



## **Registry Department and the Nigerian Universities: A Synthetic Analysis.**

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### **Abstract**

The continuous proliferation of Universities in Nigeria has not only thrown up new challenges of need and relevance, but also raised the level of improved expectations from governments, parents/guardians, students and other important stakeholders in the Nigerian university system. It is thus obvious, that the time has come for every university in Nigeria to prove its mettle and relevance. Accordingly, to survive these challenging times and realize its vision, it requires an enabling environment for the university and the harnessing of her staff potentials. Indeed, just as a good product is as a result of good thinking, the Registry Department as a major constituent component and indeed, the engine room of the university administration, is saddled to play a pivotal role in the process. It is thus in this respect, that this paper on the analysis of the Role of the Registry Department on the growth and progress of the University System is germane. This paper employed content analysis by making use of well documented secondary data. Standing upon the System Theory as propounded by David Easton, the paper noted that in any university that the Registry get its acts together and do the needful, the institution is assured of a proper roadmap and guidance towards the accomplishment and ultimate realisation of its set goals, vision and mission. Therefore, the paper recommended among others, that staff of the Registry Department of a university is to be carefully selected, well trained and adequately motivated.

**Keywords:** Registry; Registry Department; Growth; Progress and University.

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## Introduction

The University is a peculiar organization. It is essentially an academic community, an institution where ideas are generated and where high standards are set and maintained. The university staff comprises of the Academic and Non-teaching. The Academic staff are directly responsible for teaching and research while the Non-teaching staff are responsible for the day-to-day supportive services for the smooth running of the university. The non-teaching staff are grouped into departments these include: Registry, Bursary, Works and Maintenance, Physical Planning, Health, Sports, Information Technology and Resource Centre and Library services. The day-to-day administration of the university is directly the responsibility of the Registry Department, statutorily accountable to the Registrar. Staff of the Registry Department who are expected to contribute in no small measure in producing men and women who are professionally and academically equipped for socio-economic development of the nation must of necessity, be intelligent men and women themselves. They must be professionally and academically qualified for their jobs in order to cope with the academic nature of university administration. As noted by Nigeria Universities Commission, (2010) they should know all details about their work and work-place, the organization itself, the rules and regulations of the university on academic matters such as rules governing examinations, admissions, discipline and conditions of service. They should, so to say, act as data banks where information is stored and retrieved.

The contribution of university education to the socio-political, economic and technological advancement of a nation cannot be over emphasized. This is because it is the peak in the three levels of education and also one of the various tertiary educational institutions through which the nation hopes to achieve its vision. Its roles include teaching, research and community services. In order to effectively perform these roles, it thus becomes imperative that its administrative capacity is properly sharpened so as to facilitate the production of manpower (students) that would effectively key into the professions of their choice. It is in this regard that the role of the Registry Department becomes imperative.

NUC, (2010) established that the university is an institution of higher learning that offer a wide range of programmes. They provide necessary training for individuals wishing to make and pursue professional careers. They also strive to develop student's creativity, insight and analytical skills. By impacting students with complex ideas in an intellectually stimulating environment, they provide unique opportunities for personal enrichment. The vehicle that propels the achievement of the aforementioned is through the university administrators. By university administrators here we mean, the category of staff working in the university and whose primary duty is essentially to process efforts for the attainment of university goals. The administrators of universities need to pass on their talents, ingenuities, skills, knowledge, attitudes, capabilities, competences and other values to the next generation for the universities to carry on the everyday business of life. In order to perpetuate such tradition, it is essential to train and re-train for socio-economic development and culture change and overcome new challenges. The vehicle, through which these are channeled in the university system, is vested in the Registry Department.

The Registry Department of the University is vested with the responsibility of coordinating various departments, units or sections of the University to ensure efficiency and optimal performance. The Registry Department is headed by the Registrar who is the Chief Administrator of the University and statutorily the Secretary to Council, Senate, Congregation and Convocation. The Registrar reports to the Vice-Chancellor on the day-to-day administration of the University. Over the years, the growing complexities in the administration of the University has seen the Registry metamorphose from a small Unit in a one-room accommodation to a more robust organ with quite a number of key departments/units. While this development is largely a product of thorough institutional framework, the idiosyncratic values of successive registrars have also helped in shaping the Registry Department.

To reiterate further, the Registry Department with the Registrar at the head and as the Chief Administrative Officer has a dual function in the University system, namely, assisting the Vice-Chancellor in the day-to-day administration of the University and Secretary ship of statutory bodies of the University and their various committees as well as many ad-hoc committees. Since the effectiveness of the university administration, the statutory bodies and their various



committees will, to a large extent, determine the degree of achievement of the goals and objectives of the University, the functions of the Registry Department, therefore, become crucial in this process. As a service centre, servicing specifically not only the statutory bodies and their committees – Council, Senate, Convocation, and Congregation – but also the entire University community, and the public generally, the main goal of the Registry Department especially is to render efficient and effective service for the smooth progress, growth and development of the university. With this in mind, every staff in the department therefore, is expected to strive to be better than the best in the input-out process.

