

ADDRESS BY THE VICE CHANCELLOR, PROFESSOR REV. EGHOSA E. OSAGHAE AT  
THE 17<sup>TH</sup> MATRICULATION CEREMONY OF IGBINEDION UNIVERSITY OKADA ON  
SATURDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2016

PROTOCOLS/

On behalf of the Hon. Chancellor, Board of Regents, Governing Council, Senate, Staff and Students of Igbinedion University Okada, I welcome you all to the 17<sup>th</sup> Matriculation Ceremony of our Great University, and wish everyone a most blessed New Year 2016. The event of today is one of the most important landmarks in the hallowed traditions of a University. It chronicles the admission of the over 1000 young men and women assembled here, who have been found eligible by reason of academic qualification and good character, into the Distinguished and Prestigious Roll of Students and Alumni of Igbinedion University and, through the window provided by IUO, the exciting world of learning.

I congratulate you, our matriculating undergraduate and postgraduate students, on this life-transforming transition and admonish every one of you to make the best use of the opportunities on offer through this matriculation and life membership of IUO. As a university of excellence, honour and integrity, whose academic programmes are all fully accredited by the NUC and regulatory professional bodies (MDCN, PCN, COREN, ICAN, MLSC, NMC), we pledge to guide and mentor you to grow well and become the very best in your chosen fields, as previous students before you have done all over the world. In 2014, our debating team came first at the Inter-University African competition that involved over 40 universities across Africa and, only last year, our petroleum engineering students won the right to represent Nigeria at the World Petroleum Congress in Houston Texas by coming tops in the Petro-Bowl amongst Nigerian universities. At the last private universities games hosted by Afe Babalola University, we came third using genuine students and not mercenaries as some institutions do, Cumulatively, Igbinedion University has produced approximately 10,000 graduates, including the 800 that graduated at the 13<sup>th</sup> Convocation that took place in November 2015. I am delighted to tell you that graduates of IUO have excelled in their post-graduation endeavours. Our well trained doctors, engineers, pharmacists, lawyers, biochemists, nurses, computer scientists, accountants,

business administrators and political scientists, to mention but a few, end up at the top of their postgraduate courses in foreign universities, get the most competitive jobs, or else make their marks as entrepreneurs in the footsteps of Chief Gabriel Igbinedion, the legendary entrepreneur and founder of our university.

But this is only part of the encouragement for our new students. Your matriculating set has been christened the Gladiators set. If you know what gladiator denotes, a gladiator being the legendary Roman conquering professional combatant, then you should be inspired to soar far above the heights already attained by your predecessors and peers. A gladiator is an exemplar, a shining example, and above all, a paradigm, meaning a path-defining school. To be called gladiators therefore is a challenge that should drive and motivate you to be leaders, self-conscious role models and accomplishers of note. I believe that the Holy Spirit and not flesh and blood has divined the gladiatorial paths for you, and bless God on your behalf for exalting you so. But please remember that by the matriculation oath you freely enter into today, the university will not hesitate to apply appropriate sanctions where necessary, that is when you have the misfortune of breaching the oath. Do not steal, do not fight, do not abuse drugs, do not live off-campus, do not own or drive private cars in your first year, do not initiate or embrace cultism, do not cheat during examinations, do not visit hostels of the opposite sex outside designated hours, do not dress indecently, and do not show religious or ethnic intolerance of any kind. As I am sure you know by now, these acts which breach your matriculation oath will lead to expulsion, suspension or rustication. Our Human Help Directorate, which takes charge of counseling and guidance, is available to help students smoothen the rough edges of campus life.

Let me now briefly turn to our parents. First, I congratulate you also because by reason of your child's matriculation, you have also today been admitted into the Distinguished Roll of Strategic Stakeholders, Friends and Benefactors of Igbinedion University. Our pledge is that you will never regret the choice you have made to send your children to us. Indeed, it is a choice we believe you would continue to praise God for for the rest of our lives. In this regard, I think the testimonies of our legacy parents and families illustrate this God-given vision. Legacy parents and families are those who have or have had two, three and more IUO students and graduates. Their numbers have grown exponentially over the years. We have had father and two daughters

graduating, mother and daughter, twin doctors, as well as brother and sister doctors and three sisters and one brother graduating. We have had seven and more students from one family, four from the same parents, and several other multiples!

