



STRATEGIC ROLE OF THE REGISTRY IN UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATION

**BEING A PAPER PRESENTED
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DEFINITION OF REGISTRY

- a records office where registers and other records are kept.
- it is the arm that services the various organs and keeps the records of the institution.
- **Faborode (2016)** describes the Registry as “**the engine room of university governance and management**” and the Registrar as “**the Chief Administrative Officer and custodian of its statutes, symbols and assets ... the memory and database of the university, and hence its grand net-worker**”.
- The Registry is, therefore, an essential department of administration and it serves as the hub around which the university administrative processes run.

EVOLUTION OF THE REGISTRY

The Laws that set up the universities in Nigeria institute the position of a REGISTRAR as the head of the Registry and the Chief Administrative Officer of the University who is responsible to the Vice-Chancellor, as the Chief or Principal Academic and Executive Officer, for the day-to-day administration of the University except for financial affairs for which the Bursar is responsible.

The Registrar is by the virtue of the office the Secretary to all university organs such as the Board of Trustees, Council, Senate, Congregation, and Convocation. The Registry over which he/she superintends is organized to assist the officer to perform the statutory duty of facilitating the processes of the university in achieving its stated objectives.

Historically, the Registry of a university started from the idea of having officers to assist the academics in dealing with such duties that appear extraneous to their core functions. Such functions that require assistance of other people include registration of students, records of students' performances, management of the well-being and welfare of the academics and other members of the university community, management of municipal facilities, and facilitation of the planning strategies of the institutions.

Thus, at the inception of universities in Nigeria in 1948, the statutes provide for supporting staff; called the administrative staff in the Registry. They are often referred to as '**Professional Administrators**'. - **Ref. J. G. O. Adegbite**

From the foregoing provisions, it is evident that the Registry of a university is statute enabled. This consequently makes a demand on all within the structure to appreciate the strategic responsibility required of them to ensure the facilitation of the academic processes of the university.

THE UNIVERSITY REGISTRY IN PERSPECTIVE

The Registry over which the Registrar superintends is organized to assist the officer to perform the statutory duty of facilitating the processes of the university in achieving its stated objectives.

The records being kept and the activities of the registry in a university are to facilitate the generation, impartation and application of knowledge by ensuring that all those who are at the core of the functions of the university, that is the academia, are assisted to be able to give the best to their endeavours. The academia and the scholars the record keepers deal with are peculiar, impatient and have great expectations.

One major issue that we need to give attention to in the consideration of the university registry in perspective is the strategic import of the Registry in decision making. Universities by their very nature are complex organizations comprising the best of highly trained and skilled professionals. Thus, it becomes necessary for an array of such highly skilled professionals to be involved in the decision-making processes through the committee system. The secretariat of such committees is usually manned by the professional administrators

The Registry which is made up of such professional administrators therefore needs to be structured and empowered to provide an efficient back up for the committees for the smooth running of the system.

The Registrar is by the virtue of the office the Secretary to all university organs such as the Board of Trustees, Council, Senate, Congregation, and Convocation.

It should, however, be stated that the academia should themselves avoid seeing the administrators as irrelevant to the system but acknowledge the fact that as birds with two wings, the university will be at its best in flying where both wings flap well. **Amittai Etzioni (1964)** had stated that two institutions are peculiar and should always have professionals at the helm of their affairs. These are the hospitals where the Doctors hold sway and the Universities where the academia are at the core of the institutional objectives.

This fact is certainly in agreement with the history of the establishment of universities where it is either the students who were in search of Masters or the Masters doing their own and students came seeking knowledge from their institutes. Since the place of the administrator came as a later development based on the need for their unique expertise, the wrangling over their position in the system is no longer of any moment and should therefore not be given attention.

