



Librarians in Crisis of Status, Identity and Marginalization

Clement Olujide Ajidahun

Adekunle Ajasin University, PMB 001, Akungba Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria.
Tel.: +234-803-392-7663; e-mail: jideajidahun@gmail.com

Review Article

ARTICLE INFORMATION

Article history:

Received 2 September 2015

Accepted 13 October 2015

Available online 30 November 2015

Journal of Balkan Libraries Union

Vol. 3, No. 2, pp. 40-47, 2015.

Digital Object Identifier: 10.16918/bluj.52521

ABSTRACT

The paper is a critique of the 2009 Agreement between the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and the Federal Government of Nigeria as it affects the academic status and identity of librarians in Nigerian university libraries. The areas identified and discussed in the ASUU/FGN document include Composition of ASUU Re-Negotiation Team, List of Advisers, Responsibility Allowance, Excess Workload Allowance, and Retirement Age of Academics in the Professorial Cadre. The paper observed that the document is an attempt to marginalize and relegate the librarians in Nigerian university libraries as support staff and not as academic staff as the document is prepared to cater for the welfare of lecturers only. Recommendations that will enhance the status of librarians in Nigerian universities are provided.

Keywords: Librarians, Status, Marginalization, University, ASUU/FGN agreement .

Copyright © 2015 Balkan Libraries Union - All rights reserved.

I. Introduction

The agreement between the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and the Federal Government of Nigeria was first signed by both parties on September 3, 1992 under the Ibrahim Babangida's administration. This was after an intensive, spirited and vigorous administrative and labour firework. Under the Abdulsalami's regime, another agreement was signed on May 25, 1999 between the union and the then military government. According to ASUU, the agreement was "intended to be an interim palliative measure prejudice to a comprehensive negotiation at a future date." This was because the agreement excluded basic salaries, funding and university autonomy, although the allowances were adjusted. The agreement was renewed in 2001 and 2009. The agreement bothered on funding of universities, university autonomy, academic freedom, conditions of service and other related matters. The FGN/ASUU 2009 agreement was a product of a protracted strike action embarked upon by the Academic Staff Union of Universities to improve on the FG/ASUU Agreement of 1992 and 2001. For instance, before the agreement was finally signed in September 2009, ASUU had to embark on a warning strike action between May 18 and 30 and June 22, 2009. Currently, the pact has continued to suffer from lack of implementation and that was responsible for the ASUU strike action between June 30 and December

17 2013. The strike was suspended based on resolutions reached at the meeting between Federal Government and the Representatives of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and attended by the leadership of the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) and Trade Union Congress (TUC) of Nigeria held in Abuja on November 4, 2013.

The essence of the agreement, according to the signed document, was

1. to reverse the decay in the University system in order to reposition it for greater responsibilities in national development,
2. to reverse the brain drain through adequate remuneration of academic staff and also by disengaging them from the encumbrances of a unified civil service wage structure,
3. to restore Nigerian Universities, through immediate, massive and sustained financial intervention and
4. to ensure genuine university autonomy and academic freedom.

The critical areas on which the 2009 Agreement was signed include:

1. funding requirements for revitalization of the Nigerian Universities,
2. conditions of service,
3. non-salary conditions of service
4. Federal Government assistance to state universities,
5. progressive increase of annual budgetary allocation to education to 26% between 2009 and 2020,

6. earned academic allowances, amendment of the pension/retirement age of academics on the professorial cadre from 65 to 70 years,
7. transfer of Federal Government landed property to universities,
8. setting up of research and development equipment provision to the laboratories and classrooms and other related matters.

