



Repositioning Nigeria's Public Universities for National Growth and Competitiveness

By **BY BOLAJI ABDULLAHI**

Nigeria's return to democratic rule in 1999 coincided with the end of the first decade of a global commitment to the goal of Education for All (EFA) and the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), focused on achieving universal basic education, especially in the developing countries, as one of its core objectives.

However, while many countries still struggle to achieve the goal of universal education, a strong consensus has emerged over the years that although basic education is important, no country has achieved growth on the back of mass literacy alone. The compelling argument for greater investment in university education, relative to other levels of education, flows from the strong evidence that better graduates have greater positive impacts on economic growth as well as the realisation that the 21st Century global knowledge economy requires more than literacy.¹

The transformation of our public university system, where 94% of the undergraduates within Nigeria are enrolled, should therefore be integral to our vision of economic growth and competitiveness. The promise of national development must reflect in our commitment to transforming the public university system to make it more efficient and able to meet the skills, knowledge and research needs of our country now and in the future.



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¹ IBRD/WB. (2003), Directions in Development - Lifelong Learning in the Global Knowledge Economy: Challenges for Developing Countries, World Bank, Washington DC; and Kosack S. (2020). The Education of Nations: How Political Organisation of the Poor, Not Democracy, Led Governments to Invest in Mass Education; Oxford University Press, New York.

In seeking to realign our public university system with our national development objectives, we must ask four critical questions:

- What are our development goals over the next 15 years?²
- What human resources would we need to achieve these goals?
- How many of our citizens of university-going age would we require to have degree-level qualifications in the identified areas of need within the same period?
- What research priorities do we need to pursue and promote in order to meet these goals?

Attempts to answer these questions will highlight major problems in our current attitude to public university education which in turn has conditioned how we structure, operate and fund the system. The endemic corruption, inefficiency, ineffectiveness, inequity and lack of accountability that characterise the system merely thrive on a fundamental failure that cannot be addressed by interventions that merely target any of the symptoms in isolation. What we require is a system-wide reform that addresses the three critical elements of **governance**, **funding**, and **quality assurance** based on a rethinking of the entire public university education itself as a driver of national development objectives.

1. Rethinking the Governance of Public Universities

The central issue in governance is that of efficiency and service delivery. What kind of governance regime is best suited for the kind of services that the public universities are expected to provide? At the heart of this question in Nigeria is the issue of *autonomy*: the degree to which each university has the freedom to operate independent of the government authorities that set them up and fund them.

In Nigeria, universities are governed by the National Universities Commission (NUC), whose establishment Act of 1974 gives it controlling power over the university education system, including what departments or academic units they run and what they teach; what funding they receive and how; what personnel they hire and the conditions of service attached to such personnel; what their research needs are; and *"carry[ing] out such other activities as are conducive to the discharge of its functions under this Act³."*

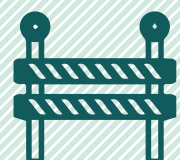
National Universities Commission (NUC), Head Office, Abuja



Many university administrators and lecturers regard the NUC as a major impediment to innovation and creativity in the universities. Global trends also suggest that less government is better for



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² In projecting for 15 years, I adopt the cycle for the United Nations Millenium/Sustainable Development Goals.

³ National Universities Commission Act, 1974.

universities and that universities function best when they are self-governing.

Lant Pritchett, a professor at Harvard University, used the spider and the starfish to illustrate two kinds of systems. The spider system is that in which all organs and parts of the body are centrally controlled, while the starfish allows for a level of control but grants freedom to each of the limbs to operate with significant autonomy. A pure spider system, Pritchett says, pulls responsibility for all functions to itself, especially through financing; whereas a starfish system creates local operation which, "Pulls apart all of the many functions and activities and allocates those across the system such that the local component of the system provides a constant stream of innovation and new ideas and can use the local nature of the operation of the system for thick accountability...while the national level provides a framework for standards and monitoring and evaluation performance"⁴. The starfish approach will fit squarely within a system of embedded autonomy which allows the university the flexibility to explore and establish local and international relationships and partnerships while government involvement is scaled back to quality assurance and monitoring compliance with national regulations.

