

NASARAWA STATE UNIVERSITY, KEFFI

THERE IS NO FINANCIAL SCAM IN NASARAWA STATE UNIVERSITY, KEFFI

The Nation Newspapers of Wednesday, July 28, 2010 on page 6 carried a sensational headline titled "Nasarawa Varsity Students Petition EFCC over Vice-Chancellor's alleged Fraud". The headline bears the by-line of Dele Anofi, who wrote from Abuja. He gave the name of the signatory to the Petition as John Doma. The same is true of The Guardian Newspaper of Thursday, July 29th 2010, page 5, written by Lemmy Ugbegbe also from Abuja. The headline this time says, 'Students accuse VC of N100m fraud'.

The Petition, according to the stories, alleged, among other things, that the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Shamsudeen O.O. Amali OFR is involved in a multi-million naira financial scam and further insinuates that his governing style, in the six months since he assumed duty, has perverted justice and breached protocols. The allegations had in mind the cost of renovating and furnishing the abandoned Vice-Chancellor's Lodge; the purchase of an official SUV Vehicle which it claimed is being fueled at the tune of N120,000 monthly. The Nation alluded that the Vice-Chancellor slapped the Internal Auditor for questioning how the Institution's money was being spent. But on this one, the Guardian differed. It said it was the personnel assistant to the Vice-Chancellor that slapped the Auditor –a case of same story, different accounts? Both however, speculated that a fortune is being spent on Hotel bills on the Vice-Chancellor where he was lodged since in January 1st, 2010.

Taking into account the right of any stakeholder to play the 'whistle-blower' role, the general public should note that the Vice-Chancellor, has not and will never engage in any under-hand dealings. Under him, the general

administration of the University including and most importantly, that of the administration of its finances has always been scrupulous, prudent, transparent and meets priority requirements.

I believe the Vice-Chancellor should be applauded for making sure that the Lodge which was abandoned due to structural defects was put in order. This was done so as to put to rest the issue of make-shift arrangements for the Chief Executive Officer since the University took off in February, 2002. The Vice-Chancellor was lodged in the Hotel because of the absence of a livable lodge. The same is true of the official vehicle. An SUV was purchased because there was no assigned vehicle then for the new Vice-Chancellor.

It is very instructive to note that the renovation and furnishing of the Lodge and purchase of the official vehicle were approved by the appropriate authorities of the University. This therefore debunks the assertions that the University perverted justice and breached protocol. Our records are clear and the doors of the University are open to any interested party to cross-check the facts.

On the Internal Auditor, there was a misunderstanding between the VC's PA and the Internal Auditor. The accounts of what really happened are as sketchy as it can get. But pronto, the Vice-Chancellor sets up a panel to investigate the matter and recommend the next line of action. But it is obvious that somebody was in a hurry to rub the Vice-Chancellor in this. Hence the glaringly discordant accounts relayed by the stories. Nothing can be farther from the truth. The Reporter should have read between the lines as to decipher what issue made enough sense to include in such publications.

I make bold to say that the allegations of financial scam are baseless and the publication breached journalism protocol by carrying a story that does not have a known person with a known contact. It perverted justice by attracting public odium with the soul intention to smear the hard-earned reputation of the Vice-Chancellor and sensationalize operators of the high-flying University but also to embarrass the government and well-meaning people of Nasarawa State.

Prof. Shamsudeen O.O. Amali has never been a party to fraudulent practices, financial or otherwise. He has built a world-class reputation for his scholarly and academic works, lived a modest and respectable social life and had since disciplined himself towards a goal – targeted administrative style. Only recently, while he was Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ilorin between 2002-2007, he acquitted himself creditably well without blemish of any kind.

It should be noted that, no amount of media onslaught will change the Vice-Chancellor's core principles of prudence, probity and commitment to selfless service to his nation. The University refuses to be stampeded into joining issues with faceless individuals and groups by engaging in unnecessary public or media spats with people who ought to know better than dissipate their time and energy in idle talks.

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