

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE SET UP BY THE NIGERIAN ASSOCIATION OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE EDUCATORS ON RELOCATION OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE (LIS) TO A SEPARATE FACULTY

Introduction

During the 22nd National Conference and Annual General Meeting of the Nigerian Association of Library and Information Science Educators (NALISE) held at Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, from 9th – 16th September, 2019, a Committee was constituted on the relocation of Library and Information Science (LIS) to a separate Faculty with the following members:

1. Professor Zakari Mohammed, Department of Library and Information Science, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria (Chairman)
2. Professor Innocent I. Ekoja, Department of Library and Information Science, University of Abuja, FCT, Nigeria
3. Professor Rosaline O. Opeke, Department of Information Resources Management, Babcock University, Ilishan-Remo, Nigeria
4. Professor Emmanuel M.K. Dawha, Department of Library and Information Science, University of Maiduguri, Maiduguri, Nigeria
5. Professor K. I. N. Nwalo, Department of Library, Archival and Information Studies, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria
6. Dr. G.A. Babalola, Department of Library and Information Technology, Federal University of Technology, Minna, Nigeria
7. Dr. Basil O. Edom, Department of Library and Information Science, Imo State University, Owerri, Nigeria
8. Dr. Juliet C. Alex-Nmecha, Department of Library and Information Science, University of Port Harcourt, Port Harcourt, Nigeria
9. Dr. Kingsley N. Igwe, Department of Library and Information Science, AkanuIbiam Federal Polytechnic, Unwana, Afikpo, Nigeria (Secretary).

The constituted Committee was given the following terms of reference which were, to:

1. Determine the appropriate, modern and acceptable nomenclature for LIS schools in Nigeria.
2. Suggest the appropriate Faculty for the location of LIS Departments.
3. Suggest, if considered appropriate and feasible, the name of a separate Faculty for the LIS Departments.
4. Make suggestions on any other related matter of interest to the LIS profession.

Activities of the Committee

Due to the COVID 19 pandemic that led to lockdown and ban on interstate movements, different Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools were adopted and used by the committee for its interactions and deliberations, especially WhatsApp, Email and Zoom applications. The committee had series of interactive sessions on WhatsApp, had some communications through email, as well as called for memoranda and received same from different LIS schools and other concerned individuals. On the whole, a total of seventeen (17) memoranda were received, twelve (12) from LIS schools across Nigeria, whereas the rest five (5) were from concerned individuals who are professionals in the field. The committee also subscribed to Zoom web conference application and used same for virtual meetings. Specifically, the committee had virtual meeting via zoom on four different occasions: Friday, July 24, 2020; Monday, August 03, 2020; Thursday, August 06, 2020 and Thursday, September 03, 2020, which was the final day when the report was considered and approved.

Resolutions

After series of interactions, deliberations, discussions and arguments, the following were reached based on the terms of reference:

1. Determine the appropriate, modern and acceptable nomenclature for LIS schools in Nigeria.

Resolution: **Department of Library and Information Science**

However, for the Universities of Technology, they should adopt 'Library and Information Technology' in line with their mandate since technology is an aspect of science.

2. Suggest the appropriate Faculty for the location of LIS Departments

Resolution: Library and Information Science (LIS) Departments/programmes should remain where they are until the realization of Faculty status for the multidisciplinary field. This is in line with National Universities Commission's (NUC) policy of accreditation of LIS Departments regardless of the Faculty where they are located (domiciled). In addition, LIS Departments in Faculties of Education in Nigerian Universities should not be compelled to take education—related courses that are not necessary to the field.

3. Suggest, if considered appropriate and feasible, the name of a separate Faculty for the LIS Departments

Resolution: All memoranda submitted by LIS Schools and concerned individuals agreed that we should have a separate faculty for the field with other allied Departments apart from LIS. It was agreed that we should adopt **Faculty of Information Studies** based on strong arguments considering that Information Science will be one of the Departments/programmes in the proposed Faculty. In addition, for

specialized Universities like Universities of Technology, they know how to take care of their situation by adding technology to the name so as to reflect their mandate.

4. Make suggestions on any other related matter of interest to the LIS profession.

i. Creation of New Departments/Programmes for the Proposed Faculty of Information Studies

After deliberations by members, it was agreed that the following programmes are viable to become academic Departments in the proposed Faculty of Information Studies due to their visible career and entrepreneurial opportunities:

- a. Department of Library and Information Science**
- b. Department of Information Science**
- c. Department of Archives, Records and Information Management**
- d. Department of Knowledge Management**
- e. Department of Publishing Studies**
- f. Department of Health Information Management**

The creation of these independent Departments does not mean that all LIS Schools should float the new Departments/programmes when approved, rather it will be a gradual process, starting with some LIS Schools with requisite human resources having expertise and specializations in the new programmes. This is in addition to the availability and accessibility of other essential resources for education and training in the digital era.