Akomolafe and Belo, (2016) remarked that the tempo of work in the University, generally, and the Registry Department in particular, is such that staff are always under pressure; pressure to get matters ready for implementation, pressure to process admission forms and examination results, pressure to take administrative decision on various issues, et cetera. As such, services in the Registry Department must therefore be quick but meticulous, and carried out with utmost dispatch at all times. Meticulous because, any iota of negligence is capable of adversely affecting the future prospect of a student. It is important to mention that the University community is a highly critical and meticulous community. Staff of the Registry Department is expected to leave no one in doubt as to the reliability of the decisions they record, the data they present, the information they give and the results they produce. As an academic community, the University strives to maintain high standards and excellence. The support services rendered by the Registry Department, the position papers prepared by it, its recordings of the proceedings of the various committees and the volume of correspondence emanating from it, must aim at being of the highest quality.

In a complex organization such as the University, there is a tendency for the various units/departments to forget that, though they perform different functions, these functions are complementary in achieving the overall vision, mission, goals and objectives of the university. That is why the Registry Department, more than any single unit in the University system, deals on day-to-day basis, with a large number of other units in the university, while performing its functions. It is therefore important that the services rendered by the Registry Department are dispassionately coordinated, always bearing in mind the effect of any singular function on the



overall achievement of the goals of the university. It should be clear to all and sundry that no one function should be made to impede other functions. The need for co-operation, consultations, free flow of information and ideas and common sharing of resources should be realized by all.

In fact a major contribution that the Registry Department can make towards the achievement of the goals and objectives of the university is by rendering, reliable and co-ordinate services with the greatest tactfulness and humility. Recognizing the above phenomenon, so many universities have depended on the Registry Department for its administrative style.

Thus, the Registry Department forms the core administrative machinery of the University system. They are the custodians of records and interpreters of regulations. All the units and sections of the university depend on their guidance for smooth governance such as policy formulation and implementation. Expediently therefore, staff of the Registry Department who pride themselves as the university professional administrators are expected to:

- =Have thorough understanding of the institutional system and its governance,
- =Be familiar with the administrative tools needed in their daily assignments,
- =To have confidence to work with minimal supervision on their schedules,
- =Develop new skills for efficient and effective performance on the job,
- =Understand the code of conduct and the need for high ethical standards in the discharge of their duties; and have good sense of loyalty and dedication to the institution (Bogoro, 2015).

Proper understanding to the aforementioned will greatly go a long way to the administrative success of the University.

### **The Registry Department**

The Registry Department of a university is a service center, servicing specifically not only the statutory bodies of the university and their committees; Council, Senate, Convocation, Congregation but also the entire University community and the public generally. The main goal of the department therefore, is to render efficient and effective service for the progress, development and growth of the university. Thus, every staff on the department is expected to strive to be better than the best in the input-out process of information. In carrying out the day-to-day assignment of their statutory responsibilities, staff of the department is to give the university community and the public cause to brand them as masters but should regard



themselves as servants of knowledge who must of necessity render their services with the greatest humility and professionalism.

The University community is a highly critical and meticulous community. As such, staff of the Registry Department must therefore leave no one in doubt as to the reliability of the minutes they take, the decisions they record, the data they present, the information they give and the results they produce. As an academic community, the University strives to maintain high standards and excellence. The support services rendered by the Registry Department, the position papers prepared by it, its recordings of the proceedings of the various committees and the volume of correspondence emanating from it, must aim at being of the highest quality and, indeed, of being better than the best. In summary, a major contribution that the Registry Department can make towards the achievement of the goals and objectives of the university system is by rendering reliable and co-ordinate services with the greatest humility.

It is instructive to note here that the Registry in the university system is comprised of the Registrar's Office with its various divisions and sections that handles designated responsibilities. The department is headed by the Registrar, who is the chief administrative officer directly responsible to the Vice Chancellor. The Registry Department derives its mandate and responsibilities from that of the Registrar as Secretary to the statutory bodies as defined in the university laws.

The Registry has often been referred to as the engine room of university administration, due to its housing of the secretariats of the major organs of governance, namely, the Governing Council, Senate, Congregation and the Convocation. Arising from this, and coupled with its being "responsible for the routine administration of the university except that bearing on financial matters" (NUC, 2010), the Registry performs the following duties that are at the heart of the university operations: Provision of Secretariat Services, Facilitation of Academic Matters and Processes, Personnel/Human Resources Management, Custody and interpretation of all important records and documents of the university, as well as all rules, regulations and decisions reached at all formal meetings in the system; and Information and Public Relations via dissemination of information to the university community and the general public; in addition, publication of university bulletins, calendars and prospectuses as well as handling of protocols.



