# A HISTORY OF THE LAGOS STATE UNIVERSITY 1984 - 1994

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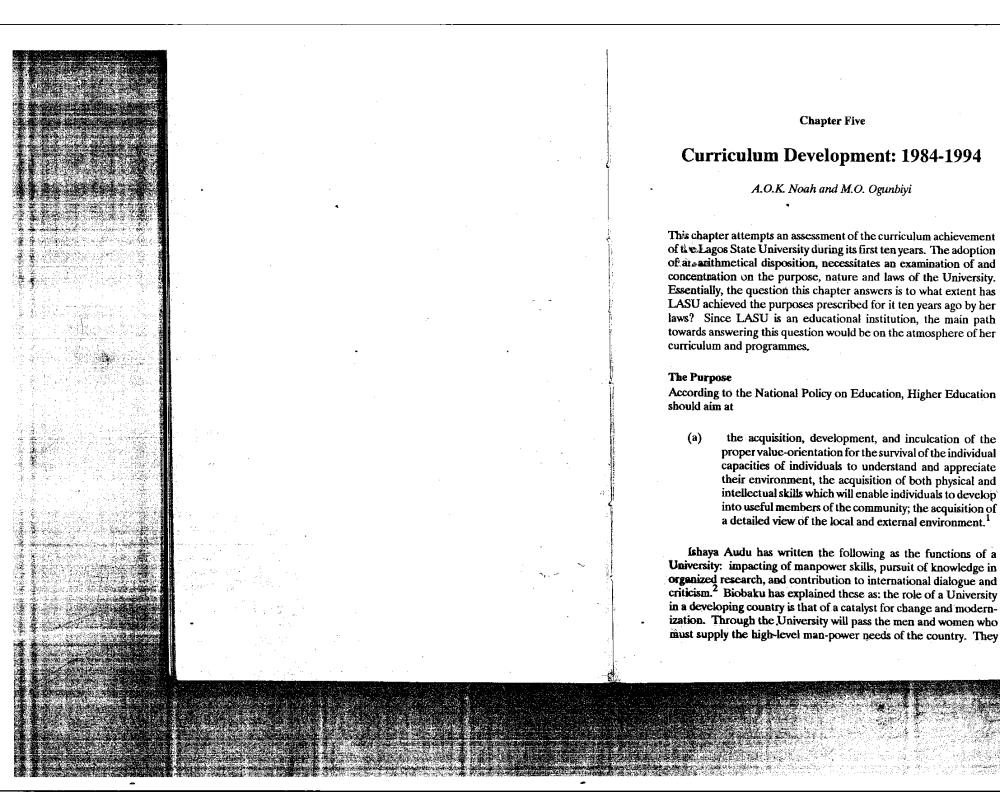
# Foreword

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This book, which is a collection of essays by scholars who are LASU-based, is an officially sponsored study of the developments and forces that have shaped the fortunes of the Lagos State University in its first ten years. The publication of this book is significant in many ways. First, it is largely a collection of the reflections of some of those connected with the evolution and growth of the institution in its incipient years. Second, it relies heavily on reproducible evidence - largely from the official records of the university and the Lagos State Government. Third, it highlights the major achievements and shortcomings of the Lagos State University, elucidating as it were, the factors that have determined its strength and acknowledging the inadequacies that have produced hiccups and crises in its first ten years. This publication, thus, carries the message of hope in the great strides which LASU made in its first ten years and checks areas of inadequacies to prevent a reoccurrence of the cleavages and contours that negatively affected the institution in the same period.

This book is intended primarily as a guide or handbook for all those interested in the history of the planning and implementation of the Lagos State University, its growth as a higher institution and above all, its aspirations for the future. It will be useful for educational planners and others involved in the search for the proper role of the university in Africa and other parts of the developing world. It is therefore my greatest pleasure to recommend this book to all those who are interested in knowing what the Lagos State University (LASU) has been doing since its establishment in 1984.

Professor Enitan Abisogun Bababunmi Vice-Chancellor, Lagos State University.



must not be only highly trained but also imbued with the spirit of service to their country and generation; they must form the intellectual community necessary in any country ... In order to maintain a high standard it must undertake research which is costly but is the hallmark of its excellence<sup>3</sup> A collective view has maintained that 'A university is established to produce critical and therefore original thinkers. It is not a factory for manufacturing narrow-minded robots who fit rigidly into specific jobs in the economy.<sup>4</sup> The sum of the above views may be called the general or universal purpose of a University.

