

**Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam  
Campus, Anambra State, Nigeria**

**Report on the Enhancing Employability of Accounting Graduates  
in Uganda and Nigeria by Integrating Employability Skills into  
Accounting Education using a Work Integrated Learning (WIL)  
Approach (DESIRED Project) Research Grant Commencement  
Meeting for Stakeholders.**



**Meeting:** EU-DESIRED Research Grant Commencement Meeting of the Stakeholders held at Department of Marketing Lecture hall, Faculty of Management Science Complex, on the 25<sup>th</sup> November 2025, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam Campus, Anambra State, Nigeria

## **Project Theme: Enhancing Employability of Accounting Graduates (DESIRED Project)**

**Meeting:** EU-DESIRED Research Grant Commencement Meeting of the Stakeholders held at Department of Marketing Lecture hall, Faculty of Management Science Complex, on the 25<sup>th</sup> November 2025, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam Campus, Anambra State, Nigeria

**Participants:** Stakeholders (Staff of Accountancy Department, Staff of Finance Department, and students leaders of both Departments) of Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University (COOU) and the COOU EU-DESIRED Grant Research Team.

### **1. Introduction and Welcome Remarks - Dr. Chukwunonso Ekesiobi (COOU DESIRED Research Team Leader)**

The meeting commenced with a warm welcome address delivered by the COOU Team Leader, Dr. Ekesiobi, beginning with acknowledging the historic significance of the occasion, noting that the EU-DESIRED grant represents the first major European Union research grant to be benefited by Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University. This achievement, he emphasized, is a positive step in the current visibility drive of the University Management under the leadership of the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Kate Azuka Omenugha *fnipr* towards the University's growing commitment to international collaboration, research excellence, and the pursuit of academic programmes that are globally competitive and locally relevant. He also highlighted members of the university administration for their role thus far in ensuring the seamless participation of COOU in the grant exercise, they include the University Bursar – Dr. Nathaniel Udezuo, the University Legal Officer – Prof. Johnny Chigbo Okongwu, the Head of the COOU Collaborations and Linkages Unit / COOU-EU Portal Officer – Prof. Ngozi Joe-Ikechebelu, and the University Public Relations Officer – Dr. Harrison Madubueze. Dr. Ekesiobi equally acknowledged the co-operative role of the Nnamdi Azikiwe University Research Team for the support and collaboration every step of the way, which will lead to the success of the Nigerian team in the project.

Subsequently, the welcome remarks focused on setting a collaborative tone for the project. Dr. Ekesiobi stressed that the success of the DESIRED project hinges on the seamless synergy between the internal and external stakeholders in the project which comprises of the staff and students of Accountancy and Finance Departments, the organised private sector, accounting professionals, and the dedicated Research Team. He extended gratitude to the European Union for their investment in promoting socially impactful research, as well as other education intuitions collaborating in the research from Africa and Europe. Dr Ekesiobi subsequently welcomed the staff and student leaders of Accountancy Department and Finance Department, whose presence underscored the necessity of institutional cooperation for the project. He concluded by assuring the readiness of the Research Team to maintain the high standards of accountability and transparency required by the European Union's Erasmus+ Programme, ensuring that the grant's objectives are met efficiently and effectively over the two-year implementation period.



**Dr. Chukwunonso Ekesiobi, COOU Research Team Lead giving the opening remarks at the COOU stakeholders meeting on the nature and scope of the Grant, stressing the opportunities for the university and the need for committed effort by all identified stakeholders within COOU.**

## **2. Presentation of the EU-DESIRE D Research Grant Project - Dr. Alajekwu**

A member of the COOU research team, Dr. Alajekwu delivered a detailed and insightful presentation on the scope, objectives, and expected impact of the EU-DESIRE D Research Grant Project. His presentation clarified that the project, officially titled "Enhancing Employability of Accounting Graduates," is a collaborative effort designed to address the skills mismatch faced by accounting graduates in the region vis-à-vis practical expectations.



