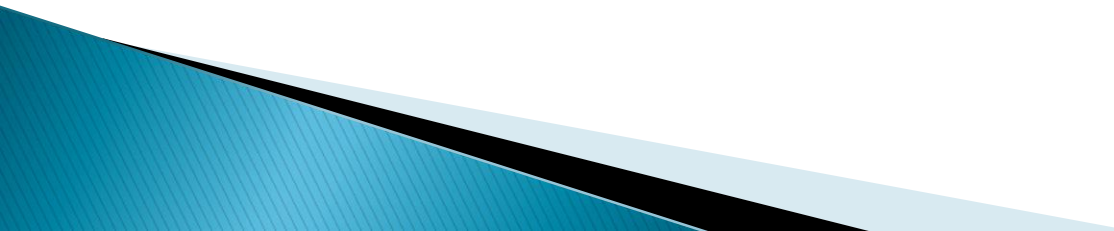
- ❑ In Nigeria's Third National Development Plan (1975 – 1980), the Federal Government established 7 Universities in 1975 referred to as second generation Universities. The third generation Universities were established between the 1980s and the 1990s. Many State Universities were established during this period. The fourth generation Universities are those ones established after 2000 to date. They include more Federal and State Universities, Universities and a myriad of private Universities.

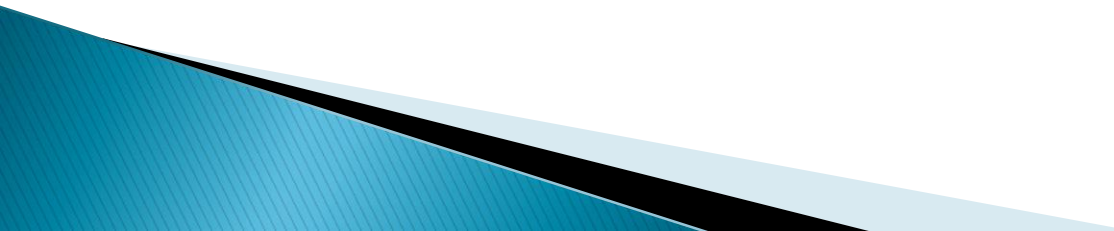
- ❑ It is difficult to give the exact number of Universities in Nigeria today as the figure changes daily. Even the National Universities Commission (NUC) is not sure as some which people believe were Universities are suddenly described as illegal by NUC.
 - ❑ In the 1960s and 1970s in Nigeria the role of Universities as agents of development was not seriously questioned. They were educating elite, which would take on socio-economic responsibility in different sectors of the Nigerian economy.
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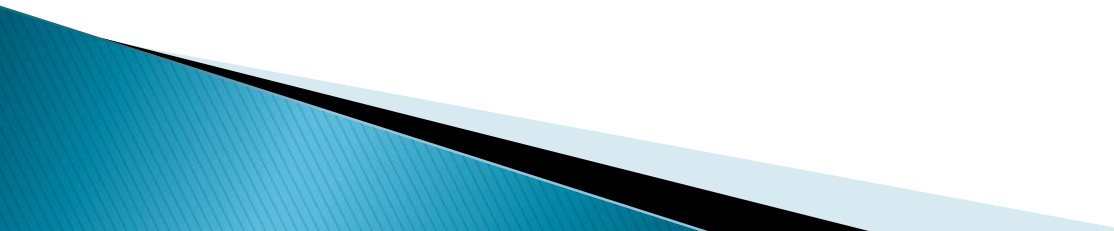
- ❑ After an impressive beginning of University education in Nigeria between 1948 and the early 1980s, the situation changed dramatically during the mid-1980s when the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) was introduced following the economic crisis in the country.
- ❑ During the past three decades, therefore, Nigerian Universities have faced a myriad of problems that have resulted in a remarkable decline in the quality of research and student output as well as governance challenges.

- ❑ In the contemporary era characterized by the knowledge economy, efforts should be made to reposition Nigerian Universities so that they can play their expected role in the technological and socio-economic development of the country.