II. Academic Status of Librarians

The issue of according academic status to academic librarians has long been settled and therefore, it is no longer debatable. It is rather unfortunate that the Academic Staff Union of Universities is playing politics with the career and the future of Nigerian academic librarians with their jaundiced view of the status of librarians even when it is glaring that the prejudice is unnecessary and misplaced. The Academic Staff Union of Universities draws its membership from the academic members of staff which include both the university teachers and librarians. This is supported by The Constitution and Code of Practice of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) of 2012 under Article 3: Membership which defines membership of ASUU as “any person who is engaged full-time in a University as a

Lecturer, Research Fellow or Academic Librarian in a University shall be deemed to be a member of the Union” [2]. It is logical, therefore, to infer and in fact conclude that all academic librarians and lecturers/research fellows in universities have and should enjoy equal membership status, rights and responsibilities as further captured and articulated in the same ASUU constitution under Appendix I: Code of Practice [2-3].

Universities are established, statutorily, for research, teaching and community service. According to Ogunruku [2012: 10], “at the core of the effectuation of these objectives is the academic staff, who play pivotal and central roles”. Librarians like their faculty staff are equally engaged in the realization and actualization of these objectives. First, it is mandatory for all categories of university academic staff to engage vigorously and robustly in research and publish in reputable local and international journals as a condition for appointments and promotions. In addition, their promotions and appointments follow the same procedures and processes. For instance, Table 1 culled from the Conditions of Service of Senior Staff at Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba Akoko, Ondo State shows the same minimum overall scores for lecturers and librarians to qualify for promotions and appointments.

TABLE I
OVERALL SCORES TO QUALIFY FOR PROMOTIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

| S/N | Status/Position | Score |
|-----|--|-----------|
| 1. | <i>Professorship/Research Professorship/University Librarian</i> | 70 points |
| 2. | <i>Readership/ Deputy University Librarian</i> | 65 points |
| 3. | <i>Senior Lectureship/Senior Research Lectureship/ Principal Librarian</i> | 60 points |
| 4. | <i>Lectureship Grade 1/ Research Fellowship 1/Senior Librarian</i> | 50 points |
| 5. | <i>Lectureship Grade II/ Research Fellowship II/ Librarian I</i> | 45 points |
| 6. | <i>Assistant Lectureship/ Junior Research Fellowship/ Librarian II</i> | 40 points |

On external assessment of publications, the document examined above further underscores the parity between lecturers and librarians when it captures the policy of the university and states as follows: “The advice of three assessors external to the University shall be required where promotions or appointment is to the grade of Professor, University Librarian, Reader and Deputy University Librarian.” [126]. The implication of this policy statement is that “Professorial Cadre” refers to Professors, University Librarians, Associate Professors,

Readers, Deputy University Librarians. In other words, all these professorial positions have equal status. Regrettably and sadly too, this position is unacceptable to ASUU without any sound, logical and convincing argument to justify its questionable and worrisome stance.

Besides, lecturers and librarians in Nigerian Universities have the same status and salary structure. Universities in Nigeria use Table 2 as the salary structure for all categories of academic staff in the universities.

TABLE II
SALARY STRUCTURE OF ACADEMIC STAFF IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES

| S/N | Position | Salary Grade Level | Salary Range (Naira) |
|-----|-------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| 1. | Professor/University Librarian | CONUASS 7 | 4580349-6020163 |
| 2. | Reader/Deputy University Librarian | CONUASS 6 | 3768221-5004750 |
| 3. | Senior Lecturer/Principal Librarian | CONUASS 5 | 3091505- 4455506 |
| 4. | Lecturer I/Senior Librarian | CONUASS 4 | 2079995-2684010 |
| 5. | Lecturer II/Librarian I | CONUASS 3 | 1649509 – 1979640 |
| 6. | Assistant Lecturer/Librarian II | CONUASS 2 | 1451071 – 1754902 |
| 7. | Graduate Assistant | CONUASS 1 | 1263377 – 1447767 |

There is, therefore, no justification for anybody to categorise librarians as support staff for lecturers who do not qualify to belong to the academics. One agrees with the submission of Salaam and Onifade (2009) when they said that, “there cannot be two types of academic staff. Academic librarians should be able to enjoy the same benefits as their teaching counterparts. Therefore, all academic staff should be treated equally.” This is in tandem with the ACRL Document on Guidelines and Standards on Library Practice. According to the document, “faculty status entails for librarians the same rights and responsibilities as for other members of the faculty. They should have corresponding entitlement to rank, promotion, tenure, compensation, leaves, and research funds.” If this is the standard practice in the developed world, why should ours who are aspiring to catch up with the 21st century civilization be dysfunctional? After all, what is good for the goose is also good for the gander. It is only in justice and fairness that peace, progress and development can be achieved. If those who have responsibilities to teach fairness and equity do not practise what they teach, it is definitely an ill omen for the future of our society.

