

WELCOME REMARKS OF THE VICE CHANCELLOR LAGOS STATE UNIVERSITY AT THE OPENING OF THE ADEREMI MAKANJUOLA LECTURE THEATRE ON THURSDAY 22ND NOVEMBER, 2018

I welcome you all to the Lagos State University. Today's event presents an excellent opportunity for the unfolding story of our new LASU to be told.

Since its establishment in 1983 by the first Executive Governor of Lagos State, Alhaji Lateef Kayode Jakande, the Lagos State University has had the honour of producing great and exceptional minds who have made their marks, and who today occupy the commanding heights of economic, political and social landscape within and outside Nigeria. The beautiful story of today's LASU cannot be complete without a mention of those who laid the solid foundation for its takeoff. Leading the roll call of these seasoned Vice Chancellors is *Professor Afolabi Olumide*, the pioneer Chief Executive. Others equally prominent on this list are the *Late Professor Jadesola Olayinka Akande*, *Late Professor Enitan Abisogun Bababunmi*, *Late Professor Fatiu Ademola Akesode*, *Professor Abisogun Olabode Leigh*, *Professor Lateef Akanni Hussain*, and *Professor John Oladapo Obafunwa*. I assumed office as the 8th substantive Vice Chancellor in January, 2016, to continue the building process that was started by these distinguished scholars, who in different ways, significantly impacted on the growth and progress of the Institution.

As at the time I assumed the volatile office of the Vice-Chancellor, it was obvious to me that the pervasive bickering and hate conflicts of the past have substantially distorted the focus of the Institution and stunted her growth. Those values and virtues that are the defining signature of a tertiary institution had virtually taken a tumble, with the palpable threat of being supplanted by anti-academic cultures which are antithetical to the traditional values of a University. At that point, I had a dilemma: As a development practitioner, I knew that if I allowed the language of engagement to resonate around "inclusive governance", "consultative approach" and the WE" mantra, we would come to terms with the challenge of the bickering and hate conflicts, and consequently steer a new narrative course for the University. The bigger challenge, however, was how to make the Institution look like a University. It dawned on me that we have consistently been producing good and great tidings from the "black pot", and this was not good enough for the comfort and psyche of staff and students. In simple

terms, LASU was not a place where you will be proud to invite your friend to visit you. Outsiders derisively referred to it as a glorified secondary school.

Your Excellency, you may never know the depth of what you did to change the LASU narrative. Indeed, your Excellency, you still may not have fully appreciated how your timely intervention at that critical point kept alive the hope and happiness which I saw on the faces of my worthy colleagues and our world class students the first day I entered this University after my appointment.

I do vividly remember that fateful evening when the Chancellor, His Excellency, Honourable Mr. Justice Adesola Oguntade CFR, CON (currently High Commissioner to the United Kingdom), led the Pro-Chancellor/Chairman of our Governing Council, Professor Adebayo Ninalowo (a strong devotee of Rule of Law and Due Process) and I to your residence late in the evening. Our simple but very expensive request was that your Excellency should tar the entire road network in LASU. Your Excellency, you not only said YES, you added that you will also light-up the entire University. The full actualization of that YES with the speed of light in my first three months in office opened the floodgates of goodwill which has further produced the following fruitful impacts:

- (i) It deepened the confidence of staff and students in our great Institution, and has made the Alumni proud of their now beautiful citadel of learning. Your Excellency rekindled the confidence of all in the LASU Project;
- (ii) It made it possible for us to proudly invite to our institution those who can build strong partnerships and linkages with us.
- (iii) It contributed significantly to the success that we have been achieving with respect to accreditation of our academic programs by the National Universities Commission and other professional bodies; and most recently
- (iv) It contributed to LASU emerging as Africa Centre of Excellence for Innovative and Transformative STEM Education.

Your Excellency, it was pursuant to the platform you created for the University that the celebrant of today, the unassuming but highly notable benefactor, Mr. Aderemi Makanjuola indicated his interest to beam his philanthropic vision and

mission on LASU. I remember that day when I led the management team of our University on a thank you visit to Mr. Makanjuola for his good gestures toward us: he noted that he would give us a befitting facility that will make us very proud. In just about six months, that promise is what stands today as the beautiful 500-seater edifice to be officially open for use. Sir, it is with confidence and faith that I make bold to say that the name 'Aderemi Makajnuola' has become an important part of LASU's legacy, and will remain indelibly ingrained for posterity in the annals of the University. Happy birthday Sir. All of us at the Lagos State University wish you all the best not just for today, but, for always in the service of humanity.

To the statesmen and other great men and women here present, my appeal is for you to partner with us in our march towards becoming one of the foremost academic and industry reference point among Federal, State and Private Universities in Nigeria. Among the many projects you can still do for us at the Lagos State University are:

- (i) Additional lecture facilities that will enable us give more access to candidates desirous of studying at LASU. Currently, we have an admission quota of over 8000, but of which we struggle to admit just about 4,500;
- (ii) Our Sports facility is the biggest from Mile 2 all the way to Badagry, but its lies critically in dire need of renovation;
- (iii) Our Staff Quarters are also in dire need of renovation and expansion, and these we can name after benefactors;
- (iv) We are seeking to strengthen ICT on our three campuses: Ojo, Ikeja and Epe through the deployment of fibre optic cable so as to fully maximize available academic resources worldwide; and
- (v) We also need an iconic befitting structure to house our Africa Centre of Excellence for Innovative and Transformative STEM Education.

All of these we will name after our benefactors.

It is now obvious that our University has all it takes to be world class and a world leader. The goodwill of every benefactor in this Auditorium today will create for our Institution new and limitless opportunities. This is the story of the new LASU thus far, and I urge each and everyone here present to be a part of it.

Permit me to specially welcome my teacher and mentor, a man who dedicated his entire career to thinking about thinking, and proffering solutions to development issues, Professor Akin Oyebode. Thank you for accepting to be the guest speaker. To the amazing men and women of integrity on the Governing Council of the Lagos State University ably led by the highly perceptive Professor Adebayo Ninalowo, we thank you for your passion and commitment. We thank you for guiding us right.

Once again, I heartily welcome you all.

We are LASU, We are Proud!!!

Professor Olanrewaju A. Fagbohun, SAN
Vice Chancellor