Promissory Notes, Deliverables and Goods in the Store

In the upcoming deanship elections there are three kinds of items you are going to get: They are Promissory Notes, Deliverables and Goods in the store. It is important to note the differences between these and be clear that you do not get supplied with pirated products. If you are promised what has already been delivered to you, then you must be careful because it may be a case of piracy!

# First where were we?

Our faculty has name and age. It is a well-recognized brand. Engineering has been taught here for half a century. To some of us, this place is a cradle and a home. We came here at a tender age and we are growing old here.

We have been in a Faculty basking in old glory where the neglect of several decades have got into reduction of our productivity to the point that we don’t even sometimes see them! How else will you talk about a Mechanical Engineering Department with both a supersonic and a subsonic Wind Tunnel that ostensibly aged; yet when you looked closely, you discovered were fired on less than 50 occasions yet have been abandoned for twenty years or more! You look closer, and you find Steam engine powered turbines that come with experiments on insulation and steam, quality but engineers have graduated first class over the years with little exposure to it simply because the boiler and super heater are not firing and laced with gangue! The other old laboratories – especially in those departments that have not had stability at the headship level for a number of years – were essentially in the same states!

Or take either room 106, 115 or 206. These were airconditioned Drawing Offices when I was an undergraduate here back in the 70’s. They turned into ghost classrooms just like in Figures 1-3. The roofs have leaked for at least 10 years without repair. The major labs first had their original lighting systems corroded by water seepage through water percolation resulting from felting that had failed through lack of replacement over the years.

LG Lab brought 50 million Naira of renewal to one lab during the deanship of Professor MA Salau. As the direct Officer of the University in Charge of this project, I wrote the proposal and specification of the original equipment and set up the management structure that utilized our bright students who took turns to install the equipment in these labs some of whom then came back into full time employment where they are now some of the most valued technical staff of the university.

We did much more than simply renovate offices and labs; we created a new paradigm in the way laboratories can be run. The Department of Systems Engineering is now using this methods in our other laboratories as we speak.

Furthermore, five of these students, under my deanship, competed for and did the University of Lagos proud when in 2013, they competed with other university students like themselves all over the world and won the Google International Prize with attached funds totaling more than sixty thousand dollars. They were Africa’s best.

When we talk about fixing the infrastructure and the teaching and learning environment, we are not simply talking about giving **you promissory notes**; neither are we telling you what some has done or has failed to do. Instead, we are telling you about innovation, industry and delivery that you can measure and see! Beyond debate! The powers behind the throne were and remain our ambassadors, our students that we have taught with these facilities and are now the technical giants to be reckoned with in our environment! Olowosulu, for example, is the only Mathematica Certified Professional in the University of Lagos; we taught him how to program here and he is what he is today because of the innovation that LG Design Lab represents.

# Alumni Relations

One of the areas we have concentrated upon is our relationship with Engineering Alumni. The 72 Set have been great and a leader in many ways. There are three projects they planned for this year that have had to be postponed because of the break in the last session:

These include: Wireless Internet provision, Distinguished Lecture Series. We are talking about a new timetable for these.

I am meeting with the Mechanical 84 Set this week and they already have a specific project they want to discuss with us.

Apart from attending specific meetings and social programs organized by these sets, we have also created a web site for the university of Lagos alumni.

# Faculty Journal

The truth about the journal is that the following things have happened in the 18 months after the Editorial Board led by Professor Mowete took leadership:

1. The Journal became an online journal reachable at [www.e-jer.com](http://www.e-jer.com). We have other URLs that are merged with this name such as e-jer.co, e-jer.org and e-jer.net in order to make it easy to reach the journal.
2. We have three issues in the archives and the committee is presently working on uploading the fourth.
3. Hard copies are printed AFTER the soft copies are properly uploaded to ensure fidelity between the two versions.
4. The editing of the journal is being handled professionally to reduce the error level based on the fact that the previous versions were handled by the typist and the printers. As at now, the quality of typesetting is professional grade as can be verified by simple comparison between the old and the new.
5. The editorship of the journal is taken out of the Dean’s office unlike what happened before when the Dean actually took over the job of the editor and appointed reviewers directly. This is not sustainable and transferable. A separation of the offices is needed to make the journal more stable and consistent.

It is curious to hear a former editor of the journal write about “faculty journal (hard copy and online) will be restored with enhanced quality” Why is it that when the journals were not online, you did not bring them online. Now that they are online, you want to restore them online? If you resigned to run the University Journal, is that journal, after 18 months of your effort, now on the web? The answer is no! If you did not put the Faculty Journal on the web when you were editor; You did not put the university journal on the web as editor; Why do you think it a wise campaign issue to raise the fate of the faculty journal at this time?