The National Universities Commission (NUC), the body invested with the supervisory and monitoring responsibilities on all Nigerian universities in ensuring compliance with standard in its Manual on University Management highlights the academic duties, functions and responsibilities of librarians under teaching to include:

1. training of his staff in-house on the job and through staff seminars;
2. the organisation of workshop or short courses for the continuing education of his librarians and non-staff;
3. the teaching of courses in the university in any subject in which he has the academic qualification, if invited and is willing to do so;
4. giving bibliographic instruction, including study skills, to users of the library, especially, the undergraduate and post-graduate students.

The NUC is unequivocal in capturing the teaching and academic functions of librarians to reinforce their academic status in unmistakable terms. The Association of College and Research Libraries Standards for Faculty Status for Academic Librarians prepared by the ACRL Committee on the Status of Academic Librarians in 2007 urged its governing body to adopt the following recommendations as standards that would carve out the faculty status of librarians:

1. **Professional Responsibilities:** That librarians have

professional responsibilities, which require their independent judgement and which must be subjected to regular review using the institutional criteria.

2. **Library Governance:** That university librarians should have an academic structure of administration that is similar to the structure in the faculties.
3. **College and University Governance:** That librarians should have the same degree of representation as other academic departments in university governing bodies such as Senate, Faculty Boards etc.
4. **Compensation:** That librarians should enjoy the same salaries and other forms of remunerations paid academic staff of equivalent rank.
5. **Tenure:** The tenure policy of the university should cover the librarians.
6. **Promotion:** The policy of the university on promotion for academic staff should be applied to librarians.
7. **Leaves and Research Funds:** Librarians should enjoy Sabbatical and research leaves and have access to funding of research projects in with the university policy.
8. **Academic Freedom:** Librarians must enjoy the same academic freedom as all other lecturers in the university.
9. **Grievance:** Librarians must have access to the same grievance process as other academic staff in the university and the process must be consistent with university extant rules and regulations.
10. **Dismissal:** The procedure for the dismissal of librarians should be consistent with the university extant rules and regulations for other academic staff dismissals.

The ACRL recommendations are quite exhaustive, extensive and far-reaching in giving credence to the academic status of librarians. Indisputably, therefore, librarians are accorded academic status globally.

III. Statement of the Problem

Despite the fact that academic librarians are recognized as academics worldwide, the 2009 ASUU-FGN Agreement is a repudiation of this global and undeniable fact. The document casts an aspersion on the academic status of librarians. It also gives an impression that lecturers alone constitute the academic staff of universities in Nigeria. The marginalization of librarians, which the document represents, makes it compelling for the ASUU-FGN document to be challenged and

interrogated with a view to identifying the contentious and vexatious areas of the document. This will, therefore, give room for a review whenever the opportunity arises in future.

IV. A Critique of the ASUU-FGN Agreement

Some aspects of the document show a deliberate attempt made by the leadership of ASUU and tacitly and implicitly by the Federal Government of Nigeria to undermine and erode away the academic status of librarians in Nigerian universities. These litigious and touchy aspects will now attract our literary and ferocious scalpel:

1. Composition of the ASUU Re- Negotiation Team:

The team that re-negotiated the FGN-ASUU Agreement in 2009 consisted of 28 academic members of staff all of which were lecturers. There was not a single librarian among the team that went to discuss the welfare of all academic staff in Nigerian universities and the revamping of the Nigerian educational system. This is tantamount to shaving a man's head in his absence. ASUU was really unfair to librarians. In the spirit of fair play, equity and equal representation, membership of ASUU team should have included some number of librarians who would have served the interest of all academic librarians. There is no way a lecturer can speak fairly, justly and competently about the welfare of librarians. Conversely too, a librarian may not be able to speak reasonably on the needs of lecturers. The composition of the ASUU team is therefore discriminatory as it clearly violates the democratic principle of equal and proportional representation.