### **The Registry as Supervisor of Departments and Units**

Due to its widespread presence and involvement in all academic and other activities in the university, the Registry has over time evolved and assumed the position for monitoring the activities and performances of the Departments, Units and Faculties in the system. With her staff posted in every Faculty, department and unit, and, also involved in implementation of decisions at all levels, it has become necessary and an easy task too, for the Registry to keep track of events/activities, extent of progress and accomplishments being recorded in all sections, and, also, by the university itself. In this way and with regards to her strategic position in the university system in particular, the Registry is able to supervise, monitor and ensure compliance, in addition to evaluation of extent of accomplishment and further review of decisions reached by the university.

By and large, in carrying out the supervisory and monitoring role of ensuring that all departments and units in the university remain alert and responsive to their duties and assignments, and especially for the Registrars who are yet to work out modalities or template in this regard, this can be realised via, monthly meeting with Registry Management Committee comprising Heads of various Registry Divisions/Units and Faculty Officers, frequent interactive meetings with all administrative staff; and regular administrative postings based on competence and or need for experience/exposure.

### **Working Relationship with the Vice Chancellor**

Given the excessive powers that a typical Nigerian University Law grants to the Vice Chancellor as the chief executive officer vis-à-vis the centrality and importance of duties and responsibilities of especially the Registrar as the chief administrative officer and head of the Registry, it is of utmost importance that a close and good working relationship is established between the two majors actors in the system.

Indeed, as can be expected, given the penchant for abuse of power and flagrant disregard of extant rules and established procedures by an increasing number of Vice Chancellors, the onus is more or less now with the Registrar and the Registry as a whole to insist on due process in matters of governance and administration while at the same time ensuring that their 'administrative table' is not in return shaken to a breaking point by an overbearing Vice



Chancellor. This is provided that the department itself and or its leadership (Registrar) are not complicit or unable to shun willful negligence and sheer incompetence that encourages the reign of impunity in the system. This can be achieved with tact especially as the Registry is the custodian of all working documents of the university.

Accordingly, and notwithstanding the often hostile and suffocating terrain and debilitating circumstances under which they operate, the Registrar and the Registry as a whole, should in addition to working closely with the Vice Chancellor on statutory matters involving Council, Senate, Congregation and Convocation, also establish useful working relationship and synergy with the chief executive on other matters such as information and public relations, student affairs and security that are also germane to the articulation and realization of the university's set objectives and mission at any point in time. This is so that the university management is always seen to be operating and projecting a unified force that is taking the university to the next level of attainment as opposed to next level of decay or rot which the absence of a cordial working relationship may ensure.

### **The Concept of University**

The term University refers to an institution of higher learning providing facilities for teaching and research and authorized specifically to grant academic degrees. Webster's Dictionary explain further that, the University is made up of an undergraduate division which confers bachelor's degrees and a graduate division which comprises a graduate school and professional schools each of which may confer master's degrees and doctorates. The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary defines University as an institution at the highest level of education where you can study for a degree or do research.

According to Encyclopaedia Britannica, (2023) University is an institution of higher learning, usually comprising colleges, faculties, departments, programmes; involved in teaching and research for arts, sciences for graduate and professional schools and having the authority to confer degrees in various fields of study. It went further to explain that a university differs from a college in that it is usually larger, has a broader curriculum, and offers graduate and professional degrees such as Master's, doctorate, professional degrees, in addition to undergraduate degrees such as bachelor's.





Essentially, university is a place for shaping, molding and learning in both thought and character. An efficient university educational system could be considered as one of the best assets a nation can have. And against this backdrop, one could rightly assert that a dysfunctional university system would surely make for a dysfunctional country.

The benefits derivable from a good and functional university system can never be overemphasized. The entire developmental apparatus of the socio-economic structure of nations revolves around a good university system. The university helps in the rapid industrialization of economies. This it does by providing well trained and quality human resources with adequate professional, technical and managerial skills (Tilak, 2019). Again, a good university system helps to boost the transformation of societies into knowledge societies. This it does by providing not just educated workforce, but knowledge-based work-force whose minds are tailored to contribute immensely to the growth of their economies. Furthermore, a worthwhile university system helps to instill good attitudes and engenders attitudinal changes that are necessary for the socialization of the individual, thereby, leading to the modernization and overall transformation of the society. It is also clear that a functional university system helps, through teaching and concise research, in the creation, absorption, dissemination and application of knowledge. Finally, healthy university system helps in the formation of a strong nation-state and at the same time aids globalization. This is so because it allows people to enjoy an enhanced life of free mind and integration, offering the wider society both cultural and political benefits (TFHES, 2000).

