



VICE-CHANCELLOR'S CONVOCATION SPEECH

PROTOCOL

A. BACKGROUND

1. With delight and gratitude to Almighty Allah, I extend a warm welcome to our distinguished guests, parents, guardians, and graduating students to the inaugural and combined Convocation ceremonies of Summit University, Offa (SUN, Offa), Kwara State, where we shine like the Sun.
2. I am very grateful and humbled by the presence of many high-profile personalities gathered here today to celebrate and rejoice with us on this historic and auspicious occasion.
3. I would also like to particularly acknowledge the presence of the Proprietor of the University, Ansar-Ud-Deen Society of Nigeria under the presidency of Alhaji (Dr.) Aare Abdul Rafiu Ademola Sanni, whose support and understanding have been tremendous.
4. I wish to express my appreciation to members of the Governing Council for their inspirational support and quality leadership from which the University has immensely benefited. Members of the Board of Trustees are equally recognized and appreciated.
5. I especially salute and recognize our royal fathers, especially Kabiyesi, Oba Mufutau Gbadosi Esuwoye II, the Olofa of Offa, for his unwavering and constant support to the University.
6. I extend a big thank you to all our guests, parents, guardians, and friends of Summit University, Offa who are gathered here today from far and near to celebrate with us and share the joy of our Maiden and combined Convocation.
7. I must also acknowledge the great work of the pioneer Vice-Chancellor, Professor H. O. B. Oloyede, who worked assiduously in putting a solid foundation for the University upon which we are building. I also commend and appreciate Professor M. L. Nassar, who acted briefly as the Vice-Chancellor and ensured that the tempo of evolution was sustained.
8. At this juncture, let me equally appreciate the historic contributions by several individuals and groups to the implementation of the take-off projects of this institution. The past and present national presidents of Ansar-Ud-Deen Society, our Proprietor, the Board of Trustees, and the Governing Council, all stand out in this regard. Their spectacular contributions will remain as points of reference in the history of this university forever.
9. I wish to appreciate all our benefactors who, at one time or another, generously contributed buildings, equipment, mowers, sets of computers, and other items for the smooth take-off of the University.

10. Let me also seize this unique opportunity to register the management's profound appreciation to our beloved parents for their wonderful support and understanding, even in the face of the present economic reality.
11. I wish to specially recognize and congratulate Alhaji (Dr.) Sulaiman Adebola Adegunwa OFR for accepting to offer his services, experience, and support as the pioneer Chancellor of this University, fully aware of the daunting challenges & needs of a budding institution such as this. May Allah SWT strengthen him and endow him with his enduring favours in his new role as the Chancellor of this promising institution.
12. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to our highly respected and erudite keynote speaker, Prof. Toyin Falola, and the convocation lecturer, Prof. Babagana Umara Zulum, the Executive Governor of Borno State, for honouring us with their presence and impactful presentations.

B. OUR EVOLUTION AND ACHIEVEMENTS SINCE INCEPTION

13. Kindly let me provide you with our story and achievements from inception till date. I will be presenting these under various subsections and yet will not bore you with too many details.
14. Summit University, Offa, Nigeria was founded by the Ansar-Ud-Deen Society of Nigeria (ADSN), a prominent Islamic-faith based organisation, with the noble objective of providing high-quality tertiary education to all Nigerians, regardless of religious beliefs, ethnicity, gender or creed. The society is 100 years old this year. Happy centenary celebration to the ADSN family.
15. The establishment of the University aimed to foster a holistic approach to education, emphasising not only knowledge and skills but also the inclusion of moral and ethical values.
16. This vision reflects the institution's commitment to producing graduates who can stand on their own, become job creators, and are prepared for gainful employment under our "Industry-Ready Graduates" philosophy. In addition, these graduates are expected to remain God-fearing individuals, in spite of prevailing vices in our society.
17. We started with two faculties and, since the commencement of academic activities on the 6th of March 2017, we have consistently achieved academic excellence.
18. Yesterday, December 8th 2023, we witnessed the investiture of the first Chancellor of the University, with the award of honorary doctorate degrees to deserving Nigerians. Today, we are witnessing the maiden and combined convocation of the University. Alhamdulillah Rabbil Alamin for this.
19. Thus, today, we are celebrating the convocation of students from four different academic sessions namely 2019/2020, 2020/2021, 2021/2022, and 2022/2023 academic sessions.

