

MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract

There has been a paradigm shift in the concept and practice of university management and leadership pattern at the turn of this century. In this paper, an attempt was made to position the concepts as they relate to university administration and management in Nigeria. We argued that Nigerian universities can be in the forefront among the best in the world if appropriate and current management techniques are applied across the different cadres of stakeholders in the University system.

Keywords: *university, management, leadership, administration, stakeholders*

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2. Introduction

The word "university" is derived from the Latin phrase *universitas magistrorum et scholarium* meaning "community of teachers and scholars. The word "*universitas*"(Latin, "a whole") refers in general to "a number of persons associated into one body, a society, company, community, guild, corporation, etc. (Colish, 1997). The university is a 'whole of several units with subunits', each of the units and subunits having some level of authority which is delegated from the supervising authority, with provisions for checks and balances. While universities are essentially the 'same' in general terms, they vary in detailed traditions which are dictated by peculiarities such as nature of ownership, focus of training and funding (Daft and Marcic, 2006).

A university, first and foremost, is a place of learning that supports students to achieve professional knowledge, skills and understanding. A fundamental requisite to make this a reality for students is for a strong and positive relationship to be built between learners and faculty members who facilitate learning. Behind the scenes, faculties (colleges/schools) are backed-up by various central administrative support units to ensure, for example, that student timetables work, exams are properly scheduled and student results are released on time.

Management is the ability to cope with complexity, to devise structures and systems that produce order and harmony. Leadership is the ability to cope with change, to establish a new direction, and to get institutions and individuals to move in that direction (Bennis, 2009). A Vice-Chancellor's job involves both management and leadership, but the latter is more important than the former. A Vice-Chancellor (VC) does not successfully run a university primarily by crunching the numbers, redrawing organizational charts or applying the latest business school concepts and techniques. The key function of a Vice-Chancellor is to lead the university: to harness the social forces within it, to shape and guide its values, to build a management team, and to inspire it and others working in the university to take initiatives around a shared vision and a strategy to implement it. In short, a Vice-Chancellor should be an enabler rather than a controller (Bain, 2004).

The concept of managerial approach to university governance, an aspect relating to the centralisation of decision-making to create efficiencies and bring about effective decision-making is fairly recent globally and even more recent in Nigeria,. University managers are the few people that have the economic rights, authority, moral responsibility, and high motivation to manage the university to achieve high-quality education though they have a principal that they are subject to. Ultimately, leadership is provided at the very top to impact on the adopted organizational design by the university and its effective governance. It should be noted in any case that good governance should not be impersonal, opaque, alienating and autocratic; rather it should be collegial, transparent and responsible (Bain, 2004).

Leadership is one of the basic and most important needs in a university. It is often considered to be the solution to most organizational problems (Daft and Marcic, 2006). It can direct human resources toward the strategic objectives of an institution and ensure that organizational functions are aligned with the external environment. Moreover, effective leaders are able to predict the future probabilities and design choice strategies to satisfy uncertainties (Riaz and Haider, 2010). Management and leadership in universities are as important as the need to have universities at all; a society or nation with ill-managed universities has no advantage over one without any, especially in the face of heightened universal conventions in standards and expectations. It follows, therefore, that the government and society at large cannot earn the full reward of putting university systems in place unless optimized management and leadership are ensured. The quality of leadership and management provided by a university can only be ascertained by how well an institution or body fulfills its roles and objectives. Succinctly put, Nigerian universities, like all its foreign counterparts are established to teach, research, build capacity and provide community services to engender dynamic social, technological and economic development. The question to ask is how well Nigerian universities are performing these obligations.

By the foregoing, therefore, the social, physical and economic outlook of any society is a reflection of the state of its university system on the one hand while on the other hand, the performance of the university system is a reflection of its leadership and management. Technically, therefore, the state of a nation is a summation of the leadership and management of the universities as the universities are the repository of the think tanks of such nations.

The rest of the paper is structured as follows: The next section is devoted to a description of what is managed in a university. This is followed by an attempt at x-raying how a university may be managed to become world class. The next section differentiates between a governance and leadership model of university administration. Different services provided in a world class university are then described with concluding remarks.

