



FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA

**Views of the Government of the
Federal Republic of Nigeria
on the
Visitation Panel's Report into the Affairs of the
Michael Opara University of Agriculture, Umudike
(2016-2020)**

DECEMBER, 2022

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**WHITEPAPER ON THE REPORT OF THE VISITATION PANEL INTO THE
AFFAIRS OF THE MICHAEL OPARA UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURE, UMUDIKE
(2016 - 2020)**



ARRANGEMENT OF PARAGRAPHS

Paragraph:

1. White Paper on the Report of the Visitation Panel into the Affairs of the Michael Opara University of Agriculture, Umudike (2016 - 2020).

2. Citation.

SCHEDULE

**WHITE PAPER ON THE REPORT OF THE VISITATION PANEL INTO
THE AFFAIRS OF THE MICHAEL OPARA UNIVERSITY OF
AGRICULTURE, UMUDIKE
(2016 - 2020)**

1. The Federal Government White Paper on the Report of the Visitation Panel into the affairs of the Michael Opara University of Agriculture, Umudike (2016 - 2020) as provided in the schedule to this Notice is hereby published in the Federal Government Gazette.

**Publication
of Federal
Government
White Paper
on the
Report of the
Visitation
Panel into
the affairs of
the Michael
Opara
University of
Agriculture,
Umudike
(2016 -
2020).**

2. This Notice may be cited as the "White Paper on the Report of the Visitation Panel into the affairs of the Michael Opara University of Agriculture, Umudike (2016 - 2020)".

Citation.

1.0. INTRODUCTION

1.1. INAUGURATION OF THE VISITATION PANELS

The Presidential Visitation Panels to the thirty-eight (38) Federal Universities and four (4) Inter-University Centres were inaugurated on Tuesday, 13th April, 2021, by the Honourable Minister of Education, Mallam Adamu Adamu, at the Idris Abdulkadir Auditorium, National Universities Commission (NUC), Maitama, Abuja.

1.2. COMPOSITION OF THE PANEL

Membership of the Visitation Panel to the Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, was as follows :

- | | | | | | | |
|-------|---|----|----|----|----|------------------|
| (i) | Professor Suleyman Adeyemi | .. | .. | .. | .. | <i>Chairman</i> |
| (ii) | Dr. Timothy I. Utile | .. | .. | .. | .. | <i>Member</i> |
| (iii) | Professor Aishatu Iya Ahmed | .. | .. | .. | .. | <i>Member</i> |
| (iv) | Mr. Shuaibu Idris, mni
(Replaced Dr. Emmanuel Igben).. | .. | .. | .. | .. | <i>Member</i> |
| (v) | Barrister Victor U. Onuoha | .. | .. | .. | .. | <i>Member</i> |
| (vi) | Professor Tanimu Abubakar | .. | .. | .. | .. | <i>Member</i> |
| (vii) | Engineer Abraham Chundusu | .. | .. | .. | .. | <i>Secretary</i> |

1.3. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Terms of Reference (ToR) of the Panel were to :

- (i) inquire into the level of implementation of the White Paper on the last visitation report ;
- (ii) examine the leadership quality of the University in terms of roles of the Governing Council, the Vice-Chancellors and other principal officers ;
- (iii) look into the financial management of each institution including statutory allocations and internally generated revenue over the recommended period, and determine whether it was in compliance with appropriate regulations ;
- (iv) investigate the application of funds, particularly the special grants and loans meant for specific projects in order to determine the status of such projects and their relevance for further funding ;
- (v) examine the adequacy of the staff and staff development programmes of each university ;
- (vi) determine the relationship between the university and the various statutory bodies it interacts with according to its law for the purpose of supervision, planning, finance, discipline, guidance and any other relationship (i.e. Governing Council, NUC, and the Federal Ministry of Education (FME));

(vii) examine the law establishing the university including the relationship between the various internal organs, units and offices, and indicate the ways the law has been observed by the competent authorities, and also suggest any modifications to the law ;

(viii) trace the historical evolution of the university and take stock of its net achievements and problems as well as its style and direction ;

(ix) examine the general security in the university and how the university has dealt with it, and recommend appropriate measures ; and

(x) examine the processes and structures of discipline of students in each university in line with the due process of the rule of law.

