

PRESS CONFERENCE BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR
LAGOS STATE UNIVERSITY ON MONDAY 18TH SEPTEMBER, 2017

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen of the media, on behalf of the Lagos State University, I am very pleased to welcome you to this press conference. The goal is to clarify the issues that have been raised in respect of the decisions of the Governing Council of the University at its 115th meeting held on Thursday 7th September, 2017, and pursuant to which seventeen (17) members of staff (Academic and Non-Academic) were dismissed, while some others were sanctioned. It will also afford the University the opportunity to respond to questions which might not have been raised earlier, and in respect of which respected media practitioners here will love to know the University's position.

Before I proceed further, let me sincerely thank each and every one of you here present for the support that you have been giving to our Institution in your different ways. Facilitating successful organizational excellence is always difficult; not changing is fatal. It is for this reason that here at the Lagos State University, we will continue to create, nurture and motivate an intentional culture of positive change. Truly your continuous support as information managers will be invaluable.

Since the decision of the Governing Council was made public, the following issues have been raised particularly in relation to Dr. Isaac Akinloye Oyewunmi and Dr. Adebowale Adeyemi-Suenu:

1) That the Decision of Council did not follow Due Process, was manipulated, and was for Political Reasons.

The above assertions are not correct. The University acted strictly in conformity with her rules and regulations. The petition pursuant to which Dr. Isaac Oyewunmi was investigated same which was dated 6th October, 2016 was copied to His Excellency, the Governor of the State; her Excellency, the Deputy Governor; the Rt. Honourable Speaker; the Attorney General and Commissioner for Justice; the Special Adviser on Education; the Chancellor and the Pro-Chancellor. On 28th October, 2016, the Honourable Attorney General requested the University for update on the investigation. The Special Adviser on Education made a similar request on 13th December, 2016. I wrote to Dr. Oyewunmi to comment on the petition and he denied the allegations contained in it. I wrote to the three (3) members of staff who were mentioned in the petition and they all responded that Dr. Oyewunmi indeed demanded for the money in question to process the results of the students. It was premised on this that a 5-man Fact-Finding Panel headed by Professor Michael Ikhariale was set up. In the Panels' report dated 16th January, 2017, the Panel recommended that Dr. Isaac Akinloye Oyewunmi had a case to answer. It is instructive to note that the Fact-Finding Panel called the Petitioner and four (4) other witnesses. Dr. Oyewunmi also appeared before the Panel.

It was based on the report of the Fact-Finding Panel that a formal query was issued to Dr. Oyewunmi by Academic Staff Establishment, and the case was thereafter referred to the Joint Council/Senate (Academic) Disciplinary Committee on 3rd April, 2017. The Committee held three (3) meetings in the course of which it interacted with the Petitioner and thirteen (13) other witnesses. The Petitioner and three (3) of the witnesses were in the class of seven (7) of which the Petitioner was the Class Representative. Dr. Oyewunmi also appeared before the Committee.

A key fact as found by the Committee was that:

"In their oral testimonies, Abiodun Davies Alabi aka Abiodun Adebola Jolaosho [the Petitioner], Aderonke BADEMOSI, Abosede Bukola, and Emmanuel ZINSU, all of the 2003 Modular year set of Political Education programme asserted that there was indeed a demand for the sum of Fifty Thousand Naira (N50,000) by Dr. Isaac Akinloye Oyewunmi (their subject co-ordinator) to process their results. This was corroborated by Dr. Isaac Oyewunmi in his statement on the audio clip of his recorded conversation with Dr. Abanikanda wherein he stated that: "Mo pada lo ba Alhaji, a jo so, it is a fact"and I went back to M.O.B that, o sele nitoo to" meaning "it happened truly."

This was the basis of the dismissal of Dr. Oyewunmi for misconduct as it relates to demanding money from students to process their results.

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In the case of Dr. Adebowale Adeyemi-Suenu who was dismissed for misconduct relating to alteration of marks, following information from students that some withdrawn students of the Department of History and International Studies had returned to the University through the assistance of some members of staff, I directed the University Integrated Data Centre (LIDC) to carry out a forensic audit of changes made during the 2015/2016 academic session.

