



# Report on the Website Inauguration for Crawford University (CRU) Alumni UK

- 1 Introduction to the event and welcome message - Ms Victoria Akinsola**
- 2 Opening prayers - Mr Elusogbon Segun**
- 3 University Anthem led by Mr Segun Aroba.**
- 4 Introduction and History of CRU UK Alumni – Dr Moses Akazue**
  - 4.1 Pre-inauguration (2011 – 2016)**

Dr Moses Akazue gave a very detailed summary of the history of CRU Alumni in the UK. The humble beginnings of the alumni in the UK was traced back to December 2011 when we had our very first reunion at the O2 arena in London. It was an evening of lively conversations, catching up and sharing ideas on how to give back to our alma mater.

The reunion mainly had Unicorns 01 and 02 in attendance. Two (2) suggestions came out of that meeting, the first of which was to explore ways of acquiring book donations from UK universities and charities that can be shipped to Crawford annually. The second was for alumni to institute regular contributions to carry out projects in Crawford. We all left that meeting with a lot of momentum. Nevertheless, time and chance still managed to happen to most of us, so we could not implement the ideas right away. Like Albert Einstein makes us understand, failure is success in progress..., despite our lack of immediate action, conversations continued into 2015 and 2016. At this stage, we faced a unique set of challenges, one of which was that most of the alumni present in our pioneer reunion of 2011, had left the UK to live in other countries.

## **4.2 Inauguration of CRU Alumni UK (2016)**

In 2016 most Unicorns in the UK were starting to settle down into stable careers and paths, so we decided to establish a link with Crawford, and put words into action. Around this time, we learnt that the VC (Prof Rotimi Ajayi) was planning to visit Scotland and that he was interested in officially inaugurating CRU Alumni UK during his visit. On hearing this news, we quickly swung into action and fixed a date for a meeting. Several alumni could not attend because of the short notice, but a handful was able to put everything on hold and book a trip to the meeting. The inauguration took place in Glasgow at the very historic and beautiful Glasgow cathedral and had a total of five alumni in attendance. Some of the alumni present at this meeting went on to constitute the core of the caretaker committee, and the committee has since grown to include several others. The caretaker committee is currently made up of the ten (10) distinguished members listed below:



- 1) Mr Opeyemi Ibukun
- 2) Mr Olusegun Elusogbon
- 3) Mr Julius Aroba
- 4) Mr Samuel Osifeso
- 5) Dr Chidozie Mgbemena
- 6) Mr Kayode Omosebi
- 7) Ms Victoria Akinsola
- 8) Mr Joba Mogaji
- 9) Mrs Ayooluwa Adegbaaju
- 10) Dr Moses Akazue

### 4.3 Post Inauguration (2016 – to date)

In September 2017, the alumni had another nationwide reunion in Manchester, which had a total of seven (7) members in attendance. As part of generating working capital for the alumni, caretakers agreed to commit to a monthly £10 contribution. This monthly contribution (strictly by caretakers) started in 2018 and is still ongoing today. Some of the chapter's achievements since its inauguration in 2016 are as follows:

- 1) The chapter successfully organised a Crawford University UK alumni week at Faith city.
- 2) The chapter actively participated in the COVID relief effort organised by pioneer Unicorns for CRU pioneer staff.
- 3) The chapter has been able to build a standard association website which we are launching today.
- 4) Today, we have over 40 members in the larger house and growing.

### 5 Presentation of the website by Mr. Joba Mogaji

Mr Joba Mogaji and Dr Chidozie Mgbemena worked on the website. The goal of building the website was to help us identify ourselves in the UK and drive networking amongst us. Another purpose of the website is to enable UK alumni network and engage with one another.

Anyone that has studied in the UK can register using the link provided on the 'registration page'. The information gathered from the register page will enable us to help one another with career and other relevant advice. The link to the website is <https://crualumniuk.org/>. We hope to improve the website over time.

### 6 Launch of website by the VC, Prof. Isaac Ajayi

The VC, Professor Isaac Ajayi, started by saluting the chair and members of the caretaker committee. He appreciated our effort, and concern for the development of the university, as well as our dedication and achievements. Professor Ajayi prayed that God bless and establish



us. Professor Ajayi mentioned that he was pleased when we informed him about the launch. He also emphasised that Alumni is a big resource for every university. Professor Ajayi is proud of all the alumni in the UK. It is why he travelled down to the UK when he heard that we were setting up a caretaker committee. He thanked us for hosting him in Scotland. That day he was able to launch the committee. He mentioned that they are also trying to formalise the Nigerian chapter. At this stage, they are looking to create the constitution and appoint officials.

