

**ASSOCIATION OF VICE-CHANCELLORS  
OF NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES  
(AVCNU)**

**KEFFI DECLARATION  
ON**



**SUSTAINING ACADEMIC TRADITION IN NIGERIAN  
UNIVERSITIES, INCLUDING GUIDELINES FOR  
THE AWARD OF HONORARY DEGREES**

**Enacted  
24th September, 2012**

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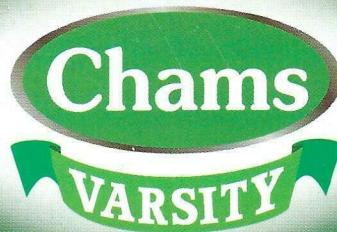
4 Parakou Street,  
Wuse 11,  
P.M.B 5286, Wuse GPO,  
Abuja.

T (09)780 5338, (09)780 5786,  
0803 213 3360  
E [cvc@cvcnigeria.org](mailto:cvc@cvcnigeria.org)  
W [www.cvcnigeria.org](http://www.cvcnigeria.org)

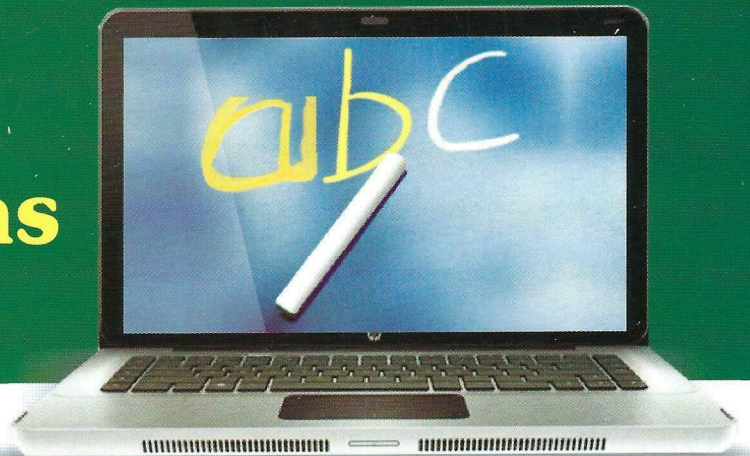
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## GUIDELINES ON THE AWARD OF HONORARY DEGREES AND ACADEMIC TRADITION IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES

### 1.0. INTRODUCTION

At the 27th Conference of the Association of Vice Chancellors of Nigerian Universities (AVCNU) held at Nasarawa State University, Keffi, and in the examination of the general erosion of academic culture/tradition with particular reference to the indiscriminate award of honorary degrees in our universities, AVCNU made a declaration (henceforth THE KEFFI DECLARATION) that the age-long, best practices of university culture be restored and maintained as herein set forth.

### 2.0 CONDITIONS AND PROCEDURE FOR AWARD OF HONORARY DEGREES

- a) AVCNU member-Universities hereby make it a policy not to honour with honorary degree anybody holding political office (elected or appointed) while such officers are still in service;
- b) The procedure for the selection of honorary degree recipients shall be in accordance with the law and statute of the respective Universities, and in line with best practices, and the selection process shall normally be through the appropriate Committee of Senate of the University;
- c) The Honorary Degree award shall normally be given to any professional who has made significant or ground breaking discoveries/accomplishments/invention/ innovation etc to societal development in any field of human endeavour, i.e. Humanities, Science or Technology. The award of

honorary degrees shall not be tied to wealth consideration or political alignment but rather, it should be based on leadership and service vis-a-vis the contribution of the intended recipients to socio-economic development of the society. Some of the other criteria that could be considered in choosing recipients for the award of any honorary degree shall include:

- i. Reputation as a leading and reputable scholar;
- ii. Associated with important discoveries/accomplishment /innovation etc;
- iii. Being an inventor, an artist, a musician or a social activist of great repute;
- iv. Being a successful entrepreneur, who has contributed immensely to development of the University;
- v. Being a leader of political organization that has impacted positively on the lives of people, subject to (2a) above;
- vi. One who has rendered outstanding life-long service to the University, the community or the nation at large, etc;
- vii. Men and women of integrity, undisputed role models, in the society.

