Superior Vena Cava: Program Planning And Staff Development In Bayero University Kano[1]

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Introduction

Just as the human heart forms the core nexus to life, so does the office of the Vice-Chancellor in Nigerian universities, especially in this era of reform. With a highly centralized and bureaucratized educational system, information about goals, directions and program structure to individual faculty units from the central funding authority, in this case the National Universities Commission, will have to pass through the Vice-Chancellor's office for onward transmission and implementation. This chapter provides a brief over-view of three aspects of the Vice-Chancellor's office that determine the very nature of the purpose of the establishment of a university in the first place: academic programming processes and staff training. Information and analyses in this chapter are provided within the developmental context of the issue being discussed to provide a more panoramic view of the evolutionary nature of academic program planning, not just Bayero University, but also as it affects the rest of the Nigerian university system.

A Big Brother for the Seven Sisters

The virtual explosion of higher education in Nigeria immediately after the oil boom of the 1970s was unprecedented in the history of higher education in African countries. The oil wealth, heavily exploited after 1973, suddenly made it possible for the Federal as well as the State Governments to embark on building more universities as manpower factories in a massive human resource drive. Between 1975 and 1980, alone, seven new universities were established. The expansion was taken to bizarre proportions when, between March to December 1983, in a test-case of newly discovered democracy as much as twenty eight *private* universities were established by various individuals and corporations in the country. These private universities were all closed down following a Military coup in December 1983.

The increase in the number of new university institutions in Nigeria from six to thirteen within four years presented a major challenge to the National Universities Commission and the universities to devise methods of preventing a fall in academic standards through severe stretching of available facilities. It is therefore understandable if a heavy emphasis is placed on the sustenance of academic standards.

Moreover, the establishment and retention of the conventional new universities nevertheless created new planning priorities and made significant demands on funding procedures in both the new as well as the old universities. The

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[1] First published in Abba, I.A., Tsiga, I. A., and Adamu, A. U. (1994), **Building The Citadel: Thirty Years of University Education in Kano, 1964-1994**. Kano, Nigeria: Bayero University Kano (The Vice-Chancellor's Office). First Published in 1994 by Bayero University Kano, Nigeria

National Universities Commission (NUC), the organization responsible for the establishment and maintenance of the universities was given the responsibility of ensuring that the new universities, and any as may be established in the future are provided with the extensive planning guidance as to avoid the mistakes made in the planning of the older universities in the countries. In each of the new universities, whether federal or state, a site would have to be developed and therefore co-ordination and planned development was not only necessary but considered of paramount importance. Consequently, the NUC presented an implantation program to the Government which approved it and authorized planning expenditure.

To achieve this end, the Commission set up two planning groups to advise it -- a Physical Planning Group and an Academic Planning Group. The Academic Planning Group — the focus of this chapter — was aimed not only to ensure the rapid take-off of the new institutions, but also to ensure programs were not proliferated indiscriminately thereby prejudicing the maximum utilization of funds and of human and materials resources. Significantly, this is the first time Nigeria had the opportunity and the challenge to plan simultaneously the establishment of many universities and to relate them to the real needs and aspirations of the people.

The Academic Planning Group
The Academic Planning Group for the new universities was setup in February 1976, following the approval by the Federal Executive Council in December 1975 of NUC's implementation program for the new institutions. This program included the setting up of a Central Academic Planning Group for all, and then a Physical Planning Group for each of the new institutions. Abdullahi Bayero College, an autonomous college of Ahmadu Bello University which later, in 1977, metamorphosed into Bayero University Kano was one of the new universities to become the focus of the Academic Planning Group[2].

The NUC set up the central Academic Planning Group (APG) comprising of senior faculty from various universities and was assigned the tasks of advising the NUC on the academic development of the new institutions. This was to include faculty and curriculum development, staff requirement, time schedule for the commencement of the various individual academic programs of each new institution and so on. The Group was specifically requested to take into consideration the programs in the existing universities, and to plan each institution as part of an overall national program. Three issues formed the core of the deliberations of the APG:

1. What are, or should be the objectives of the new universities?
2. How will the new universities and their communities relate to the environment, to the society at large?
3. How can the curriculum be designed in these institutions to relate to the stated objectives of the environment?

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2. The other universities were the University of Calabar, the University of Jos, the University of Maiduguri, the University of Sokoto (Usmanu Danfodiyo University), the University of Ilorin, and the University of Port Harcourt (NUC (1977) *Report of the Academic Planning Group*, Lagos: Nigeria).

