



UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS,
AKOKA, NIGERIA

REGISTRY **Sentinel**

Inspiring Professional Growth and Service Integrity

FEATURING

Proceedings of the
Maiden Registry Week

Professional Insights:
Voices defining the future of administration

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SENATE HOUSE

Editorial Note

Mrs. J. Aderonke Asiwaju, *MNIM*

Chairman, Registry Week Planning Committee, University of Lagos



Dear Reader,

It is with immense gratitude and pride that we present this maiden and special edition of the *Registry Sentinel*, a commemorative publication that captures the essence and highlights of the first-ever UNILAG Registry Week. The *Registry Sentinel* will go on to: protect and promote the interests of the Registry profession, keep a watchful eye on developments and trends in administration and registry management; and serve as a trusted resource and advocate for registry professionals.

This milestone event stands as a celebration of excellence, teamwork, and the enduring spirit of administrative service that defines our great institution. We are deeply grateful to our Future-Ready Vice-Chancellor, Professor Folasade T. Ogunsola, *OON, FAS*, and her Management Team for their steadfast support, to our distinguished Guest Lecturer, Mr. Akinwunmi O. Lewis, *MNIM* and Chairman of the occasion, Professor Lucian Obinna Chukwu, *FEnv, FWASOT*, for their invaluable insights, and to every member of the Registry whose dedication made this success possible.

We appreciate immensely also, the Registrar, Mrs V. Abosede Wickliffe, for trusting us to execute this crucial assignment

Our appreciation also goes to our sponsors and partners for their unwavering belief in administrative excellence, and to the entire University community for your enthusiasm and participation.

As we turn these pages together, may we find renewed inspiration to keep shaping the future of university administration; one idea, one act of service, one Registry Week at a time.

Thank you for being part of our story.

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UNILAG VISION

To be a top-class institution for the pursuit of excellence in knowledge, character and service to humanity.

MISSION

To provide a conducive environment for teaching, learning, research and development, where staff and students will interact and compete effectively with their counterparts globally.

CORE VALUES

- Commitment to excellence in learning and character
- Conducive and friendly learning environment
- Integrity and respect
- Continuous improvement of staff professionalism and competence
- Commitment to continuous improvement of all facilities
- Enforcement of innovative culture and ethical conduct

UNILAG ANTHEM

Verse 1:

University of Lagos,
the rising sun
A fountain of excellence
A Citadel of learning by the lagoon front
Home of sound minds

Chorus:

*In deed and in truth
We rise beyond the skies
Our mission is to uphold our great heritage
We're the Nation's Pride.*

Verse 2:

First choice in scholarship and excellence
Great in knowledge and character
Producing exemplary global leaders
GOD BLESS UNILAG

Chorus:

*In deed and in truth
We rise beyond the skies
Our mission is to uphold our great heritage
We're the Nation's Pride.*

Great AKOKITES!!!



WELCOME ADDRESS BY THE REGISTRAR AND SECRETARY TO COUNCIL,

**MRS. V. ABOSEDE WICKLIFFE,
DURING THE
UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS
MAIDEN REGISTRY WEEK
LECTURE (THURSDAY,
NOVEMBER 6, 2025)**

PROFESSIONALISM IN UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATION

The Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellors, Bursar, University Librarian, Deans and Directors, Heads of Departments and Units, ladies and gentlemen.

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to this maiden edition of the Registry Week. This occasion is not only an opportunity to reflect on the vital role of the Registry in the life of our University, but also a moment to chart a renewed course in how we serve, with excellence, integrity, and professionalism.

The theme of my address today is *Professionalism in University Administration*. Our beloved institution, the University of Lagos, thrives on the collective effort of the entire Registry. Your dedication, commitment, and professionalism are the bedrock of our success. For us in the Registry, professionalism is not an abstract concept. It is our daily practice, our reputation and ultimately, the legacy we leave behind. To guide us in this mission, I am proud to introduce and reaffirm our Registry Code of Conduct. It is not just a document; it is a roadmap for excellence, and a mirror reflecting who we are and who we aspire to be. The acronym **WAPIL** captures the essence of this code: **Work Ethics, Attitude, Professional Competence, Innovation, and Leadership**.

This Code is not optional; it is our collective commitment and duty. Allow me to highlight how each pillar of WAPIL represents professionalism in action:

W – Work Ethics & Responsibility

Professionalism begins with responsibility. As



custodians of sensitive records and University processes, we must be dependable, punctual, and uncompromising in confidentiality and integrity. When we commit to excellence in our work, the Registry stands tall as the model of reliability. The trust placed in us demands that we deliver quality work, uphold confidentiality and act with the utmost integrity. Every document we handle, every student we assist, and every meeting we prepare for is a testament to our responsibility.

A – Attitude & Conduct

No matter how competent we are, our attitude defines the image of the Registry and ultimately the public image of the entire university. A positive and professional demeanor, coupled with courtesy and a spirit of teamwork, creates an atmosphere where everyone can thrive. Professionalism demands that we refrain from any conduct that undermines our Registry and the University.

We must be one another's support system, building a collaborative and respectful workplace.

P – Professional Competence

The demands of modern University administration require us to be agile learners. In a rapidly changing world, remaining static is not an option. Professionalism calls us to pursue training, think critically and rightly, and act decisively. Our professional competence is our intellectual capital, and we must invest in it diligently. By sharpening our competence and embracing lifelong learning, we remain effective partners in advancing the University's mission.

I – Innovation & Excellence

Professionalism also means refusing to be stagnant. We must champion digitalisation, foster innovation, and

hold ourselves accountable to global best practices. Innovation and accountability go hand in hand; they are the two sides of the same coin that will propel us forward. Let us not only meet expectations but consistently exceed them, setting UNILAG apart as a leading institution.

L - Leadership & Growth

Finally, professionalism is about leadership at every level. It is an action. It is about owning your duties, accepting constructive feedback with grace, mentoring others, and creating a culture of fairness and inclusivity. In so doing, we ensure growth, not just for ourselves, but for the entire Registry.

My honourable colleagues, WAPIL is not just a slogan; it is the lived reality of professionalism. The strength of our Registry will not only be measured by the records we keep, but by the integrity, efficiency, and innovation with which we serve this University community. If we embody these values in our work, we will enhance trust, strengthen collaboration, and cement the Registry as the backbone of this University. Let me conclude by

saying that the University of Lagos stands today as one of the leading institutions in Africa because of the dedication of its members of staff. As members of the Registry, we must continue to uphold this legacy by living out the values of WAPIL. By doing this, we are not only upholding professionalism but also safeguarding the future of this institution.

I therefore charge us all to rededicate ourselves to this shared commitment: let us not merely talk about professionalism, let us embody it. Let us build a Registry that sets the pace for others, a Registry that inspires confidence, a Registry that will be remembered as the backbone of this University, a Registry worthy of the University of Lagos.

Thank you. I wish us all a successful Registry Week.

Mrs. V. Abosede Wickliffe
Registrar & Secretary to Council



**SPEECH BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR,
PROFESSOR FOLASADE
T. OGUNSOLA,** OON, FAS,
DURING THE UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS
MAIDEN REGISTRY WEEK LECTURE
(THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 2025)

A FUTURE READY REGISTRY

implies that the Registry must retool with requisite skills and be well versed in Information Communication Technology.

In this digital age, data is not just a by-product of operations; it is a strategic asset and must therefore be harnessed to drive decision-making: from straight forward enrolment trends and graduation rates to more complex derived data such as student support needs, programme reviews, human resources SWOT analysis, research and academic performances, as it is becoming increasingly required to run a modern university and for our survival. Through effective data governance and analytics, the Registry can offer valuable insights that inform university planning, strategy and policy formulation.

