



# FUTA News

## ENGINEERING STUDENTS NEED BUSINESS MANAGEMENT SKILLS -Bamiro

There is an urgent need to expose undergraduate students in the field of Engineering to business management and principles of entrepreneurship. This call was made by a former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ibadan, Professor Olufemi Bamiro. Professor Bamiro who was the Guest Speaker at the 9th Annual Lecture of the School of Engineering and Engineering Technology [SEET] of the Federal University of Technology, Akure spoke on the topic "Technopreneurship: Towards Meeting the Challenges for Engineers in a Globalized Knowledge-Driven Economy". The renowned mechanical engineer observed that engineering students do not usually have much exposure to business issues because most of the traditional courses in the discipline focus on the engineering fundamentals with the tendency to leave business related courses to students in the Social Sciences.

According to Bamiro, rarely do engineers in big corporations emerge as Managing Directors or Chief Executive Officers no matter their level of Professional Competencies because they are contented with operating within the confines of production management with the best achievement of becoming Engineering or Production Manager while their colleagues in the Social Sciences with a broader picture and training in business management become the Chief Executive Officer.

Bamiro thus called for a paradigm shift so as to give business orientation to engineering students. He said, "In my over 35 years of teaching engineering at the University of Ibadan, the nearest course to business in our curricula for engineering programmes has been Engineering Management. But things have started to change because Entrepreneurship has been introduced for each programme as one of the foundation courses. The designed courses in entrepreneurship are to equip students with the skills required to establish business or make them add value to existing systems, if employed in organizations."

Speaking further he said the main objective is to introduce students to concepts and opportunities available in entrepreneurship and innovation to make them understand the basic concept of enterprise, entrepreneur, cultivate the spirit of entrepreneurship and build the capacity to develop business plan to start a business instead of seeking unavailable jobs.

Also, the Guest Lecturer observed that there is a need to review what higher institutions teach to meet the demand of the industry. He said "The demand of industry and the economy has changed so much that there is an apparent disconnect between the Universities and industry. This must be continually addressed by the key action involved in the engineering education and training, namely the Nigerian Society of Engineers [NSE], the Council for the Regulation of Engineering [COREN] and the National Universities Commission [NUC]. What is required is to embed employability skills and attributes into the curriculum."

Defining the concept Technopreneurship, Bamiro said "It is the innovative application of scientific and technical knowledge by one or several persons to start and operate a business and assume financial risks to achieve their vision and goals." To, therefore become a Technopreneur, he advocated the need for a more focused and deeper exposure of people to technology and business so as to impart a set of skills that will increase the possibility of setting up of new business ventures based on exploiting technology-driven market opportunities. Such opportunities include proprietary technological innovations based on scientific research and development.

He also called on engineering students who want to become entrepreneurs to see opportunities around them, turn the opportunities into business ideas, create value and mobilize resources. According to him, an entrepreneur sees opportunities in a situation while others do not. He encouraged budding entrepreneurs to train and motivate people to deliver the business idea to new customers, put in place marketing strategies and be organized in operation. Bamiro cited a few examples of Nigerians who started small, but are today big entrepreneurs.

Concluding his lecture, Bamiro said above the usual fundamentals of engineering education and training, students should be given the skill to evaluate the viability of a new venture, produce and present a business plan for a new or growing venture and analyze a new venture from the perspective of an investor. He called on FUTA and other training institution to take the lead in nurturing technopreneurs in the Nigerian University system. "Such technopreneurs will help build the Nigerian economy above a job seeking to a job creating one" he said. Professor Bamiro was represented by Dr A.O Adegoke, member Public- Private Partnership Committee, Centre for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, University of Ibadan.

In his address, Vice-Chancellor, Professor Adebisi Daramola, represented by Professor Adedayo Fasakin, Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academic, said "The University administration recognizes the pivotal role of engineering in the well-being and relevance of a University of Technology. It is on this note that we are poised to provide all the necessary support and empowerment to make our engineering programmes the best in Nigeria and top-rated globally."

Delivering a welcome address, Dean, School of Engineering and Engineering Technology, Professor Michael Olanrewaju Alatise, said the topic of the lecture is apt and timely as it will address the challenge of massive unemployment, serious and threatening poverty in the midst of plenty and insecurity that the Country is facing.

Appreciating the contribution of the School of Engineering and Engineering Technology [SEET] to national development, Alatise said "It is worthy of note that the School has developed some tools and devices that can serve as springboards to launch us into industrial development which we all yearn for at this period." He also made known the effort the School is making to have a major breakthrough on Renewable Energy to tackle power issue in the nation and called on staff and students in Engineering to dream and live entrepreneurship anywhere they go to proffer solution to the global unemployment.

At the occasion a book titled "Essentials of Geotechnical Engineering" edited by Professor S. A. Ola of the Department of Civil Engineering FUTA, was launched.

The Chief Launcher, Chief Afe Babalola, founder, Afe Babalola University, Ado Ekiti [ABUAD], represented by the Provost, College of Social and Management Sciences, ABUAD, Dr. Alawiye Adams said the book is a compendium of issues bothering on engineering and entrepreneurship that will aid the knowledge of whoever reads it.

Book reviewer, Professor Okunade E. A. also commended the effort of the Editor, Professor Ola and recommended the book to all.

The two events drew former and serving Vice-Chancellors of Universities around FUTA. The duo of former Vice-Chancellors of FUTA, Professors Peter Adeniyi and Adebisi Balogun who started the annual lecture series were present. Other dignitaries at the event included top government functionaries and engineering students.