These embryonic and broad policy directions eventually shaped the outcome of the recommendations of the Academic Planning Group which became a firm item on an agenda by 1977. Eventually, the functions of the Academic Planning Department, as it evolved later, included:

1. Compiling and publishing three year Rolling Plans for all Federal Universities.
2. Preparing Universities Annual Recurrent Grants requests to the Federal Government.
3. Rationalizing and processing applications for academic programs in the Universities.
4. Periodic assessment of high level manpower requirements of the country in conjunction with appropriate governmental agencies.
5. Preparation of Statistic Digest of University Education in Nigeria.
6. Analysing Academic Briefs for master plan development in the Universities.
7. Evaluating the annual institutional performance against the approved academic plans.
8. Helping set up Minimum Academic Standards for the academic programs currently being taught in the Universities.
9. Helping to organize and co-ordinate the accreditation of academic programs in all Nigerian Universities (*NUC at 30.* Lagos: National Universities Commission, November 1992).

Academic Planning Processes in Bayero University
In Bayero University, the first stage in implementing this national directive for the establishment of the Academic Planning Unit was initiated on October 23, 1989 while the university was in the throes of academic transformation from the old British term system to a more cosmopolitan and American Course Unit System. In an appointment letter as the Academic Planning Officer to Dr. Kabiru Isyaku, a Tests and Measurement specialist with doctoral qualifications from University of Indiana, the then Vice-Chancellor of the University Professor Dandatti Abdulkadir outlined the basic expectations of establishing the unit which tally with those provided by the National Universities Commission. In specific terms, these include:

1. Development of long-term academic plans for the University in accordance with N.U.C. guidelines, Government directives and the University policies.
2. Liaison with N.U.C. on academic planning and related maters through prompt and adequate response to all N.U.C. initiatives as well as through original action where appropriate.
3. Monitoring compliance with University and N.U.C. policies on admission, recruitment, teacher-student ratio and the maintenance of the optimum ratio between academic-related and other expenditures.
4. Collection, collation, analysis and application of statistics from within and outside the university for the sound formulation of University policies and plans and for the superintendence of their effective implementation; such statistics will relate to the demographic characteristics of the applicants for the University's courses, the proportion of successful candidates in relation to unsuccessful ones, the distribution of students by course, Department, Faculty, age, sex, State of Origin, nationality, etc (Vice-Chancellor's Office Internal Memo, Dr. Munzali Jibril, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) to

the Vice-Chancellor, 2nd November 1989. BUK Academic Planning Office Archives, VC/A/88, Volume 1, Closed 7/9/1990).

The Academic Planning Office was then made substantially an extension of the Vice-Chancellor's office. The NUC arranged an orientation program for the new Academic Planning Officer from November 8, 1989 to November 17, 1989 to acquaint him with the expectations of the NUC concerning academic program planning of the University.

The initial activities of the Academic Planning Office in the early days concentrated on getting statistical information concerning staff strength and computing teacher-student ratios in the various disciplines for planning purposes.

The Academic Planning Office was to liaise its activities with the Academic Development Committee, responsible for approving program structures in the university; and the Development Office, responsible for planning future expansion of the university.

However, the core responsibilities of the Academic Planning Office emerged in December 1989 when the National Universities Commission initiated a massive system wide accreditation exercise of all the approved academic programs of Nigerian universities. As an initial stage in the process, the Academic Planning Office was sent *Manual of Accreditation Procedures for Academic Programmes in Nigerian Universities* from the NUC for distribution to all the departments in the University to prepare them for the accreditation exercise. The Manual was to serve as a reference book on all that the accreditation entails. By December 29, 1989 the Academic Planning Office has concluded arrangements for the accreditation of the academic programs of the university, and in response, the NUC sent the following as a time-table for the accreditation:

Date	Faculty	Program
04/6/90-8/6/90	Science	Biology, Botany, Chemistry Zoology
18/6/90-22/6/90	Science	Physics, Mathematics
16/7/90-20/7/90	Social Science	Accounting/Bus Adm
21/10/90-5/10/90	Social Science	Econs, Geo, Pol. Sci
8/10/90-12/10/90	Arts	Eng. French, Hausa
15/10/90-19/10/90	Medicine	Medicine
22/10/90-26/10/90	Arts	Hist. Isl. St. Arabic
29/10/90-2/11/90	Law	Law
12/11/90-16/11/90	Technology	Civl, Elect. Mech.
4/2/91-8/2/91	Education	Educ, Lib Sci, PHE

