

ALVAN IKOKU FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, OWERRI
(ESTABLISHMENT, ETC) BILL, 2017 (SB. 398).

Sponsor: Senator Samuel Anyanwu (Imo East)

LEAD DEBATE

Mr. President and my Distinguished Colleagues, we all know that education is the bedrock of every modern society. The existence of a sound and robust educational system in any country is predicated on the availability of qualified and well trained teachers to impart the required knowledge on the students. Thus, the need to have a strong system in our educational sector that shall continuously produce well qualified and trained teachers as it is obtainable in other developed climes cannot be over emphasized.

The Bill was read for the First Time in this Hallowed Chamber on the 1st December, 2016.

Mr. President of the Senate and my Distinguished Colleagues, you may recall that in the month of May 2015, the Federal Executive Council approved the upgrading of four Colleges of at Kano, Owerri, Ondo and Zaria to Federal Universities of Education.

These Institutions are known to be the oldest post grade II Teachers Training Colleges and the pioneer Advanced Teachers Colleges / Colleges of Education in Nigeria. The idea of upgrading the colleges to autonomous Teachers Education Degree Awarding Institutions goes as far back as the 1980's when stakeholders and prominent educationists like Emeritus Professor Segun Adesina proposed their upgrading to universities of

education to enhance teaching quality at all levels of the Nigerian Education System.

Indeed, Former President Olusegun Obasanjo during his administration, gave the approval for the implementation of the upgrade of these colleges within the Reform Agenda Framework proposed by the then Minister of Education, Oby Ezekwesili. Hence, the announcement of the upgrade of these institution to Universities during the administration of the Former President Goodluck Jonathan was received with a thunderous jubilation and jot by all and sundry in the Nigerian academia.

On the 26th of May, 2015, the Federal Government went further to appoint the Vice Chancellors for the newly upgraded universities. The letters of appointment were signed by former Minister of Education as approved by the then President. Governing Council of the Colleges were also re-constituted into governing councils of the new Universities; while the provost were re-designated as Deputy Vice Chancellors. The Vice Chancellors were directed to take charge of the institutions and to drive the transition processes from Federal Colleges of Education Status to Federal Universities of Education.

Upon reporting to the institutions, the Vice Chancellors set up Transition Committees to midwife issues relating to the Academic Brief, Re-designation of the Schools into Faculties, Staff Appraisal and Academic Programs' nomenclature of the universities, etc. Contacts were made with the National Universities Commission (NUC) and Joint Admission and Matriculation

Board (JAMB) to clarify the accreditation program in the institutions. Admissions for the then autonomous undergraduates programs of these institutions were being expected when suddenly the Vice Chancellors were summoned I August to the Federal Ministry of Education and were issued with letters to the effect that upgrade of the colleges to Universities' status had been put on hold. This was possible because of the fact that the laws establishing the universities were not made at the time the upgrade of the colleges to universities was approved by the last administration. It is on this note that this Bill is brought before you for passage.

It should be noted that these are well established institutions that have strong infrastructural base that is better than what is obtainable in several universities in the country. Thus, the Federal University of Education Owerri has more than the infrastructural requirement necessary for the setting up a university. It should be remembered that one of the cardinal goals of this administration of change is the strong development of our educational sector. It is in view of this that I urge you all to support the expeditious passage of this Bill.

Thank you.