

The Debate Platform: A rejoinder in colour to

“FACULTY OF ENGINEERING DEANSHIP ELECTION 2014

PROVOKING POSITIVE CHANGE THROUGH TEAMWORK

VOTE FOR PROF. FALADE”

**Or Why,
for Continuity, Development and Growth,
Vote OAFAK for Dean.
Don't Settle for Promissory Notes.
Choose Experience and a Steady Hand.**

“I have decided to elaborate on our vision and mission, if elected as the Dean. It is our intention to add values to the faculty staff (Teaching and Non-teaching) and the faculty itself. We intend to achieve this through:

1. PARTICIPATORY ADMINISTRATION

“University system is run on Committee basis to ensure inputs from members of staff. We shall re-constitute existing non-functional Committees and constitute other relevant Committees. They will be made to be functional. We shall run open administration where everybody has a sense of belonging. It is important that everyone has access, not only to the Dean's office, but to the Dean.”

In the past two years, we have not changed the committees in place that we met. This in addition to the regular meetings of the Faculty Boards, Appointments and Promotions Committee, Research Committee, HODs and dean meetings, have given leadership to the faculty. The Journal of the Faculty has been removed from the Dean's office except for funding matters. The editor and his team take ALL editorial decisions. There is also an editorial board. With more stability and less rush, we will be able to properly remake committees for the faculty.

2. STAFF PROMOTION AND APPOINTMENT

“Staff promotion will be given top priority. Staff will be encouraged to work together to promote collaborative research which will enhance research capabilities of the researchers. Senior academic staff will be encouraged to provide guidance and mentoring to the junior staff to ensure that they don't lose focus and become stagnated and frustrated. Appointment of new staff in the departments will be pursued with vigor to reduce workload per staff so that there will be adequate time for research work.”

Appointments of new staff has been on overdrive in the past two years. We have had several interviews for appointments and promotions at the lower cadres and some of our senior positions are now advancing through the process at the University A&P. With the new FTE system of staff establishments, our programs have been adding staff effortlessly except two that have a problem of top heaviness. We have altered the distribution of the establishment successfully in these cases and there are no issues for staff responding to present advert. Furthermore, we have welcomed new staff at Professorial and other levels in the past two years. These, include staff from Western Europe who, when added to our trained staff returning from Europe, Malaysia, South Africa, and the Americas showed we have added no less than 15 staff in the past two years.

3. PH.D STAFF CANDIDATES AND ATTENDANCE AT CONFERENCES

“It is expected that Ph.D staff candidates should not spend more than 4 years to complete their works. The Chairman of the proposed faculty PG Committee would link up with all Ph.D staff candidates in the faculty with a view to ensuring that faculty provides appropriate intervention measures, where necessary, for the

candidates to complete their programmes in record time. There will be possibility of 6 months visits to overseas universities to carryout experimental aspects of their Ph.D works. The operation of PG Committee will also provide a platform for faculty members to interact through seminars/workshops with a view to developing multidisciplinary groups.

“Conferences provide avenues for researchers to have access to tacit knowledge of other researchers and to re-shape their research focus. Faculty conference will be mounted with active participation of academic staff. All quality papers presented at the conference will be further subjected to peer-review and published in special edition of Journal of Engineering Research. Academic staff will be encouraged to attend international conferences both within and outside Nigeria. **Active participation of faculty members in Unilag Research Conference and Fair will be encouraged through the payment of the registration fee by the Dean’s office.**”

There is NO application that has been rejected for conference attendance. There was a conference last year and every request by every staff to attend was granted both to help them participate and assist the success of the conference itself. And most lecturers applied and were supported. We are therefore justifiably proud that all lecturers who applied for local conferences, International conferences from August last year until this time of writing, have been supported. We have also implemented the additional funding that allowed grants up to N700,000.00 for some overseas destinations. These are already delivered goods NOT the promissory notes that are given in the talk here.

Talking about dissemination aspect of research findings, we have done very well in supporting that. Where this write up misses the point is that it is in the enabling environment that our staff struggle and suffer. That is the simple reason why we began with seeking Private Sector funding to first take care of the shortfall in the undergraduate environment. Once engineering students are not involved with practical sessions, there are no literate people to join research groups. Instead of focusing on the dissemination aspect, the present regime will vigorously seek to get more active laboratories that will be externally funded. The Energy Center, for example, under new management, is not only being asked to add laboratories that it will run for energy testing that can be used to teach in the faculty; in addition, it will be required to keep, on its payroll, lecturers and professors that are in the cognate areas as adjunct and associate staff so that their research synergy can lead to more results and achievements. This is extra income for the lecturers. **We have had this wrong thinking that research and PhDs can be given by arrangement. Each PhD student, by statue has a supervisory team. An intrusion of dean’s office into this process is more distracting than helpful.** It cannot be done otherwise. It is only possible in a sustainable way when there are proper facilities and enabling environment. It takes dedication and continuity to achieve this. Don’t vote for anyone who will truncate this drive.

4. RESEARCH

“The slogan for academic staff in the universities, especially Unilag is ‘publish or perish’.