1.4. Details of the Findings/Observations and Recommendations of the Visitation Panel, as well as the Comments indicating recommendations accepted, noted or rejected by the Visitor are contained in a tabular format in sections 2 -12 of this gazette. The highlights of the Visitor's directives include:

(i) Bursary, registry as well as critical units and departments should be computerized and automated ;

(ii) The University Law should be amended to provide for at least two meetings of the Congregation in an academic year and FME as the supervisory agency etc. ;

(iii) The University should adhere to extant fiduciary regulations and circulars including using standard books for accounting and auditing ;

(iv) The University must operate and maintain a standard Fixed Assets Register;

(v) Council should enhance its oversight function on Procurement process;

(vi) Council should ensure that it streamlines the ownership of the University businesses and incomes must be reported annually ;

(vii) Council must establish ownership of all its assets and investments and keep their records up-to-date, as well as ensure that the Microfinance Bank operates as a Limited Liability Company owned by the University ;

(viii) The University Management should explore available opportunities for boosting its IGR ;

(ix) EFCC should conduct a forensic audit of the University's financial management for the period 2011 - 2020

(x) The Vice-Chancellor should immediately suspend all staff who have outstanding Cash Advance not yet settled within the prescribed period allowed and approved in the Financial Regulations.

(xi) Council should also handover all the suspended staff in (x) above to the EFCC with a mandate to recover all monies due to the university from these staff, including the families of late and disengaged staff;

(xii) Management should take immediate steps to provide Group Life Policy for all categories of University staff that are on permanent and pensionable appointments ;

(xiii) Council and Management should cause a holistic review of qualifications of Bursary and Internal Audit Staff;

(xiv) The unaccounted difference between fund releases and utilisation for capital grant, TETFUND and NEEDS Assessment fund should be recovered and reapplied to the projects;

(xv) University should put in place a robust staff development programme;

(xvi) Council should ensure staff promotion is fair, equitable and in line with the Conditions of Service;

(xvii) University management should change its current management style to an inclusive one, especially with the Unions ;

(xviii) The University to prioritise movement to the permanent site and build more facilities for teaching, learning and living for both staff and students;

(xix) Council to prioritise the collection of C of O from the State Government;

(xx) The University should update, produce and implement a comprehensive Security Policy ;

(xxi) The Vice Chancellor and Management should update and incorporate within its Strategic Plan, measures and activities for upgrading and expanding facilities and infrastructure for students-related services and needs ; and

(xxii) The Students Affairs Department should be repositioned to more effectively and efficiently perform its functions.

1.4. Other Matters ; Petition and memos. The Council is directed to review and appropriately address all memorandum from stakeholders and petitions from individuals, received by the Panel and contained in the report.

TERMOFREFERENCE ONE

"Inquire into the level of implementation of the white paper on the last visitation."

<i>S/No.</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Observations/Findings</i>	<i>Recommendations</i>	<i>Comments</i>
2.1.	IMPLEMENTATION OF PREVIOUS WHITE PAPER		NO WHITE PAPER TO IMPLEMENT	<i>Not applicable.</i>

TERMOFREFERENCETWO

"Look into the leadership quality of the University in terms of the roles of the Governing Council, the Vice Chancellor and other Principal Officers."