According to Oderinde, the objectives of the Lagos State Government in higher education is to increase access to education for Lagos State indigenes and correct the relative backward situation of educational development in the state. The objectives for which the Lagos State University was set include the following:

- (a) to form the apex of the educational system of the state, to provide facilities for learning and to give instruction and training in such branches of knowledge as the university may desire to foster and in doing so enable students to obtain the advantage of liberal education,
- to provide by research and other means the advancement of knowledge and its practical application to social, cultural and economic, scientific and technological problems;
- to encourage the advancement of learning and to provide the opportunity for acquiring higher and liberal education;
- (d) to act as a vehicle of development in general and in particular to act as an instrument to effectively stimulate the development of the state through continuing education, applied research, technical assistance, direct consultation, informatorial services, and interesting programmes;

- to provide innovative educational programmes of high standard, regardless of the nature of the degree being pursued, as long as this has importance and relevance for state and national development;
- (f) to provide a ready access for citizens of the state in particular to higher education regardless of social origin or income;
- (g) to meet the specific manpower needs of the State;
- to serve as a creative custodian, promoter, and propagator of the state's social and cultural heritage and resources;
- to undertake undergraduate and post-graduate course in Law and Social Sciences, Education, Science, Engineering, Technology and Environmental Design and Medical Sciences;
- to enhance the educational opportunities of Lagos State indigenes by admitting students in the following percentages, Lagos State indigenes 40%, products of the Lagos State school system 40% and other Nigerian citizens 20%;
- (k) to undertake any other activities appropriate for a University of the highest standard.<sup>6</sup>

Objectives b, c, and j are in terms of curricular relevance more specific than the others which in essence would serve as the socio-political and cultural milestones for their achievement.

### The Nature

The nature of LASU is interestingly discernible and better appreciated from the background to the School. In April 1981, the Agbalajobi committee was set up by the civilian administration of Alhaji Lateef Jakande in Lagos State, to look into the establishment of an institution of higher education in the State. The committee

recommended the establishment of a University of Technology. In June of the same year (1981) the Sobowale Committee, empowered by the government, recommended a classical non-residential University that would guarantee equality of access to all indigenes. The Fajemirokun Tertiary Education review Committee of 1984, set up by the military administration of Group Captain Gbolahan Mudashiru, following the ousting of the civilian administration in December 1983, eventually recommended a conventional university type with three faculties; Education, Law and Humanities and Sciences.

Another committee led by Professor Adegbola recommended that the University should be a mono-campus one in a location with easy access and communication. It was suggested that the main campus should accommodate the faculties of Humanities, Sciences, Education, and Business Studies and Law and that they should start during the 1984/85 session. The other faculties to be established subsequently are: Agriculture and Fisheries, Engineering Technology and Environmental Studies; and College of Medicine, Dentistry and Pharmacy, recommended for location at the sites of the Government College Ketu, Epe Division; Government College Agege, Ikeja Division, and Badagry General Hospital, Badagry Division respectively. The main campus was as suggested for the sites of the Government College Ojo and the proposed site of the Methodist Boys' High School Lagos at Ojo.

The bill establishing the University was passed by the Lagos State House of Assembly and assented to by the Governor - L. K. Jakande on 13th June, 1983 while the school opened with 387 students in January 1985. The university started eventually as a conventional university with the ambition of training manpower in as many disciplines as possible but with an initial bias and hope for Education, Law, Science, Agriculture, Arts, Engineering, Technology, Environmental Designs and Medicines. These are contents of what may be called her overt formative curriculum and they shall constitute the focus of our assessment.

### The Laws

The laws of the university through the edict establishing the school, LASU Edict No.1 of 3 January, 1992 contain provisions that indicate

her curricular scope in general while specifying faculties that should be established. Section 3(1)(i) of the 1992 Edict provides that the university shall 'undertake under-graduate and post-graduate courses in Law, Arts, Social Sciences, Education, Sciences, Engineering, Technology, Environmental Sciences, Medical Sciences, Agricultural Sciences and Administration. These courses are to be provided in seven faculties as contained in item 34(2) and statute 6 of the same Edict viz:

- a. Faculty of Law;
- b. Faculty of Arts and the Social Sciences;
- Faculty of Education;
- d. Faculty of Sciences;
- Faculty of Engineering, Technology and Environmental Design;
- f. College of Medical Sciences; and
- g. School of Post-graduate Studies.

