

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S ADDRESS AT THE PRESS BRIEFING FOR THE 13TH CONVOCATION CEREMONIES

8th January 2024 / 26th Jumada Thani 1445 AH

BUILDING PILLARS OF FOUNTAIN UNIVERSITY'S NEXT HORIZON

All praise is due to Allah, the Sustainer, the Gatherer, who has sustained our existence till this moment. May His peace and blessings be upon the noblest of mankind, Muhammad (SAW), his household, his companions and all Muslims till the end of time.

With great honour and immense pleasure, I extend a warm welcome to all of you at this press briefing, marking the commencement of our 13th convocation ceremonies. I express my deepest gratitude to Almighty Allah for bringing this day to fruition –a realization of my lifelong aspiration to serve as a Vice-Chancellor. On 1st March, 2023, I proudly assumed the role of the fourth substantive Vice-Chancellor of this esteemed institution, Fountain University, Osogbo, and the first female to do so.

My sincere gratitude begins with Almighty Allah for His mercy. Special appreciation to the Proprietor, Nasrul-lahi-li Fathi Society, Board of Trustees, Governing Council, Management, Senate, staff, students and all stakeholders for their steadfast support. I extend profound gratitude to my predecessors for upholding FUO core values, mission, vision and laying a robust foundation for our progress.

A warm welcome is extended to the esteemed members of the press, whose presence and professionalism significantly contribute to the success of today's momentous occasion. Thank you for being an integral part of the force that supports our dreams and celebrates our achievements.

I also extend a heartfelt welcome to the parents and sponsors of the graduands of the 13th convocation ceremonies of the University. Additionally, I express deep gratitude to our well-wishers worldwide, whether present physically, virtually, or unable to attend, for their unwavering support and encouragement.

At this junction, I extend a special acknowledgment to key individuals who have played pivotal roles in the progress and development of Fountain University. A heartfelt appreciation goes to the Board of Trustees, Executives, Council of Elders and the Mission Board of NASFAT—the Founder of the University. Your dedication to the upliftment of the university is duly recognized and deeply appreciated.

The unique contributions, commitments and sacrifices of the Chairman of Fountain Board of Trustees, Alhaji Adeyinka Adeola, towards the development of the university are acknowledged

with sincere gratitude. Special thanks to the Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of the Governing Council, Alhaji (Dr) AWA Ibrahim. Your dedication and sacrifices, as evident in your concerted efforts to steer the university to safer and more successful grounds are genuinely appreciated.

To all the distinguished members of the Board of Trustees and of the Governing Council, your hard work and focused efforts in supporting the university at all times have been instrumental in the remarkable achievements of the university. Special recognition is given to the Fountain University Patrons Club of successful Muslims and the Osun State Fountain University Development Foundation. Your contributions and supports are duly recognized and deeply appreciated.

Though our current administration may be young, age alone does not determine achievements. Since assuming office on 1st March, 2023, the narrative has been one of rebranding, transformation and remarkable achievements for the university. The 2022/2023 academic year, by the grace of Allah (SWT) has witnessed monumental accomplishments and feats for which I cannot claim sole credit. My inaugural address to the university community emphasized teamwork for a greater Fountain University and indeed, the spirit of teamwork has been pivotal in our success.

Special thanks to the university principal officers, the stalwarts of our institution; the Registrar, Mr. Sheriff Adenekan; the Bursar, Mrs. Silifat Ali-Balogun and the Acting University Librarian, Mr. Sirajudeen Bakrin. Your exceptional commitment has been critical in propelling our university to greater heights. Your strategic decisions have been helpful in upholding the highest academic standard, and I am truly appreciative of your invaluable contributions to our university's success.

Special acknowledgment and appreciation are extended to the Deans who have demonstrated exemplary leadership in their respective roles; Prof. A. Usman, the Dean of the Postgraduate School; Deans of various Colleges, Profs A.J.K. Shittu (CONAS), M.D. Adeoye (COBMEHS), Labo-popoola (COARTS), Drs O.F. Liadi (COMAS), K.O. Olaniyan (COLAW) and Dr. R.K. Alatishe (DSA). Their constant support and dedication have also played a crucial role in shaping the success story of Fountain University. In the same vein, I recognize the contributions of the Director of Academic Planning, Prof. G.A. Lalude; the Director of Works and Physical Planning, Engr S. Odenike and the Deputy Director of Internal Audit, Mr. I.Y. Adenarinwo. I also acknowledge the Directors of all university centres as well, including the newly created ones under my leadership.