However, technology alone is not the solution. The efficiency and credibility of any system depends on the people who run it. This brings us to the critical pillar of professionalism in administrative processes. Registry must be repositioned to build a culture of excellence where every member of the Registry understands their role in delivering timely and accurate evidence-based service. It calls for continued training, clear communication, a strong work ethic and an intentional commitment to consistency, fairness, and accountability. It is therefore imperative that Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) should be the norm, which will help us to standardise the quality of our delivery, more easily identify errors and most importantly measure and improve our impact.

A future-ready Registry must also be deeply rooted in the extant laws/regulations/policies that form the framework for the existence and running of our institution. We operate within a complex web of national and institutional regulations — from admissions to graduation, from academic records to

It is both an honour and a responsibility to share a few notes on a subject that is central to the engine of any academic institution — the Registry. Often described as the heartbeat of the university's administrative system, the Registry is more than just a custodian of records; it is a strategic partner in academic governance, student experience, and institutional excellence.

Today, we stand at a critical intersection — between tradition and transformation. To remain relevant, responsive, and resilient in a rapidly evolving academic environment, we must envision and build a future-ready Registry.

At the heart of a future-ready Registry lies digitisation. In a world increasingly defined by data and speed, the era of paper trails, long queues, and manual processing must give way to smart, secure, and efficient digital systems that reduces errors, enhances transparency, and improves turnaround time.

But digitisation is not just about adopting technology. It's about rethinking our processes, retraining our staff, and realigning our goals with the efficiency, accuracy and speed required for today's students, alumni and faculty. It is about enabling a seamless, self-service experience where students can access their records anytime, anywhere — while maintaining the highest standards of data protection and integrity. It therefore

data privacy, human resource procedures and policies. It is therefore crucial that Registry staff not only understand but can interpret and apply these regulations correctly. Misinterpretation can lead to missteps that have long-term consequences — for students and the university's reputation.

Ultimately, the success of the Registry is measured by the quality of the service it delivers. Therefore, premium must be placed on optimal service delivery which should not just be about doing things faster but better and efficiently. Effort must include implementing feedback mechanisms, benchmarking against best practices, and adopting performance indicators to measure service quality. It should involve streamlining workflows, eliminating redundancies, and creating a culture that sees continuous improvement not as a burden but as a commitment.

Finally, to sustain a future-ready University, the Registry cannot operate in isolation. Its success depends on strong collaboration with faculties, ICT units, student affairs, finance, and leadership. Alignment with the university's strategic goals ensures that the Registry is not just reactive, but proactive — anticipating needs, innovating solutions, and contributing to institutional transformation. Therefore, we must challenge ourselves and begin to understand that the Registry of the future is not merely a

department — it is a driver of change, a custodian of trust, and a catalyst for academic excellence. By embracing digitisation, upholding professionalism, mastering regulatory frameworks, optimising service delivery, and leveraging data, the Registry will be positioned as a vital organ in the body of a truly 21st-century university.

In closing, in the words of Eddie Harris an American jazz musician, *"The sooner you step away from your comfort zone, the sooner you'll realize that it wasn't really all that comfortable."*

The Registry must therefore optimise its training and retraining of staff to ensure that they serve their customers; fellow workers (teaching and non-teaching); students and the general community in an empathetic and professional manner.

Let us rise to the challenge. Let us build systems that are not only fit for purpose — but fit for the future. Again, I congratulate the Registrar and Registry as you take the Registry of the University of Lagos to the next level.

Professor Folasade T. Ogunsola, OON, FAS
Vice-Chancellor

OPENING REMARKS BY CHAIRMAN OF
THE OCCASION,

**PROFESSOR LUCIAN OBINNA
CHUKWU**, *FENV, FWASOT*

(IMMEDIATE PAST DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR,
MANAGEMENT SERVICES) AT THE
MAIDEN UNILAG REGISTRY WEEK LECTURE
HELD ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 2025

Navigating the Future of University Administration

Protocols

It is with great honour and absolute delight that I welcome you all to the 2025 Edition of Registry Week Lecture. I congratulate the Registry team for organising this important gathering and for selecting such a timely and thought-provoking theme: “University Administration: The Future is Now!”

This theme is not only apt but urgent. It reminds us that the future we once anticipated is already here. The disruptions, opportunities, and transformations that once seemed distant have arrived – and are reshaping the landscape of University administration in real-time. The rapid evolution of the higher education landscape demands that we respond with innovation, speed, and purpose. As administrators, we must lead this response with clarity and conviction.

My brief remarks today, titled “Navigating the Future of University Administration,” align squarely with this theme. They serve as a call to action – a challenge to each of us to embrace the mindset, skillset, and toolset needed for relevance and excellence in today's academic environment.

Navigating the Future of University Administration

The Registry serves as the engine room of the University's operations. From records and admissions to council matters and student services, the work of Registry staff sustains the backbone of the institution. To stay relevant, we must embody professionalism, discipline, and excellence in all we do.

Let us remember: we are privileged to serve in one of Africa's most respected institutions – the University of Lagos. Despite economic constraints and infrastructural challenges, we must take pride in our service, act with integrity, and manage our limited resources with wisdom and accountability. Others may have it



better – but many have it worse. So, let us appreciate what we have, and work tirelessly to strengthen it. Our success depends not only on commitment but also on teamwork. Let us continue to support one another, mentor younger colleagues, and build a shared culture of continuous improvement. Our ability to adapt and collaborate will determine how well we thrive in this new era.

Key Strategies for the Future

Allow me to propose a few strategies that can help guide our journey into the future of university administration:

- 1. Promote a culture of innovation:** Be willing to question outdated practices and test fresh approaches that can improve our services.
- 2. Embrace technology:** Digital tools, especially automation and AI, can help us become more efficient, accurate, and cost-effective.
- 3. Strengthen partnerships:** Internally and externally, collaboration is key. We must foster good working relationships with other departments and stakeholders.
- 4. Use data to guide decisions:** We should rely on relevant metrics and analytics to track progress and inform choices.
- 5. Focus on service delivery:** Let us ensure that students, staff, and external partners experience

professionalism, clarity, and care in every interaction.

These steps will position the Registry not just to cope with change but to lead it.

Skills for Today and Tomorrow

To operate effectively in this new context, I encourage everyone to sharpen three key areas:

- Professionalism – integrity, diligence, and reliability in service.
- Digital literacy – confidence in navigating and using modern technology.
- Teamwork – the ability to work harmoniously with others across roles and units.

The days of working in silos are over. The future belongs to teams that share goals, adapt together, and learn continuously.

Closing Reflections

As we listen to the Guest Lecturer for the Registry Week, I invite you all to reflect, learn, unlearn, and relearn. Let this Week be a moment of renewal – a time to recommit to the values and vision that make this institution great.

I must sincerely thank our Vice-Chancellor, Professor Folasade Ogunsola, OOON, FAS, and the Management team for the transformative leadership and for setting a standard of excellence that inspires us all.

To our Registrar, Mrs. V. Abosede Wickliffe, thank you for your dedication and for championing this platform for professional development and reflection.

And finally, to every member of the Registry – your commitment and resilience are the true engines of this institution. While perfection may be elusive, excellence is within reach. Continue to strive, grow, and support one another. The University's strength is in your hands. Let us rise to the moment. The future is not tomorrow – it is now!

Thank you, and I wish you a rewarding and inspiring Registry Week Lecture.

