

AN ADDRESS DELIVERED BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR, PROFESSOR OLAYEMI AKINWUMI AT THE 6 AND 7th COMBINED CONVOCATION CEREMONY OF FEDERAL UNIVERSITY LOKOJA ON SATURDAY, 21 OCTOBER, 2023

Protocol

With immense gratitude to God Almighty, I wish to formally welcome the president and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and Visitor to the University, His Excellency Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR and all our Invited Guests on behalf of the Pro-chancellor and Chairman of the Governing Council and other Distinguished Members of Council, Senate, Management, Staff and Students of this great University to our Sixth and Seventh Combined Convocation Ceremony. We are grateful to all our dignitaries who came from far and near to honour our invitation and for your demonstration of goodwill towards the University. Our most respected Chancellor, His Royal Highness, Alhaji (Dr.) Mohammadu Abali Ibn Muhammadu Idris CON, I heartily welcome you to the Sixth and Seventh Convocation Ceremony.

I warmly welcome the Executive Secretary of the National Universities Commission, Dr. Chris Maiyaki. We are equally grateful to the Executive Governor of Kogi State Alhaji Yahaya Adoza Bello and his Cabinet for honouring our invitation despite his busy schedules. I sincerely welcome our Erstwhile Pro-Chancellor, Senator Chris Adighije and all the members of the Governing Council for their selfless service to lead the University to the next phase of development.

We appreciate the presence of all visiting Vice-Chancellors, Registrars of sister Universities, Rectors and Provosts of Polytechnics and Colleges of Education and Royal Fathers. We thank you for your continuous support. All our invited guests, parents and guardians, Staff, students and friends, I most sincerely welcome you as we celebrate this epoch making occasion.

The Visitor, Sir, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, the Sixth and Seventh Combined Convocation Ceremony that we celebrate today represents another milestone in the Federal University Lokoja. Let me use this golden opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to the Convocation Lecturer, Professor Olu Obafemi NMON, FNAL, Professor of English and former Pro-Chancellor and Chair of Council, Federal University of Technology Minna for his scintillating, topical Convocation Lecture entitled "The Role of University Education in a Society in Constant Transition".

Celebrating our Graduating Students

As a historian, I want to remind you that on 4th November, 2017, the Federal University Lokoja graduated a total of 285 students who were found worthy in Character and learning.

During its 3rd and 4th combined Convocation Ceremony, a total number of 708 students were found worthy in learning and character and admitted to First Degree of the University. At the fifth convocation ceremony of the University, a total number of 804 students graduated and the first in the School of Postgraduate Studies where a total number of 66 Postgraduate Diploma students in ten various programmes also graduated.

Today, which is my second convocation ceremony as the Vice-Chancellor, the University will be graduating a total of 2738 students in this sixth and seventh combined Convocation ceremony.

6th Set

Faculty of Arts

S/N	DEPARTMENT	NO. OF GRADUANDS	FIRST CLASS	SECOND CLASS UPPER	SECOND CLASS LOWER	THIRD CLASS	PASS
1	English & Literary Studies	141	0	16	106	20	0
2	History & International Studies	157	0	34	113	10	0
	Sub Total	298	00	50	218	30	0

Faculty of Social Sciences

S/N	DEPARTMENT	NO. OF GRADUANDS	FIRST CLASS	SECOND CLASS UPPER	SECOND CLASS LOWER	THIRD CLASS	PASS
1	Economics	144	04	44	72	24	0
2	Geography	67	00	09	44	14	0
3	Political Science	140	01	24	84	31	0
	Sub Total	351	05	77	200	69	0

Faculty of Science

S/N	DEPARTMENT	NO. OF GRADUANDS	FIRST CLASS	SECOND CLASS UPPER	SECOND CLASS LOWER	THIRD CLASS	PASS
1	Biological Sciences	180	02	52	97	27	02
2	Chemistry	126	07	44	65	10	00
3	Computer Science	129	12	53	51	12	01
4	Geology	75	01	17	43	14	00

5	Mathematical Sciences	30	00	09	13	08	00
6	Physics	49	01	05	32	11	00
7	Statistics	35	00	12	17	06	00
	Sub Total	624	23	192	318	88	03

Overall Summary of the Classification of Degrees

FIRST CLASS	SECOND CLASS UPPER	SECOND CLASS LOWER	THIRD CLASS	PASS	GRAND TOTAL
28	319	736	197	3	1273

7th Set

Faculty of Arts

S/N	DEPARTMENT	NO. OF GRADUANDS	FIRST CLASS	SECOND CLASS UPPER	SECOND CLASS LOWER	THIRD CLASS	PASS
1	English & Literary Studies	135	0	19	83	32	1
2	History & International Studies	185	0	34	111	40	0
	Sub Total	320	0	53	194	72	1