2. List of Advisers: The FGN/ASUU Re-negotiation Committee comprised 11 advisers. The breakdown of the composition is as follows:

- The Executive Secretary of the National Universities Commission, Abuja.
- Former Chairman, Committee of Vice Chancellors (CVC).
- Immediate Past Chairman, Committee of Vice Chancellors (CVC).
- Chairman, Committee of Vice Chancellors and Vice Chancellor, University of Benin, Benin City.
- Vice Chancellor, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.
- Vice Chancellor, Cross River University of Technology, Calabar.
- Vice Chancellor, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.
- Vice Chancellor, Gombe State University, Gombe.
- Former Vice Chancellor, Federal University of Technology, Akure.
- Former Registrar, University of Ibadan, Ibadan.
- Registrar, University of Abuja, Abuja.

Again, there was no serving University Librarian or former University Librarian on the team of advisers. It was either a serving Vice Chancellor or a former Vice Chancellor, a serving Registrar or a former Registrar.

What is the sin of librarians therefore? Neither ASUU nor the Federal Government thought it wise to involve academic librarians in the re-negotiation process. This discriminatory or oversight tendencies are very discouraging and offensive as it is reminiscent of apartheid and segregation in the ivory tower.

3. Responsibility Allowance: It was agreed that Responsibility Allowance should be paid annually as follows:

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| Deputy Vice Chancellor/Librarian | N750, 000 |
| Provost/Dean/Director | N500, 000 |
| Deputy/Vice/Associate Dean or Provost | N350, 000 |
| Head of Dept./Sub Dean | N 250,000 |
| Fac./Dept. Exam Officer | N150,000 |
| Hall Warden | N150, 000 |
| All other Officers | N150, 000 |

Apart from the University Librarian that is recognized by the FGN/ASUU Agreement to enjoy N750, 000 annually equally with the Deputy Vice Chancellor, other categories of librarians who hold positions of responsibilities as Heads of Department in the Libraries are not entitled to the responsibility allowance. This template agreed upon between the FGN and ASUU recognizes Heads of academic Department in the faculties and provides responsibility allowance for whoever occupies such positions. In the faculties, a senior Lecturer on CONUASS 5 who is a Head of Department will be entitled to N250, 000 annually, whereas a Deputy University Librarian on CONUASS 6 who is the Head of Technical and Bibliographic Services in the University Library is not entitled to the responsibility allowance because he is not in the faculty. The Faculty/Exam Officer who may not be more than a Lecturer I on CONUASS 04 will receive N150,000 as responsibility allowance, whereas a Principal Librarian on CONUASS 5 who is the Head, Readers' Services in the University Library is not entitled to the allowance. Some Vice Chancellors have denied librarians who are Heads of Department in the Library the payment of responsibility allowance because the FGN/ASUU does not make provision for it. Other non-academic officers of lower cadres in the university enjoy responsibility allowance because the FGN/SSANU agreement provided that all categories of non- academic staff that hold positions of responsibilities should enjoy the allowance. Yet, ASUU treats its librarian colleagues contemptuously and disdainfully. How can a Head of Payroll Unit in the University Bursary on CONTISS 9 be enjoying responsibility allowance while a Deputy University Librarian on CONUASS 6 will not be paid the allowance? How can one explain that a Higher Library Officer, a non-teaching staff on CONTISS 7 who works under the supervision of a Principal Librarian, an academic librarian on CONUASS 5 is paid responsibility allowance whereas his supervisor does not enjoy the allowance? This is disgusting, repugnant and unethical! It is disheartening and worrisome that ASUU feels comfortable with this incongruous and bizarre trend. This absurdity is capable of undermining the unity and

harmony in ASUU as a labour union and as an intellectual organization. As an alternative, therefore, the template

below is proposed to take care of the interest of academic librarians:

TABLE III
PROPOSED RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCE TEMPLATE

| S/N | Positions/Responsibilities | Amount |
|-----|---|-----------|
| 1. | <i>Deputy Vice Chancellor/University Librarian</i> | N750, 000 |
| 2. | <i>Provost/Dean/Director/Deputy University Librarian</i> | N500,000 |
| 3. | <i>Deputy/Vice/Associate Dean or Provost</i> | N350, 000 |
| 4. | <i>Head of Dept. in the Faculty/Head of Dept. in the University Library/Sub Dean.</i> | N250,000 |
| 5. | <i>Fac./Dept. Exam Officer</i> | N150,000 |
| 6. | <i>Hall Warden</i> | N150,000 |
| 7. | <i>All other Officers</i> | N150,000 |

4. Excess Workload Allowance: The agreement also specifies that Excess Workload Allowance shall be paid to the entitled academic staff as stated below:

| | |
|--------------------|------------------|
| Professor | N3, 500 per hour |
| Reader | N3, 500 per hour |
| Senior Lecturer | N3, 500 per hour |
| Lecturer I | N2, 000 per hour |
| Lecturer II | N 2,000 per hour |
| Assistant Lecturer | N 2,000 per hour |
| Graduate Assistant | N 2,000 per hour |

The template for the payment of Excess Workload Allowance to academic staff did not take into consideration the existence of academic librarians who form part of the academic staff in Nigerian universities. An unwilling or a smart Vice Chancellor will not pay librarians who demand for the Excess Workload Allowance because the FGN/ASUU did not capture it. What constitutes Excess Workload Allowance to ASUU is the lecturer-student ratio. In most cases, lecturers handle large classes, which will normally qualify them for the allowance. There was no provision for librarians who teach courses on Use of Library, Study Skills, and Bibliographic Instruction. There was no provision for librarian-user ratio. ASUU did not think of the number of books to be catalogued by librarians daily, which could qualify them for the allowance. The mind-set of ASUU has always been on lecturers who teach large classes. ASUU, therefore, erred. If it was an oversight, then it is unfortunate and that further underscores the need for librarians to be part of the ASUU negotiation team. This is not in the spirit of competition but in the spirit of equality, fairness and justice since there are no two types of academic staff in the university system. The lamentation of Farkas (2005) on the marginalization of librarians is instructive here:

At Norwich, librarians are “staff with faculty rank.” The only places I see our “faculty rank” coming into play is in payroll (we are paid monthly), vacation days, and in the ability to be a part of faculty senate and other committees. While we have a “place at the table,” we are certainly not seen as faculty members by the faculty or by IT. It is clear to me that the faculty members see us as support staff. They see us as people who help them find articles and help their students to learn how to do library research. They don’t see us as teachers, as creators of knowledge, and as experts in our particular field

(librarianship).

The alternative template for the Excess Workload Allowance is, therefore, proposed for future review:

| Proposed Excess Workload Allowance Template | |
|---|------------------|
| Professor/University Librarian | N3, 500 per hour |
| Reader/Deputy University Librarian | N3, 500 per hour |
| Senior Lecturer /Principal Librarian | N3, 500 per hour |
| Lecturer I/ Senior Librarian | N2, 000 per hour |
| Lecturer II/ Librarian I | N 2,000 per hour |
| Assistant Lecturer/ Librarian II | N 2,000 per hour |
| Graduate Assistant | N 2,000 per hour |

5. Retirement Age of Academics in the Professorial

Cadre: The FGN/ASUU agreed that the retirement age of academics be increased from 65 years to 70 years for those in the Professorial cadre. The Universities Miscellaneous Provisions Act (Amendment) Bill, 2010 Section 8 Subsections 3- 5 (a) and 6 (b) give this legal backing: ‘the compulsory retiring age for academic staff in the Professorial cadre is 70 years; and non-Academic staff is 65 years’. For ASUU, academics in the professorial cadre in the university system are Readers and Professors. University Librarians and Deputy University Librarians, who are the equivalents of Professors and Readers in status respectively, in their wildest imagination, do not belong to the Professorial cadre. They can, therefore, retire at 65 years like other academic and non-academic staff in the university.