# Faculty-Industry Partnership

Faculty industry partnership is one of the main distinctions of the present administration of the faculty. We reached out to Alumni and Friends of the Faculty in Industry. From Siemens Corporation we got Solid Modelling package Solid Edge which we instructed several sets of students in. I was personally in the leading edge of the LG Design Laboratory as chairman of the committee that oversaw and ran the lab under Professor Salau’s deanship. In the years that followed, our innovative method of running, maintaining and cleaning the lab made us look good in the eyes of the donors. We were thus able to persuade the same donors to give us another lab in an area of need.

To expatiate on this, note that the Heat and thermodynamics laboratory of Mechanical Engineering including its Refrigeration and Airconditioning labs had NO WORKING equipment when we took over. We resuscitated the Boilers and Superheaters, the Subsonic and Supersonic Wind Tunnels and other smaller equipment. All funds we have in the department were exhausted without making significant impact. With LG, we are injecting into the same facilities more than 30 million Naira as we speak. If you add that to the nearly 50 million LG previously injected, it is clear that Industry partnership is the best way to go!

Let me say two things about industry partnership:

1. You do not need to be a dean to cultivate industry. You start by using your personal contacts and those of your friends.
2. Industry funding is a slow process. A candidate that can “transform the Faculty in three months” cannot do anything more than cherry picking. Is it better to spend one million on toilet renovation that fixing boilers and Wind tunnels? Of course the former is more visible! A cherry picker will not choose the latter! We have started negotiating the LG Airconditioning Training lab for more than 28 months. In fact, the equipment we need were produced in Korea two months ago. We only got the Form M from the CBN to ship them yesterday after the concerted efforts of the dean’s office and the University of Lagos Bursary Department!
The impatient dean will bring no serious industry projects. As at the time of the initial LG project, there were two other projects that never saw the light of day: 1. The Schenider’s Control Lab project, 2. The Exxon Mobil under-sea welding project. Those who do not understand the cycle time and the nature of Industry negotiations will not help the faculty.

The way to involve industry is to have several projects we are pursuing at the same time. That is what we are doing. Let me tell you about three of the other projects that are still on course:

1. We are discussing with Westminster Dredging on a co-location agreement to resuscitate the Hydraulics laboratory. They have asked us for what we need but we replied that we would prefer co-location. If they have a lab on campus that they actually use and our lecturers and students can have practical experience in coastal modelling, we will be better able to facilitate research in coastal works that the modelling lab was set up initially.
2. The Ericsson Communication Certification project is on course. The previous model of installing equipment here has not worked as those equipment became obsolete as soon as they were installed. Our meeting of last month led to an initial agreement on a change of paradigm that will allow our students to be trained on their clients live platforms while completing a certification program that we are now trying to agree on.
3. Aries Ingenieria Sistemas SA from Spain is trying to go into partnership with us on the testing of automotive parts here in Nigeria. They are interested in our engineers doing training in Spain so that when they are installing test beds in the country, we will have a joint team so that our own will constitute the local expertise for them.
4. NAPTIN Training for the power sector. This is a joint program between the faculty and the Government organ for training manpower for the power sector. Engineering Lecturers that are interested can have an opportunity to participate in lecturing and consulting in this huge market. This is being anchored by Professor F. Okafor. In course of this on-going project, we will receive more externally funded laboratories for electrical engineering including power simulators that our entire laboratory budget may not be able to buy.

Other projects have taken root or gotten fully installed under this Deanship: Delta-Afrik recently opened the CAD Design room in Civil & Environmental Engineering. FUGRO has been there for our Survey and Geoinformatics department with scholarships and other collaborations. Chemical Engineering is pressing on with the Exxon Mobil collaboration on a Testing Laboratory.

The principle of success in Industry partnership is patience and continuity. If you take an adversarial position that fears to acknowledge existing program, you are sentencing the faculty into relying on its own meagre resources that you can then use to beautify toilets!

The small successes we have had thus far came from the fact that the transition from Salau to this deanship was cordial and complementary. No projects were truncated either by ignorance or adversarial neglect.

# Toilets

It is ironic that toilets continue to be a problem for this faculty. The solution we have adopted and delivering on are long-lasting and will solve the problems with finality. Yes, we are breathing down the necks of cleaning staff to do their work in presenting the available resources in the best way they can. Yet truth is that the toilets are inadequate. That inadequacy came from two sources: 1. The population of the faculty has grown fourfold since my undergraduate days. 2. The number of available toilets have reduced by half. It is a thing of shame to me personally that drivers that come with their ogas here simply urinate around our parking lots. When we open our toilets, students from neighboring faculties whose toilets are closed come to use them. We have had battles preventing toilet equipment from being stolen.

