

ANAMBRA STATE UNIVERSITY

AN ADDRESS BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR OF ANAMBRA STATE
UNIVERSITY, PROFESSOR FIDELIS UZOCHIUKWU OKAFOR,
AT THE 5TH CONVOCATION CEREMONY OF THE UNIVERSITY
ON FRIDAY 7TH MARCH, 2014, AT THE IGBARIAM CAMPUS
OF THE UNIVERSITY

Your Excellency, The President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria,
Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, *GCFR*

Your Excellency, The Governor of Anambra State, Mr. Peter Obi, *CON*
The Governor Elect of Anambra State, Chief Willie Obiano

Your Excellency, the Governor of Akwa Ibom State, Chief Godswill
Obot Akpabio, *CON*

Hon Minister of Power, Prof. Chinedu Nebo

Members of the National Assembly

The Speaker of the Anambra State House of Assembly

Members of State Executive Council here present

Members of the State Legislature

The Hon Commissioner for Education, Dr. Mrs. Uju Okeke

The Chancellor of Anambra State University, HRM Maj Gen (Dr.) Felix
A. Mujakperuo (rtd), CFR, mni, The Orodje of Okpe Kingdom, and
other University Chancellors here present

The Pro-Chancellor & Chairman of the Governing Council of Anambra
State University,

Prof. Elo Amucheazi

Visiting Pro-Chancellors and Vice-Chancellors of other Universities
here present

Members of the University Governing Council

Principal Officers of Anambra State University

Former Vice-Chancellors and Registrars of Anambra State University

Rectors and Provosts of Institutions of Higher Learning here present

The Commissioner of Police Anambra State

Chairman of Anambra-East Local Government and other Local
Government Chairmen here present

My Lords, Spiritual & Temporal
Your Royal Majesties

Members of Senate of Anambra State University
Distinguished Academic and Administrative Staff of Anambra State
University

Members of the Students Union Government

Great Eagles and Falcons

Graduands of the 5th Convocation of Anambra State University

Distinguished Members of the Press

Most Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

1. Welcome

We could not find in the vocabulary of English language a word which most appropriately expresses our deep feeling of joy for your presence on this occasion coming from all directions, North, South, East and West, travelling various distances to honour our invitation, than the same word of seven letters - **WELCOME**. Your Excellency, President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, we love you and cherish you and your presence. On behalf of the University Community, I respectfully welcome you to our University. You are the first President of Nigeria to set your foot on our University soil whether in its old or new name.

Our amiable Governor, Mr. Peter Obi, who is indeed the Visitor and Proprietor of the University, we welcome you like a father to his house. We welcome His Excellency, the Governor of Akwa Ibom State, Chief Godswill Obot Akpabio, who will be awarded, during this ceremony, Doctor of Laws, *Honoris Causa*. We welcome the Honourable Minister of Power, my Former Vice-Chancellor at the University of Nigeria, Ven. Prof. Chinedu Nebo. We thank you for your exceedingly enlightening Convocation lecture delivered yesterday.

We welcome the Honourable Members of Federal and State legislatures, especially, the Hon Speaker of the State House of Assembly, Hon Princess Chinwe Nwebili. We warmly welcome the Hon Commissioner for Education, Dr. Mrs. Uju Okeke. We salute the Chancellor of the

University, His Royal Majesty (Dr.) Major General Felix Mujakperuo. We also welcome the Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of the Governing Council, Prof. Elochukwu Amucheazi. I welcome my Lords, Spiritual and Temporal. I respectfully welcome our Royal fathers and traditional chiefs. I welcome all our guests unnamed yet recognized in their various positions in life and society.

2. The Unique Nature Of The 5 Convocation Ceremony

This Convocation, though constituted like the previous ones for the Award of degrees and certificates, is interwoven with academic fanfare and social conviviality reminiscent of our traditional commensality which the past Convocations did not enjoy. It is a Convocation which, by the act of history and the action of the Divinity, was designed to be a Convocation with a difference. The difference is underscored by the realities of the historical moment. This is a Convocation adorned by many firsts. This fifth Convocation of the University is the first Convocation to be held in this Campus on a hill top. It is the first Convocation of the University that is being held in the month of March. It is the first Convocation during which the graduands will participate in their Convocation ceremony and receive their certificates before proceeding to the National Youth Service. It is the first Convocation under its new name, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, and indeed the first Convocation which our amiable Governor, Mr. Peter Obi, is presiding over as Visitor to the Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University. It is the first convocation attended by the President of Nigeria, His Excellency President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan. It is yet the first Convocation in which the Royal fathers from within and outside the State, who are arraigned in colourful royal regalia, are gracing. It is the first time that a serving Governor is awarded the Doctorate Degree, *Honoris Causa*, of the University whether under the new or old name.

3. The Structure And The Location Of The University

This University is a three Campus institution brought into being by law

and by different political philosophies, namely; Uli, Igbariam and Awka. The land on which this Campus is sited was donated by the people of Igbariam. It was all a thick forest, a semi jungle inhabited by wild animals. So it was until the present Administration of Anambra State led by the indefatigable Governor, Mr. Peter Obi, swung into action and transformed this jungle into a modern University Campus in *potentia*. The Igbariam Campus covers about 2 kilometers on both sides of the road sharing borders with Igbariam, Umudioka-Awkuzu, Ukwulu and Nando. It is the home of the famous farm settlement of Eastern Region fame. The land is fertile and rich.

