



FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY OWERRI

CONVOCATION ADDRESS

DELIVERED BY:

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ON THE OCCASION OF THE:

25TH CONVOCATION CEREMONY
of the Federal University of Technology, Owerri



ON SATURDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2012.
CONVOCATION ARENA, FUTO.
12:00 NOON.



CONVOCAATION ADDRESS

Presented By

PROFESSOR CHIGOZIE CYRIL ASIABAKA,
VICE-CHANCELLOR

At the 25th Convocation Ceremony of
FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, OWERRI
on Saturday, December 8, 2012



1.00 PROTOCOL/ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Your Excellency, the President and Commander-in-Chief of the Nigerian Armed Forces and Visitor to our University, Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan GCFR

Your Excellencies, the Senate President, Senator David Mark GCON

And the Honourable Speaker of the House of Representatives, Rt Hon. Aminu Tambuwal GCON,

Your Excellencies, the Executive Governor of Imo State, Owelle Rochas Anayo Okorochoa OON

And other Visiting Governors and Deputy Governors.

Your Excellencies, the Speaker of Imo State House of Assembly and other Heads of State Legislatures.

The Honourable Minister of Education, Prof. (Mrs.) Raqayyatu Ahmed Rufai

Members of the Federal and State Executive Council

Members of the National and State Assemblies

My Lord, the Chief Judge of Imo State and other Members of the Judiciary

Our Respected Chancellor and Chairman of Convocation

Visiting Chancellors, Pro-Chancellors and Vice-Chancellors

Members of the Diplomatic Corps and other Service Chiefs

Deputy Vice-Chancellors and other Principal Officers of the FUTO

Deans, Directors, Heads Of Departments and Unit Coordinators

Members of the University Senate and Congregation

My Lords Spiritual and Temporal

Your Royal Majesties and Highnesses

Distinguished Guests, Special Invitees and Friends of the University, Staff, Students and Alumni of the University

Members of the Fourth Estate of the Realm

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.

2.00 INTRODUCTION

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all on this special occasion marking the 25th Convocation ceremony of the Federal University of Technology, Owerri, for the conferment of degrees and the award of prizes. We welcome in a special way the Visitor to our University and

Commander-in-Chief of the Nigerian Armed Forces, His Excellency Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan *GCFR*.

We are also delighted to welcome the leadership of our National Assembly and all Distinguished Senators and Honourable Members of the Federal House of Representatives who have spared the time to be with us on this auspicious occasion.

We welcome Members of the Federal Executive Council here present, and most especially our Honourable Minister of Education Professor (Mrs.) Raqayyatu Ahmed Rufai and the Honourable Minister of State for Education Mr Nyesom Nwike.

Our special appreciation goes also to our amiable Host Governor, His Excellency Chief Rochas Anayo Okorochoa *OON*; other Visiting State Governors, Deputy Governors and Members of respective State Executive Councils. We are also delighted to welcome His Excellency the Speaker of Imo State House of Assembly Rt. Honourable Uwajimogu and other Heads of State Legislatures here present, and Members of respective State Houses of Assembly who are here to celebrate with us today.

We welcome also the Chief Judge of Imo State, Honourable Justice B.A Njemanze and Members of the State and Federal Judiciary here present. In the same vein, we are glad to welcome all our Royal Fathers, Members of the Clergy, Members of the Diplomatic Corps, all our Security Chiefs, Permanent Secretaries and Heads of Government Agencies and Parastatals here present.

The Executive Secretary, National Universities Commission and all our Visiting Pro-Chancellors, Vice-Chancellors and Chief Executives of Sister Institutions are also very welcome to this occasion. And last but not the least, we are glad to welcome all our Special Invitees, Guests and Friends of the University, our Development Partners, all our Distinguished Alumni, and the Parents and Guardians of our FUTO Students.

As you are aware, this Convocation Ceremony is coming up barely six months after the unfortunate demise of our immediate past Vice-Chancellor, Professor Celestine Onyemaobi Elihe Onwuliri *FAS*, who happened to have been one of the passengers in the ill-fated Dana Air Crash of June 3, 2012. The University Community is pained by this unfortunate loss; and even as we continue to share the grief with the immediate family, the University Council, Senate and Congregation have resolved to immortalize his name by re-naming our International Conference Centre as "**Professor Celestine O.E Onwuliri International Conference Centre, FUTO**". May the good soul of Professor Celestine O.E Onwuliri and those of all the faithful departed through the mercy of God rest in perfect peace. Amen.

