



THOMAS ADEWUMI
UNIVERSITY,
OKO, KWARA STATE
Science | Technology | Medicine

AN ADDRESS PRESENTED BY
PROFESSOR FRANCISCA OLADIPO,
ON THE OCCASION OF HER
INAUGURATION AS THE 2ND
SUBSTANTIVE VICE-CHANCELLOR
OF THOMAS ADEWUMI
UNIVERSITY, OKO-IRESE
IREPODUN LOCAL GOVERNMENT
AREA, KWARA STATE

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Protocol

Let me begin these my brief remarks by thanking the Almighty God, the giver of all and sustainer of all things for making us see this great day. Today, we do not only enter the first day of the 8th month of this year, but more importantly, herald a new beginning in the history of Thomas Adewumi University, set in this historic and blessed town of Oko. It is a rare privilege to be here today and to be installed as the 2nd Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive of this Citadel of Excellence, and I am confident that even Heaven is pleased with this our endeavour. I am grateful for this opportunity to join this community and to co-create with you all in building TAU for global Impact. Since my arrival in this community yesterday, my accompanying team of senior administrative colleagues from Federal University Lokoja and the Kogi State Polytechnic Lokoja, as well as my family and the representative of my Royal Father, His Imperial Majesty, Oba Fredrick Adegunle Aroloye have been treated to a most royal welcome. Thank you to the many volunteers, staff and students who ensured that we enjoyed nothing but the best of hospitalities all round.

I must from the outset salute the foresight and unique sense of mission of the Founders and of this our university, Engr. Dr. John Bamidele Olorunsola Adewumi,^{FNCE} and Dr. (Mrs) Gloria Adewumi. The founding of TAU is somewhat divine and unconventional at the same time. The institution was built as a legacy project being a logical progression from the Thomas Adewumi College and the Thomas Adewumi Sports Academy both of which were established to serve the needs of the community and to challenge conventions in the provision of secondary education. Therefore, I salute you sir and ma and on behalf of all of us who are beneficiaries of this divine and uncommon initiative, I thank you. Gladly, my most respected predecessor, and I must say, Father, Professor Kolade Luke Ayorinde has laid a solid foundation in the direction of TAU being extremely outstanding. Knowing that you and all the other members of the university community, including our amazing students are pioneers in giving context and content to this big dream, I must appreciate the visible outcome of the efforts so far.

The university was licensed in an era when universities all over the world are experiencing a paradigm-shift due to the demands from the forces of technology, new policies, new curriculum focused on problem-solving, demands of regulatory agencies, ranking and accreditation bodies, new pedagogy, and so on. In Nigeria specifically, the rapidly increasing population leading to an increased higher education enrolment and the transitioning from analogues to digital based on the lessons learnt from the shutdown of schools due to the COVID-19 pandemic are the major factors shaping the face of university education. TAU, therefore, has a unique opportunity to be at the cutting-edge of providing world-class education through teaching and research, and positively impacting society thereby playing an important role in economic recovery and ensuring that the society is more resilient in the future.

Today, I join a moving train founded on such solid big ideal. Though, I have thrived to make my mark in the academia both in the country, the continent and around the world, inwardly, I have never stopped seeing myself as that Yoruba girl, from the hills of Idanre, whose destination is to make a difference. So, this towering ideal of providing the environment for community, national and global dominance in learning and research is much in sync with the burning zeal within me to always add my bit. I therefore join the train deeply understanding that we have only one goal that of being the best, and nothing but the best. Indeed, my very clear insight and I must say judgement is that the dream of being the best is not just in some things, but in all things.

Achieving the Vision and Mission of Thomas Adewumi University

As defined by the founding fathers of TAU, the vision is to provide excellent and suitable academic environment for the development of ideas and knowledge for the benefit of mankind. As the pathway to achieving this vision, the founders defined a mission for TAU to be the centre of attraction for staff and students of the highest quality who are dedicated and attuned to the ideas of excellence, truth, progress, and development. Guided by these two illuminating pathways, this administration shall be committed to positioning the University as a world-class academic hub that supports staff and students to deliver excellent teaching, and cutting-edge research, and to produce graduates who can think critically and creatively to solve local and global real-life problems. Graduates of TAU shall be known for competitiveness, independent thinking, and the ability to engage in successful careers anywhere. I am proud of the excellent team of teachers and researchers in this community, and together with the technical and administrative staff, we shall build a strong team to ensure the delivery of accessible, student-centred, world-class education in Science, Technology and Medicine by providing stellar academic leadership, promoting entrepreneurship, ensuring quality research, increasing diversity enrolment, implementing creative funding, and expansion of academic programmes.

It is based on this that I wish to today, in the presence the university community and our partners, my colleagues, my friends and family, everyone here in this assembly, and those tuning in via livestream, make the following commitments:

1. Leadership

I am committed to providing a stellar academic and research leadership and the institutionalization of University Culture here in TAU. This administration shall promote an open-door policy, patriotism, and the culture of cooperation, ambition, and conviction. I shall lead by example and promote team work as one of the strongest points of this administration. We shall institute a reward system for academic and administrative excellence and achievements as well as ensure discipline.

2. Ranking, Linkages, Internationalization and Global Visibility

According to the January 2022 edition of the Webometrics Ranking of World Universities, we are ranked 252 in Nigeria, 1,052 in Sub-Sahara Africa Nigeria, 1,531 in Africa and 25,986 in the World. Starting from today, we shall begin to take important and urgent steps towards improving our global and national rankings. The goal is to rank among the top 100 universities in Nigeria by January 2024 and this can be achieved with the cooperation of everyone.

