

Why Choose Godfrey Okoye University?

14th Matriculation Speech of the Founding Vice Chancellor of Godfrey Okoye University

Protocol

On behalf of the senate, staff and students of Godfrey Okoye University, I welcome each you to this 14th Matriculation of our beloved university, fondly called God's Own University. I am profoundly grateful to all parents and guardians of our fresh students who are here today in spite of the craggy valley we have jumped into in our socio-political life as an independent nation of this world. Your presence today has revealed not only your interest in this fastest growing private university east of the Niger but also your palpable commitment to its unstoppable narrative of success. The clear testimony of our rapid growth is the number of students matriculating today: 1093 students.

Dear parents, guardians, ladies and gentlemen, as I look at the large number of our new students, one question has kept tugging the fringes of my mental landscape: **why choose Godfrey Okoye University?** I am convinced that you certainly have your reasons for choosing this great university. But it is important to reflect on the implication of this choice today. One poem reveals the implication in a profound fashion.

Robert Frost's poem (1915) has always fascinated me because of the profundity of thought it reveals about humans choices:

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;



Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

What emerges from this poem is the challenge of choosing among options that appear to have the same degree of attractiveness. Note that the roads are in a yellow wood with a carpet of yellow leaves which announce the presence of autumn. The beauty is also underscored by the incredible purity of these leaves “which no step has trodden black”. The magnetic force of attractiveness is also underscored by the phrase “as just as fair. In such a situation making a choice is like an impish fight of Beowulf with the monster Grendel. But a choice has to be made since “I could not travel both”. As humans lack the power of bilocation, traveling both roads at the same time is an illusion. Therefore, a choice has to be made. But the narrator realizes at the end that the choice made “has made all the difference”. Frost writes this poem as a joke about his friend Edward Thomas to tease him about his indecisions in taking a particular course. Little does know he is communicating an incredible profundity of thought about the intricacy of human decisions.

Ladies and gentlemen, my dear matriculating students, you certainly have your reasons for choosing Godfrey Okoye University among over 200 universities in Nigeria today. For some of you who know the university well, it may have been an easy choice. But for many others the decision was a tearing struggle since each university has got its beauty and attraction just like the roads in the yellow wood. I will not tell you today why you should choose Godfrey Okoye University since you have already made your choice. But I will surely assure you that this choice, your choice, will make all the difference.



In the next three, four or five years you will be painted with the beautiful colours of this university and thus acquire the GO identity, which is pretty unique in our country. The identity you will have is summarized in the vision of Godfrey Okoye University:

The vision of Godfrey Okoye University is to produce graduates who will be outstanding in learning, balanced in character and personality and ready to pursue epistemic unity in all its ramifications.

There are three shades of the GO Uni identify here:

1. **Produce graduates who will be outstanding in learning.** To achieve this, Godfrey Okoye university has employed a team of brilliant scholars in various programmes of the university, including our new College of Medicine. It has a spiderweb of national and international collaborations. Our university is a member of Africa-UniNet, a network of African and Austrian universities, where the VC of Godfrey Okoye University is one of the seven board members. Godfrey Okoye University is very popular in Austria, Germany, Switzerland and many European countries because of our connections and collaborations with many institutions and universities in Europe. Godfrey Okoye University is also well known in the USA. We have very functional collaborative arrangements with a good number of institutions and universities in Europe, North America, and Asia. We have exposure programmes for students in the UK , and as many students as possible travel to the UK. It will be important for parents and guardians to support their children and wards to travel to our partner universities in the course of their studies here. This year some students from the Faculty of Law will travel to Austria if they have the support of their parents and guardians. We also have our Foreign Liaison Office in Germany to coordinate all our relationships. Furthermore, when we made the Use of English programme a three-year programme, we were conscious of the quality of graduates we had set out to produce. Many graduates of our university are known for the quality of their language and good writing because of our intensive Use of English programme. The result is that many graduates have no problem getting scholarships and admissions in universities in Europe and other continents of the world. Also to help students to concentrate on their studies, we restrict the movement of students during a semester so that they, like good footballers, will train well and achieve success in every national and international competition. Finally, we have a programme that promotes healthy learning and competitions: Vice-Chancellor-for-One-Day. This prestigious position is taken by the student with the highest Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) in an academic year.