The forensic evidence linked the PF number and password of Dr. Adeyemi-Suenu to the alterations, thus, I directed the Dean of the Faculty to investigate same. The Faculty of Arts set-up a 5-man Fact-Finding Panel on Wednesday 25th January, 2017. I received the Report of the Panel on 27th March 2017. There was a majority Report signed by four (4) members of the Panel (including the Chair, Dr. Abidemi Atolagbe, Associate Professor Department of English). The minority report was issued by Dr. Aboderin-Shonibare, who also happens to be the Treasurer/Financial Secretary of ASUU-LASU. The position of the majority report was that Dr. Adebowale-Suenu had a case to answer. In consequence of this, a query was issued to him on 3rd of April, 2017 by Academic Staff Establishment to explain his involvement in the allegation of alteration of results. He denied the allegations in his response of 5th April, 2017. The case was, thus, referred to the Joint Council/Senate (Academic) Disciplinary Committee.

The Committee interacted with 23 witnesses and also with Dr. Adeyemi-Suenu. The Committee established among others that:

- (i) Altered results did not reflect a zero (0) grade point to minimum pass grade of 1.0 or 2.0 in maximum of two (2) courses only as was decided by Departmental Board of Examiners for final year students and stragglers, but, some were changed from zero (0) and other lower grades to 3, 4 and 5 points in one (1) to eight (8) courses:
- (ii) Twelve (12) students classified as withdrawn on the ground of academic weakness, having between four (4) and eight (8) outstanding courses had their results in the courses changed to pass grade and their academic status upgraded from withdrawn to good standing.
- (iii) The changes effected on the withdrawn students were done on 9th and 25th November, 2016 with Dr. Adeyemi-Suenu's PF number and password.

During his oral testimony before the committee, Dr. Adeyemi-Suenu defended the charges of result upgrade of the twelve (12) withdrawn students by referring to them as mere recommendations for presentation to the Departmental Board but was mistakenly given to the Computer Operator due to his haste to meet a deadline for a trip. Mr. Olawale Oladimeji, the Computer Operator of the Department, however, debunked Dr. Adeyemi-Suenu's claim. He stated that Dr. Adeyemi-Suenu was seated with him during the correction exercise but left later when the correction had been completed and submitted for uploading. Mr. Oladimeji's Statement was corroborated by Mr. Olatunde Olatundun, the clerical Staff of the Department.

It was premised on the above misconduct that Dr. Adebowale Adeyemi-Suenu was dismissed. By the provisions of the Conditions of Service Guiding Senior Staff of Lagos State University, 2008, manipulation of student's records and result attracts dismissal as sanction.

2) That the dismissal of Dr. Oyewunmi and Dr. Adeyemi-Suenu is aimed at weakening ASUU-LASU.

This is far from the truth. From what I have earlier stated, the dismissal of both Dr. Oyewunmi and Dr. Adeyemi-Suenu among others were pursuant to thorough investigation of specific and documented allegations of misconduct. The cases of these two (2) individuals have nothing to do with Union related activities, thus, the University sees the frantic efforts being made by some individuals to make these cases a Union issue as a deliberate ploy to distract and hoodwink members of the public. The Communiqué issued by the Body of Professors and Associate Professors (numbering 47) issued on Friday 15th September, 2017 is a clear indication that the University will not allow our respected Union to be used by few individuals to protect unethical selfish personal agenda.

3) That the Sack was done so as not to have a dissenting voice when Management finally perfect its plan to increase Tuition.

This is a figment of the imagination of those raising it. The ploy is to use this to incite our world class students to become restive. Our students now know better and will not allow themselves to be used to foment needless crisis. I reiterate again that there is no plan to increase Tuition at the Lagos State University.

Conclusion.

In closing my statement, I on behalf of Council and Management want to thank all media practitioners here present. I plead that in reporting events about LASU; avoid sensational titles that can create unnecessary tension and put the University in crisis. Kindly do remember that we are dealing with young adults who can easily misinterpret a sensational headline. I also want to thank the student body and members of staff of our University for supporting the drive to instil and strengthen discipline, and for their determination to ensure that we maintain the peace that we have in our University. I thank you all.

Professor Olanrewaju A. Fagbohun, Ph.D (Vice – Chancellor, Lagos State University)

We are LASU, We are Proud!

UNIVERSITY MANAGEMENT

...Beginning of a new Dawn

BULLETIN