Adult Education was omitted from the schedule of accreditation, and when the Academic Planning Office sought clarification on this (APO to NUC, VC/A/88, 29th December 1989), the NUC responded that "Adult Education was not included in the schedule of programmes to be assessed, because it is not in the approved Minimum Academic Standards documents. It is therefore not a recognised degree programme in the National University System that is subject to accreditation" (NUC to APO, BUK, NUC/SCA/5, 6th March 1990).

The APO was therefore given the responsibilities of ensuring that the minimum expectations for successful teaching and learning all disciplines as outlined in the *Manual of Accreditation* have been complied with before the accreditation teams arrive. The accreditations were successfully completed within the scheduled timeline, although up to 1994 none of the Departments in the university was made *officially* aware, either from the University or from the NUC about its accreditation status.

On January 10, 1990 a new Academic Planning Officer, Dr. Ibrahim Yaro Yahaya, was appointed by the Vice-Chancellor, and when Dr. Yahaya was later promoted to the rank of a Professor, the Academic Planning Office, quite independently, was also elevated to the status of Academic Planning Unit, with Professor Ibrahim Yaro Yahaya as its first Director on December 12, 1990.

Banking on World Support: The World Bank and Staff Development in Bayero University Kano

Closely related to the activities of the Academic Planning Unit in Bayero was the maintenance of a *World Bank Federal Universities Development Sector Adjustment Operation Credit Facilities.* This was started in 1990 to provide the university with US$120 million for rehabilitation of the status of books, journals, equipment and staff development. The criteria which Universities must meet to qualify for the Credit were actually objectives set by the university system itself and aims at ensuring academic excellence, cost effectiveness in the management of Universities.

By early 1980s the indicators that Nigeria's economy has gone down the recession drain were quite clear. This has severe consequences on many funding priorities and project, and the university sector was not spared. Belt-tightening, coupled with relatively poor facilities for effective teaching, learning and research due to lack of funds created a massive brain drain bandwagon which saw Nigerian professors willing to work at level of Graduate Assistants in foreign (i.e. developed countries of Europe and North America) universities to earn what is clearly a more significant salary scale and status. As noted,

There was a growing and steady turnover of experience staff in the Universities, euphemistically referred to as "Brain Drain". Academicians in medicine and related sciences found jobs in the Near East. Social scientists were drawn to the USA, young brilliant scientists relocated to Europe, and even educationalists left the Universities for State and Federal Government assignments. Meanwhile the university student populations increased, Classrooms and lecture theatres became completely inadequate for the large and increasing admissions...Universities found it difficult , in the face new national economic measures to buy books, maintain o retain journal subscriptions or even train staff overseas. Sabbatical leave overseas became a rare luxury and even taking it within the country was not always possible, in the face of acute shortage of lecturers. In the face of all these, Government's effective subvention to the Universities declined.[3]

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3. NUC (1994) *Federal Universities Development Sector Adjustment Operation: A Progress Report.* Abuja, World Bank Project Implementation Unit Secretariat: National Universities Commission, p. 3.

It was in the face of all these problems that the Nigerian Federal Government decided, in 1989, to devote the entire higher educational projects on World Bank credit facility to universities. This was agreed upon in principle, and between July 1988 to July 1989 the project document preparation group at NUC worked with their World Bank counterparts to produce a final draft report on the project implementation.

The main objective of the credit facility to the universities was to inject a substantial amount of hard currency into the university system in order to resuscitate and rejuvenate teaching, learning and research. The areas identified for improvement were Library (equipment, books and journals), maintaining equipment and laboratories, staff development (training young staff overseas) and staff recruitment (attracting foreign staff) through the Nigerian Expatriate Supplementation Scheme (NESS). The then Honourable Minister of Education, Professor Jibril Aminu succeeded in obtaining for the universities a credit facility of US$120 million. The credit facility had a thirty-five year maturity period and at a service charge of 3/4%. The credit was to be drawn within a three year period, effective July 1991.

The agreement itself was signed on June 18, 1990 with World Bank, and NUC was given the responsibility to implement the project for and on behalf of the Federal Ministry of Education. It was of course significant that Professor Jibril Aminu was not only then the Minister of Education, but had just previously served as the Executive Secretary of the NUC.