Another major advantage of the starfish system is that by granting autonomy to the local components, it also ensures that a problem with one of the components does not cripple the entire system. By granting autonomy to each of the universities to negotiate contract terms with its staff based on its unique capabilities and local conditions, the government would have addressed the problem posed by the principle of collective bargaining which has turned the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) into a disruptive force over the years.

Of the eight identified issues that have formed the basis for ASUU's perennial strikes, five are directly related to issues of conditions of service and remunerations⁵. Granting autonomy to the universities along this line will not necessarily save the government money, but it will achieve three things. One, it will bring stability to the university system; two, it will ensure that the lecturers are competitively and equitably remunerated; and three, it will enable the government to focus on her quality assurance functions as an objective arbiter.

The argument for more equitable remuneration of lecturers is central to attracting and retaining the right calibre of lecturers and professors. The current system that pays lecturers in different contexts and with different quality of outputs the same salary just because they are on the same "salary scale" is wrongheaded and suboptimal. However, this can only be corrected if each university is at liberty to negotiate salaries and other benefits with its lecturers. University lecturers should be employees of their universities not those of the Federal Government or the state governments. Essentially, what we require is a system that fosters high-level competition for resources and even for students. Under the current governance system, the universities lack the incentive to do anything differently. Neither the funding they get nor the students that come to them depends on the quality of what they offer to students either in terms of learning or living experience or the quality of their research outputs. Autonomy will create the condition for each university to develop at its own pace, based on real accomplishments in research, in teaching and in their contributions to national development goals.

It is interesting to note that "university autonomy and academic freedom" has been one of ASUU's key demands. Their desire is to free the universities from what they consider as the stranglehold of the NUC. The obvious implication of this, however, is that the NUC must undergo its own reform to enable it repurpose itself for its coordinating and monitoring role in a new governance system.

2. Changing How Public Universities are Funded

In respect of funding, two factors need to be considered. Effectiveness: are they being adequately funded? Efficiency: are the funds being spent on factors that are directly relevant to delivering the best results, especially in the core task of teaching, learning and research? The current funding system does not meet either of the criteria.

The chief source of funding for public universities in Nigeria is the government, whose intervention however accounts for only about 44% to 60% of what is required to run a university effectively⁶. This means that at any given time, the funding deficit is between 40% to 56%.

4 Pritchett L., (2013). *The Rebirth of Education*; Centre for Global Development, Washington DC.

5 <https://businessday.ng/news/article/explainer-asuus-demands-and-what-government-has-met/>

6 This is according to a 2013 paper delivered by Prof. Rahmon Bello, former Vice-Chancellor, University of Lagos.



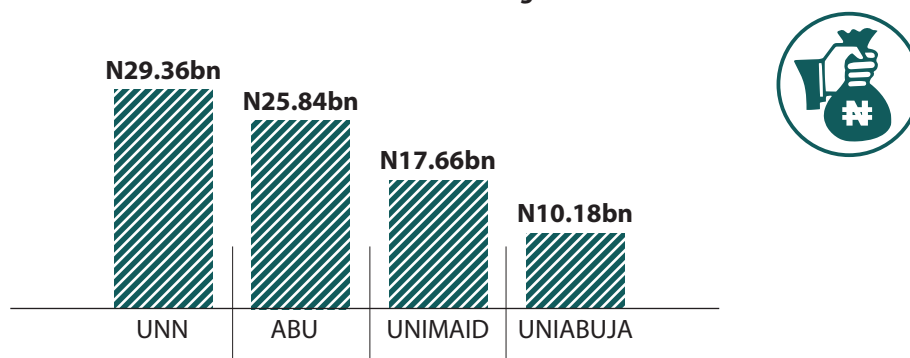
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Table 1: **Allocations to Federal Universities in the 2023 Budget**

University	Appropriated Budget
University of Nigeria, Nsukka	N29,362,671,106
Ahmadu Bello University	N25,848,474,033
University of Maiduguri	N17,669,486,473
University of Abuja	N10,184,446,436

Source: Budget Office of the Federation

Figure 1: **Allocations to Federal Universities in the 2023 Budget**Table 2: **2023 Allocations to Federal Universities: Percentage of allocation to personnel and overheads**

University	Personnel Allocation	Overhead Allocation
University of Nigeria, Nsukka	86.15	0.7
Ahmadu Bello University	85.8	0.7
University of Maiduguri	95.89	0.9
University of Abuja	91.31	1.4

