

This Infant Prodigy - Godfrey Okoye University!

The Matriculation Address of the Vice Chancellor of Go University on the Occasion of the
3rd Matriculation of the University, this 4th Day of February, 2012

Rev. Fr. Prof. Christian Anieke

On behalf of the Board of Trustees of our university, the Governing Council, the Senior Management Staff, the Senate, the staff and students of Go University, I welcome you with much joy and gratitude to the 3rd matriculation of our university.

My continuous reflection on our university and its rapid growth brings to mind the following words of the famous English writer William Shakespeare in his play **'As You Like It'**:

*All the world's a stage,
And all its men and women merely players.
I 'hey have their excits and entrances,
And one man in his time plays many parts,
His ads bring seven ages.
At first the infant,
Mewling and packing in the nurse's arms.
Then the whining schoolboy with his satchel
And shining morning face, creeping like snail
Unwillingly to school...
Then the lover...*

Then, a soldier ...

And then the justice ... etc.

I think GO University belongs to the first stage in this classical poetic classification of stages of life. But what type of infant will do what this university has already done in its two years of existence? If it is an infant, then GO University must be an infant prodigy.

It is so fascinating to me to watch like a grey-haired father with smiles spread across a wrinkled landscape of an aging face the growth of this university. I recall the words of the poet Bernard Dadie:

*In your eyes so clear
I read the dreams of man.
In your eyes so tender
I view nature blossom, in full bloom.
In your eyes so transparent,
I see again all the eyes
Blue of the rivers
White of the mountains All the eyes Green*

*of the meadows Red of the fires and stars
The eyes of other worlds*

*All the eyes of the universe In your eyes so far, so
far
My love is becoming...
In your eyes, child,
I view nature in blossom, in full bloom.*

From 215 students admitted after a hard screening test taken by over 600 applicants in 2009 the number of students has grown to 800, coming from all over Nigeria, the USA and Europe, including an Austrian exchange student from the University of Vienna.

GO University took off with two faculties: Natural and Applied Sciences and Management and Social Sciences. Within two years of existence, the National Universities Commission, convinced that our University is a serious one, has approved another Faculty (Faculty of Education) and additional programmes like Mass Communication, Psychology, Religion and Philosophy, Geology and Mining, Statistics and Demography, Geography and Environmental Management, Physics, Chemistry and Biology (single honours). Furthermore, this university started its journey with only 10 full-time professors. Today it has 30 professors, with a good number of visiting professors from Europe and America.

To prove to the world that it is indeed an infant prodigy, GO University hosted an international conference on Biotechnology in July last year which drew eminent scholars from all over Nigeria and other countries of the world. The fruit of this academic epiphany is that the Biotechnology programme of GO University is one of the best you can have in any Nigerian university. Our students, under the academic leadership of Prof. George Ude, have done a lot of experiments in DNA analysis and genetic engineering. We hope that with time, this university will be in position to help our governments in solving criminal puzzles by providing evidence based on DNA analysis. It is also our ambition to use the knowledge gained from genetic engineering to improve the varieties of food, plants and animals we have in our country. Fascinated by our Biotech programme, the Enugu state government has declared its willingness to partner with us in developing big Biotech projects for the state.

Last year, this university hosted a conference of librarians of all Nigerian universities. The participants were so fascinated by the orderliness and cleanliness of our compound that they declared GO University the cleanest university in Nigeria. The librarians were convinced that GO University would be a great university. To crown their admiration for our university, they elected our librarian their secretary.

By playing host to the Conference of University Librarians, the management of our

university underscored the place of the library in the university. GO University believes that the library must play a central role in answering Immanuel Kant's three philosophical questions: *Will the interests of my reason, speculative as well as practical, combine in the three following questions:*

1. *What can I know, now?*
2. *What ought I to do ?*
3. *What may I hope?*

I thank God that GO University has an American-born librarian who understands the centrality of the library to the life of a university and has been working assiduously to ensure that no important print or electronic material is missing from the library.

My dear matriculating students, may I reiterate (as I have done during your orientation) that your university understands education as a dialogical process of acquisition and dissemination of knowledge; you will experience this in lecture halls, in your projects and extra-curricular activities. We will help you, using our dialogical approach, to understand what James Russell Lowell means when he says, *True scholarship consists in knowing not what things exist but what they mean; it is not memory but judgment.*

Furthermore, looking at the Nigerian educational setting, analyzing its challenges and pitfalls, I have come to a disquieting conclusion that our universities are churning out graduates who are unemployable. I am beginning to believe that the problem of this country is not so much the problem of unemployment as that of unemployability of Nigerian graduates. A university must ask itself what the graduates will do after their studies. It must ask itself what the world outside the university needs and must equip the students to acquire the necessary skills that will enable them to work. Besides, students must acquire such education that will enable them to employ themselves if they want.