3. What is managed in a university?

Once, the university was described as an “ivory tower” but it is now seen as part of the DNA strands of a “triple helix,” in conjunction with government, civil society and industry, forming the dynamic building blocks of the knowledge economy that produce knowledge, know-how, and technology of prosperous societies. The foregoing has put new pressure on the university to provide specialized training to more students; develop and transfer technologies to industry; and provide responses to societal needs.

University leadership, therefore, must manage knowledge production, knowledge impartation and knowledge dissemination or transfer by way of research, teaching and services respectively, as well as the resources and facilities to ensure adequate flow of their operations. Management in the university system involves leading and directing the ‘‘knowledge drivers’’. This, therefore, requires that the management provides a high level of leadership for two reasons: one is to win the respect of the rest for adequate followership and the other is to keep the knowledge development flow. Poor management of the knowledge drivers can hamper development because quality academic programmes, quality teaching and research would be affected leading to poor quality and low quantity of knowledge that can aid the development of the nation.

The Nigerian university system has been beset by a staggering number of challenges, the effects of which are readily observable in our society. Some important leadership and management issues affecting Nigerian universities include poor leadership and governance resulting in ineffectiveness and incompetence at all levels, non-realization of national cohesiveness, incessant crime and insecurity, inadequate funding, and poor quality of products turned over (World Bank, 2000). Downplaying performance evaluation and subsequent implementation of reactionary measures based on the outcome of evaluation exercises by university leaderships and decision makers are the reasons these problems are not only still in existence but growing in magnitude by the day.

The challenges enumerated above call for good leadership in universities to ensure speedy development of the economy and the entire nation at large. In order to lead a university effectively, it is incumbent on the VC to have a clear vision of his direction and to possess the ability to rally the others. He likewise needs the ability to recognize correct choices and bring out the best in others, emotional intelligence, the ability to facilitate communication and mediate conflict, a sense of fairness and also, the kind of authenticity and integrity that creates trust (Bain, 2004; Bennis, 2009). A strong moral compass is required, though not necessarily belonging to a religious faith. Character counts in the position of the VC more than any other single quality, it is more important than how much the VC knows of foreign policy or economics, or even of politics.

Hereafter, we shall try to do justice to the topic by providing clues as to how our universities should be managed and led towards achieving world class status. The points raised here are not exhaustive of the managerial and leadership issues that should be addressed in our universities, but they would go a long way in providing basic information on the requirements for good leadership in Nigerian universities.

4. Managing a University towards Achieving World Class Status

What should be the best practices in university leadership and administration have continued to evolve as various universities competitively and ingeniously improve on their existing systems with universities learning from each other’s areas of strength. Policymakers and relevant institutions within and across borders have also taken it upon themselves to strengthen leadership and administration in universities by providing platforms for collaborative development among universities within their jurisdiction and promoting standards for management and administrative practices based on the achievement of the various universities that are outstanding in a specific area.

The Economist (2011) reported that the top 20 universities in the world have produced about 70 percent of the Nobel Prize winners of the world. Their graduates hold most of the prestigious positions in public and private institutions, in governments and global institutions. These universities are able to recruit, relatively, higher quality staff and students from the global talent pool. They have the largest financial resources and endowments. These universities are those of Harvard, Stanford, Princeton, Cambridge, and Oxford (*The Economist*, 2011). Initiatives to rate and give awards to universities based on performance are in an attempt to reward leadership prowess, managerial efficiency and best adherence to conventions and best practices, thereby fostering continuous evolving of university systems (Visser and Sienaert, 2012).

Given the excellent feat that these outstanding universities have performed, the quickest pathway to leadership development and management enhancement is for universities to learn from their strengths. Since leadership and management are abstract and continually evolving, there really is no standard other than proven systems that have been successfully deployed by others who have recorded better results; and the best way to utilize these insights is by looking out for ways to yet improve on practices that are being imbibed and also ensuring that such practices are adequately adapted to a recipient's specific operational environment. It is, therefore, more than advisable for developing universities to learn from and inculcate the proven systems and practices of the renowned front liners, both in their internal administration and their external interaction with their political, socio-cultural and economic environment. Based on this, some issues are discussed below to further strengthen university management and leadership in Nigeria.