3.00 MISSION AND VISION

In my Address at the 24th Convocation Ceremony (December 2011) I unveiled my Vision and Mission Statement entitled the "**Quest for Excellence**" with the target of practically transforming this University to the status of a World Class University of very high rating in terms of training curricula, equipments and facilities, research productivity, and quality of staff, students and graduates. We were indeed poised for moving FUTO to a higher level, through



positive policy initiatives and an unrelenting commitment to value addition, refinement and International competitiveness.

One year hence, I am glad to report that this Administration has made substantial progress in moving this University forward. This is evident from a critical appraisal of our achievements so far, during the 2011/2012 Academic Session, as captured in my Special Address to the University Community and the general public, on the occasion marking the completion of this Administration's First Year in Office. In that document titled ***“the Quest for Excellence: Taking FUTO to the Next level”***.

I had drawn attention to an impressive range of attainments, gains, awards and prizes recorded by FUTO, based on such credible tenets as accountability, purposefulness, cost-effectiveness, equity and overall good governance of this young Institution.

Understandably these achievements would not have been possible without the support and co-operation of our Staff and Student's and the tacit backing of our 9th Governing Council under the able leadership of our indefatigable Pro-Chancellor, Engineer Vita Abba.

We are also very grateful for the active support of the National Universities Commission, the Federal Ministry of Education, and various Governmental and Non-Governmental Agencies, including especially the Tertiary Education Trust Fund, the Petroleum Technology Development Fund, and other well-meaning Agencies.

I should assure this August audience that this Administration is determined to continue with our positive transformation initiative, to the best of our ability, and within the limits of available resources, so as to fast-track the development of our University to the required World Class standard, in the shortest possible time.

4.00 ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT

Our quest for improved academic development has been pivoted on a four-pronged approach of:

- a. Qualitative expansion and consolidation of training opportunities
- b. Significant improvement of the teaching and learning environment
- c. Establishment of purpose – oriented Institutes and Centers and other relevant Developmental Agencies
- d. Internationalization and Promotion of positive Linkage Arrangements and other beneficial outreach Initiatives.

4.01 QUALITATIVE TRAINING

For quality assurance in our training programmes, the University Administration has been emphatic on the qualitative screening and selection of candidates for admission to our various undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. Training curricula have also been reviewed and up-dated for relevance, while facilities for teaching and learning have been expanded and reinforced qualitatively. Likewise, the University has observed strict quality assurance in our Staff recruitment exercises, plus active involvement of Departments and Schools in the screening and

short-listing of candidates, based not only on qualifications and experience, but also on areas of need and priority. Added to this is the consistent drive of the University to enhance Staff development, especially through sponsorship of local and overseas training and active participation of FUTO Staff in local and international Conferences and Workshops.

4.02 TEACHING AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

As for our teaching and learning environment, this administration has taken bold steps to re-structure our University environment, both externally and internally. In the past few months we have addressed our University scenery for aesthetic improvement, through clearance of forests, grassing of lawns and the planting of hedges, plus the overall physical improvement of drainage and environmental sanitation systems. The provision of ample parking lots and healthy surroundings in and around our University buildings, including those in the Academic, Administrative and Hostel areas, have all contributed to promoting a better and befitting environment in FUTO. Likewise, the University Administration has so far achieved a quantum leap in the amount of Classrooms and Laboratory/ Workshop spaces available on Campus. The same is true of the number of Staff offices, Conference Rooms and other auxiliary facilities needed for effective discharge of teaching and learning functions in FUTO. Added to this is the provision of improved teaching and learning equipments and essential Laboratory and Workshop fixtures and installations and modern Classroom office furniture and facilities etc.

4.03 ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW CENTRES/INSTITUTES

During the past year also the University Administration, with the backing of our Senate and Council, has achieved the establishment of some purpose oriented new Institutes and Academic Centers. These include specifically the following:

- Centre for Women, Gender and Development Studies
- Centre for Nuclear Energy Studies and Training
- Centre for Public Procurement and Research
- Centre for Research and International Development.
- Institute of Environmental Health Technology

The Centre for Women, Gender and Development Studies and Research was founded as an initiative of our FUTO Women's Association, and it has continued to promote Teaching, Research and Conferences in the areas of Women and Gender-related Studies. The Centre for Nuclear Energy Studies was established through the kind auspices of the National Universities Commission. The Centre for Public Procurement and Research was founded on a major Endowment support to the University by the Director, Bureau for Public Procurement, Office of the President. I should again place on record the gratitude of this University to all our benefactors who have continued to partner with us in moving this University forward.