BRIEF PROFILE OF THE GUEST LECTURER

Mr. Akinwunmi Oladapo Lewis, ^{MNIM}

Seasoned University Administrator | Thought Leader | Capacity Builder

When the story of university administration in Nigeria is told, Mr. Akinwunmi Oladapo Lewis will be one of its finest chapters. With over two decades of unparalleled experience navigating the ever-evolving landscape of higher education, Mr. Lewis embodies the very essence of strategic leadership and innovative governance.

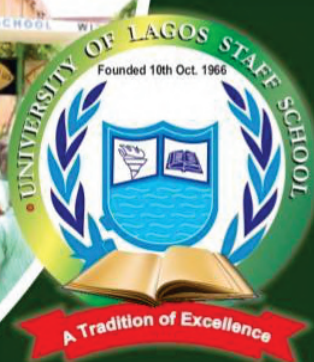
From his early days as an Administrative Officer in 1994 to becoming the Registrar of Lagos State University (LASU) and, most recently, the Director of Staff Welfare, Training, and Development at LASU, Mr. Lewis has built a reputation as a visionary administrator, a team builder, and a champion of staff empowerment. His expertise spans university governance, strategic planning, conflict resolution, and capacity development; areas where he has consistently raised the bar for excellence.

Armed with a Bachelor's degree in History from the University of Ibadan and a Master's degree in Public Administration from LASU, Mr. Lewis has combined academic depth with practical leadership to shape policies, mentor future leaders, and steer institutions toward impactful transformation. He is a member of the Nigerian Institute Management (NIM); Association of Higher Education Professionals (AHEP); American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO); Canadian Association of University Business Officers (CAUBO); and Association of Nigerian University Professional Administrators (ANUPA).

Beyond his professional milestones, he is an avid reader, traveller, public speaker, mentor, and community builder; a man who believes that true leadership is service. His passion for developing people, driving innovation, and strengthening institutional frameworks mirrors the spirit of this year's theme:

“University Administration: The Future is Now!”

Mr. Lewis is happily married and blessed with children.



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Excellence in University Administration: The Imperatives of Professionalism and Digital Literacy

Mr. Akinwunmi Oladapo Lewis, ^{MNIM}
Former Registrar, Lagos State University, Ojo, Lagos

Introduction

Good morning, distinguished colleagues, university administrators, and future leaders in the Registry. It is a profound honour to stand before you today to discuss a topic that is not just a matter of professional interest but a calling to service. For far too long, the administrative arm of our universities has been perceived as a secondary, almost subservient, component of the academic enterprise. Yet I contend that the Registry is the very heartbeat of the institution. Without a robust, efficient, and professional administrative framework, the academic missions of teaching, research, and community service would inevitably falter. My years of service at Lagos State University and other engagements with numerous universities have taught me that true institutional strength is a product of a cohesive and value-driven administration. We are the custodians of institutional memory, the enforcers of rules, and the architects of an environment where academic pursuits can thrive.

In this era of increasing complexity, global competition, and digital transformation, traditional approaches are no longer sufficient. Historically, digital tools were introduced to improve efficiency, automate records, streamline communication, and reduce paperwork. Today, the stakes are higher than just being able to use software or navigate online platforms. The modern administrators must be able to interpret complex datasets for decision-making, anticipate digital risks, and design systems that reflect institutional values. This shift requires not just training, but a reorientation of identity, from gatekeepers of information to architects of digital culture. Gutiérrez-Ángel *et al.* (2022) analysed empirical studies from 2010 to 2021 and found that digital literacy adoption is strongly linked to self-efficacy, motivation, and perceived relevance. When administrators feel confident and see the value in digital tools, they are more likely to integrate them into their workflows. However, many institutions still lack structured programmes to build these competencies.

This paper, therefore, explores the imperative of excellence and digital literacy for professional administrators in higher education, not as a technical

skillset, but as a transformative mindset. It argues that digital literacy must evolve from basic proficiency to strategic fluency, enabling administrators to lead with insight, agility, and ethical foresight. This paper is also a call to action, a plea for each of us to embrace the imperatives of professionalism and digital literacy, not as mere buzzwords, but as the foundational principles that will secure the future of our universities. We will dissect these concepts, examine our collective challenges, and outline a clear path forward for the modern Nigerian university administrator.

Re-establishing Our Foundational Principles

To engage meaningfully with this topic, we must first agree on the precise meaning of the terms that form its bedrock.

(I) **University:** The University, in its truest form, is a regulated community. It is an intricate ecosystem where students, scholars, and administrators operate under a shared governance structure, guided by established statutes and regulations. It is an engine for human capital development and a repository of knowledge, distinct from other institutions by its commitment to academic freedom and critical inquiry.

(ii) **Excellence:** The pursuit of Excellence within the university community is an institutional philosophy, not an episodic achievement. It is a daily, relentless commitment to optimal performance (Brusoni *et al.*, 2014), where every process, from student admission to staff promotion, is carried out with diligence, fairness, and strict adherence to due process. Excellence is the very antithesis of mediocrity and remains the standard by which our global counterparts are measured.

(iii) **Administration:** Administration, particularly in the Registry, is the central nervous system of this complex organism. It is the strategic and tactical management of human, financial, and material resources to support the university's core mission. The Registrar, and by extension the entire Registry staff, is the chief administrator, the keeper of institutional records, and the implementer of university policies. This role requires an understanding that our work is not a series of independent tasks but a deeply interconnected function that facilitates the entire university's operations.

(iv) **Professionalism:** Professionalism, in this specialised context, is a non-negotiable set of virtues. It is not merely a matter of wearing a suit to work. It is an unyielding commitment to ethical behaviour, including honesty, fairness, and accountability. It demands an understanding of our ethical obligations, such as maintaining confidentiality and avoiding conflicts of interest. More profoundly, professionalism demands that we act in the best interest of the institution, rather than personal or sectional agendas. It is a mindset that prioritises merit, due process, and the integrity of the system above all else.

(v) **Digital Literacy:** Finally, digital literacy is the contemporary skillset that empowers us to carry out our responsibilities effectively. It extends beyond the basic use of a computer to a comprehensive ability to find, evaluate, create, and communicate information using digital technologies, and to do so with an understanding of the security and ethical implications involved (Jimoh & Adenekan, 2024; Onojaife, 2025). This skill is the single most important factor that will determine the future relevance of the Nigerian university administrator.

Overview of the Challenges Facing University Administration in Nigeria Today

Nigerian universities, and by extension their administrative arms, are operating in a highly challenging and often hostile environment. The most visible challenge is the perennial issue of inadequate funding (Ogbomah & Moses, 2024). Years of chronic underfunding by state and federal governments have left our institutions burdened with dilapidated infrastructure, outdated technology, and diminished capacity to attract and retain the top talent. This has a direct impact on the Registry, where overstretched staff are forced to manage a growing student population with limited resources, often leading to inefficiencies and burnout. Beyond funding, the administrative process is frequently hampered by incessant industrial disputes. The recurring strikes by various university unions, ASUU, NASU, NAAT, and SSANU, have severely disrupted the academic calendar and eroded public trust in the system (Shimawua, 2020). These conflicts, often centred on issues of welfare and governance, place administrators in a precarious position, caught between the demands of the unions and the directives of the university management and the government. This environment fosters a culture of mistrust and instability, making it difficult to implement long-term administrative reforms.

Perhaps the most insidious challenge, however, is the widespread erosion of institutional culture and the subversion of due process. In many of our universities, decisions are often influenced by personal relationships, political patronage, and a general

disregard for established rules and regulations (Bakare, 2021). This 'jankara' style of administration, as I have termed it, is a cancer that hollows out the integrity of the system. It leads to a breakdown in merit-based appointments and promotions, a lack of accountability, and a climate where professionals feel demoralized and their efforts unappreciated. This institutional malaise must be confronted head-on if we are to restore the credibility of our universities.