The World Bank Project Implementation Unit (WBPIU) was established in January 1990 at the Office of the Executive Secretary, National Universities Commission. However, the universities to benefit from the credit facility were those established before 1985. Excluded with post-1985 universities are State Universities. Bayero University, categorized as a Second Generation Federal University (established before 1980) was one of the recipients of this facility.

Each of the universities benefiting from the credit was requested to establish its own World Bank Project Implementation Committee (WBPIC) and in particular to ensure that each had a computer and adequate staff in its Secretariat under the Vice-Chancellor's office. Each WBPIC was to establish a database of staff, equipment, books, journals, students, etc., necessary to furnish information and analysis required to work towards meeting the eligibility criteria before benefiting from the credit.

In Bayero University, the responsibility for the establishment of the necessary committees and co-ordinating the project between the University and the NUC was placed under the Academic Planning Unit; thus blending two functions all under the Vice-Chancellor's Office. The Director of the Academic Planning Unit actually became Chairman/Co-ordinator of the World Bank Project.

By September 1990 virtually all the infrastructural facilities necessary for project implementation were in place. A permanent office was established at the New Campus and an administrative Office and computer programmer allocated to the office. A Kentec IBM PC Compatible computer with an 8088 processor was borrowed from the University's Computer Center to start off the project, and Ashton Tate's database, Dbase III+, and Lotus 123 Release 1.1 spreadsheet were used as the main programs to generate the information the Project would

require. WordStar 2000 word processor then complemented the suite. The use of such ancient hardware and software clearly indicate one vital area where this unit would have to be significantly improved.

While masses of printouts of list of books, equipment, journals were generated by the World Bank Project office, one area where its effect was clearly felt was in staff development. Within the period of its established, the University has arranged facilities were academic staff members of the university pursuing higher degrees, especially doctorate, to obtain a period of attachment with foreign universities in most cases for the purposes of instrumentation, especially as it affects those in science and technology disciplines.

The idea was that such staff members, ideally were already enrolled on their PhD programs in various Nigerian universities, and may require advanced laboratory or library facilities to intensify their arguments or expand their exploratory procedures. Such facilities were clearly not possible in Nigerian universities where they were enrolled. The World Bank credit facility makes it possible now for the University to send such staff members to overseas universities where they carry out a significant portion of their laboratory or library based work for one academic session, before returning to Nigeria to complete their theses. About thirteen staff members of Bayero University have befitted from the initiation of the Project to July 1994 in Bayero University are:

Name	World Region	Discipline
Rabi'u, S	Old Dominion, U.S.	Biological Sciences
Salisu, S. D.	Massachusetts Institute of Technology, U.S.	Physics
Ibrahim Y. Yola	Southern University, U.S.	Physics
Musa, D. I.	Lawson State University, U.S.	P.H.E.
Gonoh, B. A.	Tennessee University of Technology, U.S.	Electrical Engineering
Alabe, M	University of Terente, Netherlands	Electrical Engineering
Aliyu, N. A.	University of Wales, U.K.	Chemistry
Adamu, M.K.	University of Leeds U.K.	Chemistry
Aliyu, M. M.	University of Newcastle, U.K.	Civil Engineering
Yahaya, D. B.	University of Leeds, U.K.	Mechanical Engineering
Musa, A. O.	University of Northumbria, U.K.	Physics
Achaver, R. S.	University of St. Andrews, U.K.	Physics
Abdullahi, A. M.	University of Sussex, U.K.	Technology Education

Managing the Information Superhighway in Bayero University
In 1988, at the beginning of a massive system wide reform in Nigerian universities[4] which saw the introduction of the Course Unit System (CUS), calculation of the newly introduced concepts of Grade Point Average (GPA) and other CUS accessories posed considerable problems in Bayero University Kano because not all staff were clear on what a GPA is, how it can be calculated, and most importantly who should be responsible for it, especially as it seemed rather too administrative.

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4. For details of the evolution of the course unit system in Nigerian universities, and its antecedent influence from United States, see Adamu, A. U. (1994) *Living on a Credit Line: Reform and Adaptation in Nigerian Universities, 1960-1994*. Studies in African Higher Education Series. Lewiston, New York: The Edwin Mellen Press (forthcoming).