Statutes 10, 11, 12 and 13 of the Edict contain provisions on the College of Medicine i.e. its establishment, functions and the composition of its academic board, responsibilities of the Provost; and its Board of Governors. The Edict also empowers the university to be able to perform its general and specific obligatory functions. Items 4,1 says 'For the purposes of carrying out its objectives as specified in Section 3 of this Edict, the University shall have the following powers - (a) to establish such faculties, colleges, schools, departments and other teaching and research units within the university as it may from time to time deem necessary on the recommendation of the Senate; (b) to institute academic, administrative, technical, professional and other posts and offices and to make appointments thereto ... '9

The purpose of the University is no doubt being achieved: the school annually turns out skilled manpower for employment in the society; it currently forms the apex of the educational system in the State; it promotes research into the culture and needs of the people of the State many of which are fruitful already, for example, the publication of Badagy: Studies in the History and Culture of An

Ancient City, <sup>10</sup> the refined coconut body lotion work by the students of the Faculty of Science; another is the publication of Urban Transition in Africa: Aspects of Urbanization and Change in Lagos <sup>11</sup> (through personal efforts and initiative, yet most relevant and noteworthy). Yet another is Educational Development in Lagos State: Policies, Programmes and Practices. <sup>12</sup>

The university puts its technical expertise at the disposal of the state through the service of her staff on the boards of government agencies and parastatals. For example, Drs Tunde Samuel and S.O. Olaniyonu serve on the board of the Lagos State Agency for Mass Education, Professor T.K. Obidairo on the State Manpower Board, Dr. E.O. Odubunmi on the State Committee for the implementation of the 6-3-3-4 programme; Dr. Tunde Samuel on the Textbook Committee; Professor Peter Okebukola on the Governing Councils of the State Polytechnic and College of Education and many others. The students of the Faculty of Education conduct their final year research projects using the Lagos State School System while the Faculty has an annual conference on educational developments in the state. The Faculty also has the innovative School Attachment Programme (SAP) - making LASU the first University in Nigeria to operate such. Under this programme, students are assigned to schools which they visit, study and report on every week throughout a semester, supervised/guided by experienced teachers in those schools and LASU based lecturers.

The Faculty of Engineering, particularly the Computer Centre currently marks the Primary School Leaving Certificate Examinations for Lagos State, also definitely at a comparatively cheap rate. The University, as shown below, operates post-graduate and undergraduate courses in Law, the Social Sciences, Education, Arts, Sciences and Engineering while admissions to these programmes have been guided by the 40:40:20 ratio stipulated in the University Edict of 3 December, 1985 item 1 (3)(j). It would appear that the University is significantly achieving both the general purposes of a University and those purposes peculiar to it.

The nature of LASU is a reflection of her purpose. When the School opened in late 1984, it was as a conventional University, not as a specialist one, for example, University of Agriculture or Science

and Technology. This nature dictated, as reflected in her laws, that many areas of human concern be studied there. This, she has provided to the Lagos community in particular and the university in general.

Recent developments, however, indicate that the mono-campus structure recommended by the government during the first ten years of the university may soon be dropped, inadvertently, for the multicampus structure originally proposed by the original founders of the institution. Following the acquisition of the old army barracks at Epe by the former third republic governor of Lagos State, Sir Michael Otedola, for the University and the enthusiasm of the Epe people to have a University, a campus of the institution (to house the Institute of Education and the Faculty of Engineering initially) may soon be established in that town. This expected change would only be structural as the University would continue to provide as many courses as possible, unlike a mono-technical, specialist University. The law is explicit on curriculum in LASU and it is to its satisfaction that we shall turn with emphasis on the faculties and courses.

### The Faculty of Education.

This is one of the pioneer faculties, it has four departments: Curriculum Studies; Educational Foundations; Management Studies; Physical and Health Education; and offers the B.A. Education degree in Arabic, Christian Religious Studies, Islamic Studies, English, French, History and Yoruba; the B.Sc Education degree in Physical and Health Education; the B.Sc degree in Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics, and Physics and the B.Sc Education degree in Geography, Political Science and Economics. The Faculty rejoices at being the first to graduate students in the first class division in the university; design the Pre-degree Science Programme (a one-year remedial course for students lacking degree admission requirements in the sciences and science education); introduce the unique programme called School Attachment Programme (SAP), earlier referred to; 14 organize the first in the University lecture series (delivered by Professor S.T. Bajah of the University of Ibadan); and be the base of the winner of the UNESCO/Kalinga Award for the popularisation of Science Education, Professor Peter Okebukola.