C. OUR ACADEMIC ENDEAVORS AT SUN, OFFA

20. Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, I am pleased to inform this esteemed gathering that the University has maintained a seamless academic calendar since its inception. Even during the outbreak of the COVID-19 epidemic in 2020, the University coped admirably well through the adoption of online lectures and distance learning modes.
21. Since assuming the role of the second substantive Vice-Chancellor of this University, I, along with my team, have made a catalytic impact on the lives of our students, preparing them to face potential challenges. We are committed to the pursuit of academic excellence, research innovation, invention, and enhancing the quality of life in our society.
22. We have observed outstanding performances from our students in various competitions and within their respective studies. The exceptional achievements of many of our students are closely linked to a tradition of rewarding academic excellence established by the University.
23. The University introduced and cultivated a culture of acknowledging students' contributions to the development of the institution. These groups of students are openly and generously celebrated at special events organized by the University.
24. We have consistently supported the personal and self-learning development of each student, sponsoring them to attend national, regional international conferences and workshops while pursuing their first degree with us.
25. In achieving our goal of producing industry-fitted and industry-ready graduates, the University has introduced seven compulsory skills, integrating and mainstreaming them into our curriculum.
26. The newly introduced skills are: Financial Literacy, Clean and Renewable Energy, Family and Leadership, Artificial Intelligence, and ICT, Acadopreneurship, History, Heritage, and Storytelling, as well as Islam and Global Citizenship. all these have been successfully integrated into the curricula of our University, thus enhancing the educational experience for our students.
27. The university has also invested in recruiting renowned faculty members and organizing training programmes for continuous learning and capacity development.

D. STUDENT-CENTERED LEARNING APPROACH

28. The University is dedicated to the holistic wellness and success of the institution's students, alumni, and stakeholders. Since inception, the University has provided comprehensive support and guidance to all members of the University community.
29. The University, through the Student Support Unit has been highly responsive to various requests from Summit University alumni. Notably, the unit has actively assisted graduates seeking admission for further studies by providing essential information and attestation letters. It is worth highlighting that numerous alumni have successfully gained admission to pursue their desired courses in foreign universities while some have been supported to gain employment nationally.
30. The University management is steadfast in its commitment to a student-centred approach. The establishment of various platforms has enabled indigent yet promising students to participate in numerous scholarship programmes. As a result, deserving students from Summit University have consistently been awarded scholarships. This reflects the university's dedication to supporting students in their academic pursuits and fostering an environment conducive to their overall success.
31. We have put in place several disciplinary measures which are articulated in the student handbook to inculcate high moral values in our students. We are also taking very proactive steps in enforcing dress codes among staff and students. Provocative dressings are not allowed. Lateness to meetings, engagements, lectures and other activities by any staff or students are seriously frowned upon.
32. The University has no tolerance for anti-social behaviour and other misdemeanours, such as cultism, sexual harassment, theft, immoral dressing, drug abuse, drunkenness, prostitution and others.

E. OUR RESEARCH FOCUS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

33. We, at SUN Offa envision evolving into a world-class Research-Intensive University that plays a pivotal role in solving societal developmental challenges. Hence, we focus on developing innovations and inventions that will drive the way we live in our community, defend our nation, and work on a daily basis.
34. Recognizing the crucial role of universities in addressing policy priorities and fostering innovation, SUN, Offa, is committed to enhancing its research capabilities, infrastructure, collaborations, and talent.
35. The primary research focus at SUN, Offa, revolves around Emerging Technologies such as artificial intelligence, robotics, clean energy and drone technology. The aim is to explore the applications of these technologies and their societal impacts, with a particular emphasis on sustainable development, public health, cultural preservation, and social and economic justice.