- d) The maximum number of recipients of honorary degrees at any convocation ceremony shall not exceed THREE, and this may be in one out of several convocations;
- e) A University shall not award honorary degrees if it has not graduated any Ph.D or has no Post-graduate school or programme;
- f) Award of Honorary degree can be Posthumous, but no Honorary Degree shall be awarded in absentia to a surrogate;
- g) Award of Honorary degree to the Chancellor of one's University particularly before Convocation is not compulsory, but shall be without prejudice to her statutes and 2(a) above;
- h) Installation of a Chancellor can be done on a special day or a day preceding convocation. It depends on the decision of the Senate of the University concerned;
- i) The use of 'Dr' as a title for honorary degree graduands/awardees is unconventional and therefore, not allowed. This shall be strictly observed in all academic documents and publications.

### 3.0 CONDUCT OF CONVOCATION

Convocation is an annual formal assembly of the University for a Graduation Ceremony for its students. It is a cardinal statutory event which provides the University an opportunity to showcase its graduands and give account of how the institution has fared to its stakeholders. It is normally presided over by the Chancellor, with the Chairman and members of the

Governing Council or Board of Trustees/Regents present. The Visitor or proprietor of the institution usually attends in person or is represented. Convocation shall evoke decorum, solemnity and grandeur.

Therefore:

- a) As a matter of policy, Universities shall hold their Convocation ceremonies annually, preferably on their Foundation day and, as much as possible, within the same month each year;
- b) Convocation shall be a timely and solemn event (needs to start on time and strictly observe the timeline of programmes or activities)
- c) Certificates must be ready at convocation and issued to students after necessary clearance;
- d) Before the procession starts, there could be light music to be supplied by the University choir, the Police band or through stereo sound system.
- e) While guests are seated, officiating personnel (as authorized by the Vice Chancellor or Registrar) can use the period before the commencement of procession to recognize dignitaries and make announcements, but no more. After the procession, the Registrar takes over the order of proceedings and announcements, if any.
- f) The norm about procession requires that people should not robe or de-robe in public except when such a person is being dressed publicly for honours. Furthermore, guests are not allowed to cross or interrupt a procession.



- g) **Persons who are not robed should not normally be part of a convocation procession.**

- h) With respect to Order of Procession: the procession shall move to the Convocation Arena in the following order (while processional music is played) and the assembly shall stand as the Congregation's procession enters the Arena:

#### Graduands' procession

Students Affairs Officer  
Graduands

#### Alumni

Alumni Relations Officer  
(All graduands must be seated before the academic procession commences and shall remain at their seats throughout the ceremony)

#### Congregation procession (All Guests and Graduands shall stand)

Establishment Officer  
Members of Congregation (who are not members of senate or Council)

#### Senate procession

Academic Officer  
Members of Senate (who are not members of Council)  
Professors (who are not Deans)  
Deans of Faculties / Schools / Colleges  
Dean/Provost, School of Postgraduate Studies  
Provost of Colleges (If the College contains faculties)

#### Council Procession

Council Affairs Officer  
University Librarian  
University Bursar

Registrars of other Universities  
Visiting Vice-Chancellors  
Visiting Pro-Chancellors  
Members of Council  
University Orator(s)  
Honorary Graduands (After conferment and robbing)  
Registrar  
Deputy Vice-Chancellors  
Former Vice Chancellors of the University (Robed)

#### Chancellor's Procession

University Mace Bearer  
Vice-Chancellor  
Pro-Chancellor  
Executive Secretary, National Universities Commission  
Chancellor  
Members of Federal Executive Council (Robed)  
Visiting State Governors (Robed)  
Members of National Assembly (Robed)  
Visitor

- i) As soon as the Visitor gets to the front of his seat at the Dais, the National Anthem will be sounded. Thereafter, the Visitor takes his seat followed by the Assembly.

- j) At the Convocation Ground:

The Faculty colours should be placed in front of the graduands for easy identification of the various faculties.

In the academic procession, the mace, which is the symbol of authority, is usually carried by a designated mace bearer. After the sounding of the National Anthem, it is then positioned on a platform in front of the Chancellor.

The sitting arrangement at the



Convocation ground should be such that gives prominence and prime recognition to members of Senate, Deans, members of Council, State dignitaries from the education sector including Visiting Vice-Chancellors, as well as parents, guardians and the press. The sanctity of designated seats shall be strictly maintained by ceremonial officials.