Faculty of Social Sciences

S/N	DEPARTMENT	NO. OF GRADUANDS	FIRST CLASS	SECOND CLASS UPPER	SECOND CLASS LOWER	THIRD CLASS	PASS
1	Economics	128	6	50	54	18	0
2	Geography	54	0	4	27	23	0
3	Political Science	131	1	20	83	27	0
	Sub Total	313	7	74	164	68	0

Faculty of Science

S/N	DEPARTMENT	NO. OF GRADUANDS	FIRST CLASS	SECOND CLASS UPPER	SECOND CLASS LOWER	THIRD CLASS	PASS
1	Biological Sciences	124	5	36	72	11	0

2	Chemistry	88	7	23	38	20	0
3	Computer Science	158	4	54	84	16	0
4	Geology	85	0	15	42	28	0
5	Mathematical Sciences	58	4	16	25	13	0
6	Physics	41	1	8	22	10	0
7	Statistics	51	5	7	27	12	0
	Sub Total	605	26	159	310	110	0

Overall Summary of the Classification of Degrees

FIRST CLASS	SECOND CLASS UPPER	SECOND CLASS LOWER	THIRD CLASS	PASS	GRAND TOTAL
33	286	668	250	1	1238

Statistics of Graduating List from College of Postgraduate Studies

S/N	FACULTY	DEPARTMENT	PGD	MASTERS	TOTAL
1	Arts	i) History and International Studies	-	05	05
		ii) Peace and Conflict Studies	17	66	83
	Sub Total		17	71	88
2	Social Sciences	i) Economics	41	-	41
		ii) Geography	-	02	02
		iii) Political Science	21	12	33
	Sub Total		62	14	76
3	Science	i) Biological Sciences	17	05	22
		ii) Chemistry	03	-	03
		iii) Computer Science	13	04	17
		iv) Mathematics	05	05	10
		v) Statistics	11	-	11
	Sub Total		49	14	63
	Grand Total		128	99	227

I heartily congratulate our graduating students on this academic feat and rejoice with you and your family for the journey so far. I admonish you to be good Ambassadors of Federal University Lokoja and ensure that you strive to uphold the morals and values of this noble University.

Situation Reports

Mr. President Sir, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, permit me to update you on the situation reports of the University since the last convocation ceremony which took place on 13th November, 2021:

Movement to Permanent Site

Whereas, the relocation of non-teaching Units and Departments to the Felele Campus was completed in June, 2021 and that of the Faculties of Arts, Education, Management Sciences and Social Sciences was achieved and lectures commenced on the Felele Campus during the 2020/2021 Academic Session, I am pleased to confirm that the Faculty of Science has finally moved to the Felele Campus during the 2021/2022 Academic Session and lectures in the Faculty have since commenced there. The absence of critical infrastructure and essential services remain an enormous challenge that require huge capital investment which are still staring the Management in the face. However, efforts are being made to tackle these challenges albeit very slowly as a result of lack of funds. We therefore, still solicit for your assistance to develop this Campus to make it conducive for work, teaching, learning and research.

Inaugural Lectures

Inaugural Lectures have continued to hold in the University. Under my leadership as Vice-Chancellor. A total of twelve Inaugural Lectures have taken place. This is in actualizing my desire to promote academic excellence through the institutionalization of academic traditions and ceremonies in the University.

The following Professors have delivered their Inaugural Lectures between the last convocation ceremony and today:

No. of Inaugural Lecture	Inaugural Lecturer	Date	Topic
8th	Professor Francisca Onaoladipo	16/11/2022	If you wish to go far, go fairy: Reconnoitering an Emerging Computing Paradigm

9th	Professor Adang Lucas Kombe	25/01/2023	Birds: Their role in sustaining the environment
10th	Professor Suleiman Muhammed Nasirudeen	22/02/2023	Pathogenic Fungi and Food deprivation the challenges of plant Pathologists.
11th	Professor Tanko Dauda	29/03/2023	Biodiversity Conservation for Sustainable Economic Development in a Post Covid-19 Era: Dress and Keep it, for this is the whole duty of man.
12th	Professor Jacqueline Badaki Azumi	07/06/2023	The Endless war between Neglected Tropical Diseases and overlooked populations.
13th	Professor Ezra Shiloba Gbaje	05/07/2023	Beyond Digitization: Access and Preservation
14th	Professor Patrick Amidu Audu	26/07/2023	Ubiquitousness of Parasites: Keeping the 'Tricksters at bay'.
15th	Professor Benjamin Mopa Dauda	20/09/2023	Polymer: Material Driving Technological Advancement.