THE UNIVERSITY REGISTRY IN PERSPECTIVE (CONTD)

For the registry to effectively and efficiently carry out its **facilitating** responsibilities, it is typically structured to take care of the following functions:

- Management of students' academic records
- Management of students' support services
- Management of staff matters, including their welfare and well being
- Administration of Council matters
- Issues of corporate services
- Academic planning matters

The Cookey Commission Report of 1981 identifies four major divisions of the registry as follows:

- Division of Academic Affairs
- Division of Personnel Affairs
- Division of Student Affairs
- Division of Council Affairs and General Administration

Each of the four major Divisions identified above is also further structured into units and sub-units for efficient control and administration as follows:

1. Academic Affairs Division comprises the
 - Admissions and Senate Matters
 - Exams and Records

2. Council and General Administration Division comprises
 - Council Matters
 - General Administration

3. Personnel Affairs/Human Resource Department comprises
 - Academic Staff Matters
 - Administrative and Technical Staff Matters
 - Junior Staff Matters

4. Corporate Services which deals with matters such as
 - ▶ Legal Matter
 - ▶ Public Relations
 - ▶ Protocol and Passages

5. Student Affairs (now mostly under a Dean but with a Student Affairs Officer) comprises:
 - ▶ Students' Welfare Services
 - ▶ Students' Halls of Residence

6. Administrative Support to Faculties/Schools/Colleges where administrative officers are posted to provide administrative support services to the particular sections of the university.

THE RELEVANCE OF THE UNIVERSITY REGISTRY

The University registry, according to Ette “**is the pulse point of administration of the university ... regarded as the strong room where all records of staff and students are kept**”.

It is the repository of information, the statutes, ordinances and Act of the university, interpretation and enforcement of these are effected in the Registry’.

The Registry Department forms the core administrative machinery of the University system. The staff therein, popularly referred to as ‘*Professional Administrators*’ are the custodians of records and interpreters of regulations. All the units and sections of the university depend on their guidance for smooth governance such as policy formulation and implementation.

Expediently, therefore, staff of the Registry Department who pride themselves as the university professional administrators are expected to:

- Have thorough understanding of the institutional system and its governance,
- Be familiar with the administrative tools needed in their daily assignments, - e.g. The Law, Staff Conditions of Service etc.
- To have confidence to work with minimal supervision on their schedules,
- Develop new skills for efficient and effective performance on the job,
- Understand the code of conduct (Code of Governance for Private Universities in Nigeria, The Keffi Declaration of 2012) and the need for high ethical standards in the discharge of their duties; and have good sense of loyalty and dedication to the institution (Bogoro, 2015).

The Registry performs the following duties that are at the heart of the university operations:

- Provision of Secretariat Services,
- Facilitation of Academic Matters and Processes,
- Personnel/Human Resources Management,
- Custody and interpretation of all important records and documents of the university, as well as all rules,
- regulations and decisions reached at all formal meetings in the system; and Information and Public Relations via dissemination of information to the university community and the general public; as well as,
- publication of university bulletins, calendars, handling of protocols etc.

THE REGISTRY AS SUPERVISOR OF DEPARTMENTS AND UNITS

The Registry is able to supervise, monitor and ensure compliance, in addition to evaluation of extent of accomplishment and further review of decisions reached by the university due to its widespread presence and involvement in all academic and other activities in the university.

With its staff posted in every Faculty, department and unit, and, also involved in implementation of decisions at all levels, it has become necessary and an easy task too, for the Registry to keep track of events/activities, extent of progress and accomplishments being recorded in all sections, and, also, by the university itself.

ACTIVITIES OF THE REGISTRY DEPARTMENT

For the smooth and efficient running of the Registry as a department, it is divided into the Registrar's main office, the Council Affairs Unit, the Human Resource and the Academic Affairs Unit. The Registrar's main office coordinates the activities of these other units apart from its involvement in the policy formulation and implementation of the University.

- **The Council Affairs Unit**
- **The Human Resource Unit**
- **The Academic Affairs Unit**
- **School of Postgraduate Studies**

ACTIVITIES OF THE REGISTRY DEPARTMENT (CONTD)

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- **Public Relations Unit – The FUTA case of 2002**
- **Student Affairs**
- **Legal Services – Stands as witness in Court**
- **Protocol and Passages**
- **Faculty Offices**

QUALITIES OF A GOOD PROFESSIONAL ADMINISTRATOR

- Diligence – the Case of the Prof. of English from University of Maiduguri; Student Affairs Officer
- Discipline
- Humility
- Accountability
- Perseverance - Case of CVCNU (2017)
- Dresses well
- Responsive to staff and students' needs relating to the Registry – e.g. Transcripts' issuance etc.