The Faculty also runs the M.Ed programmes in Physical and Health Education, Guidance and Counselling, Educational Administration and School Management. The degrees of M.Phil and Ph.d are expected to begin soon following the part-time B.Ed programme started during the long vacation of the 1994/95 session.

As the Faculty searches for greater relevance, it may consider the following: courses for non-education graduates freshly employed in the Lagos State School System; seminars on Management and Structure of Higher Education in Lagos State; Workshops for Year-tutors in the State; seminars on social problems arising out of pop culture, city life, parental absence, the area-boy phenomenon in Lagos State; greater promotion of science education, improved academic utilisation of the school complex arrangement, conferences on industrial participation in secondary school assistance; supervision of schools; and roundtables on adult literacy and mass education in Lagos State.

### The Faculty of Science

This is another pioneer faculty. It started with two departments: Physical and Mathematical Sciences and Biological and Chemical Sciences. It offers the B.Sc degree in Physics, Mathematics, Biochemistry, Chemistry, Fisheries, Zoology, Botany and Micro-Biology. It currently has five departments: Fisheries and Zoology, Chemical Sciences, Mathematics, Physics and Biological Sciences. The Department of Fisheries and Zoology is currently researching into the Fisheries of Lagos State and the possibility of culturing river prawns. It has also initiated and constructed a one-hectare teaching and research fish farm through direct labour 15 while 'Research in the Department of Botany and Microbiology include looking into the development of stomter cultures for locally fermented foods'. 16 The department of Chemical Sciences is currently interested in Pharmacology, Food and Nutritional Biochemistry, Membrane Biochemistry, Enzymes and nuclei acid; Biochemistry; polymer, industrial organic and Environmental Chemistry and sugar research. 17 The Department of Physical and Mathematical Sciences is interested in the design and fabrication of essential laboratory equipment and devices with a focus on the use of local raw materials, in addition to numerical analysis, operation research and other relevant areas. 18

The Faculty of Science needs to derive as much benefit as it can from the presence of Professor Enitan Bababunmi (the current Vice-Chancellor) a biochemist of international repute, one of the very few scholars to have worked with Lehninger, (the Father of Biochemistry) and an environmentalist who has not been able to hide the impression that he is on a productive yet flying visit to the University. After the international conference for laboratory technologists organized by Professor Robert Borroffice in 1989, not until the coming of Bababunmi did a science conference with international note take place i.e., the First International Seminar on Basic Concepts and Biotechnology which started on Monday 11th of July, 1994. The Faculty then also started a joint venture known as the Lagos State Government/LASU Environmental Science Research Center (Pollution Control Laboratory Complex) at Alausa Ikeja.

In addition to its lofty research aspiration,s the Faculty would go into the production and sale of everyday items such as distilled water and methylated spirit and the refinement of coconut oil, in the University's immediate environment. The Faculty is constrained by lack of funds but it needs a good academic journal, as 'a foreign policy option'.

### The Faculty of Arts

This is the remnant of the pioneer Faculty of Humanities and Law. The Faculties of Law and Social Sciences were excised from her in 1986 and 1990 respectively. In its present format and status, it started with two departments: Languages and Linguistics; and History and Religions. It offers the B.A. degree in six departments: African Languages (offering only Yoruba), English, Foreign Languages (offering Arabic and French), History; Religions (offering Christian Religious Studies and Islamic Religious Studies) and Philosophy. 19 The success of the experimental programme in Arabic Studies initiated by Professor Isaac O. Ogunbiyi recommends itself for international emulation: newcomers to Arabic Language with the pre-requisite five credits in WASC/GCE though without Arabic/Islamic Studies bias are through carefully selected contents and strategies nurtured up to degree status. A similar programme was mounted in the French Unit of the Foreign Languages Department.

Though Mass Communication and Journalism are not offered, despite the comparatively high number of media houses in Lagos, the department of English operates 'a strong emphasis on practical applications in the areas of Journalism, Advertising, Writing, Publishing, Creative Writing and Drama'. The publication of the work titled, Badagry by Ogunremi and others and the monitoring of course GNS 201 Lagos and its Environs or the General Studies Programme are two significant credits to the Department of History.

To its credit, the Faculty of Arts had, in the first ten years, performed some feats. The Languages and Linguistics department successfully organized a conference on Aesthetics in Language which resulted in a book, in the same way that the book on Badagry was the outcome of a conference on Badagry history and culture. It is also worthy of note that it was from the Faculty of Arts that the first three inaugural lecturers of the Lagos State University were drawn from Professors Oladele Olawuyi Arowolo, Isaac Adepoju Ogunbiyi and Gabriel Ogundeji Ogunremi, respectively.