Pre-Convocation rehearsal is very necessary and Vice-Chancellors must ensure that it is done before the Convocation proper so that observed lapses could be addressed.

k) In the Procession, the following should obtain:

Academic ceremonies must always begin and end with a procession.

Academic processions are always formed in ranks of two

Processions are divided into divisions according to affinity groups. Each division should be separated by a gap of about 20 feet, enough space to keep marchers from bunching up as people move into their seating rows. The gap is also to ensure a better view of the marchers' regalia

Only those people specified in the order should be in the procession, if robed.

Where for example, Council members want to be part of the procession, they could only wear the gown but without the hood unless they are also qualified to wear the hood by holding appropriate degrees.

#### 4.0 MATRICULATION CEREMONY

This is a statutory ceremony where new students are inducted into the university. The ceremony comes early after

orientation programme, usually within two to four weeks of freshers' arrival on campus.

Consequently:

- a) Matriculation ceremony shall normally be held not later than the fourth week of students arrival on campus;
- b) There shall be no further admission and registration of students after matriculation;
- c) Matriculation shall be given the seriousness it deserves as all academic ceremonies with Principal Officers and members of Senate actively participating;

#### 5.0 SENATE

Senate is the highest body on academic matters of a university. Many of the University Committees report to Senate, and through the Committee structure, Senate regulates the academic activities of the University.

Therefore:

- a) In terms of regularity, Senate meetings shall hold as scheduled in the university statutes, which means other relevant committees such as Faculty Boards shall meet ahead of Senate meetings to submit matters for Senate consideration;
- b) All statutory meetings of Senate shall also be held as scheduled;
- c) A university's basic governance system is the Committee System which is self regulatory. Consequently, the various committees shall be allowed to function effectively;
- d) In Senate, and indeed in the University, robust debate and effective participation shall be encouraged to ensure quality decisions;



## 6.0 COUNCIL MEETINGS

Council is the highest policy making body in the university governance structure and superintends over the Assets (estate, property and finances) of the university.

### It is RECOMMENDED that:

- Statutory meetings of Council shall be held on a regular basis as specified in the university statute;
- Council shall adhere to its functions and not override Senate decisions on academic matters; and
- A clear distinction between policy matters and day-to-day management of the university shall be recognized and respected for good governance.

## 7.0 CONGREGATION

Congregation meetings provide opportunity for a large proportion of staff to be briefed on university matters and enable them to participate in the governance of the university.

### Therefore:

- a) There shall be regular meetings of the Congregation, as specified in the statutes or at least once per semester;
- b) Congregation meetings shall be given adequate publicity and members encouraged to attend;
- c) Freedom of expression and robust debates and contributions shall be encouraged and constructive criticism permitted.

## 8.0 INAUGURAL, PUBLIC AND VALEDICTORY LECTURES

By the University tradition, it is the inaugural lecture that inaugurates a person's chair as Professor and this is usually held

within one or two years after the date of appointment, promotion and announcement. This cherished academic tradition has been neglected or is done on irregular basis in many universities, to the extent that some professors retire without giving their inaugurals. Also, public lectures in the university allow scholars and people from various walks of life who have distinguished themselves in their different callings to speak on contemporary issues. This culture is gradually being neglected to the extent that in many universities the tradition of public lectures has almost been forgotten.

Valedictory lecture is the academic tradition where a retiring Professor or Emeritus Professor delivers a farewell address or oration in a valedictory ceremony. In many universities, this is no longer done. The culture of Emeritus Professorship appointment has also been neglected or being improperly done.

### Therefore:

Universities should restore and observe these cherished age-long academic traditions and practices.

### 8.1. Inaugural and Public Lectures

- i. The University authority shall programme inaugural and public lectures into the university calendar in such a way that within 2 or 3 years of being given a Chair/becoming a Professor, every Professor must deliver his/her inaugural lecture.
- ii. Efforts shall be made to clear the backlog and since the programme is basically academic, it should be undertaken regularly so as to



continuously enliven the academic community.

- iii. Senate shall regularly approve the schedule of inaugural and public lectures in accordance with the established Calendar, and relevant committees enabled to ensure compliance.