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study is anchored on the System Theory as propounded by David Easton in 1964. According to the System Theory, a system is essentially an assemblage of things interconnected or interdependent, so as to form a complex unity'' (Ademolekun, 1983). All systems interact with and are influenced by their environment (political, social, economic, ethical, technological etc), and in turn, influence its environment. An important element in the systems approach is the emphasis on input-output analysis.

According to Adamolekun, (1983) ‘A system is represented as receiving inputs from the environment. Worthy of note is that a system needs support from its environment in order to survive. Thus, in the university system, it receives inputs of support such as payment of school fees, obedience to rules and regulations etc. Equally important is the fact that, consequent upon the outputs, some new inputs are generated and feedback into the system through the feedback mechanism. These are again processed and converted to output. Hence, the System Theory is cyclical.

Every organization exists to provide goods and services for the satisfaction of the society. In discussing the role of the registry department to the development of University, the Systems Theory is more apt as it helps in explaining explicitly the socio-political, economic and environmental factors which influences, dictates, interacts and shapes the university management. It is on this note that I disagree with the views of Koontz et al, when they state that; all systems interact with and are influenced by the environment. Even though there are peculiarities in the governance and management of organizations, there are seemingly observable differences in the running of University particularly by the efforts of the activities of the registry department dictated by the environmental influences.

For example, in the appointment of the Vice Chancellor, there is usually a selection committee set up by Council which makes recommendation to Council and eventually to the Visitor who appoints largely based on the environmental/zoning factor. In addition, the appointments of the DVC’s are also based on environmental considerations. Other areas in which environmental influence plays a role is in the constitution of the University Governing Council, appointment/selection of Principal Officers, recruitment of staff, admission of students, day to day running of the University, interaction with the host community, traditional institutions etc. Even in the running of the university, most decisions made by the VC at certain points may not be the best option available but such decisions are taken for political and administrative expediency.

The system theory is a conceptual framework that examines complex systems as a whole, comprised of smaller interacting subsystems. It seeks to understand how the components of a system are interconnected and how they function together to produce the system's behavior. According to systems theory, everything is composed of systems, which are entities that have



inputs, processes, outputs, and feedback. Systems consist of subsystems that are themselves systems with inputs, processes, outputs, and feedback.

One of the central concepts in systems theory is that of feedback. Feedback is information about the results of a system's actions that is used to adjust or control the system, so it operates optimally. Feedback loops can either be positive, where the feedback reinforces the system's behavior, or negative, where the feedback serves to regulate the system's behavior. Another key concept in systems theory is the idea of inputs and outputs. Inputs are the resources or information that a system requires to operate, while outputs are the products or services that a system produces as a result of its processes. Systems theory also recognizes that systems often interact with other systems, and it is important to understand how these interactions affect the behavior of the systems as a whole.

In conclusion, the system theory is an interdisciplinary approach to understanding complex systems such as the university. It provides a framework that enables the analysis and understanding of complex systems by breaking them down into smaller components and examining how they interact with each other. Thus, the Systems Theory enables the University administration to run perfectly taking into account the totality of the systems in order to ensure growth, peace and stability which is the hallmark of an efficient and effective management.

### **Evolution of the University System in Nigeria**

The importance of education in the overall development of an individual cannot be over emphasized. This is because education serves as an avenue for removing individuals from the shackles of ignorance, unemployment and poverty and also the bedrock for every development that occurs in the society. This perhaps might be the reason why the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014), averred in the National Policy on education that education is the greatest investment that the nation can offer for the quick development of her economic, political, sociological and human resources. This, no doubt is responsible for the fast proliferation of universities in Nigeria since independence in 1960.

The history of university system in Nigeria is traced to the Elliot Commission of 1943, which culminated in the establishment of University College Ibadan (UCI) in 1948. Hitherto, it was an affiliate of the University of London (Ike, (1976) in Jake (2019). In April 1959, the Federal

Government commissioned an inquiry (the Ashby Commission) to advise it on the higher education needs of the country for its first two decades. But before the submission of the report, the Eastern Region government established its own university at Nsukka (University of Nigeria, Nsukka in 1960). Two years later, the implementation of the Ashby Report led to the establishment of University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife) in 1962 by the Western region, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria in 1962 by the Northern Region and University of Lagos (1962) by the Federal Government (Babalola et al, (2017). Furthermore, the University College, Ibadan became a full-fledged university in 1962. From the above, we can infer that the University College Ibadan and University of Lagos became the first two federal universities in Nigeria as the other three were regional creations. In 1970, the newly created Midwestern region established the University of Benin. The six universities established between 1960 and 1970 are still referred to as the first generation universities. It is pertinent to remark that during this period, universities in Nigeria were under the close surveillance of government. Appointments of lay members of the council, and that of the Vice-Chancellor were highly politically motivated.

