Letter to the Editor

THE SORRY PLIGHT OF THE IVORY TOWER

Dear Editor,

One of the numerous unpleasant regimens of medical practice in the face of management of an incurable, agonizing morbid condition is mercy killing at the behest of the patient or his/her next of kin. Little did we realize in this country that the regimen of euthanasia will be applied to our citadels of higher learning — the universities. It is needless to say that our higher institutions are mere collating centers where lecturers assemble to collate and review old publications in the present circumstance to save their face.

The quality of teaching is so skeletal to the extent that lecturers cannot boast of current magazines, journals, textbooks, etc. for effective teaching/learning. The laboratories are empty, the premises are unkempt and the teachers look rugged with their patched dresses.

This ugly situation probably prompted many worn-out lecturers to become leftists. The research grant, which used to cushion the financial embarrassment of the academic after spending his/her meager resources, has now become a fad. A visit to any departmental library is enough to drive my points home. They are replete with archaic, out-moded texts and journals. The students themselves have lost hope for the future when the teachers whom they should emulate are nothing but place-fillers. Some of the students who are privileged lend their books to their lecturers who cannot afford to purchase any no matter how small the price is.

This is ridiculous, it is unthinkable to express the least if an academic is to command respect from his/her students. What knowledge do you wish to impact or the technique you wish to adopt when a lecturer who is supposed to have greater and more advanced textbooks in his custody shares a textbook with his/her student? Who is a learner and who is the learned in this context?

Things have gone down the drain and we are yet to see the exodus of academics to the land full of milk and honey. An academic can only perform effectively when he is well informed, well catered for and very comfortable. That is the reason why you don’t find them engaged in social outings, which can disrupt their teaching I research schedule.

It used to be a matter of honour and respect when people learn that one is a university teacher because they know the sacrifice and perseverance it entails let alone the cut-off from the environmental goodies to which employees are subjected. You can predict the whereabouts of an academic. He is either in his office or lecture room/laboratory or in the library. There is no doubt that their families miss them a lot.

A friend of mine applied to her institution for a sponsored workshop on AIDS; only to be told that her university regretted to inform her that she could not be sponsored due to the institution’s lean purse. Just imagine that! A university was so poor to sponsor an international workshop. How on earth do you profess yourself when you have no idea of the current/global approach to the wide-spread issue like AIDS? Weep not Nigerians.

I salute the courage of the lecturers in the present predicament for letting the world know their plight and I do believe that the truth shall prevail no matter crooked and long the journey for academic pursuit takes.

Akande O. O.
Department of Physiology,
College of Medicine,
University of Ibadan.
Ibadan, Nigeria.