The National Executive Council (NEC) meeting of ASUU in 2010 resolved that:

- Any staff appointed University Librarian without being a Professor can enjoy the Conditions of Service of Principal Officer of the University, but not those of a Professor.
- In accordance with the FGN-ASUU (and the law to be promulgated), an academic who is a University Librarian and is a Professor will be entitled to the 70 year old rule, but this is because he or she is in the Professorial cadre so deemed by the A&PC (not because he or she is a University Librarian by appointment).

These resolutions of ASUU NEC have clearly shown that ASUU does not believe that the University Librarian belongs to the Professorial cadre and therefore he cannot retire at 70 years like Professors. ASUU is made up of

the finest minds, intellectuals, scholars, men and women of incredibly impeccable sagacity with unusual resilient academic prowess, unimpeachable logical reasoning and dispassionate conclusions and submissions from an enigmatic and inscrutable discourse. This is the status of academics in all climes, and it is in tandem with the best global practices.

However, their interpretation of Professorial cadre, which excludes the University Librarian and the Deputy University Librarian, belies what academics represent. ASUU's interpretation smirks of supremacist egoism, segregation and discrimination. Librarians find the position of ASUU NEC very offensive, depredatory and disgusting. The Federal Government is similarly inclined in this obnoxious, divisive and conspiratorial bill enacted to extirpate librarians from the mainstream academics and thereby jeopardize their career as professional academic librarians.

The intervention of the Executive Secretary of the National Universities Commission, Prof. Julius Okojie must be commended in this regard. In his letter titled INTERPRETATION OF "PROFESSORIAL CADRE" IN THE ASUU-FGN AGREEMENT, 2009 of 8 March 2010 to all Vice Chancellors of Federal Universities, he said:

The University Librarians of Federal Universities in their letter, dated 8th March, 2010 complained that the ASUU's President in his letter recently sent to the Vice Chancellors, interpreted "Professorial Cadre" to mean Professors and Associate Professors, or Readers only. Unfortunately, the University Librarians and Deputy University Librarians were left out in his interpretation. They regard this as an error which should be corrected immediately. The Law establishing Federal Universities confers academic status on them. In addition, they have the same salary structure as Professors and Readers or Associate Professors while their appointments and promotions follow the same procedures and processes. Academic publishing is entrenched in the criteria for their promotions. I wish to observe that the agreement takes cognizance of University Librarians as academics and therefore, invariably will be reflected in the proposed Bill to be presented to the National Assembly. Consequently, I wish to advise you to include the University Librarians and the Deputy Librarians on the list constituting "Professorial Cadre".

Without any hesitation, it was clear to the NUC, the highest regulatory body for all Nigerian universities that "Professorial Cadre" should include University Librarians and Deputy University Librarians. That cerebral and highbrow mediation by the NUC should have been considered before the Bill was enacted. This dirty politicking between ASUU and the National Assembly, which resulted into the passage of the Bill, is highly unfortunate.

V. Conclusion

Unfortunately and sadly too, librarians will have to live by this development until the Federal Government reverses itself. The reversal of the interpretation of "Professorial Cadre" by the National Assembly may not come until there is a strong, resolute and continuous

agitation from all academic librarians in Nigerian universities. The kingdom of the librarians may not come until they take it by force; not by the brute force that the thugs, hoodlums and criminals are known for but by the intellectual war of words expressed verbally or in writing in unmistakable terms with logical, rational and superior arguments that cannot be easily faulted and questioned. Librarians must square up their shoulders, and carry themselves with élan and with aura of dignity and be prepared to rub shoulders with their faculty colleagues on their various university campuses.