- Good in record keeping especially staff and students' records
- Creative in solving problems in the Registry
- Providing sound advice to the Vice-Chancellor on administrative matters – Case of a non-teaching staff being placed on Professor's salary
- Applying modern methods in Registry operations
- Confidentiality – e.g. Professor of Computer Engineering at Ife
- Ability to retrieve important records/documents on demand

- Promptness in correspondence
- The Registrar as head of the Registry should be bold to tell the VC the rules and regulations guiding the administration of the University without fear.
- Communication lines should be opened for staff to criticise or commend administration without fear

MAKING THE REGISTRY WORK EFFICIENTLY

The Registry in the Nigerian university system should strive to attain the following goals:

- **Efficient service as Secretariat of Board of Trustees/Council, Senate, Faculty and other key university committees** – Decision Extracts, Minutes, Matters Arising etc.
- **Objective Custodian of the Traditions and Practices of The University**
- **Increasing use of Technology in Service Delivery**
- **Exemplar in the Implementation of SERVICOM**
- **Catalyst for Defusing Tension that can lead to Strikes and Lockouts**

CHALLENGES FACING THE REGISTRY DEPARTMENT IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES

Some of the challenges faced by the Registry Department in the university system are as follows:

- 1. Increasing number of students**
- 2. Manual Record Keeping**
- 3. Paper-Based Processes**
- 4. Suitability of Technology**
- 5. Short Funding**
- 6. Inaccurate Data**
- 7. Inconsistency in Regulations**

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The challenges facing the Registry Department in the University system call for the need to have a defined mechanism, i.e., efficient regulations, provision of supportive infrastructure, technology advancement, and human resource training to safeguard students' records, outcomes, and a smooth progression of academic activities.

CONCLUSION

From the foregoing, there is no doubt that in any university that the Registry gets its acts together and do the needful, the institution is assured of a proper roadmap and guidance towards the accomplishment and ultimate realisation of its set goals, vision and mission as it is the case in Elizade University. However, where the Registry is deficient or lacking in its statutory duties and responsibilities by itself, or, in reflection of its debilitating milieu, the chances of the university attaining its full potentials will remain bleak, if not altogether, unattainable. Although the university is statutorily established for academic purpose, the role of the supporting arms such as the Registry is very important.

Indeed, the registry is the physiology of the university system.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to reassert and reposition the Registry Department for more relevance in not only the accomplishment of its statutory duties, but also in the general scheme of things in the university system, there is an urgent need to work hard and consolidate on professionalism for demonstrable expertise and competencies to meet the standards and expectations of the twenty first century university and beyond.

RECOMMENDATIONS (CONTD)

In other words, since it is commonly agreed that charity begins at home and also given that one cannot give what he/she does not have, it is categorically imperative and highly recommended that going forward, the Registry Department should continue re-invigorate and re-orientate itself through, continuous conduct of induction/orientation for new staff, frequent training and retraining (capacity development) of the staff, purposeful postings and effective departmental blending, confirmation and promotions as at when due, restoration of honesty, trust, integrity and openness in operations; and institutionalization of professional code of conduct and work ethics.

RECOMMENDATIONS (CONT'D)

In carrying out the day-to-day assignment of the Registry Department, staff of the department as the backbone of university administration should not give the community and the public cause to brand them as masters but should regard themselves as servants of knowledge who must of necessity render their services with the greatest humility.

The Registry plays a critical role in the health of a University. The heart pumps blood to all the cells in the body. Similarly, the Registry services all the units in the university. If the Registry breaks down, the university will literally ground to a halt. **If there are blockages in the Registry in terms of efficiency of operation, like blockages to the coronary vessels, the university will have an equivalent of a heart attack.**

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