4.1. Governance or Leadership model

The physical development of the university, custody of its assets and application of its funds are usually the responsibility of the Governing Council while the Senate oversees the academic programmes and development of the University. The day-to-day management of the university and implementation of policies are the responsibility of the vice chancellor and other principal officers. This places a high responsibility on the VC. University leadership represents an opportunity to assume responsibility and authority for an entire institution, to be able to make a difference in a world they know and value, correct the problems they detected and judged from long before. The job of an ideal university VC seems to necessitate being a superman. Campus leadership needs to be directed at strengthening system components primarily at the local environment and maximizing local factors for the university to adapt itself to the world standards, work and interact with others in an international environment and establish a win-win relation in a globalized world (Eskandari, 2010).

If the vice-chancellor is going to spend most of his time leading, then he needs to recruit others to do the managing. He needs to put together a group of managers who have sufficient coherence to work together as a team, and sufficient competence and power to manage the change. And having appointed these people, he must delegate as much of the problem solving, committee chairing and other work to them as possible.

i. Appointment of VC

The process of appointing a VC is crucial to the eventual management of a University. It goes a long way in shaping the University. The VC, therefore, should be appointed to the position through democratic means and not by imposition as is done at times by the government. The selection of candidates for the post should be based on their accumulated knowledge and experience, deep understanding of the intricacies of the job, and past accomplishments in a number of situations on other posts proving their wizardry on the profession. Imposition will only bring chaos because such a leader will show allegiance to the government that installed him rather than the system he is to lead. This eventually breeds caucuses to the detriment of openness, leading to the down-play of merit in appointments; the 'mutual back scratching' becomes the order of the day. The development of relationships with key stakeholders, gaining the confidence of other members of the university community and developing a secure base of support are all jettisoned. Such will hamper the development of an institution.

ii. Role of Integrity

In addition, good leadership entails a high level of integrity and being able to embrace those who speak valuable truths, however hard they are to hear. Nothing will sink a VC faster than surrounding him- or herself with yes-men and women. Even when principled nay-sayers are wrong, they force the VC to reevaluate his positions and to poke and prod his assumptions for weaknesses. Good ideas are only made stronger by being challenged (Bain, 2004).

iii. Group Decision-Making

The group decision-making process provides wider knowledge and more information for decisions and gets the support of all the stakeholders. There are no diseconomies to knowledge; the wider the knowledge, the better the decisions. The decisions which are based on wider knowledge, and supported by all of the stakeholders generate higher quality for many institutions (Sen et al., 2012). The recent advancements in information technology have made it relatively easier and faster to access new knowledge, ideas, skills, and information. Debating, learning and voting directly on important issues is possible with the new information technology. This process, which used to be difficult and impractical, is now possible in contemporary management activities (Glushak et al., 2015). The universities constitute the most educated segments of the society. Making the major decisions as a group will increase the knowledge, skills and the values for making effective decisions. Besides, including the stakeholders in major decisions will increase their support and efforts for their implementation (Sen et al., 2012). This, in turn, will increase the quality of higher education and help the universities in Nigeria to become such as deliver high quality.

3.2 Development/Alumni Relations

The alumni are key stakeholders in the activities of their *alma mater*. They are essential for the existence of the university and should play the key supportive roles in the management of the University for the Development of high-quality education. It is expedient for there to be a functional alumni association in the university, properly constituted with elected officers governing its affairs. A representative of the association should be a member of the governing council of the university in most cases. Endowment and advancements for a

university are crucial sources of funds which are the areas where the alumni as a body and individuals can come in; either to make personal donations or facilitate such donations based on their networks and affiliations as members and ambassadors of the institution. Distinguished alumni may from time to time be honoured and be appointed to serve on the advisory boards of their colleges or faculties as the case may be so as to retain membership and ownership consciousness in them. The alumni office is often merged with advancement or endowment unit. This has proven successful as it has been adopted by several universities.