Source: Budget Office of the Federation

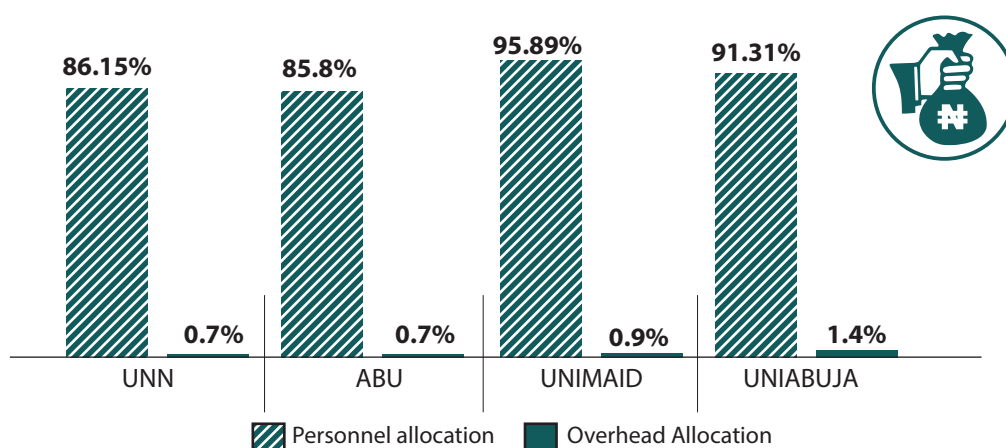
Figure 2: **2023 Allocations to Federal Universities: Percentage of allocation to personnel and overheads**

Table 2 indicates that between 86% and 96% of the federal allocations of these four universities goes to personnel cost alone. This leaves a range of 0.7% to 1.4% and 2.2% to 7.2% for overhead and capital respectively. What this means in essence is that our federal universities are existing mainly to pay salaries, with hardly much left for the other operational costs and for provision and maintenance of infrastructure for teaching, learning and research.

Funding effectively and efficiently would require a major paradigm shift in how we view public university education generally and how we fund it. If we take the budgetary allocations to the universities as standing in lieu of tuition, this should be regarded as subsidy. However, as Table 2 has shown, what the government has done over the years is to subsidise personnel cost of the universities, rather than the students who should enjoy the subsidy. A major step-change

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that is required here is to target the subsidy payments around students’ enrolments rather than the administration of the university. What this does is to place the students at the center of the university planning, with all other expenditures, including personnel, overheads and physical development, now revolving around the students and their needs. This also ensures an objective parameter for allocation of funding, one that is focused on output rather than the current input-based approach.

Running a university costs a lot of money. Costs are incurred almost on a daily basis. One Vice Chancellor reported spending about N40 million monthly on diesel alone to keep the generators running, this is in addition to the cost of the main electricity supply. The university therefore spend up to N100million on power supply alone in a given month. Infrastructure and vehicles maintenance, fueling of vehicles, re-agents and other consumables for the laboratories, sporting activities, all these are covered under the overhead costs, which are released to the universities on a month-by-month basis. However, interaction with several university heads reveals that while the budget for personnel is released 100%, they hardly get more than 50% of overheads allocation in a given year⁷.

However, even if all the overhead allocation is released, it is hard to imagine how it could meet the monthly cost of running the university. For example, the University of Nigeria Nsukka (UNN) with an overhead allocation of about N203 million in its 2023 budget has a population of 36,000 students. To start with, it means that UNN has an allocation of N16.9 million per month for overhead. But more interestingly, it means that, minus personnel cost, the university has only N5,638 available in a year as running cost for per student. Even if this amount is added to the fees charged by the university in a year, the total available per students will be about N67,000 or \$145. This applies to all federal universities in Nigeria.

The Fallacy of Tuition-Free Education

The two organised ‘vital constituencies’ for government in producing education are the students and the lecturers. The two constituencies appear to want the same thing: university education that is accessible to all who can meet the entry requirement, that is of high quality and that is free of charge. Although this is more like a pie in the sky, government has continued to give the impression that it is possible to achieve. This has resulted in a lose-lose situation for everyone involved. Government’s best funding efforts continue to run short, the vital constituencies are permanently disgruntled, and the system continues its steady decline because government has been funding the administration of the institutions rather than education itself.

