

AN INAUGURAL ADDRESS TO THE POLYTECHNIC COMMUNITY BY THE RECTOR AKANU IBIAM FEDERAL POLYTECHNIC, UNWANA, VENERABLE OGBONNIA IBE-ENWO ON SEPTEMBER 9, 2014,

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Permit me to start the inaugural address by welcoming you to this gathering and also thanking every person who contributed in making this day come through.

I want to thank His Excellency, **Dr. Goodluck Ebele Johnathan**, GCFR, President, and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, Federal Republic of Nigeria for approving and ratifying the interview result as presented by the Governing Council. I wish to assure Mr. President that the Polytechnic under my watch will vigorously pursue the implementation of the Federal Government policies in Education.

I wish to also thank the honorable Minister of Education, Malam Ibrahim Shekarau for his determination to move Education forward and his doggedness in ensuring that the right things are done.

I thank the Chairman of the 7th Governing Council of Akanu Ibiam Federal Polytechnic, Unwana, Sir Chimdi Ejiogu and members of the Council for conducting a transparent and impeccable exercise of appointing me the **5th Substantive Rector** of Akanu Ibiam Federal Polytechnic, Unwana. Sir, I salute your courage, dedication, commitment and the fear of God. I want to thank the acting Rector, Engr. E. I. Igweonu and the entire Management team for providing quality leadership and direction for the institution since June 12, 2014 and particularly for the

smooth conclusion of the 1st semester examinations of the 2013/14 academic year.

I thank the former Rector, Professor Francis Otunta, Ph.D for his undaunted efforts at ensuring a smooth transition. His efforts at moving Akanu Ibiam Federal Polytechnic, Unwana to higher grounds would be written in the annals of our great Polytechnic.

I wish to also thank the National President of ASUP Mr. C. B. Asomoga and our chapter chairman Chief E. E. Onyeneho for all their efforts in ensuring that the Rector was appointed from within the Polytechnic sector.

I salute my Predecessors: Late Engr. Dr. O. B. Epele (1981-1989), Late Prof. Zack Obanu (1989-1997), Late Mr. G. I. Amasiatu (1998-2006), Professor Francis O. Otunta (2006-2014). Their landmark achievements in Akanu Ibiam Federal Polytechnic, Unwana have been exemplary.

I thank members of the Academic Board for their contributions and efforts towards the realization of the Akanu Ibiam Federal Polytechnic, Unwana dream. I doff my hat for your doggedness, objectivity and consistency in giving direction to our academic endeavours.

To our Deans, Directors, Heads of Department and other academic support staff, I recognize and appreciate your work in the Polytechnic. Additionally, I appreciate the cordial relationship you have with the students and other members of staff under your supervision.

To our administrators, I salute your skills and professionalism. Without your input, the work of other officers would be incomplete.

I recognize our dear students, without whom our business of education would not materialize. Thank you.

I most sincerely thank the clergy and the religious for their prayers.

To our entire host community, I say, thank you for being our host, irrespective of the challenges along the line. Thank you for accommodating nearly 8, 000 students and about 2, 000 staff, that make up the Polytechnic community (including security and cleaning staff).

I thank the Alumni for representing us very well outside the confines of this citadel of learning. However, I thank the PRO unit, they will be encouraged to leverage on existing relationships to further help us build the polytechnic

I thank in a special way, my wife Lady Grace Ibe-Enwo for being there for me always. Her support and counseling led us this far. To my children, Benson, Amanda, Jack and Doris, I appreciate you and love you all.

This is the day the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it. Let us glorify God for His marvelous deeds and because He is always in perfect control.

I am overwhelmed with joy, but at the same time humbled that by the grace of God, I am appointed the **5th Substantive Rector** of Akanu Ibiam Federal Polytechnic, Unwana, Ebonyi State, Nigeria.

2.0 MISSION OF AKANU IBIAM FEDERAL POLYTECHNIC, UNWANA

2.1 VISION AND MISSION

My career vision is to see that the quality of education in Nigeria compares favourably with those of other advanced nations in the world.