36. On our part, we aim to address the need to reduce reliance on the Proprietor for funding in the shortest time possible, as other legitimate means are being explored to generate funds for the University. We have already made steady progress by aggressively seeking external grants and financial support from national and international agencies.
37. The present management team has continued to strengthen its efforts to raise funds from research grants. Thus, within the last couple of months, we have attracted international research funding opportunities to the University, and we are also actively participating in other funded research projects in conjunction with our numerous industry, government, community, and academic partners across the world.
38. In pursuit of this research agenda, SUN, Offa, has secured international research grants, with a notable project titled "Artificial Intelligence for Females in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (AI4FS)," funded by the Royal Academy of Engineering (RAENG), United Kingdom.
39. Furthermore, the university also secured another research grant titled "Artificial Intelligence for Women in Aquaculture (AI4WA)" project, funded by Gender and Responsible Artificial Intelligence (GRAIN).
40. The University recently won two other international research grants, and we are also actively participating in the European Union-funded project in collaboration with the Federal University of Technology, Minna, Nigeria, Manchester Metropolitan University, UK and other 18 organisations; Artificial Intelligence for Women in Agriculture (AI4WIA), with Kwara State University, Malete, Kwara State just to mention but a few.
41. All these achievements have undoubtedly earned the University recognition and accolades from funding agencies. We have set the necessary machinery in motion to encourage our staff to be actively involved in research of immense benefit to the promotion of academic excellence and development.

F. Capacity Development and Collaborations

42. Summit University, Offa, Kwara State, thrives on research and innovations designed to solve societal problems. This explains why it has been very active in organizing training workshops, webinars, lectures, etc., for staff, students, and the general public.
43. Within the last few months, we have organized over 100 different workshops and capacity development activities for members of staff, students, and our communities.
44. We are ready to be part of the narrative of the present Government drive to tap into the endless possibilities of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Technology.
45. In conjunction with our partners across the country, we have organized training along the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) technologies, which include Artificial

Intelligence, Drone Building and Piloting, Printed Circuit Board (PCB) production, just to mention but a few.

46. In addition to 4IR technology, we have also organized special events on Governance, Politics, and International Relations. We engaged in capacity development and mass mobilization activities towards the successful last general election in the country.
47. Since the inception of the University, we have always emphasized the entrepreneurial skill inherent in all the disciplines to enrich teaching, learning, and research. The University can boast of an entrepreneurial centre where different entrepreneurial skills are acquired.
48. We have also mainstreamed Acadopreneurship into the curriculum at Summit University, Offa. AcadoPreneurship simply means turning academic ideas into businesses. This enables our students to transform their academic ideas into business ventures and startups.

G. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENTS AND COLLABORATION

49. In addition to its research endeavours, SUN, Offa, is committed to community engagement and development. The university actively collaborates with stakeholders, including government, academia, industry, and the local community, exemplified by initiatives like the Offa Talent Pool and engagement with Ansar-Ud-Deen Youth Association, ADSN Colleges and Schools and traditional rulers.
50. In collaboration with One Innovation Hub, Offa and MOMAS Metering School, Lagos, we will be co-managing the largest Printed Circuit Board (PCB) manufacturing plant in Nigeria within the next few weeks.
51. This endeavor is poised to have a significant impact on the nation, providing both direct and indirect employment opportunities and serving as the essential platform for commercializing our innovations. It is worth noting that this will be the first and largest PCB plant in Nigeria.
52. The University is also part of the KU8 Consortium in Nigeria chaired by the Present Vice-Chancellor, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Prof. Abdulwahaba Egbewole. The KU8 consortium is a collaborative effort of the eight (8) universities in Kwara State and has been collaborating in seeing to the realization of the focus and vision of its members.

53. Let me also mention that, at Summit University, Offa, we presently leverage social media platforms to connect with our stakeholders, showcasing achievements, promoting events, and engaging our audience. As a testament to this, the Executive Governor of Kwara State, Gov. Abdurazaq Abdulrahman, has commended our efforts along this line in one of his numerous speeches.