Jake (2019) reported that, in the Third National Development Plan (1975 -1980), the government established seven universities instead of the four proposed in the plan, and also took over the four regional universities in 1975. They were Universities of Calabar, Ilorin, Jos, Sokoto, Maiduguri, Port Harcourt and Ado Bayero University, Kano - all known as second generation universities. The third generation universities were established between 1980 and early 1990. They are: the Federal Universities of Technology in Owerri, Makurdi, Yola, Akure and Bauchi. While state universities were found in Imo, Ondo, Lagos, Akwa-Ibom, Oyo and Cross-River states. The fourth generation universities are those established between 1991 and the present date. They include more state universities, Nigerian open universities and many private universities across the length and breadth of Nigeria. As of September 2021, there are 43 Federal Universities, 48 State Universities and 79 Private Universities in Nigeria making a total of 170 universities in the country.

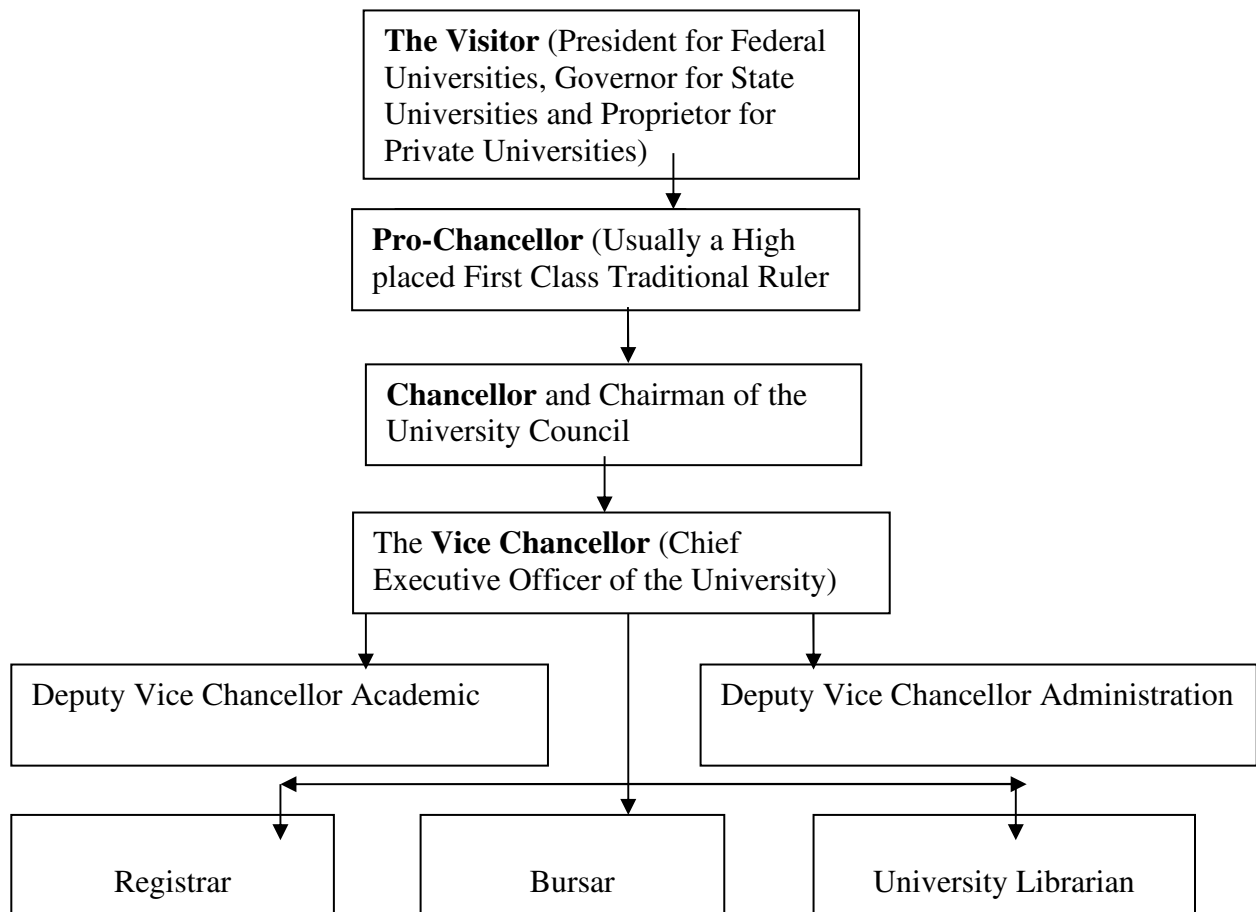
As pointed out by Nwafor (1998) in Victoria & Emmanuel, (2019) the first university established in Nigeria was the University of Ibadan in 1948. Afterwards, three other universities were established which are University of Nigeria Nsukka, University of Ife now Obafemi Awolowo University Ile-Ife, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria by the then regional governments of the



Eastern, Western and Northern regions respectively. In addition, University of Lagos was established in 1970 by the Federal Government and University of Benin in 1972 by the Mid-Western regional Government. Thus, by 1972, the nation had six Universities in less than twelve years after her independence.