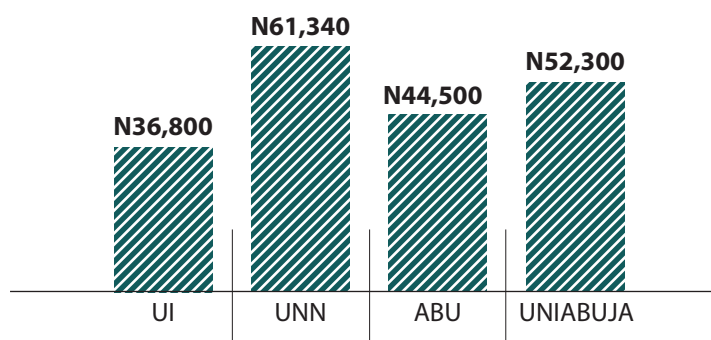
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Table 3: Fees charged by some public universities in Nigeria⁸

University of Lagos	N55,500
University of Ibadan	N36,800
University of Nigeria Nsukka	N61,340
Ahmadu Bello University	N44,500
University of Abuja	N52,300

In contrast, Table 4 shows the fees charged by some private universities in the current year.

Figure 3: Fees charged by some public universities in Nigeria



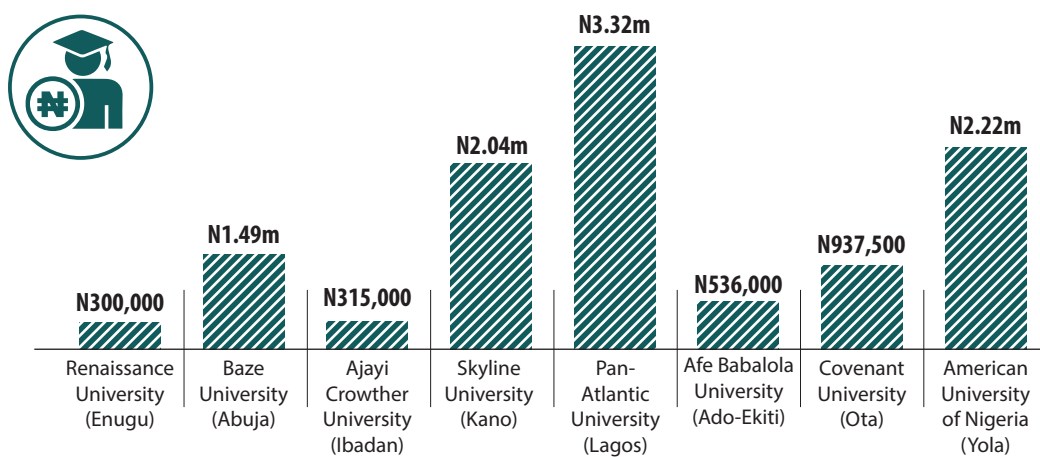
7 Some reported going months without receiving any overhead allocation.

8 These are sundry fees charged at the discretion of each university. Tuition remains free of charge.

Table 4: 2023 First Year fees for some private universities in Nigeria⁹

University Name	Location	Fees
Renaissance University	Enugu	N300,000
Baze University	Abuja	N1,497,375
Ajayi Crowther University	Ibadan	N315,000
Skyline University	Kano	N2,046,000
Pan-Atlantic University	Lagos	N3,324,250
Afe Babalola University	Ado-Ekiti	N536,000
Covenant University	Ota	N937,500
American University of Nigeria	Yola	N2,220,000

Figure 4: 2023 First Year fees for some private universities in Nigeria



It is possible to argue that private universities run on a business model and will not operate at a loss. Nevertheless, the fees they charge may provide useful insights for determining what might be a realistic cost of providing university education in Nigeria. It is interesting to note that American University of Nigeria in Yola actually calculates its fees per credit units offered by the student¹⁰. Even if we account for profitability, it is difficult to understand how University of Ibadan can reasonably charge a maximum fee of N36,800 in a session for a course that AUN, Yola charges more than twice the same amount to teach a single credit.