Surely, there must be something about our university that these legacies are saying, as indeed there are several things to be said. But most importantly, these parents and families have put the lie to the efforts of those who have made it their preoccupation to run down our university through the fabrication of lies and disinformation to create panic, doubt and anxiety in our parents and stakeholders. How many times have they raised the dust about the accreditation of our programmes? Or the adequacy of our facilities? Or the tissues of lies that were contrived to unilaterally abrogate the legitimate MoU we had to use Edo state hospitals for clinical training, an arrangement that worked to the mutual benefit of our university and state government? Our legacy stakeholders know that the wicked lies told about us are the handiwork of those who have elected to de-market IUO. We are not moved because, thanks to our parents who are our greatest supporters, they are always put to shame. As I have said, all our programmes in this university are fully accredited by the NUC and other regulatory bodies, including the MDCN, PCN, COREN, ICAN and the Council for Legal Education. I am glad to report that our teaching hospital, the IUTH, has finally taken its rightful place as the centre of clinical training for medical students. Only two days ago, the MDCN approved the house officers' programme for IUTH which shows the pace at which our medical programme is growing, all thanks to God. On several other fronts, we are waxing stronger still. Through our entrepreneurship and skills acquisition programme, our students have become accomplished experts in block-making, fashion design, catering, management and manufacturing. We are also revolutionizing the administration of examinations through the introduction of ICT solutions, and keep building the best teaching and non-teaching staff in the private university sector. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, we are building a new national elite that will take charge of our national life in the near future. Unlike public tertiary institutions that are fast becoming parochial and ethnic cocoons, we have students from all of Nigeria's 36 states, many of them sponsored by states like Kano and Bauchi and the federal government. At Okada, we uphold the virtues of secularity, patriotism, detribalization, inclusivity, discipline, character, freedom and intelligence, all of which blend together to produce the elite Nigeria needs.

Parents have also expressed concern over issues of safety and security, actual dues and fees to be paid, municipal services and the like. Concern over such issues is perfectly normal, given the fact that many of our children are young adults at the stage of life when they can be easily influenced and are vulnerable to outside home syndromes. But this is where – and why – we ask parents to work with us. The welfare, wellbeing and security of your ward are a triangular affair that involves parents, IUO and students. Personal security requires for instance that students should not work alone in isolated places, and success in academics requires attendance at lectures and hard work. University regulations require students to have 75 per cent attendance at lectures to be eligible to write examinations. Parents should monitor their children constantly to ensure compliance, especially at those times when they like to overstay their holidays. IUO has a full residency policy that requires all students to live on campus. Parents should not encourage any breach. We know that many parents want maximum comfort for their children, but they must be moderate and not vain in the luxuries they indulge their children with. This is the minimum required to prepare our children for the real rather than imagined or pampered lives.

Happily, the PCF provides a platform for engaging the university in the management of your children and the university. The Forum has been very proactive, and has moved from being a fault-finding body to a true partner, ready to bail the university out of the difficulties that beset it. In the last few years, the Forum has procured buses and official cars for principal officers, built and equipped a Student Health Centre, including the provision of an Ambulance, built and equipped a student recreational centre, boosted water supply to the hostels, supported sporting activities and competitions, equipped model classrooms, supported accreditation preparations, and is completing an ultra-modern laboratory complex. We cannot thank the Forum and its executive led by Dr. Aibangbee enough. I plead with all our parents to take active part in the PCF and support IUO to be the university you have always dreamt of for your children.

To close, I join faith with everyone here today to praise and thank God for the 17<sup>th</sup> Matriculation of Igbinedion University. May the matriculating students of today live meaningful, exemplary and successful lives here at IUO and graduate to become the leaders that our country and the

world at large are looking for, to take us from where we are to where we ought to be. God bless our Great Igbinedion University. Amen.