Although the number of universities in the country is increasing in lips and bounds, surprisingly, none of these institutions have been able to rank among the first 400 universities in the world. As the giant of Africa, this scenario ought not to be so. It is based on this premise that various commissions and agencies are being set up by government to look deeply into the cause of the academic challenges confronting the university education in Nigeria. Accordingly, universities are ensuring that the administrative workforce is adequately strengthened to surmount some of the challenges.

#### A Typical University Organogram of Principal Officers



**Source:** Field work 2023



### **The Visitor and Principal Officers of the University**

For Federal Universities, the President and Commander-in-Chief of Nigeria is the Visitor while the Executive Governor of a state is the Visitor to a state University. Directly under the Visitor is the Chancellor (a ceremonial head). The Chancellor is statutorily appointed by the Visitor. It is common practice now in Nigeria that prominent traditional rulers are appointed as chancellors of Nigerian universities whether federal or state.

Principal Officers of the university directly responsible for the day-to-day management of the university are: The Vice Chancellor, The Deputy Vice Chancellor Administration, The Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic, The Registrar, The Bursar and the University Librarian. The Vice Chancellor is the Chief Executive and Academic Head of the university. He/She is vested by law with the responsibility of directing the activities of the university. Deans, Directors, Heads of Departments, including the Registrar, Bursar, Librarian and other Heads of Units are expected to advise and assist the Vice Chancellor (KSU, 2016)

The Deputy Vice Chancellors (Administration and Academic) are direct assistants to the Vice Chancellor in their respective designations. The Registrar as the Chief Administrative Officer of the university and is responsible to the Vice Chancellor for the day-to-day administration of the university. The Bursar is the Chief Finance Officer of the university. Accordingly, all financial matters of the university are under his/her purview. The University Librarian is charged with the responsibility of managing and directing the university libraries.

### **Decision Making in the University System**

Decision making in the university system is an administrative function and invariably requires information in the form of records. Administration is ordinarily discussed as the art of "getting things done." Emphasis is placed upon processes and methods for insuring incisive action. Principles are set forth for securing concerted action from groups of people. Decisions are made at different levels in the university. However, it is fairly obvious that the lower one goes down the organization the lower the level of decision that must be made and in reverse, the higher one goes the higher the level of decision; irrespective of the level, however, information will be required one way or another. In all spheres of activity decisions are being made about the



allocation of budgetary resources, the prioritization of programmes, the granting of social benefits, the commissioning of new projects, the closure of unproductive ventures, and the information to release to the public or the level of classification that certain information requires.

Records and archives provide the information that is required by those who make the decisions. The question only is whether these records are available to these decision makers and whether the decision makers are aware of their existence and thus make use of them when making decisions. Thomassen, (2002) opined that trustworthy records contain reliable evidence of decisions taken, rights acquired and commitments made. Without records, no assessment can be made of whether individuals and public organizations have actually carried out the actions and transactions that they had to execute, whether they have performed these actions and whether they have done the things which they were not supposed to do.

Decision Making in University System is always by committee system. Each university has between twenty and sixty committees and each of this committee is expected to specialize with regards to the terms of and focus of activities. In practice, however, there are disturbing overlaps and duplication of efforts. Nevertheless, the thrust of committee activities is decision making. This entails the analysis of available options and the choice of one of several possible alternative options. Such decisions of committees may have to do with providing solutions to specific problems (e.g., course unit system and the problem of re-sit examinations; top heavy structure of staff in some departments etc.). The decisions may also have to do with broad and recurrent issues like financial allocation (e.g. finance sub-committees of the development committee or the finance and general purposes committees of council) or recruitment and reward sub-committee as in appointment and promotion committees, or with disciplinary sub-committee as in the joint committees of Senate and Council. What is most instructive and common to all the committees is decision making and choice of one out of several options or alternative viewpoints. The degree to which such activities reflect or result from superior administrative capacity is conditioned by several factors. These include:

- i. The membership or composition of the committee



- ii. The leadership, chairmanship or conveyance
- iii. The frequency or regularity of committee meetings
- iv. The time taken for a particular decision to be reached (one month, one year etc.)
- v. The records or minutes of proceedings (accuracy of documentation)
- vi. The availability or non-availability of administrative supports (e.g. competent secretary, information bank or precedent regulations etc.)
- vii. Consistency or inconsistency of application of rules and regulations or other bases of reaching decisions
- viii. The timeliness of frequency or follow up actions and documentation of decision, decision extract, communication of decision etc.