Librarians should be columnists in National Newspapers, and utilize the opportunity to make their points known to the whole world on regular basis. Librarians must come out of their cocoon of inferior complex, and take the bull by the horns. They should be bold, daring and courageous to blow their own trumpets themselves. Librarians must ferociously engage their lecturer colleagues in an intellectual combat, and be ready to fight gallantly until the battle is won.

The Committee of University Librarians of Nigerian Universities (CULNU) must awake out its slumber and defend the integrity of its profession now. They owe posterity that onerous responsibility. They must speak with one voice irrespective of their qualifications, creed and personalities. It is no longer a secret that the CULNU has been polarised. University librarians among them who are already professors lean towards ASUU line of argument, while the non-professor University librarians are on the other side. So, the house of CULNU is divided. This is preposterous and laughable. CULNU must provide good leadership and defend librarianship profession that has given them so much by launching them to their professional limelight. They must now stand up to defend the profession and safe it from being eclipsed by the intellectual pomposity of ASUU.

The Federal and ASUU must look at all these aberrations in the 2009 FGN/ASUU Agreement with a view to reviewing the document to accommodate the observations made in this paper. Government and ASUU must see these obvious inanities in the Agreement objectively and dispassionately, and make the necessary adjustment or else, the only way out is for librarians to form a parallel union that will take care of the interest of academic librarians in Nigerian universities. After all, not all the members of the senior staff in Nigerian universities are members of SSANU. The technologists among them belong to NATS.

Finally, librarians are not pushovers. Librarians are not lecturers' appendages and accessories. Librarians are not sub-academics. Librarians are not fittings and stuffs in the ivory towers. Librarians are not dregs or lees. Librarians are information brokers, information carriers and information providers. Librarians are academics and thorough intellectuals, indefatigably committed to scholarship. After all, it has been said that "the character and quality of an institution of higher learning are shaped in large measure by the nature and accessibility of its library resources as well as the expertise and availability of its librarians."

This paper will not be complete without mentioning some names of distinguished librarians, bibliographers

and contributors to the development of library profession globally whose marks will continue to remain indelible in the sands of history. We recall Prof. Helen Thornton Geer, ALA Headquarters Librarian, author and consultant, Mohammed Khatami, former President of Iran and previously Head of National Library of Iran, Justin Winsor, Harvard University librarian, Zenodotus, first Superintendent of Library of Alexandria and noted scholar of the 3rd Century BC, Shen Zhurong, father of Library Science in China, Frank Coombs, US politician and also State Librarian of California 1898-1899, Vaunda Micheaux Nelson, author and librarian, Gratia Countryman, Minneapolis Librarian, Hector Berlioz, French composer and Librarian Paris Conservatoire. Prof. William John Harris "The Father of Librarianship in Nigeria." According to Oyinloye (1992), John Harris was appointed Librarian, University College, Ibadan in 1948, Deputy Vice Chancellor of the University of Ibadan, Ibadan, 1964, Acting Vice Chancellor of the same university in 1966, University Librarian Mid-West Institute of Technology, Benin (now the University of Benin) and Acting Vice Chancellor, University of Benin. John Harris, a librarian was Deputy Vice Chancellor and Ag. Vice Chancellor of two universities in Nigeria. This position was seen as the exclusive preserve of professors in the faculties. Where were professors then when librarian John Harris was ruling the universities? His was a success story, and his intimidating records are unbeatable. This lost glory of librarians must be restored, and the time is now.

Acknowledgements

I want to sincerely acknowledge and appreciate Prof. N. Oluwafemi Mimiko, Vice Chancellor, Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba Akoko, Nigeria who blazed the trail by appointing me as Ag. Dean, Student Affairs of the university in January 2014 in recognition of his firm belief in the academic status of librarians. He also ensured that I was accorded all the rights and privileges enjoyed by Deans. This is unprecedented in the history of Nigerian universities.

