

1985 LECTURE SERIES ON THE UNIVERSITY STRUCTURE
AND ADMINISTRATION

THE ROLE OF THE ACADEMIC REGISTRY

1. In a similar lecture to the Administrative and Executive Staff in 1984 titled "The Work of the Academic Registry" I drew attention to Schedule 1, paragraph 5 of the Draft Act of the Federal University of Technology Owerri where statutory provision is made for the post of the Academic Registrar, among other Officers of the University. Sub-paragraph 5(2) provides that the Academic Registrar by virtue of his Office shall be Secretary to Senate, Congregation and Convocation. The schedule of duties for the Academic Office provides that the Academic Registrar shall be responsible to the Vice-Chancellor for the Administration of all Academic matters other than academic planning and development. I would therefore like to discuss the "Role of the Academic Registry" from the broad definition of duties as stated above.
2. Senate
 - 2.1 The 1979 Nigerian Constitution created a body called the 'Senate' consisting of elected members and charged with certain legislative functions: In the Universities, Senate is the highest body charged with the responsibility for all academic matters.
 - 2.2 The functions of Senate are listed in Sub-Section 6(1) of the 'Draft Decree' Sub-Section 6(1) specifically stated that "it shall be the general functions of Senate to organise and control the teaching by the University; the admission of students (where no other enactment provides to the contrary) and the discipline of the students, and to promote research at the University".
 - 2.3 Academic Regulations:
Sub-Section 6(4) empowers Senate to make regulations for the purpose of exercising any functions conferred on it. Therefore in

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exercise of the powers conferred on it by this provision, Senate has made a number of regulations on academic matters collectively referred to as the Academic Regulations. The regulations are reviewed from time to time as the need arises. The Academic Registry ensures that these regulations are fairly and firmly implemented.

2.4 Membership

The membership of Senate is presently as follows:

(i) Ex-Officio Members:

Vice-Chancellor (Chairman)

Deans of Schools

University Librarian

(ii) Directors of Programmes

(iii) Professors

(iv) Programme Co-ordinators

(v) Members elected by Congregation - Usually teachers whose number does not exceed one-third the number of non-elected members.

(vi) Outside members representing professional bodies

2.5 Committees (1984/85)

Many of the functions assigned to Senate are carried out through a network of Committees as follows:

(i) Academic Staff Appointments and Promotions Committee

(ii) Planning Committee

(iii) Admissions Committee

(iv) Business Committee

(v) Research Committee

*(vi) Senior Staff Training Committee

(vii) Estimates Committee

(viii) Library Committee

(ix) Student Welfare Committee

(x) Committee on Examinations

(xi) Committee on Industrial Attachments

*(xii) Computing Facilities Committee

(xiii) Board of Postgraduate School

*(xiv)

2.6 Each of the above Committee has its specific terms of reference. Some of the Committees take decisions on behalf of Senate. Others are purely deliberative. That means that their recommendations must first be submitted to Senate for consideration and approval before they are implemented. The Academic Registrar as Secretary to Senate ensures that all decisions of Senate are communicated to those affected. The Academic Registrar is a member of some of the Committees (*). He is 'in attendance' in others. The Academic Registry also provides Secretarial Service for a number of the above Committees.

2.7 Standing Orders

The procedure of Senate is regulated by its standing Order's.

3. Congregation

3.1 Membership:

Congregation consists of

- (a) top University functionaries together with
- (b) every member of the Administrative Staff who **holds** a degree of any University recognised by the Vice-Chancellor, not being an honorary degree.

3.2 Functions

The functions of Congregation are stipulated in Article 4, Sub-section 4(G) of the Draft Act of the University as follows:

"Congregation shall be entitled to express by resolution or otherwise its opinion on all matters affecting the interest and welfare of the University and shall have such other functions in addition to the function of electing two members of the Council, and members to Senate as may be provided by statute or regulations".

In order that Congregation may be well informed on matters affecting the interest and welfare of the University, the agenda of every meeting of Congregation includes a report by the

Vice-Chancellor. This affords members of Congregation the opportunity to contribute ideas and to seek clarification on issues of vital interest to the University. Presently Congregation is represented in Senate by five members and in Council by one member. Therefore Congregation is one of the avenues for the generality of Staff to participate in the governing structure of the University.