Key Components of University Governance

- ❑ Governance is a key component of the modern University within the context of discharging its responsibilities effectively and sustainably.
 - ❑ Many Universities in Nigeria have grown in size and complexity over the years. Within the institutions, the student bodies have become increasingly heterogeneous in abilities, ages and socio-economic backgrounds.
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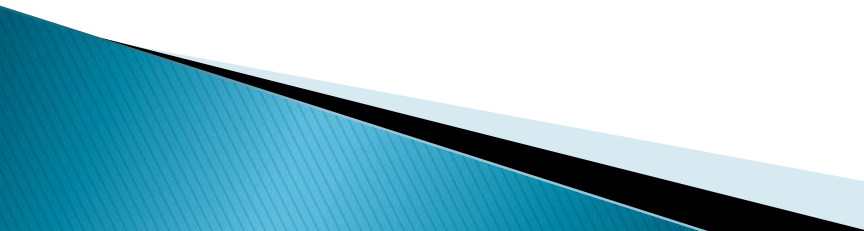
- ❑ **Consequently, University administrators of today are placed in the middle of human problems which require co-operative efforts for solution.**
 - ❑ **Nigerian Universities experience shortages of competent administrative personnel and this has created the need for trained administrators who are able to take on management roles and leadership in University governance.**
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- ❑ **The administrator's main function, for which special training is required, is an organizational one: to ensure that the policies of the institutions are well formulated and that programmes are effectively implemented.**
 - ❑ **Thus University administrators are involved in a number of planning, organizing, directing, controlling and evaluating activities of major units within the University.**
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- Basically, University administrators can be broadly categorized into two groups comprising, in the first place, professional administrators that handle basically all aspects of the University management and provide continuity in the system.
- Secondly, there are the academic administrators who are mainly involved in University administration on temporary or part time basis. In this category are Vice Chancellors, Deputy Vice Chancellors, Provosts, Deans, Directors, Heads of Departments, Chairmen and members of key University Committees.


Challenges facing contemporary Nigerian Universities

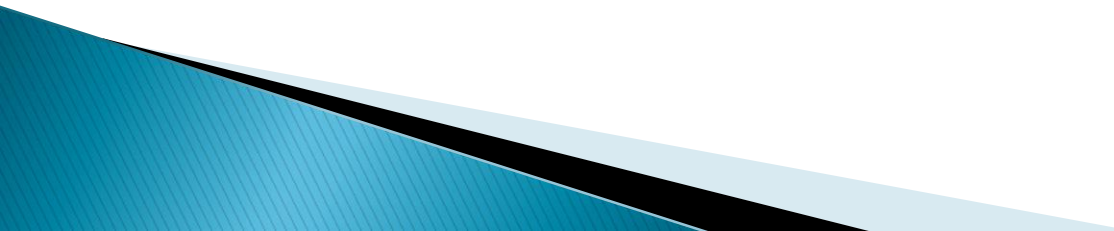
- ❑ In the colonial and early independence years, specifically between 1950 and the 1970s, the question of the quality of the Universities in Nigeria was not an issue because they generally met what can be called international standards.
- ❑ The conditions facilitating the development and the maintenance of international standards in the country's Universities were to undergo substantial and dramatic change in the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s, 1990s and even today.

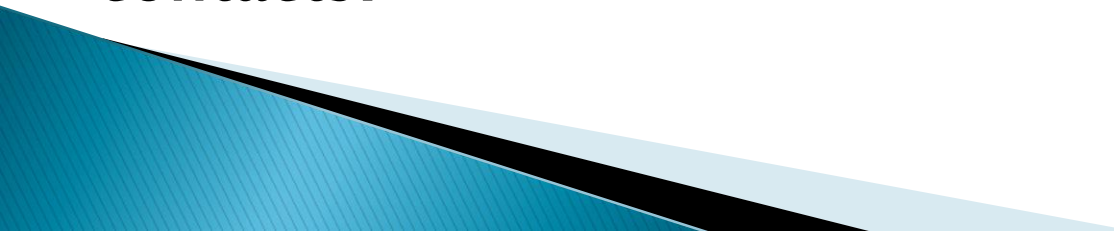
- ❑ Nigeria began a slide into economic decline in the late 1970s. The decline in the economic fortunes of Nigeria led to the sharp reductions in the capacity of the government to maintain support to Universities at the levels of the financial support provided in the 1960s and early 1970s.
 - ❑ For example, from 1976 onwards, the funds available to Universities in Nigeria began to dwindle as resources became scarce. Another factor responsible for this was the expanded commitment of the Federal Government to the establishment and funding of more universities at a time when oil revenues began to decline.
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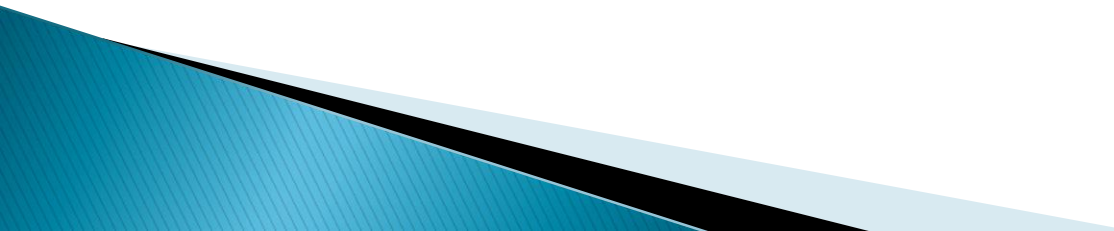
- ❑ The other contributory factors were the abrogation of tuition fees in 1977, which deprived Universities of much needed revenue, and the pegging of boarding, and lodging fees at such low values that Universities were compelled to subsidize.
- ❑ These reasons, coupled with escalating inflation, reduced the revenue base of the Universities, despite a rapid expansion in student's enrolment.
- ❑ The damage sustained by under-resourcing Nigerian Universities during the 1980s, 1990s and beyond has been massive. In fact, the first impression one got of an average Nigerian University campus since the 1990s to date is one of an all-pervading state of physical, managerial and intellectual dilapidation.