4.04 LINKAGES AND OUTREACH INITIATIVES

The University has equally made good progress in the area of establishment of positive Academic Linkages and the promotion of viable Outreach programmes locally and overseas. In particular, we have been able to establish mutual collaboration Agreements for active



Research collaboration between FUTO and following Institutions:

- University of Georgia, Athens, U.S.A.
- Dillard University, New Orleans, U.S.A
- Louisiana State University, Barton Rouge, U.S.A.
- Wayne State University, Detroit, U.S.A
- University of Salford, Manchester, U.K
- University of Nairobi, Nairobi, Kenya
- Egerton University, Egerton, Kenya
- University College, Cork, Republic of Ireland

Likewise FUTO has successfully established mutual collaboration training arrangements with the following Organizations and Agencies:

- The West African Health Organization (Based in Ghana) for Postgraduate and Specialized Training of Students from Anglophone ECOWAS States.
- The Nigerian Institute of Management (Chartered) for Collaboration in Students Development Schemes for Management and Entrepreneurial Skills Acquisition.
- Federal Institute of Industrial Research, Oshodi

Outside the above, the University is currently processing several requests for Academic and Industrial Linkages from various Institutions and other Agencies from within and outside the country. Management believes that this trend holds great promise for the future growth and consolidation of this University.

5.00 INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Over the years, FUTO has suffered the challenge of poor and limited Infrastructure. In line with our vision and mission this Administration has confronted these challenges with determination since the past year. In our efforts to improve the level of Infrastructure and expand facilities to meet the growing challenges on campus, the University Management has facilitated several important projects, including the following:

- Completion and Commissioning of FUTO Child Development Centre Building.
- Completion and Commissioning of the Public Procurement Research Centre building
- Completion and Commissioning of SAAT (ETF) Building
- Completion and Commissioning of Department of Optometry building.
- Completion of the Chevron-Sponsored new ICT building
- Completion and Commissioning of the Development of Dental Technology building.
- Completion and Commissioning of School of Environmental Technology Complex
- Installation of Solar Street Lights on Campus.
- Supply and Installation of an 800KVA Perkins Electricity generation set to service SEET Complex Academic Area.
- Restoration of regular PHCN power supply on Campus.
- On-going Construction of a major building complex for the School of Engineering and Engineering Technology (SEET), to



- accommodate six (6) Departments.
- Initiation and Construction of a new Nuclear Science and Engineering building.
- Initiation and Construction of a Department of Physics building in the School of Science.
- Construction and furnishing of a 1000-Capacity Lecture Theatre.

In addition to the above, the University has commenced action on a number of impending new projects.

Among these are the following areas of activity

- Design of a new Senate building to cater for our University expansion and current needs.
- Design and initiation of a Research and Technology Park project.
- Design of commencement of a new School of Management building.
- Design and commencement of a new School of Science building.

Altogether, the University Administration is committed to sustaining the current pace of Infrastructural Development in FUTO. Where feasible we will be glad to step up the pace, based on enhanced funding of the University, and active patronage by Development Partners and other well-meaning Endowments.

6.00 OTHER DEVELOPMENTAL PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES.

Within the past two years, FUTO has been fortunate in recording a number of other development projects and programmes. These cover a wide spectrum of activities touching on the functional sustenance and improved productivity of our University System. Of particular interest in this regard are our achievements in the following areas:

- Information Communication Technology Development.
- Industrial and Commercial Projects Development.
- Transportation Services for Staff and Students.
- Environmental and Natural Resources Development Projects.

6.01 ICT DEVELOPMENT

With respect to ICT Development, this Administration was determined, from the on- set, to achieve full computerization of University functions generally. To this end, Management worked hard to achieve early deployment of a Campus – Wide Internet Access facility and the establishment and use of Eduportal Solution in FUTO.

These have significantly fostered our over –all performance index, especially through the advantageous use of the facilities for such purposes as the following:

- On–line processing of Applications for Admission and Post UTME placements.
- Automated Students Registration and processing of enrolments and Hostel Allocations.