In order to enhance our research capabilities, a capacity building workshop with an insight into effective way to present research proposals to access research grants, will be mounted for academic staff. University of Lagos provides research grants (minor and major) through Central Research Committee (CRC). As a member of that Committee, I am aware that the participation of our faculty members is at a low ebb. Staff will be encouraged to develop research proposals while Faculty Research Committee will meet regularly to process the proposal to Central Research Committee.”

5. REHABILITATION OF REST ROOMS AND CHANGING ROOMS

“The deplorable faculty rest rooms and changing rooms will be given qualitative improvement via rehabilitation and ensuring regular flow of water, cleaning as well as provision of consumables for their effective utilization. Our young lecturers and those who stay far from the campus should be able to use the changing rooms at all times. At the moment, the changing rooms are locked up.”

Notice here that the Changing Rooms are locked for the use of staff. Those who need it have access to the keys. Furthermore, we have, already built, 24 new toilets installed in the new building. We have also modified the coming building to have 40 extra toilets as a result of our requesting and obtaining permission to change the design of the new building. The present Changing rooms are about to be pulled down! That is why the VC did not allow us to carry out further developments in the place. In fact, please read the web link: <http://oafak.com/2014/06/mechanical-84-set//> You will see that in addition to the facilities coming from the university on this ground, the 84 Mechanical Alumni have offered to build toilets and changing rooms. In addition to what we are getting from the new buildings!

6. PARKING AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

“The current parking arrangement in the faculty is cumbersome. Efforts will be made to optimize the available space with a view to increasing its capacity. We shall introduce the use of stickers by faculty members such that only faculty members will have access to the parking space.

“We shall ensure regular cleaning of our surrounding, cutting of grass and trimming of shrubs and adequate lighting of the environment.”

Parking is a problem we have already discovered and are actually solving. Look at the Faculty of Engineering as it is today, you will see that a 50-car parking lot falls far short of the needs of its academic staff and others with cars. The new construction taking place show that the Center of gravity of the faculty is shifting to the back. The new buildings to be delivered in August, The complementing buildings, that the VC assures us are soon to be awarded by TETFund grants, and the twin of the Julius Berger Lecture theatre which is already awarded for construction all demonstrate clearly that what we need is another parking lot across the road from the JB Lecture theatre. Works department have already started tipping sand there as the Vice chancellor has approved our use of that lot. It is a work in progress. There are no tallies you can issue to increase the space we have right now.

7. DEVELOPMENTAL PROJECTS IN THE FACULTY AND FACULTY/INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIP

“Implementation of developmental projects in the faculty is a welcome development as they contribute to human development. These projects are in three categories – (i) federal government funded (ii) university funded (IGR) and (iii) donors funded (individuals/corporates). Some of the projects in categories (iii) come from individuals/corporates bodies who offer to provide such facilities as their contributions to the development of education in Nigeria. The facilities are named after the donors. Currently, I am aware, such projects run into billions of Naira in our University. Some have been completed and others are on-going. They can be solicited for or unsolicited. The donations are not made to individuals but University/Faculty/Department so they do not end with individuals. We don’t believe that the ‘supervision’ of such facilities should be compromised with staff welfare and pursuit of academic excellence. We shall promote faculty-in-industry and industry-in-faculty relationships”

It is important to note here that this writer finally agrees that we have done the correct thing in “implementing development projects”. The truth, however, is that “implementing” is the easy part. You have to first convince business people to fund projects that you propose to them. This requires ingredients that you really do not need to be a dean before you acquire. It is dangerous to trust someone who says “[Make me dean, I will implement development projects](#)”. Projects come from trust built over the years by showing people you have ideas that can make them proud to be associated with you. You need to begin this BEFORE you are dean! Private sector projects, unlike Government projects are the results of decisions made shrewd business people. We also had to use creative ways to run the LG Design Lab, pay for software and maintain equipment before we could convince the same company to continue investing here! We have had donors in the past (Julius Berger, Nigerdock, Ericsson etc.) who gave once and did not return. What we want to institute is a regime where donors continue to give to us because we have the ideas that will let them see that we can be trusted not only to handle their gifts, but that we will produce results for them and they can use us for publicity. Two of the most recent achievements of the previous gift of LG Lab as an example, are the Google International Competition where a team made up of our proctors in the LG Design Lab came first in the whole of AFRICA and the recent Shell Eco Marathon where, again, a team also made up of the LG lab proctors also participated. It is therefore no surprise to anyone why this company wants to deal with us.

Add this fact to the matter of creatively separating the cleaning of the LG Lab from the regular civil-service cleaning regime of the university, you will see that the donors are able to trust that we can maintain any other gift we get from them. That we are starting installing the LG funded Airconditioning Academy at this point (to be launched in September, 2014) is no surprise. It has taken three years of negotiation, trust building and result oriented method of seeking funding to achieve these. For other ongoing projects and those in the pipeline, refer to the web link <http://oafak.com/2014/06/promissory-notes-or-goods-delivered/>

8. FACULTY JOURNAL

(i) Regular Publication

We shall restore regular publication of faculty journal (hardcopy and on-line) with enhanced quality.

