African universities of the 1948 generation (preindependence era)—University of Ibadan, Nigeria; University of Khartoum, Sudan; University of Ghana in Legon, Ghana; Makerere University, Uganda; and University Cheikh Anta Diop of Dakar, Senegal—were affiliated with partner universities in the colonizing countries, such as France, Portugal, and the United Kingdom. Through these affiliations, the institutions automatically became part of the French, Portuguese, U.K., or other systems of quality assurance through their partner universities. This type of close administrative and curricular alliances provided African countries with educational qualifications comparable to the academic standards, culture, and character of European universities of that time.

Upon independence, the increased power of state authority over higher education altered the autonomy of the institutions. National government priorities included increased access, tuition-free education, and measures to control political dissent, which was often seen as originating in the universities.

Between 1985 and 2002, the number of tertiary students in Sub-Saharan Africa increased 3.6 times (from 800,000 to about 3 million), on average by about 15 percent yearly. The public’s demand for tertiary education is shaped in part by overall trends in population growth and, in
part, by trends in access at the lower educational levels. The youth population in Sub-Saharan Africa already constitutes more than four times its 1950 level. With broadening access to lower levels of education, pressures to access tertiary education are expected to intensify. Meanwhile, the education system inherited from the colonial past did not adapt to the countries’ social and economic transformation, remaining rooted in traditional, hierarchical academics meant for the elites.

Private provision of higher education has been expanding in response to the increasing demand for access. The fastest-growing private institutions are the nonuniversity tertiary ones, and they generally feature programs that emphasize social sciences, economics and business, and law because of their lower start-up costs. They undertake little research and tend to respond to student interest rather than labor-market demand.

The expansion in enrollments has taken a harsh toll on public resources. Expenditure per student decreased from US$6,800 in 1980 to US$1,200 in 2002, recently averaging US$981 in 33 low-income countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. The decline in unit costs has affected the quality of education programs. Tertiary institutions are finding it increasingly difficult to recruit and retain teaching staff; lecture halls are overcrowded, equipment is outdated, and few postgraduate programs exist. These factors were exacerbated by the economic and political crises that rocked the region in the past 40 to 50 years. The consequence of this environment is the inability of universities in most of Africa (with the possible exception of South Africa) to keep pace with global developments in the management of universities as well as in curricula, teaching, and research.

African leaders recognize that the continent’s development depends on its ability to fit into today’s knowledge economy. Finding a place for Africa in this era of globalization is also based largely on Africa’s ability to be a viable contributor to the global pool of knowledge. Because universities are the major center points for knowledge generation (through research), knowledge transmission (through teaching), and knowledge application (through engagement with the wider society), commitment is strong for African universities to take appropriate steps to revive their vision for world standards.

Nigeria, as the largest and most populous country in Africa (140 million people), reflects the general education patterns and challenges throughout the region. Nigeria is a vast country, defined by an ethnically and religiously diverse population. The provision of education addresses these aspects through the concurrent responsibility of the federal, state, and local governments. Each level of government provides services that
benefit its respective constituency. Thus, the federal budget for education addresses four national interests: (a) produce highly specialized skills for a national labor market, (b) establish training standards and credentials that permit a national labor market to emerge for learned professions, (c) increase understanding and tolerance across major ethnic divisions, and (d) promote a sense of national identity (World Bank 2006).

The system is hindered by its complicated constitutional and legal framework. In particular, the division of responsibilities among the three tiers of government (together controlling 50 percent of resources) complicates accountability. Within the federal system, the division of responsibilities between the federal Ministry of Education and its parastatals is not always clear, suggesting duplication and inefficiency. At the federal level, institutional roles and responsibilities sometimes appear to overlap or are out-of-date with recent developments. Underlying these problems is the inadequate capacity for planning and policy analysis and a lack of reliable statistical data, including enrollment data, financial data, and population projections (World Bank 2006).

This chapter focuses on one of Africa’s 1948-generation institutions, the University of Ibadan in Nigeria. This three-part discussion examines (a) the close link between the political, economic, and social evolution of the Nigerian state in the past 60 or so years and the fortunes of the university; (b) attempts by the university to revitalize itself; and (c) necessary interventions at the system and the institutional levels to move the revitalization process forward and place the institution on the path to world-class status.

