

*TAKE HOLD OF YOUR
FUTURE*



**40TH CONVOCATION ADDRESS OF THE
VICE CHANCELLOR, UNIVERSITY OF
ILORIN
PROFESSOR WAHAB OLASUPO EGBEWOLE,
SAN
ON THURSDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2025 (DAY II)**

Protocols,

With great joy and excitement, I warmly welcome you all to today's ceremony. Since the commencement of this 40th Convocation, we have witnessed many memorable and fulfilling moments and for this, we are deeply grateful to Almighty Allah. The journey so far has been remarkable, and we return all praise and adoration to Him for the uncommon privilege of gathering for an occasion such as this.

Once again, it is a great honour for me to welcome our distinguished Visitor, His Excellency, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR who is ably represented here today by the Vice-Chancellor of the Federal University of Technology, Akure, Prof. Adenike Temidayo Oladiji. I also wish to specially appreciate the

Honourable Minister of Education, Dr. Tunji Alausa, whose support has been both unprecedented and uniquely innovative.

We deeply appreciate our Chancellor, the Emir of Katsina, His Royal Highness, Alhaji (Dr.) Abdulmumin Kabir Usman, CFR — a father figure, a steadfast supporter of our progress, and a true defender of our values. Our Chancellor is ably represented here today by the Waziri Katsina, Distinguished Senator Ibrahim Ida. We equally acknowledge the unwavering support of the Governor of Kwara State, Mallam AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq, CON who also serves as the Chairman of the Nigeria Governors' Forum. It is with heartfelt gratitude that I thank our gracious host, the Emir of Ilorin, His Royal Highness, Alhaji (Dr.) Ibrahim Sulu-Gambari, CFR, for his consistent and invaluable support.

Dear colleagues' Vice-Chancellors, appreciating you cannot be enough. You stood strongly and identify with us at this joyous occasion. The past and the present support we cannot forget. You are great and specially acknowledged. I also seize this opportunity to acknowledge the unique contributions of Tertiary Education Fund (TETfund), Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB), National Universities Commission (NUC) and the Committee of Vice-Chancellors (CVCNU). All of you have

collectively ensured that tertiary education thrives in Nigeria. Your support cannot be taken for granted.

As I mentioned yesterday, while this celebration includes all of us, it is especially for our proud graduands — and for their joyful parents and guardians. In the year 2023, we held a combined Convocation Ceremony for the 37th and 38th in the series. On that occasion, I addressed the graduands with a message titled ***The Future is Here.*** It was inspired by the powerful and thought-provoking lecture delivered by Professor Toyin Falola — a message that was both illuminating and deeply motivating.

This year, we are honoured to have His Excellency, Mr. Babatunde Raji Fashola, SAN, as our 40th Convocation lecturer. His thought-provoking lecture comes at a special time — on the heels of our 50th Anniversary. Reflecting on this milestone, and having shared with the audience yesterday about our unique style and values — what we call our DNA — I am inspired to declare that ***the FUTURE BEGINS NOW!*** This future must be matured, jealously guided and protected for the overall development of our society. This future must not be allowed to derail on the altar of being *Gen-Zs*.

At 40 years old, a person is traditionally seen as mature and capable of great independence and responsibility. Similarly, as an institution reaching this milestone, we too have reached a stage of strength and readiness. It is now time to be strong and determined. Graduands, you have an undeniable need to set clear goals, develop new skills, and build consistent, focused, and disciplined habits that will serve as pedestal to stride forward. A very heartwarming and challenging story comes from one of you: **Mr. Sanusi Akanbi Kazeem** of the Department of Mathematics, who recently broke the Guinness World Record for the longest mathematics lesson. This historic achievement followed a marathon lesson that lasted **31 hours, 42 minutes, and 54 seconds** — surpassing the previous record of 26 hours. But this was more than a record; it was a story of resilience, dedication, and uncommon commitment. At the start, Mr. Kazeem was not well-known, nor was a positive outcome certain. However, as he persevered, he gained supporters — and today, his success is a story told with pride.

We also celebrate the remarkable achievements of **Babalola Karimot Abisola and Idris Nahimah Opeyemi** from the Department of Veterinary Microbiology, who won the \$5,500

Global Morris Foundation Scholarship — an accomplishment recognised worldwide.

Another shining star is **Qudus Aduragbemi** of the Food Engineering Department. He led his team to win €1,200 and emerged as the project leader at the prestigious European Youth Empowerment Fund. While we have many stars to celebrate, these success stories remain vivid in my mind. They remind us that local beginnings can lead to global recognition. Many could have been just statistics, but by their own choices, they made a difference. As we gather today to celebrate all of you, let me remind you of the importance of taking deliberate control of your future by choosing to be unique.

You may be familiar with the stories of Steve Jobs, Bill Gates, and Elon Musk. But today, allow me to share the inspiring journey of **A.P.J. Abdul Kalam**, who went on to become the 11th President of India. Kalam's life teaches us that our background does not determine our destiny. Greatness is achieved through perseverance and commitment to one's goals.