Aspects of Professionalism in Administration

Professionalism is not an abstract concept; it is a tangible practice that must be evident in every aspect of our work. The first and most critical element is an unshakeable commitment to integrity and ethical conduct. As administrators, we are the custodians of trust. We handle sensitive documents, manage confidential processes, and are often the first point of contact for external stakeholders. Upholding integrity means resisting all forms of corruption, from small favours to large-scale graft. It requires a firm moral compass that guides our actions and ensures we always act in a manner that honours our position and the institution we serve.

Second is the principle of confidentiality. The sanctity of university records is paramount. Information related to student records, staff personnel files, and financial matters must be treated with the utmost discretion. The unauthorized disclosure of such information, whether through carelessness or malice, can have severe consequences, not only for the individuals involved but for the reputation of the entire institution. A professional administrator understands that trust is earned through discretion and that our role is to protect the integrity of the records we manage.

Third is competence and continuous learning. The university landscape is in constant flux, with new technologies, policies, and challenges emerging regularly. A professional administrator must be a lifelong learner, dedicated to acquiring new skills and staying updated on best practices. This includes understanding the latest regulations from government and professional bodies like the National Universities Commission (NUC) and the Joint Admissions and Matriculations Board (JAMB) as well as new tools for record-keeping and data management. Without a commitment to continuous learning, we risk becoming obsolete and irrelevant to the evolving needs of the modern university.

Finally, we must embody a rule-based decision-making culture. This is the cornerstone of administrative justice and fairness. Our decisions must be guided by institutional statutes, not by personal sentiment or external pressure. This approach ensures predictability, transparency, and equity. A professional administrator does not bend the rules to favour an individual or

group. Instead, they interpret and apply the rules consistently, thereby building a reputation for impartiality and trustworthiness.

Digital Literacy and Digital Tools for Modern Administrative Practices

Digital literacy has emerged as a foundational competency, not merely for students and faculty, but critically for professional administrators. As universities undergo digital transformation, the role of administrative staff has shifted from operational support to strategic leadership. Traditionally, digital literacy has been defined as the ability to use digital tools effectively. However, in the context of university administration, this definition is insufficient. Administrators are now expected to navigate complex digital ecosystems, interpret data for decision-making, ensure compliance with privacy regulations, and foster a culture of innovation. As Homa (2022) argued, digital literacy for higher education administrators must include both foundational technical skills and the capacity to generate innovative ideas that enhance institutional effectiveness. In addition, Gutierrez-Ángel *et al.* (2022) posited that digital literacy must include competencies related to digital writing, database use, and content creation, but also the ability to critically assess digital risks and promote responsible use of technology. These expanded views align with the framework proposed by JISC (2024), which outlines six elements of digital capability: (i) ICT proficiency, (ii) information literacy, (iii) digital communication, (iv) digital collaboration, (v) digital learning, and (vi) digital identity management. For professional administrators, these capabilities are not optional, they are essential tools for navigating the digital university.

Candidly, the future of university administration is inextricably linked to our ability to embrace and master digital tools. Digital literacy is the critical skill that will enable us to overcome the inefficiencies and systemic challenges that have plagued our institutions. It empowers administrators to move beyond manual, time-consuming processes to a system that is transparent, efficient, and data driven. The implementation of Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems is a game-changer. An effective ERP system can integrate all core university functions, from finance and human resources to student enrolment and alumni relations. This eliminates the siloed operations that often lead to information gaps and redundant work. For example, a student's admission data can seamlessly flow to the Bursary for fee payment, to the faculty for registration, and to the Registry for record-keeping, all within a single, secure platform. This not only increases efficiency but also enhances accountability, as every transaction is logged and auditable.

For a university registry, a modern ERP system handles everything from admissions to graduation. The best

ones are integrated and cloud based. Some of the prominent ERPs are:

- i. Oracle ERP Cloud for Higher Education: As a global leader, Oracle offers a comprehensive, scalable suite. It is built for large institutions and can manage finances, human resources, student information, and supply chain management all in one place. It is a robust solution for a university looking for an all-in-one system.
- ii. Ellucian Banner: This is one of the most widely used ERPs in higher education globally. It is designed specifically for academic institutions and manages the entire student lifecycle, including admissions, academic records, financial aid, and billing. Its track record with universities worldwide makes it a strong contender.
- iii. Odoo ERP: Odoo is an open-source option that has a large developer community. This gives it a high degree of customisability, which can be a significant advantage for a university with specific, localised needs. It is often used by Nigerian IT firms to build tailored solutions for educational clients.

Furthermore, Student Information Systems (SIS) and Document Management Systems (DMS) are essential. An SIS provides a comprehensive, centralised database for all student-related data, from admissions and grades to graduation records. This digitises what was once a cumbersome paper trail, making information accessible in real-time while also securing it against loss or damage. Similarly, a DMS allows us to digitise all official documents, such as staff files and minutes of meetings, making it easier to search, retrieve, and secure them. This transition to a paperless office is not just an aesthetic improvement; it is a fundamental shift that enhances data security, reduces administrative overhead, and supports environmental sustainability. A dedicated DMS is crucial for a paperless registry, helping to manage records, minutes, and confidential files securely.

Some of the prominent DMS includes:

- (i) DocuWare: This system is a powerful and user-friendly DMS that is already popular in the higher education sector. It digitises paper records, automates workflows (like document approvals), and provides secure, centralised storage. Its robust security features are vital for protecting sensitive student and staff data.
- (ii) Microsoft SharePoint: This is a very common choice for organisations already using the Microsoft 365 ecosystem. SharePoint allows for collaborative document management, secure storage, and can be integrated with other Microsoft tools. It is a versatile and reliable

option, especially for a university that wants to leverage its existing IT infrastructure.

- (iii) **Folderit:** This is another cloud-based DMS that focuses on security and ease of use. It offers features like automated document filing, secure sharing, and audit trails. Its system is specifically designed to handle the complexities of educational records, making it a good fit for a university registry.

Finally, the adoption of secure communication platforms is vital. In a professional setting, we must move away from informal messaging platforms and personal email for official communication. Encrypted email and university-sanctioned platforms ensure that sensitive information is transmitted securely and that a clear record of official correspondence is maintained. This protects both the institution and the individual, ensuring that all professional communication is conducted in a verifiable and confidential manner. In considering any of these systems to adopt, the key is to choose one that aligns with your university's size, budget, and specific needs. It is always best to conduct a thorough needs assessment and consider a vendor that offers local support and a proven track record or at best, develop them in-house if the expertise is available.

Nonetheless, as custodians of sensitive institutional data, ranging from student records to financial systems, university administrators must also grapple with the ethical dimensions of digital literacy. The rise of learning analytics, predictive modelling, and algorithmic decision-making raises urgent questions about privacy, bias, and accountability. Administrators must be equipped to interrogate these systems, advocate for transparency, and ensure that digital practices align with institutional values.

Why is Professionalism Low Today in the Nigerian University System?

The decline in professionalism within the Nigerian university system is a complex issue with deep-seated roots. One major contributing factor is the erosion of institutional memory. With the retirement of older, seasoned administrators, there is often a lack of adequate mentorship for younger staff. Without a structured succession plan, invaluable knowledge and the core values of the institution are not effectively transferred, leading to a system where new staff are not properly grounded in the ethical standards and traditions of the Registry (Ndubuisi & Jacob, 2021).

