TERTIARY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA:  
WHITHER GOOD GOVERNANCE?  
GO Uni Third Convocation Lecture by
Tertiary Education in Nigeria: Whither Good Governance?

Convocation Lecture:
TERTIARY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA: WHITHER GOOD GOVERNANCE?

RT. HON. AMINU WAZIRI TAMBUWAL, CFR
(MUTAWALLE SOKOTO)
The Executive Governor of Sokoto State, Nigeria.
TERTIARY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA: WHITHER GOOD GOVERNANCE?


Protocols:
I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the authorities of the Godfrey Okoye University Ugwuomu Nike, for this opportunity to deliver the convocation lecture at this auspicious occasion of the 3rd Convocation of this citadel of learning. I also seize the moment to express profound appreciation to my brother, the Executive Governor of Enugu State, RT Hon Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi as well as the good people of Enugu state for providing this conducive environment for private sector participation in the provision of tertiary education to the citizenry.

2. Pursuant to the Liberty afforded me by the university authorities, I am minded to share with us today on the topic “TERTIARY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA: WHITHER GOOD GOVERNANCE? ”. Two concepts here require brief elucidation given their definitive roles in the discourse, namely “good governance” and “Tertiary education”, whether the one has impacted or is impacting the other.

3. Before proceeding however it is important to state that for decades the question of falling standards in our educational system has stuck in
public discourse and concerns like a leech and justifiably so, in my opinion, because there has not been any significant improvement such as should assuage these public concerns. This is aggravated by the realization that it is a lamentation over the lost jewel of yesteryears that the Nigerian education was. Indeed a lamentation over the was and the was.

4. The concept of "good governance" is a child of the experiences of governments and governance over the years in differential habitats. According to the UNDP "good governance is among other things participatory, transparent and accountable. It is also effective and equitable. And it promotes the rule of law."I

5. The World Bank opines that good governance "is epitomized by predictable, open and enlightened policy making, a bureaucracy imbued with professional ethos, an executive arm of government accountable for its actions, and a strong civil society participation in public affairs and all behaving under the rule of law." It is obvious then that the original concept of government, devoid of corruption, would have had no need for the springing up of such qualifying sub concepts as "good governance".

6. According to the free encyclopedia, "tertiary education, also referred to as third stage, third level, and post secondary education, is the educational level following the completion of a school providing a secondary education."3 In the case of Nigeria, the territorial scope of our discussion covers polytechnics, colleges of education, universities and other equivalent such institutions by whatever designation called. Given that our audience today is a university community, we shall concentrate
our analysis on university education in Nigeria, which constitutes the habitat of Godfrey Okoye university.

Global **Ranking And Nigerian Universities.**

7. Under the World's Top 800 Universities ranking released in July 2015, only one Nigerian university, namely the university of Ibadan made the list placing in the 601 position! It is important to note that 13 African universities made that list which included 5 universities from South Africa, 3 from Ethiopia and the remaining 6 being one each from 6 other African countries including Nigeria.'

8. On the African stage, out of the top 10 universities, South Africa picks 6 slots, Egypt 2 leaving Nigeria and Kenya with one slot each. The situation under the 2015 University Web Ranking of Top 100 universities in Africa, South Africa again picked the top 5 and a total of 18 on the list while Nigeria has only 6 picks with the best in 31st position.

9. In one Nigerian Universities Ranking released July 2015, Ibadan the only Nigeria university that made the world ranking in the 601st position is indeed ranked 4th out of 114 in Nigeria, behind Obafemi Awolowo, Be Ife, University of Lagos and Covenant University, Ota. It is consoling that Godfrey Okoye made the list ahead of a couple of others.f Again in yet another 2015 Nigerian rankings Covenant University Ota is placed first in Nigeria beating Ibadan to the 3rd position, meanwhile Covenant ranks 1401 in the World! This state of affairs is frightening and raises doubts as to whether any Nigerian university can make the World's top 1000 subsequently!
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10. It must be admitted that though the criteria for these rankings have some variations in terms of emphasis in allocation of scores, the underlying principles are generally same. These include: quality of education measured by the number of alumni excelling; quality of Faculty measured by number of academic staff excelling like in Nobel prizes; Research Output manifesting in volume of academic papers published and cited, Employer Reputation - the premium placed on the products of the university by the labour market; Preference of the Institution by foreign students among others." Coincidentally other than the first generation and a few second generation universities, only Covenant University Ota from the later generations of Nigerian universities has consistently featured in both domestic and international rankings.

11. It should be obvious from the criteria for ranking that for any university to aspire for the top, certain basics such as quality academic staff, quality infrastructure both academic and recreational, quality students, quality management staff, quality funding and above all quality leadership or good governance must be in place. It is important at this point to state categorically that even where all the other basics are present but in the hands of an inept leadership or put differently, subjected to bad governance, no positive results can be realized.

Good Governance and Nigerian Universities Path to Ranking.

12. From the rankings discussed earlier, both local and international, it is clear that Nigerian tertiary institutions have not taken their rightful position in the scheme of things having regard to our comparative material and human resource endowment. It is also a general national consensus that the nation’s expectations from her tertiary institutions, namely men and women of character and learning and quality high level manpower are no longer being realized. I use the phrase "no longer" advisedly given the fact that same was not the case yesterday: how is it that the first generation universities produced two Nobel laureates in Wole Soyinka and Chinua Achebe and suddenly the fountain has gone dry? Why will it have to take American tertiary educational institutions to "produce" the Philip Emeagwalis of computer wizardly fame and the [elani Aliyus, the Nigerian diaspora automobile design genius?

Brains born and nurtured in Nigeria but which the Nigerian tertiary education system could not produce!

13. The peer review analysis clearly brings to the fore, the reality that the tertiary educational institutions of several countries less endowed are faring much better than Nigeria, both in Africa and globally. This must turn the searchlight in the area of resource management or good governance: If we possess equivalent or, in some cases, greater material and human resources than many of these peer countries, what justification would there be for our comparative abysmal performance? In any case governance or management is all about problem solving, whether it is preventive or curative and inadequacy of resources in organizations and countries has always been the norm rather than the exception lest life and living be reduced to sheer routinism.

14. FUNDING no doubt constitutes a serious challenge to educational development in Nigeria especially tertiary education which is capital
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