**Cross-section of COOU staff in attendance during the presentation on the Grant overview by the speaker and member of the COOU Research Team, Dr. Bernard Alajekwu.**



### **Student Leadership in Attendance from COOU Accountancy Department and Finance Department**

#### **Project Objectives and Scope**

Dr. Alajekwu outlined the three primary pillars of the project:

- 1 To review and update the existing accounting curriculum to integrate practical, industry-relevant modules, focusing on areas such as forensic accounting, data analytics, and sustainability reporting.
- 2 To embed practical skills through case studies, simulations, and real-world projects, moving beyond traditional lecture-based teaching.
- 3 To train academic staff on modern pedagogical techniques and to equip students with essential soft skills required for the contemporary workplace.

The presentation highlighted that this DESIRED project will directly benefit over 3,000 students and staff across the partner institutions in Nigeria and Uganda. Dr. Alajekwu noted that the research component will involve a baseline and end-line assessment to rigorously measure the impact of the interventions on student employability metrics.



**Dr. Benard Alajekwu presenting an overview of the EU-DESIRED Research Grant Project to the stakeholders at the meeting.**

### **3. Upcoming Accounting Students Summit**

Following the project overview, the Research Team were briefed about the ongoing arrangements for an **Accounting Students Symposium** being organised by the COOU chapter of the Nigerian Universities Accounting Students Association (NUASA). This symposium was welcomed by the Research Team and envisioned to serve as the first major public-facing event of the DESIRED project, designed to create immediate excitement and engagement among the student body.

After deliberations on how to integrate the DESIRED project into the NUASA programme, the follow were summarised as the potential benefits of the symposium:

- To formally introduce the DESIRED project to the students in line with the theme of the symposium, and explain how they stand to benefit from the new initiatives.
- To gather direct feedback from students on the skills they perceive as lacking and the areas where they require the most support.
- To facilitate early interaction between students and potential employers, professional bodies (e.g., the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria - ICAN, the Association of National Accountants of Nigeria - ANAN), and successful alumni.

The symposium is scheduled to hold in two weeks' time from the date of this event, allowing the Research Team sufficient time to finalise logistics and provisions for high-profile speakers from the accounting and finance industry. The COOU Grant Research team appreciated the format of the symposium which includes keynote speeches, panel discussions on emerging accounting trends, as well as networking opportunities. In general, the stakeholders expressed strong support for the initiative, offering to contribute to ensure the event's success and broad participation.



**Head of the Finance Department, Professor G.C. Nkechukwu affirming the role of the finance department in the grant exercise, urging students of the Department to take advantage of the opportunity, subsequently calling for stakeholder support for the project.**

#### **4. Short-term Initiatives and Executions: Mentoring Programmes and Internships**

The meeting then shifted focus to the immediate, short-term initiatives planned for execution within a short period of the grant period. These initiatives will be designed to deliver tangible benefits quickly and establish the project's credibility in line with the work packages. The initiatives include (a) Mentoring Programmes through the proposed launch of a structured Industry Mentoring Programme which will involve pairing senior accounting professionals from leading firms with final-year and penultimate-year students. (b) Also, recognising the relevance of practical experience, the team outlined a plan to significantly enhance the existing internship framework. The goal is to move from passive, observation-based internships to structured, experiential learning placements.



The Dean of the Faculty of Management Sciences which houses the Departments of Accounting and Finance, Prof. Ogochukwu Nwangene, speaking on the relevance of the research grant to the Faculty and the commitment of the Faculty board towards the successful execution of the grant.



**Dr. Nkechi Offor of the Department of Accountancy, COOU, commending the Research Team for the DESIRED Project. She thanked the team for prioritising these practical initiatives, noting that they directly address the employability concerns that the DESIRED project seeks to resolve. She also stated that the new National Universities Commission's bench mark prioritise industrial training.**

## 5. Vote of Thanks

The meeting concluded with a heartfelt Vote of Thanks delivered by Dr. Nwankwo, a member of the Research Team. Dr. Nwankwo reiterated the profound gratitude of the Vice Chancellor for being the gateway of COOU Research Team. He expressed gratitude to the European Union for the substantial grant and to the University for the overwhelming support. Dr. Nwankwo specifically praised the dedication and hard work of the Overall EU-DESIRED Research Team Coordinators, whose efforts continue to steer the grant process. He concluded the meeting by reaffirming the COOU research team's commitment to executing the project with the highest level of professionalism and diligence, ensuring that the DESIRED project becomes a benchmark for accounting education reform in Nigeria and beyond. The meeting was adjourned with a sense of optimism and renewed purpose.