Appreciation goes to all Heads of Departments and Units, along with other members of the senate, level advisers and all senior and junior staff, both teaching and non-teaching, for their cooperation. Your collective efforts have played an indispensable role in achieving the landmark success we celebrate on this grand occasion. Your innovative thinking coupled with unalloyed

support given to the university administration has fostered excellence in teaching, research and community service. Additionally, your commitment has sustained a tranquil learning environment, contributing to growth. This achievement shows the collaborative spirit and hard work of individuals, highlighting the strength unity brings to Fountain University. The university's Public Relations Officer, Mr. Taoheed Alimi, has been doing a brilliant job with his exceptional efforts in publicizing the university and elevating it to become a household name not only in Nigeria but also beyond. As the image maker of the university, the PRP has through his dedication and strategic communication played a crucial role in enhancing the university's visibility and reputation on both national and international platforms.

“Our Fountaineers”, the students of Fountain University, propel our progress with dedication to academic excellence and vibrant contributions to the university community. Celebrating their achievements inject vitality into our pursuit of greatness. Entrusting them with our institution's legacy, we are confident they will shape the future of Fountain University and beyond. Our host community, under the leadership of the paramount ruler, His Royal Majesty Oba Jimoh Abidemi Oyetunji Olaonipekun, Laroye II, The Ataoja of Osogbo Land, deserves our commendation for smooth relationship we enjoy. Appreciation is further extended to the security agencies for their dedicated efforts and cooperation.

As the custodian of Fountain University for nearly eleven (11) months, it is clear that with the continued dedication and support of this remarkable team, my vision to rebrand the university as through enhancing enrolment, digitizing learning, driving internationalization agenda, creating a conducive environment for development, boosting internal revenue, strengthening relationships and governing with exemplary leadership will undoubtedly be realized. Together, we shall strive for excellence and elevate Fountain University to greater heights.

On 8th June 2023, which marked my first hundred days in office, I engaged with member of the Press, many of whom are present here today. During that session, I highlighted accomplishments across academic development, internal revenue generation, staff development, collaborations, student welfare, physical development, corporate social responsibilities and more. I discussed transformative initiatives aimed at elevating education and research in an environment fostering intellectual curiosity and innovation, empowering both students and faculty to become change agents. Today, I am proud to share that there are many more success stories to tell.

Distinguished guests, members of the Press, ladies and gentlemen, our university, as a rapidly growing entity, continues to showcase excellence in academic and research, achieving new milestones under my leadership. Once again, I take pride in recounting the numerous feats that our university has accomplished, marking the commencement of the 13th Convocation Ceremonies, which began yesterday with a Walimatul Qur'an event.

1. ACADEMIC MATTERS

i. Programme Accreditation and Quota Allocations

All academic programmes have secured full accreditation status from the National Universities Commission (NUC) and their respective professional bodies, ensuring their recognition and compliance with established standards.

Following a special visitation in June 2023, NUC granted full accreditation to all four programmes in the College of Basic Medical and Health Sciences (COBMEHS) (Nursing Science, Medical Laboratory Science, Environmental Science, and Public Health). Notably, the Nursing Science programme received accreditation with an increased quota from the Nursing and Midwifery Council for the next five years. The Medical Laboratory Science programme also obtained accreditation from the Medical Laboratory Council of Nigeria, solidifying the endorsement of both NUC.

On 31st October 2023, the NUC officially approved the commencement of eleven undergraduate and eight post-graduate programmes. These include cutting-edge B.Sc. Electronics and Computer Science, B.Sc. Electronics and Communications and B.Sc. Criminology and Security Studies. The postgraduate programmes are M.Sc. & Ph.D. programmes in Accounting, Political Science, Computer Science and Public Administration.