Leveraging on the achievements and networks of alumni is very crucial to the continued success of university administration. Former students scattered abroad going about businesses in various sectors of various economies are able to grant their university access in the various economies where they are. Hence, alumni relations is integral to the success of universities and adequate stakeholder management strategies must be put in place to carry alumni along in the administration of the institution especially by providing them with information and seeking their opinion. Many top-notch institutions circulate their bulletins amongst all their former students. Besides this serving publicity and visibility purposes, it also aids commitment and donations from alumni.

3.3 Human Resources Management

Human resources are the most important factor of production and services, constituting the ultimate asset of organizations. Long-term employment is even more profitable. Many productive organizations in Germany have been employing their employees on a long term basis. Two-thirds of Japanese high-tech organizations have been using long-term employment. The global competitiveness of Japanese and German organizations is attributed to their long-term employment practices (Ozaki, 1991; Schneider and Ellen, 1992). The long-term employment at the university through tenure practices (job security) of quality faculty helps the university to develop and maintain high-quality education. Quality faculty/college member with a tenure may be able to speak and write freely, teach contemporary knowledge without fear, and do research and develop new knowledge, skills and values freely without any fear of losing his/her job. Universities with policies of employing faculty on a short-term basis will not be able to develop and keep the quality faculty for an appropriate time to benefit from their valuable teaching and research fully (Blaskova et al., 2015). Most of the high-quality universities have been utilizing the tenure policies to benefit from the quality faculties fully for a long time. Such universities are able to increase the quality of education and gain other advantages from their long-term employment policies.

i. Appointment

There is a need to appoint managers to assist the VC at the different levels –faculty, department, unit etc. The process is as critical as that of the appointment of the VC. Roles should be well defined as well as the tenure of the incumbent. Appointments of HODs, especially, should be based on the ability of the HOD to attract grants as is being done by the world class universities. Experience should also count and character as well. Likewise, the imposition of staff on the department/unit by the VC should be a thing of the past. Staff should be appointed based on merit for effectiveness and enhanced efficiency. Also, newly appointed academics should receive an effective induction in the Department.

ii. *Staff performance evaluation and development*

Staff performance evaluation should normally provide information for systematic planning and implementation of an agenda for staff and institutional development. It is, however, sad that the drive to improve on the existing systems and structures is higher among nations and regions with better-performing universities than among those with the least performing universities who actually have the greater need for enhanced leadership and management. Universities in Nigeria should not fail to address the real needs of academic staff, sustain their interest and support their traditional academic roles while at the same time fairly assessing their diversified roles in knowledge economy.

3.4 Organizational Structure

Organizations with a horizontal network structure provide an environment for open communication and close cooperation, while establishing close and genuine relations among its stakeholders. This kind of environment plays an important role in achieving high quality in many organizations. Horizontal networks, being expansive, self-controlled and non-physical, seem to be better than vertical networks in modern day management of universities. This is because all stakeholders have a sense of belonging without a master-servant relationship. The horizontal network structure provides opportunities for innovation and creativity by encouraging people to work cooperatively and closely. The free and full communication untainted by fear, and the close coordination among the stakeholders provide better opportunities and increase motivation for developing a high level of quality. World-class universities use the horizontal network organizational structure for establishing high-quality education. The stakeholders in Nigerian universities can also easily adopt the horizontal network structure for their organizational structures, since universities have well-educated people who can adopt the horizontal network organizational structure easily.

3.5 Marketing/Communications

The adoption of digital innovation into marketing and communication strategies is now more critical than ever in strengthening a university's brand and reputation. With increase in tuition fees, greater competition at home and internationally and with increasingly demanding, digitally savvy students, digital media have become an important and exciting part of higher education recruitment strategies (Jie, 2011). Today's graduates are competing with peers from all over the world for the jobs of tomorrow. According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), at the current rate of growth, nearly 50% of all 25-34 years old are expected to have a university degree by 2030 (Potocnik and Verheugen, 2007). The undeniable solution to this looming challenge is institutional internationalization. Introducing students to global perspectives and opening campus doors to international students to ensure classrooms and lecture theatres reflect the global workforce is critical.