4. Infrastructural Development

It is in this Campus that we are holding the 5th Convocation of the University. This Convocation Arena, located on a platform raised by nature, affords the Anambra people and others outside the State the opportunity to know this part of the State, to see government at work and in action in this place and to entertain your senses with the beauty of nature that stretches all around the Campus.

It is in the interest of parents and guardians to know and see the environment in which their children are receiving University education. At Uli Campus, where science-based courses, including Engineering, are located a state of the arts Engineering Faculty building, to be equipped with most modern engineering facilities, is already taking off. An ultra modern research laboratory with modern equipment is being sited at Uli too. Already the College of Medicine and the Teaching Hospital of the University are now objects of admiration as you view the edifices from the expressway at Awka. In the next twelve months or thereabouts the first set of medical doctors will emerge from our College of Medicine with full certification from the Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria. On this Campus, moving in line with history, a state of the arts Faculty of Agriculture with modern research facilities, is being sited. This Campus will also house the Institute of Petroleum Studies and the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences.

5. Anambra State Government Presence In The University

The existing facilities in this Campus are now in use, even though the large building for the Faculty of Management Sciences is yet to be completed. Our International ICT Resource Centre is before or in front of you depending on your position. The towering building that confronts you as you approach the Campus is the Administrative Building now ready for use. The Government of Anambra State has also awarded the contract for the road which will link the old and new sites of this Campus. Frequent accidents that occurred between the University and the Express Road is now history with the construction of that road. For this and other numerous projects within and around the University we say thank you to our dear Governor. The Department of Mass Communication of this University has published, in its current edition of our newspaper, a comprehensive list of the projects and facilities built and provided by the Governor of Anambra State, Mr. Peter Obi, for this University. We have published also in the same newspaper a list of the friends and benefactors of the University. May I seize this opportunity to thank them all. We recommend that you do not miss this edition. Please, take a copy home for your record.

6. Educational Growth In Anambra State In General

It is a truism, if not a platitude, to say that our dear Governor has left an indelible mark in the history of the development of Education in Anambra State. I say this without fear of contradiction and without equivocation but rather with equipoise. His passion for education and his love for youths has impelled our Governor, whom some people regard as stingy, to spend lavishly to provide quality education at primary and secondary levels. Your Excellency, the seed you have sown will bear fruits in years to come.

7. Academic Development

The University has continued to advance in all frontiers of learning. The

Council for Legal Education in Nigeria, some three months ago, accorded our Law Faculty full accreditation thereby granting the Faculty increase in admission quota from 50 to 100. Similarly the College of Medicine and the Teaching Hospital have been fully accredited by the Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria. Consequently, in the next 12 months time or thereabouts we will graduate our first set of Medical Doctors. All the programmes of this University are successful in the accreditation and some are now due for re-accreditation. In the area of research, the University has made a mark through the International awards given to some academic staff in this University. These are published in our news bulletin. The University has also established academic cooperation with many overseas Universities and Research institutes. Our University is one of the few Universities which the National Universities Commission (NUC) gave approval to run part-time programmes in various disciplines.

8. Message To The Graduates And Their Parents/Sponsors

To our graduands, the University most heartily congratulates you for recording such level of success, despite the challenges under which learning in higher institutions is currently taking place in Nigeria. You have done marvelously well. On behalf of the University Administration, I salute you all.

As graduates of Anambra State University, we enjoin you to register with the Anambra State University Alumni Association, and participate actively in its activities. We also urge you to endeavour, at all times, to be good ambassadors of your alma mater and to come forward with useful suggestions on ways to move the University forward. We are aware that you will experience difficulties finding a ready employment. This is one of the major problems facing Nigeria at the moment. Endeavour to engage yourself in honest and meaningful activities aimed at sustaining yourself. Avoid idleness. Do realize that no honest job is mean to undertake.

9. Parents And Sponsors

To the Parents/guardians/sponsors of the graduands, the University felicitates with you on this momentous occasion. It is our honest conviction that you have worked very hard and denied yourselves certain basic necessities of life in order to see your wards acquire University Education. We sincerely hope that you will reap the fruits of your labour. May God reward you abundantly and lead you safely back to your various destinations.

10. Conclusion

Let me seize this opportunity to thank members of the University Senate, the Staff and the Students of this University for their cooperation and for their enthusiasm in this Convocation. I thank the Chairman and members of the Senate Ceremonials Committee for their good work in the arrangements for the ceremonies, despite the shortness of the time. I Once again thank the Visitor to the University the Chancellor, Members of the National Assembly and State Executive and Legislative bodies, the Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of the most esteemed Honorary Graduand, Visiting Vice Chancellors, Rectors and Provosts of sister Universities and Tertiary Institutions, Distinguished State Functionaries Oha-na-Eze Ndigbo, Pressmen, beloved graduands Ladies and Gentlemen, I thank you all for your esteemed presence and wish you Journey mercies to your respective destinations.

11. A Final Word For The Teachers

And finally, without the teachers who taught these graduates, there would be no Convocation So, in appreciation for the role of our teachers let us hail them with this old song: “ANYJ AGBASAGO AKWUKWO”

Prof. Fidejis U. Okafor

Vice_Chancellor