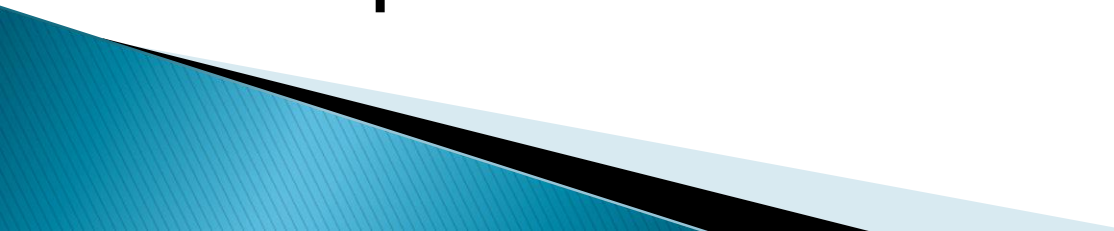
- ❑ **The constraints on financial and human resources have produced consequences at various levels and of several dimensions: on the progress of science, technology and scholarship; on the kind and quality of individual academic work; and on the teaching and training of students.**
 - ❑ **The story of the resulting deterioration in physical conditions in Nigerian Universities in the 1980s and 1990s has often been told in various publications.**
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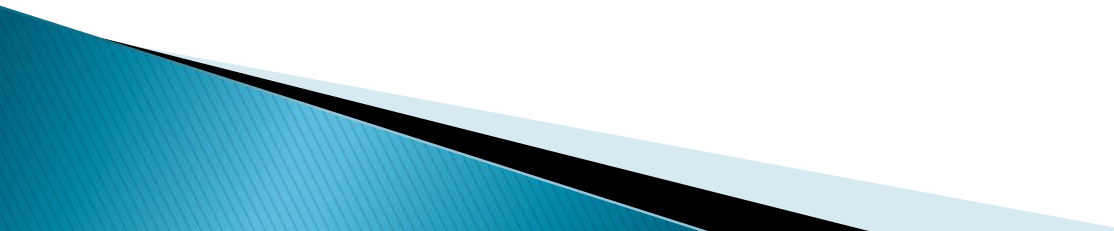
- ❑ There are reports of students having to take lessons standing, for lack of seating space in the classrooms, while in other instances some students have to listen from outside the classroom.
 - ❑ Libraries are not only overcrowded, but books are out of date, whilst journal holdings lag years behind. Small-group tutorials, industrial and other attachments, and fieldwork are hardly feasible in many Universities.
 - ❑ Science students go through degree programmes with no hands-on experience of computers, scientific equipment and basic experiments. Overcrowded students residential facilities only compound the problem.
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- ❑ The result has been a massive decline in the dedication to scholarship and teaching. There is not much research and hardly any fieldwork, and dissemination of research results through publication has taken a back seat, as has supervision of graduate work.
 - ❑ In general, the life of the mind, which has for decades defined and sustained academic communities everywhere in the world, is an endangered category on many Nigerian University campuses.
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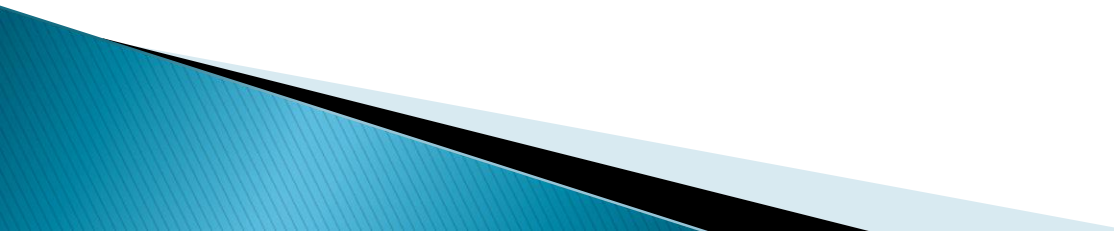
- ❑ Staff retention has become a major problem as most talented staff left and are still leaving the system for greener pastures within and outside the country. In a vicious cycle, worsening conditions have led many of Nigeria's best minds to emigrate to the Northern hemisphere, where they benefit from far superior academic facilities and living conditions.
 - ❑ There is the virtual collapse of the system of *sabbatical leave*. The practice of enabling faculty to get away from regular teaching once every seven years, to spend up to one year renewing themselves was one of the most effective means of enabling faculty to remain abreast of developments in their field and maintain international contacts.