The advent of world rankings of universities in the past half decade (2005–10) has ignited in Nigerian educational institutions the desire to compete and benchmark their institutions. Even though the value and parameters of rankings can be contested, the fact that no Nigerian university has ever been featured among the top institutions was a wake-up call, both within the universities and in the wider society. Nigerians have since begun to benchmark their universities against those of South Africa, which have occupied the top of the ranking table on the African continent.

Within the country itself, the struggle by the older universities to rank among the top 100 institutions in Africa can be seen and felt. The most highly ranked Nigerian institution in each year’s ranking readily acquires the title of “best university in the country.” The University of Ibadan, often referred to as the nation’s “premier university” and “the first and the best,” has thus far not earned this title. To the contending universities, this is evidence that the first has not remained the best.
Influence of Nigeria’s Political, Economic, and Social Trends on the Evolution of the University

A statement by a historian at the University of Ibadan has often been quoted: “The history of the University of Ibadan is, in a sense, inseparable from the history of Nigeria after the Second World War” (Adewoye 2000, 16).

From a historical perspective, the evolution of the University of Ibadan fits neatly into three distinct phases: the University of London years (1945–62), the era of the nascent national university (1962–66), and the turbulent years (1966–99). Each phase represents some form of landmark in Nigeria’s political and socioeconomic evolution and has had a major impact on the development of the University of Ibadan.

The University of London Years: 1945–62

This phase in Nigeria’s sociopolitical and economic development ran from the end of World War II (1945) through the process of political independence (1960) to the attainment of full university status (1962). This period was characterized by formation of Nigerian political parties (1951) and the institutionalization of a three-region political structure in the north, east, and west (1952). The next steps brought self-government for the regions in 1957 and 1958 and, eventually, independence in 1960.

Both the federal and the regional governments expanded public services during this period, pushing for Nigerianization policies to bring national cohesion and encourage an influx of nationals into public services. This period brought a growing political momentum for self-rule and decolonization in Africa. Great Britain saw the development of higher education as essential for preparing colonies for emergence into self-ruled states with appropriate human resources to run political and economic affairs.

To cultivate an elite of leaders and civil servants, the British colonial government set up two commissions in 1943. The Asquith Commission looked into the “principles which should guide the promotion of higher education, learning and research and the development of universities in the colonies” (Adewoye 2000, 16). The Elliot Commission was expected to report on the organization and facilities of existing centers of higher education in British West Africa and to make recommendations regarding future university development in that area. The commissions’ reports led to the upgrading of existing postsecondary institutions in different parts of the British Empire. In Nigeria, Yaba Higher College, which had existed
since 1934 for training an intermediate-level indigenous workforce, was upgraded and moved to the city of Ibadan to become Nigeria’s first university college, formally inaugurated in November 1948.

Like its counterparts (Makerere University in Uganda and University of Ghana in Legon, Ghana) that were established at about the same time, the University of Ibadan was affiliated with the University of London and was, for all intents and purposes, an external campus and a replica of the latter. This designation was in keeping with the recommendations of both the Asquith and the Elliot commissions that “these should aspire from the outset to academic standards equal to those of universities and university colleges in Britain” (Montani 1979).

Staff (academic, technical, and administrative) recruitment and advancement followed strictly British standards. Student recruitment was stiffly competitive. Courses were limited to the classical British areas of arts (classics, English, history, and geography); science (mathematics, botany, chemistry, physics, and zoology); agriculture (introduced in 1949); and medicine (only preclinical courses in the early years).

There were, however, two major departures from the typical London standard. The first was the expansive campus with full municipal services and full residential facilities for senior staff members and students. These elements were to raise serious challenges for the university at a later date. The second point of departure from London standards was the introduction of “concessional entry” for students without the standard British university qualification of General Certificate of Education at an advanced level—obtained after seven years of secondary education. Students who came in through concessional entrance examinations had to complete a preliminary academic year successfully before full admission to a degree program.

The University of London tag, the preponderance of London-type lecturers and professors, the London-dictated and London-controlled curricula, and the highly competitive and elitist student admissions procedures combined to enhance the prestige of the university all over the then-British commonwealth.

