



LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT UNDER PROFESSOR CHIGOZIE C. ASIABAKA, KSM, JP AS VICE-CHANCELLOR FUTO: 2011 - 2016

1. Introduction

It is almost stating the obvious that the establishment of a university is synonymous with the establishment of a university library. This is expected since the university is regarded as the centre of learning and excellence, where knowledge of all sorts is acquired, processed and disseminated. Universities are centered in the injection of ways and means of making and acquiring knowledge, through the inculcation of study and service ethics in both student and staff with the focus of creating a better and productive society. The university library therefore becomes the nucleus around which the expectations from the university revolve. Implicitly the university library is poised to serve as the nerve centre for knowledge acquisition and its services.

The Library FUTO was established on 3rd August, 1981 with the mandate to provide information resources to the students, staff and surrounding community for education, research relaxation and community service. It is considered and recognized as a major service unit of the University. From its humble beginning with 2,500 volumes of resources, 22 staff providing traditional library services to 80 students in a small hall, it evolved to 96,501 volumes of resources, 124 staffers providing 24,700 users with innovative knowledge intensive service activities. With a vision statement of striving to provide resources and conducive environment for teaching and research in an information and communication technology (ICT) based set-up, the Library has always worked to assist the University in maintaining excellence and high-level performance in its academic and/or professional programmes.

In this march to provide the right materials and maintain attractive environment in aid of teaching, learning and research, the touch by the *"Quest for Excellence"* crusader, Professor Chigozie Cyril Asiabaka as Vice-Chancellor, has made it possible to achieve this vision. Anyone would agree with us that Prof. C.C. Asiabaka means many different things to many different people, but fortunately he means much that is positive to the majority of the people. Even his opponents find so many good things in Prof. Asiabaka. A man of excellent character who exudes joy, confidence and tenacious hope in any one who comes across him and yet is extremely unassuming and humble. A man of extraordinary intellectual capacity with an innate knack for administration and a great sense of industry. A man of unflinching and unflagging faith and zeal in the work of Him who chose and made him the 6th Substantive Vice-Chancellor of FUTO.

Another thing that strikes one very much about him is his great faith in the ability of others. You can never see him under-rating anybody. The poor and the rich belong to him and are his friends. His love and interest in people cuts across the entire societal spectrum when you encounter him the first thing that strikes you is his sincere interest in your own welfare, be it material, moral or spiritual – his entire approach is invariably holistic but you must show marked response to his “**Quest for Excellence**”. . Our University has continued to wear a new look with many of the white elegant structures springing up by the day, and the Library is not left out.

He is a father, in the real sense of the word, and a lover of books, which trait has translated into the immense love he has for our University Library. As a man who has experienced and respected library routines as a student, even from his undergraduate days, it is no wonder his attachment and soft spot for our Library. For the Library, he was always thinking globally, but acting locally and this is seen in every of the achievements recorded in the Library during his tenure, especially the structural and physical transformation of our Library and its environment. It was therefore not surprising that the Library staff, out of appreciation to this special friend of the Library, composed a special song in his honour during his valedictory visit to the Library on the 22 of April 2016, thus.:

“ Asiabaka nodi nma;

I lusigo olu gi;

Anyi si gi nodi nma;

Asiabaka nodi nma;

I lusigo n'udo;

Anyi si gi nodi nma;

Asiabaka, Odogwu) -2ice

VC anyi, Nwoke din ma)

Chigozie, Nwoke di uchu) “ -3ice

It was really an exciting moment for the Library staff as well as Prof Asiabaka and his management team.

Within his tenure as the 6th substantive Vice- Chancellor of FUTO, the Library stood tall at all times in the areas of staff capacity development , resources, organization, operations and services. His scorecard is in the superlative.

Infrastructural Score Card

The mindset of Prof Asiabaka “thinking globally and acting locally” is visualized through

the nook and cranny of the University. In the University Library, he transformed the location and outlook of the structures. The environmental indicators in FUTO library include the building, furniture and its arrangement, the temperature, library decor, signage and noise level are rejuvenated. The entire library environment despite the size can pass for any international academic library. The transformation are made manifest as follows:

(i) Relocation to Library Phase II building

In an effort to provide additional space and to vacate the Pilot Plant House for the School of Science, the Library moved to its Phase II building on the 5th of September, 2012. The Library Phase II building, which has a seating capacity of 300, houses the Serials Unit (Bound and Unbound Periodicals, Magazines and Newspapers), the Processing, Acquisition, Documents, Archives/Light Reading Materials, and the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Units.

