

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S ADDRESS AT THE 2023 STAFF RETREAT

Delivered on 7th November, 2023/23rd Rabiul Thani 1445 AH

As-Salam alaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh,

I extend a warm welcome to everyone attending the 2023 staff retreat. This one-day gathering provides us with a valuable opportunity to engage in meaningful conversations with the aim of harvesting valuable contributions. Despite the brevity of our time together, I am optimistic that the insights gained and decisions reached will chart the course for a brighter future in our university. Thus, the significance of this one-day retreat for our institution cannot be overstated.

In my role as the Chief Academic Officer and custodian of Fountain University for the next four years, my vision is to rejuvenate FUO into a Center of academic excellence, excelling in teaching, research, innovation, entrepreneurship, and community service. I aspire to foster an environment where all staff and students feel a sense of belonging and work in a convivial atmosphere. The realization of this vision will be guided by seven pragmatic strategies, namely:

1. Improvement of the curriculum and scholarship programmes
2. Student enrolment.
3. Digitization and Internationalization of a smart campus.
4. Staff and students' welfare and stimulating student-centeredness learning and friendly campus.
5. Vibrant funding of the University.
6. Strengthening the gown to town relationship through community service
7. All-inclusive governance.

It is a compact yet intensive opportunity to focus our collective wisdom and experience on key matters that will shape our direction. I wish to emphasize a few key points regarding the significance of this retreat for our university's growth:

1. **Strategic Focus:** In this condensed timeframe, we can concentrate on strategic discussions. By bringing together Deans, Directors and Heads of Departments and Units, we ensure that the leaders of our university collectively deliberate and make decisions that align with our long-term vision.
2. **Efficient Decision-Making:** The compact nature of this retreat allows us to make efficient decisions, ensuring that we optimize our time and resources to achieve our objectives. We will prioritize discussions that matter most.
3. **Innovation and Adaptation:** The one-day retreat allows us to brainstorm and innovate. In a rapidly changing world, the ability to adapt and stay ahead is paramount. This retreat provides a platform for generating fresh ideas and strategies that will keep our institution at the forefront of education and research.
4. **Alignment with Proprietor and Stakeholders Expectations:** This retreat is a unique

opportunity to bridge the gap between our vision and their aspirations.

5. **Long-term Sustainability:** The decisions made during this retreat are not just for immediate gains. They are investments in the long-term sustainability of our university. We are laying the groundwork for a resilient and enduring institution that will continue to excel for generations to come.
6. **Strengthening Institutional Culture:** This retreat also serves as an opportunity to reinforce our university's core values and culture. By collectively discussing and recommitting to these values, we strengthen our sense of purpose and identity as an institution.
7. **Holistic Development:** Education is not just about academics. It encompasses personal growth, well-being and character development. This retreat allows us to explore ways to holistically develop our students, ensuring they graduate not only with knowledge but also with the skills and values to make a positive impact on the society.
8. **Immediate Action:** The decisions made during this one-day retreat can be swiftly translated into action. We have a unique opportunity to kick-start initiatives and set the wheels in motion for positive change.
9. **Leadership Collaboration:** This retreat fosters collaboration among university leaders. Deans, departmental/unit heads and principal officers will have the opportunity to share insights and align their visions with their respective areas, promoting a unified approach.
10. **Quick Wins and Momentum:** We can identify "quick wins" – actions that yield immediate positive results. These quick wins not only improve our current standing but also build momentum for larger, long-term projects.

Furthermore, as we convene for this one-day retreat, it is important to acknowledge the Islamic faith-based nature of our institution. This unique characteristic underscores our commitment to creating an environment of inclusivity, respect and cultural understanding. Let this retreat be an embodiment of our dedication to upholding the principles of Islamic ethics in all our endeavors.

In conclusion, this one-day retreat is not just a meeting; it is a pivotal moment in the life of our university. It is a catalyst for positive change, a platform for collaboration and innovation and a commitment to our shared vision. I urge each one of you to use this opportunity, to engage one another wholeheartedly, and let your collective wisdom and dedication shape the future of Fountain University, Osogbo. Thank you for your presence and I am excited about the possibilities that lie ahead. Together, we will make this day count in our journey toward a brighter future for our beloved Fountain University, Osogbo.

Fountain leads, others follow!

Professor Olayinka Ramota Karim
Vice-Chancellor