## 8.2 Valedictory Lectures and Emeritus Professorship

- i. Valedictory lecture can be delivered by Retiring and Emeritus Professors. However, such a person must still be seen to be professing even at that old age.
- ii. Nomination of candidates for the conferment of Emeritus Professorship usually starts from the Department. A senior professor may nominally initiate the process which gets through the Faculty to the Senate and then to Council for final approval.
- iii. In some cases, the University may on its own recognize the academic contributions of some senior professors who have retired from service for the conferment of Emeritus Professorship subject to laid down guidelines.
- iv. Emeritus Professors can be provided with official accommodation / house whenever on campus, and be remunerated on the basis of the work they do, including the mentoring of younger academics. Senate must establish proper guidelines for this.

## 9.00 GENERAL ISSUES OF ACADEMIC ETHICS AND DECORUM

- i. Universities shall all have code of conduct to be embedded in the condition of service for all members of teaching and non staff. Such a code shall address issues such as research, examination, dressing, sexual harassment, cultism and social vices, etc;
- ii. The code of conduct shall address all anti-social habits with appropriate sanctions.
- iii. The issue of extortion and 'sorting' of all kinds shall be addressed and appropriately sanctioned by university authorities.
- iv. Universities shall adhere strictly to their statutes and regulations on all matters, reward excellence and enforce discipline.

### 9.1 Examinations

- i. Universities shall adhere strictly to examination time-line
- ii. Continuous assessments shall be submitted before the commencement of examinations. Deans and Heads of departments shall ensure that all continuous assessment records are submitted and deposited with them before the commencement of examinations.
- iii. There shall be strict adherence to examination time table and examination regulations
- iv. An external examiner shall not only ensure a proper vetting of



- the examination questions in order to maintain standards, he/she shall write a report after reviewing the answer scripts.
- v. The departments shall not overload young lecturers with sensitive academic matters in order to prevent abuse
  - vi. Universities shall determinedly address the problem of 'sorting' and examination leakages and culprits shall be appropriately sanctioned.
  - vi. The mentor-mentee relationship between the old and the young academics shall be revived and strengthened. The younger academics shall sufficiently demonstrate their attitudinal and psychological preparedness to be mentored;
  - vii. Universities shall encourage departments to establish research forum where young and old researchers can interact.

## 9.2 Research matters and Mentorship

- i. The issue of widespread plagiarism need be addressed by the university system.
- ii. All efforts shall be made to authenticate the originality of academic publications for the sake of credibility of the University;
- iii. Universities shall make funds available for research and research shall be made to attract more scores for promotion purposes;
- iv. Scholars with multi authorship shall indicate their specific contributions in the publications;
- v. People appointed to Professorial chairs are required to demonstrate competence through mentoring;

## 10.0 IMPLEMENTATION AND ENFORCEMENT

AVCNU and the National Universities Commission (NUC) shall act as 'whistleblowers' and shall take appropriate actions to ensure compliance with these guidelines.

Furthermore, all Vice Chancellors, as signatories to the Declaration, commit to strict adherence to the guidelines, and whenever occasions demand, to boycott convocation ceremonies of universities that flagrantly flout the guidelines on award of honorary degrees.

Endorsed by Vice Chancellors of Nigerian Universities, this 24th day of September 2012.





### ABOUT CVC/AVCNU

The Committee of Vice-Chancellors of Nigerian Universities (CVC) is a quasi-governmental, non-profit organization, established in 1962 by the five first generation universities. Its primary goal is to provide a focus of academic leadership and a platform for discussing issues affecting higher education in Nigeria. With the establishment of State and Private universities in the 1980s, the committee was expanded to accommodate the new university typologies, and it was then called "Association of Vice-chancellors of Nigerian Universities (AVCNU), serving as the umbrella organization for Vice-Chancellors of Nigerian Federal, State and Private Universities. At its 67th general meeting in Nasarawa State University, Keffi in September 2012, which was attended by other principal officers of universities, it was resolved that the committee/association transforms to the "Association of Nigerian Universities", ANU, and cater for the needs of the entire university system, in conformity with similar bodies, like International Association of Universities, IAU; Association of Commonwealth Universities, ACU, Association of African Universities, AAU and the Association of West African Universities, AWAU, to which ANU would be affiliated. This is without prejudice to the rights of existing of constituent associations. It was also at this 67th general meeting that the subject of this publication, the "Keffi Declaration" was enacted, based on the report of a Committee set up to advise AVCNU on the erosion of academic standards and cultures in the Nigerian University System.