In November 2023, the College of Arts secured resource approval from the NUC, enabling the commencement of programmes such as B.A. English, B.A History and International Relations, B.A Linguistics, B.A French, B.A Arabic, and Islamic Studies.

The National Board of Arabic, Islamic and International Studies (NBAIS) endorsed the Diploma in Arabic, Islamic and International Studies.

The University received approval to commence the Interim Joint Matriculation Board (IJMB) programme.

Efforts are currently underway for the establishment of the College of Education, incorporating new academic programmes.

ii. Core Curriculum Development:

In conformity with the NUC Core Curriculum Minimum Academic Standards (CCMAS), we have meticulously developed a comprehensive 30% Fountain University, Osogbo (FUO) content for all our programmes. I am delighted to inform this gathering that the CCMAS-FUO has been implemented, starting with the 100 level of the 2023/2024 academic session.

To meet the demands of modern higher education, Smart Boards have been introduced in selected classrooms, aligning with current technological trends. This initiative is designed to

elevate the learning experience by incorporating interactive and innovative teaching methodologies.

2. RESEARCH AND INNOVATION HUB & TECHNOLOGICAL INTEGRATION:

Recognizing the crucial role of research and innovation in intellectual endeavour, Fountain University inaugurated the Centre for Research, Innovation, and Technology (FUCRIT) on 20th March, 2023. FUCRIT is dedicated to enhancing research capacity, fostering an enabling environment and facilitating FUO's research growth. The Centre comprises four units, including the FUO-NASFAT Research Unit, which coordinates and provides research grants, supporting diverse and multidisciplinary research on NASFAT and its affiliates. Three tiers of 3 million naira research grants were awarded for the 2022/2023 session. The award ceremony took place on 11th October, 2023, where three lead researchers, Prof. Mariam Adeoye, Dr. Suliat Abdullah and Dr. Rasheed Adebiyi were granted 1.5 million naira, 1 million naira, and 500 thousand naira respectively, to fund their research work alongside their team members.

Prof. Majeedah Afolabi-Balogun, from the Department of Chemical Sciences, successfully secured a grant from the Cambridge-Africa Programme for early Cervical Cancer diagnosis in Nigeria in collaboration with Dr. Sara Pensa of the University of Cambridge, United Kingdom, showcasing the international collaborative prowess of the university.

Dr. Mutiat Ogunbode, as a co-investigator, successfully obtained a TETFund National Research Fund grant of ₦25.6 Million for a project on Microbial valorization of keratinous wastes.

Furthermore, Dr. Rasheed Adebiyi from the Department of Mass Communication received a \$2,000 grant from Solution Journalism Network, New York, USA for implementation of solution journalism training for journalists and media houses in Osun State.

Dr. Ridwan Kolawole, also from the same department, earned a \$10,000 grant from Next Generation Social Science Research Council (Next-Gen-SSRC) Doctoral Dissertation Completion Fellowship, USA, for his Ph.D. programme, among various other grants.

Additionally, Prof. Abdulazeez Lawal, also from the Department of Chemical Sciences, has been recognized among the top 2% of World Researchers for 2023, affirming the university's unwavering commitment to research excellence.

In April, the university signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Teaching Research in Natural Sciences for Development in Africa, United Kingdom, to support Molecular Biology and Genetic Diversity Research. This collaborative effort brought state-of-the-art equipment valued at over N148 million to the university, thereby advancing research capabilities in these critical areas.

Furthermore, in the pursuit of excellence, Dr. Rasheed Adebisi of Mass Communication completed a 6-month post-doctoral attachment with Opolo Global Innovation Limited, Lagos. Dr. Adebisi played a crucial role in leading the Branding and Strategic Communication in the Research for Innovation, Commercialization, and Enterprise (RICE) team. This valuable experience not only boosts our research capabilities but also reinforces our commitment to bridging the gap between academia and industry.

The university's management will launch the inaugural merit award on Thursday as part of the convocation programmes to recognize outstanding researchers, staff and students who have made breakthrough research contributions and demonstrated significant publication record.