(ii) Renovation/Creation of Walkways

The entire Main Library building was renovated in 2015. Eight new toilets for staff and students were built; the ceiling was changed from asbestos to modern P.V.C. ceiling and the floor was tiled in and out. A Walkway linking the Main Library and the Library Phase II building was created between August 14th 2014 – March, 2015, thus making it possible for staff and students to use both Libraries without walking through the sun or being cascaded during the rainy period. Library materials are now easily moved between the 2 buildings irrespective of the weather.

(iii) Office Equipment:

The following office equipment were approved and procured from 2012 to date under Prof Asiabaka

- (i) 100 KVA generator
- (ii) 300 KVA generator
- (iii) 50 Desktop Computers
- (iv) 20 Laptops
- (v) 4 Refrigerators
- (vi) 1 Deep freezer
- (vii) 12 Standing Fans
- (viii) 8 TV sets (Majority were stolen during the burglary incident at the Library Phase II).

(iv) Furniture:

- (i) The office of the University Librarian was furnished in 2015.
- (ii) The Library received 15 office tables and chairs in 2012 and additional 10 sets in 2016 .

(v) Building of New Library Complex

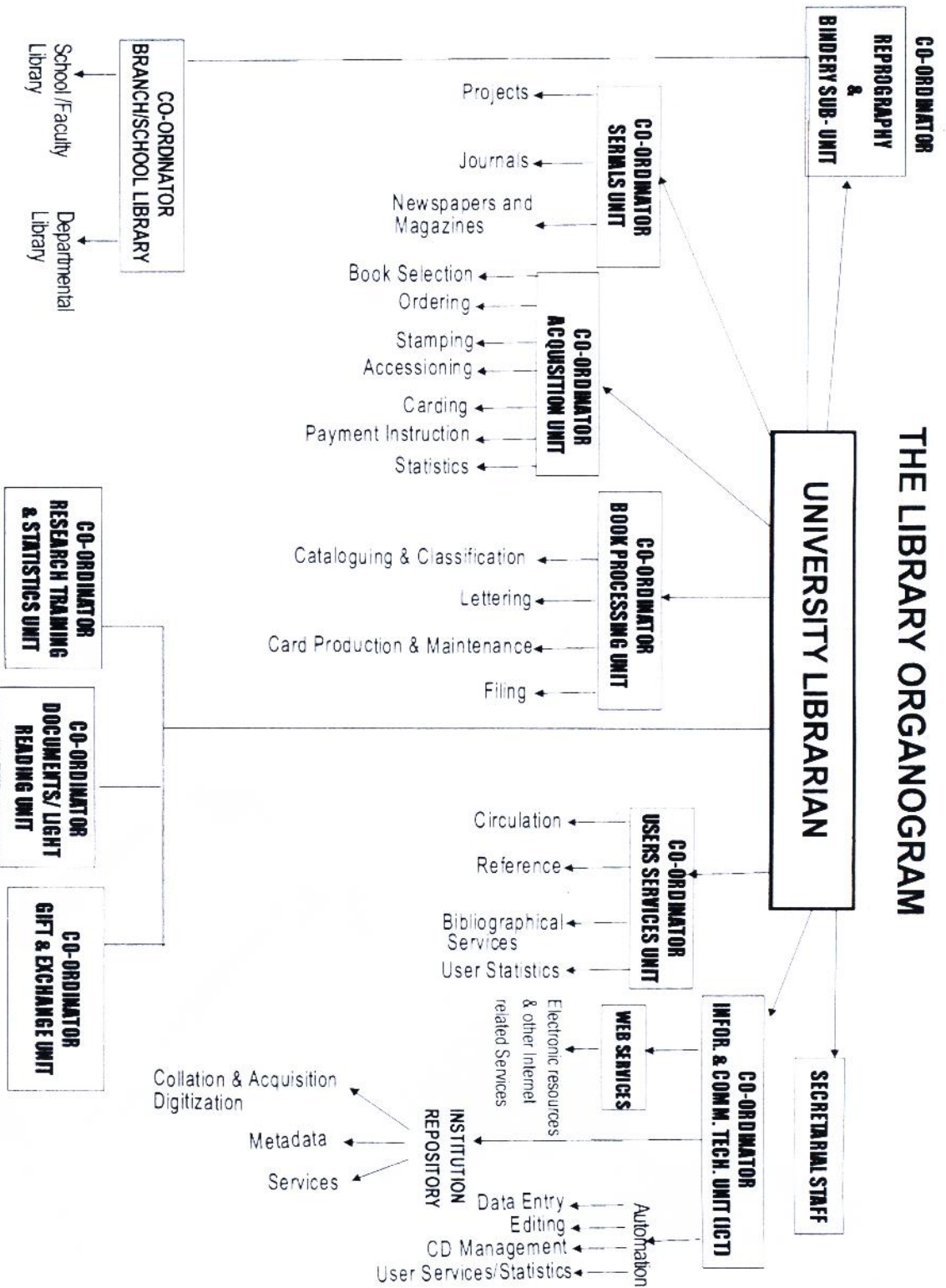
A recording breaking achievement was made for the Library with the construction of a new Library Complex which was started by in 2015 and commissioned by the Minister of State for Education Prof ... Anwuka on Thursday, 19th February 2016.