Another critical factor is the deficit in continuous training and capacity building. In many institutions, professional development is treated as an afterthought or a luxury. The rapid evolution of technology and best practices in university administration means that staff

who are not regularly trained quickly become obsolete. This lack of investment in human capital leads to a workforce that is ill-equipped to handle the demands of a modern university, resulting in a reliance on outdated, inefficient processes.

Furthermore, the absence of strict accountability measures has created an environment where unprofessional conduct often goes unpunished. When there are no consequences for lapses in integrity, confidentiality, or due process, it sends a clear signal that such behaviour is tolerated. This erodes the morale of those who are committed to professionalism and normalises mediocrity. The result is a system where the 'rules' are seen as suggestions rather than binding principles.

Finally, the persistent friction between administrative and academic staff contributes to this problem. A lack of mutual respect often leads to a breakdown in communication and a professional environment where one arm of the university feels undervalued. A professional administrator understands their vital role in supporting academic work and must work to bridge this divide, demonstrating through competence and integrity that the Registry is a critical partner, not a subordinate.

Conclusion and Recommendations:

In conclusion, the 21st century university is shaped by administrators who understand the human implications of digital systems. Digital literacy is no longer optional; it is foundational to ethical, effective, and visionary leadership. Administrators must not only adapt to digital change, but they must also lead it. Succinctly put, the pursuit of excellence in Nigerian university administration is not a theoretical exercise; it is an urgent and critical task. It requires a fundamental shift in mindset, that is a return to the core values of professionalism and a forward-looking embrace of digital literacy. The challenges we face are significant, but they are not insurmountable. By rebuilding a culture of integrity, investing in our human and digital infrastructure, and fostering a spirit of collaboration, we can restore the prestige and functionality of our university systems.

Consequently, I offer the following recommendations as a clear path forward for this institution and for all our universities:

- (i) **Mandatory and Continuous Professional Development:** The university must establish and enforce a robust, mandatory training program for all registry staff. This program should include modules on ethics, data security, and the use of modern administrative software. This investment will not only enhance individual competence but will also instil a shared professional ethos.

- (ii) **Strategic Investment in Digital Infrastructure:** We must prioritize the acquisition and proper implementation of enterprise-level digital tools, such as modern ERP and Document Management Systems. This investment should be coupled with a comprehensive plan for staff training and user support to ensure that these tools are used effectively to their full potential.
- (iii) **Enforcement of Institutional Rules and Ethical Codes:** The university management vis-a-vis registry leadership must lead by example, consistently and fairly enforcing the rules and regulations. This will restore confidence in the system and send a clear message that integrity and accountability are non-negotiable.
- (iv) **Promoting Collaborative Culture:** We must actively work to bridge the gap between administrative and academic staff. This can be achieved through joint workshops, collaborative projects, and open forums that emphasize our shared mission and foster mutual respect.

Thank you for your time and attention.

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LIVING OUR VALUES: ELEVATING THE UNIVERSITY'S REPUTATION THROUGH ADHERENCE TO ITS CORE VALUES

by Pastor (Mrs) Adebowale Ukaiwe,
Former Director, Directorate of Academic Affairs, University of Lagos

Universities operate on a tripod of teaching, research, and public service, and due to their complex nature, they involve multiple stakeholders, including the government, parents, staff, students, and business entities.

The reputation of any University is measured by the quality of its service delivery and relevance to these stakeholders who are its primary beneficiaries.

WHAT ARE OUR CORE VALUES?

In my years of experience working in the Registry of the University of Lagos, I have come to realise that our core values can be categorised as follows:

1. Efficiency
2. Effectiveness
3. Excellence

To enhance these core values, we need to prioritise capacity building and uphold integrity in all our actions.

Hard work and dedication to the core values must be the vehicle to enhance our adherence. An organisation will only be as strong and relevant as the capacity of the people running it.

During my Professional Administrative Lecture, 2013, I pointed out how the Registry, as a major arm of the University, can ensure good and prompt delivery of services. I quote:

- *"How can this be achieved?"*
- *"Ask yourself first, how effective and relevant am I on my job?"*
- *"What is my impact in my Unit?"*
- *"Is there continuity of the labour of 'our heroes past?"*

As leaders in your respective Units and Departments, there is need for you to stop for a moment and think of the five or six people closest to you, probably working with you and ask yourself these questions:

"Are you developing them?"
"Do you have a plan for their administrative development?"

"Are they growing?"

Those who will run with the vision and mission of the University, and whose activities determine its reputation, must be trained, mentored, and rightly positioned.

How do we live our values?

We must be proactive by getting things done; that is making things happen, instead of waiting for them to happen. Our actions and inactions are responsible for our reputation as a University.

The University of Lagos is a brand associated with excellence within and outside our nation;
The University of First Choice and Nation's Pride.

In today's highly-competitive world of academia, we should guard our values very jealously so that we do not lose our relevance especially with the emergence of new universities that are also highly ranked internationally. We must be flexible, adaptive and think long-term.

Successful organisations walk the talk. Therefore, self-control and determination must be part of our values urging us to fine-tune our strategies to success and progress. Feedbacks and suggestions from stakeholders will aid decision-making and enhance living our values.

The Registry of the University of Lagos has emerged over the years as a vital organ responsible for ensuring the smooth operation of academic and administrative processes.

In living our values therefore, the Registry should accommodate: technological advancements, changing regulatory requirements, and increasing demands for transparency and accountability. Most importantly, we should leverage emerging technologies to enhance efficiency, accuracy, and accessibility.

I congratulate the Registrar, Mrs V. Abosede Wickliffe, for this great innovation. It will breathe new life into the Registry and promote a culture of excellence.

God bless you.

Pastor (Mrs) Adebowale Ukaiwe



Carve a Niche for Yourself; Make a Difference

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"Ability is what you are capable of doing. Motivation determines what you can do. Attitude determines how well you do it." Lou Holtz

As we roll out the drums to celebrate the Registry Week at the University of Lagos with pomp and pageantry, we need to remind ourselves that as administrators, we are very important in the scheme of things. The duties of university administrators encompass a wide range of responsibilities that permeate the entire university system, ensuring it runs smoothly.

Over the years, the University has been fortunate to have the Registry led by forward-looking and dynamic administrators, the incumbent Registrar, Mrs V. Abosede Wickliffe, is no exception. One of her innovative ideas to showcase the essence of who we are as administrators is this Registry Week, which has been beautifully packaged by a wonderful team of administrators under the leadership of the Director of the Staff Training and Development Unit, Mrs J.A. Asiwaju. I am confident that this programme will bring out the best in us and birth a new sense of direction.

The current administration under the leadership of our amiable Vice-Chancellor, Professor Folasade Ogunsola, ^{OON, FAS} is working tirelessly to ensure that the University of Lagos is Future-Ready, with administrators being an integral part of this vision.

In order to remain relevant, you must find your space in the total picture by carving a niche for yourself and ensuring that you make a difference.

How do you achieve this?

Junior administrators can become Future-Ready by:

- Embracing Technology: Staying updated on use of social media and digital tools to enhance service

delivery.

- Pursuing Lifelong Learning: Continuously seeking professional development and learning opportunities in emerging career paths to stay current and relevant.
- Cultivating Adaptability: Developing a growth mindset to adapt to changing educational landscapes and student needs.
- Building a professional network within and outside the university.
- Enhancing Leadership Skills: Developing leadership and management skills needed for the effective discharge of administrative roles.
- Fostering Wellness and Resilience: Prioritizing physical and mental well-being to navigate challenges effectively.

