The contribution of R & D to the Nigerian economy and the state of science and technology in Nigeria

B R I E F  H I S T O R Y  O F  F U T O
& her Achievements

T he Federal University of Technology, Owerri was established in October 1980 by the Federal Government under the regime of President Shehu Shagari, with a definite mission to operate practical and result oriented programmes and training geared towards transforming the nation's economy with a sound technological base.

A Governing Council headed by the first Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of Council, His Royal Highness, Chukwumela Nnam Obi II, Oba (Eze Ogba) of Ogbaland was appointed. The Federal Government also appointed the first Vice-Chancellor, Professor Umaru Dechi Gomwalk, and the first Chancellor Dr. F.O Esiri, OFR, MBE.

After one year of careful planning carried out with the assistance of an interim planning committee and several advisers from overseas, and the recruitment of key staff, the University opened its doors and admitted its first set of students in October 1981. A formal opening ceremony was held in January 1982, with the then Vice-President, Dr. Alex Ekwueme representing the Visitor.

In 1984, The Federal Government appointed a new Governing Council for the University with Chief Okon W. Inyang as Pro-Chancellor and Chairman. His Royal Majesty, Justice Ambrose Ezeolla Alugga, Mingi IX, the Amayanabo of Nembe was also appointed as the University's Second Chancellor. The Third Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of Council, Alhaji Suleiman Liman was appointed in 1986 and was succeeded in 1990 by His Royal Highness, Alhaji Sabi Idris, the Emir of Gwanara, who served as Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of the fourth and fifth Governing Councils.

Professor Chiewyite Ejike served as Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of the sixth Governing Council from 1997 to 1999 and was succeeded by Dr. Theo Chike Osanakpo, SAN who was appointed in April 2000 and served as Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of the seventh Governing Council up till May 2004.

The pioneer Vice-Chancellor, Prof. U. D. Gomwalk was succeeded by Professor Amagh Nduka (1987-1991) and from October, 1991 to January, 1992, the University was administered by an Acting Vice-Chancellor, Prof Udadigwu B.C.O. Eijke. The third substantive Vice-Chancellor was Engr. Professor Chuka O. G. Obah who took the saddle from January, 1992 to December 30, 1999. Prof. Charles C. Namere acted as Vice-Chancellor from December, 1999 to August 7, 2000 when Professor Jude E. Njoku was appointed the fourth substantive Vice-Chancellor on August 7, 2000. He worked tirelessly to lift the structural and socio-political face of FUTO until he was replaced in 2004 by Engr. Prof B.A. Nwachukwu who acted as Vice-Chancellor until August, 2006 when the incumbent, amiable Prof. Celestine O.E. Onwuiri took the reins of office.

His Royal Majesty, Dr. Shekarau Angu Masa-Ibi CON, the Aku Uka of Wukari was appointed the University's third Chancellor in July 2001.

The University operated on a temporary site, the Lake Nwaebere campus, up till 1992/93 session when it relocated to its permanent site situated about 25 kilometers south of Owerri metropolis.

The Federal University of Technology, Owerri has matured in many respects. From its first student enrolment of 225 in 1981, it has grown in student population to over 12,000 students by 2003/2004 session. The University has matriculated 24 sets of students and graduated 18 sets of graduands. At the moment, the University offers first degree programmes in five schools split into 33 Departments. The fifth undergraduate school namely, School of Health Technology, comprising five departments admitted its first set of students in the 2003/2004 academic year.

Outstanding also in its academic development was the establishment of a School of Postgraduate Studies and the conferment of its own higher degrees.

FUTO graduates have proven their mettle in industry and are in high demand especially in the oil and gas sector, and in critical sectors of the Nigerian economy. The University is being positioned to ensure future growth and to take its place as one of the outstanding institutions of excellence in the world.