Operational Support Score Card

Prof Asiabaka did not renege on his push to advice and encourage the University Librarian to maximize her potential and be the best she could by way of actualizing the new organizational structure made available by her predecessor Chief J .E Nwogu but yet to be fully engaged as shown in Figure 1.

FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, OWERRI

THE LIBRARY ORGANOGRAM



Mindful of his support, Acquisition as operational unit was not restricted . Approval was given for acquisition to support especially new programmes established in the University . No wonder the Library was not found wanting in most of the accreditation exercises. Testimonies of Prof Asiabaka support for acquisition of resources in the Library is shown in Figures 1, 2 and 3

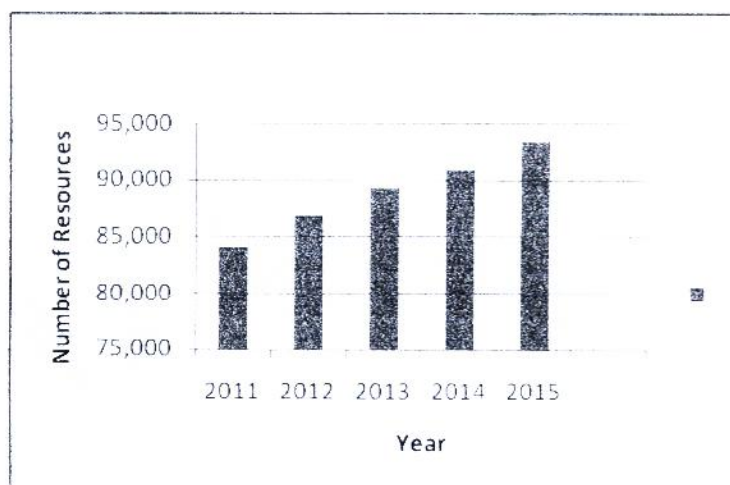


Figure1: Total Library Collection Between 2011 and 2015

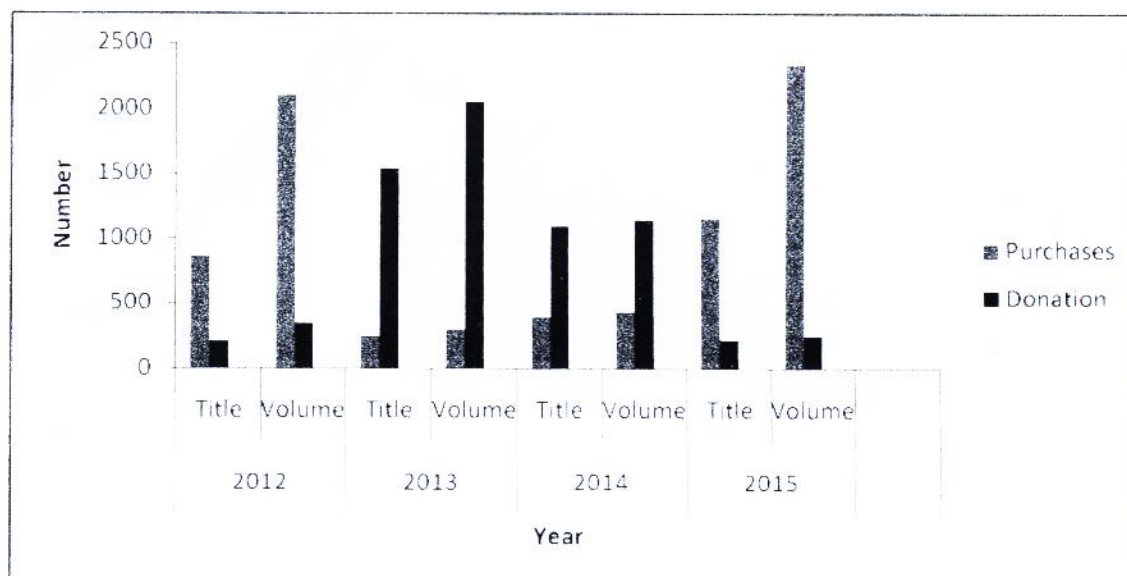


Figure 2: Library Books Procurement Between 2012- 2015.