3. ADVANCEMENTS IN STUDENT ENROLMENT

i. Student Enrolment

With the introduction of new programmes and the revitalization of existing ones, our student enrolment is experiencing significant growth. Admission is still on-going for the 2023/2024 academic session and all our admissions adhere to the standards set by the Joint Admission Matriculations Board. Furthermore, postgraduate admissions are now conducted online.

ii. Revival of Adult Education

In order to promote lifelong learning and inclusivity, the university management has successfully revived adult education. Our institution now accommodates adults eager to return to the classroom as learners. It is worthy of note that FOU currently enrolled adult students in the Law and Political Science programmes, with ages ranging from 68 to 69 years. We are also proud to have a paramount ruler and a wife to a paramount ruler among our adult learners, demonstrating our dedication to providing educational opportunities for all.

4. ACADEMIC WORKSHOPS AND LITERARY EVENTS:

The university has reinvigorated its fundamental role as a hub for the exchange of research output and discussions on issues related to national development and internationalization. This was achieved through a series of seminars, lectures, workshops and conferences, underscoring the significance of academic engagement. Each college and department embraced the responsibility of hosting these events, a feat brilliantly accomplished, as evidenced by the diverse array of activities undertaken. Although, time constraints will prevent a detailed enumeration of all these programmes, however some of the activities are:

i. Professor Hussein Oloyede Annual Lecture

The university institutionalized the Professor Hussein Oloyede Annual Lecture in recognition of his sterling contributions as the pioneer Vice-Chancellor of the university. The inaugural lecture, hosted by the College of Natural and Applied Sciences (CONAS), featured Prof Adenike Oladiji,

Vice-Chancellor of the Federal University of Technology, Akure, as the distinguished guest lecturer.

ii. COMAS International Conference and Distinguished Lecture

The College of Management and Social Sciences (COMAS) organized its first International Conference, attracting scholars from both within and outside Nigeria. Furthermore, COMASS hosted its 2nd Distinguished Lecture, exploring the theme “Digital Economy, Nigerian Youth, and National Development”, with Senator (Dr) Abdulfatai Buhari as the Guest Lecturer. On 22nd November, the College also conducted the 2023 academic workshop, delving into “The Challenge of Development in Nigeria: Beyond the Corruption Narrative.”

iii. CONAS Book Review and Seminar Series

In November, 2023, the College of Natural and Applied Sciences (CONAS) held a book review on “The Beginner’s Guide to Python Programming” alongside the College Seminar Series.

iv. SPS Digital Academic Workshop

The School of Postgraduate Studies organized a Digital Academic Workshop, dissecting the ethical use of AI in research practices. Assistant Professor Lukman Raimi from the University of Brunei, Darus Salam, expertly facilitated the session. The programme witnessed participants from over seven nations.

v. COBMEHS College Seminar Series

The College of Basic Medical and Environmental Health Sciences hosted College Seminar Series, which provided a platform for scholarly exploration and collaboration. Other Colleges also organised College Seminars in the year.

vi. COARTS Da‘wah and Dialogue Training

The College of Arts collaborated with the NASFAT Missionary Initiative to organize a Train-the-Trainer Course in Dawah and Dialogue for final year students. This initiative reflects the university’s dedication to equipping students with valuable skills in outreach and meaningful dialogue within the community.

vii. COLAW Pioneering Legal Excellence

The College of Law is a trailblazer in fostering legal excellence and societal impact. By offering rigorous academic programmes, hands-on training and active community engagement, the College is dedicated to moulding the future generation of legal professionals.

3. COLLABORATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Central to our success is a firm commitment to enhancing collaboration and strategic linkages with global institutions and organizations. We actively seek partnerships transcending geographical boundaries and academic disciplines to build a vibrant, globally connected academic community.

i. Scientific Collaboration with TReND in Africa:

On 25th March 2023, Fountain University achieved a significant milestone in scientific research by entering into a transformative partnership with Teaching and Research in Natural Sciences for the Development in Africa (TReND in Africa). The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signing marked the initiation of a collaborative venture dedicated to advancing education and scientific exploration. This strategic alliance has garnered substantial support, with equipment valued at over N148 million generously donated from the United Kingdom, providing our institution with state-of-the-art tools for ground-breaking research in Molecular Biology and Genetic Diversity, with a focus on Cancer studies.

ii. Strategic Alliance with Nigerian Air Force (NAF):