- On-line payment of school fees and processing of student's clearance
- Computerization of Student's Records and management of Examination Results and Transcripts.
- Computerization and documentation of Staff records and profiles
- Automated Staff Pay-roll system and use of Electronic Payments for Settlement of Bills.
- Improved and Facilitated Accounting Systems generally.
- Electronic and Speedy Management of other University functions.
- Development of FUTO-TPS (FUTO-Transcript Processing Solution).

With launching of the FUTO-TPS, our graduates will be able to apply and receive their transcripts from anywhere in world and any currency. This will solve the problem of transcripts of our graduates. This is also the first of its kind in the country.

Understandably, these measures have significantly enhanced our efficiency and productivity in FUTO. The University has also succeeded in attracting ample patronage in support of our ICT development Programmes.

Prominent among such gestures are the following:

- Funding and Completion of NNPC/Chevron Joint Venture Partners – sponsored major ICT building project in FUTO.
- Allocation of a grant of N25million from TET Fund for the development of ICT facility in FUTO, 2011/ 2012.
- Donation to FUTO of 110 Laptops and two (5.5 KVA) generators and other ICT Accessories by the Nigerian Communication Commission.
- Donation of 25 HP Laptops by First Bank Nigeria Plc to support the FUTO Eduportal project (2012)
- Selection and approval of FUTO by the Federal Executive Council to be part of the NUC–Sponsored Electronic Teaching and Learning Platform (Phase I)
- Selection of FUTO to benefit from a wireless Internet cloud project under the auspices of the National Communications Commission, Schools Support programme.

6.02 INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL PROJECTS:

With respect to promoting viable industrial and commercial development projects we have been able during the past year, to complete and commission our *FUTO Water Project*, conceived as a viable commercial project meant to produce and package high quality bottled water to service the needs of the University Community, and the Public at large. The project has taken – off fully, and we are optimistic that it will earnestly break even and start earning reasonable profits for the University within a short time.

Likewise, the University Administration has invested ample resources in such other



University – sponsored Commercial ventures as FUTO Farms Limited, FUTO Consult Limited, FUTO Microfinance Bank Limited, and FUTO Bookshops Limited etc. We shall continue to strive in this direction with a view to fostering University self-reliance through positive enhancement of avenues for increased Internally Generated Revenue.

6.03 TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

Another area of endeavour addressed by our University Administration is that of providing University–Sponsored Transportation Services for our Staff and Students. This project was conceived and founded on a Public– Private Partnership Agreement with an external Collaborative Agency willing to provide the bulk Funding, as Capital outlay for the take- off of the Transport Services.

Altogether a fleet of Twenty (20) buses have been assembled and should hopefully be fully deployed to service the needs of the University Community, within the next few weeks. Outside this, the University Management will not relent in the effective maintenance and up-keep of existing transportation services so far being enjoyed by our staff and Students.

6.04 ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

Furthermore, quite a number of Environmental and Natural Resources Development projects are currently being pursued and processed by the University Administration. These include for example the following:

- Proposal forwarded to the Petroleum Technology Development Fund (PTDF) for the establishment of a tripartite Oil and Gas Research Centre in FUTO to address the following:
 - i. Enhanced Oil Recovery Activities,
 - ii. Oil Spillage and Environmental Cleansing, and
 - iii. Development of Marginal Oil Field.
- Exploratory Meeting and consultation with the National Agency for Science and Technology Infrastructure (NASENI) for the Establishment of a Centre of Excellence in Advanced Materials and Manufacturing Technology in FUTO
- Meeting and consultations with the Federal Ministry of Water Resources, on the prospects of harnessing and exploiting the Otamiri River and its potentials for Hydro-Electricity Development and for Fisheries and Aquaculture Development.
- Collaborative Agreement with the Federal Ministry of Environment for the construction and installation of three purpose–designed Biogas Digesters for training and capacity building of Environmental Officers, and for solving basic household energy needs.

In addition to the above, the University has continued to pursue chances of Collaborative Research and Development Projects in areas such as Waste Recycling,





Public Procurement Research Centre Building



Department of Optometry





FUTO Library



New ICT Building



Post Graduate Building



FUTO Water Building



The Enterprenueral Building



Engineering Complex





The Computer Centre, FUTO.



Central Instrument Equipment Centre



NDDC Students' Hostel



1000 Capacity Building (On-Going)



Engineering Complex



Engineering Complex





Professor Celestine Onwuliri International Conference Centre



Department of Dental Technology



Alternative Energy Sourcing, Mineral Exploitation and Processing, and Industrial Raw Materials sourcing and processing etc.