Thus the reform also came accompanied with increased bureaucratic procedures, and administrative chores. The demands of such fragmented system are reflected in a consideration of the structural modalities of the British modular system. As, for instance, noted by Sheil (1993),

Modularisation relies heavily on administrative systems and infrastructure to achieve its effect. For instance, in the modular system the ease of movement between institutions and coulees of various types and on various levels calls for the existence of information systems capable of recording and indeed facilitating such movement.[5]

And there were certainly no computers to help in the process. At one stage an impasse was reached between staff and administration in Bayero University. The faculty insisted that such administrative chores should be the responsibility of either the university administration or the Registrar's office. The university administration countered that the faculty did not have complaints about doing such tasks in the old system. Moreover, security considerations makes it necessary to ensure that only internal examiners (i.e. all academic faculty) should handle student results.

Although a series of directives were issued from the university administration regarding the importance of these records, no detailed tutoring on how it could be done was provided by the universities, or the NUC which initiated the whole process. This, perhaps not unexpectedly, caused considerable problem in that accurate student records became difficult to keep, and tracking of students achievement even more difficult to maintain.

The whole situation would have gone quite well if before the reform an administrative support unit is established, and comprising of academic faculty to process the system on a permanent basis in each university.

In the Bayero University one of the first problems with regards to course evaluation faced was carry over results. While it is relatively easy to keep track of results for a students in their current level (i.e. year), it becomes more tricky when the same student has a string of courses to carry over in lower levels — and the higher the current level of the student, of course, the more the possibilities of such lower level carry-overs. Keeping tracks of all these courses and results was problematic. For the student, in trying to cope with a lecture time-table that schedules a current year course with a lower level carry over course at the same time, and in different places either on the same campus, or on separate campuses creating severe time conflicts.

It was also problematic for the examination officers who have to keep track of every course the student registered and sat for. While students are required to provide such information at the beginning of the sessional registration exercise (there was no facility for registrations each semester), getting carry over results for the students is also problematic; in some cases because students were not

5. Sheil, T., "Modularisation in the UK — Structure first, then Substance." *Association of Commonwealth Universities* ACU) *Bulletin of Current Documentation* (ABC) Number 108, April 1993 pp 21-28.

aware they were required to carry over any course, while in other cases students were not sure whether a missing result on the result sheets (and there were many missing results) was caused by either a failure on the part of the student in the course, or a failure on the part of the examination officers to record the result for the appropriate course.

The time gap between the semesters is normally two to three weeks, with almost all of taken up with marking, recording, collating and preparing the results for submission to the various university examinations Boards and eventually to the Senate for approval. By the time the results were ready for posting on the students notice board, it is well into the middle of the second semester. On the average about 40% of the university term time is spent by the lecturers on marking assignments and scripts, collating and synthesizing the results.

And because the results are all entered manually on numerous forms, another 10% of the time is spent on verifying missing results, or rectifying incorrect result entries against courses for students before the results are submitted to a departmental meeting for approval.

The actual semester examinations are normally taken — in theory, but never practically done, in the first three years of reform — 15 weeks after the commencement of the semester. The semester examination time is usually dreaded by every examination officer, not least because of the sheer complexity of manually preparing an examination time table with numerous possibilities of clashes between the courses in the same level and across the levels. The spread of the students amongst faculties created a situation where examination and lecture time-tables were to be produced in a way that avoids clashes either within the Departments in the same faculty, or with other departments in other faculties.

However, the clashes were brought about because students carrying over courses from one Level (i.e. year) to another, find that they have been slotted to take two or more totally different examinations, in different departments at the same time. To illustrate, it is very common to find a Level IV History student carrying over a Level III course in the Department of English, as well as a Level II course in the Department of Education. It is of course, not uncommon for all his three courses to be scheduled for examination at the same time.

During examination time-tabling, there is no way the individual examination officers could keep track of who is carrying over what course without a global view of the entire registration scheme. This is because registration lists are never accurate because many students carrying over courses from lower levels often fail to register their carry over courses. And even if the students do register such courses student attendance list does not reflect the accurate number of students who actually registered for such courses. This is because due to possible clashes with other courses, students inevitably prefer to attend their current level courses than their carry over courses. It is only during tests, or assignments that lower level classes get full attendance.