Professor Ajayi thanked Opeyemi for visiting the university at the last graduation on behalf of the team. He also thanked the caretaker committee for the donations made to members of staff as a relief fund for Covid-19. The university has given so much to us, and he is glad that we are contributing to its development. All our efforts are appreciated. Prof. Ajayi also mentioned that building the website is heart-warming to the school as everyone knows that the window to any organisation is their website. Thousands of people will be coming to learn about CRU from our website. Professor Ajayi wants CRU to be recognised globally, and this website will contribute to that.

Professor Ajayi thanked us for building the website on behalf of the management, the board of trustees, members of staff and students. He urged us to continue to update it so people will learn about us and know what we are doing. He mentioned that it is an adequate networking tool to rally more support for the university. Professor Ajayi spoke about the monument garden, which is a legacy of the first set. The alumni and the church own the university. Everyone must come together to help the institution grow. CRU has produced godly and responsible citizens that will be able to help the Nigerian government. The dreams of the founding fathers are being achieved. Daddy Paul Akazue founded the university, and the university will fulfil his dreams for it. Professor Ajayi expressed his profound gratitude to all of us. He is aware that the contributions that we are making are coming from our hard-earned money. The university expects us to do more. Let us network with other people such as the US as they can learn from us and create a US chapter. The Nigerian Alumni chapter will be created, and that chapter will be the global one. We can all come together and network. Years to come, we will all be proud of this.

There are new structures in the school now that have just been commissioned. These include the new lecture centre, lecture block as well as several buildings. Everyone is proud of the contributions that we are making. Today, everyone is proud of Harvard and Yale. In some years to come, people will know CRU as a citadel of higher education. He is proud of CRU. Professor Ajayi gave us his blessings and prayed that God will bless, support, and establish us in our careers. We will reach the pinnacle of our careers. 'On behalf of the board of trustees, council



management and staff, I wish to formally launch this website, the UK chapter alumni association of CRU'. Professor Ajayi believes that the website will be used for good and the development of mankind. He launched it in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

## 7 Future of the association by Opeyemi Ibukun

Opeyemi Ibukun appreciated the VC. 'Thank you so much for your presence, thanks for the support always. It is deeply appreciated'.

Opeyemi mentioned that he is happy we have like-minded people that are willing to support the university. We are encouraged to do more; hence we will share our plans. We wish to have a larger group, so networking is essential. Now donation comes from the steering committee.

There are 40 people in the entire group. We kept contribution to the caretaker committee because we think we should lead by example. We want to show what we can do before approaching people for funds for bigger projects. It will encourage people to trust us with their money. We are also looking to increase the number of people in the group. We also want to register it as a charity organisation. It is a legal requirement for charity organisations to earn at least 5,000 GBP per annum. We do not have this amount now. However, we do not want to wait until we have 5,000 GBP before we start. We are working on the necessary documentation pending when we get the money. We are aware that regulations change. However, we do not believe that these changes will be drastic.

We are also looking to incorporate a networking feature on the website. It will be used for the business network after students complete their studies. Students will be able to connect and seek advice on what to study and everything else. We will ensure that data is properly governed as we are careful with regards to how people use the data.

The next paragraph provides a list of projects in the pipeline:

- 1) **Project 1:** Alumni week will be done every year, but we may not be able to do it this year as we are not sure of the impact of Covid-19 on the forthcoming convocation. However, we are looking to do something small if we are unable to do something as big as what we did last year. The plan moving forward is that we will get keynote speakers and give awards to students and lecturers.
- 2) **Project 2:** Quarterly/Bi-annual business/technical meetings. It will provide learning opportunities in business, technical, and other relevant areas to help us excel in our careers.