The faculty journal is presently being printed in hard copy and online. Quality publishing with Internet is a 21st century skill that has to be learned. It is not a coincidence that some have had more than six years in this and have not succeeded is a single web-published journal. The claim to restore what you have not been able to do in six years of opportunity cannot be taken seriously by anyone acquainted with the facts. The full facts are at this link: <http://oafak.com/2014/06/faculty-journal/>

(ii) Matters Arising

Ordinarily, I would not have joined issues with the current Dean on his performance concerning faculty journal. Faculty members should be the arbiters; however, he mentioned my name in the coloured flyers that he circulated. So for record purpose, I provide a brief explanation on the issue raised in his flyer. At the assumption of deanship position in the faculty by Prof. M. A. Salau, I was appointed Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Engineering Research. We found out that the journal was indebted a private press and two volumes were yet to be collected. The then Dean raised funds to pay the debt in order to collect the outstanding volumes (2). Then, we strategized to make the journal sustainable. As we believed that the journal is one of the identities of the faculty, we ensured that the editions came out regularly. At the end of Prof. Salau's tenure, he left sufficient money in the journal account. Prof. Fakinlede had indicated in the flyer that Prof. Salau was the only person doing the journal then. We had functional technical and publications Committee (members will attest to this) that met regularly while the Editorial board met occasionally. Currently, the Committee and the board are not functioning.

I had to resign as Editor-in-Chief of JER within 4 months of resumption of the new Dean because the Dean refused to listen when I informed him that his style was bureaucratic and non-result oriented. It is interesting that Prof. Fakinlede cited the delay in the timely production of University Journal (Journal of Medicine, Science and Technology), of which I was appointed the Editor-in-Chief, to justify the irregularity in the release of editions of our Journal of Engineering Research under his deanship. The conditions for the two journals are not the same. We provided enabling environment for his administration for regular production of volumes of the journal but he did not tap into it. In the case of the University Journal, the articles were taken from the Proceedings of the 8th Unilag Research Conference and Fair. They were given timely review by relevant experts. The journal was to be funded from Tetfund money but the money would only be released after the first edition. Unfortunately, the university could not fund the production of that first edition of the journals (Science and humanities-based) earlier than it did because of paucity of funds. The argument of Prof. Fakinlede is best described as 'baseless'.

There are two major excuses for failure to produce more than one edition of University Journal in the plenty of talk above. In addition, there is a **revised version** of what led to the exit of former editor from the editorship of the Faculty Journal. That story itself is disputed; but, for argument's sake, let us assume it is true. Editor resigned because Dean's methods are "*bureaucratic, and not result-oriented*". So he went away after four months. We can therefore assume that in the ensuing 20 months, this editor was NOT bureaucratic. This "*result orientation*" produced ONE lonely edition of the journal in 20 months! What a result! There was no money! What an excuse! There is Internet publishing with which you could publish on the web as many editions as you want just for the cost of hosting the site. The editions can later be printed in hard copy when money became available! What are the excuses for not doing this? Could it not be argued that it is the lack of expertise and the disdainful reference to Internet usage that you have to blame for this excuse giving? Is it right to believe the same person can "Restore" our already successful Internet Publishing of the Journal as we are being promised here? Are we not going to have more excuses in the future if we use our votes to trust this person? How do you "restore" what you failed to create in the first place?

"The Election Day is 10th July, 2014 at 2.00pm and Please be there to vote."

WE agree perfectly! **Vote oafak for dean.** Vote for continuity, development and a steady hand. Don't settle for promissory notes that have been shown here to be long on excuses and short on original thinking. Choose experience and a steady hand!

"Don't be cajoled again. Performance speaks louder than coloured flyers and internet chatting."

Colour fliers, especially if you made them yourself, are also the result of skill and performance. In fact, some of these skills are the same ones needed to publish things on the web. That is why, for more than six years, my lecture notes have been on the web. They exist on my personally maintained site and the social media that our students use. Innovations in Engineering Education must cooperate with these realities or it gets fossilized! That is also why the University of Lagos expects all lecturers to learn the Moodle System to teach students in a 21st century way!

"Thank you for your support."

Don't trust someone whose principal achievement in life is in Engineering Education and yet has so little knowledge of the modern systems of information delivery that he can create a choice between Internet usage and performance. Don't allow anyone to lure you back into the dark ages of copy typists and manual ways of doing everything. You should be captivated, cajoled and excited into the digital ways of the modern age! Analog folks, learn quickly or forward march to retirement! Get up to speed with modern age of the use of facebook, Internet chatting, web publishing, technology based learning, online, lifelong learning, etc. You should send all these who don't know back to the classrooms and NOT dean's offices. Your future may depend on it!

"Prof. F. A. Falade, Ph.D, FNSE, FAEng"

This is actually oafak, your humble servant. And you can see, there are still degrees and accolades I am yet to earn. With your help in voting me to a second term, we will get there. In the meantime, let's do more Internet chatting! We are marching into the future and it shows! Watch out for more colour fliers at www.oafak.com These things are so easy to make! And I don't get tired using them!