3.3 Standing Orders

The procedure of meeting of Congregation is regulated by its Standing Orders as provided in Sub-Section 4(5).

4. Convocation

4.1 Membership

When established, Convocation will consist of (a) Officers mentioned in Schedule 1 of the Draft Decree:

Deans of Schools

Directors of Institutes & Centres

University Librarian

Director of Administration

Academic Registrar

Dean of Student Affairs

Bursar

Director(s) of Planning

Director of Works

Director of Health Services

(b) all teachers within the meaning of the draft decree

(c) a person entitled to be registered as member of Convocation if

(i) he is a graduate of the Federal University of Technology, Owerri in cursu or

(ii) he is a graduate of the Federal University of Technology, Owerri honoris causa and

(iii) he applies for registration of his name and pays the prescribed fees.

There is provision for the maintenance of a Convocation register in a prescribed manner.

4.2 Functions:

Convocation, shall have such functions, in addition to functions of appointing a member of the Council. Thus Convocation will be one of the avenues of participation on the governing structure of the University by the alumni.

4.3 Standing Orders:

When established, Convocation will draw up Standing Orders to regulate its procedure.

5. General Academic Administration

5.1 Within the scope of General Academic Administration of the University, it is relevant to mention some support services provided by the Academic Registry as follows:

- (i) Admissions
- (ii) Student Records
- (iii) Examinations
- (iv) Secretaryship of Statutory bodies and Committees.

5.2 Admissions

The activities of the Admissions Office are briefly as follows:

- (i) Review of University Regulations of entry qualifications
- (ii) Admission procedure for undergraduates in collaboration with JAMB.
- (iii) Servicing of Admissions Committee - Recommendation of Candidates for admission takes account of merit, locality, educational disadvantage, federal character, female representation and foreign students.
- (iv) Checking credentials for matriculation (with the aid of micro-film print-out of WAEC (GCE) results.
- (v) Control and distribution of JAMB forms.
- (vi) Co-ordination of JMB Examination.

(vii) Liaison with academic units in evaluating transfer records of applicants seeking admission by transfer. Ensuring that forged transcripts are not submitted in support of admission by transfer by:

- (a) insisting that all transcripts are issued directly from the issuing institution and that they bear appropriate signatures;
- (b) contact the issuing institution if any irregularity is detected;
- (c) exercising special care in handling credentials from foreign countries because of high incidence of forgery.

Evaluation of previous academic work with degree requirements of the University is not easy. In carrying out this assignment, care is taken to ensure that students expelled from other Universities on grounds of misconduct are not accepted.

- (viii) Change of degree programmes
- (ix) Maintenance of appropriate admission statistics.
- (x) Response to initial enquiries about admission - requests for information and application forms and follow-up correspondence.

5.3 The Admissions Office has a major responsibility to ensure that admission objectives and procedures are developed and maintained. The question of ethical conduct is of paramount importance. Opportunities abound for unethical behaviour. The job, therefore, calls for personal integrity. Unless standards of good behaviour are maintained, serious harm could be done to the individual and to the image of the University.

6. Student Registration & Records

6.1 Certain groups activities are located in the Records Section of the Academic Registry. These are registration, grade reporting, and recording. The services provided are:

- (i) Maintaining and updating students record system.
- (ii) Student identification system including registration number in collaboration with the Chief Security Officer. The main purpose of a student identification system (usually a unique number) is to help in positive identification of students for record purposes. It also helps in identifying students with identical or similar names.
- (iii) Provision of transcript service. The transcript is a complete educational record of an institution and is an effective means of communicating educational information.
- (iv) Enrollment statistics as required by Federal and State Agencies.
- (v) Preparation of Matriculation register.
- (vi) Issuing Examination reports.
- (vii) Guidelines for registration. Registration in the broadest sense includes:
 - the development of a well balanced curriculum.
 - with classes distributed throughout the hours of the day and days of the week. This calls for a careful time-tabling technique especially as the plan Review points to the fact that Laboratories, equipment and other teaching facilities are inadequate.
 - academic advising.
 - collection of personal data
 - assignment of students to sections.
 - payment of fees.