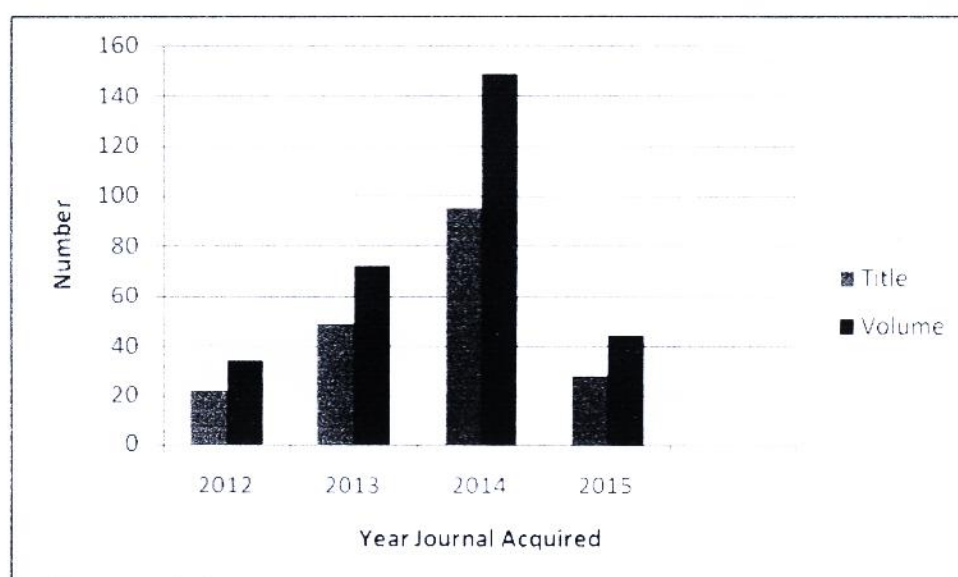


Figure 3: Library Journals Procurement Between 2012- 2015

The Figures show Library collection and acquisitions during the tenure of Prof Asiabaka as Vice-Chancellor of FUTO. The Library, under Prof. Asiabaka, intensified its book acquisition efforts; book donations from individuals and organizations have been quite noticeable. As new programmes emerged in the University, new acquisitions were made, some even before the programmes kicked off.

ICT Operations Score Card

The organizational platform of the Library is fully actualized in the areas of ICT operation. Prof Asiabaka supported the evolution of Library from the traditional mundane environment to state-of-the- art ICT driven of international repute.

Automation activities are in top gear . With his support the Library migrated from non-web based less interactive Library Management System (**Alice for Windows**) to web compliant, highly interactive system(**Alexandria**).