What we are trying to do in this university is to find out what industries and employers of labour need and to provide such education that will enable students to

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meet the demands of employers of labour. Besides, we help students to see the possibility of employing themselves by exposing them to practical skills within their field of study or beyond their field. We insist that students acquire such skills in the course of their studies. I buy totally the idea of A1 McQuire: *I think everyone should go to college and get a degree and then spend six months as a bartender and six months as a cab driver. Then they would really be educated.*

Nigeria needs such an understanding of education now in order to tackle the problem of youth unemployment. Nigerian universities must reflect on the words of John W. Gardener: *Much education today is monumentally ineffective. All too often we are giving young people cut flowers when we should be teaching them to grow their own plants.*

GO University takes these words very seriously and tries to help students to see the possibilities they have to 'grow their own plants'. I cannot stop reminding lecturers and students that education here must be different. It must be goal-oriented, must expose the practical application of the learned material and must result in the employability of the products of the university system.

My dear students, as Aristotle says, *The roots of education are bitter but the fruit is sweet*. GO University, because of its emphasis on evidence-based learning, is not offering you an El Dorado. You may be overstretched sometimes, but you will see God's blessings after all your toiling. In the words of Pope John Paul II: *You can trust in the future even though you cannot discern its shape... you can trust in God and thus overcome the magnitude of the task and the price to be paid*. As Abigail Adam says, *Teaming is not attained by chance; it must be sought for with ardour and diligence*. God will certainly bless you and guide you in your struggle to make the best out of the opportunities you have here.

You are being admitted to a university that prays, to God's own university. The university expects you to join in its 3 times of prayer. Here prayer is not an option. It is obligatory! I am convinced that a good relationship with God will make the burden of learning a little easier.

Dear parents and friends of the matriculating students, I thank you for choosing our university. What we owe you is to provide the kind of education and training that will justify whatever financial commitment you have made in the university. It may interest you to know that we publish the CGPA of the students after their second semester examination and place them in positions from the highest to the lowest. So before you give your child or ward fees for a new academic session, ask them to print their result out or you can request for the result directly from us. You have the right to know how they are performing.

Also, those who have 3 points and above qualify to study in any of our partner universities in Europe and America for a semester or a year after two years at GO University. For more enquiries, you can visit the website of the university: www.go-uni-enugu.net or www.go-uni.edu.ng. We expect to get a feedback on how the students are performing while on holiday. That will help us to know where we must put more effort. Be assured that your children are in a safe place; no cultism, no sexual abuse or harassment, no bullying, no intimidation, no subjugation or suppression and no 'sorting'. GO University is God's own university and we are bound to radiate the goodness, justice and love of God in all academic activities and formative duties.

Besides, the type of education we are providing here has already started yielding fruit. Our students are engaged in several activities related to their programmes of study. For example, our students in Sociology participated in social actions ranging from ensuring that their environments are clean to working with Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC) to

manage the usual morning congestion around Abakpa-Nike road and assisting National Grammar School Nike to establish a clean environment in the school. Biotechnology students are busy with DNA profiling expecting to uncover ways to improve security, food, healthcare and other life supports that will enhance our national economy. Some of our students have written and published Igbo and English novels and self-help books; some are engaged in providing artistic expressions of their experiences in the university and others can be seen typing their own assignments with their laptops and or developing and launching other advanced computer activities such as networking, website and intranet design and information management database. Presently, a second year student, Ugonna Egbo Best, is the Hon. Speaker of the Children's Parliament of Enugu. The knowledge he is getting from our evidence-based approach has been very helpful to him in the difficult task of representing children from Enugu State.

Finally, some people have identified themselves with this university in different ways. We want to use this occasion to say a big thank you to them by recognizing them today as special friends of GO University. They include:

1. Gov. Sullivan Chime Executive
Governor, Enugu State
2. Hon. Aminu Tambuwal
Speaker, House of Reps
3. Hon. Ogbuefi Ozuomgbachi
Member, House of Reps
4. Hon. Alex Ogbonna
Special Adviser to the Deputy Senate President
5. Arc. Victor Okolo
Commissioner, Ministry of Housing and Urban Development
6. Prof. Julius Okojie
Executive Secretary, NUC
7. Dr. Ifeanyi Okoye
MD, Juhel Nig.
Ltd
8. Mr. Innocent Chukwuma
Chairman/CEO, Innoson Nig. Ltd
9. Chief Rob Anwatu
MD, Roban Stores Enugu
10. Mr. Alphonsos Omeje Regional
Manager, Zenith Bank

We congratulate each of you. We also wish to encourage others to identify with this university. It is a university that is set to bring back the lost glories in academia!