Best practice is to fund university based on the needs of students. Money must be made to follow the students. We need to determine what is required to deliver university education to each student, do a realistic costing and pay the universities accordingly or arrive at a cost-sharing arrangement, with government bearing most of the costs. It is understandable why government may want to persist on the outmoded policy of zero tuition, but no one is helped by it, not least the students who are mostly being rolled through the university with no prospect of real employment because they have not had the opportunity to acquire real skills.

Government needs to allow introduction of cost-reflective tuition or should pay the university full equivalent of what they would ordinarily charge as tuition or provide alternatives that guarantee realistic funding for the universities. Like Kosack argued "in the absence of a well-functioning private education market, where most consumers are unable to afford education without subsidy, there are only two options: government continues to pay subsidy or lower the fee to make it available to everyone¹¹". Kosack's assumption is that there are fees to lower. But what happens where there are no fees at all, and government cannot pay enough?

In the current fiscal climate, it is unlikely that government can afford to give the universities all the money they need to function effectively. Government therefore needs to invite parents to shoulder more of the financial responsibility. If it is clearly defined as a means of improving quality,

⁹ The table captures the minimum payable. Fees normally varies, with significant upper bound in the same university, depending on the courses.

¹⁰ The N2,220,000 is arrived at by charging N74,000 per credit for a 30-credit academic session.

¹¹ Kosack S. (2012), Ibid.



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which will enhance the employability of the students upon graduation, it would not be a totally strange proposition. After all, as parents lose confidence in the public primary and secondary schools, they voted for fee-paying private schools. It is indeed curious that parents who were able to pay fees running into hundreds of thousands for private basic education would expect to pay next to nothing for university education.

Below are some options that can be explored to improve the pool of funding for our public universities and ensure that students from poor homes are not denied access to university education.

Guaranteed Loan through the Education Bank

The issue of a federally-backed Education Bank has been in the works for about three decades. Now is the time to give it real traction in the context of the funding reform. It is a great opportunity that the National Assembly as well as some civil society actors have backed the idea over the years¹². Once again, the only voice of dissent is ASUU, whose president declared in 2022 that "ASUU will never support the issue of Education Bank because the poor will not benefit from it."¹³ It is not clear from this statement whether ASUU is opposed to the idea of students' loan because it thinks the scheme would constitute a debt burden to the students or because the union fears that the loans might not be awarded to intended beneficiaries. Whatever the case, concerns should be addressed and the idea of an Education Bank must be framed as part of the efforts to improve quality of education generally (including to ensure that the public universities are well funded and the lecturers can be well paid) and as a means to support indigent but talented students who need university education for career progression. Affordable loans, with repayment tied to salaries earned upon graduation will ensure that children from poor homes are not excluded from university education because their parents are too poor to pay.

One major reason the idea of a students' loan scheme may not be attractive, especially to a government seeking to shift costs, is that the risk of people defaulting is high. Education is a bad collateral. A bank can recover a house from a defaulting customer, but education cannot be recovered from a customer who fails to pay for the obvious reason that she is not able to get a job after graduation or because she has simply relocated to another country, leaving no contact address.

There is thus the risk that government might still end up paying for defaulters, except adequate risk-mitigating strategies are put in place. In the context of a full subsidy, the alternative is for the government to give out scholarship vouchers to students which would stand as guaranteed promissory notes that the universities could redeem with the government. If the government is able to redeem the vouchers in full and on time, it would have ensured that the universities get paid the agreed amount for each student. But this is unlikely to happen.

It is important to emphasise that the conversation around an Education Bank is in the context of the need to introduce tuition payment in the university, which has become inevitable as the only realistic and sustainable pathway to effective funding of the universities. Even in the face of high risk of default, there are other benefits to the system in the idea of a student incurring a debt to fund her education. It turns the parents and the students into active financial stakeholders and gives them a skin in the game. Perhaps, the most important effect is that it is likely to engender a new attitude towards learning and even teaching. As the indebted students begin to demand value for money, horizontal accountability will be strengthened and quality is likely to improve generally. As quality of graduates improve, employability is likely to improve and same with earning capacity. In addition to all these, government may also use the instrumentality of the loan to push students towards some courses that are relevant to the nation's manpower requirement by giving priority to students who go in for those courses.

