

## Osun State University library system: The story so far

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### Abstract

*Much has not been said about the inception of Osun State University Library. It is an opinion paper that focuses on the historical background of the library in Osun State University with the adoption of historical research design (Historiography). The research examines the library strategic goal, situation analysis, strategic activities and its administration by the conglomeration of staff as of then. The paper concludes by showcasing the university library as an indispensable organ of the University.*

**Key words:** Osun State University; strategic goal; strategic activities.

## Introduction

Osun State University Library System is the pivot for teaching, learning and research activities. According to the plan period as stipulated in the Uniosun Strategic Plan of 2012-2016, the quality of its services will be constantly enhanced. The centrality of the library to all academic work makes it to be extremely important and urgent that every college has a specialised library with current books and other documents that are supported by Information and Communication Technology (ICT) facilities. The key issues in the library provision are: collection development in both print and digital formats; processing of the materials; provision of ideal environments for use, including e-environment; qualified personnel to carry out the services and feedbacks.

## Strategic goal

The strategic goal for the library services during the plan period was to make the entire library system attain world-class standard in supporting teaching, learning and research activities in the University.

## Situational Analysis

The libraries across the campuses are presently housed in temporary buildings; permanent purpose-built facilities are at various stages of completion: Ikire is 90% complete, Ipetu-Ijesa is 65% complete, Ejigbo is 85% complete and Ifetedo is 75% complete. The main library at Osogbo and that of Okuku are on the drawing board.

## Strategic Activities/Plan (2012-2016)

In the plan period, all on-going library building projects are to be completed, stocked with up to date relevant information materials and their operations will be ICT driven. The present library collection will be increased by 120% for better coverage, especially in the electronic format. Also, staff structure will be enhanced both in quality and in quantity. A Law librarian currently undergoing specialised training is take full charge of the law library at Ifetedo campus while a Medical librarian will be trained for the medical collection. The target is to achieve the following staff mix:

i.	Principal Librarian cadre	.....	04
ii.	Senior Librarian cadre	.....	08
iii.	Librarian I	.....	11
iv.	Librarian	.....	11
v.	Library Officer	.....	12
vi.	Library Assistant	.....	14
vii.	Library Porter	.....	21

The librarians would continue to take charge of the teaching of the *Use of library, GNS 103* at the undergraduate level. For sustainability, the University will commit 10% of its recurrent expenditure to the running of the Library. Additional funds would as well be sourced from donor agencies. The library will also contribute to the University's IGR through outsourcing some of its reprographic services.

The University will ensure improved power supply to the Library on all campuses. All of these are of high priority. The indicator for these activities will include increase in accessibility to relevant library facilities in all campuses, increase in number of collections in the Library, increase in IGR from library services. The responsible officers are the Vice-Chancellor and the University Librarian. The activities will commence from 2012.

### **The story so far**

Osun State University Library is as old as the institution itself. It is the heart of the University. It helps students to develop critical thinking skills and creativity by connecting them to wide range of scholarly resources. The library exposes staff and students to new technologies innovation and findings in their areas of research.

In 2007, the Library of Osun State University took off from one of the lecture halls in the main campus at Osogbo with few Professional Librarians headed by Dr. M.A. Olaosun as the Consultant Librarian whom, with other Professors interviewed the Librarians, who were later employed. The library materials were purchased while some came in as gifts and donations in all areas of human endeavours. Following the processing of these materials, they were distributed to other campus libraries, most especially the three campuses that were ready for their academic work as of that time, that is: Osogbo, the College librarian then was Miss. O.O. Ilori, Okuku, the College Librarian was late Mr. A.K. Iyiade, while at Ikire Campus, the then College Librarian was Mr. A.S. Gbotosho. However, each of these three (3) Campuses, College Librarians were directly responsible to the University Librarian and Provosts/Deans of their respective Colleges/Faculties.