I will pursue academic excellence, infrastructural development and discipline that will raise qualitative manpower that will fit into the transformation agenda of the present Federal Government administration.

As the Rector of Akanu Ibiam Federal Polytechnic, Unwana my vision is to make the Polytechnic an educational institution of choice for nurturing innovative, creative, entrepreneurial, cultured and ICT compliant professionals, fit for the world of work. We shall achieve this by adopting and applying the eight core values of this administration, to be known as AIFP CORE values. They are:

- A – Attitude**
- I – Integrity**
- F – Fidelity**
- P – Productivity**
- C – Confidence, Consideration and Commitment**
- O – Openness**
- R – Responsibility**

E – Excellence

How do we move forward with courage amidst challenges and uncertainties? As a member of the nation's public higher education family, Akanu Ibiam Federal Polytechnic, Unwana is an institution with many milestones that proudly mark-over 33 years of education and service to the global village.

Also while we could spend much time reveling in our milestones, recounting the names of those individuals who as staff, students and graduates defined this institution's identity, we are better served by articulating how we, who are gathered here today, will move forward and meet the challenges before us, how we will build on this history and tradition to achieve the public agenda that we sought and earned and that was given to us by the nation. This agenda requires us to play a central role, a leadership role, ensuring a better way of life for the people of our state, a leadership role ensuring improved economic and educational opportunities for all Nigerians.

We are challenged to assure the people that as their servants, we achieve the mission they gave us to educate their sons and daughters, to promote economic development and the quality of life in our state and nation. We must demonstrate that we are accountable, transparent, fair, and equitable and that we are stewards of the people's trust, which we are committed every day, every hour, and every minute to the awesome fiduciary responsibility to use the resources given to us to achieve the public goal.

There are those who doubt us, and we must address their doubts head-on. We must address head-on those members of staff who are less committed to the dreams of this polytechnic. We must address head-on comments from friends and critics who believe that we will not move, Akanu Ibiam Federal Polytechnic, Unwana forward to greater achievements. In order to address those who doubt us, we must embrace and commit ourselves – head-on – to the mandate given to us by the Federal Government “to become an internationally recognized Polytechnic”.

We must remember, respect and learn from the past, from our distinguished history, from our failures and our success. There is much in our history to inspire us, encourage us and strengthen us daily.

We must know that it is not enough to dream, for it has been written *“Behind the dream – the deed; and Behind the deed – the doer”* We are called to this place to perform the deeds, to be the doers!

To better serve the next generation, to ensure that ours is a challenging, supportive, student-friendly polytechnic, we must re-engage previous generations within the life of the Polytechnic. We must reconnect with our alumni, our many friends, our donors, our advocates, and our community and state leader’s who understand what we can do, what we will do to improve our state, its economy and its quality of life. To each of you I plead: join us. We need you to be successful.

Finally, we must re-commit ourselves to the values that will never fail us; values that will not allow us to deviate from the dreams and the deeds

that must be performed to achieve our goal. We value good attitude, integrity, fidelity, productivity, confidence and commitment, openness, responsibility and excellence. We value respect for all individuals, regardless of position, regardless of length of tenure/appointment, regardless of ethnic group, regardless of educational background and regardless of state of origin and religious inclinations.

3.0 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- To inspire and give academic leadership to the Polytechnic, embracing a range of training programmes, by providing a coherent vision for activities and by inspiring the highest standards of research, teaching and community services by Polytechnic staff and thereby achieve the Polytechnic's ambition of national leadership in its core activities.
- Develop the polytechnic's national and international profile.
- Develop and maintain a master plan for the Polytechnic that will take into consideration all the challenges that have been identified.
- Identify, promote and contribute resources to developing the Polytechnic's strengths and managing its portfolio. This will include identifying and supporting opportunities to forge linkages/exchange programmes.
- Encourage, support and facilitate entrepreneurial activity, identifying and pursuing external funding.