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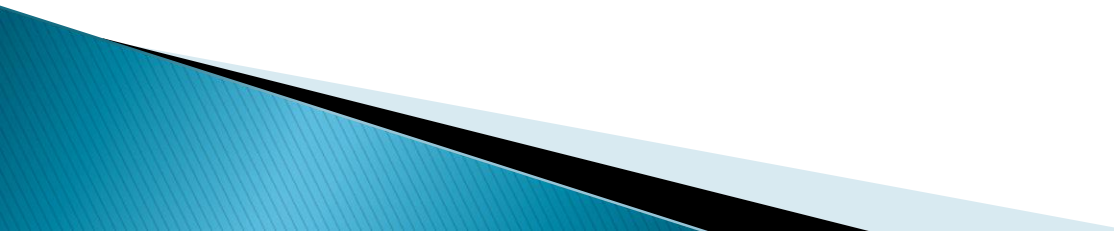
- ❑ Sabbatical leave became a period for taking full-time employment abroad or locally. A professor chooses an institution for sabbatical leave based on the salary he would earn rather than the facilities available for research. Thus some senior academic staff headed for Polytechnics and Colleges of Education on sabbatical.
 - ❑ Thus, the infrequency and the uses to which sabbatical is put in Nigerian Universities have completely subverted the principle of sabbatical leave as a means for staff self-regeneration.
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- ❑ These unfortunate developments were taking place at a time that the role of knowledge in social and economic development has become accentuated caused by transformations in the global political economy and the heightened significance of information and knowledge to production, management and services throughout the world.
 - ❑ The decline in the research tradition of the Nigerian Universities had basically influenced the attitude of University managers in terms of the priority, which they set for themselves on assumption of office.
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- ❑ Executive Heads of Universities had become the drivers of the ship that diverted the Universities from the core business of improvement in the University curriculum and research they were caught up in a grim struggle to keep their institutions liquid and operational.
 - ❑ Beyond that there were the numerous new efforts focusing on fundraising; setting up and managing income-generating ventures; restructuring staff and departments/units.
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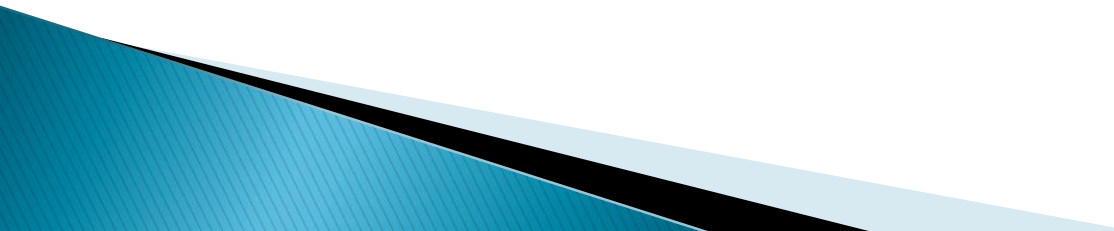
- ❑ While this drive to cope with the prevailing situation was understandable, it had tended to crowd out proper attention to the core business for the discharge of which the institution was struggling to survive in the first place, which is teaching and research.
- ❑ The agreement put in place in September 1992 by the Federal Government and the *Academic Staff Union of Universities* (ASUU), which was expected to revitalise the Universities, turned out to further worsen the already bad situation rather than improve it.