He Encouraged and supported the design and hosting of Library site (**library.futo.edu.ng**). Under Prof Asiabaka as Vice-Chancellor, the 1st Institutional Repository of the University was developed, deployed and hosted (**FUTOSpace**). Presently more than 1000 indigenous resources of the University including theses, dissertations, lectures, journals, addresses, proceeding, question papers etc are available electronically in the repository all through the support and encouragement of Prof Asiabaka .

Over 50 desktop computers and 20 laptops were acquired for the Library . A fully developed ICT unit with network computer is fully operational while the Library environment is fully engaging with wireless LAN.

The Vice-Chancellor has continued the support for the provision of on-line services as provided by the Library, namely:

Blog (www.futolibrary.wordpress.com)

Twitter (<http://twitter.com/futolibrary>).

Facebook ([www.facebook.com FUTOLibrary](http://www.facebook.com/FUTOLibrary))

- E-mail services (Librarian@futo.edu.ng).

These have aided real time and social media services to our Library users.

Staff Recruitment and Development Score Card

One of the areas most noticeable in our Library development during the Asiabaka era is human Capacity Building. He did not renege in his quest for enhanced competences. To him knowledge , skill and attitude is evolving and for any staff to acquire the capacity for full actualization of the vision and mission of their call to duty , the staff must engage in continuing education . Figures 4 and 5 show the staff intake and qualifications within the period of Prof Asiabaka as Vice-chancellor FUTO .

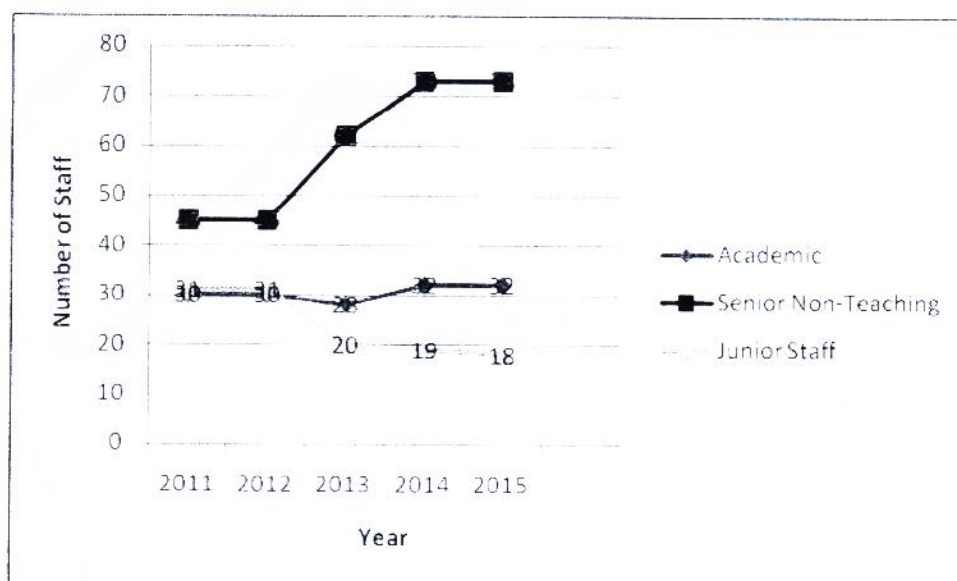


Figure 4: The Changing Staff strength Under Prof. Asiabaka as Vice-Chancellor FUTO.