For senior administrators;

- i. You must be a highly articulate administrator who is well grounded in the rules and regulations, as well as several guidelines and policies your schedule entails.
- ii. You must aim to be an administrator who can generate ideas, make contributions that will have significant impact on the decisions of the various committees you serve.
- iii. You must set goals and work purposefully towards the achievement of such.
- iv. The use of Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) in getting things done smarter and faster is fast gaining traction. We cannot afford to be left out, and we need to embrace it in order to improve our service delivery to all stakeholders.
- v. Continuous learning leads to continuous improvement, commit yourself to advancing your knowledge, skill and expertise (Pamela Gill Alabaster)

In order to add value to the system, you must think of

new ways of getting better result on any task. You need to develop a thirst for knowledge and a desire to do things better. Never leave the office the same way you met it, only failures do that. In the words of Mrs. C.F.A. Olumide, former Registrar, you need to ask yourself these questions: *"With each posting, what additional value can I introduce to my schedule? When taking decisions, am I fair to all concerned?"* (Doyen Series: March, 2016).

Conclusion

It is imperative that you strive to be nice and kind to everyone; staff, students and other stakeholders alike and be a source of inspiration for others. Remember it is only **YOU** who can make a difference on your schedule and positively project the brand of the University. The onus is on you to be a thoroughbred professional, be the authority in your assigned sphere of influence, make an impact in the way you deliver your service, don't just be a staff, but a worker and you will find yourself leading the way for others to follow.

Dr. (Mrs.) Taiwo F. Ipaye, FNIM
November, 2025



ENHANCING STAFF PRODUCTIVITY THROUGH PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

By **Dr. Olayinka Obafemi-Moses**, FNIM
College Secretary, College of Medicine, UNILAG

In my capacity as College Secretary & Director of Administration in University of Lagos, the leading University in Nigeria, University of First Choice and the Nation's Pride, I have had the opportunity to observe and participate in the evolution of performance management systems within higher education sector both within and outside Nigeria. The transformation I have witnessed over the years (close to 26 years) has been both challenging and rewarding, revealing the profound impact that well-designed performance management can have on staff productivity and institutional effectiveness. The contemporary higher education landscape demands a strategic approach to human resource management that goes beyond traditional administrative functions.

Universities today operate in an environment characterised by increased need for accountability, competitive funding mechanisms, and heightened expectations from stakeholders. In this context, performance management has emerged as a critical tool for institutional success and sustainability.

Strategic Imperatives for Performance Management

The fundamental shift in higher education operational environment cannot be overstated. Universities are no longer insulated academic institutions but dynamic organisations that must demonstrate measurable values to diverse stakeholders. Research by Tanveer and Karim (2018) emphasises that *"higher education institutions are under pressure to prove their usefulness, objectives, and methods of achieving these objectives"* while being *"more involved in the race of securing funding and winning over potential customers"*.

This transformation requires university administrators to reconceptualise performance management as a strategic enabler rather than a compliance exercise. Effective performance management systems must integrate multiple assessment dimensions, including professional competence, institutional contributions, and alignment with organisational objectives. The goal extends beyond individual evaluation to encompass organisational development and strategic goal achievements. Modern performance management frameworks recognise that staff productivity is multifaceted, encompassing task completion, innovation, collaboration, and contribution to institutional culture. This holistic approach ensures that performance evaluation captures the full spectrum of value administrative staff bring to the university ecosystem.



Digital Transformation and Systemic Implementation

The integration of digital technologies into performance management represents a significant advancement in administrative efficiency and effectiveness. Contemporary Universities have embraced online performance evaluation systems that streamline processes while enhancing data quality and accessibility. These digital platforms eliminate traditional inefficiencies associated with paper-based systems and enable real-time performance tracking across departments and administrative units.

Research consistently demonstrates the superiority of continuous feedback mechanisms over traditional annual review processes. Studies indicate that *"a once-yearly performance review is less effective than regular and continuous feedback,"* with frequent interactions producing significant positive impacts on *"attitude, productivity, and feelings of belonging"*. This evidence has informed the adoption of multi-phase assessment models that incorporate both mid-year and end-of-year evaluations, creating sustained dialogue between supervisors and staff members.

The systematic implementation of digital performance management also facilitates data-driven decision-making. Universities can leverage performance analytics to identify trends, benchmark against best practices, and implement targeted interventions to enhance staff productivity. This evidence-based approach represents a significant evolution from intuitive or subjective performance assessment methods.

Professional Development Integration

Integrating professional development within performance management frameworks represents a best practice that aligns individual growth with institutional advancement. Stanford University's Staff Development Program exemplifies this approach through its comprehensive support for job-related training and career development initiatives. Their model

demonstrates how universities can create synergies between performance evaluation and professional growth. Stanford's framework includes the Staff Training Assistance Program (STAP) and Staff Tuition Reimbursement Program (STRP), which provide financial support for courses, seminars, and workshops that enhance current job performance or prepare staff for career advancement. This investment in human capital development recognises that staff productivity correlates with professional competence and institutional commitment.

The professional development component of performance management serves multiple strategic purposes. It addresses skill gaps identified through performance evaluation, enhances staff retention through career advancement opportunities, and builds institutional capacity for future challenges. Universities that integrate professional development into their performance management systems create a culture of continuous learning and improvement that benefits individuals and the institution.

Recognition and Appreciation Systems

Effective performance management extends beyond evaluation and development to encompass comprehensive recognition and appreciation systems. Cornell University's multi-layered approach to staff recognition provides an excellent model for universities seeking to enhance staff motivation and engagement. Similar system such as formal recognition programs and informal appreciation mechanisms acknowledging contributions at various levels are also being practised in University of Lagos. These initiatives are grounded in demonstrating that *"simple, timely gestures have a profound impact on attitude, productivity, and feelings of belonging"*.

The effectiveness of recognition systems lies in their ability to reinforce desired behaviours and outcomes while building a positive organisational culture. When recognition is timely, specific, and meaningful, it is a powerful motivator that enhances individual performance and collective morale. It will encourage improved staff retention, increased engagement, and enhanced institutional reputation.

Future Directions and Emerging Opportunities

The future of performance management in Nigerian Universities presents significant opportunities for innovation and improvement. The integration of artificial intelligence and advanced analytics promises to enhance the objectivity and predictive capabilities of performance evaluation systems. These technologies can identify performance patterns, predict potential challenges, and recommend targeted interventions to optimize staff productivity. Digital collaboration platforms are already transforming workplace dynamics and performance monitoring capabilities. These platforms enable real-time communication, facilitate peer feedback mechanisms, and provide comprehensive dashboards for tracking

progress toward individual and institutional objectives. The post-pandemic environment has accelerated the adoption of such technologies, creating new possibilities for performance management innovation.

Nigerian universities must also consider the unique contextual factors that influence performance management effectiveness. Cultural considerations, infrastructure constraints, and resource limitations require thoughtful adaptation of international best practices. The evolution toward more sophisticated performance management systems also necessitates enhanced capabilities in areas such as digital literacy, data analysis, and change management. Universities must invest in developing these competencies among their administrative staff to fully realise the benefits of modern performance management approaches.