S/No.	Item	Observations/Findings	Recommendations	Comments
3.0.	LEADERSHIP ROLE OF THE 6TH COUNCIL OF MOUAU (2016-2020)	<p>The sixth Governing Council (2016-2020) was inaugurated on 9th May, 2017 for a four-year tenure.</p> <p>The Council performed its functions through constituted committees and boards.</p>	<p>Council should always ensure that the Laws of the University are constantly applied in arriving at decisions to avoid conflicts in the institution.</p>	<p>Visitor notes this recommendation.</p>
3.1.	THE POWERS AND FUNCTIONS OF THE VICE-CHANCELLOR	<p>Act No. 48 of 1992 establishing the Universities of Agriculture, and other Federal Universities, provided the powers and functions of the Vice-Chancellor.</p> <p><i>The Vice-Chancellor: Professor Francis O.Otunta.</i></p> <p>Professor Francis O. Otunta : 1st March, 2016 to 28th February, 2021, was the 5th Vice-Chancellor of the University. Though late Professor Francis Ogonna Otunta met a distressed institution, he tried to carry on the work of keeping the University afloat.</p> <p><i>The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) : Professor M. O.Iwe</i></p> <p>Professor M. O. Iwe : 28th April 2016-19th August 2016 and 20th August 2016- 20th August 2020e was first ap-</p>	<p>(i) Professor M. O. Iwe should be commended for his due diligence in all assignments he had carried out in the University.</p> <p>(ii) Professor Herbert Udo should be encouraged to do more for the University.</p> <p>(iii) Professor Joy Nwabueze's contributions to the growth of MOUAU should be noted and commended.</p> <p>(iv) The University should be encouraged by the Federal Ministry of Agriculture to revive its farms and other meaningful research projects.</p> <p>(v) Professor Asawalam should be commended for hard work and diligence.</p>	<p>Visitor notes recommendations (i) - (vi), accepts (vii), and urges Council to direct the Management to deploy appropriate technology to run its administration.</p>

S/No.	Item	Observations/Findings	Recommendations	Comments
		<p>pointed the Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor from 28th April, 2016. He served in that capacity satisfactorily until 20th August, 2016 when he was appointed substantive Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and also served the University very well. He was appointed Vice-Chancellor by the Governing Council on 16th December, 2020.</p> <p>Professor Iwe was never found wanting in the discharge of his duties. His relationship with staff and students was known to be good.</p> <p><i>Professor Udo Herbert : DVC (Academic). 21st August, 2020 to date.</i></p> <p>Professor Herbert Udo took over from Professor M. O. Iwe as Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) on 21st August, 2020. His commitment to work was outstanding.</p> <p><i>Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration) : Professor Joy C. Nwabueze: 14th October, 2016 - 15th October, 2020.</i></p> <p>Professor Joy C. Nwabueze was mature in handling official duties and committed to the progress of the University.</p>	<p>(vi) As a very hardworking administrative staff, the Registrar, Mrs. Ogwo-Agu should be encouraged to do more.</p> <p>(vii) Council, Senate, Registry, as well as critical units and departments should be computerised for enhanced quality academic and administrative services.</p>	

S/No.	Item	Observations/Findings	Recommendations	Comments
		<p><i>Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Admin) Professor Elechi F. Asawalam 16th October, 2020 till date.</i></p> <p>Professor Asawalam was a committed and pro-active Deputy Vice-Chancellor.</p> <p><i>The Registrar: Mrs. Jacinta N. Ogwo-Agu-12th July 2017 to date.</i></p> <p>She joined the services of MOUAU in November, 1994 as an Administrative Assistant and rose through the ranks to the position of Deputy Registrar in 2011 and was appointed as the Registrar on the 12th July 2017, a position held till date. A hard worker and good team player, the Registrar related well with council, management, staff and students.</p>		
32.	BURSAR (MR. JOSEPH OKORIE KALU)	The Bursary had not processed Accounts of the University for Auditing by External Auditors for several years i.e. 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020.	<p>(i) In addition to the directorate system, the Bursary should be fully computerised for effective service delivery.</p> <p>(ii) The Bursar should be properly trained in ICT for greater effectiveness.</p> <p>(iii) All Accounts for the various years should be audited by external Auditors and the reports submitted to council for necessary action.</p>	<i>Visitor accepts these recommendations.</i>