**Dr. Cosmas Nwankwo giving the vote of thanks at the meeting**

Sl No	COOU Students Names	Leaders Department	Position
1	Okpara Favour Beauty	Accountancy	Course rep 200L
2	Anidebe C Joseph Samuel	Banking & Finance	Financial Secretary 400L
3	Johnson Obanufunwo Helen	Accountancy	vice president
4	Anychwa Oziemeka.	Accountancy	Course rep 400L
5	Chikwudiegwu Elizabeth O.	Accountancy	DEPT president
6	Atabueze - Michael	Accountancy	COURSE rep 300L
7	Zube Chukwubuka Best	Finance	Director of Player
8	Obafor Ebuba Matthew	Finance	Director of Sports (D.O.S)
9	Okafor Faith Chiemerem	Accountancy	Financial Secretary
10	Emmanuel Abraham Chinozu	Banking & Finance	ASS COURSE REP
11	Okosa Miracle Chioma	Banking & Finance	Course Rep 400L
12	Anozie Emmanuel Kosisochukwu	Banking & Finance	Senator Rep 300L
13	Esinilo Bright Ugochukwu	Accounting	Senate President
14	Okwuba Nancy Chwendy	Business Administration	Vice president finance
15	ONUORAH CALISTUS CHISON	Banking & Finance	Faculty president
6	DIBOR IBUCHUKWU	Banking & Finance	Director of Socials (D.O.S)
7	Abara Peter Chibueze.	Banking & Finance	Departmental President.
7	Iteanyichukwu Kosisochukwu	Banking & Finance	Senator Rep. 400 Level
7	Okike Chukwumeka	Banking and Finance	General Secretary 300L
0	Orakwelu Oluwalake	Banking & Finance	public relations officer, 500L
1	OKOLI VICTOR CHIAMUBO	Banking & Finance	Senate Rep 200L
2	Chidimma Ezeabali Miracle	Banking & Finance	COURSE REP 200L
3	Ojukwu Gillian	Banking & Finance	Face of Finance
4	Ejimole Doreen Choma	Banking and Finance	Treasurer
5	Ezeonwudike Chibueze Joseph	Banking and Finance	Assistant Secretary
6	Okunwo Mac-Anthony	Banking and Finance	Mr Finance
7	Nwabuike Maresomachukwu - M.	Banking and Finance	Director of Welfare
	Ugosi Teta Chiemerem	Accountancy department	ASSISTANT COURSE REP 200L

COOU Staff in Attendance			
SN	Name	Department	Sign
1	Prof Alphonsus Anichebe	Accountancy	<del>AS</del>
2	Dr. Fabian C. Obiana	✓	<del>Obiana</del>
3	Dr Chude Daniel	✓	Chude
4	Dr. Lawrence U. Okoye	BKF.	Okoye
5	<del>Dr</del> IBEKWE ANGENA OBIACELI	✓	<del>Ibekwe</del>
6	Dr T N Offor	Accountancy	T. Offor
7	Dr (Mrs) Ovjinta, H. I	Accountancy	Ovjinta
8	Prof MaryAnn N Igodike	BKF	Igodike
9.	Prof. G. C. Nkechinkwu	Banking & fin.	Nkechinkwu
10	Dr. Chukwunonso Ekesuba	Economics	Ekesuba
11	Dr E. C. Okoro	Accountancy	Okoro
12	Ven R. I. C Okepadarukeje	Accountancy	Okepadarukeje
13	Dr. Cosmas A. Nwankwo	Marketing	Nwankwo
14	Dr Udoka B. Alajekwu	Finance	Alajekwu