### **Activities of the Registry Department**

The registry department is made up of well-structured and functional units as component parts with key responsibilities. To ensure efficiency, these units are headed by seasoned university administrators who are responsible to the Registrar. It is the statutory responsibility of the Registrar to coordinate the activities of all administrative staff posted to all units, sections, departments, colleges and faculties of the University. Meetings and minutes of such meetings are taken on the behalf of the Registrar. Indeed, it is best practice that these officers report to him from time to time. The functions of the University Registry Department are carried out in the following offices:

**Council Affairs:** The University Council is the highest decision making organ in the University Governance Structure. It is mainly a policy making body but wields enormous power in its advisory and supervisory roles. The Council is headed by a Pro-Chancellor but in practical term, administered by the Chancellor and chairmen of council who is a nominee of the Visitor. Primarily the Council is responsible for the policies and operations of the University, it





superintends over assets of the offices and functionaries (University Law, 1999). The secretariat of the Governing Council is the Council Affairs Unit. The Unit supports the Registrar in servicing the Council and ensures that Council decisions are implemented without delay. It also facilitates meetings of Council and the various standing committees of Council such as the Finance and General Purpose Committee, University Tenders Board, Appointment and Promotions Committee and Senior Staff Disciplinary Committee. The Unit also secures all Council documents.

**Academic Affairs:** This office is headed by an officer called the Academic Officer who is responsible to the Registrar and concerned with the smooth administration of academic programmes in the University. The Office monitors compliance with academic regulations in the University. There are units under the Academic Affairs which help in ensuring academic excellence. These units are: Senate and Ceremonies, examinations and records, admissions and certificate verification among others.

**Senate and Ceremonies:** This is the secretariat to the University Senate. It takes minutes at all meetings and ensures Senate decisions/approvals are implemented promptly. The Unit also serves as secretariat to the ceremonies committee which is in charge of arrangements for the Convocation, Congregation as well as Inaugural Lectures.

**The Examinations Office:** The Unit is in charge of the conduct of all examinations in the University. The Unit also performs other essential functions such as, reproduction of examination questions, supply of examination materials, scheduling and attendance of Faculty Board of Examiners meetings, processing of results for Senate and Vice-Chancellor's approval, processing of schemes of examination and list of examiners, scheduling of lecture and examinations time-table and implementation of academic misconduct reports after Vice-Chancellor's approval.

**Records Office:** The Unit is responsible for the safekeeping of students' records and ensuring prompt issuance of transcript upon request. It is responsible for issuing statements of result for the purpose of NYSC, scholarship approval and other official requests. Careful attention is placed on accuracy of information that emanates from the unit as this is important to avoid jeopardizing the career of ex-students, thus the unit is headed by administrators of proven track records.



**Admissions Office:** The Office is in charge of admitting eligible candidates in compliance with the National University Commissions standards and quota. The functions of the Admissions Office include; filling vacuum created by the exit of graduating students, attending to general requests on admission issues, conducting post-UTME screening exercise, selection of qualified candidates, screening and registration of admitted candidates, verification of students' results and confirmation of studentship. With the overwhelming choice of Universities by a good number of UTME applicants and the quality of students that JAMB examination produced, Kogi State University Management through the Admissions Office introduced the post-UTME screening to help curb the intake of unqualified candidates. This novel idea has since been the norm by all Nigerian Universities (KSU, 2016).

**Certificate and Verification Unit:** This Unit prepares Certificates of graduates upon completion of academic requirements and approval of Senate. The unit also verifies certificates of ex-students upon request from private and public organisations. It is important to note that the unit has lived up to expectation by ensuring certificates are ready as requested by the regulating body and modalities for collection of the certificates are seamless.

**Establishment Office:** (Senior/Junior) The Establishment office is the core of the Registry department and is basically concerned with general staff matters of the university. This unit is saddled with the responsibility of recruitment/appointment, promotion, welfare and capacity building, processing of leave, processing of retirement/exit and discipline of erring staff. It also ensures proper establishment, placement and job description for staff members. It has the following sections: Academic Staff, Senior Staff, Junior Staff, Training and Development, Health and Pension.

**School of Postgraduate Studies:** This section of the university is responsible for the Postgraduate programmes of the university and it is headed by a Dean, usually an academic staff. However, a Secretary who is usually not lower than the rank of a Deputy Registrar is the administrative head of the School. He/she assists the Registrar with the day to day administration of the Postgraduate School.

**Information Unit:** This is the public relations unit of the University. Its major thrust is to provide accurate information about the University to the University community and general



public. Although this Unit is under the Office of the Vice-Chancellor, it is however headed by a senior administrative staff, usually a Deputy Registrar. The Registrar plays an oversight role.