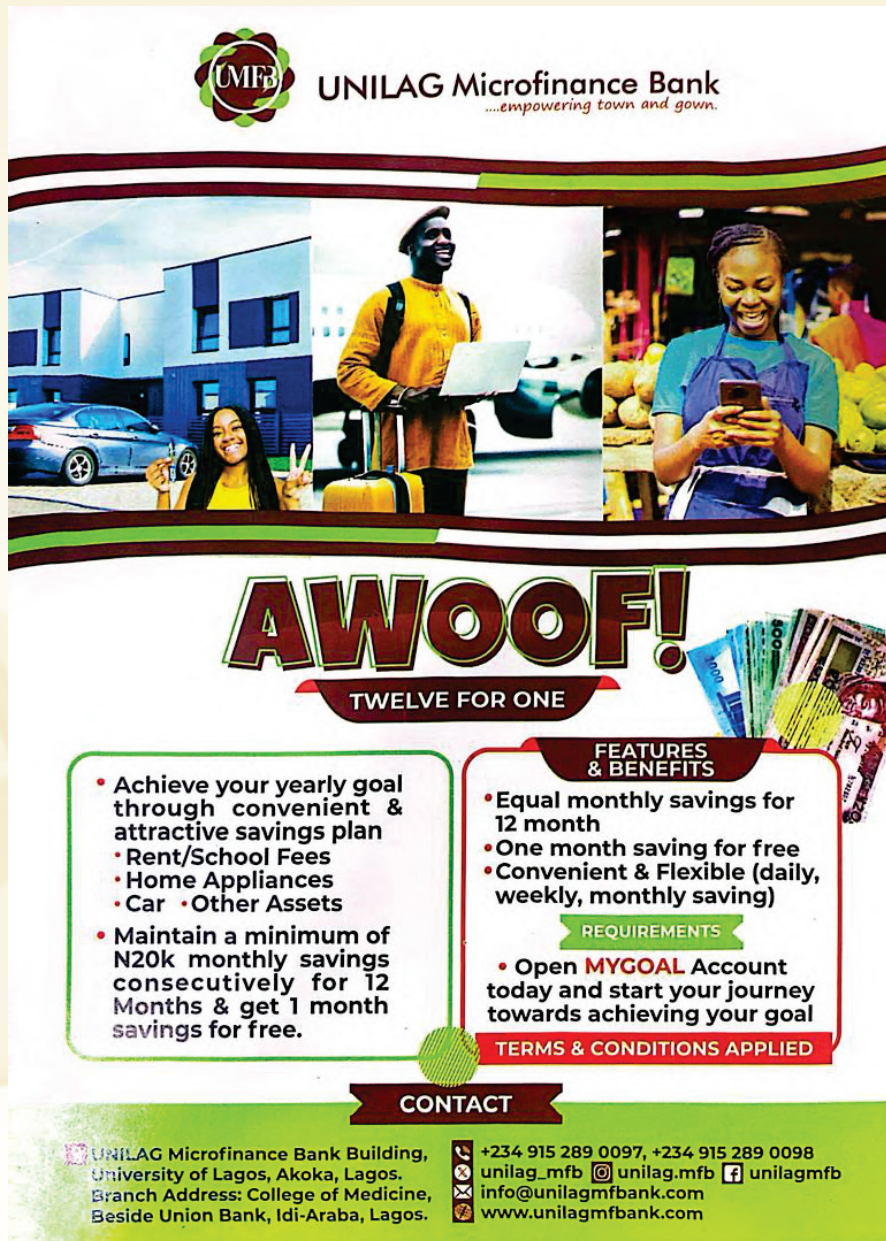
Conclusion

The transformation of performance management in Nigerian universities represents both a necessity and an opportunity. As higher education continues to evolve in response to changing societal needs and expectations, universities must embrace performance management as a strategic tool for institutional excellence. The evidence from leading institutions worldwide demonstrates that well-designed performance management systems can significantly enhance staff productivity, institutional effectiveness, and organisational culture.

The path forward requires commitment to continuous improvement, investment in digital infrastructure, and a culture that values both individual development and institutional advancement. Universities that successfully implement comprehensive performance management systems will be better positioned to navigate future challenges while serving their communities with distinction. The future of university administration indeed lies in recognising and developing the full potentials of our human resources through strategic performance management.

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Leveraging AI in Administration: Opportunities, Benefits, and Future Challenges

by Dr. Victor Odumuyiwa,
Ag. Director of NITHUB

Artificial intelligence is no longer a futuristic technology reserved for researchers and big tech companies; it is a reality that must be accepted and implemented across all sectors to improve productivity and enhance innovation. One of the core aspects of every organisation that can be enhanced with AI is administrative services. Administration encompasses all processes involved in managing and coordinating human and non-human resources and activities within an organisation, with the goal of achieving operational and strategic excellence. AI in administration is centered on leveraging intelligent systems to automate processes, thereby improving efficiency and accuracy.

One of the forms of AI revolutionising every aspect of work today is generative AI (GenAI). Leveraging GenAI in administration can help administrators create documentation, generate ideas, document processes, prepare summaries, and produce meeting transcripts, etc.

Areas in which GenAI can enhance administration, particularly in universities, include:

- Student information and academic management
- Communication and documentation
- Financial and resource management
- Events and community engagement

Student Information and Academic Management

Many tasks related to student information and academic management are repetitive, and years of administrative knowledge in this area have already been captured electronically. Fine-tuning AI models with such knowledge can generate modern knowledge management systems that fast-track learning for new staff and increase the productivity of existing staff. AI chatbots can be developed to attend to students' enquiries instantly, support course registration, and

provide admission process guidelines. Such chatbots, built specifically for an institution, will provide responses tailored to the institution's knowledge and processes.

Communication and Documentation

With AI, administrators can achieve a reduced turnaround time in communication and documentation duties. Tools such as ChatGPT and Gemini can help draft memos, emails, reports, and meeting minutes quickly and professionally, saving time while maintaining the right tone.

AI transcribers, such as Otter.ai and Gemini in Google Meet, can further boost administrators' productivity as they generate accurate transcripts, summaries, and action points. Routine enquiries can also be handled by AI virtual assistants, enhancing access to information and relevant resources. This frees administrators from redundant, repetitive tasks and allows them to devote more time to complex tasks.

Events and Community Engagement

AI has also revolutionised event planning and community engagement. Developing publicity strategies and materials has become more efficient through the use of AI. Administrators can now create tailored content and communication materials that foster stronger connections with both their teams and wider audiences, leveraging on AI thereby enhancing engagement.

For instance, AI tools can quickly generate event posters, draft email invitations, schedule posts across social media platforms, and even analyse audience feedback to improve communication strategies.

Financial and Resource Management

Budget draft creation, expenditure reporting, and the generation of summaries are all feats that Gen AI can support in a very short time using raw data inputs. It enables administrators to make data-driven decisions by predicting expenses and forecasting resource allocation.

These processes are supported by several AI tools available in both freemium and premium plans. For example, Gemini, developed by Google, is an advanced AI assistant designed for tasks such as summarisation, idea generation, workflow automation, and data analysis. Its key strength lies in seamless integration with Google Workspace, including Gmail, Google Docs, Sheets, and other Google tools. This enables users to analyse documents, generate concise summaries of files and meeting transcripts and receive intelligent reminders. Importantly, organisational privacy is safeguarded, as all interactions and data histories remain within Google's infrastructure and are not shared externally, particularly under the enterprise plan.

A parallel ecosystem exists with Microsoft Copilot, which integrates with Microsoft applications such as Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Outlook. Copilot supports email and document summarisation, content drafting, presentation building, and task automation, drawing directly from organisational business data.

Beyond Text and Data Processing

Generating reports and text is only the beginning of what AI tools can accomplish. Platforms such as Midjourney and DALL·E extend these capabilities by creating unique, high-quality images through prompt-based interactions with large language models (LLMs). Prompting is the primary way users engage with LLMs, and the quality of the AI's output largely depends on the clarity and specificity of the prompt. Beyond content creation, a wide range of AI tools—such as Lindy.ai, Napkin, Notion AI, and Zapier AI—support workflow automation, integration across multiple business applications, and generation of presentation slides. Many of these solutions are available under both freemium and premium plans, enabling organisations to adopt them flexibly to enhance efficiency, collaboration, and overall productivity.

