

MEET

DELSU VICE CHANCELLOR, PROF SAMUEL OGHENEVO ASAGBA

Prof Samuel Ogheneovo Asagba hails from Sapele, Delta State. He is an alumnus of the University of Benin, Nigeria, where he obtained his BSc and PhD degrees in Biochemistry in 1986 and 2001 respectively. He received his MSc degree in the same subject from the University of Lagos, Nigeria, in 1991. He is highly interested in academic research, which informed his decision to pick up an academic position with Delta State University in 1994 and has risen through the ranks since his engagement. He has been a Professor of Biochemistry since October 2010. As an academic, Prof. Asagba is highly respected for his cutting-edge research in the field of toxicology, particularly his work on the molecular effects of heavy metal toxicity. His focus on cadmium toxicity and its environmental impact has placed him at the forefront of global research in this area. With over 100 published works in prestigious national and international journals, Prof. Asagba has established himself as a leading figure in biochemistry and toxicology, earning the admiration of colleagues both in Nigeria and abroad.

Many of the published works of Prof Asagba showed the possible toxic effects of the consumption of the level of cadmium in Warri River and contaminated fish from the river between 1986 and 1991. The findings from Prof Asagba's research work underscore the need for the study of the toxicological implications of chronic low-level exposure to cadmium in Nigeria in view of the increasing contamination of the soil and water bodies by heavy metals as a result of industrialization. Prof Asagba's research also covered the alleviating effects of natural products of plants origin such as carrots, garden eggs, oats, Hibiscus sabdarrifa extract (zobo) and honey on cadmium toxicity. The outcomes of these researches showed the protective actions of these natural products to the presence of antioxidants such as anthocyanins and vitamins.

Prof. Asagba is not only a celebrated researcher but also a dedicated teacher and mentor. Over the years, he has supervised the doctoral and master's degrees of numerous students, many of whom have gone on to become successful academics and professionals. His legacy as a mentor continues to shape the future of education in Nigeria, as his former students now serve as lecturers and researchers across various institutions.

At the level of the Department, Faculty, University and larger society, he has held numerous academic, administrative and policy positions where he has performed with distinction. Prof Asagba has on several occasions served as the Head of Biochemistry Department, Associate Dean of Student affairs, Dean of the Faculty of Science, Provost of the Asaba Campus of Delta State University and is a past Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration). As Provost and DVC he served continuous for 5 years in the University Governing Council and as a council member he contributed his quota in the management and governance of the university. He has also served as Chairman University conference grant and Examination monitoring committees. Prof Asagba was the Departmental time table officer (1996-2001), Departmental coordinator for seminar and projects (1996-2006), Departmental coordinator SIWES (1996-2001), Departmental coordinator Pre-degree programme (2001-2006), Senate representative Faculty of Science (2005-2007) and Faculty representative Post graduate board (2011-2013). Prof Asagba has also been involved with the following special University assignments: member study group of the centre for environmental and Niger-Delta studies (2010), Chairman ad hoc committee on suitability of project defence by undergraduate students (2015), Member University Library Committee (2015 -2016), member council committee for selection/interview and appointment of University Librarian (2015), Chairman

certificate verification on senior administrative, technical and professional staff (2018), Chairman senior staff disciplinary committee for non-teaching staff (2019- 2021), Chairman car/vehicle refurbishing loan committee (2019-2021), Chairman Delsu FM board (2019-2021), Chairman University Health Services Board (2019-2020), Chairman University Facilities management committee (2019-2021), Member Tetfund manuscript and publication board (2015- 2016), Member DIL board (2015-2016) and Member DELSUTH board (2019-2020).

In addition to his teaching and research duties Prof Asagba has functioned as external examiner for undergraduate and post graduate students in several Nigerian universities. He has also served either as chairman or member in NUC accreditation teams to several Nigerian Universities since 2012 to date. He is a reviewer to many journals in Nigeria and abroad. Prof Asagba served as the Assistant Editor of the Nigerian Journal of Science and Environment (2005-2010) and Managing Editor of the same journal from 2010-2013.

Due to his immense academic and administrative experience, Prof Asagba was appointed a member of the editorial advisory board of the International Journal of Forensic Medical Investigation and the African Journal of Medicine and Biomedical Research. He has been contributing to the growth and development of these journals since 2017.