On 20th June 2023, Fountain University established a strategic alliance with the Nigerian Air Force (NAF), emphasizing commitment to cyber security, governance and strategic studies. The MoU signifies a collaborative effort aimed at advancing knowledge and expertise in these vital areas.

i. International Academic Cooperation with INTI International University, Malaysia

On 3rd October 2023, Fountain University expanded its global reach through an MoU with INTI International University, Malaysia. This collaborative initiative spans various programmes such as student mobility, academic collaborations and joint publications, aligning with Fountain University's commitment to providing students with diverse educational opportunities.

ii. Partnership with other National Institutions:

Fountain University has strengthened national connections through strategic MoUs with institutions like Al-Hikmah University. The MoU aims at collaboration in various aspects, including staff and student exchange programmes. The university also signed an MoU with Value Female Network to support community health initiatives for the Public Health Programme. Furthermore, a commitment to Arabic and Islamic studies at a sub-degree level was solidified through an MoU with the National Board for Arabic & Islamic Studies (NBAIS), offering graduates a pathway to admission into recognized Nigerian universities.

4. SCHOLARSHIP ACHIEVEMENTS

In addition to the University Scholars Award designated for students with the highest Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) per level per programme and the Alhaja Wosilat Aregbesola University Scholarship, which contributes N2 million annually for brilliant students, the

university successfully attracted more scholarships in 2023. This ongoing effort aligns with our vision of making Fountain University affordable for all students.

The scholarships attracted include:

i. Scholarships for Indigent Students

In adherence to our belief that financial constraints should never hinder access to education, the university secured full tuition fee payments for 14 and 11 indigent yet brilliant students for the 2022/2023 and 2023/2024 academic sessions, respectively. This significant support, amounting to N17.6 Million, was generously provided by the Alhaji Belo-Olusoga Foundation within a span of four months.

ii. The N50 Million Admiral (Dr.) Jubrila Ayinla Scholarship

We proudly received the Admiral Jubrila Ayinla (former Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of the Governing Council) N50 Million Scholarship for distinguished students who have demonstrated outstanding efforts in their academic journey.

iii. Scholarship for Arabic and Islamic Studies Programmes:

In addition to above scholarships, I am pleased to share that the Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of the Governing Council of the University, Dr. AWA Ibrahim, has generously extended full scholarship support to the first 20 students admitted to the Arabic and Islamic Studies programmes for the 2023/2024 academic session.

5. PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND FACILITIES DEVELOPMENTS

In the period since the last convocation, we take immense pride in the successful completion of several essential building projects that have not only reshaped our physical landscape but also fortified our commitment to excellence. Allow me to share the details of these noteworthy projects with you.

i. Public Health and Environmental Science Laboratories and Museum

These cutting-edge facilities will advance research and practical learning in Public health and Environmental science. Commended by both the NUC and professional bodies, it underscores the university's commitment to providing top-notch facilities that meet and exceed established standards.

ii. College of Arts Building

This impressive structure, generously donated by five anonymous philanthropists, houses staff offices with ensuite facilities, a well-equipped college library and three spacious classrooms with a seating capacity of 300.

iii. Jubrila Ayinla 292 Bed Spaces Hostel

Admiral (Dr.) Jubrila Ayinla, former Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of Council, also provided essential accommodation infrastructure for students with the donation of 292 bed space hostel.

iv. Luxury Seat-Out

Dr (Mrs) Ojo-Opeewe and associates in USA, supported the university's drive for amenities with comfortable seating arrangements for leisure and communal activities at the Histopathology complex.

v. Olympic-sized Basketball and Tennis Courts

The new courts, donated by NASFAT Youth Wing, offer top-notch sporting facilities for staff and students and this promote physical well-being.

vi. Animal House

Dr. Raheemat Adisa generously donated the Animal House for practical learning in animal-related disciplines, aimed at achieving research excellence.

vii. Completion and Furnishing of 18 Staff Offices (Old Administrative Building)

The Building was completed and adequately furnished to improve the working environment for staff.

viii. 100 Units Solar Security Lights

A gift from the Parents Forum, which objective is to promote campus safety

ix. Renovation of the University Library:

The library was renovated and collection expanded to enhance academic resources for students and staff.

x. Establishment of Lotus Bank:

The introduction of Lotus Bank on the university campus signifies a meaningful stride in the provision of essential banking services. This facility provides convenient and accessible banking solutions for all stakeholders within the university community.

xi. NCC's Donation of 100 Laptops

The Nigerian Communication Commission (NCC) donated 100 laptops to the university, fortifying our computer-based test facilities and supporting technological advancement in education.

xii. NITDA's Digital Economy Centre & E-Learning Solution:

The National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) contributed a 15-working station Digital Economy Centre & E-Learning Solution, facilitated by Senator (Dr) Fatai Buhari. This donation reflects a commitment to digital literacy and innovation on campus.

xiii. NCC's Broadband Project

The NCC also donated a broadband project to the university, which is aimed at improving connectivity and providing a high-speed internet infrastructure.

xiv. 10,000 litre Water Project

A 10,000 litre water project has been implemented for the halls of residence, to address a fundamental need of a reliable and sufficient water supply for our students.

xv. Introduction of University Bakery

In a bid to enhance food services and provide valuable vocational training opportunities, the university is proud to announce the commencement of its own bakery. This initiative will elevate the quality of food services on campus, offer students a platform for practical skill development in the field of baking and contribute to the university's IGR.

xvi. Greening and Beautification of the Campus

The Fountain University Greening and Beautification Club (FUO-G&BC) transforms the campus in three phases; planting trees, flowers and greening open spaces. This initiative aims to create a visually appealing and eco-friendly campus environment for staff and students.

6. STAFF WELFARE AND DEVELOPMENT

Beyond the realms of academia, the current administration also embodies on all round staff development and welfare as a crucial key for the institution. Achievements and feats we have recorded so far are:

Financial aid for acquisition of higher degrees and certificates: Our commitment to staff development persists, offering financial aid for the acquisition of higher degrees and certificates.

I am proud to report that seven staff obtained PhD degrees while three acquired Master Degrees in addition to other professional certificates in 2023.

Numerous staff received sponsorship for conferences, seminars and workshops, both nationally and internationally, showcasing the university's dedication to their professional advancement.

The establishment of the Centre for Development and In-House Training (CDIT) with Dr. Olusegun Liadi as the pioneer Director. The Centre emphasizes the importance placed by the university on staff development. In four months, CDIT conducted training for management, newly recruited academic staff, groundkeepers and facilities service personnel, supporting their professional growth and skill enhancement.

Fountain University inaugurated its branch of the Association of Nigerian University Professional Administrators (ANUPA) on the 31st May 2023, to support the network of university professionals dedicated to effective administration.

We efficiently cleared the 2022 promotion backlog, ensuring timely and fair recognition for deserving individuals. This birth the promotion of the first two female Professors (Profs Adeoye and Afolabi-Balogun) in the university. We concluded the year 2023 promotion exercise before 30th September, 2023.

New footwear and work wear were supplied to enhance the comfort and efficiency of our facility service personnel, security officers and groundkeepers, leading to a better working environment for our dedicated staff.

In line with government approval, we successfully implemented a 35% salary increment for staff, effective from October 2023. This adjustment reflects our commitment to the well-being and satisfaction of our valued faculty and administrative team.

7. ENHANCING STUDENTS' WELFARE

In my inaugural meeting with the Student Central Executive Committee on 30th March 2023, I outlined my vision and dedicated agendas to elevate Fountain University. I am pleased to share that, by the grace of Almighty Allah, we have achieved significant milestones in improving students' welfare and care. These accomplishments underscore our avowed commitment to a supportive and enriching environment for every student at Fountain University.

The university conducted comprehensive repairs and upgrades in all university halls of residence. The addition of ensuite facilities has significantly elevated the overall accommodation standards. Looking ahead, similar enhancements are planned for the Adegunwa Hostel in the upcoming academic session.

We are proud to provide consistent support for various student activities, including the Students' Week, Da'wah Week, VC's Cup and other important events. These efforts aim to create a conducive and engaging environment for all our students.

We augmented the Ramadan Feed Programme with extra food items. This ensures enhanced nutritional support for students during the blessed month of Ramadan.