5.00 FINANCE, FUNDING AND ENDOWMENTS

As is the case with most of our training Institutions, the question of Finance and Funding continues to pose one of the biggest challenges to effective and functional service delivery. The reason is because most of our training institutions in Nigeria, especially at the Tertiary Level can hardly ever get enough resources to meet and satisfy all their challenges. Nevertheless, there is also the twin issue of judicious and efficient management of even the limited resources available. In this respect, I should report that FUTO has so far fared well in the overall management of available grants and resources allocated by Government. We have continued to cope well with our Recurrent and Overhead Charges. Salaries are paid, as and when due, and the various running costs (including our Direct Teaching and Laboratory Costs, Examination Costs, Conferences/ Workshop Sponsorship and other essential Training Requirements etc) are duly sustained and serviced by the University from Government allocations and Internally Generated Revenue.

FUTO has also benefited immensely from the active financial and other practical support from statutory and other well-meaning Agencies and Individuals. Prominent among such support received during the past year (2011/2012 Academic Session) are the following:

- TETFund Intervention Fund for FUTO Development Projects such as Construction of Lecture Hall and for Research in the School of Science, lecture theatres, solar lighting, laboratory equipment and for Academic Staff Training and Development,
- Additional TETFund Special Intervention Grant for purpose of construction of a New School Building for the School of Management Technology, FUTO.
- Donation by Schlumberger Nigeria Limited (to the Department of Geosciences, FUTO) of five (5) Geology and Geophysics Licenses of Petrel Version 2010 with an estimated value of over USD 2.1 Million.
- Establishment and Funding of an Environmental Health Laboratory in the School of Health Technology FUTO, plus provision of Laboratory Equipments Valued at over N22Million through the kind auspices of the Environmental Health Registration Council of Nigeria.
- Donation of N5 Million to FUTO Endowment Fund by Chief (Dr) Mrs. Fidelia Njeze, Former Minister of Aviation.

Donation by Agip Energy (Nigeria) Ltd of an 18-seater Bus and several Geology Equipments plus a grant of N1.05m as logistic support for promotion of Geological field mapping in the Department of Geosciences, FUTO.



The University remains ever so grateful for the substantial Funding from TET Fund and all our other benefactors who have continued to contribute to our mission and goal of promoting quality training here in FUTO.

7.00 COMMUNITY RELATIONS AND SOCIAL WELFARE

One of the cardinal policies of this University Administration is that of promoting healthy community relationships within the University, and with all our host Communities in the immediate catchment area of the University. In particular, the University Management is concerned about maintaining cordial relationships with our staff and students to help guarantee and sustain the stability and progress for which FUTO is well known.

7.01 Students Management and Welfare

With respect to Student's Management, the University has taken positive steps to strengthen the Students Affairs Unit, improve on Student's Support Services (including effective maintenance of the Student's Hostels, and sanitary supervision of Catering Services, plus enhancement of Students Recreational and Sporting Facilities etc). Students Union Government Elections for 2011 and 2012 have been conducted smoothly, using Electronic Voting System and other checks and balances to guarantee full democratization of Students, Unionism. Furthermore, the University Administration has introduced the innovation of conducting an Annual Orientation Retreat for our Newly Elected Students Union Government. Added to this, the University Administration has re-instated the appointment of Hall Masters and Mistress and Hall Wardens/ Administrators, to enhance proper guidance and grooming of our Students. We have embarked and completed the renovation of students' Hostels including the renovation and furnishing of the Common Rooms in the Hostels. Solar lighting, PHCN electricity, and water are constantly provided for the students. The 600 room NDDC Hostel is progressing rapidly. This administration is poised to give students befitting hostel accommodation. Discussion is at advanced stage to provide through (PPP) partnership with a Canadian-based company to provide additional 288 room state-of-the-art Hostel in the next twelve months. The Parent Management Forum (PMF) is also embarking on a 138-room hostel project.

7.02 Staff Welfare

Staff capacity building and social welfare have also received priority attention under this University Administration. In the past one year alone scores of Academic and Administrative Staff have benefitted from Training Leave (locally and Overseas) and well over 500 Staff have been sponsored to various Professional Conferences, Seminars and Workshops globally. Special workshops have also been held for FUTO Drivers, Secretaries and other key categories of Staff. As a rule, Staff Salaries and other Entitlements have been paid as and when due. Annual appraisals have been conducted regularly, and all deserving staff have continued to earn their promotions on basis of merit and outstanding performance. In addition, this Administration has provided some useful incentives for staff through institution of Special Prizes for performing Staff in various Departments and Schools and the provision of special Christmas/End-of-year gifts for the generality of our Staff. The completion and commissioning of the FUTO Child Development Centre and Provision of active Support for our Staff School and our FUTO International Secondary School, plus



backing of our FUTO Women's Association, all contribute also to Improved Staff welfare in our University.