- 3) **Project 3:** Sponsor students for postgraduate degrees at CRU, based on financial capability – This is for people who are willing to study and do not necessarily have the funds. We are looking to get to this level in the next five (5) years.
- 4) **Project 4:** Support the university to have international exchange programs and collaborations with universities in the UK. We are not sure if the university is in the process of doing this with a UK university. If this is the case, we can help facilitate the process/discussions.
- 5) **Project 5:** Donate books and electronic gadgets to the university. Like Moses said, during our first meeting, this is one of the things that we discussed. We still have it in mind to do it.
- 6) **Project 6:** Paid advert to highlight University and Alumni achievements - We are looking to pay for adverts in newspapers and TV stations in Nigeria.
- 7) **Project 7:** Improve the skill sets of CRU undergraduates to be best suited to face the 21st century. Opeyemi mentioned that a CRU student came to meet him to talk about the university setting up a business hub to commemorate what the university is doing with their entrepreneurship program. One of the things that we need to do is lobbying if there is an innovation hub set in place. We have people in finance and IT who can support in this area. We have Drs and lecturers amongst us. We have four (4) Drs amongst us, and some other members are undergoing their doctorate program. We can use our experience in built-in industry and academia to support CRU students. We are also happy to take suggestions from the UK group. Opeyemi thanked everyone for attending and for their support. Opeyemi especially appreciated the VC and spoke of how he has supported us. The VC has given us confidence that he is with us, and he wants to see the university grow. Opeyemi mentioned that he wants them to renew the VC's tenure as we do not want to see him go. Thank you, Professor Ajayi. We pray that God continues to bless you. Thank you to the caretaker committee. The members of the committee all contributed to the success of UK alumni group and the website launch. Thank God for inspiring us to do all that we have done.

## 8 Comments

### 8.1 Mr Henry's comments

Thank you very much for inviting me and allowing me to be part of history. I am excited. I have two concerns.

- 1) The website for UK alumni. I want you all to know that it is possible but not feasible i.e. it is not in our best interest in the long run if other alumni in different areas such as America replicate what we have done. The UK should rapidly expand to be able to welcome alumni's globally. The website is too beautiful to only be a UK property.



- 2) I like the things you have highlighted with regards to what we want to do. Some few suggestions- instead of advertising on newspaper, occasionally chip in adverts via social media adverts – maybe once in a month or once in a quarter to support our effort globally. Think about this and include this in our agenda.

## 8.2 Further comments from the VC

When coming to Nigeria, you are welcome to lecture students, especially those of you who have PhDs. It will be a thing of pride to have PhDs do seminars and public lectures.

The university can organise a public lecture, publicise it for you, share your profile with students and introduce you to them. If you are staying for three months or more, you can teach a course. It is another way to contribute to the university. An American professor did a course for three months and earned a salary for this. The professor is also providing CRU with students. I will explore the website and visit it from time to time.

You should also use social media invites to inform people about what you are offering. These are ways to promote the university. Today's event has made my day. Thank you all. In less than three months, my tenure is ending as the Vice-chancellor. I will be in touch with you and hand you over properly to the incoming VC. I will also hand over to him so he can continue the journey. I am proud of all of you.

Endeavour to assist the Nigerian branch. They are trying to organise a conference. The Nigerian chapter needs to be formidable. You should be part of the exercise so that you can get people to represent you. The interim chairman, Mr Olusoji Adasaka has been contributing to the council meetings. Since he is still interim, I would like the elected officers to be inaugurated. CRU is also looking to start a levy for alumni. CRU alumni will pay certain fees to the alumni account. I hope these things are achieved even before the end of my tenure.

## 8.3 Comments from Julius Aroba and the VC

- 1) Mentioned that there is no updated database for all CRU graduates.
  - a. The VC confirmed that there is one and it also contains phone numbers.
- 2) Institutions in limelight do weekly testimonies. Interview people and they will speak about the school.
  - a. The VC confirmed that we have some of these put in place. An Alumni working with UNESCO met with the chairman of BOT and the BOT interviewed him. They have this on record. He encouraged us to send the school videos if you have any that they can document. The school needs the alumni office to be functional. They have appointed a secretary who relates with the interim chairman in Nigeria.





- 3) Julius suggested that the caretaker committee should work closely with Mr Henry to be aware of this.
- 4) Julius also suggested an interaction session before the end of the meeting.

## 9 Vote of thanks – Opeyemi Ibukun

Appreciated VCs support and thanked him for letting us know that he will hand us over properly.

## 10 Closing Prayer – Samuel Osifeso

Led closing prayers.

After the closing prayers, we took a screen shot of attendees followed by a bonding session.