Other contributing factors to the early academic prestige of Ibadan are worth mentioning. First, the authorities consciously attempted to attract high-caliber academic, technical, and administrative staff. This effort included special encouragement to promising Nigerian young professionals and academics. Second, staff composition was truly international, contributing to the rich academic and social culture of the university. In these early years, the staff had only a handful of Nigerian academics,
mainly those inherited from the Yaba Higher College that was the predecessor of Ibadan. These nationals constituted less than 10 percent of the total number of academic staff members. Third, physical and pedagogical facilities were of high standards. Fourth, student numbers were relatively small, which translated to manageable teacher-student ratios. Ultimately, Ibadan built a culture of research into its academic life from the beginning. In the words of Mellanby (1958, 104), “the provision of teaching for our students and the prosecution of original research by our staff were our most important duties.”

From about 1951 (when it produced the first set of Ibadan graduates of the University of London) to the advent of independence in 1960, the university was able to generate a pod of Nigerian graduates with the capacity to take up public services across a wide spectrum—education, administration, diplomatic services, medicine, agriculture, broadcasting, police, and other areas. A record number of Ibadan-London graduates also undertook graduate courses overseas and later joined the academic staff of the university. Thus, the wider Nigerian society felt the effect of Ibadan from the first decade of its existence. The university’s recognition was further supported by the significant contribution of a number of graduates to the emerging African literature in English.

These literary pioneers have remained sources of pride to the nation—Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka (1986 Nobel laureate for literature), John Pepper Clark, Chukwuemeka Ike, and others. This period also witnessed the emergence of Ibadan-trained Nigerian scholars who later became world-acclaimed academics in various disciplines—J. F. Ade Ajayi (history), Akin Mabogunje (geography), Ayo Bamgbose (linguistics), and C. Agodi Onwumechili (physics), among many others.

During this period, Ibadan also pioneered research and teaching of African history under the leadership of Kenneth Dike, who later became the first Nigerian academic head of the institution. The product of these efforts—the Ibadan History Series—became instantly recognized as the most accurate interpretation of Africa’s past. Ibadan was able, through the African history initiative, to build links with other universities in Africa and with world centers of study and documentation on Africa. Ibadan also became a force to which researchers on African history of diverse origins gravitated.

The university’s research and publications on African history later exerted a transformational effect on school curricula at the preuniversity level. Progressively, the study of Africa took precedence over the study of other regions (especially the study of British Empire history) at the
secondary-school level. Similar spillover effects also occurred with the 
emergence of African literature in English at the secondary level, which 
was fueled by creative writing from Ibadan graduates, with contributions 
from other sources.

Ibadan was not, however, without its critics during these early years. 
The Nigerian elite class and some of the political parties were unhappy 
with the narrow range of courses offered by the university. Links to 
European standards were seen as detrimental to the specific workforce 
needs for Nigeria’s nation building, ethnic diversity, identity, and socio- 
economic priorities. Many qualified young men and women (secondary 
school graduates) were excluded from higher education because of the 
highly competitive admissions requirements and began migration to 
Fourah Bay College in Sierra Leone and to the University of Ghana in 
Legon. The university did not remain unresponsive to these criticisms. Its 
practical responses and the fallouts will be discussed in later sections.

The Nascent National University: 1962–66
This phase coincided with the era of great expectations in Nigeria, as well 
as in the rest of the world. The words of the British prime minister, 
Harold Macmillan, resonated powerfully in Nigeria as he spoke of the 
birth of independent nations in Africa and the strong appearance of 
Africa on the global scene.

Nigeria’s fervor for political independence and organization was 
reflected in the new governance structures established by the three con- 
stituent regions of the federation (east, west, and north). The produce 
marketing boards (cocoa, rubber, palm oil, cotton, and groundnuts) were 
yielding enough revenue to sustain government activities. Healthy com- 
petition among the regions led to notable improvements in the provision 
of infrastructure, education, health, and agricultural extension services.

By 1959, however, the first ideological conflicts began to manifest 
themselves. The struggle for political control at the federal level led to an 
election-related crisis. Tribalism came strongly to the forefront of national 
discourse, and competition among the three regions took on a hostile 
tone. Tribalism also became a serious consideration in deciding who 
should occupy which position in the emerging bureaucracy and in most 
decision-making positions. By 1964–65, disputed federal elections and 
national census results compounded the situation. The political situation 
deteriorated rapidly; the first military coup occurred in January 1966 and 
a second one just six months later—both of them bloody and with strong 
tribal coloration. The eastern region declared independence and named
itself the Republic of Biafra, a decision that was unacceptable to the federal government. A civil war followed that lasted three years (1967–70), which will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

Regarding social reform, these years witnessed a conscious attempt by the governments of the Nigerian federation to meet huge social demands for education. Free primary education was successfully established in the western region in January 1955. The eastern region, less capable of implementing such reform, had to rely on local communities to support improvements in education. The northern region, although not formally declaring a free-education policy, still took steps to expand access to education by opening more government schools, offering subventions to nongovernment providers, and strengthening school supervision.

