



**UNIVERSITY
OF LAGOS**



UNLEASHING HUMAN POTENTIALS

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS STAFF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT UNIT

Vol. 1 No. 12 – December 2024

THE ROLE OF PROFESSIONAL ADMINISTRATORS IN A FUTURE READY UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS

Introduction

In a rapidly changing world of technology and innovation, our universities cannot afford to be left out in preparing our products for the future by adapting to the new realities in the education sector. The current catch phrase, **Future Ready University**, is a “concept that refers to an educational institution that has adapted to meet the changing needs and demands of the future”.

The future of our universities lies in our collective ability as administrators to join hands with every stakeholder in the system to move beyond the mundane. For us to continue to maintain our relevance in the university system, administrators must fully;

- Understand the reasons for the existence of the universities and appreciate the need for customer-focused services.
- Possess basic research-related skills and be well-versed in Information Communication Technology.
- Have strong analytical skills and a capacity for independent critical thinking.
- Be creative and possess problem-solving skills.
- Have excellent cooperative skills based on tolerance, integrity, and a sense of personal responsibility.
- Appreciate what it takes to be a world-class institution.



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As University administrators we must be digital natives and keep abreast of innovations and developments that would have a direct impact on our operations for greater efficiency. Over the past decades, the basic formal university education structure has served the universities well and has helped in the efficient discharge of administrative responsibilities. However, the lack of professionalism with diligence has made the non-teaching cadre complacent without the desire to strive to be technological and innovative in the discharge of duties.

Where are We?

It goes without saying therefore that for an administrator to operate successfully in the future ready university space, he/she must be;

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should invest in personal self-development by attending conferences, workshops, seminars etc. This will equip us to add value to our services and enable us cope with challenges on the job having been exposed to best practices in the sector.



A. Adaptive and resilient. Covid-19 brought this reality home, all those who couldn't adapt are still struggling. The emerging career in Research Grant Administration requires administrators to work alongside researchers in groups or teams to collaborate on various projects, this way, they will be able to build strong relationships by working towards common goals. Also, there has been a dynamic change in workplace culture and skills requirements with the adoption of the "work from home" model. This has increased the number of digital natives and this probably accounts for the significant increase in the number of emigrants popularly known as the "Japa Syndrome".

B. Digitally literate and possess technology fluency. Members of staff in the university system, need to emulate those in the private sector and move quite a number of the operations to the digital space. Only digitally literate staff can navigate easily in today's workspace.



C. Engaged in Lifelong Learning. Education itself does not stop when we graduate from institutions. It is a lifelong commitment and as administrators, we will function better when we are committed to continuous learning and growth, using such skills and knowledge gained to improve our service delivery. That is why we

In his presentation titled "Realities of University Education" at the first Arthur Mbanefo Annual lecture series held in February 2020, Late Mr. Bode Augusto, posited that for our universities to be future ready, we "need to revise **where we play and how we win** in the university system. This would entail leveraging artificial and machine intelligence to reach new frontiers as well as partnering with organisations like Coursera and Khan academy to provide free training and certification on-line".

It is gladdening to note that here at the University of Lagos, the current Vice Chancellor, Prof. Folasade Ogunsola, OON, FAS has leveraged this partnership. Between March 2023 to date, over 3000 personnel have undergone various kinds of Coursera programmes as part of the reskilling and upskilling drive of the university management. Similarly, the in-house training centres have been mounting various types of capacity development programmes for both staff and students in tandem with the demands of the time.

The way forward

It behoves on university administrators to keep abreast of innovations and developments that would have a direct impact on operations for greater efficiency. The university must put in place structured programmes for training and retraining of members of staff to ensure that they serve their customers; fellow workers (teaching

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and non-teaching); students and the general community in a professional manner.

The job is not just for the Vice Chancellors and academics alone, we are all stakeholders. While we need inspirational leaders at every level with vision, we must all work together to achieve the institutional strategic goals and objectives such that our graduates are equipped with the needed skills and competencies to make a difference in the 21st Century

The future of our universities lies in our ability as administrators to get to the future and think about what we can do now! Artificial Intelligence will ultimately affect the structure and organization of universities, how prepared are we? **Our universities are whatever we make them, so let's make them good ones.**

Conclusion

It is fair to say that at the University of Lagos, both management and staff are committed to the acquisition of higher levels of social and emotional skills, they are getting trained and also developing new job skills to keep up with the pace of changes in the workspace thus moving the University forward by being **future ready**.

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