Nigerian universities need to take a step further by engaging in digital innovation as a way of attracting students, at least, from neighbouring countries in West Africa rather than allow some universities in Africa take advantage of our citizens. This will reduce the amount spent annually by Nigerian parents on edu-tourism thereby conserving foreign exchange earnings

and saving our economy. To succeed, Nigeria university professionals need to embrace digital innovation and seize the opportunities it provides for marketing and communications. It is an opportunity to leapfrog competition in other countries in Africa by learning from commercials. This calls for the overhauling of the present situation to allow for better curriculum, infrastructure and funding.

Many change initiatives fail because the vision and the strategy are not adequately communicated to the staff whose commitment and support are crucial to their success. Normal methods of communication – internal newspapers, meetings with deans and heads of school – are important, but the “informal” – management-by-walking-about – are the most important. As John le Carré has observed, “a desk is a dangerous place from which to view the world” (Bennis, 2009). Vice-chancellors need to get out and about both inside and outside the university. They need an abundance of interactive energy: an endless ability to be with, talk to, and have exchanges with colleagues. Hence, they need to regularly visit schools and departments, hold lunches and informal meetings with small groups of senior staff, new recruits and other natural groupings; and use their official residence to entertain not just the great and the good but as many people as possible within the university and a wide social and political spectrum outside it.

Correspondence in a university, whether it be by memo or letter, is usually on the university letterhead. The letterhead is an official instrument of a university, which normally suggests that the information it carries is backed by the authority of that university. It is wrong for an office holder to use the letterhead of the office for private communications or for communication not originating from one’s office. Apart from interaction through correspondence, however, university staff should It is also expected that staff interact through different awareness forums such as meetings and seminars.

3.6 Funding/ Bursary Activities

The amount of funds available for use by universities will definitely affect their ability to hire quality staff and to acquire advanced technology equipment and infrastructures to conduct research. Thus, funding has a direct impact on the production of high-quality research. However, universities in Nigeria are underfunded. The 15% of the yearly budget for education as recommended by UNESCO has not been adhered to by the various administrations in the country, culminating in several strikes, putting the management under stress. Therefore, this calls for alternative sources of university funding (Ebuara, 2009). Fees from students on various programmes in universities have not kept up with the universities’ funding needs. The key financial objective of universities in Nigeria should target the provision of long-term resources to strengthen outstanding learning, teaching and research. However, excesses and leakages should be checked.

3.7 Library and Student Services

This aspect is about the quality of service rendered to students. Universities are expected to create educational environments where students will begin to appreciate the complexity of global integration and develop skills to navigate it successfully. Likewise, university should have fair, effective and timely procedures for handling students’ complaints and academic appeals.

i. Voice

Students are pivotal to the existence of any University. Their voices on issues are expected to be heard. Students should be given voice and enabled to express themselves without fear. They should have the opportunity to raise any issue of concern without risk of disadvantage. Therefore, management should put in place mechanisms to collect, review and where and when appropriate respond to feedback from students.

As a matter of fact, students should have a voice in the assessment of their lecturers and other staff in the department. This will reduce the high-handedness or overbearing pride evidenced by some staff manners towards students. University management should ensure the existence of student/staff forums at the departmental or faculty level. Likewise, the arrangements and frequency of meetings and how issues may be put forward should be well documented. Mechanisms should also be put in place such that any conclusions reached by the forum are taken into consideration and the outcome of such consideration is forwarded to students. Feedback questionnaires could be designed to elicit information from students.

ii. Digitization of activities

Recurrent activities such as students' registration, fees payment, student identity card processing, and entrance examination should be digitized so that every student can have access to it wherever and whenever, provided that the timelines set for such activities have not lapsed. The situation in which students are made to form long queues for any of the above activities ought to be avoided. The management of the university has a responsibility to ensure the smooth-running of the mechanisms put in place for the digitization of activities.

iii. Students' support

Students are able to give full support to the university when there is trust and they can rely on the system. Early implementation of the promises made by the university and the positive behavior of lecturers and staff inspire trust of the students. Likewise, the interest and support of staff, academic and non-teaching, in solving students' problems is key to ensuring the reliance of students on the system. The VC is, therefore, expected to provide an enabling environment for supporting students in their quest to acquire needed knowledge while enrolled in the university. Lecturers and other staff members should become partners of their students, always willing to help students in their intellectual and personality growth.

