



## Just for Professor Olufemi Ayinde Peters

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Professor Olufemi Ayinde Peters traversed the landscape of the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) with remarkable distinction and grace. In the early days of his service at the university, before benevolence elevated him to the exalted office of Vice-Chancellor, colleagues described him as a risk-taker who willingly relinquished the security and prestige of Ahmadu Bello University (ABU) for the uncertain future at the newly established National Open University of Nigeria.

Like the sailors described in the classic novel, *Treasure Island*, by Robert Louis Stevenson, they led a rugged and unpredictable life on the high, very rough seas. Like the very young crew member on the ship, Jim Hawkins, a cabin boy, he faced many challenges. Like the one-legged, peg-legged 'Long John Silver', an infamous pirate whose character was said to be complex, embodying both charm and the turbulence of life on the seas, Professor Peters experienced both loyalty and betrayal. Sustained by conviction and hope, he pressed forward, confident that, regardless of the circumstances, he would not only sight the harbour, but also anchor with treasure-laden ships.

Endowed with humility, wisdom, and kindness, Professor Peters exemplifies steady leadership, refined by experience and faith. It is perhaps no coincidence that God entrusted him with the responsibility of steering the university at a critical juncture of institutional growth and consolidation in the digital era of teaching and learning.

When he articulated his strategic goals at the outset of his tenure, few could have foreseen the depth and reach of the transformation that



would follow. True to his word, Professor Peters fulfilled his commitments with distinction. He expanded public awareness of NOUN, enhanced the university's visibility, and increased access to its programmes across social and demographic groups — workers, the underprivileged, the disadvantaged, and other marginalised populations — through improved ICT infrastructure, modern laboratories, enriched libraries, and revitalised study centres nationwide. Under his guidance, course delivery was significantly refined to integrate e-learning platforms, instructional videos, print materials, and structured facilitation.

His administration revitalised the Directorate of Research Administration (DRA) by introducing and funding Senate Research Grants, which have significantly benefited many academics. He also institutionalised a comprehensive framework for robust human capacity-building and welfare, recognising the imperative for the efficient delivery of content by the university's academic, technical, and administrative staff.

Equally noteworthy was his success in harmonising the operations of the NOUN Press, the Course Material Development Unit (CMDU), the Learning Content Management System (LCMS), and the Management Information System (MIS). This alignment created an efficient, sequential process for the physical and digital production of course materials and their timely dissemination to learners nationwide.

Having had the privilege of serving under Professor Peters as Director of Research Administration, Dean of the School of Postgraduate Studies, and currently as Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), I can attest to his sterling qualities. He is a statesman of intellect and integrity - compassionate, visionary, and profoundly innovative. He embodies fairness, rewards excellence and loyalty, and maintains an enduring commitment to institutional progress. Like Stevenson's Long John Silver, he possesses a generous spirit; yet, unlike Silver, he never sought the treasure for himself but dedicated it to the advancement of posterity.



He is a gateway to knowledge in the Open and Distance e-learning system, with the maxim: “In Open and Distance Learning, let your mind be open”. As the sun rises unfailingly every morning, so has Professor Peters remained steadfast and consistent in his advocacy for the ODL philosophy.

As I conclude this tribute, it is fitting to reaffirm that Professor Olufemi Ayinde Peters’ contributions to academia - particularly in Open and Distance Education - have revolutionised the delivery of higher education and expanded access for countless learners across Nigeria and the African continent. Beyond the tangible milestones of leadership and accomplishment lies a visionary whose passion for progress continues to inspire collective commitment to innovation and excellence.

Tireless, meticulous, charismatic, forward-looking, and strategic, Professor Peters remains a beacon of purpose and a custodian of institutional transformation. His legacy endures in the systems he strengthened, the minds he nurtured, and the lives he profoundly uplifted.

Thank you, Professor Peters, for your exemplary leadership and service, for the minds you have shaped, the systems you have improved, and the lives you have touched.