Nevertheless, Osun State University is a multi-campus institution operating collegiate system located in the six geo-political zones of the State. The UNIOSUN Library is decentralised in each of the six campuses namely: Osogbo, Okuku, Ikire, Ejigbo, Ipetu-Ijesa and Ifetedo. All the campus libraries share the responsibility of supporting the University's information needs, thus pooling knowledge, resources and personnel together to create efficiency. The main Library at Osogbo coordinates the activities of all campus libraries and ensures that they work together to achieve the mission and vision of the University. Similarly, Mrs. B.O. Asubiojo who was on sabbatical from Obafemi Awolowo University headed the University Library in the capacity of Deputy University Librarian, but plans were in top gear to employ a substantive University Librarian.

The decision to appoint Mrs. B.O. Asubiojo was taken then because the development of the University Library initially had major challenges due to the fact that the position of University librarian was advertised twice, without positive response. The position remained vacant until when Mr. A.M. Oyinloye was appointed as substantive university librarian in 2013.

Thus the headship of Mrs. B.O. Asubiojo precipitated massive development which has continued even to the end of her stay in the University. With the provision of quality leadership, the library was able to realise much of its potentials. The University invested huge sums of money on purchase and installation of electronic resources, journals and all kinds of reference materials. The library played a major role in supporting programmes mounted by the campuses during the accreditation exercises. The Library procured about 60,000 volumes of books and subscribed to 1,248 titles of both local and international journals. It is generally acknowledged

by professionals that this was a remarkable achievement for a University that was barely five years old from 2007-2012.

More so, the library also subscribed to a number of electronic databases and has a total of 1,133 electronic resources in various formats. The library has access to the MIT open course ware which aided development of the UNIOSUN Open Course Ware. Hours of opening were extended to 6 pm on weekdays and 4 pm on Saturdays.

Library services have been automated since the 2009/2010 session when the library purchased and installed the Koha library management system (an integrated library automation system), making its holdings visible to users via the Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC). Majority of the usual tiresome library routines have been taken up by KOHA automation software.

In addition, the library is connected to the Internet and has subscribed to many databases online which include: HINARY, AGORA, OARE, EBSCOHOST, JSTOR, Nigerian Virtual Library, African e-journal, Lexis-Nexis, Questia, etc., which are highly relevant, up-to-date and useful to students and staff in their various disciplines/programmes. On the other hand, librarians in the library started teaching the use of library course, that is, (LIB 101) from the 2008/2009 academic session, while also engaging in user-education for both students and staff.

At the end of Mrs. Asubiojo's tenure with the University, she was succeeded in an acting capacity by Dr. M.A. Olaosun, former University Librarian of Crawford University, Igbesa, Ogun State in 2011, for the second time to serve Osun State University Library. In the University Library, each of the campus libraries is headed by a qualified librarian and a number of qualified support staff. The University Management is a friend of the library and has been very supportive. Though, a young university, the institution has employed well qualified librarians and can boast of a larger number of staff than older university libraries.

Nonetheless, at the appointment of Dr. M. A. Olaosun as Acting University Librarian, he worked tremendously from where Mrs. B.O. Asubiojo stopped in enhancing the quality of the library infrastructure and services. A law librarian has been trained to take full charge of the law library in Ifetedo Campus while a medical librarian will be trained for the medical collection as soon as the department is put in place. The centrality of the library to all academic work as the pivot for teaching, learning and research activities in the University system to fulfill all righteousness, made it imperative in the year 2013 to appoint Mr. Ajibola Maxwell Oyinloye as substantive University Librarian to continue with the good work of Dr. M. A. Olaosun and Mrs. B. O. Asubiojo.

In earnest, on his assumption of duty, he started building on the specialised libraries in all the campuses of Osun State University, with up to date books and other documents supported by ICT facilities. His major target is the key issues in library provision in enhancing development in both print and digital formats such as: processing of the materials; provision of ideal environments for use, including environment; qualified personnel to carry out the services and feed backs. To this end, the library staff has been attending several training and workshops hitherto to make the entire library system attain world class standard in supporting teaching, learning and research activities in the University.