3.8 Institutional Internationalization Strategy

It becomes incumbent on universities to undertake internationalization initiatives to prepare students for success in a global marketplace. In the lifespan of today's university students, the world's economies have developed ever-closer links in trade, investment and production such that impact of globalization permeates their career aspirations. Coopers reported that 71% of millennials say they want and expect an overseas assignment during their career, 64% of employers also see that international experience is an important factor in staff

recruitment while 92% of employers are seeking personality traits gained from studying abroad (Bouter, 2010). This means that the jobs of tomorrow will require greater sensitivity to individual differences and the ability to relate to people from different cultural backgrounds.

If the goal of our universities includes preparing students for life post-graduation, then a VC must be internationally exposed and should ensure that the university continues providing their students more opportunities for international exposure, by expanding and broadening, in their lecture rooms, diversity of perspectives that challenge and encourage insight into and understanding about the world outside their nation's borders. The impact of internationalization efforts also reaches beyond job preparation, helping to cultivate global citizens. The level of interdependence in the world can be seen in news events, entertainment, sports, and natural resource shortages. As the connections in the world grow beyond the characteristics traditionally associated with globalization, a cross-cultural perspective is needed to fully contribute to the interconnected society.

3.9 Knowledge Exchange/Transfer Initiative

Knowledge transfer and exchange comprise set of activities and methods that are undertaken to disseminate knowledge among those who have interest in or needs for it. The movement could be a one-way flow of knowledge from researchers to practitioners (i.e., knowledge transfer) or two-way flow of knowledge among researchers and practitioners (knowledge exchange) recognizing that knowledge creation is not the sole domain of any one actor in a system (Moriconi, 2014).

University management needs to ensure that knowledge produced in their domain is transferred by providing a framework and a standard operating procedure through which the outputs of research from the university can be shaped, shared and communicated with the relevant target audiences around the globe. Universities in Nigeria, therefore, need to strategize on developing workable and effective knowledge transfer mechanisms. This is important to make universities more visible and to let the local and probably international communities benefit from the purpose for which the university has been created – knowledge production. This again opens the universities to receive new ideas thereby enriching their knowledge base and enhancing their outputs.

The way research is packaged or findings from universities are disseminated can impact the application of such knowledge (Moriconi, 2014). At times, findings of academic research may not be necessarily presented in an academic way for effectiveness. This is because the audience has to be put into consideration otherwise the form and medium of ideas presentation may actually affect the impact of such ideas.

3.10 Administrative Services

The administrative section is responsible for the provision of post-admission activities for effective student administration and for providing leadership and coordination in the development and delivery of administrative support for teaching and learning across the university. The administrative section typically comprises the registry and student affairs division. Registry encompasses academic records, data quality, examinations and assessments, student data management, analysis and staffing.

Administration in universities is expected move towards paper-light and finally to paper-less processes. This will reduce cost on stationery. The VC and his team who want to reposition their university for global competitiveness will ensure that their administrative activities are as paperless as possible. Issues of leave and memos, for example should be handled electronically through the intranet. To reduce the wage bill, core administrative duties should be handled by the university while activities like cleaning and security are outsourced.

3.11 Quality Assurance and Improvement

Two ways exist through which Nigerian universities are regulated. One is the periodical assessment done by the National Universities Commission (NUC) by way of programme accreditation. The internal one, is the prerogative of the academic planning units (APU) of various universities. This second one is under the control of the university management which is controlled by the VC. Academic planning units must ensure that the deliverables i.e. graduates and research output are competitive in terms of quality and are relevant to the societal need. The university management should put in place a structure that ensures necessary actions as recommended by the APU are taken at the appropriate time. There should also be appropriate information flow between departments, colleges/schools and the APU. This also ensures that the approval of new programmes and programme monitoring are properly done.

i. New programmes

Times are changing fast in the Nigeria educational sector. There is competition in admission of students and job prospects for graduates such that new programmes and upgrading of curriculum are inevitable. There is a need to ensure that course design and delivery reflect the current expectations about the standard of university education. Newly proposed courses should take account of developing knowledge in the discipline and a suitable reflection on NUC benchmark. Programmes and courses are not to be floated by departments solely for fundraising as is the practice in some universities in Nigeria (Skolnik, 2010). University management needs to ensure that proposals for new programmes should provide information on a range of factors such as anticipated demand, academic content, availability of examining resources, availability of teaching resources, library implications, IT skills required, administration and servicing among others. The above will help inform the approval of the VC.