In his school years, Kalam received average grades but was described by his teachers as a bright, hardworking student with a

strong desire to learn. Born into a humble family, with a father who owned a small boat, Kalam overcame poverty to become a renowned scientist and eventually the leader of his nation. Known as the ‘Missile Man of India,’ he played a crucial role in developing the Agni and Prithvi missiles, which were key to India’s successful Pokhran-II nuclear tests. He championed self-reliance and technological advancement for his country. Even after his presidency, he remained a source of inspiration to the youth, tirelessly advocating for India’s transformation into a developed nation by 2020.

His story shows us how determination, hard work, and resilience can lead to greatness, even when starting from a disadvantaged position. The difference between your story and Kalam’s is that with a Unilorin degree and the additional value gained through the **U-INSPIRE** programme, you are already standing on a higher ground — not from a disadvantaged position.

Now, it is your turn to go into the world and write a story that connects with our success stories — one defined by our unique style of greatness and foresight in getting things right. Let the investments of your parents, your teachers, and this institution begin to count in your journey of life.

I am optimistic that, sooner than expected, many of you will be recognised as worthy ambassadors of this institution and will return to give back to your alma mater.

This is the true way for all of us here today to appreciate the valuable addition you represent to the workforce of this nation and the world at large. You have been truly certified to contribute your unique quota to the development of Nigeria and to fly our flag all over the world. For the avoidance of doubt, 11,886 bagged first degrees in this year ceremonies out of which three hundred and sixteen (316) bagged First Class Honours; 4,120 Second Class (Upper Division) 5,939 Second Class (Lower Division); 1078 Third Class and 11 Pass. The Ceremonies also have 175 MB;BS graduands, 94 Nursing graduands, 40 Optometry graduands, 36 Veterinary Medicine graduands, and 64 Physiotherapy graduands. We have a total of 13 Diploma. The total numbers of Higher Degrees to be awarded at this 40th Convocation Ceremonies is 1,520. Out of this figure, there are 182 Postgraduate Diplomas, 916 Masters from various Faculties, 188 Professional Masters and 234 Ph.Ds.

The training we provide here is proudly supported by various government initiatives and the generosity of good-spirited

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individuals. As I mentioned during the recent press briefing, nearly 13,000 students benefited from the Nigerian Education Loan Fund (NELFUND) in 2024/2025 — a Federal Government initiative that provided over **One Billion and Five Hundred Million Naira (₦1,500,000,000)** in school charges.

We also received more than **Two Billion and Five Hundred Million Naira (₦2,500,000,000)** this year from TETFund to support physical infrastructure, ICT development, entrepreneurship, career services, among others. In addition, there is a **Four Billion Naira (₦4,000,000,000)** Special High Impact Project (SHIP) to upgrade the College of Health Sciences, along with **750 Million Naira (₦750,000,000)** dedicated to constructing new hostels for medical students, among other supports.

Our achievements, innovations, and plans would not have been possible without the dedication of our staff and the responsibility shown by our student body. Let me seize this unique opportunity to formally express my appreciation to the members of the management team whose support has been truly unflinching. The faculty members of this university are rare breeds, unmatched by those in any other institution in the country. I boldly say that our staff are dedicated, with matchless zeal to always deliver their best.

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It is in realisation of these contributions that Administration resolved that the welfare of our workforce will continue to be our priority, in terms of promotion, training, retraining and other motivations.

The Deans, both past and present, have shown deep understanding and belief in our vision — the 1:10:500 initiative — which we collectively embraced three years ago. We have been driven by technology and automating our processes with thanks to the unwavering commitment of the rejuvenated staff of COMSIT. Our Heads of Departments have responded to every call without hesitation, and our Level Advisers have taken up their responsibilities as personal projects. Indeed, to all of you, we are deeply grateful.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), Professor Moji Taibat Bakare-Odunola, who also serves as the Chairman of the Business Committee of Senate (BCOS), has been central to the success of this Convocation. Your efforts have yielded positive results and are deeply appreciated. Through you, please extend my gratitude to the other members of the committee. The distinguished members of Senate remained unwavering in ensuring we achieve this feat.

I also want to specially acknowledge the staff of the Academic Support Services Unit, the Senate Office, and the Students Affairs Unit. Their dedication, particularly in expediting transcripts and results processing, as well as in the timely mobilisation of today's graduands for the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) has been invaluable.

To the team that packaged this unique ceremony — the Ceremonials Committee under the Chairmanship of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Management Services), Prof. Adegboyega Adisa Fawole. I call you performers! Your individual and collective investment of time, resources, and creativity in planning and executing this event is deeply appreciated. May your joy know no bounds! All other Principal Officers have been faithful to the team, have remained focused on our goals and consistently championed all the positive ideals.

The Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of the Governing Council and other distinguished members of the Governing Council have been consistent and have been partners in progress with a view to achieving the lofty ideals of the University.

In conclusion, I urge our graduands to take full hold of their futures, and I pray that your accomplishments will far surpass what we celebrate today. In taking hold of this future, be bold, be courageous, be focused, be consistent and on the whole be driven by integrity.

I also want to express my heartfelt appreciation to our invited guests, who have come from near and far. To the families and friends joining us in this celebration, we do not take your esteemed presence for granted. You have added colours and meaning to this occasion in countless ways.

Again, congratulations to all our graduands. We celebrate your achievements today and look forward to the bright futures you will create.