Strengthening Scholarship Schemes

Scholarship awards, whether need-based or merit-based, represent another opportunity for talented students to pay for university education. It is interesting to note that while the Federal Government and some state governments award scholarships every year, they are mostly for



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12 <https://guardian.ng/features/stakeholders-canvass-implementation-of-education-bank-act/>

13 <https://dailytrust.com/asuu-opposes-students-loan-bill/>

candidates to study abroad. Under the Bilateral Education Agreement, the Federal Ministry of Education awards scholarships to Nigerian students to study in countries such as Russia, Morocco, Hungary, Egypt, Cuba, Macedonia and Japan. Sending students to study abroad has also become a pet policy of some state governments in recent years. Government agencies like the Petroleum Trust Development Fund (PTDF) also award annual study-abroad scholarships, up to \$30,000 for a student. A 2022 report says PTDF has awarded 9,659 such scholarships since 2002¹⁴.

It is possible to argue that governments and government agencies prefer to award foreign scholarships because Nigerian universities do not charge fees. The rise in the number of fee-paying private universities in recent years would however put a question mark on that argument. Most scholarships available to study in public universities in Nigeria are awarded by private companies in the country. These limited scholarships are mostly for the upkeep of the students. Introducing tuition payment is likely to direct some of these scholarships into Nigerian universities and help students to pay.

Expanding Funding through Endowments & Alumni Donations

Endowment is another great opportunity for universities to expand their pool of funds. Just as government alone cannot provide all the money that universities need to be truly competitive in a global sense, tuition payment would also not be the silver bullet. The universities must constantly seek means to expand their funding based. This is why the modern university administrator is more of a fund raiser than anything else. But the current system does not encourage the goal-getting attitude that is required to attract the right support outside government. Some of our public universities have endowments already, but they are too paltry for the scale of the challenge. Alumni represent a great source of endowments to universities. Each university needs to bring their alumni closer and give them real incentives to contribute to the funding of their alma maters. Many universities have alumni who have gone on to become successful businessmen and women, and even state governors and ministers. Many are even setting up their own universities. The universities need to be more deliberate in tapping into this opportunity.

Instituting Work-Study Programmes

Looking at the unemployment statistics, it would be tempting to dismiss this as an option. But work-study provides additional option for indigent students. And they don't have to seek employment outside the universities. Some reports indicate that many of the universities have up to four times the number of their academic staff as non-academic staff, mostly doing the work that students can do and get paid for. The employment office can keep a register of students who need such jobs and give them priority as vacancies are available. Also, some of the students can serve as research and teaching assistants to lecturers or serve as library assistants. As done in many countries abroad, the number of hours that students can work per week should be limited so that work will not interfere with their study.

Develop a New Framework for TETFUND's Allocations

The Tertiary Education Trust Fund was established in 1993 to manage the 2% education tax payable by companies registered in Nigeria and to disburse same to tertiary institutions in the country for the purpose of providing or maintaining physical infrastructure for teaching and learning, for instructional material and equipment, research and publications as well as academic staff training and development¹⁵.

Although the TETFUND was intended to provide intervention funds to support the universities in the areas listed above, it has more or less become the only source of funding available to the universities to carry out those activities. Apart from the grants uniformly awarded to universities annually, some universities may still get additional grants depending on the vice-chancellor's political connections or capacity to lobby. There is no evidence that allocations from TETFUND follow any objective parameters other than the Fund's own discretion or proposals submitted by the universities themselves based on their respective needs. Moreover, giving the same amount to all universities regardless of their performance in the core business of teaching and research does not encourage productivity or accountability.



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¹⁴ See Punch Newspaper, April 18,2022.

¹⁵ <https://tETFUND.gov.ng/index.php/mandate-objectives/>

Therefore, a new National Framework for Tertiary Education Funding needs to be developed that will set objective parameters for allocation of funds. This new framework should ensure that institutions are funded based on verified outputs in teaching, research and community service. While the details of this funding framework will still need to be worked out, the main objective is to ensure that funding is made based on *output*, rather than *input* requirements. Because the parameters for allocation of funds under the new framework will also be objective and pre-defined, it would bring about greater equity and transparency, while providing real incentives for each institution to respond to the national development needs in manpower development, research, and community service. A framework that funds the entire higher education system as a single system will also improve accountability and limit the chance for duplication. Perhaps more importantly, because institutions would be required under the new framework to show evidence of change in governance, operations and productivity, funding will then serve as an important lever in driving the desired reform. The idea of financial autonomy to the universities would also be better served because once a university is able to win the grant under the new framework, it would also be at liberty to decide how to spend it to better position itself for even more grants in the future.