- To expand the internal revenue base of the Polytechnic by commercializing certain aspects of some departments like Mechanical Engineering Technology (MET), Electrical Engineering Technology (EET), Food Technology (FT), Hospitality Management and Tourism (HMT), Agricultural Technology (AGT), Science Laboratory Technology (SLT), Ceramics Technology (CT), Computer Science (CS), etc.
- Support and promote knowledge transfer between the Polytechnic and end users; through appropriate mechanisms.
- Lead and manage the Polytechnic with clear, effective delegation lines as appropriate whilst maintaining overall responsibility and oversight functions.
- To attract, manage and retain top quality staff to achieve excellence in research and training, supported by performance and development review process.
- Upgrade and extend the existing web-site of Akanu Ibiam Federal Polytechnic, Unwana.
- To improve upon existing work ethics and general discipline amongst staff and students.
- To maintain zero tolerance for corruption (especially examination malpractice for both staff and students).
- To prioritize staff welfare.
- Build strong team spirit.
- Expand AIFPU's scope of competence through more academic programs: Banking and Finance, Paralegal Studies, Geological

Technology, Crop Production Technology, Animal Production Technology, Extension and Farm Management, Local Government Studies, Mass Communication etc.

- Integrity, honesty, discipline and hard work will remain key core values.
- Develop sports and recreational facilities: staff club, students' complex with indoor sporting activities, etc.
- To maintain industrial harmony by cooperating with trade unions on campus.
- To maintain peaceful co-existence with the host community.
- Review of Master Plan for the Polytechnic.
- To build a standard Guest House for the Polytechnic.
- To build a Rector's lodge.
- To procure more vehicles and buses for staff and students' use.
- To provide a battery of boreholes; water treatment plant and maintenance of Ebonkwu water source.

4.0 PHILOSOPHY, STRENGTH AND CHALLENGES

PHILOSOPHY

The philosophy of the Polytechnic under my leadership shall be in line with the motto of the Polytechnic "skill for technological freedom.

Strength

- Akanu Ibiam Federal Polytechnic, Unwana a very old institution with its humble beginning in 1981, therefore, it has a wealth of experience spanning nearly thirty-three (33) years. The Polytechnic presently runs 42 programmes: 22 at the ND and 20 HND levels including Pre-ND programmes in both science and business. It has staff strength of 1481 made up of 488 academic staff and 993 support staff. She currently has student population of about 8082 as at January 30, 2014.
- The institution has a track record of breakthrough research work in technological adaptation on local products, processes and processing e.g. the production of weather resistant bricks/blocks from abundant rice husks from milling paddy rice, paper was also manufactured from bamboo leaves, table wine was produced from several fermented fruits and others include solar cooker and solar distillation units.
- Rural location with abundant resources and favourable climate.
- Well established and functional laboratories and library.
- Well furnished class-rooms and staff offices.
- Centre for excellence in Electrical/Electronic Technology, Ceramic Technology and Computer Engineering Technology.
- Abundant skilled manpower – researchers, technicians, support staff, etc.
- Medical centre that has been upgraded to Hospital status.
- Large expanse of land for expansion/development.

The Challenges Ahead

The challenges facing the Polytechnic are numerous and they have militated against the actualization of the institutional goals and objectives. It is necessary to identify some of these problems with a view of addressing them. They are:

- Limited funding
- Unfavorable topography i.e. clayey soil that is too expensive to develop
- Inadequate student's accommodation
- Host community encroachment into polytechnic land
- Exit of qualified staff to Federal University Ndufu-Alike, Ikwo (FUNAI) and other higher institutions.
- The distance between Unwana where the Polytechnic is situated and Afikpo where more than 95% of staff resides is very long.
- Selection, development and maintaining academic programmes along the lines of best practices, and in accordance with the mandate of AIFPU/NBTE
- Co-ordination of programmes in comparable areas of research by other institutions and organizations.
- Ensuring efficiency of academic programmes.
- Balancing budget
- Expanding the scope of funding within and outside the normal budgetary provisions from government.
- Maintaining, Akanu Ibiam Federal Polytechnic, Unwana leading position as a foremost excellent academic institute.