- ❑ The then two other unions in the University system, the *Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities* (SSANU) and the *Non-Academic Staff Union* (NASU) laid claims to most aspects of the agreement and insisted that government should fulfil its obligations to their members.
 - ❑ The agreement therefore generated controversy among the then three staff unions within the university system as well as between them and the government in terms of the failure of government to fulfil its obligations.
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- ❑ **At some point, the target of the strike in this case the Federal Government, was left completely out, while members of the University communities engaged themselves in a bitter and acrimonious war of attrition.**
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Reinventing the University System in Nigeria through the new University of Medical Sciences

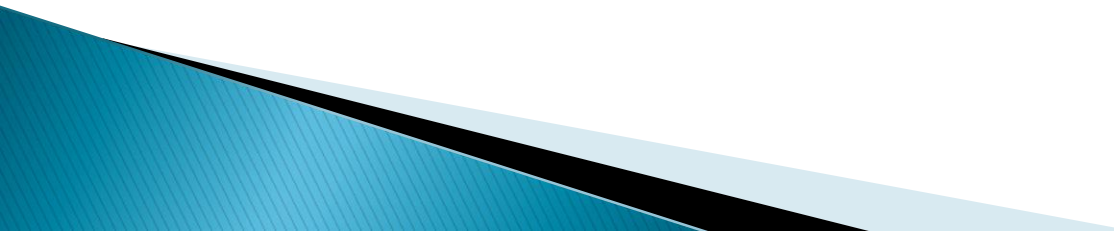
- In his Millennium Report to the United Nations General Assembly in 2000, the former UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, stated the obvious when he said that ‘knowledge is the key to the new global economy’. In fact it can be stated that the entire international system of stratification has come to be based not on “who owns what” but on “who knows what”.

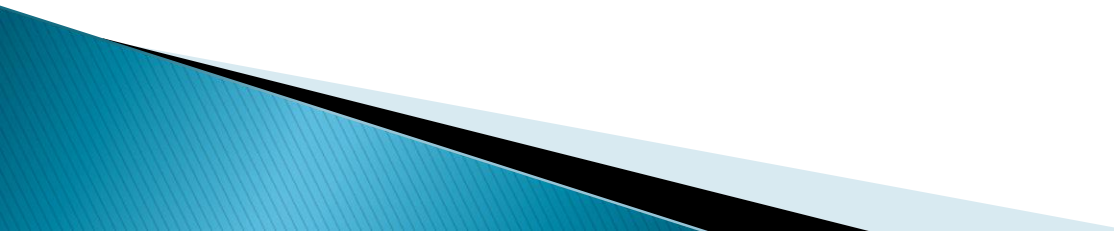
- ❑ **The ability to learn and to interact with others, to learn from others, is at the heart of individual and organisational success in the knowledge-based economy.**
 - ❑ **The key process in the knowledge-based economy is learning, which from the point of view of individuals in an organisation has three components, organisational learning, networking, and discovery.**
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- ❑ Despite their shortcomings, Nigerian Universities will become more, not less, important as the knowledge economy expands. Universities are key players in domesticating knowledge and diffusing it into the economy.
 - ❑ The main role of the first generation of Nigerian universities was to create civil servants. Unfortunately, this classical model has become the template within which most new Universities were established even though social and economic needs have changed radically.
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- ❑ **Nigeria needs a new generation of Universities that can serve as engines of both community development and social renewal. To achieve this, a qualitative change in the goals, functions and structure of the University in Nigeria is needed.**
 - ❑ **As part of this process, fundamental reforms are needed in research orientation and funding, curriculum design, teaching, choice of staff and students and the governance of the country's Universities. This is the innovation we expect of our University of Medical Sciences.**
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□ What, then, would it mean for the University of Medical Sciences to commit itself to a new role aimed at maximising the contribution of knowledge to development? A few of these can be listed:

- ❖ Knowledge must be actively recognised as a vital issue for development.**
 - ❖ High-level research and teaching activities must be strengthened right from the beginning. Achieving this will require many competent researchers, professionals and creatively trained students.**
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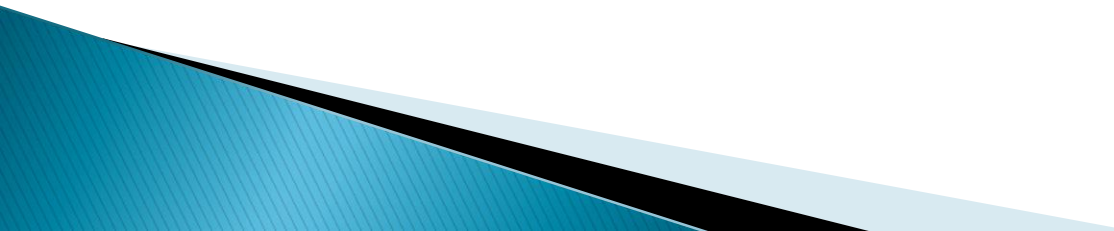
- ❖ **Local needs must be included in research agenda. In particular, attention should be paid to the needs of local environment, and priority given to tackling social problems.**
 - ❖ **Concomitant efforts must also be made to ensure that there is demand for the results of research and that potential users have the capabilities to implement them.**
 - ❖ **New assessment methods must be developed for University researchers which will encourage research on local needs. This means that good research into problems of local relevance must be rewarded, irrespective of whether it achieves international acceptance or impact.**
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- ❖ At the same time care must be taken to devise new and rigorous methods to evaluate academic work; and international isolation must be avoided at all costs.
 - ❖ Support must be provided for students and University staff to identify and be committed to solving social and productive problems.
 - ❖ The University of Medical Sciences should strive to be linked to developmental Universities in the advanced countries to provide necessary assistance.
 - ❖ The University of Medical Sciences must, therefore, decide which existing traditions of the Nigerian University system deserve keeping, and which new approaches are worth adopting.
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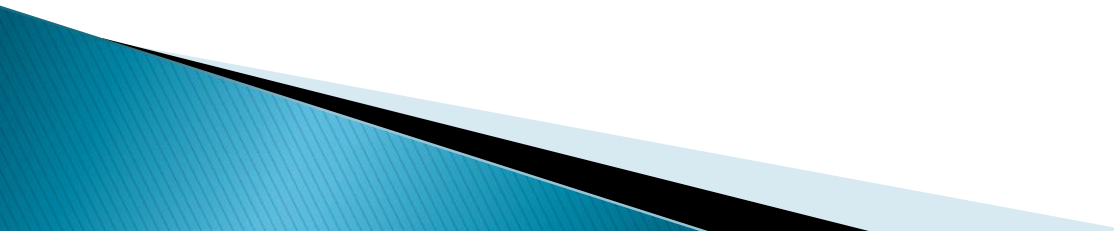
Promoting Good Governance