3. Re-prioritising Quality Assurance

Conversations about improving the quality of university education or education generally usually focus strongly on the issue of funding. As has been noted however, a university is like a factory. If the factory is not producing the goods, simply throwing in more money or recruiting more staff will not change its fortune. To proceed with the same analogy, a factory that is designed to produce sheets of paper cannot be used to produce roofing sheets without undergoing a major redesign. Generally, people go to university to increase their earning power and for social mobility. But like Kosack noted, the investment value of education is a function of three conditions: the education's quality; scarcity; and the level of the country's economic development.¹⁶

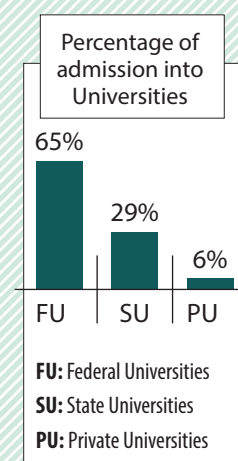
Nigeria has doubled admission spaces in the last two decades or so, yet a significant majority of those who apply for university admission each year are unable to get in. Rapid expansion of private universities in recent years has not helped much, as most students are unable afford the fees they charge. While there are 79 private universities in the country, they account for only 6% of the undergraduate students enrolled in Nigerian universities. Of the remaining undergraduates, 29% are in the 48 state universities while the remaining 65% percent are in 43 federal universities. Available reports indicate that only one in four applicants (or 25% of applicants) is able to secure admission. This has pressured the government to continue to expand access by granting licenses to private universities and setting up new ones of her own. In 2011 alone, the government set up nine new federal universities.

It is axiomatic that wherever enrolment expands too quickly, the first casualty is quality. Expanding access without paying corresponding attention to factors that actually determine quality of teaching and learning will ultimately devalue education. It is no surprise therefore that one of ASUU's demands is that government should stop the proliferation of universities.

Related to the issue of quality is also the issue of relevance both in terms of curriculum content and in terms of course preferred by students relative to the needs of the employment market and the nation's manpower needs. The Association of African Universities has identified weakness in curricula and how they are delivered as major factors in explaining the declining quality of graduates in Africa:

"The orientation of curricula needs to shift away from producing theoretical elites and administrators to produce doers and entrepreneurs who are transformational wherever they find themselves. Due to poor remuneration and poor facilities, African HEIs are not competitive in attracting and retaining top instructors."¹⁷

In addition to this is the question of what the students are applying to study and how these courses will help their prospect of getting a job or contributing in areas that the country needs their expertise. In 2019, while 1,874 graduated in Medicine and 923 in Computer Engineering,



¹⁶ Kosack S. (2012). Ibid. Pg 25.

¹⁷ Strategic Plan 2020-2025 (Accra, 2020). Pg. 18.

10,261 graduated in Accounting, and 6,239 in Political Science in the same year. Other reports also show that Education and Agriculture are the only two courses for which universities are not receiving enough applications, yet these are areas of critical manpower needs for the country.¹⁸

The issue of curriculum is also related to that of governance. Over-centralisation of the university system has created a sense of uniformity that has robbed every university the chance to develop a unique character of its own. Almost every university offers the same menu of courses without regards to the needs of its local environment or its own capabilities.

As stated earlier, higher education system in Nigeria must be situated within a national human resource development strategy, which in turn must derive from a broader national development plan. Therefore, transforming the public universities in Nigeria will not be a job for the minister or the Ministry of Education alone. The Ministry of National Planning, the Ministry of Labour and Productivity and the Organised Private Sector (OPS) must work closely together. But the process has to be led by the President of the country or someone who has his convening authority to drive the process.