Public Lecture

The University has not relaxed in its bid to strengthen town and gown relationship and carryout community service through Public Lectures. These Public Lectures are aimed at extending the frontiers of knowledge and the global visibility of the University. On the 24th August, 2021, the first in the series of Public Lectures titled, "Corruption in West Africa: The Role of Linguists and Literary Scholars" was delivered by Professor Adams Bodomo, a Chair of African Languages and Literatures, University of Vienna, Austria. On 11th October, 2021, the University, in collaboration with the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria (ICAN), held the second Public Lecture Titled: "Public Sector Financial Reforms as Panacea to Eradicating Corruption and Enthroned Accountability" was delivered by Mrs. Comfort Olajumoke Eyitayo, the ICAN President. The former Chief of Army Staff and former Minister of Interior, Lt. Gen. Abdulrahman B. Danbazau, Rtd presented the third Public Lecture series

titled "Nigeria and her Security Challenges: Revisited". The Lecture was delivered on Thursday, 4th November, 2021. Professor Ibrahim Agboola Gambari, CFR former Chief of Staff to the President and Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria delivered the 4th Lecture titled "The Relevance of University Education in Innovation for the Advancement of Town and Gown Symbiosis". The lecture was delivered on 11th October, 2023.

Webometric Ranking: 2023 Sub-Sahara African Varsities Ranking

I am delighted to inform this gathering that our University, Federal University Lokoja made the elite list of the maiden Times Higher Education 2023 Sub Saharan African Varsities ranking. Our University falls within the 51st - 60th bracket out of the 120 Sub Saharan Universities that were ranked using the criteria of resources and Finance, Access and Fairness, Teaching Skills, Students engagement and Africa Impact.

The information made available by Professor Peter Okebukola, Chairman of Nigerian Universities Ranking Advisory Committee (NURAC) on 26th June, 2023 in Accra, Ghana indicated that Federal University Lokoja was in 17th position of the 51 Nigerian Universities ranked and 9th position amongst the Federal Universities.

I hereby express appreciation to the Senate, Deans, Directors and all the University Staff for this academic feat and recognition and appeal that we should not rest on our oars.

Academic Distinctions and Fellowship

Our staff have continued to exhibit the highest level of academic excellent and distinctions. Several of them have won highly competitive International fellowships and awards. Many of our colleagues have also made outstanding marks in TETFund sponsored research projects.

The University Institutes and Partnership

I will like to inform you that our Institute of Education and the Institute for Governance and Development Studies which are handling some special programmes including some elite professional Postgraduate Programmes have continued to carry out their mandates as contained in the approvals given to the University by the National Universities Commission. In spite of the daunting challenges encountered due to limited resources that have adversely affected the provision of more facilities in the University, the Management of the University remains committed in its resolve to move Federal University Lokoja to higher level academically and administratively. This is our drive.

Staff Audit

The report of the Staff Audit that was initiated on my assumption of office has received the approval of Council and I am happy to inform you all that the recommendations of the Committee has been implemented. This has put to rest the agitations of members of staff for proper placement in the service and update of staff personnel records. This is one of the steps taken to ascertain that the welfare of our staff is continually guaranteed.

Re-Accreditation of Programmes in the Faculty of Science

The Programmes in the Faculty of Science are due for re-accreditation. The University has completed all the necessary formalities and made all payments in respect of the re-accreditation of the programmes. We are committed to sustaining the highest standard of all our academic programmes that would guarantee full accreditation at all times even as we prepare for re-accreditation of these programmes very soon.

Admission into Engineering and Nursing Programmes 2023/2024 Session

With immense gratitude to both the National Universities Commission (NUC) and Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB), I announce to this gathering that Federal University Lokoja has been granted approval by the NUC, COREN, Nursing Council and JAMB to admit our pioneer students into both the Engineering and Nursing programmes after Resource Verifications were conducted.

In obedience to this approval, the first set of students will be admitted in the 2023/2024 academic Session. These are professional programmes that will impact the community and the Nation in general.

Consultancy Services and Ventures

The FUL Felele Consult Ltd has been on the driving seat of the University's effort for revenue generation. This has assisted the University to meet some of its urgent needs that are not catered for by government subventions for the management of the University. We will continue to work assiduously to ensure that the Consult does not renege in its drive.