## Activities

Whenever the library is open, there is at least a porter on duty to protect users' personal materials left at the cloak of the library. These may include umbrellas, bags, briefcases, etc., which are not allowed into the library. The under listed persons are eligible to use the library: Bonafide students of UNIOSUN; members of the University Community; staff and students of other tertiary institutions on interlibrary co-operative loan system and any other researcher with special permission.

Furthermore, staff and students must register at the circulation desk by filling a form. The circulation librarian then completes the process online. In arranging the library materials, books and journals acquired and processed by the library are arranged by subject according to the Library of Congress Classification Scheme.

The software the library uses is Koha. It has the circulation, cataloguing, online public access catalogue (OPAC) and serials modules. It supports multi-campus system and so suitable for the university. Staff and students do not have to come physically to the library to check the holdings of the library. The campus libraries holdings are all visible to all users regardless of which campus they are, hence if they require a title in another campus library, *reservation can be made*. OPAC can be accessed on: [www.opac.uniosun.edu.ng](http://www.opac.uniosun.edu.ng).

Campus libraries are connected to the Internet. This becomes imperative for access to enrich information on the World Wide Web (WWW). Staff and students have unhindered access to current articles. Since many students may not have enough funds to acquire personal computers, the library provides access through the provision of over 200 computers all linked to the internet at its E-libraries in the campuses. The library Website can be accessed via the University Webpage by clicking on "library" while these-resources are accessed by clicking on "e-library".

## Highlight of the pioneer staff of the Library

It is pertinent to mention the first generation pioneer library staff of UNIOSUN, 2007/2008, while subsequent employment of librarians, library officers, secretary and other library staff of different cadres have continued to be given attention since then.

Dr. M. A.Olaosun	:	Consultant University Librarian
Miss. O. O. Ilori	:	Senior Librarian
Mr. F.A. Fabunmi	:	Senior Librarian (left)
Mr. A. K. Iyiade	:	Senior Librarian (deceased)
Mr. A. S. Gbotosho	:	Librarian II
Mrs. G. D. Pelemo	:	Librarian II
Mr. J. O. Oyekale	:	Librarian II
Miss. M. O. Odewole	:	Librarian II

In addition, right from the onset of this University library, there is a healthy relationship between the library and the members of the University Community.

## Library building

Based on the mission and vision of the University Management and Government of Osun State to create a unique institution committed to the pursuit of academic innovation, skill-based training and a tradition of excellence in teaching, research and community service, the libraries were moved from the lecture halls in each of the six (6) campuses to a bigger and spacious place within the main college building that could accommodate the increasing number of library users/clientele, library materials, staff and furniture. This was as a result of partial completion of the college buildings as at that time.

Nevertheless, apart from these stand-alone libraries in Osun State University, the state government and the University management commenced the building of a magnificent library that is comparable to any standard library in the world. This project is to be completed soon to accommodate students beyond vision 2035. For these reasons, one should not be surprised that UNIOSUN has tremendously performed well during the University accreditation exercise, in all the six (6) campuses, even as a young institution. Above all, by the time the main campus library building is completed, there will be enough space for all.

## Library literary materials

The library has purchased over 50,000 titles and more than 80,000 volumes of books which spread across all campuses according to programmes. The titles are current titles. It also subscribes to over 2,000 journal titles, local and international, print and electronic. There are many current reference materials such as encyclopedia, handbooks, and dictionaries, among others.

Both students and members of staff do not have to come physically to the library to check the holdings of the library. The campus libraries holdings are all visible to all users regardless of the campus they are, hence if they require a title in another campus library, reservation can be made. OPAC can be accessed on: [www.opac.uniosun.edu.ng](http://www.opac.uniosun.edu.ng). Thus, staff and students have unhindered access to current articles. Since many students may not have enough funds to acquire personal computers, the library provides access through the provision of over 200 computers all linked to the internet at its e-libraries in the campuses. The library has trained staff and students. The library website can be accessed on: <http://www.uniosun.edu.ng>, and via the University webpage by clicking on “*Library*” while the e-resources are accessed by clicking on ‘*e-library*’.

