

Vice-Chancellor Urges Faculty, Others to Embrace Innovation

The Vice-Chancellor, Covenant, Professor AAA. Atayero has urged faculty, staff and students of the University to be innovative by thinking of something new, implementing creative ideas, and coming up with new ideas/products that are valuable and impactful.

He made this submission at the recent workshop of the Covenant University Centre for Research, Innovation and Discovery (CUCRID) themed: 'Making Innovation Happen: Masterclass Series'.

Professor Atayero had while making his presentation titled, 'What Innovation Is', acknowledged that there were different definitions of innovation, with almost everybody having his/her own definition. He, however, chose to leverage on the definitions of certain experts in the innovation landscape in order to arrive at a holistic definition.

Quoting Nick Skillicorn, the CEO and Founder of Improvides Innovation Consulting, the Vice-Chancellor said that, "Creativity is thinking of something new. Innovation is the implementation of something new", while Jeffrey Baumgartner, a keynote speaker and workshop facilitator specialising in creativity and innovation, defined innovation as, "The implementation of creative ideas in order to generate value, usually through increased revenues, reduced costs or both".

According to him, Stefan Lindegaard, who is an author, speaker and advisor focusing on corporate transformation based on digitalisation, disruption and innovation, stated that, "I try not to define 'innovation' as we should tone down our use of the word and term"; and Michael Graber, Co-Founder and Managing Partner at Southern Growth Studio, described innovation as, "New, organic value creation by applying creativity, in-depth relationships with consumers and customers, and new thinking".

After analysing the aforesaid expert definitions amongst others, Professor Atayero arrived at what innovation is: "The Implementation of a novel idea, which addresses a specific challenge and achieves value for both the company and customer in a new (and potentially disruptive) way".

Also speaking at the workshop, Mr. Iortim Ogenetegha, a 2013 Covenant graduate who made a presentation with the topic, 'Innovation and Design', said that innovation was a new idea, method or device synonymous to novelty, while design was an underlying scheme that governed functioning, developing or unfolding.

Ogenetegha, whose innovative product "GRIJ FRIJ" helps to preserve vaccines administered on people in remote areas, highlighted steps to innovative thinking as: identify the problem, understudy the status quo, identify the status quo loopholes, and fix each loophole. On what necessitated his innovation, he explained that 19.4 million infants had lacked access to vaccines, 52% of anemic patients died within 8 hours of not receiving blood, and 40% of maternal death in Africa were due to blood inaccessibility, all occasioned by the lack of cold chain storage.

He attributed the illustrated situation to inability to track items in real time; inability to view temperature, security and locations history; inability to maintain prescribed temperature; and unavailability of data that facilitates prediction. He said



Vice-Chancellor, Professor AAA. Atayero, making his presentation on the topic Making Innovation Happen

that GRIJ FRIJ, being a smart cold chain box built to actively keep critical commodities in healthcare at regulated temperatures during storage and transportation, was the solution to the identified challenges.

Ogenetegha listed steps to be taken to achieving great designs as: create a problem statement, research solutions and identify processes and procedures to achieve solution, build a team around this process and procedure, and implement solution.

While speaking on the topic, 'Innovation that Brings Income', the third facilitator at the workshop, Dr. Stephen Oluwatobi, said that, "Innovation that brings income puts Value Creation at its core as people pay for what they value". The money, he added, was in the value, and innovation had to be taken to the point it was valued from raw to refined.

On how to create, capture and deliver the value as well as generate revenue from it, Dr. Oluwatobi, who is the Deputy Director, Commercialisation, CUCRID, said that the innovator must determine his/her customer segment, value proposition, channels of delivering value to the customers, customer relationships, how to capture revenue streams, resources needed to create, capture and deliver value, the most important activities necessary to execute the value proposition, and key partners amongst others.

"Ideas must become innovation before they can become cash cows. If it can easily be copied, it is lacking uniqueness. Innovation is derived from testing and executing the ideas," said Dr. Oluwatobi.

Earlier in his welcome remarks, the Director, CUCRID, Professor Emeka Iweala, stated that the workshop was the first in the series, adding that its purpose was to educate faculty, staff and students on what innovation was all about. He noted that for advancement and recent developments especially in the technology industry, academics would have to focus not only on publications alone but innovating, inventing and on the long run making impact in the society.

The CUCRID Director, who appreciated the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Atayero, for leading by example by agreeing to be one of the facilitators at the workshop, said that the academic industry was now challenged, especially with demands from society, to make products and develop technologies that could impact society especially.

Also present at the workshop were the Deputy Director, Research and ODL, CUCRID, Dr. Agboola Mayowa, senior and junior faculty as well as staff and students.

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