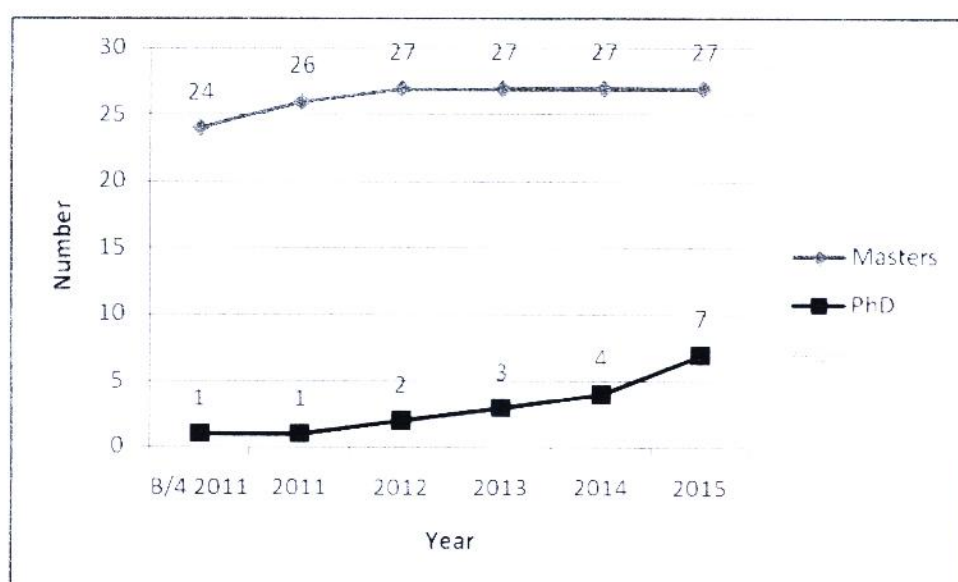


Figure 5: The Changing Professional Qualification Acquisition during the Time of Prof Asiabaka as Vice-Chancellor, FUTO.

The two figures demonstrate that Prof Asiabaka encouraged professionalism and high level staffers in the Library. He injected the push for staff to fully gain the profession which justifies their academic status thereby positioning them for excellent academic support. The quest for increase competences and academic qualification especially the highly solicited doctorate was the focus of Prof Asiabaka hence the quantum increase as show in Figure 5 and Table 2 below.

Table 2: Staff Development Sponsored by the University Under Prof Asiabaka

Type/Year	PhD	Masters	Conferences	Seminar/ Workshop	Overseas Training
2012	1	-	-	-	
2013	2	5	15	-	
2014	1	2	15		1
2015	1	-	28	7	5
Total	5	7	58	7	6

The Vice-Chancellor also supported more than 10 of in-house trainings which took place in the Library all aimed at ensuring excellence in the way we do things as professional librarians and other library staff.

He has also encouraged and supported professional collaboration. In doing this Prof. Asiabaka sponsored for two consecutive times the hosting of the Annual General Meeting of the Nigerian Library Association (2014 & 2015)

Improved Service and Academic Support to the University Community Score Card

By the approval of the Prof Asiabaka , the Library pushed to enhance the services provided to the University Community . Following his openness and request for the establishment of School Library during his tenure as the Dean ,School of Agriculture and Agricultural Technology ,the Library demonstrated its capacity to bring the resources and services of the library close to the point of use. This was achieved through his approval for establishment of School Library as well as the deployment of embedded Librarians to the various schools .

Expanded orientation programme for fresh students was organized and held by the Library on the approval of the Vice-Chancellor.

Through the visionary leadership of the Vice-Chancellor, the University signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with ITOCA/Cornel University, New York in 2015. ITOCA has successfully trained more than 40 lecturers and Library staff of the University.

Prof Asiabaka in his magnanimity has approved the training of faculty and librarians of institutions of higher learning in Owerri by the University anchored in the Library .This will position FUTO as the Big Brother which she is .

The Promised Near Paradise Dream Digital Library

Prof Asiabaka is still fully focused as far as the realization of the best University Library in Nigeria and West African Sub-Region is concerned. Plan is at the advanced level to realize his dream Digital Library. A look at the architectural platform of the new Digital Library as proposed by the Vice-Chancellor shows that FUTO library will surely get there. His love for the University Library is fully manifested in the promised four story Digital Library which will be the first building in FUTO with elevator. Vice-Chancellor Sir, we say thank you.

Conclusion

Should we continue to recount ? No. But we can say like the Igbo song:

'Nguba Mmeso Oma Ya, Chi ga eji , chi ga abo'. Vice-Chancellor Prof Asiabaka has really towered so high like an Iroko. His mantra **'Quest for Excellence'** was not a mere gimmicks, He announced it, lived it , and danced it . Like St Paul he has ran the race , kept to the rules, fought the fight and ready to bow out gallantly. Though saints are not of this world, he has put the little effort which posterity will assess and qualify for heavenly Jerusalem. May God lead you as you move on.



Dr Mrs Chinwe Veronica Anunobi
University Librarian