S/No.	Item	Observations/Findings	Recommendations	Comments
33.	LIBRARIAN (MR. UCHE ARUA)	<p>(i) The Librarian did not possess the requisite qualification to head the Library in the modern day University system. The new trend is that the Head of Library shall be a Professor or at least a Ph.D holder with adequate cognate experience and publications.</p> <p>(ii) The Institution needs a befitting Library with e-facilities to conveniently seat its growing number of students.</p> <p>(iii) The Library needs proper funding to grow.</p>	<p>(i) The Institution should henceforth appoint professor of Library Science to head the Library or at best Ph.D holders of Library Science with cognate experience and Publications in line with international best practices.</p> <p>(ii) A befitting Library should be constructed with e-facilities on the permanent site to accommodate staff offices and conveniently seat over 2500 students at a time.</p> <p>(iii) TETFUND intervention should be sought for Library intervention for construction of the Ultra-Modern Library building on the permanent site.</p> <p>(iv) There should be proper funding for the Library.</p>	<p><i>Visitor accepts recommendation (i) notes recommendations (ii) to (iv); and urges Council to adhere to extant laws and regulations of the University in the appointment of its principal officers.</i></p>
34.	LEADERSHIP ROLE OF SENATE: 2016-2020	<p>The Panel found out that during the period under review, Senate established the Department of Geology, senate successfully conducted accreditation of its academic programmes by the National Universities Commission (NUC). Others include :</p> <p>(i) Approval of curricula for different undergraduate programmes</p>	<p>The visitation panel recommends that senate should be commended for holding regular meetings for the purpose of offering quality academic direction in the University.</p>	<p><i>Visitor notes this recommendation.</i></p>

S/No.	Item	Observations/Findings	Recommendations	Comments
		<p>(ii) Students welfare and Discipline</p> <p>(iii) Research and development</p> <p>(iv) Visitation panel observed that senate meetings were held regularly in the University.</p>		
3.5.	THE POWERS AND FUNCTIONS OF CONGREGATION	<p>Section 4 (1) of the 1992 ACT, No. 48, A429, of the Laws for Federal Universities of Agriculture, provided for congregation.</p>	<p>Congregation can meet more than once a year in the University, especially when matters of urgent importance need the input of staff of the University.</p>	<p><i>Visitor accepts this recommendation.</i></p>
3.5.1	THE CONGREGATION : 2016-2020	<p>Congregation met once in a year and the meetings were based on need. The common need was the election of representatives of Congregation to Council.</p>		
3.6.	ROLE OF CONVOCAATION:2016-2020	<p>During the period under review, convocation met intermittently and was presided over by the Vice-Chancellor in the absence of the Chancellor.</p> <p>The Chancellor is usually available during convocation ceremonies with the EXCO members of the convocation of the University.</p> <p>Two convocation ceremonies were held between 2016 and 2020.</p> <p>The Law setting up MOUAU is quiet on the number of meetings convocation and Congregation can hold in a year.</p>	<p>The Law of the University setting up congregation and convocation should be reviewed in terms of the number of meetings both congregation and convocation can hold in a year.</p>	<p><i>Visitor accepts this recommendation and directs the inclusion of FMEast the supervisory agency of the University.</i></p>

S/No.	Item	Observations/Findings	Recommendations	Comments
3.7.	MANAGEMENT-UNION RELATIONS	<p>(i) There are four (4) unions in operation.</p> <p>(ii) The relationship between the Unions and Management was frosty.</p> <p>(iii) Unions accused Management of not carrying them along in the implementation of the (2004-2010) White paper report.</p>	<p>(i) Management should henceforth see Unions as partners in progress for the University and always carry them along especially on matters that can foster peace, quality teaching, research and community development in the University.</p> <p>(ii) Management should involve Unions and other stakeholders in the implementation of subsequent white paper from visitation reports.</p>	<p><i>Visitor accepts these recommendations.</i></p>

TERM OF REFERENCE THREE

"Look into the financial management of each institution including statutory allocations and internally generated revenue over the recommended period, and determine whether it was in compliance with appropriate regulations."