Challenges and Risks

As useful as these technologies are, their use is associated with certain risks that users must be properly educated about.

One such risk is hallucination, where AI provides answers that sound correct but are in fact wrong. This is why it is important to always double-check results before using them—human judgement remains essential in interpreting AI outputs.

Another risk is bias, where AI produces unfair results. For example, if an AI system is used in recruitment, it may favour certain demographics of candidates over others because of the data on which it was trained. This demonstrates why AI must be applied carefully and responsibly.

Data security and privacy represent further risks. These may arise from data poisoning, theft, misuse of information, or lack of control over personal data. For instance, when interacting with chatbots, sharing personal or confidential organisational details can lead to unintended exposure.

Ethical Use of AI

The importance of using AI responsibly and ethically cannot be overstated. From the user's side, ethical usage involves respecting privacy, avoiding harmful misuse, and ensuring fairness in how AI is applied to daily activities such as decision-making at work, in education, or in business.

By using AI thoughtfully and responsibly, users contribute to building trust, reducing risks, and ensuring that AI delivers real value without causing harm. Administrators must never lose their critical thinking ability in the age of AI. AI should be seen as a tool—and used as a tool. We must never allow AI to control us; rather, we must remain in control of it, using it to become more productive and efficient in all that we do.



Administrative Strategies for Team Development and Capacity Building: A Guide for Unit Heads

by J. Aderonke Asiwaju, MNIM,

Chairman, Registry Week Planning Committee/
Director, Staff Training and Development Unit, University of Lagos

Introduction

The strength of an organisation hinges on the quality of its teams. High-performing teams catalyse innovation, efficiency, and sustainable growth while mitigating performance gaps. Unit heads should prioritise intentional team-building initiatives and capacity development, rather than relying on redeployment of staff that merely shift problems without addressing root causes. This underscores their critical leadership imperative to proactively drive team development and performance.

As John C. Maxwell's Law of Legacy states, *"A leader's lasting value is measured by succession."* This emphasises the importance of leaders investing in others, developing future leaders, and empowering team members to take on new challenges and responsibilities. When unit heads take ownership of team development and capacity building, they enhance individual and collective performances, foster collaboration, and create sustainable organisational success.

Administrative Strategies for Team Development

Building high-performing teams requires strategic leadership that involves:

- **Defining Core Values and Vision:** Clearly articulate and promote the organisation's mission, vision, and values, and demonstrate them consistently. This helps to create a shared understanding of the organisation's purpose and direction.
- **Leading by Example:** Exhibit integrity, professionalism, and commitment to inspire teams to emulate these qualities. Leaders set the tone for their teams, and their behaviour can either motivate or demotivate team members.
- **Driving Open Communication:** Maintain open channels for dialogue, share updates, address concerns, and encourage innovative ideas. This

helps to build trust, foster collaboration, and ensure that everyone is working towards the same goals.

- **Recognising and Rewarding Excellence:** Acknowledge contributions that align with organisational values to motivate staff and cultivate a culture of high performance. Recognition can take many forms, including formal awards, or public acknowledgement.
- **Encouraging Employee Engagement:** Provide platforms for sharing ideas and contributing to decision-making to deepen sense of ownership. When employees feel valued and empowered, they are more likely to invest in the organisation's success.
- **Creating a Supportive Environment:** Foster a positive work environment where staff feel respected, included, and valued. This includes promoting work-life balance, providing resources and support, and addressing conflicts promptly.
- **Establishing Continuous Feedback Loops:** Regular, constructive feedback creates a learning culture where growth and adaptability thrive. Feedback should be specific, timely, and actionable.
- **Building and Sustaining Trust:** Consistency, transparency, and follow-through on commitments build credibility and strengthen relationships. Trust is essential for effective teamwork and collaboration.

Capacity Development Strategies

Leaders require the following strategies for capacity development:

- I. **Identifying Skill Gaps and Training Needs:** Frequent assessments of skills and competencies help leaders identify gaps and address them

through targeted in-house training. This ensures that team members have the skills and knowledge needed to perform their roles effectively.

- ii. **Providing Development Opportunities and Resources:** Offer workshops, seminars, e-learning platforms, and in-house knowledge-sharing sessions. This helps to support the growth and development of team members.
- iii. **Implementing Coaching, Shadowing, and Mentoring Programmes:** Pair experienced staff with less experienced colleagues to facilitate knowledge transfer and skill development. This helps to build a strong and capable team.
- iv. **Establishing Performance Evaluation Mechanisms:** Objective, transparent performance evaluations and constructive feedback help identify areas for improvement. Regular evaluations also provide an opportunity to recognise and reward outstanding performance.

Best Practices for Unit Heads

Unit heads should:

- i. **Demonstrate Integrity and Accountability:** Leaders set the tone for their teams, and their behaviour can either inspire or undermine trust.
- ii. **Give Clear and Unambiguous Directives:** This ensures that team members understand what is expected of them, thereby reducing errors and increasing productivity.
- iii. **Empower Teams through Delegation and Support:** Give team members the autonomy to take ownership of their work and provide the necessary support and resources.
- iv. **Foster Collaboration and Celebrate Achievements:** Encourage teamwork, recognise and celebrate achievements. This helps to build a positive and productive team culture.
- v. **Address Conflicts Promptly and Fairly:** Conflicts can arise in any team, and it is essential to address them promptly and fairly.
- vi. **Promote Innovation and Inclusion:** Encourage innovative thinking and create an inclusive environment where everyone feels valued and respected.
- vii. **Lead with Empathy:** This fosters trust, collaboration, and drives success. It balances compassion with accountability, creating a safe space for open communication and loyalty.

Conclusion

Unit heads are instrumental in shaping high-performing teams and driving organisational excellence. By adopting these best practices, unit heads can strengthen their teams, enhance performance, and contribute to organisational success.

Call to Action

Leaders should:

- Take ownership of staff performance and support development: Leaders should prioritise the growth and development of their team members.
- Create inclusive environments where every team member feels valued: Leaders should foster a positive and inclusive team culture.
- Foster a sense of shared responsibility for team outcomes: Leaders should empower team members to take ownership of their work and contribute to team outcomes.
- Provide remediation for individuals with challenges and track improvements.
- Lead with Emotional Intelligence: This is the ability to understand one's emotions and impact on others. By developing and applying emotional intelligence, leaders can become more effective, empathetic, inspiring and leading to improve team performance and success.



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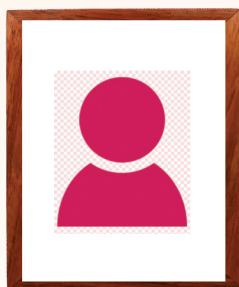
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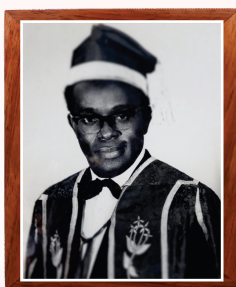
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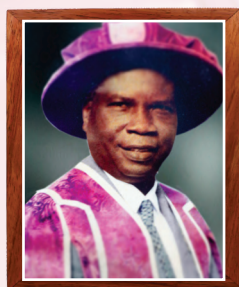
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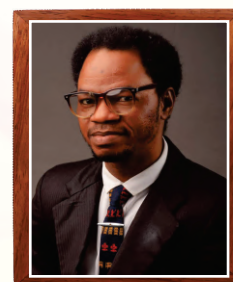
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