ii. Programme monitoring

Programme monitoring focuses on the effectiveness of an academic programme in achieving its stated aims and objectives, the continuing effectiveness of the curriculum and the associated assessment (Coates, 2010). University management therefore will need to routinely monitor the effectiveness of its programmes and should not wait for the NUC reaccreditation. This is necessary to ensure that such programmes remain current in the light of evolving knowledge in the discipline and that appropriate actions are taken to remedy any identified shortcomings.

3.12 Strategic Planning

The university strategic plan will normally fulfill the commitment to its formulation and outline the framework for university's direction of efforts over a period of time, usually five years. The strategic plan should be guided by the core values and objectives of the university as drawn by the management in collaboration with the university council. The plan should as well lay out the main challenges that are likely to be faced by the university in achieving the stated objectives during the period in focus. The plan should specify clearly the strategies of the various faculties relating to different areas of the university's activities, and describe how the identified challenges are to be addressed in the course of the planned period of concern.

The plan should also take into consideration the specific core activities of the university. The plan should aim at bringing together ideas generated across all areas of the university before arriving at the overall strategy and should build on the previous achievements of the university. University management under the leadership of the VC will ensure strict implementation of the strategic plan using appropriate administrative and leadership strategies.

3.13 Departmental Administration

The department is the engine room for all academic activities and has the primary responsibility for the training of students using a curriculum approved by the university senate. The curriculum used as a guide for training of students in the various programmes is expected to be a dynamic document that responds to changing realities and needs of the society and meet internationalization requirements. Hence, it is subject to regular review which may involve changes. Any change in the curriculum should normally originate from the department, but does not become operational until it is approved by the senate. It must be discussed at the departmental board meeting and then presented by the head of department to the faculty, school or college board of studies for deliberation and approval after which it become a matter for the college. The dean then takes responsibility for the matter and forwards it for the consideration and approval of the university senate through the Vice Chancellor. It is only after the senate (or the VC acting on behalf of the senate) has approved the proposal that it can be operated. However, this procedure may vary from one university to another.

The head of department should not unilaterally take a decision or act on matters that require the attention of the appropriate board of studies (except it is urgent). Since the head of a department (HOD) is the representative of the VC in that department, it is necessary for the VC to ensure that appropriate persons occupy the position of Head of any Department. The major preoccupation of the HOD is hereby discussed.

i. Supervision of Subordinates

The HOD has oversight responsibility to ensure that the departments in the school, college or faculty are delivering on their mandates. While monitoring the fulfillment of contact hour requirements, the HOD also has the responsibility to ensure that all staff teach their classes regularly and as scheduled. It is an aberration for any staff not to teach during the normal lecture periods only to later crowd the classes into a few weeks or, worse still, several hours

in a day in the name of covering the synopsis. Such behavior should be discouraged if truly the department and, by extension, the university aspire to become world-class.

ii. Examination and Grading

Assessment of the students to ascertain their readiness for certification is crucial to the training of students. Hence, the administration should ensure that it is done in a just and fair manner. Examination questions are to cover the synopsis and reflect what was taught to the students. Grading of scripts should be done in line with well-developed marking schemes. The standard practice is for examination questions to be submitted to the head of department and chief examiner for vetting. The marking schemes should be submitted along with the question papers. The marking schemes should clearly show the award of scores per points and not a bulk award of scores. Scores awarded to students must be just and fair. To guard against allegations of extortion and sorting of all kinds, the Association of Vice-chancellors of Nigeria Universities (AVCNU) in its Keffi Declaration (communiqué after the national conference of the VCs) recommended that continuous assessment scores must be submitted to heads of departments and deans before the commencement of examinations. The NUC-recommended techniques of students assessment in its undergraduate benchmark comprise a combination of unannounced quizzes, class examination, and homework assignments. It is the responsibility of the head of department to protect and assure the integrity of scores awarded in each department and they must not spare any effort in dealing with any issue of sorting or examination leakage. Culprits must be appropriately sanctioned as recommended by the Keffi Declaration. The HOD should not only ensure that staff submit their scores within the approved time, a meeting of the departmental board of examiners should be called to discuss the scores for further processing.

