

US Embassy Counselor delivers lecture on Citizen Driven Development at CU

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The visit was historic being the third of its kind in three years that the University was hosting the team from PAS. The previous visits coincided with the International Higher Education Week while this year's took place a day to the U.S. Thanksgiving Day, celebrated annually.



The PAS team with members of the university management team

The visit featured an interactive session with the University Management team led by the Vice Chancellor, Prof Aize Obayan and a special lecture presentation delivered by the leader of the visiting team and Counselor for Public Affairs, U.S. Embassy in Abuja, Dr Atim Eneida George.

While delivering the lecture, titled, 'Citizen Driven Development', Dr Atim, who has over 20 years of experience in international affairs, said governance was too important to be left in the hands of government as citizens must of necessity be involved in the governing and development process of their nation. She said citizen driven development could be realized through association, advocacy, agency, compassion and sweat equity.

The PAS team with members of the university management team

Dr Atim who was honoured with a Chieftaincy title of Yeye Araba by the Ooni of Ife in May 2006, said Nigeria was on the threshold of profound transformation. She explained that the country has great potential for development, adding that at its backyard laid acres of diamonds, which needed to be harnessed for the good of all.

She sensitized staff and students of the University on the need to be part of the development efforts in Nigeria by chanting the acronym of her message, AAACS (Association, Advocacy, Agency, Compassion and Sweat equity).

The Country Counselor for Public Affairs said she was most impressed by what she saw at Covenant University. Also speaking at the occasion, her spouse and one time Minister of Education, Minister of State for Peace Keeping, Federal Republic of Liberia and former Vice Chancellor, AME University, Monrovia, Liberia, Prof Levi Zangai, commended the vision of the University. He said he was very impressed to see a private initiative blossomed into an impressive University, adding that the University was a good example of private initiative with people who are committed to the great commission. "Whatever government does, Covenant University has contributed its quota to citizen driven development".

Another member of the team and Public Diplomacy Officer in the United States Consulate-General, Lagos, Mary Lou Johnson-Pizarro, agreed with Prof Zangai and said Covenant University students were getting a sound footing to make great contribution to their world.

" What I cherished most are the faculty and the students that you send to me so that we can deepen the relationship between Nigeria and America. After my first visit, getting to know you and seeing this place, I have been talking and bragging about it and telling my other American officers that you have to come to Covenant University. I also use this institution as a model and I use to tell all other Nigerian Universities that if you want to compete with our programme you better be serious because there's a University out there if you are not serious they are going to win everything", Mrs. Johnson-Pizarro revealed.

In her remarks at the occasion, Prof Obayan, who welcomed the visitors on behalf of the Chancellor, Dr David Oyedepo, commended the Public Affairs Section for considering CU as a very relevant platform in its linkage agenda to expand the frontiers of scholarship. She appreciated them for providing the platform for the University faculty to benefit from US Government sponsored educational and cultural exchange programmes, especially the Fulbright Fellowship and Study of US Institutes (SUSI). Two Covenant University faculty participated in SUSI in June, 2007.

On the issue of citizen driven development, the Vice Chancellor remarked that the students and graduates of Covenant University were already involved in community driven development. She thanked Dr Atim George for the stimulating lecture and later presented an award to her on behalf of the University for 'her exemplary dedication to capacity building and human empowerment initiatives in Nigeria.'

The lecture attracted high dignitaries from within and outside the University including the Registrar, Yemi Nathaniel and other principal officers of the University.

Members of the team, which also included Mrs. Chineye Uwadileke, Cultural Affairs Assistant, were given a guided tour round the campus and a luncheon at the University Cafeteria 2. The PAS team also used the occasion of the visit to make book donations to the Covenant University Library.

[Click here to view pictures of the event](#)

01/29/2009 09:52 am