## Library furniture

All libraries in the six campuses are well furnished with modern library furniture for the users. Tables, chairs, catalogue cabinets, security desks, circulation desks, wooden and steel shelves, office cabinets, cloak shelves etc. have been acquired for all campus libraries. No campus library is left out in terms of facilities which are acquired in multiples to go round. Each campus library can accommodate over 300 users at a time. The shelves are well arranged and the library staff members are well trained and always ready to assist users. The library lays emphasis on delivery of good services.

## **Impact of the State Government**

The development of UNIOSUN Library right from the inception of the institution hitherto, is the outcome of the efforts of Osun State Government in all ramifications, and the love the University Management has for the library. Osun State Government has allocated billions of naira for the development of the library in the areas of staff welfare, training, library buildings, purchase of books and other information materials.

## **Library services**

### **Collection Development Unit**

In Osun State University Library, the nature of acquisitions has continued to illustrate the shift from print material to electronic media. More investments are in both digital content and technology infrastructure. The library acquires its resources in all formats, such as subscription to locally produced books and journals, large scale acquisition of books in print and subscription to international databases.

Information materials in the library could also be acquired through gifts, exchanges, inter-library loan and bequeath. It is the duty of the acquisitions unit to obtain acquisition funds, receive invoices from book-sellers, book vendors and publishers and make payments for book order in liaison with the accounts unit. However, some library acquisitions do not involve invoice payment. Every new information material coming into the library passes through the acquisitions department which ensures that proper records are kept concerning the item(s) acquired before being taken out for further processing and use.

### **Serials Unit**

The Serials unit stocks primary sources of information, for example periodicals, newspapers and magazines, academic journals on various subjects. The materials in this unit are restricted and cannot be taken out of the library. This unit of the library contains back issues of both foreign and local journals/periodicals, magazines, newspapers and special collections that have to do with government publications, Nigeriana, Osun-ana, gifts and exchanges, legal depository and rare books. The task of the serials unit is to select, acquire, record, process and display serials for use in the library. The serials unit undertakes the cataloguing and classification of serials and creation of a serials catalogue.

In Osun State University, the Serials Librarian and other support staff performs indexing, abstracting services as well as creation of vertical files. This unit also acquires and organises materials that belong here, and provides information services to users such as compilation of reading lists, selective dissemination of information, publication of current contents list, etc. Similarly, the unit handles all financial matters pertaining to the acquisition of serials, because the unit is run like a business enterprise or a commercial venture.

### **The Bindery Unit**

The University management, in collaboration with the University Library is seriously working hard for the establishment of a befitting and well equipped bindery unit of the library in Ikire Campus. This unit will take charge of repair and restoration of damaged library books. It could

as well fortify library books by converting paperbacks to hardbound books and binding cumulative volumes of serials. All issues of a particular newspaper in the library could be bound on a monthly basis such that they are better protected to withstand the wear and tear of intensive use.

### Reference Unit

The Reference Unit is headed by a Reference Librarian who performs the following services:

- Conducts an extensive literature search for readers with research/project proposal;
- Provides answers to specific queries;
- Instructs users on the use of the library, catalogues, abstracts, and indexes, etc.;
- Guides users/clienteles in locating materials;
- Renders photocopying services to readers; and
- Provides inter-library loan services.

The materials in the reference unit are for in-house use only. They are not for loan. Readers are supposed to consult or refer to them only. However, it is not only the materials that are consulted in this unit, but also the Reference Librarian and his supportive staff are consulted. These staff constitute the human resources of this unit and can answer questions from the users to satisfy their information needs. In addition, this unit of the library assists users to source for information very quickly through compilation of reading lists, dictionaries, encyclopaedias, dissertations, maps, gazettes, yearbooks, theses, bibliographies, abstracts and indexes, etc.

### Technical Services Unit

The Technical Service unit of Uniosun Library processes all library resources. The following resources are made available in this unit:

- LC Subject Headings and Schedule;
- Internet Connectivity to check online resources;
- Cataloguers' desktop.