5.0 SHORT-RUN ACTIVITIES (FIRST TWELVE MONTHS)

We need to move as a matter of urgency in the following directions:

- Beautification of the entire campus.
- Start negotiation for massive infrastructural development e.g. guesthouses, rector's lodge, hostels, staff club house, etc.
- Improvement of electricity supply to the campus.
- Computerize and provide internet services, on campus-wise basis
- Retrain all categories of staff.
- Inaugurate an effective and operational Gender unit/Gender Policy in line with the directive of the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, His Excellency, Dr. Goodluck Ebele Johnathan, GCFR.

5.1 STAFF WELFARE

Staff welfare includes salaries, promotions, transportation, housing, office accommodation and medical services. These will be accorded priority attention. Efforts shall be made to pay staff salaries on time.

More specialized medical professionals shall be employed and the existing staff retrained to handle complicated health problems. The medical diagnostic laboratory shall be expanded and equipped with the state-of-the-art laboratory equipment for diagnosis. The pharmacy will not be left out and shall be stocked such that out-of-stock syndrome will be totally eliminated.

To ease the problem of accommodation, all on-going projects will be completed and equipped. In addition school-based building projects shall continue.

A functional staff club shall be established within the campus to take care of the staff needs for relaxation.

5.2 STUDENT WELFARE

Hostel accommodation remains one major problem facing the, Akanu Ibiam Federal Polytechnic, Unwana. With a student population of about 8082 and only two hostels, there is urgent need for more students' hostel. Additionally, private developers from within and outside the state shall be invited for students' hostel development. This is pertinent to make students acquire polytechnic education in an environment conducive for learning. Currently, more than 10 students live in a room meant for four students and a reasonable number live in make shift hostels and in the rural host communities unprotected. A well articulated hostel development programme shall be given priority attention through the collective efforts of all stakeholders. To this end we shall explore every opportunity for PPP and BOT.

In view of the level of poverty in Nigeria, the students work aid scheme shall be reactivated and made more functional in addressing the needs of indigent students. A separate account shall be set aside for this purpose and a management board set up to ensure effective administration of the scheme.

The Student Union Government (SUG) shall be made more purposeful. This will be achieved through short training of elected leaders on leadership roles. Furthermore, they will play more active and positive roles especially in the areas of control of cult activities and overall campus security monitoring. Most importantly, constant dialogue with students will be encouraged.

5.3 OVERALL ADMINISTRATION

A democratic, open, humane, just, fair, transparent, people oriented and task-oriented administration that adheres to the rules and regulation of the Polytechnic shall be promoted. The Principal Officers, Deans and Directors, Heads of Department/Unit shall be allowed reasonable degree of independence in the administration but within the ambits of Polytechnic Regulations. The Rector need not be burdened with smaller chores which other officers of Polytechnic can handle. Delegation with responsibility shall be encouraged. The Committee system will continue to be used in the general administration of the Polytechnic.

5.4 ACADEMIC BOARD

The relationship between the Administration and the Academic Board shall be cordial, democratic, orderly and within the provisions of the law. The watchwords shall be cooperation and mutual respect. However, in line with what obtains in other sister institutions, we shall consult with the council with a view to seeing the possibility of making Chief Lecturers automatic members of the Academic Board (AB) in the hope that this will

add value to their appointment as Chief Lecturers and that the institution will continue to benefit from their vast wealth of experience.

5.5 PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

On-going projects shall be completed while news ones shall commence. The general approach shall be to construct more departmental buildings in the School.

The following projects shall be embarked upon as soon as possible and efforts shall be intensified to conclude those started:

- Student hostels
- Hotel and shopping plaza
- New departmental buildings
- Landscaping of the entire Polytechnic
- Internet access throughout the campus

5.6 COMMERCIAL VENTURES

The activities of the following Polytechnic outfits shall be streamlined and strengthened to make them viable commercial ventures:

- Polytechnic commercial farm
- Centre of continuing education
- Polytechnic microfinance bank
- Guest houses
- Polytechnic press
- Petro/filling station
- AIFPU water

I challenge every department to be innovative and productive.