7.03 Industrial Relations

The University Management has also worked hard to maintain good Industrial Relationships in FUTO. Regular consultations are held periodically with all the Staff Unions (ASUU, SSANU, NASU and NAAT) and matters of global interest and welfare issues affecting staff are mutually addressed e.g. with respect to transportation, career progression, pensions and other entitlements etc. In like manner, the University Administration has continued to liaise with our Students Union Government and the Students Parliament. Issues of critical importance to the Students are regularly tabled and mutually resolved in the overall interest of the Institution.

7.04 Host Community Relations

As for relationships with our host Communities, FUTO has continued to maintain cordial relationships with each of the autonomous Communities around us, despite occasional challenges. The same is true of our relationships with our host Local Government (Owerri West L.G.A) and of course our host state (Imo). The University Staff Schools are open to children from the catchment Communities, and in recent times, the University Administration has put in place an innovative Medical Outreach programme to service the Healthcare needs of our host Communities. We have put a systematic employment and admission of qualified candidates from our host communities. These measures are intended as well-meaning gestures on the part of the University to service our corporate Social Responsibility to our hosts. Furthermore the University Management undertakes regular consultations with the Traditional Rulers (and other community Leaders) of FUTO host Communities on matters of mutual interest. This administration has also appointed a Host Community Relations Officer to assure that we maintain a harmonious relationship with our host communities.

8.00 PRIZES, AWARDS AND HONOURS

With our stable Academic Calendar, and our strict emphasis on qualitative training, FUTO Students and Staff have continued to excel in various fields and Competitions Locally and Overseas. We have also continued to attract Honour and Commendation from various sources. Examples of these are evident from the following:

- FUTO Students emerged as National Champions at the Society for Exploration Geophysicists challenge bowl in Part – Harcourt (2011). The FUTO team subsequently represented Nigeria at the International Competition in Texas U.S.A (September 18 – 22, 2011) and placed 2nd globally.
- FUTO students industrial fabrication and entrepreneurship team won this year's National SIFE competition held in Lagos on July 24, 2012, and earned N0.25m Interswitch gift for the best innovative presentation. The team was thus selected to represent Nigeria at the SIFE World Championship competition held in Los Angeles California USA in October, 2012.



- Fifteen (15) FUTO Students won Shell Petroleum Development Company Joint Venture Partners 5 years scholarship awards on competitive basis for 2011/2012.
- The Vice-Chancellor of FUTO, Professor Chigozie Cyril Asiabaka was recently chosen for the Distinguished Platinum Award by the Nigerian Society of Engineers, Owerri Chapter. The Award was conferred on him on August 18, 2012.
- The Vice-Chancellor of FUTO, Professor Chigozie Cyril Asiabaka was also chosen for 2012 Award of Excellence of the College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences, University of Georgia, Athens, USA. The CAES Alumni Association Award of Excellence recognizes alumni who has achieved excellence in their chosen field and/or community. The Award was conferred on him at the 58th Annual Awards Banquet on September 14, 2012 at the Georgia Center, Athens, Georgia, USA
- One of our Distinguished Professors, and a former Deputy Vice- Chancellor (Academic) Professor Mike U. Iloeje was recently appointed as Rector of the Institute of Management and Technology (IMT) , Enugu.
- Our serving Deputy Vice –Chancellor (Academic) in FUTO, Professor Beniah N. Onwuagba was recently admitted as a Fellow of the Nigerian Institute of Physics. He had earlier participated actively at several Conferences and Workshops locally and internationally.
- A lot of other FUTO Staff have also benefitted from Scholarly Awards and Professional recognitions as Fellows of various Organizations/Societies during the past year.
- Others have been appointed to serve in key positions in Government Agencies, and quite a few have been elected as officers of their respective Professional Associations. We are glad to note that some FUTO Staff have also earned sizeable Research Grants for Scholarly works in various fields.