Besides, Prof. Mimiko moved the University Library from its former inglorious building to a modern and exotic accommodation with the state-of-the-art facilities, equipment and very compelling and functional virtual library. In addition, the library collection has continued to attract more current and relevant books, journals and other research materials published locally and internationally across all disciplines through the support of the Vice Chancellor. It was in recognition of this laudable and exceptional achievement that the Vice Chancellor was given an award of excellence by the Nigerian Library Association, Ondo State Chapter on 3rd December, 2014 at the Federal University of Technology, Akure.

Prof. Mimiko is passionate about the welfare of students. The facilities put in place in the university for the comfort and the educational development of our students are unparalleled. He freely gave students access to his phone number and email address for easy contact. No

wonder our students are fond and proud of him as their Vice Chancellor. Academic members of staff sumptuously attend international conferences to enhance their intellectual development unlike before. Many others are undergoing postgraduate studies in foreign universities.

The Senate Building is simply the best thing that has happened to AAUA. It is an edifice of an international standard. It is a gigantic manifestation of Prof Mimiko's dynamic and superlative leadership. This has, therefore, led the critics and cynics bewildered.

On behalf of the articulate Nigerian students, I deeply and sincerely appreciate my Vice Chancellor for putting Adekunle Ajasin University on the global map, for creating an enabling environment for teaching and learning, and for instituting excellence and merit-driven and workable system. His outstanding achievements will remain indelible in the annals of Adekunle Ajasin University. I will miss him as a friend, brother, mentor and Vice Chancellor.

Indisputably, Prof. Mimiko will be proudly remembered as the quintessence of intellectualism, a fearless and indefatigable leader, and the architect of modern AAUA.

References

- Agreement between the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) and the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), October, 2009.
- Association of College and Research Libraries Standards for Faculty Status for Academic Librarians. (2007). Retrieved from <http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/faculty>
- The Constitution and Code of Practice of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) as amended by the National Delegates' Conference (NDC) Held at the University of Abuja, Abuja, June 3, 2012.
- Farkas, M. (2005). Librarians in Academia: Faculty or Support Staff. Retrieved from <http://meredith.wolfwater.com/wordpress/2005/10/08/librarians-in-academia-faculty-or-support-staff/>
- Hosburgh, N. (2011). Librarian Faculty Status: What does it mean in Academia? *Library Philosophy and Practice*.
- 1972 Joint Statement on Faculty Status of Colleges and University Librarians. Retrieved from <http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/jointstatement/faculty>
- National Universities Commission (NUC) (1997) *Manual on University Management*, Abuja.
- Ogunraku, Ayorinde. (2012). *University Administration in the 21st Century: A New Direction*. Ile-Ife: Obafemi Awolowo University, Press Ltd.
- Okojie, J. A. (2010). Interpretation of "Professional Cadre" in the ASUU-FGN Agreement, 2009: A Letter to all Vice Chancellors of Federal Universities, 8 March.
- Oyinloye, M. A. (1992). The Pioneers: William John Harris (1903-1980). *World Libraries*, 2(2).

Resolutions of the National Executive Council (NEC) Meeting of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) Held at the University of Calabar on Saturday, September 18- Sunday 19, 2010.

Rules and Regulations Governing the Conditions of Service of Senior Staff Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba Akoko. Akungba: Ajasin Varsity Investment Ltd, 2013.

Salaam, M. O., & Onifade, F. N. (2009). Academic Status and the Doctoral Degree Requirement for Promotion of Librarians in Nigerian University Libraries. *Library Philosophy and Practice*.

Universities (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act (Amendment) Bill, 2010 Enacted by the National Assembly of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.



Clement Olujide Ajidahun is a deputy university librarian at Adekunle Ajasin University Library, Akungba Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria. He is also the Head of the Readers' Services of the same University Library. He is an academic librarian of long standing. His current research activities include Library Management and Administration, User Education, Bibliographic Citation and E-Learning. He possess B. A. (Ed.), MLS and PhD in English.