In order to have a long term permanent solution, we altered the design of the next phase of our faculty extension building so that 40 toilets will be on the ground floor. This will add a total of over seventy in two tranches. The first tranche is coming next month with 16 publicly available toilets in the new building soon to be released to us. There are additional 8 toilets for HODs and Professors. The next phase will accommodate the remaining toilets.

After phase one next month, we will be in a position to completely renovate existing toilets one at a time because we will then be able to lock them up for the kind of time that will be required to essentially rebuild them. Anything less is window dressing as these facilities have been without renovation for more than 40 years and too many bypasses of the drainages have taken a toll.

Let it be clear now that the documents for the solution above are already available as the University has agreed with us on these major changes. Never again will a deanship candidate, in the faculty of engineering, talk about the cleaning of toilets. It is time we left that to Faculty Officers and other administrative staff.

# Education & Training Facilities

This deanship believes in the improvement of teaching and learning facilities. These begin with our Laboratories and our classrooms. However, it goes further than that! Here are our achievements:

First, we have continued the success of the original LG Design Laboratory. We have continued to renew, with faculty resources, the subscription to the original software for training. COMSOL Multiphysics, Mathematica are current. We have now, through another Industry collaboration, added ANSYS. Dr Bode Olakoyejo – a “Returnee” from South Africa has been empowered and charged with training graduate students and interested faculty members not only to use this modern technology, but to incorporate it into the teaching of engineering as a prelude to using them in research activities.

Second, the Airconditioning Training Academy supported by LG Electronics will be available for training in technical skills and may yet become our new paradigm in instilling a technical skills acquisition discipline into our undergraduates. While the co-located facility will be useful to Mechanical, Electrical and Systems Engineering programmes for the Airconditioning hardware needed to obviate our lack of adequate laboratory, such a facility can be used for off-season training that can be paid for by technicians, engineers and contractors in the building services industry. Organizing training in this way takes our minds away from the concentrating on Foundation sharing as we will be offering engineering-related training while some will be empowered to set up thriving consultancies in Engineering. Our own students can also receive LG Technical Certifications concurrently with their engineering degrees.

Third. With Ericcson, we are carrying the idea of co-location one step further. Due to the Obsolescence problem of communications equipment, we are reaching agreement of off-campus facilitation with the training selected students on Ericsson client facilities in addition to availability of industrial attachments and job placements for them in the communications industry.

Fourth. We received two NIMASSA equipped classrooms in the past two months. One in Systems and the other in Met&Mat Engineering. Both sit between 50 to 70 students and are part of the gains to the faculty of the NIMASA MOU with Unilag. One of the classrooms is fully furnished and can function fully as a computer laboratory to host smaller classes than the LG Design laboratory. We are extending the software systems available in LG to the facility.

Fifth. Delivery has been taken of the PTDF funded Chemical Engineering facility. We have also been able to secure funding for the landscaping of the same facility from the PTDF.

These projects, as I have mentioned earlier, do not exhaust all we have seen happen within the period of my deanship. In fact, some projects were started before we came in, it will also happen that others we have worked on will be consummated only after we have left office. What these teach us are at least two things:

1. Improving our teaching and research facilities is a joint effort – not just the dean. What the dean does in all of these is to be a trustworthy ambassador of the faculty that can truly represent our values, wishes and aspirations in the discussions with external bodies.
2. Continuity is important. It is necessary to ask would be- replacement of deans, how much involved they are in what is going on in the faculty so to ensure nothing gets wasted in adversarial discontinuity. This will definitely happen when an aspirant is promising to do what has already been done since sufficient information and expertise on what has happened is not known to him!

I want to mention here that we are also encouraging lecturers here to put theior coursenotes on the web. The university has been trying to facilitate this. I am pleased to inform you that some of our members are doing this very well as we speak. I have personally had my lecture notes and slides on the web for more than six years running. I had to pay for and maintain my own web pages and manage the data personally. With the adoption of Moddle by the university, this level individual effort will no longer be necessary.

I have been working with the Director of CITS to go through the last mile to make this a reality. That will happen when they purchase a sufficient number of switches to make the Intranet of the university work. As of now, there is little distinction between the Intranet and Internet services. When we achieve our goals, we will be able to deliver content to our members and students even when the university connection to the web is down. It is a good idea to train in Moddle now and the Faculty is poised to augment the ongoing training offered by the university.

