



Vice-Chancellor's Media Chat: What Prof. Iwe told the Press on March 3, 2025

To mark his 4th Year in Office, the Vice-Chancellor of Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, Prof. Maduebibisi Ofo Iwe, CFS, hosted the Executive Committee of the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ), Abia State Council and other Pressmen to a **Media Chat** on March 3, 2025. During the Chat, the Vice-Chancellor entertained questions from the Press on a wide range of issues about the mandates, vision, mission and activities of the University especially within the 4 years he had been on the saddle. In this edition of MOU AU News, we serve our esteemed readers with details of what the Vice-Chancellor told the Press.

Abia needs another Federal University, in addition to MOU AU – Prof. Iwe

By Collins Ginger-Eke

Prof. Maduebibisi Ofo Iwe, has suggested that the Federal Government may consider establishing a second federal university in Abia State, while reserving the status, mandate and vision the only existing and specialized university in the State, MOU AU.

Prof. Iwe made the suggestion while responding to a question from a pressman during a media chat to mark his 4th year in office as Vice-Chancellor of the University.

According to Prof. Iwe, "Abia needs a think-tank that is devoid of politics. I also appreciate what everyone is doing for Abia State and MOU AU. Abia needs a new federal university like other nearby states."

The Vice-Chancellor also described MOU AU as a historic institution, renamed in honour of the former Premier of the defunct Eastern Region, Dr. Michael Iheonukara Okpara, who, despite being

a medical doctor, was well-known for his programmes and policies that revolutionized agriculture in the Region.

Prof. Iwe highlighted MOU AU's role in Nigeria's agricultural and technological advancement, noting that in the past 25 to 26 years, the University has produced over 60, 000 graduates who have excelled in agriculture. He stated that many of these alumni have significantly contributed to the development of the nation's agricultural sector.

Reaffirming the purpose of universities of agriculture, he stressed that they were established to train highly skilled graduates in agriculture, science, and technology, with the primary goal of achieving self-sufficiency in food and fibre production.

He appealed to all Abians to support the University to achieve its goals.



Why NELFUND ranks MOUAU high among other universities in Southeast Nigeria

By Sunday Anyim



The Vice-Chancellor, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, Prof. Maduebibisi Ofo Iwe says the Nigerian Education Loan Fund (NELFUND) has ranked MOUAU high for its rapid response to NELFUND's needs, and that the University has become a model of their reference to other universities in Southeast, Nigeria.

Prof. Iwe made the declaration during a media chat to mark his 4th year in office as the 6th Vice-Chancellor of the University and in response to a question by a Journalist, who asked his views on the Federal Government's NELFUND and whether students of the University were benefiting from the scheme.

The Vice-Chancellor hinted that the Biometric capture of students initiated by his administration has provided the University with data of its students, and guaranteed a platform where the University has the precise population of its students with accurate and secured details of the students' information. He pointed out that the introduction of biometrics in capturing students' data has afforded the University the advantage of providing information to NELFUND in less than 24 hours.

"We are on the 3rd tranche of NELFUND. MOUAU has become a Model Centre for NELFUND where the high and

low in NELFUND has been visiting our University to know how we are responding to their needs so quickly.

The introduction of the biometric exercise has enabled us to respond to NELFUND anytime they need any information on our students that applied for the loan, the VC emphasized.

Prof. Iwe, during the media chat commended President Ahmed Tinubu for introducing the NELFUND, designed to alleviate financial burdens for students enrolled in public tertiary institutions.

He appealed to students to subscribe to NELFUND in order to reduce financial constraints on the parents and make every student have access to quality education.

Said the Vice-Chancellor: "NELFUND has come to stay and MOUAU students are accessing it. The loan fund is helping the University, our students and government. It makes no sense for students to keep lamenting about the rising cost of education instead of applying for NELFUND to lessen the financial burden of their education on the parents and guardians" the VC noted.



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Linkages: MOUAU signs MoU with UNDP for UniPod, joins LTU

By Sunday Anyim

Michael Okpara, University of Agriculture Umudike (MOUAU) is expanding its global footprint through a series of strategic partnerships aimed at advancing research, innovation, and sustainable development.

In a major step towards technological advancement, the University has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to establish an University Innovation Hub (Unipod) on campus. The facility, currently 70% complete, is expected to be inaugurated in April this year

Speaking on the initiative, UNDP's Resident Representative in Nigeria, Elsie Attafuah, highlighted the project's transformative potential. "We are creating a space where we can turn ideas into prototypes, where we can turn prototypes into businesses, and businesses into industries," she said. The hub aims



to drive entrepreneurship.

Similarly, MOUAU has also joined the League of Tropical Universities (LTU), reinforcing its commitment to global academic collaboration.

Established in August 2023, the LTU is a network of leading institutions across Asia, Africa, and South America, dedicated to addressing key challenges such as food security, climate change, and public health. The league seeks to empower tropical regions through science-driven initiatives aligned with the United Nations'

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

It seems that MOUAU UniPod is the best among the ten projects we have Nigeria - UNDP Rep

Japa syndrome: Universities may face human capacity crisis if ban on employment lingers – Prof Iwe

By Joy Nlebedum

Universities in Nigeria may face serious human capacity crisis, if the ban on employment lingers, the Vice-Chancellor of Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, Prof. Maduebibisi Ofo Iwe has warned. The Vice-Chancellor gave the

warning during a Media Chat with the Press in response to a question about brain drain and massive migration of young Nigerians and university teachers out of Nigeria, popularly referred to as japa syndrome.

According to the Vice-Chancellor, "japa syndrome is real. There has been a vacuum in the universities because most of the staff who went

to America, Europe, etc. for training and study, never returned. And for 5 to 6 years, there has been no employment".

Prof. Iwe therefore appealed to the President and Visitor to Federal Universities to urgently direct relevant agencies of government to allow universities to employ academic staff as soon as possible to fill in the gaps and avert looming human capacity crisis in Nigerian universities.



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Abia NUJ lauds Prof. Iwe, presents certificate of credence, seeks partnership with MOUAU

By Ubadire Agua



In a rare but real gift of honour to whom it is due, the Abia State Executive Council of the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ) presented a certificate of credence to the Vice-Chancellor of Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, Prof. Maduebibisi Ofo Iwe, applauding his landmark achievements in the University in the past 4 years. Chairman of Abia NUJ, Comrade Chidi Asonye, while presenting the Certificate to the Vice-Chancellor

during a courtesy call and a Media Chat, held on March 3, 2025, said the Council had observed MOUAU over time, particularly since Prof. Iwe assumed duty, and noted his consistency, forthrightness and commitment to the peace, stability and steady progress of both the University and the communities across her fence. He praised the Vice-Chancellor for his sterling leadership qualities that have helped to reposition and restore the good image of the

University.

Comrade Asonye seized the opportunity to seek for the establishment of a strategic partnership between Abia NUJ and MOUAU in boosting the University's visibility and highlighting its research findings and breakthrough. He said the University may also support the Union by introducing agriculture-based certificates for journalists to enhance their knowledge and reporting skills in the agriculture sector.

Responding to the presentations, the Vice-Chancellor described the Certificate of Credence as a 'pearl of high value' and expressed his gratitude for the honour. He described the Press as a critical stakeholder group and friend of the University, appealing to them to remain professional in the discharge of their duties to society.



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