Infrastructural Development

It is with utmost delight that I report to this August gathering the infrastructural development that has taken place on the Felele Campus (Permanent Site) since the relocation of Administrative and academic activities to the campus in September 2021.

- i. Construction of road networks linking the main Gate to the Administrative Block, Students Hostel and University Farms, ring roads connecting the Senate Chamber

through the professorial offices block, administrative block through Faculty of Science to the Library.

- ii. Construction of Entrepreneurship Centre where all our students are now trained in one skill or the other after which they will be registered with Corporate Affairs Commission and certificated.
- iii. Construction of 12 blocks of Lecture Halls
- iv. Construction of University Mini-Stadium and Recreational Centre.
- v. Expansion of the University Health Centre - The Health Centre is now opened to the public for consultation and medical attention.
- vi. Solar powered electrification of the streets/road networks on the Campus.
- vii. Construction of 40 blocks of Shops on Build, Operate and Transfer model
- viii. Renovation of Faculty of Science Complex
- ix. Renovation of the University Library and ICT Centre
- x. Construction of Agricultural Training Centre facilitated by the Federal Ministry of Agriculture
- xi. Connection of electricity from the Lokoja Power Substation to link the University to the national grid.
- xii. Procurement of a fire fighting service Truck
- xiii. Construction of Security building
- xiv. Renovation of the Male and Female Hostels at the Adankolo Campus for the MB;BS students.
- xv. The construction of 4-Storey Senate Building in progress.
- xvi. The construction of the Faculty of Engineering in progress
- xvii. Two 18-Seater Buses donated by Dr. Innocent Ozoemena Ezuma which is highly appreciated by the University.
- xviii. Grant of N250,000,000.00 from BUA Cement for the construction of our Central Laboratory for which the University deeply appreciates.

Industrial Harmony on Campus

The existing religious and industrial harmony on the Campus continues to subsist. I must express gratitude to the Labour Unions for their cooperation with this administration in the course of the session. It must be put on record that in spite of the daunting challenges

occasioned of the industrial actions embarked on by the in-house unions, our staff committed themselves towards ensuring a seamless academic session.

Hosting of Association of Registrars of Nigerian Universities (ARNU)

Our University played host to the Association of Registrars of Nigerian Universities (ARNU) first Workshop and 73rd Business Meeting titled "Repositioning Administration Machineries of the Nigerian Universities System for Global Competitiveness: The Role of the Registrars". The programme took place from 15th - 20th May, 2023. It was a very grand and fruitful time.

International Conference on Flood Management

The University hosted its first (1st) International Flood Conference with a Theme "Flood and its sustainable Development" from 14th to 16th June, 2023. The Conference which attracted an array of distinguished Scholars from within and outside Nigeria, was organised to provide intellectually driven understanding of the incessant flood disasters that have plagued the confluence area.

The publication arising from the Conference is being edited by erudite scholars before its public presentation.

Promotion of Staff

The promotion of eligible staff members is a top priority of the University Management and the Governing Council. Therefore, the promotion exercises for the year 2021 has taken place while the Central Appointments and Promotion Committee has considered the 2022 promotion of eligible Academic staff awaiting the approval of the Governing Council. \

Federal University Lokoja Endowment Fund

It is with utmost humility that I solicit the generous supports of the eminent public spirited individuals here gathered to donate generously to the Federal University Lokoja endowment fund which we are launching today. It is an established fact that with the dwindling fortunes and revenue base of the Federal Government, it is becoming difficult to fund public universities. It is for this reason that we establish the FUL endowment fund with the assurance that funds generated will be judiciously and efficiently managed to the development of the FUL.

Conclusion

I want to appreciate the Visitor, Chancellor, the erstwhile Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of the Governing Council and members, Senate, Management, Staff and students and indeed, all the benefactors who have contributed in cash and kind to this noble university for making the environment conducive for us to achieve this modest leap forward in the development of the University. Let us also, acknowledge that the success we have all witnessed today by the grace of God became possible due to the efforts and cooperation of Federal University Lokoja members of staff who were mobilized and who served in various Committees to ensure a successful 6th and 7th Convocation Ceremony. I am personally indebted to you for your efforts. God bless you all. Finally, I appreciate the presence of all our invited guests, dignitaries, staff and students, family and the general public for gracing this occasion. As you will be returning to your various places, I wish you journey mercies and God's protection. We are indeed, very grateful.