# Welfare and the Development of Capacity

(Collect the actual number of new staff on training abroad)

We believe that the most important challenge facing the young academic is the environment being developed in such a way that he may be globally competitive. We are therefore in active promotion of the career of young staff in getting them to opportunities internationally. It is a thing of pride that Dr Mrs Gbenga Ilori of Electrical Engineering, for example is leaving in July for a Alexander von Humboldt Fellowship in Germany. A personal contact from me gave Dr Gbenga-Ilori an opening in Germany which eventually gave her this opportunity. She was then able to compete with several others and was an awardee for the current session. Apart from her personal research development and exposure, she is bringing equipment and further training the Department of Electrical and Electronics Engineering.

Several of our staff have won the PTDF, TETFUND as well as several Chinese scholarships. The opportunities continue to come as we are processing several staff development papers as we speak.

This is where the office of the dean comes in. We have been more firm as to the quality of people we employ at the entry level. Our previous problems came when we did not follow the university time honored traditions of attracting our top students to entry-level positions. We have now found a way to bring our best students into the entry level jobs and they are winning us honors. The latest is Miss Ogechi Onuoha who, last week, was awarded the NUC world scholarship that enables her to attend any of the top 25 best universities in the world for her PhD.

The best way to improve the welfare of staff is to give them opportunity to excel in their chosen professions. These people chose to teach engineering, we are offering them opportunity to become engineering consultants. We want to wean our people from the dead-end of struggling for small money shares at the end of the year. Look instead to NAPTIN, Ericsson ESAP Training, LG Airconditioning Academy, Energy Consulting, Partnerships with foreign contractors in Nigeria for money making and career boosting participation that will take add needed practical experience to your education, teaching and research. It is my desire that rather than looking to growing old in this university, it will become possible for a good engineering lecturer to look at early retirement to face consulting and engineering practice fully. This was the situation with those who taught me here and we must return to that stage. Let there be a choice. Of course Rice Sharing, no matter how we laugh about it, may be OK for the teeming illiterate electorate that gubernatorial candidates have to face, We should not allow that mentality to prevail in our environment. Where it exists, let us root it out!

# Wireless Internet & Internet Access to Journals

We have looked deeply at the issue of wireless internet in the time we have spent in this office. There is a company, supported by the Engineering Alumni 72 Set. They are ready to place wireless service in our faculty but our negotiations broke at the point of who pays what. Let me make it clear here, wireless internet is not going to come cheap. Our budget to provide for everyone is going to need about ten million Naira for installation and bandwidth payment in the first year for about 10G service per month.

We had the money and as dean, I personally proposed to go ahead to do this. HODs needed the same monies for other purposes in the departments and the funds could not be used for that. Please ask anyone promising you free internet service how much bandwidth is to be provided. How much will it cost? Where will the money come from? Is it just a proof of concept or a real reliable solution that will solve your problem?

Let us now leave fantasy and talk about the real solution to a real problem:

The Vice Chancellors that have been in office in the past eight years, the Librarians and the directors of CITS in the same time period have ALL had proposals and position papers from me on this connected issue. As a result of our efforts, the University of Lagos is about to get access to Science Direct and the other journal databases we dearly need for productivity and to be internationally competitive. This costs millions of dollars in subscriptions over a period of years. If you pay the required millions for the databases, and you don’t have the INTRANET bandwidth to access them, then you have just wasted your money! These two problems therefore have to be solved together.

The university normally transfers our funds for Internet to CITS. The solution for our Internet service on the long run has to come from there. Moreover, the databases we are talking about are passworded by the IP addresses of university computers. Provision of external services cannot be the solution for us on the long run. What then are we doing?

1. For over two years, we have provided wireless services for departments that want it. Each HOD is empowered to get wireless Internet for the Department office. This is a last line when all other connections has been lost. I am satisfied and pleased that I have even received advice from some HODs recently when better services were available from new entrants to the market.
2. We are at the neck of CITS to get the services commensurate to the funds taken from our vote to theirs yearly. The part of the bandwidth they receive reaching us and being used by us is too small. We are working to meter this and get our fair share. Any serious funds we have should be ploughed here to get improved service rather than creating a fresh infrastructure.
3. The present CITS director is from our faculty. We know the problems they have with their switches and the poor design of the existing network. I can assure you its is being worked on.
4. The university has no choice but to get this up as the tens of millions invested in Science Direct and other databases will be wasted unless the Intranet solution is done at the same time.