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RE: UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS COUNCIL RESOLUTION

The University Community will recall that on March 9, 2020, there was a release on the University Campus News, which was purported to have been issued at the instance of the Governing Council.

The members of the public should note that the content of the publication does not provide the true reflection of what transpired at the Governing Council meeting of March 4, 2020. Though the Registrar by a text message requested for my approval as follows:

"Good afternoon sir. Pursuant to Council decisions, the Pro-Chancellor has directed that a Release be published in the Information Flash/News Bulletin concerning the Convocation Ceremonies. Kindly approve that the members of staff in the Communication Unit make facilities available for the publication as the directive was received not long ago. Thank you sir."

The Registrar's request was approved, however, the Vice-Chancellor was taken aback by the content of the publication when it was released on Monday, March 9, 2020.

It is therefore imperative to give members of the public the true picture of what transpired on the floor of Council at its meeting of March 4, 2020.

1. Contrary to what was stated in the Campus News, the NUC directive to suspend the Convocation Ceremonies was based on the Pro-Chancellor, Dr. Bolanle Olawale Babalakin's letter of March 2, 2020 that the program of the Convocation Ceremonies *"...was not authorised by the Council of the University of Lagos."*
2. This assertion was debunked on the floor of Council at its meeting of March 4, 2020 when the audio recording of the meeting of January 21 and 22, 2020 was played. Records of the Minutes of the meeting also showed that the convocation programme was indeed discussed.

Excerpt of the Minutes of January 21 and 22, 2020 are thus reproduced:

"Council was informed that the 2019 Convocation Ceremonies have been scheduled between March 9 and 13, 2020. The Chairman informed members that all matters on the Convocation Ceremonies shall be considered at the Council meeting of January 22, 2020."

"Council received and considered C.P. No. 2019/20/3b, which contained the Nominees for Honorary Doctorate Degree at the 51st Convocation Ceremonies of the University and the Proposed Budget Estimate."

3. In line with the ethos and traditions of the University, the dates and programmes of the Convocation ceremonies are usually brought to the attention of Council after due clearance of the dates has been received from the supervising Ministry, which we did.
4. On the issue of Honorary Doctorate Degree, in line with extant University regulations, Management considered nominations for the award of honorary degrees and forwarded its recommendations to the Honours Committee of the Senate. However, mindful of the short time to Convocation, the Vice-Chancellor proactively brought to the floor of Council at its meeting of January 22, 2020, through Council paper CP 2019/20/3b, the names of nominees that were being considered by the Senate Honours Committee. Council discussed the issue extensively and the Pro-Chancellor stated that the University should endeavour to ensure that only deserving individuals are honoured and suggested the inclusion of Late Dr. Stella Ameyo Adadevoh for a posthumous award, which we thereafter forwarded to Honours Committee for inclusion. Council further decided that after the University Senate had concluded on the nominees for the awards, the Vice-Chancellor should liaise with Dr. John Momoh "off-line" since the next Council meeting would hold just a week before the Convocation Ceremonies. That the deliberation of Council on the issue of honorary nominees at the meeting was extensive is, in fact, documented in the minutes of the meeting of Council. The fact was also corroborated by Dr. Momoh on the floor of Council. It would therefore appear that there was another version of the tape being referred to in the Campus News released on Monday, March 9, 2020.
5. On the issue of ignoring the letter of the Pro-Chancellor, the letter from the Pro-Chancellor was sent via email on Friday, February 28, 2020 at 10:28pm, but not seen until late Saturday afternoon. Given the issues involved, it was important to discuss this at the Management meeting of Monday, March 2, 2020, which was also the scheduled date for the Convocation Ceremonies world press conference. While Management was responding to the letter, another letter was received from the Pro-Chancellor via email at 12:38pm showing that the matter had been escalated to the Ministry of Education and the NUC. The Vice-Chancellor and Management responses to both letters were therefore sent to the Pro-Chancellor and also forwarded to the Ministry of Education and NUC that same day.
6. It is pertinent to note that despite the special appeal by Senate following its Emergency Meeting of March 4, 2020 and entreaties by virtually all members of Council at the Council meeting of March 4, 2020 for the Pro-Chancellor to speak to NUC and the Ministry to persuade them to allow the Convocation Ceremonies to hold as planned, the Pro-Chancellor did not heed the pleas.

It is important that members of the University Community are fully aware of all the facts. I enjoin members of the University to always put the University of Lagos first so that through our cooperative efforts, we can yield the best for our great University and sustain the culture and tradition that will showcase why we are Number One (1) in Nigeria and Number Eight (8) in Africa.

Professor Oluwatoyin T. Ogundipe
Vice-Chancellor
16-March-2020