Our students participated in virtual leadership development programmes, notably the LEAP Africa Virtual Youth Leadership Development Programme and the Think Start-up Beyond Borders initiative, a further attestation to our commitment to nurturing leadership skills and empowering students for success across diverse platforms.

We significantly upgraded our sporting facilities to provide a conducive environment for physical activities. We also introduced various sports competitions, including the VC's Cup, Alhaja Jemilat Jubrila and SSCE Sports Competitions and staff and students monthly walk for life and friendly match, to encourage and promote a culture of sportsmanship and healthy competition among members of the FUO community.

Fountain University's dedication to a healthy campus environment is exemplified through the creation of the Drug-Free Club. This initiative focuses on fostering awareness and building a supportive community for substance-free living among students.

8. ENTREPRENEURIAL ENGAGEMENT

Aligning with Fountain University's vision of producing academically equipped and entrepreneurial graduates, we have enhanced the Centre for Entrepreneurship and Skills Acquisition. In 2023, the university attained full membership in the African Speakers Bureau for Entrepreneurship. This membership provides opportunities for online training in various entrepreneurial skills and access to a student/youth entrepreneurship growth hub, among other benefits.

9. SPIRITUAL PROGRAMMES

At Fountain University, we recognize the integral connection intellectual and spiritual/moral dimensions in the development of individuals. Our commitment to nurturing spiritual growth is evident through various platforms and initiatives including post-salat admonitions, weekly learning gathering etc. The inaugural Walimat Qur'an of fifteen students, including Mukhtar Ayomide Afolabi, who will be graduating at this year convocation, was held yesterday, Sunday 7th January, 2024. I have also mentioned earlier the Train-the-Trainer course in Da'wah and Dialogue which was successfully conducted in December 2023.

10. ALUMNI AND SUCCESS STORIES

Our alumni play a crucial role in our advancement activities, serving as primary ambassadors of the university and exemplary models for current students. The university takes great pride in the notable achievements of its alumni, both locally and internationally, some of whom will be honoured at the inaugural university Merit Award. For the year under review:

Several alumni of the university bagged various international Scholarships. Mr. AbdulFatai Lawal, a graduate of Industrial and Environmental Chemistry bagged the Prestigious Erasmus Mundus Scholarship. Also, Mr. Abubakar Shittu, a first-class graduate of Computer Science bagged both the coveted Chevening and Commonwealth Scholarships and had to choose one.

Our ladies are also doing amazingly great. Mariam Muritala, a graduate of Microbiology bagged scholarship with the University of Leicester in the United Kingdom to pursue her PhD degree as well as Aishat Abubakar, a graduate of Mass Communication who recently completed her Masters through scholarship with the University of Leeds, United Kingdom. And our best graduate for Class 2021, Fatimah Subair bagged her Master degree in Public Health at Manchester Metropolitan University in the UK.

One of the graduands for this 13th Convocation, Ahmad Awelenje of Industrial Chemistry won Wema Bank Start-Up grant of Six Hundred naira in Kwara State NYSC orientation camp, Batch C, late last year. All of these and many more allude to the training we provide to our students.

11. CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

In line with our university's commitment to community impact, our Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) efforts epitomize a comprehensive approach to social responsibility. Recent highlights include collaborating with Turner Wright Biosciences Ltd. to provide cervical cancer tests for 180 women at NASFAT Osogbo Branch. The establishment of a Law Clinic in the College of Law not only offers students practical experience but also extends legal assistance to the community. The College of Basic Medical and Environmental Health Sciences contributes to community well-being through initiatives like community lectures and blood donation project. Our support to the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) with drug donations for the 2023 Batch C Stream 2 orientation programme in Osun State reflects our on-going commitment to nurturing the next generation. These initiatives collectively underscore the university's dedication to holistic community engagement and social responsibility, embodying our vision for a positively transformed and interconnected society.

