



The Nigerian Society of Engineers

PORT HARCOURT BRANCH



e-newsletter

2013 / VOLUME 164

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MAY 4, 2013

Interview with Engr. Prof. Joseph Ajiienka on Collaboration between the Academia & Industries

Engr. Prof. Joseph Ajiienka, is the Vice Chancellor of University of Port Harcourt.

E-Newsletter: *What can you tell us about engineering collaboration between the academia and the industry?*

Prof. Ajiienka: The important thing is that the universities particularly for engineering are training people for the industry. In recent times, industries have been complaining about the quality of graduates. Most times when people talk about standards, standards are not falling, standards are getting higher. What people are really complaining about is quality of graduates. I always give example that in this digital age that we are in, our children are more vast in the use of digital facilities; the mobile phones, electronic equipment at home, the children are very vast. So in most cases what people are really complaining about are communication skills, the ability to communicate, values and so on. The industry is looking for not necessarily the best graduates, the industry is looking for graduates that are capable of playing in a team, working in multicultural international environment and so on. With the gaps we find in funding, in faculty, in facilities in the university system, it is important for industries to be actively involved in the university system. Industry captains can be involved as members of governing council; they can be involved as members of Advisory Boards. For example the University of Port Harcourt has the research advisory board and also faculty advisory board. Industry captains should be involved so that they can have a voice in the quality and design of the curriculum, in projects, in the use of software applications and field trips. When that is the case, when industries are actively involved, all the observations about quality



Engr. Prof. Joseph Ajiienka

of graduates can now be put on the table with the higher institutions. That way there will be a synergy for all to work together in curriculum development, report delivery, in project supervision, in software applications and so on. I do remember that Engr. Massari has been involved in the Electrical Engineering Department of the University of Port Harcourt. He was the first to bring internet to the university. So you see it is important that we do this and if we do this, industries will be happy with the quality of graduates they receive. Industry practitioners do not have time to be full time lecturers but they can devote a little time maybe one day in a week, once in a while, a week in a session and also help in report delivery in the way that they expect things to be done in higher educational system. In that way we will be working together to grow human capacity suitable for industries and industries will be happy with the quality of graduates they receive. So most of the deficiencies they observed would have been filled. I think that synergy between the academia and the industry is very crucial. Most innovations comes through students all over the world and in working with these students, industries will be able to tell the graduates some of the challenges they have and you allow young people to think. I give you an example, I once gave a project that I did not know the solution. I just said somebody should think about it and I was amazed at the quality of solutions that the student brought and this was at the Institute of Petroleum Studies (IPS). In that Institute, we work with industry. The industry is actively involved in the project life cycle, from curriculum development to project supervision, to software delivery and all that. So what did the student do? An industry practitioner taught them something on multiphase flow meters, unrelated to the project I gave, but the student saw that if you apply that it will work and he applied it and everybody was stunned. So there must be synergy between the industries and the academia in such a way that it will be mutually beneficial to both parties.



The Nigerian Society of Engineers Port Harcourt Branch held its 1st Quarter Dinner on Saturday 27th April 2013 with Engr. Prof. Joseph Ajiienka Vice Chancellor University of Port Harcourt as Special Guest of Honour. The dinner featured the induction of new members and the celebration of those who were recently conferred fellowship by the Nigerian Society of Engineers.



NSE Exams in progress at the NSE PH Branch Secretariat.



Inauguration of Engineering Collaboration/ Business Integration Committee on May 1st 2013 at Hotel Presidential in Port Harcourt.



On Thursday April 25th NSE PH Branch inaugurated a Political Forum as directed by Council. The chairman of the coordinating committee is Engr. Chief O. O Oruye, FNSE. The Branch Chairman Engr. Denis Dania inaugurated the committee.



Technical visit to Ibeto Cement Company Ltd on 2nd May 2013

Interview with Prof. Joseph Ajienka

E-Newsletter: *What advice do you have for industries that take their research outside the country?.*

Prof. Ajienka: First of all you gradually need to build confidence in industry. When today we now have Nigerian Content Development Law (Local Content Law), it will be impossible for them to take things out if that law is fully implemented. You have to work together with the people in the country. Even if you have the experts abroad, those experts can also work together with the people in this country. In that way we will benefit from the rich experience of people in the country. My position is that Nigerian Content Development should not just be applied to the oil and gas

industry. I am a petroleum engineer. It should apply across board to all industries. You see let me give you an example; we were invited by Total for an international oil and gas seminar in Paris, people came from different countries and from Nigeria, I think we were three professors that were invited. I sat down and I kept asking myself why did they invite us? It was obvious to me that should anything happen they have investments here. First of all they need Nigerians to run the operations. So in that sense the Institute of Petroleum Studies is training high quality manpower recognized by industry and are some of the best both in Nigeria and outside the country because these are Nigerians trained through this synergy I am talking about that is between the industry, University of Port Harcourt, foreign universities and lecturers. This is called internali-

zation at home. Beyond running the operations, if there are challenges of finding innovative solutions to certain problems of industries you also need these people and so if we work together, grow research capabilities and so on, then we can offer solutions to industries. If anything happens, like look at what is happening in the country, some foreign nationals are prevented from coming because of security situations and so on. So you need the local man power to handle all these things and I can tell you quite frankly that some of my colleagues had developed enough solutions that can save industries a lot of money in dollars. So we have capable brains all over. All we need to do is to have confidence in them.

E-Newsletter: *Thank you sir.*



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NOTICE! NOTICE!! NOTICE!!!

All members of NSE PH should pay their **Annual Branch Dues** of **N4,500** for **Corporate Members** and **N6,500** for **Fellows** to **UBA ACC. NO: 1000183629 (Port Harcourt Main Branch)**. Also pay **National Annual Subscription** of **N9,000.00** for **Corporate Members** & **N11,000** for **Fellows** directly to **Main Street Bank ACC No. 6500374224** & forward all tellers to the secretariat for reconciliation. All payments should be made at the Bank