9.00 THE 25th CONVOCATION CEREMONY

Our Convocation Ceremony for 2012 has been packaged to accommodate the Award of Degrees and Prizes to about 3000 graduating Students who have been found worthy in character and learning over the past five years of study here in FUTO. Also we shall be graduating students, from the Postgraduate school, who have acquitted themselves creditably in their Postgraduate Studies in various fields. Of the 2012 graduating class, we shall be awarding first degrees in respective fields of learning as follows:



UNDERGRADUATE DATA

S/N	SCHOOLS	1 ST Class	2 nd Class Upper	2 nd Class Lower	Third Class	Pass	Total
1.	SAAT	2	34	24	6		66
2.	SEET	11	256	180	31	7	485
3.	SOSC	5	107	174	3		289
4.	SMAT	3	88	73	4		168
5.	SOHT	1	13	26	4		44
6.	Total	22	498	477	48	7	1052

For the Postgraduate Class, the breakdown of Numbers of graduates in the various fields is as follows:

POSTGRADUATE DATA

S/N	SCHOOLS	1 ST Class	2 nd Class Upper	2 nd Class Lower	Third Class	Pass	Total
1.	SAAT	2	34	24	6		66
2.	SEET	11	256	180	31	7	485
3.	SOSC	5	107	174	3		289
4.	SMAT	3	88	73	4		168
5.	SOHT	1	13	26	4		44
6.	Total	22	498	477	48	7	1052

On behalf of our Senate and Congregation and indeed all Staff and Students of FUTO, I congratulate you all and wish you even greater achievements in the years to come. Furthermore, I should enjoy you all, as you become proud Alumni and Alumnae of FUTO, not to relent in the task of promoting the cause of this pioneer Federal University of Technology in the years to come. On our part, you should be rest assured that we shall be glad to continue to partner with each and every one of you, and to support your steady progress in your career profiles.

10.0 OTHER ISSUES AND CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS

This convocation Address will not be complete without my drawing attention to some other issues and developments of interest to the University during the past year. These include the following:

10.01 Alumni Relations

Among other things the University Administration has invested time and resources in

cultivating and promoting healthy relationships with our FUTO Alumni at home and abroad. Management has continued to support our Alumni Relations Office in FUTO. During the past year also, the Vice Chancellor has held successive meetings with the National Executive Council of FUTO Alumni Association, with a view to mobilizing and galvanising our Alumni in Nigeria and in the Diaspora to identify actively with the efforts and aspirations of the University Administration to move FUTO to greater heights.

10.02 Accreditation Visits

Not long ago (November 2011) this University hosted an NUC Team on Institutional Accreditation. This was part of the overall Quality Assurance Mechanisms put in place to assess the Status and Performance of respective Universities in the Country.

We have also played host recently (October, 2012) to some NUC programmes Accreditation Teams that came to assess some of our courses in various Schools. Given our efforts so far, we remain optimistic about the outcomes of the exercises.

10.03 Visit by National Assembly Education Committee

FUTO has also played host to visiting team from the Senate Committee on Education led by Senator Uche Chukwumerije, Members of the Team met with the Vice – Chancellor, and interacted with Principal Officers of the University, as part of their statutory oversight functions. The visitors also undertook a field tour of the University to inspect facilities and projects.

10.04 Dr T. C. Osanakpo Prize

In the past year also FUTO has received a special donation of N0.5m from Dr. T.C Osanakpo, former Pro – Chancellor and Chairman of the 7th Governing Council of FUTO. The donation is for establishing an Annual Cash Prize of N50,000 for the Best graduating student in Chemical Engineering. The University Management has expressed due appreciation for this noble gesture.

10.05 FUTO Parents Management Forum

During the year under review, the University Administration has had a series of meetings with Members of the FUTO Parents–Management Forum. After due deliberations, a new Executive has been elected to man the affairs of this important Forum. The Committee has since set to work on partnering with the University to address areas of need of the Institution. Among other things, the new PMF Executive has received approval to commence a new Hostel Project to provide additional 138 – rooms Accommodation for our Students in the foreseeable future.

11.00 CHALLENGES AND APPEAL FOR SUPPORT

Like most other higher Institutions in Nigeria, the Federal University of Technology has continued to face a series of challenges over the years. These include the challenges of limited funding, inadequate Infrastructural Development, Staff constraints, Accommodation and Transportation difficulties plus issues of effective students management and industrial relations etc. I had dwelt extensively on these issues in my last Convocation Address, and had suggested some feasible remedies. Furthermore we have, in the recent past, been faced with serious cases of land encroachment from our neighboring Communities;



so much so that the University Master Plan has literally been called to question.