This unit is responsible for the cataloguing and classification of all library materials. Cataloguing has to do with description of library materials such as books to point out important bibliographic features like author, title, place of publication, publisher, edition, date of publication and subject of each book. In classification, all materials that have similar subject contents are grouped together and are assigned class marks/numbers. The class mark identifies each item as a member of a group. The ultimate purpose of cataloguing and classification is to ensure that library materials are systematically organised by putting together all materials on a specific discipline in one area of the library shelves. It is possible to label the shelves so as to indicate what class of materials they hold. Cataloguing and classification save the time of the library users when it comes to retrieval of library materials

### Readers Services Unit

In Osun State University Library, this unit serves as the public relation unit. It is the point where books are charged out and discharged. The unit registers users and generates the library tickets that admit users/patrons into the library. All library users must, with or without borrowing privileges register and be issued a library ticket before they can make use of the library. The purpose of every library is to provide literature support and general information services to



users. It will definitely be a complete failure if a library cannot provide the needed readers' services. This library provides readers' services in two main divisions, namely:

- **Circulation Division:** In the Circulation Division, books change hands from one library user to another. This is why the library materials are said to be circulating. Here, there are books for loan and in-hour use. Once the library user is properly registered and is entitled to book loan, he goes to the circulation division to borrow the book(s) he wants. All records of a book on loan, including name and address of the borrower are kept at the circulation desk.
- **Reference Division:** In the Reference Division, materials are for in-house use only. They are not for loan. Materials here are supposed to be consulted or referred to only, hence, the name "*reference division*". Similarly, this division assists users to case out information very quickly through compilation of reading lists, bibliographic and the making of abstracts and indexes. A personalised information services is also provided for users, including selective dissemination of information (SDI).

### Access to library resources

Access to Uniosun library resources is through the library catalogue. The following catalogues are available either manually or electronically: Author/Title Catalogue, Subject Catalogue, and Serials Catalogue. The electronic catalogue is the Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC). It is managed by using Integrated Library Management System (ILS), for instance, KOHA Software. KOHA is an open source library system.

### Conclusion

Teaching, learning and research are important components of the goals and objectives of Osun State University. The University Library is established to assist the university achieves its goals and objectives as well as assist the researchers conduct a good research. However, many researchers (lecturers, students, scholars alike) lack the required library skills for gaining access to the relevant information resources in support of their learning and research activities. The Osun State Library is a suitable place for sourcing materials for research writing in a conducive environment. The information materials are current, relevant, and comprehensive, which can be used all the time to provide information sources and resources for knowledge development. More so, library users/clientele should endeavour to solicit for the assistance of library staff whenever and wherever they need assistance relating to materials for their research works.

### Recommendations

The following recommendations, if adopted by the Osun State University will go a long way in addressing its challenges and at the same time look forward to future opportunities to serve the community better.

- The university and library managements should collaborate by proposing a bill to Osun State House of Assembly that will make UNIOSUN Library a "Legal Depository Library" for Osun State. When passed into law, it will make it compulsory for authors and publishers in Osun State to deposit two (2) copies of their publications to Osun State University Library.
- Library programmes and services should be presented to library users/patrons in a way that will help them to understand the connections to their various needs.

- Critical library resources should be digitised to make them available online for easy accessibility. The provision of digital content, tools and services will facilitate easy convenient discovery and use of the relevant scholarly information.
- The UNIOSUN Library will need to develop new research partnerships by being an active partner in the development of infrastructure that supports research and publishing.
- New titles, both print and electronic are to be acquired from time to time to keep the stock alive. The University Management should not wait until accreditation exercises by the National Universities Commission approach before updating the library collection. The consequence of libraries not regularly and adequately acquiring current information materials from time to time will include among other things, a serious setback of the quality of university education. This may negatively affect job performance of the university products in a competitively driven market. Above all, by the time the main campus library building is completed, there will be enough space for all.

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