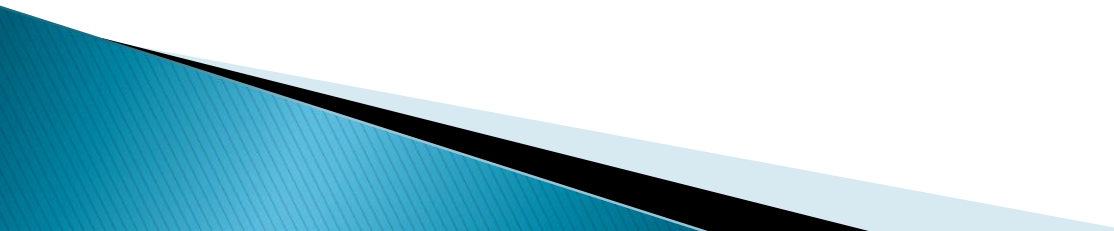
- ❑ Reinventing the University in Nigeria through the University of Medical Sciences requires a solid governance system to achieve sustainable results.
- ❑ At the beginning of the University enterprise in Nigeria, most of the decision-making organs were dominated by the senior members of the community, specifically the Professors. Power and authority within the University was distributed among departments, colleges, faculties, key committees and principal officers.

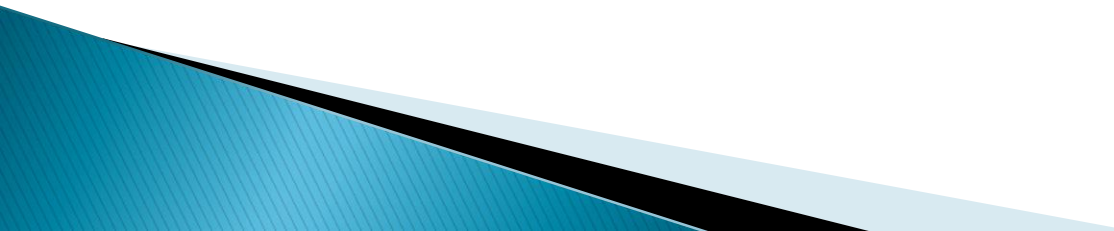
- ❑ In fact the Vice Chancellor's role was to coordinate the activities of the different decision making organs. The Vice Chancellor at that time was called *primus inter pares* or first among equals. Council was basically supreme as it handles all issues affecting the university with finality.
- ❑ In the last three decades, it has become well known that one of the key components of good governance in the University system is promoting democracy in decision-making within Universities so as to ensure improved participation by the different groups within the system.