H. ENERGY TRANSITION ON CAMPUS

54. The removal of petrol subsidies by the current government has coincided with the University's transition towards green energy. At present, we are reliant on the mains grid, which suffers from frequent load shedding by the distribution company, resulting in unreliable power supply.
55. The distribution grid serving SUN Offa operates at 11 KV line and is supported by a 500 KVA distribution transformer. However, due to the irregular supply, the peak energy demand far exceeds the peak supply, leaving us with a deficit even during periods of supply.
56. To address these energy challenges, the University is actively exploring green energy solutions and strategies for increased self-sustainability. This includes implementing renewable energy sources such as solar power and exploring energy-efficient practices across campus. The university's commitment to sustainability is evident through solar installations, energy-efficient practices, and continuous efforts to reduce its carbon footprint.
57. By transitioning to green energy and reducing dependence on the main grid, the University aims to mitigate the impact of unreliable power supply and decrease the deficit between energy demand and supply. These efforts align with the broader goal of embracing sustainable practices, reducing the University's carbon footprint, and decreasing operational expenditure.
58. Thus, I am happy to inform us that we are gradually transitioning from fossil fuel-based energy generation systems on our campus to a clean and renewable energy system.
59. Efforts are underway to establish a solar farm and a clean energy mini-grid for the provision of electricity on campus and for the community. For the past two years, we have been seeking research grants, investments and donations to support this initiative. We are open to collaborating with interested individuals or corporate organizations to establish this very soon.
60. In line with this, we are actively training our students with the skills needed for generating clean and renewable energy. To achieve this, we have introduced and mainstreamed clean and renewable energy generation into our curriculum for all students.

I. Future Plans

61. We have set all machinery in motion with the active support of the Proprietor, Board of Trustees, and the Governing Council to create more Colleges and programmes, including the commencement of Postgraduate studies. We are ready to provide more access to quality education with moral in the country.
62. In providing access to quality education laced with morals, we shall also be supporting our research, academic expansion, and the increase in students' enrolment. We are introducing two new faculties (Colleges) and programmes, aligning with the demands of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.
63. The new faculties are College of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Engineering and the College of Innovation and Computing Technology, while the new postgraduate programmes are Computer Science, Mass Communication, Business Administration, and Accounting.
64. The university has plans to establish the campus radio station and embed practical training in the timetable of Mass Communication students.
65. The management and the Council unanimously expressed the vision of becoming self-sustaining by exploring mechanisms that involve the transfer of academic knowledge to business. Currently, we are undertaking the following initiatives:
66. **Campus e-Rail System:** We are in the process of creating a campus rail system inspired by the concept of electric tricycles. The initial model is being constructed within the university premises and will be first unveiled as an e-Tricycle before being converted into an e-Train for student mobility on campus.
67. **Products for the Market Mantra:** In line with the self-sustainability goals, the management is exploring the production of prayer mats that incorporate an intelligent Qiblah finder, providing convenience and enhanced functionality for users.
68. **Cashew Plantation:** In addition, the University is in the process of establishing a large Cashew Plantation. The Cashew plantation will witness the use of Digital Technology for its operation and commercialize some of the developed or deployed technology in the plantation.

J. CONCLUSION

69. Let me heartily and sincerely congratulate all the graduates for the successful completion of their programmes at this recognized citadel of learning. We are very proud of your achievements today and identify with your aspirations. No doubt, you came, you saw, and conquered as you burned the proverbial midnight candle, and with unwavering determination, you have achieved the sweet success we are all celebrating today.
70. I admonish you to always remain good and worthy ambassadors of Summit University, Offa, as you go into the world. I have no iota of doubt that, with the type of teaching

and other training you have been exposed to in this University, you will excel wherever you may find yourselves in the future. I challenge you to go into the world and shine like the Sun in line with the University's motto and cherished values.

71. I must not forget to thank my highly dynamic management team. I also thank members of the expanded Senate and all members of staff for their sacrifices, commitments, loyalty, and support throughout the period under review. Let me congratulate our proud parents and their wards on this joyous occasion. No doubt, it is a defining moment and landmark achievement.
72. In conclusion, SUN, Offa is on a trajectory to become a leading institution in innovation, research, and development, contributing significantly to societal advancement through its commitment to cutting-edge research, community engagement, and academic excellence.
73. I cannot end this speech without putting on record the tremendous assistance, donations and support of our corporate friends and associations. We thank you all for donating generously to help the University achieve its goals and core mandates of providing quality education.
74. We appreciate gentlemen of the press for being part of this historic occasion.
75. We thank Almighty Allah for His mercies and protection over us since the beginning of our journey till date. Once again, invited and distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, we thank you for coming and wish you all a safe journey back to your various destinations and