The activities listed in 6.1(vii) above are shared with other Units both academic and administrative.

6.2 There are two distinct kinds of students records:

- (a) The official educational record which may be referred to as the academic record. This indicates work done in the University. Normally non-academic records are not included in the academic record.
- (b) Personal record - this is a record of the student's personal characteristics, secondary school background, aptitude and interests.

6.3 Student records provide a picture of their academic progress and achievements. The records of work are arranged in chronological sequence by Semester and Academic Session, with identifying academic unit prefix (Course Code), the Credit Unit, and grades earned for each Course, together with up-dated Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA). In the maintenance of these records certain security measures should be borne in mind as follows:

- (i) The method used to up-date or officially change recorded information on academic records, should be noted on the margin.
- (ii) Security of records includes protection from tampering, loss, unauthorized access and reproduction. Therefore, students' files are kept in locked storage especially outside office hours.
- (iii) Official academic records should under no circumstances leave the control of Records Office staff at any time.
- (iv) Statements of results and transcripts of official records should be properly certified with office rubber stamp and coloured (endorsing) ink.
- (v) Measures are taken to ensure that students have no access to their personal files.

- (vi) Identity (ID) Cards provide students with access to University facilities. To prevent their unauthorized use, careful attention must be paid to the method of issue, replacement and validation.
- (vii) If a student for reason ceases to be member of the University, he is required to surrender his ID card.

7. Examinations

The following activities are handled by the Examinations Section:

- (i) Organisation of Semester Examinations (in co-operation with Schools).
- (ii) Review of examination scripts.
- (iii) Preparation of lecture schedules in co-operation with Schools.
- (iv) Computation of examination results and follow-up action.
- (v) Withdrawals - including those for academic reasons.
- (vi) Examination time-tabling.
- (vii) Enforcement of academic regulations.
- (viii) (a) Certification - the certification of graduates is one of the most important responsibilities of the Academic Registry. This involves careful checking of records to ensure that the student has fulfilled all academic requirements. Usually at the beginning of the final year a list of possible graduands is prepared and checked with academic units. Academic records of such possible graduands up to the penultimate year are also checked with Academic Units.
- (b) The certificates carry the official seal of the University as well as the signature of the Vice-Chancellor and the Academic Registrar. Before certificates are released the graduates should be cleared of all indebtedness to the University.

The above list excludes the physical handling of examination question papers.

8. Committee Work

The Academic Registry provides secretarial service to the following:

8.1 Statutory Bodies

- (a) Senate
- (b) Congregation
- (c) Convocation (yet to be established).

8.2 Committees

- (a) Admissions Committee
- (b) Board of Postgraduate School
- (c) Research Committee
- (d) Business Committee of Senate
- (e) Senate Committee on Examinations
- (f) Computing Facilities Committee
- (g) Committee on Industrial Attachments: SLWOB
- (h) Ceremonials Committee
- (i) Honorary Degrees Committee
- (j) Committee on University Lecture Series

The servicing of the above bodies and Committees involve preparation of agenda papers for meetings, recording of minutes, conducting correspondence, and follow-up action.

9. Conclusion

The objectives of the University include

- (i) Teaching and Learning
- (ii) Production of skilled manpower
- (iii) Research
- (iv) Public Service

There are well recognized forms of authority in academic system. One distinctive kind of authority is the one possessed by academic staff because of their expertise in certain disciplines. Possession of such authority enables them to supervise the work of students in various ways. Another kind of authority, the so called 'collegiate rule' is the one exercised by such statutory bodies like Senate, Congregation, Convocation, and School Boards. In these bodies, a number of people with full membership rights come together to take decisions on very vital issues.

The objectives of the University can be achieved through the judicious exercise of the two kinds of authority. The staff of the Academic Registry are actively involved in efforts aimed at realising these objective.

This is done through

- (a) Interaction and Consultation with individual members of staff and Heads of Units
- (b) Providing Secretarial support for the various Statutory Bodies and Committees at which important decisions are taken.

G. O. EMEROLE
Academic Registrar