And since examination time-tables for each Department or Faculty are designed independent of other Departments (although the allocation of examination

times for the whole university are done collectively at a committee level by the Central Scheduling Committee), or Faculties, the end product of course, is that within half an hour of the time the first draft of the examination time-table is published on the notice board, streams of students troop to the examination officers in all departments reporting clashes. These clashes are normally sorted out by making adjustments on either times or dates of the affected courses leading to more clashes. To sort out the issue, unorthodox examination times became imposed into the system. Examinations then start as early as 8.00 am and finish as late as 12.00 am of the following day. This is because it was discovered that by moving courses that clash to unusual hours (after 7.00 p.m.) a considerable number of the clashes will be reduced. But there was a considerable anxiety in giving out examinations beyond 6.00 p.m. because of the erratic nature of electricity supply.

All these point to a very obvious and crucial issue: the need for a well developed information management system to handle the course unit system. For despite the complexity of the system as operated in Nigeria, it remained a manual, and consequently labour intensive process in the first five years of its introduction. The needs for a well developed management information system with regards to the record keeping in the course unit system were acknowledged even a less complex system such as the modular system as operated in some British institutions. In providing a case study of the management of the modular system in Oxford Polytechnic, it was noted that[6]

> The record-keeping and office procedures implications of the Modular Course when it started in 1973 with an intake of 75 students were modest but have since grown with the Course. There is now the need to keep track of thousands of individual student module programmes, termly timetables and assessments and of applications for places across hundreds of field combinations. *This growth would have been strangled by the paperwork involved if new computerized systems had not been introduced and continuously developed.* The foresight of the Course founders, in using a computer for a range of student records applications from the very first intake, set the pace for subsequent information technology developments. That original range was surprisingly wide and included personalized student records, timetables and class lists (emphases added).

The first steps towards the introduction of Management Information Systems (MIS) to handle the management of the courses among other things, in the Nigerian universities were taken in 1987 at a joint seminar held by both the National Universities Commission and the British Council. Naturally, since the British were to provide the computers, there were expectations that the computers to handle the system in all Nigerian universities were to be from British companies.

At the joint NUC-British Council MIS seminar in 1987, a clear statement of aims and objectives were formulated with regards to the function of the MIS in Nigerian universities, and which include:

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6. Coghill, C.,(1989) "Systems" in Watson, D. (ed), *Managing the Modular Course -- Perspectives from Oxford Polytechnic*. Milton Keynes: Society for Research into Higher Education/The Open University Press. p. 117.

1. to develop a viable computerized MIS as to maximise the effective use of resources.
2. the need for modern data approach to University management practices;
3. it is envisaged that it will assist management and indeed operating personnel, by producing timely and accurate information, not only to plan and control present and future operations, but also to pinpoint potential problems that need to be rectified.

The objective of the (National Universities) Commission in embarking on the MIS project include the following:

a) to standardise the system of obtaining reports and statistical information from the various universities on:

    students
    staff
    financial matters
    library

b) to record such information on diskettes or tapes at the user universities and send the diskettes or tapes to the NUC for budgeting, information storage, analysis and retrieval purposes.
c) to ensure that such information are accurate and timely
d) to organise information for planning, budgeting and decision making.
e) to help the Universities put in place effective management system and improved utilization of resources. (NUC 1992: Address by the Executive Secretary Professor Idris Abdulkadir at the Opening Ceremony of the University MIS Workshops of the Nigerian Universities at the Lomay International Hotel, Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria on April 27, 1992, p. 2-3).

In 1989 the MIS project for Nigerian universities took off officially. The NUC in conjunction with British Overseas Development Administration (ODA) consultants selected four pilot universities for the MIS project (the University of Lagos, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Federal University of Technology, Minna and the University of Ilorin) and a workshop for academic planners, bursars of Nigerian universities was held at the University of Lagos. In March 1990 a special Technical Committee on Software Design and Development was established to design the programs to be used for the MIS project. The ODA organized a training program on University MIS in the U.K. for one MIS Chairman from each of the pilot universities from January to April 1992. The whole idea behind the MIS therefore was to network all Nigerian universities eventually using Personal Computers ("386-486 models"; NUC 1992 p. 17). "By the time all Nigerian universities are networked to a central hub possibly via satellite, the gains of the system will be so overwhelming as to overshadow in no small measure, the cost of its development, installation and commissioning.: (NUC 1992 p. 64).