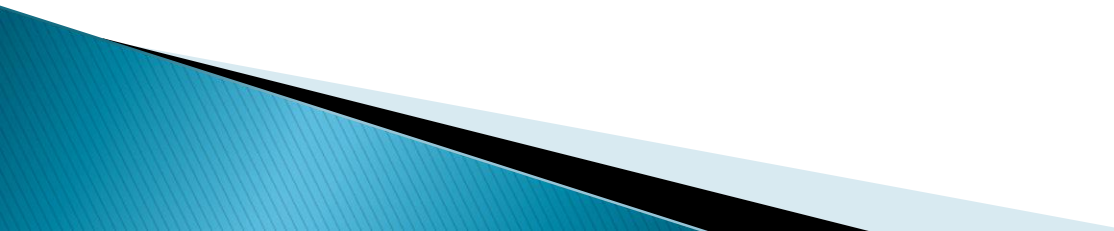
- ❑ This was achieved by wider representation of staff and students in key University governing bodies as well as giving staff and students more say in the management of the affairs of the University.
 - ❑ But in the real sense, the so-called participation by key stakeholders within the University is cosmetic. What has happened in the last two to three decades is that Vice Chancellors' powers increased to the extent that they are basically 'sole administrators' if not 'dictators' in the University's governance structure.
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- ❑ **With the decline in financial resources to the Universities, Vice Chancellors argue that the limited resources available should be pooled together centrally invariably under the control of the Vice Chancellor.**
 - ❑ **What follows is that heads of departments, deans, provosts and chairmen of key committees go cap-in-hand to beg the Vice Chancellor for funds. If a head of department or dean is one of the vocal critics of the administration or generally outspoken he has to pray hard to succeed in getting approval of funds from the Vice Chancellor for his programmes.**
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- ❑ **Considering the fact that the Vice Chancellor also appoints chairmen of those committees which he himself is not presiding over, the overwhelming influence of the Vice Chancellor in the decision making of the university in recent years can better be imagined.**
 - ❑ **There is need for change in the University of Medical Sciences to move the University to its desired goal. Good managers must be recruited, especially to top positions.**
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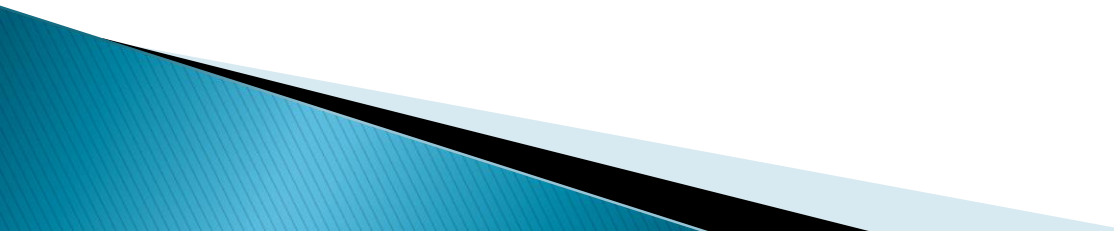
- ❑ **Good managers are people who have cognate experience in University administration and management. When engaged, these managers must be given the freedom to run the system with a view to meeting the global expectations of University systems.**
 - ❑ **Good governance is essential to the success of all efforts geared toward the growth and development of the University; whether in community engagement, linkages and partnering, alumni relations, capital campaign or whatsoever.**
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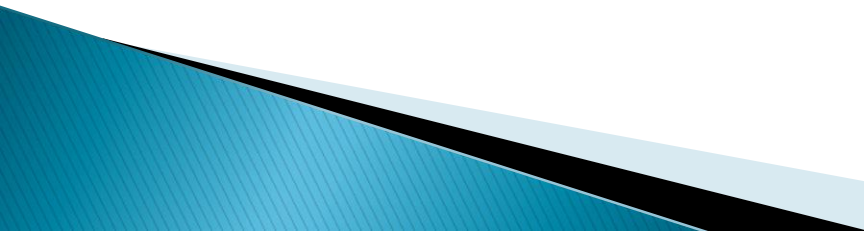
- ❑ **A key element of the good governance in the new University of Medical Sciences relates to the importance of the training of middle level professional administrators or managers.**
 - ❑ **The importance of enhancing the training and development of managers is a priority if greater effectiveness is to be achieved in the University's management.**
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- ❑ **However, in Nigerian Universities where training activities have been run to date most attention has been paid to the needs of senior staff including vice-chancellors, rectors and deans. Thus the needs of middle management comprising mainly professional administrators have been less recognised. This must change.**
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What the University of Medical Sciences should do in the short and long run


- ❑ The University management and academic and non-teaching staff must assume responsibility for the following:
 - ❖ Develop an institutional strategic plan, using a consultative and consensus-building approach involving all stakeholders. The main elements of the strategic plan should include the definition of the university's mission statement, elaboration of an institutional strategy, and preparation of an initial five-year rolling plan for the implementation of this strategy.