S/No.	Item	Observations/Findings	Recommendations	Comments
4.1.	GENERAL ISSUES ACCOUNTING MANUAL/ COMPUTERISATION	<p>(i) All financial records were maintained manually. Moreover, the records were poorly kept.</p> <p>(ii) There was absence of format for data collection and reporting.</p>	<p>(i) The Vice-Chancellor should ensure that a robust Accounting Software is procured and installed immediately so as to achieve effective and efficient record keeping. The software should suit University financial reporting system.</p> <p>(ii) A Standardized Accounting Manual or Financial Reporting Guidelines should also be introduced and implemented across all the component units of the University.</p>	<i>Visitor accepts these recommendations.</i>
4.2.	INTERNAL AUDIT MANUAL AND AUDIT PLANNING MEMORANDUM	<p>(a) The Internal Audit function was not given its proper place in the University administration system.</p> <p>(b) The absence of an approved Audit Manual made the department operate without direction.</p> <p>(c) There was also absence of a quarterly and annual audit planning schedule.</p>	<p>(i) The Vice-Chancellor should direct the Head of Internal Audit Department to ensure that a Standard Internal Audit Manual is instituted immediately by domesticating the Internal Audit Manual Produced in 2007 by Committee of Heads of Internal Audit Department in Nigerian Universities.</p> <p>(ii) The Council should ensure that</p>	<p>(i) <i>Visitor accepts recommendations (i) and (ii) and urges Council to implement.</i></p> <p>(ii) <i>Visitor rejects recommendation (iii) as it will be a duplication and usurpation of the functions of the Finance and General</i></p>

S/No.	Item	Observations/Findings	Recommendations	Comments
			<p>the Head of Internal Audit Department produces an annual internal audit plan which should be broken down into quarterly audit plans. This document should be reviewed, discussed and agreed with stakeholders particularly in areas of timing of the audit, resources required to carry out the exercise etc.</p> <p>(iii) Council should immediately constitute a Standing Committee on Audit, Risk Management and Compliance Committee to be saddled with oversight functions of Audit (Internal and External), Risk Management (such as Insurance) and compliance (checks in efficacy of internal control system).</p>	<p><i>Purposes Committee of Council.</i></p>
4.3.	CASH HANDLING OUTSIDE BURSARY SYSTEM	<p>(i) Members of staff outside of the Bursary Department staff were allowed to handle large sums of cash in form of Cash Advance contrary to subsisting Financial Regulations and Guidelines.</p> <p>(ii) These staff were neither bonded by the University nor insured.</p>	<p>Council should ensure the following immediate corrective measures are taken viz:</p> <p>(i) Discontinuation of the use of staff personal accounts for official transactions.</p> <p>(ii) Discontinuation of the practice of allowing staff other</p>	<p><i>Visitor notes these recommendations and urges Council to ensure that Management complies with extant Financial Rules and Regulations.</i></p>

S/No.	Item	Observations/Findings	Recommendations	Comments
		<p>(iii) Several staff who took cash advance for University duties flouted the rules governing retirement of cash advances. The Bursar and the Head Internal Audit Department also failed to pay due credence to the rules.</p> <p>(iv) Personal bank accounts of members of staff of the University were used to receive cash advances contrary to known financial rules and best practices.</p>	<p>than Bursary Department staff and in particular Cashier to handle University cash.</p> <p>(iii) Bonding and insurance of Staff handling University cash at all times.</p> <p>(iv) Setting up and managing of Imprest Account which should be retired and replenished monthly unfailingly.</p> <p>(v) Retirement of Imprest within five working days preceding the month of collecting the Imprest.</p> <p>(vi) Prompt and regular updating of cashbooks (at least once a week) and immediate lodgement of all cash received or refunds by staff.</p>	
4.4.	INTERNAL CONTROL	<p>(i) Arising from poor record keeping, complex and or convoluted organogram, segregation of duties in order to have some levels of checks and balance is absent.</p> <p>(ii) In a number of instances, statutory procedures were breached in contract procedure as well as in some payments leading to collapse of functional internal control mechanism.</p>	<p>(i) The Council should immediately set up a Task Force to review existing Internal Control Structures with a view to revamping the system, strengthening and making it strong and functional.</p> <p>(ii) Internal control review and compliance should not be part of Internal Audit functions and thus a unit should be</p>	<p><i>Visitor notes these recommendations and urges Council to direct Management to comply with extant Financial Rules and Regulations, including assurance of functional internal control.</i></p>