At this point it is pertinent to note some of the achievements of Prof Asagba in some positions he held. As Head of Department of Biochemistry he carried out prudent management of Department finances, motivated staff for higher performance, ensured that the laboratories had functional facilities which enabled our students to have adequate practical exposure, provided supportive structure which enabled the educational advancement and promotion of many staff and prepared the Department for successful accreditation of its undergraduate degree programme. His achievement as Dean include the following: prudent management of Faculty finances, left surplus savings from internally generated revenues, welfare programme for staff, revived Faculty Journal which is now a major source of internally generated revenue, Achieved 100 % accreditation of the five programmes of the Faculty that were due in 2015, Provided supportive structure which enabled the educational advancement and promotion of many staff and operated an open-door policy which addressed the wishes of staff with sincerity. There is no gain-saying that academic staffs of the Faculty of Science were over-worked due to the inadequate number of personnel. In order to address this, the Faculty under the leadership of Prof Asagba ensured that more academic staff members were employed to improve quality of teaching and research. Most importantly academic staff were encouraged to utilize available windows of opportunities for training and re-training, research, workshops and conferences; particularly those funded by the Tertiary Education Trust Fund. Prof Asagba also ensured that the Faculty of Science occupied its pivotal position in University governance, representation and equity in entitlements.

As Provost Asaba Campus, Prof Asagba established a security structure using internal and external security organizations that ensured a reduction of cult activities and guaranteed security on campus, Started the Construction of perimeter fencing of the campus with funds from internal and external sources to ensure security of life and properties on campus, paid over 90% of inherited debts before his exit, successfully initiated and executed an integrated water supply system that addressed the chronic water scarcity in Asaba campus, embarked on renovation of facilities e.g. classrooms and offices which ensured a conducive atmosphere for staff and students and contributed to the success of all programmes due for accreditation in 2017, comprehensively renovated the Asaba Campus Guest House that was abandoned,

ensured availability of power on campus for at least 16 hours daily from both public power supply and our power generating systems at minimal cost, achieved 100% accreditation of programmes that were due for NUC accreditation in 2017 and allowed easy flow of communications between the office of the provost and staff/students which ensured harmony on campus.

During his tenure as Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration), he ensured fairness in decision-making as Chairman of the Senior Staff Disciplinary Committee and streamlined the processing of loan applications, clearing a backlog in the Car/Vehicle Refurbishing Loan Committee. Prof Asagba also led a successful debt recovery initiative through the University Facilities Management Committee, significantly boosting revenue. His assessment of University vehicles saved costs by decommissioning unserviceable ones, and he also expanded the work-study program for indigent students, increasing their stipends to align with global standards. Prof Asagba's services as Deputy Vice-Chancellor contributed to improved administration and enhanced support for staff and students.

Before his employment as a lecturer in DELSU Prof Asagba worked in the organised private sector where he gained relevant administrative, professional and managerial experience which have contributed to his successful service in the different positions he occupied in the University. It is noteworthy that Prof Asagba has displayed determination, perseverance and resilience at the different levels of service to the University. He is a good administrator, excellent scientist, team player and listener, compassionate and amiable person. He is capable of meeting people of all ages with ease and often exercises a quiet sense of humour in his work. He belongs to several professional associations within Nigeria, amongst which are the Nigerian Society of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology and Nigerian Society of Experimental Biology. He is also a member of the American College of Toxicology and the Society of Toxicology both in the USA. He is currently a fellow of the African Scientific Institute a body based in the USA recognising the scientific outputs of African scholars in Africa and the Diaspora.

Prof. Asagba's appointment as Vice-Chancellor comes at a time when DELSU is poised for further growth and development. With his vast experience, unwavering integrity, and deep understanding of the academic and administrative needs of the institution, he is well-equipped to lead the university into a new era of excellence. His commitment to fairness, innovation, and inclusivity is expected to have a lasting impact on DELSU's future.

Under his leadership, it is anticipated that DELSU will continue to flourish as a center of academic distinction, research, and community engagement. His clear vision for the university and his collaborative leadership style are qualities that will surely inspire both staff and students alike.

His previous achievements indicate a proactive approach to governance that prioritizes transparency, inclusivity, and innovation. His leadership style is characterized by an open-door policy that encourages dialogue among academic staff members, students, and administrative staff. This approach aims to create a collaborative environment where ideas can flourish and challenges can be addressed collectively.

Professor Asagba is happily married to Elizabeth Olabimpe Asagba, a senior higher library officer in Delta State University Library.