13TH CONVOCATION CEREMONIES: A WEEK OF CELEBRATION AND RECOGNITION

Distinguished guests, members of the Press, ladies, and gentlemen, it brings me immense pleasure to declare the commencement of our 13th Convocation Ceremonies. This year, we proudly celebrate the academic achievements of 253 outstanding individuals across sub-degree, undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

In the First Degree category, nine (9) will be awarded First-Class Honours, ninety-one (91) will be awarded Second Class Honours (Upper Division), while ninety-nine (99) and eighteen (18) will be graduating in the Second Class Honours (Lower Division) and Third-Class categories respectively and one (1) in Pass category. In the Higher Degree category, we will confer eight (8) Master degrees across various disciplines. Twenty-seven (27) students will receive Diplomas in Arabic, Islamic and International Studies. We invite you to join us in the various activities lined up for this special occasion.

Ladies and gentlemen, I want to use this opportunity to inform you that the 13th Convocation Ceremonies began yesterday with a special Asalatul and the maiden Walimatul Qu'ran held at the university Masjid. The festivities continue with diverse events, including a Business pitch and Town-Gown harmony, tomorrow January 8th, aimed at empowering local businesses and promoting community unity. On Wednesday 10th January 2024, sporting activities take centre stage with an intervarsity football match between Fountain University and Bowen University, followed by a volleyball match featuring Fountain University academics and Fountain University Non-teaching staff.

On Thursday 11th January 2024, Fountain University will honour the outstanding contributions of our staff, students alumni and community leaders at the inaugural Merit Award ceremony. This event is a tribute to the collective dedication that defines our institution. This will be followed by a special Jum'ah service and a research fair/exhibition on Friday 12th January, showcasing the university's commitment to both spirituality and academic excellence. Our esteemed alumni will gather for a dinner in the evening, to further strengthen ties with the university.

The week culminates in the Convocation Lecture titled "From Within to Without: The Ripple Effect of University Challenges on National Destiny" to be delivered by the Vice-Chancellor, University of Abuja, Professor Abdul Rasheed Na'Allah, on Saturday 13th January, 2024. The Executive Governor of Yobe State His Excellency, Alhaji Mai Mala Buni CON, will chair the lecture. The day programme will be rounded off with the commissioning of the new projects. The convocation ceremonies proper for the award of diplomas and conferment of degrees and honorary degrees take place on Sunday 14th January, 2024 at 10am prompt inshaAllah. As we celebrate the achievements of our graduates and honour exceptional individuals, including our outgoing Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Alh. Yinka Adeola, and legal personality Mr. Wale

Babalakin, SAN, we reflect on the collective journey that has made Fountain University a beacon of academic excellence and holistic development. Join us in this week of joy, recognition and a shared commitment to shaping the future

Appreciation

As we approach the culmination of this grand event, I extend my sincere appreciation to the members of the ceremonial committee ably led by Prof. Oyegoke Lalude, for their selfless dedication to the success of this occasion and those to follow. My deepest appreciation goes to the entire university community for the belief in our shared vision. It is through our collective efforts that we will undoubtedly achieve greatness and leave a lasting legacy for this esteemed institution.

Conclusion

Esteemed guests, members of the Press and other attendees, despite challenges, our resolve remains unbroken. As the Vice-Chancellor, my commitment to supporting our students and staff remake unshakable. We shall continue to focus on upholding the University's reputation and promoting a culture of excellence. Our guiding principle is 'excellence', benchmarked against international standards.

With our stakeholders, we aim for Fountain University's next horizon: academic excellence, research, student-focused initiatives, tech integration, community engagement and sustainability for growth. Our focus is improving facilities, establishing new colleges, upgrading buildings and constructing a modern Student centre and hostels to elevate our university's standing.

Amidst the celebration, I invite everyone to bask in the joyous atmosphere of the convocation ceremonies. Graduates, equipped with knowledge and skills, stand on the cusp of their future endeavours, and are encouraged to embrace the values instilled by Fountain University. Let us relish in the pride of this day, recognizing it as the start of enduring legacies and a reminder of the limitless possibilities education offers. Congratulations to the outstanding achievers, the resilient graduands and our esteemed university on the remarkable occasion of the 13th Convocation ceremonies!

I urge all visitors to follow instructions from university officials during these events. I am proud to say today that Fountain leads, others follow.

Thank you for your rapt attention.

Professor Olayinka Ramota Karim
Vice-Chancellor