The external examiner is used to assess final year courses and projects, and to certify the overall performance of graduating students as well as the quality of facilities and teaching. The external examiner is expected to write a report of his/her findings. External examiners answer to the Vice Chancellor, hence their reports go directly to the Vice Chancellor; although they can and normally should discuss their observations with the department or head of department. It is an aberration for head of department to receive the external examiner's report and forward to the vice chancellor.

iii. Exercise of Discretion

As head of department or dean, one must hold office in trust. Attached to the office is some authority to take some actions. However, there are issues on which one cannot pontificate, especially where the position of the University is not clearly stated. In such circumstances, the HOD needs to suspend decision and consult the next level of decision making.

iv. Abuse of privilege

As an office holder, the HOD is likely to come in contact with sensitive information that he/she would normally not have access to if he was not holding the office. The HOD is not to use such information to the disadvantage of others or further his/her personal agenda or interest. In addition, the HOD is not to impose his/her views on the department or take unilateral decisions on matters that should normally be a joint decision of the faculty or

departmental Board. As much as possible, the HOD is expected to ensure a consensus is reached and to uphold the decision of the board. For effective administration of the department, the HOD is to carry his/her staff along and ensure they buy into the vision for the department or faculty as outlined by the HOD and in tandem with the university vision and core values.

3.14 Staff Appraisal and Reward System

Academic staff that are committed to the university's mission (including teaching), ought to be rewarded adequately and provided with appropriate career ladders. Vice chancellors cannot manage adequately only by exhorting the good virtues or loyalty displayed by staff members (Bain, 2004). Staff members' behavior and, ultimately, attitudes and values need to change so that they support, rather than undermine, their vice chancellor's vision and the strategy. Having appraised individuals and units, the management needs to motivate them by recognizing and rewarding achievement not only by thanks, praise and status but also by money. Hence, management needs to allocate resources – which will always be scarce – to units and to individuals on a performance-related basis.

4 Concluding Remarks and Recommendations

Some Nigerian university leaders run the universities with the assumption that the system cannot be sustained without continuous government assistance. Some others see the university education system as their private estate. This has caused disharmony in the university system. To these groups, the university is a means to their individual ends with devastating results on Nigeria's economy. Some university leaders have become much too sensitive to criticism and arbitrariness and high-handedness on their part have blurred their vision of tackling challenges in the education system in an effective and efficient manner. If our universities are keen at and committed to creating and disseminating knowledge across disciplines and fields, delivering elite education across levels, serving national needs and furthering the international public good, then we have to re-invent their management and leadership before it is late. One thing is clear: for Nigeria to take its legitimate place as a global intellectual power, world-class universities are a necessity in the country.

The following recommendations following from the above are made for mainstreaming Nigerian universities for world class status:

- i.* Vice chancellors should be appointed through democratic means and not by imposition as it is done at times by the government. The criteria to be used for the selection of candidates for the post should be based on quality of accumulated knowledge and experience, deep understanding of the intricacies of the job, quality of mentorship and past accomplishments in a number of situations on other posts.
- ii.* Vice chancellors and other leaders in the University should be appointed on the basis of integrity as good leadership entails a high level of integrity and tolerance for those who speak valuable truths. Any individual with a history of corrupt practices should not be appointed to the post of a vice chancellor.
- iii.* Decision making heavily lies on the vice chancellor but he/she should be able to make wide consultation which forms part of decision making process.
- iv.* There must be a vibrant and formidable alumni association through which funds can be raised for the development of the University.

- v. The university authorities should regularly put in place training programmes for researchers where writing of proposals that can win grants can be learnt. This is necessary because grants are an avenue of generating revenue for the university through which developmental projects can be executed in the university.
- vi. Universities should diversify their income base through research grants, endowment and investment, collaboration, contracts and consultancies, commercialization of facilities and research.
- vii. There must be proper means of communicating the research outputs from the university to individuals, industries and Government organizations who will make use of these outputs.

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