As at July 2013, the Association has 40 Federal Universities and 88 State and Private Universities in its membership. Its **VISION** is "to be a veritable platform for Nigerian Universities for the attainment of academic excellence through cooperation and exchange of ideas". The **MISSION** is to provide a focus of academic leadership through which bold initiatives can be taken on matters concerning University Education and provide a platform for discussing common issues such as inter-university cooperation, administrative and academic practices, maintenance of academic standards, staff recruitment and exchange, sporting competitions, students' affairs, etc. It is also to serve as a forum for collaboration with Governments and Non-Governmental Organizations, Ministries, Parastatals, Agencies and other national and international organizations on matters concerning University education.

### CORPORATE INFORMATION

#### REGISTERED OFFICE

3, Idowu Taylor Street  
Victoria Island, Lagos Nigeria

#### ABUJA OFFICE

Plot 198, Parakou Crescent, Off Aminu Kano Crescent  
Wuse II, Abuja, FCT, Nigeria

#### CHAIRMAN

Prof. Mohammad Hamisu Mohammed  
Vice-Chancellor, Abubakar Tafawa Belewa University, Bauchi

#### VICE-CHAIRMAN

Prof. Barth N. Okolo  
Vice-Chancellor, University of Nigeria, Nsukka

#### SECRETARY-GENERAL

Prof. M. O. Faborode, FAEng, FNSE, FNIAE  
(From January 2, 2012)

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#### AUDITORS

Akinola Akintunde & Co., Chartered Accountants

#### MEMBERSHIP

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#### ASSOCIATED ORGANIZATIONS

Committee of Vice-Chancellors of Nigerian Federal Universities  
Committee of Pro-Chancellors of Nigerian Federal Universities  
Committee of Vice-Chancellors of Nigerian Private Universities  
Committee of Vice-Chancellors of State Universities of Nigerian  
International Association of Universities (Affiliated to UNESCO)  
Association of Commonwealth Universities  
Association of African Universities  
Association of West African Universities





## ANNEXURE

### ABUAD DECLARATION ON PLAGIARISM

The Association of Vice-Chancellors of Nigerian Universities at its 29th Annual Conference held at Afe Babalola University, Ado- Ekiti on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 2014, viewed with very deep concern the rising tide of a cankerworm called plagiarism eating deeply into the fabrics of academia in Nigeria, and this called for urgent action.

It also frowned at the proliferation of phantom journals accepting all manner of plagiarized materials completely at variance with acceptable global standards.

This unimaginable dimension is not unconnected with the era of high-speed e-life style. It is in the light of this that calls for a total commitment to a zero tolerance to this unwholesome practice was made.

The conference therefore resolved as follows:

- i. All Vice-Chancellors must, with immediate effect, revisit the menace of plagiarism in their respective institutions and put in place a robust system to stop it. This should include elements of early warning and intelligence (whistle blowing) systems.
- ii. Universities should discourage practices that encourage plagiarism e.g. strict adherence to appointment and promotion guidelines for academics on publications that encourage ill-intended and unethical proliferation.
- iii. All cases of plagiarism should be treated as high profile academic fraud, which should be tried and attract maximum sanction of outright dismissal of a staff or withdrawal of degree/ certificate/statement of result of a student / graduate once a *prima-facie* case has been established.
- iv. A culture of high-speed anti-plagiarism technology capable of detecting academic fraud at any level be imbibed. All universities should, through the postgraduate Schools and other units, subject all publications (books, theses, dissertations, projects, technical/annual reports, journals etc) to anti-plagiarism test, with a declaration of compliance of all copyright laws, rules and regulations, before such can be made public.
- v. No thesis or dissertation should be examined unless it has passed through anti-plagiarism test and certificate of compliance must be verified by the external examiners.
- vi. All identified offenders should be widely publicized for all universities to know, particularly through the CVC/NUC website, bulletin and university websites.
- vii. Create a national database of publications that will be linked to a global database, which will enhance efficiency of anti-plagiarism packages such as 'Turn-it-in' and other similar software. The NgREN should serve this purpose by integrating into its mandate the hosting of such software sites/pages.