This administration will be committed to the internationalization and global visibility of TAU. Prior to today, even while preparing for my official resumption, we have taken some important steps towards establishing local and global partnerships with institutions and organizations. Today as part of a reversed linkages scheme, we shall sign a memorandum of understanding with The Federal University Lokoja to formalize cooperation in the areas of staff and students' development. Talks are at an advanced stage, and we are in the process of formalizing a collaboration agreement with the University of Central Oklahoma, USA for staff and students exchange and with Coursera, a leading MOOC provider for Vocational training. We have also partnered with the Namibia university of Science and Technology in co-organizing the 1st International Conference on Information Systems and Emerging Technologies, to be held on the 23-25 November 2022. In addition, as soon as we are eligible, TAU shall seek membership of relevant international university associations.

3. Students Experience and Learning

Leveraging on the student-centric culture of the Asiwaju and Yeye Asiwaju Academic Legacy, we shall continue to put the students first, by ensuring a student-centred learning environment, clean campus, introduction of innovative teaching styles, access to classes taught by international faculties, etc. We shall ensure the quality of the academic programme through the full accreditation of existing offerings by the National Universities Commission and develop the diversity of the students' population through the admission of international students. Other student-centric commitments of this administration shall include:

- Interdisciplinary curriculum that focuses on problem-solving leading to efficiency, effectiveness, and employability.
- Entrepreneurship development and skills building.
- Additional learning beyond the classrooms through the MOOCs, Mirror MIT open courseware, certifications, workshops, development of online and eLearning opportunities, opportunities for sponsored international conference attendance, international academic mobility via Semester and Summer abroad programmes.

We shall improve the students' social life on campus through watch parties, cultural events, community engagement events, etc.

4. Improving Funding for the university to achieve growth

To complement the funding efforts of the Founder and the Board of Trustees, we shall establish additional funding streams within and outside of our environments. We have one of the most important natural resource anywhere on earth -**land**. Therefore, we shall leverage this to provide sustainable new sources of Internally Generated Revenue for the institution. We shall seek partnerships with foreign organizations and institutions to secure funding via block grants, competitive funds, joint projects, and so on. We shall devise strategies to cut costs and reduce wastes, expand our academic programmes, and diversify our offerings to include sub-degree programmes. Through the friends of the university, we shall raise funds and welcome profitable partnerships.

5. Staff Welfare

As we strive to build a committed workforce based on meritocracy and transparency, this administration shall give priority to the welfare of staff. I have obtained the commitment of the Board of Trustees on this, and I trust them to deliver. However, I must point it out to my colleagues that while we expect the funders to fulfil their commitments, we shall also be committed to the delivery of excellent services. The Board of Trustees has given us a place to work, and we must earn our keeps. We shall ensure a conducive workplace, continuous professional development, for training and upskilling.

Chancellor sir, distinguished guests, time, and space will not permit me to enumerate all the aspirations of this administration for Thomas Adewumi University. However, with immediate effect, we shall put together a strategic plan for the period 2022-2027 detailing the actionable steps we shall take towards achieving your vision for TAU.

Kindly permit me sir, to list the following top 10 commitments that will be achieved within the first 180 days of this administration:

- i. Full deployment of digital media and Search Engine Optimization to promote TAU and ensure that we become one of the knowledge hubs in Africa.
- ii. Introduction of and resource verification of new academic programmes.
- iii. Increasing the tempo of academic activities on the campus through the introduction of the University and Faculty Lecture series.
- iv. Systematic transition to an ICT-driven university.
- v. Establishment of a centre for Innovations and Technology Management in partnership with the Hi-Tech NGO.
- vi. Signing and operationalization of at least one international and one local collaboration agreement.
- vii. Institutionalization of a reward system for academic and research excellence. Today I am proud to announce three of these key awards:

1. The Yeye Asiwaju Prize for the first early career teaching staff to present a research seminar in TAU.
 - a. Cash prize of ₦50,000
 - b. Search for a travel grant, and mentor the recipient through the application process to attend an international conference.
2. The Olayemi Akinwumi Prize for the first faculty to organize a Faculty Research Seminar in TAU.
 - a. Cash prize of ₦50,000
3. The Godknows Igali Prize for the first mid-career teaching staff to present a research seminar in TAU.
 - a. Cash prize of ₦50,000

Each of these awards will be accompanied by a personally signed certificate and listing in the TAU's Hall of Fame.

- viii. Establishment of the TAU Consultancy and R&D Unit. I am happy to announce that our Expressions of Interest (EoI) for funding Artificial Intelligence (AI) for education innovation research and to partake in the Artificial Intelligence for Education Innovation Research Network in Africa was approved. We shall be funded by Canada's International Development Research Centre and the Swedish International Development Agency to host one of the Artificial Intelligence Hubs in Africa. We have more funding hopefuls and therefore shall strengthen this unit to become a think-tank for the university.
- ix. Authoring of winning Research and Development Grant
- x. A workshop on Teaching and Learning in a 21st Century University to be delivered by a prominent and world-class Professor.

As I close, let me say, I perceive, that the national and global landscape for the tertiary education space will soon disperse itself by a natural process of attrition to three categories. First, those institutions which will continue to relish in the euphoria of old past and lost glory. Secondly, new, and emerging institutions that get held up in the cobweb of impaired vision and mission. Third and last are those universities which are standing on a pedestal of an unquestionably clear focus, driven by a commitment to creativity and innovation, excited about the match of technology and global linkages and not the least, willing to take advantage of all available opportunities.

I choose to be with the last group. That is what I will bring on board.

I am honoured to join you all to build on our unique strengths, as we take Thomas Adewumi University into a bold new future and build the next generation to be good citizens in a democratic society.

APPRECIATION