It is of course interesting that inspiration for the MIS to manage the Nigerian variant of the distinctly U.S. course unit system should come from Britain, rather than the United States. Further, the support services needed to manage the MIS even within the universities, especially with regards to effective communication networks, have not been established while all these grand plans were being debated _ at workshops. Indeed it is instructive that the report of the team sent to the U.K. by the ODA on MIS in British universities acknowledged the evolutionary, incremental and utility support function of the British industry and commerce by noting that:

All British universities have efficient information systems which they have developed over the years out of their own initiatives. Their computers are linked to the Universities Central Council on Admissions (UCCA) computer by telephone cable and this facilitates the updating of applicant's records at both ends simultaneously by either party. In addition to efficient and large central computer systems, many have administration computers dedicated to payroll, personnel data and students' records (NUC (1992) *Pilot Stage Implementation of MIS in Nigerian Universities: Concepts, Perceptions, Problems and Prospects* p. 4).

The minimum infrastructural facilities for MIS were outlined by the Report of the Chairmen of the Pilot Universities MIS as below:

Computers	20 of 386 machines with printers for each pilot university
Software	WP51, Lotus 123, Dbase III+, dBase IV
Training	Pre-pilot training including data collection techniques
Security	Secured housing against fire, theft, damage
Storage	Storage in dust-proof environment
Support	User-support services
Maintenance	Central maintenance depot
Power supply	Backup power plant

The chairmen further noted that

In suggesting these requirements, careful thoughts have been given to the reality of the compelling nature and risks of introducing MIS in the Nigerian university environment in terms of meeting the challenges of large data requirements; the extensive nature of data sourcing such as in cases where some universities have two or more campuses and nation-wide extension programmes and public functions; user expectations in satisfying their information requirements vis-à-vis the usefulness of an MIS may be seen by some as an expensive venture that should succeed; as well as the need for a sound initial and continuing commitment and management support (NUC 1992 p. 10 of Pilot Chairmen's Report).

The MIS project was to be partly externally funded by the British Council and the Overseas Development Administration. At the preparatory MIS workshop held for Registrars, Academic Planners, and Bursars in April 1992, the workshop resolved that

a) The computerised MIS project is desirable and timely and should be introduced in all Universities, Federal and States.
b) The NUC should provide a minimum of four (4) out of the ultimate twenty (20) computers for all the Federal Universities at the initial stage of MIS. The NUC should request the proprietors of other universities to procure same for their institutions and assist these Universities to obtain external funding to do so.
c) All Universities should make budgetary allocations for MIS as from 1992/93. All participating universities must ensure local input into the project is provided as a reflection of their commitment to MIS (NUC, 1992 p. 21)

Thus although all Universities in the country must conform to the NUC minimum academic standards guidelines, yet the NUC would not provide MIS support for non-Federally established universities, even though they will also be accredited and graded on the same basis as the Federally funded universities. The MIS project, as envisaged by the NUC has a significantly wide scope, as stated in the Workshop proceedings,

Initially, computerised MIS in Nigerian universities should start with a few stand alone Personal Computers (PCs) without networking, to deal essentially with students, staff and financial records. It is noted that one of the main problems with this arrangement, will be the slow rate of input and retrieval of data. Also, inputting of data at different locations could lead to inaccurate output. Centralised data preparation was proposed to address the above problem, and the need for back up was emphasised (NUC 1992 p. 22).

In a general circular to Nigerian Vice-Chancellors (NUC/MIS/2/92 of September 2, 1992), the Chairman of the NUC Management Information System (MIS) provided the first outline of the proposed structure of MIS units in Nigerian universities. All this flurry of activity was being undertaken at a time when the course unit system, for which the MIS was to provide the vital support function, had already been in operation officially since 1988.

However, due to operational difficulties, it was not until May 1994 that the formal office of the Management Information System (MIS) was established in Bayero University. A committee, the MIS committee was established with Dr. M. Y. Bichi as its Chairman. A unit, the MIS Unit was created under the office of the Vice-Chancellor, and Dr. Muhtar Hanif Alhassan was appointed by the Vice-Chancellor as the Director of the MIS. The Unit was assigned two computers to start off the project, or at least before those promised by the NUC arrive. The computers were a Gateway 2000 486SX-33 and a Vutech 386SX-40; both of which meet the minimum expectations of the MIS as designed by the NUC.

The three units — Academic Planning, World Bank, and MIS clearly are the heart of the University, and their expansion in accordance with the NUC's recommendations vital to the sustained existence of the University.