While we will continue to do our best to cope, I will like to appeal once again to all our friends, well-wishers and every Stakeholder in the affairs of FUTO to come to our aid and consider partnering with us in the determined task of fashioning and re-positioning FUTO as a top-ranking University in Africa for offering quality training in Science, Engineering Agriculture, Health, Technology and Management.

It is in consideration therefore of our lofty vision and mission for FUTO that we will be glad to receive practical support in form of endowments, donations and active sponsorship of any one or more of the following projects by well-meaning individuals, Corporate Organizations (including Governmental and Non-Governmental Agencies) and various Development Partners based in Nigeria or Overseas:

1. Construction of one (1) each of the following:
 - (a) 1000 – Capacity lecture hall
 - (b) 2000 – Capacity lecture hall
 - (c) 3000- Capacity lecture auditorium
2. Provision of standard well – equipped laboratories and workshops for the Schools of Science, Engineering, Health Technology, and Environmental Technology.
3. Construction and equipment of an ultra-modern research complex with facilities for inter – disciplinary research in Engineering, Industrial Science and Environmental Technology
4. Provision of five (5) blocks of Academic Staff Offices, each with a capacity to accommodate 100 Academic and Technical Staff
5. Construction and Equipment of four (4) blocks of hostels (two for males and two for females) each with capacity to accommodate about 1000 students on campus
6. Construction and Equipment of two Office Blocks to house Administrative and other support staff, with each block having the capacity to accommodate at least 100 staff.
7. Provision of other essential infrastructural facilities, including major installations, buildings and equipments needed to boost teaching, research and other forms of contemporary training exposure in FUTO.
8. Construction of all season roads in the campus
9. Donation of Earth-moving equipment such Bulldozers, graders, etc to help in the process of bush clearing, etc.

I should assure all and sundry that every endowment or donation shall be duly acknowledged and the University Community will remain grateful for such positive investments for the future up-lifting of this University.

Furthermore, you should please be rest assured that such endowments and donations in cash or kind shall be judiciously harnessed and protected.

12.00 CONCLUSION

Your Excellency, the President and Visitor to our University, our indefatigable Honourable Minister, Your Excellencies, our respected Chancellor and Chairman of Convocation, Pro-Chancellors, Sir, Members of Council and Senate of FUTO, my Lords Spiritual and Temporal, Distinguished ladies and gentlemen. I can not end this Convocation Address without expressing my sincere appreciation to Members of the Governing Council, Senate and Congregation of this University (including the Executives of all our Industrial Unions), for the support and cordial relationships that this Administration has enjoyed over the past year. All our Staff and Students also deserve commendation for their commitment to our maintenance of a stable, steady and progressive Academic Calendar here in FUTO. I should assure you all that the University Management, under my watch, shall continue to do our best to help promote and sustain this healthy tradition, even as we toil within limits of available resources to move FUTO to become top-class University of Technology in Nigeria and beyond.

Finally, to our graduands, I urge you to be good ambassadors of the FUTO. These are tough times, and the future is uncertain. But one thing is clear: Building a path to a better tomorrow for ourselves, our children, and the world will require advanced skills, deep knowledge, strong ethics, **and** the more expansive and broadly applicable habits of mind developed through education. As you leave FUTO and move to the next stage, I urge you not to dwell too much on the uncertainties of your own future, but, instead, to realize that the world stands in desperate need of your skills and talents. You have graduated from one of the world's best Universities of Technology. The world needs what you have to offer now more than ever.

I urge you to be creative and forceful in bringing your skills to bear on the problems we face, including the current mirage of problems facing the world. Be more useful to your country and to humankind. We need your creativity, your courage, your optimism and your clarity of purpose. We need you to contribute to community, national and international development. Most of all, we need you to put those hard-won skills and habits of mind to use not only in your professional lives, but in service to your community and to the world. Congratulations.

I should thank the Representative of the Visitor, our Honourable Minister, and all our distinguished Guests, special Invitees and the Parents and Guardians of our dear students, for honouring our invitation to be with us at this special occasion. May our good Lord protect and guide you all back safely to your respective homes.

Thank you, and may God bless us all.

Professor Chigozie Cyril Asiabaka Ph.D, KSM,JP
Vice-Chancellor.
Owerri
December 08, 2012