### **Faculty of Law**

In both good and bad times, this Faculty signifies what the University can achieve, granted proper funding and an enabling environment. It was carved out of the Faculty of Law and Humanities in 1986 because 'within two years it became obvious that Law degre programme could only be properly executed within the organizational context of a full-fledged faculty. Consequently the Department of Law metamorphosed into a Faculty under the pioneering leadership of Professor (Mrs.) J. O. Akande on 1st October, 1986.<sup>21</sup>

The Faculty offers the LLB degree and Diploma in Law programmes in its four departments: Business Law, Private and Property Law; Jurisprudence and International Law and Public Law. The Diploma programme first signified the commercial viability of many of LASU's programmes: the MBA, MPA and B.Ed part-time courses have since followed. The LL.M/Ph.D programme is expected to commence in 1996 while the part-time LLB course has reached an advanced planning stage. 22

The University prides itself on the achievements of its Law students at the Law School. Thus, the tenth Anniversary Edition of the LASU Bulletin trumpets as follows:

Some of these include: The high level performance of the first set of LASU Law graduates who not only performed extra-ordinarily well at the Nigerian Law School (call-to-bar) examinations but also produced the best all round student in the School during that year. The student, Bamodu was automatically awarded a Postgraduate Scholarship (tenable in Britain) by the British Government.<sup>23</sup>

Mr. Olugbenga Bamodu's feat was repeated in 1995 by another LASU graduate Mr. Francis Oniekoro. A report has it that 'Determined to maintain leadership position in Law in Nigeria, LASU students shined again in the Law School as revealed in the final examination results released on 25 February, 1995. Francis Oniekoro of LASU performed best overall and came in the First Class Division'24

The Faculty of Law would appear to have received the most assistance, of LASU's faculties, from the Lagos community. The late Judge Teslimi Olawale Elias donated about thirty years worth of Law Journals (as Akin Holloway did); donated land for student's hostel (at Mosafejo); assisted with the accreditation of Law courses by the professional body and sponsored Mr. I. O. Smith, currently the Director LASU Law Centre on a research trip to the Hague. Chief (Mrs) Otunba Ajayi Okunuga, donated the lecture theatre currently housing the Human Rights Centre appropriately named after her. Chief Adeniran Ogunsanya sponsored the building of the LASU Moot Court. The successes of the Faculty of Law cannot be separated from the might of Professor (Mrs) J. O. Akande her pioneer Dean and Vice-Chancellor, Lagos State University, 1988-1993 who ensured favourable disposition to her in legal circles. The frequent yet positive presence of the contemporaneous Chief Justice of the Federation at LASU ceremonies is an attestation: only the deep can call to the deep, as Chief Obafemi Awolowo once said.

### Faculty of the Social Sciences

The Faculty started as a department in the Faculty of Law and Humanities. It became a Faculty in 1991 following a review of the

Edict, the approach of the National Universities Commission maiden Accreditation exercise and the insistence of ASUU-LASU that it be so treated. The following courses and departments obtain in the Faculty: Political Science, Sociology, Economics and Geography and Planning. The departments offer the B.Sc degree. 25 The Faculty started the Masters of Public Administration programme in 1992 and admitted its first set of Masters in Business Administration students in 1995. 'The University has approved the following programmes for the Faculty: (a) Post-graduate Diploma in Export Management, (b) Post-graduate Diploma in Town Planning. There are proposals for other projects such as (i) B.Sc Business Administration, (ii) M.Sc. Ph.D (Geography and Planning) (iii) Postgraduate Diploma in Business Administration and (iv) Postgraduate Diploma in Local Government Studies. An expansion is in progress for M.Sc, M.Phil, Ph.D in other departments of the Faculty'26

This list of future programmes may include a diploma or postgraduate course in Transport Economy and Management, given the urban nature of Lagos and its need for a smooth transportation system. The Faculty has a *Journal of Social Sciences*, the latest edition of which is co-sponsored by *Mobil Nigeria* but an independent *Journal of Politics* would appear to hold a better and heart-warming potential of objective and international scholarship. In an era when many would-be journals are advertised and articles and publication fees collected without the first editions seeing the light of day, due to a combination of moral and financial factors, Adejumobi's efforts become highly commendable.

