

**MY VISION FOR BENUE
STATE UNIVERSITY,
MAKURDI 2015-2020**

By

PROFESSOR JOSEPH TERWASE KERKER Ph. D
(PROFESSOR OF ETHICS)

Introduction

Benue State University was established in 1992 with a clear vision and mission: *to be the first choice university in Nigeria and one of the best in the World*. In the past 22 years, the university has partially actualized this vision and earned its position among the first generation universities in Nigeria and of course first choice university in Nigeria. This is evident from the teeming applications that the university receives every year from prospective undergraduates and staff appointments. This therefore demonstrates the fact that Benue State University has come of age. What remains to be done is, consolidate on the gains so far, restructure our failures and initiate new projects to address the emerging realities and challenges of our times in the overall interest of actualizing the vision of the University.

My vision for Benue State University derives from the well articulated vision of the university: *'To make Benue State University, FIRST choice university in Nigeria and one of the Best in the world*. Below are the highlights on how we intend to achieve this noble goal.

A THE DEVELOPMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE

The development of infrastructure in Benue State University is a key demand given the exhausted nature of the structures inherited from the institutions that were here before. Despite the tremendous improvement in the provision of infrastructure in the university through TETFund interventions, there are still challenges.

Senate Building

The university central administrative block, known as the senate building will be a priority project of my administration and shall be given speedy attention and will not be compromised.

University Library; The ultra-modern library complex under construction shall be stock-pilled with current books and journals with full e-library facilities of modern status.

Well Equipped Staff offices

Staff offices are still inadequate in Benue State University despite all the efforts of the past administrations. My drive in this direction will be to ensure that the hard working staffs of the university have good offices to be able to deliver the needed administrative and academic services that they provide or offer every day.

Lecture Theatres and Halls

Again I commend the efforts of the past leaders of the university in the provision of lecture theatres and halls, especially with the interventions from TETFund. I shall seek additional funds from other organizations like IMF, World Bank, NNPC, etc for the purposes of building additional lecture halls to increase our carrying capacity.

Water and Power Supply

Water and power supplies in the university shall be given the desired attention since modern facilities that are used every day and every time in the university cannot function to full capacity without adequate and continuous supply of water and power.

Landscape

The university needs a very elaborate landscape activity to give it a befitting outlook. Proper walk ways will be constructed especially the road linking the two campuses to facilitate orderly and safe movement of people on campus.

B STAFF DEVELOPMENT/MOTIVATION

Staff development and motivation shall remain a key plan of my administration. This shall be done in these specific contexts.

Staff Welfare

Staff welfare shall not be compromised and shall be given top priority. Specifically I will liaise with the state government to ensure prompt payment staff salaries. I will also decisively address the issues of pension, National Health Insurance Scheme and Taxation. These three items originate from the national level but we can domesticate them at our level pending when all contending issues are resolved. For the Pension in particular I will through negotiations with all interested parties on campus begin the monthly contribution of N5Million. I shall also persuade the government to resume the monthly contribution which was stopped in 2007. I shall aggressively negotiate the current tax for a down ward review.

Attendance to Conference

My administration through the Directorate of Research and Development shall encourage staff attendance to both local and international conferences, workshops, seminars and other functions where they will engage in cross fertilization of intellectual ideas. The directorate of research development shall prepare a roster for attendance to conferences and especially, lower cadre academics will be given priority.

Staff Promotions

I will ensure that staff promotions are carried out promptly as at when due with payment of such done with immediate effect to prevent accumulated promotion arrears..

Sports and Recreation

Sports and recreational facilities shall be provided specifically for staff who will be encouraged to engage actively in sports and recreation during their leisure times. Staff games will be staged annually in the university to prepare our university staff for the National Universities Staff Games.

The University Security

I shall put in place measures that will strengthen the security of staffs, students and other university properties during my tenure of office as Vice Chancellor, if given the opportunity. I shall collaborate state security agents, students informants etc. Younger people including university graduates will be recruited in the security department, with frequent seminars and workshops to upgrade their knowledge on matters of crime and security. We shall also acquire modern crime detectives and other security gadgets to make the unit more effective.

Reward for hard work

There are many staffs of the university that since its inception about 23 years ago have been working day and night to give it its present status of national recognition. Most of these people are not noticed and appreciated, but my administration intends to change the situation. To further motivate the staff for greater service delivery, such staff with outstanding performances of duty shall be identified and given merit awards including material incentives. Ailing staffs will not be tolerated.

Staff Discipline

This is a very delicate issue but there must be a balance between hard work and indiscipline. Specifically issues of sexual harassment and sorting shall be aggressively but diligently treated decisively as they put the university image in jeopardy. Those found culpable will be appropriately sanctioned.

C FACULTIES, DEPARTMENTS AND UNITS

The strength of the university is located in the Faculties, Departments and Units that collectively work for the promotion of the general wellbeing of the system. Due attention shall therefore be paid to these various segments of the university for maximum service delivery. We shall pursue the issue of vehicles not only for Deans and Directors, but also for Heads of Department. We shall restore departmental and faculty registration charges, to be collected directly at

the registration points by faculties and departments, and also monitor closely to ensure prudent and transparent management of funds generated. This is to avoid the tendencies that may warrant the diversion of faculty and departmental funds for other uses as sometimes difficult situations may compel the university management to utilize such funds for other pressing needs.