The 2023 *webometrics* ranking of African universities includes less than 10 Nigerian universities in the top 100. While these rankings may be taken as fair indicators of our universities' standing within the parameters being measured either in a global or regional context, they are not sufficient in measuring our higher education institutions' responsiveness to the national development needs. We need a new system of evaluation and quality assurance that is semi-autonomous and has a strong private sector orientation. It is important for the private sector to play a leading role in quality assurance because they are the major off takers of what the universities produce as students or as research. Acting Director of the Innovation and Technology Management Office of the University of Lagos, Abiodun Gbenga-Ilorin, recently stated that 13,282 research papers were published in Nigeria in 2020, which ranks the country 50th in the world in the number of research papers published that year. However, of all these, only 300, about 2.2 percent has led to successful innovations. Working closely with the industries will ensure that research focus becomes more demand- and solution-driven, plus the added benefit of attracting good funding¹⁹.

Summary of Recommendations

- i. Federal Government needs to step back. Less government is best for universities. Government should grant full autonomy to its public universities, and allow each university to develop its own identity and grow at its own pace.
- ii. National Universities Commission Act (1974) should be amended to release its stranglehold of NUC on the universities and assign it a coordinating and monitoring role rather than a directive or prescriptive role.
- iii. In keeping with the principle of autonomy, government should cede its role as employers of university lecturers to each university. This will empower the universities to negotiate terms and conditions of service with their respective employees in line with their local reality and the value expected of each lecturer.
- iv. A realistic annual cost for each student should be determined and the universities should be funded by government based on the number of students rather than personnel or administrative needs of the university.
- v. Universities should be allowed to charge tuition fees within the parameters set by government, but the Education Bank needs to be established to offer federal government-backed loans to students who may require them.
- vi. Government and institutional scholarship awards are another opportunity for talented but indigent students to pay tuition. Most government scholarships now are targeted at students studying abroad. This should be reversed.
- vii. Work-study also presents another option for indigent students. Most of the work currently being done by non-academic staff and even contract staff in the universities can be done by students.
- viii. Endowment funds are a major way for universities to expand their pool of funds. Currently, the universities are not tapping into it as much as they should do. They need to bring their alumni closer and give them incentives to contribute to their university endowment programmes and to establish scholarship schemes and give back in other ways.



... transforming the public universities in Nigeria will not be a job for the minister or the Ministry of Education alone. The Ministry of National Planning, the Ministry of Labour and Productivity and the Organised Private Sector (OPS) must work closely together.

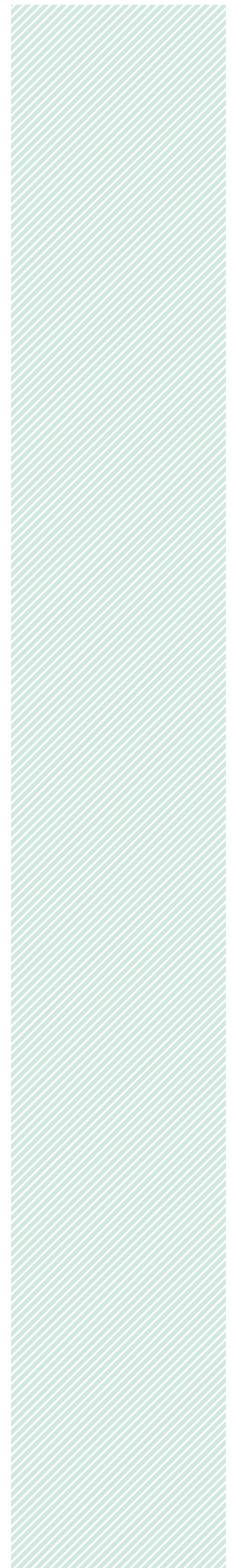


18 <https://punchng.com/367499-applied-for-43717-medicine-slots-jamb-report/>

19 TETFUND allocation to each university for research in 2023 is only N40 million or \$86,000.

- ix. A new framework for tertiary education funding needs to be developed that will set objective parameters for allocation of funds from the TETFUND based on verified outputs in teaching, research and community service.
- x. A semi-autonomous National Higher Education Quality Assurance Agency (NHEQAA) needs to be established to monitor the quality of teaching and research in the universities, and evaluate them in terms of their responsiveness to the nation's manpower requirement and economic development plan.

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About The Policy Memo

The Policy Memo offers evidence-based and considered prescriptions on urgent national challenges for the consideration of policy makers and other policy actors. It is part of Agora Policy's Policy Board, supported by MacArthur Foundation.

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