**Student Affairs:** The students are at the heart of any university, therefore great attention must be put in ensuring their experiences in the university are rewarding. The Student Affairs Unit of the University handles all matters concerning student welfare. The core of the unit's activities is allocation of accommodation for students, regulating student activities, mobilisation for National Service, identifying brilliant and indigent students for scholarships, and providing counselling services for students. This important unit is headed by a Dean who relies on administrative staff (the Student Affairs Officer, a Deputy Registrar) in the day-to-day activities of the unit. As the Chief Administrative Officer of the University, the Registrar plays an oversight role through the Student Affairs Officer by ensuring the unit conforms to the set norms of the University.

**Legal Services:** The University deals with individuals and corporate bodies on a regular basis, these engagements require that extant laws are considered. The Unit therefore prepares the legal framework for awarding and renewing contracts i.e. crafting suitable agreements, partnership with other organisations (both local and foreign) and other engagements. This Unit is therefore essential in advising Management on the rules of engagement. The Registrar works closely with the unit to ensure support from time to time (KSU, 2016).

**Faculty Offices:** The Faculty Office is headed by a Faculty Officer who is the Registrar's representative in the faculty. The Faculty Officer is the secretary to most of the committees at the faculty level. It is pertinent to note that the Registrar provides support for the faculty officers at all times, the faculty officers in turn keep the Registrar abreast of progress and challenges facing the faculty. The Faculty Officer coordinates the administrative duties of all service personnel at the faculty level. They serve as the interface between the main Registry and staff/students at the faculty level.

### **Challenges Facing the Registry Department in Nigerian Universities**

We have been able to establish that the Registry Department in a University System is responsible for managing and maintaining student records, registration, admissions and graduation processes. The department also ensures that academic policies and regulations are implemented by faculty and ensure that accurate records of the students in the university system



are observed. Some of the challenges faced by the Registry Department in university system are as follows:

1. Increasing number of students: As more students seek higher education the workload of the Registry department increases. This results in longer queues, delayed decision-making and a backlog on the part of the department.
2. Manual record keeping: Many universities still rely on manual record keeping processes, which often leads to data duplication, inaccurate and incomplete records. This increases the workload of the department and can result in errors in student records.
3. Paper-Based Processes: Many universities still rely on paper-based processes for student registration and admission, resulting in delays, errors, a lack of transparency, and the potential for lost documents.
4. Suitability of Technology: Some universities have implemented technology to improve registration, however not all technologies are suitable for the needs of the university system. A lack of training, support maintenance and user adoption leads to technology shortcomings that limit the effectiveness and efficiency of the department.
5. Short Funding: Limited financial resources can compromise the execution of duties and responsibilities of the Registry Department. For instance, in some instances, the use of equipment, access to necessary data, or important collaborations may be compromised due to lack of funds.
6. Inaccurate Data: Accurate data are essential to the smooth operation of the Registry Department. However, a lack of data accuracy, quality control and documentation procedures lead to a lack of confidence in the data collected, which can lead to errors, decisions based on wrong inputs, and a potential neglect of student outcomes over time.
7. Inconsistency in Regulations: Colleges and universities set academic regulations that govern the behaviour of faculty and students, but inconsistency in regulations may result in confusion among students, staff and faculty. This can slow down the work of the Registry Department and delay student progress.

In conclusion, challenges facing the Registry Department in university system call for the need to have a defined mechanism, i.e., efficient regulations, provision of a supportive infrastructure,



technology advancement, and human resource training to safeguard student records, outcomes, and a smooth progression of academic activities.

## **Conclusion**

From the foregoing, there is no doubt that in any university that the Registry get its acts together and do the needful, the institution is assured of a proper roadmap and guidance towards the accomplishment and ultimate realisation of its set goals, vision and mission. However, where the Registry is deficient or lacking in its statutory duties and responsibilities by itself, or, in reflection of its debilitating milieu, the chances of the university attaining its full potentials will remain bleak, if not altogether, unattainable. Although the university is statutorily established for academic purpose, the role of the supporting arms such as the registry is very important. Indeed, the registry is the physiology of the university system.

## **Recommendations**

In order to reassert and reposition the Registry Department for more relevance in not only the accomplishment of her statutory duties, but also in the general scheme of things in the university system, there is an urgent need to work hard and consolidate on professionalism for demonstrable expertise and competencies to meet the standards and expectations of the twenty first century university and beyond.

In other words, since it is commonly agreed that charity begins at home and also given that one cannot give what he/she does not have, it is categorically imperative and highly recommended that going forward, the Registry Department should re-invigorate and re-orientate itself via: recruitment of the right calibre of staff into the department, continuous conduct of induction/orientation for new staff, frequent training and retraining (capacity development) of the staff, purposeful postings and effective departmental blending, confirmation and promotions as at when due, restoration of honesty, trust, integrity and openness in operations; and institutionalization of professional code of conduct and work ethics.

In carrying out the day-to-day assignment of the Registry Department, staff of the department as the backbone of university's administration should not give the community and the public cause to brand them as masters but should regard themselves as servants of knowledge who must of necessity render their services with the greatest humility.



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