# The Faculty of Engineering

The Faculty which was established in 1986 offers the 5-year B.Sc Engineering degree in Electronics and Computer, Mechanical and Chemical and Polymer Engineering. It started with two departments: Chemical and Polymer Engineering, and Computer, Marine and Mechanical Engineering. These have now changed into three as reflected in the type of degrees awarded. The Department of Polymer and Chemical Technology was scrapped in November 1988 due to the inadequate facilities available for the teaching of the programme<sup>27</sup> but was reintroduced in 1991 in the Department of

Chemical and Polymer Engineering and is currently researching into the use of raw materials sourced from local plants in the textile, rope, plastic, paint and food industries. <sup>28</sup>

The Faculty prepares students for the design, construction, installation and operation of engineering systems in the relevant fields of Engineering; it has the design of an all-surface hovercraft to its credit and has succeeded in attracting the United Nations Development Programme funding for one of its new projects titled Strengthening the Capacity for Training in Electronics and Computer Engineering. 29 This is perhaps the first overtly internationally funded programme in LASU and the management has on several occasions expressed pride in it. The Faculty has benefitted from the Engineering Faculty of the University of Lagos with which it has a use-of-workshop agreement, and from JOSAFF an enlightened automobile workshop (opposite the Ojo Campus) which the students frequented in the early days. The Faculty has to urgently improve its equipment, inaugurate a journal, employ more full-time academic staff, and establish linkages with industries around the University, particularly those in the Agbara, Ikeja and Apapa industrial areas.

## Post-graduate Studies

The school of Post-graduate Studies was established in 1992 with Professor Adebowale Falade as its pioneer Dean and Chairman of its Board. He was succeeded by Professor Samson Olabode Olarinmoye, the only Professor of Bryophate Studies in Sub-Saharan Africa as its current Dean. In partnership with the appropriate Faculties and departments, it operates the M.Ed, PGDE, M.Sc, MBA and MPA higher degrees.

### The College of Medicine

The College of Medicine mentioned in the edicts (1985, 1990 and 1992) and envisaged for the 1988-89 session<sup>30</sup> is the only Faculty legally provided for but yet to be established. Available evidence from the records of the University Senate seem to indicate that considerable efforts had been put into the logistics and other infrastructural needs of the proposed Lagos State University College of Medicine (LASUCOM). However, the crises which rocked the

university and the dwindling financial allocation to the institution are probable factors in explaining the non-establishment of the College of Medicine. Environmental Design Medicine is a course which exceedingly excites the people of Lagos State.

# **NUC Accreditation Exercise**

The NUC which was empowered, pursuant to section 10 of Decree 16 of 1985 as incorporated in its amendment Decree 19 of 1988 and reversed as Decree 9 of 1993, to lay down minimum standards for programmes and accredit courses, visited the Lagos State University between 1990 and 1992. Only two courses were granted full accreditation out of a total of thirty six. The modus operandi and the effectiveness of the exercise should be reviewed with particular reference to the Law programme in LASU which has consistently produced students who do very well at the Professional School of Law but which has none of its courses given full accreditation. Much as LASU authorities may not panic excessively about the NUC Accreditation exercise report, they should accept it as a challenge and an indication that the school can and should improve. The situation is not utopian but it is reminiscent of the old debate about ideals.

In the Sciences, particularly Physics, and the Library where the comments could be embarrassing, urgent attention has to be paid. Physics needs special attention because the 'Staffing situation is not adequate'. There is a high dependency on part-time teachers. No faculty-member of the Physics Unit has a Ph.D<sup>32</sup> and 'the curriculum is not adequate because Physics should be taught at the 300 level while the principles of quantum mechanics II should be a compulsory course for all'. Note that with the appointment of Dr. M. Olaitan to the University and the enrolment of some members of the Physics department in doctoral programmes (home and abroad), the problems of the department may soon be a thing of the past.

The NUC Accreditation exercise is essentially a mechanism for prodding Universities to greater heights.

### Conclusions

With three Faculties and an abundance of hope in 1984, the Lagos State University in 1995 has six Faculties and an abundance of achievements in the areas of Law, Science Education and the sciences coupled with at least six Association of Commonwealth Universities Scholarship awards between 1990 and 1991 and four known Fulbright Fellowship awards by her academic staff, it becomes inevitable concluding that the University has done well in her first ten years. It has experienced positive curriculum development, designed a few but significant revenue generating courses and operated in accordance with the curricular dictates of her enabling laws.

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