2. **Balanced in Character and Learning.** We often hear in Nigeria “*found worthy in character and learning*”. But the question is: which institution is measuring the character component of degrees awarded to students? In Godfrey Okoye University, it is different. The Godfrey Okoye University senate approved criteria for measuring the character component in the education of students. We have character assessment of our students, which is part of the total score in a semester. Not only the attendance to programmes of the university but also behaviour is assessed in the hostels and various units of the university. Students who fail the character assessment at the end of their studies are usually sent to do community service before they graduate (if they are not suspended or expelled in the course of their studies because of deviant behaviour as spelt out in the Student Handbook). Our university also rewards outstanding demonstration of good character during an academic year such as harmonious coexistence in the hostel rooms, care for other students, selflessness, etc. The expression of good character is what you will see in a presentation by our graduates today. Graduates (2014 set) of our university built a house for their colleague who died in an accident. We also know that good character is the grace of God. This is why we pray. Our university is God’s Own University and constantly prays to God. Here we emphasize not only academic intelligence but also emotional, social and spiritual intelligence. This is what balanced life is all about. This is the identity of GO!
3. **Ready to pursue epistemic unity in all its ramifications.** Godfrey Okoye University pursues three dialogues as stated in its philosophy, mission and vision. One of the dialogues is epistemic dialogue. Epistemic dialogue recognizes the fact of the unity of human knowledge. A student of GO learns the unity of knowledge through our interdisciplinary approach to teaching, entrepreneurial teaching and Student Training for Entrepreneurial Promotion (STEP). Our students are helped to see the connection between one field and another in all these programmes and approaches. The result is that the product of GO has epistemic identity: clear understanding and demonstration of the unity of human knowledge. This makes knowledge application and teamwork in companies, ministries and agencies easy. This explains why our graduates easily get jobs on graduation.

My dear students, I have painted the identity of a graduate of GO (a full GO). I am pretty sure you will like to have such a face and identity. This must be the reason for choosing Godfrey Okoye University. With its spider-web of connections, incredibly beautiful main campus, which has attracted many foreign investors to the GO Uni-European Business Park and where Godfrey Okoye University



College of Medicine is, its two natural lakes, and its clean and eco-friendly environment, Godfrey Okoye University remains the best private University east of the Niger.

Remember there is no room for the barbarism baptized “cultism”, no space for the madness called drug addiction, zero tolerance to prostitution in the form of reprehensible merchandising of the female body, no positive nod to male chauvinism and rascality, no welcoming of primitive shouting and insults, and no coming with open arms to lunacy in the form of neopaganism. As you know, your university is spiritually clean. Please do not open our doors and windows to unclean spirits.

Furthermore, your university stresses good dressing, civilized communication and gentility. Do the best you can to make all this part of your life. May God bless you as you take this road that will surely make all the difference.

Before I round off this speech, let me congratulate students of our Centre of Practical Skills at the main Campus of Godfrey Okoye University. The Centre of Practical Skills is a fully funded project of the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (with financial contributions from GIZ, ADA and private investors). The Centre of Practical Skills (CoPS) took off last year with 100 Nigerians, taught by foreign and Nigerian teachers, with all the students of the centre on fully-funded scholarships. The Centre is connected with our business park, since it will be providing the skilled manpower needed by the companies. Those who cannot be absorbed by the companies can apply for funds from our Start-Up Project. All students will be getting European trade certification in collaboration with our university. We thank the Manager, Meggy Kantert, and those teaching at the Centre. Thanks for being here. God bless you all.

We thank you parents, guardians and friends for your continuous support and solidarity. God bless you all as you travel back to your different destinations. Peace be with you!

Rev. Fr. Prof. Dr. Christian Anieke (Eb. Mitterkirchen, Austria)
Founding Vice Chancellor