5.7 FULL COMPUTERIZATION OF ALL ASPECTS OF POLYTECHNIC ACTIVITIES

All aspects of the Polytechnics activities shall undergo full computerization. All categories of staff shall be encouraged to undergo computer training in the use of various software and computer applications. Purchase and installation of computers in all offices shall be embarked upon. A database management system that will serve the peculiar needs of the Polytechnic shall be installed and security policies enforced to avoid unauthorized access to the database. Every aspects of student registration, accounting, results etc will be fully computerized. It is expected that we will have internet access in every part of the Polytechnic.

5.8 WORKS, PHYSICAL PLANNING, BURSARY AND REGISTRY DEPARTMENTS

These arms of the Polytechnic shall be strengthened to make them more effective.

5.9 AIFPU PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

The AIFPU Primary and Secondary Schools will be strengthened to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

6.0 MY ROLE AS YOUR RECTOR

What will be the role of the Rector in moving Akanu Ibiam Federal Polytechnic, Unwana forward and making it a world-class Polytechnic? I believe that the Rector, *“is expected to be an educator, to have been at sometime a scholar to have judgement about finance, to know something about construction, maintenance and labour policy, to speak virtually continuously in words that charm and never offend, to take bold positions with which no one will disagree, to consult everyone and follow all proffered advice, and do everything through committees but with great speed and without error”*.

The governance of an institution like ours could be described as a dance. The manifold activities and the actions of staff and students is likened to a set of dances in which “the context of each dance is the same, but the details of each dancer’s movements are never the same and never predictable. It is this unpredictability of discovery and creativity that defines a Polytechnic such as Akanu Ibiam Federal Polytechnic, Unwana. Staff should also be able to have room to think differently. What can I do, as one person to direct effectively and efficiently and steer the ship of this great Polytechnic. What can I do, even in the face of challenges, to improve the course of this highly cherished citadel of learning with nearly 8, 000 students and about 1481 members of staff? Today, I urge all of us to see our own dance as AIFPUs. The Rector is the Chief Servant, but the success of this Chief Servant and the choreographer depends on the synchronization of the dancer’s steps. What can I do? Basically: to transform Akanu Ibiam Federal Polytechnic, Unwana into a meritocracy, a peaceful and stable family, a fair and equitable Polytechnic, where

obedience to rules and regulations must be the watch-dog. I urge you all to work for the common-wealth and common good of this great Polytechnic. I most respectfully ask every member of this great community to join me to move Akanu Ibiam Federal Polytechnic, Unwana towards excellence.

7.0 CONCLUSION

As a visionary leader, I am a firm believer in measuring progress and success. How should we know if Akanu Ibiam Federal Polytechnic, Unwana has made progress? Obviously, we will measure progress by asking the following questions: is our graduation rate increasing? Is our student applicant pool increasing? Are the credentials of our applicants stronger and competitive enough in the job market? Are we receiving important private donations? Is our reputation increasing as evidenced by national ranking? Every one of us must do everything possible to nourish the positive momentum we already established. I am very sure with full confidence that we will. I fully recognize that the Quest for Excellence will not be achieved over-night, and will be an ongoing process. Meanwhile it is a goal so vital that we all must share. The fact still remains that, the beginning is often the most essential step. Therefore, how and where do we start?

In the words of Aristotle; *“we are what we repeatedly do”*. Thus, the *Quest for Excellence is not an act, but a habit*”. We must always dream big dreams of making Akanu Ibiam Federal Polytechnic, Unwana a world class Polytechnic. We must also know that it is not enough to dream, for it

has been written, behind the dream-the deed, and behind the deed-the doer. Hence, I ask each one of you to join me in the relentless pursuit of this mission and its consolidation. Trust yourself and have faith in God. I trust and have faith in God. That is why I stand here as the 5th Substantive Rector of the Akanu Ibiam Federal Polytechnic, Unwana.

Thank you for this great privilege to address you. May God bless us.

Venerable Ogbonnia Ibe-Enwo, JP.
Rector.
Akanu Ibiam Federal Polytechnic, Unwana.