Meanwhile, LIS education and training in Nigeria should discourage specializations like Law Librarianship, Medical Librarianship, Agricultural Librarianship, etc, at the first degree level, as products of such areas would be highly limited in employability. However, specialization is desirable along areas identified as viable independent academic programmes like Archives and Records Management, Publishing, Knowledge Management, Health Information Management, etc.

ii. **Constitution of Enlarged Committee for Developing Curriculum of the New Departments/Programmes**

It was suggested and agreed that another committee should be set up with enlarged membership that cut across all stakeholders of the field (educators, practicing librarians, inforpreneurs, knowledge managers, publishers, professional associations like Nigerian Library Association, etc) that will develop curriculum for the new academic Departments/programmes. Membership of this committee should also include some practitioners in the corporate sector playing active roles in information and knowledge management practices.

iii. **Polytechnic-based LIS Schools and the New Programmes**

When approved, Polytechnics that run LIS programme should consider these new programmes/Departments as specializations at Higher National Diploma (HND) level. What this means is that after National Diploma (ND) in Library and Information Science (LIS), the students have options at the HND level for specialization, which are:

- HND in Library and Information Science,
- HND in Archives and Records Management,
- HND in Knowledge Management,
- HND in Publishing Studies, etc.

The only exception is Health Information Management which is already an approved programme in Nigerian Polytechnics and other health-related Monotechnics leading to the award of ND & HND in Health Information Management. These specializations would facilitate further studies in the Universities in line with the new Departments/programmes.

This will be like other programmes in the Polytechnic system like Department of Science Laboratory Technology that after ND, there are specializations at the HND level such as HND Biochemistry, HND Microbiology, HND Chemistry, HND Physics and Electronics, etc.

iv. Curriculum, ICT Laboratory and Ultra-Modern Libraries

Curriculum of LIS programmes should be broadened to include more courses on ICT, entrepreneurship and general information management outside libraries. Emphasis should be on practical ICT skills like coding, programming, networking, web design and management, digitization and content development, troubleshooting, e-learning applications, etc. In addition, there should be functional ICT laboratory as well as ultra-modern libraries in all LIS schools.

v. Staffing and Continuous Professional Development

There should be adequate staffing of LIS schools in terms of number and quality. Deliberate approach should be adopted to engage more LIS educators with strong and practical-based ICT background in our LIS Schools. In addition, there should be periodic and continuous professional development of LIS educators in line with 21st century realities.

vi. Sponsor a Bill at the National Assembly

Government establishments, primary and secondary schools should be encouraged to establish standard library and information centres (or library and media resource centres). NALISE, NLA and LRCN should sponsor a bill at the National Assembly to that effect, especially to enforce the establishment of libraries in primary and secondary schools as contained in National Policy on Education, 4th edition, 2004.

vii. Discourage Dual Appointment of Lecturers and Librarians

There is need to discourage dual appointment of Librarians as Lecturers and vice versa. Rather, there should be single appointment as Librarians or Lecturers, whereas, any other responsibility should be on adjunct basis. Librarians in the university library can voluntarily participate in teaching and project supervision in the LIS School on a part-time basis. Anything that looks like dual appointment as Librarian/Lecturer in any university or polytechnic should be discouraged as it would breed conflict of interest. Moreover, Henri Fayols' 14 Principles of Administration emphasised the principle of Unity of Command (i.e. staff must report to only one head at a time within an organisation to avoid conflict of loyalty and interest). Similarly, lecturers in the LIS School could also take up part-time appointment in the parent University or Polytechnic library to enhance their income and improve on their practical skills.

Challenges

The committee had some challenges, especially poor network connectivity during its virtual meetings. Cost of subscribing to zoom application (about #6,500 for a month) that enabled us have our meetings beyond 40 minutes (maximum duration for free zoom) was borne by one of the committee members. This should be reimbursed by NALISE Executives. In addition,

engaging in zoom virtual meeting consumes a lot of data; so members spent their personal resources to ensure the actualization of the mandate given to the committee.

Conclusion

The Committee Chairman, Professor Zakari Mohammed, thanked NALISE led by Professor Udo Nwokocha for the opportunity to serve the association and LIS profession in Nigeria. Professor Mohammed also thanked all members of the committee for sacrificing their time and data throughout the virtual meetings we had via Zoom.

Professor Zakari Mohammed.....SIGNED.....03/09/2020.....
(Chairman)

Professor Innocent I. Ekoja..... SIGNED.....03/09/2020.....
(Member)

Professor Rosaline O. Opeke..... SIGNED.....03/09/2020.....
(Member)

Professor Emmanuel M.K. Dawha..... SIGNED.....03/09/2020.....
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Professor K. I. N. Nwalo..... SIGNED.....03/09/2020.....
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Dr. Juliet C. Alex-Nmecha..... SIGNED.....03/09/2020.....
(Member)

Dr. K.N. Igwe..... SIGNED.....03/09/2020.....
(Member/Secretary)