The *Faculty of Environmental Sciences* will be run with the **Faculty of Engineering in mind**. This is intended to move our people from civil service training to more professional service skills to produce graduates who can be self employed. In the same direction high premium will be placed on centre for entrepreneurship to train students in skills acquisition to be self employed by establishing small and medium scale businesses on graduation.

The ICT

Information and Communication Technology has taken the central stage in world development and any modern university without a functional ICT cannot function effectively. The university ICT will be sufficiently positioned to handle the university internet requirements through the provision of genuine high powered equipments (band width), staff recruitment and training to make it operate at maximum capacity. I will seek the services of staff of mathematics and computer to develop software for use in examination processing, collection of school fees, students registration etc.

Academic Excellence

The university is known to be the centre of academic excellence, achieved through teaching, learning and research. The directorate of research shall take full responsibility of ensuring the full realization of the university culture of teaching, learning and research. We shall closely monitor, research, teaching by staffs and learning by students at regular bases. To make the academic staff more effective, I shall employ more qualified staff to reduce academic staff work load to make them more effective including marking of examinations scripts on time.

The Unions on Campus

The role of the unions in capacity building in the university is very crucial and if given the opportunity, my administration shall work very closely with the unions on campus to realize the overall objective of the university, to achieve academic excellence. As partners in development I shall constantly engage into frantic dialogue and sometimes, negotiations with the unions on campus and always keep them informed about the general administration of the university from time to time. I will capitalize on my experience as a former Chairman of ASUU- BSU to bring this about. You will recall that during my tenure as

Chairman of ASUU of this branch the university did not witness any strike action embarked by the union.

D COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES

The College of Health Sciences operates only two faculties for now, Faculty of Basic Sciences and Faculty of Clinical Sciences. There is need to create the Faculty of Allied Medical Sciences to meet the statutory requirements of a college of health sciences, and we shall with delight do that and also ensure a cordial relationship between the university and the college, by recognizing and respecting the statutory autonomy of the college. There is need also to build additional hostels for the students as there is hostel crises already owing to stagnation of students in the past years. We shall endeavor to enhance the relationship between the University, the Teaching Hospital and the College.

E FUNDING

The most demanding challenge in the overall scheme for university development is the issue of funding. Without proper funding, it will be impossible to realize the vision of the university as we have stated above. Apart from the allocation of funds to the university from the state government, funds are also generated from tuition and other fees paid by the students and those who do various businesses with the university. This is usually inadequate given the recurrent financial demands of the university occasioned by the daily administrative running and maintenance of the system. In addition to the above we shall resuscitate these already existing sources of internal revenue generations of the university.

Convocations/Endowment funds

Convocation ceremonies are very important functions of the university, for during that period, the university usually invites her good friends to converge for the ceremony. During our convocation ceremonies, our teaming visitors, who are mostly friends of the university, shall be wooed to participate in fund raising activities by donating cash or other items like buildings, vehicles, books etc. to enhance development of the university.

The University Clinic

With the great number of consultants and other high professionals in the college of health sciences, the university clinic shall be upgraded with modern facilities to offer medical services equivalent to those being offered at the teaching hospital at lower rates and this can attract some revenue to the university.

Consultancy Unit

The Consultancy unit shall be overhauled and mandated to expand in fund yielding ventures. For example, the team of professionals that we have in the various departments of the university shall be mobilized to offer consultancy services to those desiring them at a cost for the benefit of the university. Other fund raising activities like, transport services, Hotel and Catering services, sell of petroleum products, agricultural production, etc, shall be engaged in at various stages.

Centre for Continuing Education/Sandwich/Distance Learning

These three programs will be expanded to cover as many departments of the university as possible. The reason is that these programs yield a lot of revenue to the university, and expanding them will mean increase in revenue generation.

Postgraduate School

The pursuance of higher degrees by academic staff in particular shall be mandatory and the top priority of the postgraduate school and no longer a matter of choice of the individual staff. All departments must mount Postgraduate programmes with upgraded postgraduate facilities like air-conditioned lecture theatres, public address systems, viewing screens and Power Point, etc.

Micro Finance Bank

Considering the huge monies raised and expended by the thrift, cooperatives and credit societies in the university, my administration shall attempt to harmonies these bodies with the aim of establishing a Micro Finance Bank properly constituted to manage the staff and students funds/savings.

Private Investors

Friends of the university shall be wooed to invest in the institution by providing infrastructures by either donations or on lease to the university. The lease arrangement will allow the donors to be able to recover their monies after a period of time and then hand over such property to the university. The consultancy unit shall adequately take care of this.

Alumni Association

As a major stakeholder of the Benue State University, The Benue State University Alumni Association has come of age and we shall partner with it so that it can intervene in the development drive of the university.

Our Bankers

We shall negotiate with our bankers to invest in the university, and other organizations like, MTN, GLO, ETISALAT, AIRTEL, etc who do business on the university to do same

Conclusion

The success of every establishment or institution lies in the quality of its leadership. This is demonstrated in Benue State University in the context of the past leaderships that we have had that made the university what it is today that we are all proud of. The position of the Vice-Chancellor of Benue State University at this moment is very critical because of the monumental achievements that the university has gained in the past 22 years. I have been in this university from the very beginning of the University, served the university in very many strategic positions and capacities, contributed immensely towards its development and therefore remain, in a very good position to further contribute to the development of the university towards the realization of its vision. This I am prepared to do if I am given the opportunity.