- ❖ Use the strategic plan as a basis to negotiate the University's relationship with owners and other stakeholders of the university. This discussion can include topics such as the budget process, the budget allocation process, management and institutional autonomy, and mechanisms whereby the University will demonstrate accountability to the owners and to the public.
 - ❖ Build capacity for teaching and research activities to an international standard in one or more academic areas that are crucial for Ondo State's economic or social advancement in particular and Nigeria in general.
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- ❖ **Take immediate steps to foster and reward research activity. These steps include budgetary provision earmarked for research, and conditions of service that encourage research output by staff.**
 - ❖ **Develop a management information system that enables and facilitates access to timely and reliable information on institutional performance, in order to assist managers to make informed decisions and to facilitate monitoring and evaluation.**
 - ❖ **Devise and initiate management training courses for all University managers, including senior administrative staff, academic department heads, faculty deans, provosts and vice-chancellor.**
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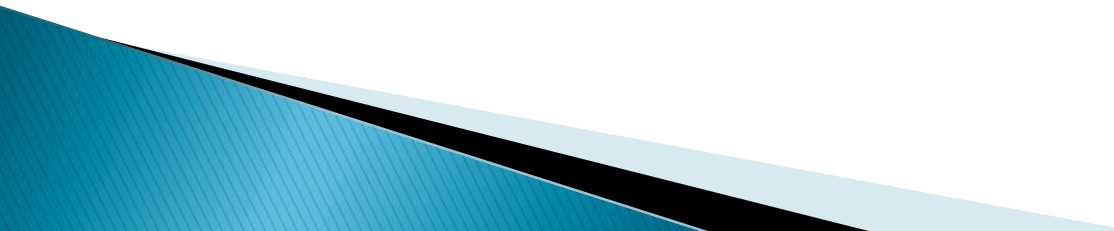
What the Ondo State Governments can do

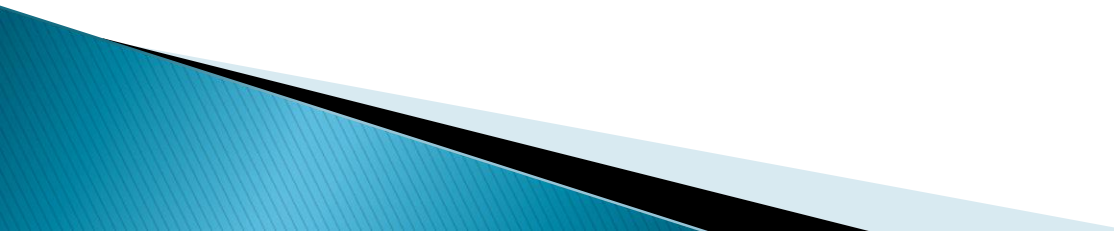
- ❑ The Ondo State Government that has taken the bold initiative of establishing the first autonomous University of Medical Science has the potential to contribute much toward the sustenance of the University. Some of the key areas in this respect include:
 - ❖ Provide funding with the objective of ensuring academic and professional quality. Maximize investment in University, teaching and research activities, and minimize support for non-academic activities.

- ❖ Support the strategic planning of the University by recognizing the urgent need for the University to articulate its goal and mission in light of contemporary circumstances, enabling University budget submissions to reflect the priorities of the strategic plan, and asking donors to provide support in ways consistent with the plan.
 - ❖ Encourage management autonomy and initiative. Permit the University Council to establish terms and conditions of employment and to handle the contracting of all university staff.
 - ❖ Ensure that any cost savings generated by the institution are retained by the University and that any additional revenues generated by the University's own efforts are treated as supplements to public funding. At the same time, encourage the University to set annual performance goals, to publicly report its achievements, and to have its accounts audited.
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What international funding agencies could do

- ❑ International funding agencies have an important role to play in the reinvention of Nigeria's University system especially the University of Medical Sciences. Some of the things that they can be propelled to do include:
 - ❖ Recognize the legitimacy of Universities as a development investment. University development has national capacity-building implications that reach far beyond the education sector.

- ❖ Support University strategic planning by providing the inputs required to undertake strategic planning. Shape donor assistance to University programs in accordance with the institution's strategic vision.
 - ❖ Provide assistance for strategic library development, for definition of a coordinated University information development plan, for campus-wide electronic networking with Internet access, and for professional upgrading of library staff.
 - ❖ Support institutional linkages designed to build capacity in essential skill areas critical for the future development of the country.
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- ❖ **Support management training through overseas work assignments, post-graduate training, local short courses, and in-service training; and**
 - ❖ **Provide assistance for regional programs in leadership development, management, institutional communications, and financial administration.**
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Conclusion

I believe very strongly that Nigerian Universities can still be salvaged to prevent its total collapse, especially as we are now in another period of economic austerity, which will invariably impact negatively on the Universities. I am sure, with the quality of leadership pioneering the new University of Medical Sciences this University can make enormous contributions to the contemporary global economy to the advantage of Nigerians. Once more, I congratulate all of you on the take off of this great University.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR
ATTENTION**