The period also witnessed vigorous postsecondary scholarship schemes at both regional and federal levels. These programs were aimed at training Nigerian personnel for public service and led to the creation of special institutions for the upgrading of junior administrative staff (for example, the Institute of Administration at Zaria) of regional and local governments. At the same time, similar initiatives were taking place in the fields of agriculture, education, public works, and health. However, the greatest area of concentration for the scholarship boards was university-type studies in Nigeria and outside the country.

In April 1959, the federal government of Nigeria constituted the Ashby Commission to investigate and report Nigeria’s workforce needs for a period of 20 years, 1960–80 (Ashby 1959). The commission recommended expanding and improving primary and secondary education, upgrading the University College of Ibadan to a full-fledged university, and establishing universities at Nsukka (1960), Ile-Ife (1962), and Zaria (1962). It also recommended establishing a University Commission in Nigeria so that universities could maintain uniform academic standards. The postsecondary school system was to produce the postindependence high-level workforce needs of Nigeria (Fabunmi 2005).

The University of Nigeria, Nsukka, was in several respects revolutionary regarding university education in Nigeria. It introduced professional degree programs in such disciplines as law, education, management, mass communication, home economics, engineering, and architecture—most of which were nonuniversity courses in the conventional British system that Ibadan had inherited. Courses in the social sciences (sociology, political science, and psychology) were also introduced, while agriculture was taught with a variety of specializations—plant and soil science, animal production, agricultural economics, and others. In its second year
Nsukka admitted more than a thousand new students, some five times the number usually admitted by Ibadan.

Ibadan’s response to these developments took a variety of forms. There was a programmed transition from university college status (that is, a dependent college of London) to that of an autonomous institution, with authentic Ibadan programs beginning from the 1962/63 academic year. New faculties of education and the social sciences were established, as well as the introduction of French in the faculty of arts, while new departments were created in the faculty of agriculture (forestry, agronomy, animal science, soil science, agricultural biology, and agricultural economics). Student intake was expanded, and new student hostels (designed to take two students per room) were built.

The university also took significant steps toward nigerianization. The first Nigerian head of the institution (Kenneth Dike) was appointed in 1958, as principal, and became the vice-chancellor with Ibadan’s transformation to full-university status in 1962. More Nigerians were appointed to professorial chairs in such fields as history, political science, agriculture, medicine, and the natural sciences. Nigerian professors also began to occupy headship and deanship positions in larger numbers.

This phase of the university’s development witnessed great intellectual ferment. Ibadan became home to major international conferences and collaborative research endeavors. A postgraduate training program took root under collaborative arrangements with universities in other parts of the world. The wider society felt the effect of the university in a number of ways. The Department of Extra Mural Studies organized academic and professional courses for all levels of education across the country. The Institute of Education helped professionalize teaching in the schools through its associateship (nongraduate) and postgraduate diploma in education programs.

Ibadan also became the “mother” to Nigeria’s newer universities in Ile-Ife, Nsukka, and Zaria. The first vice-chancellors of these universities, who later achieved international recognition, developed their research and expertise at Ibadan. Many professors at these universities came from Ibadan, as did many younger members of their academic staffs, a good number of whom had been postdoctoral fellows in Ibadan.

Ibadan’s relatively high global reputation during this phase of its development can be explained by the following factors. First, the period represented a consolidation of the solid foundation of the earlier years—the international caliber and composition of staff, the relatively good standard of facilities, the competitive nature of student intake, and other aspects.
Second, a broadening of academic links was under way with foreign institutions and foundations (mainly the Ford, Rockefeller, and Nuffield foundations) that funded programs and facilities and promoted staff development initiatives. Third, staff development was taken seriously, as steps were taken to ensure that academic staff members remained abreast of developments in their disciplines through attendance at conferences, research and travel grants, and sabbatical leave attachment with internationally acclaimed centers of excellence.

Ultimately though, the university was deeply affected by the violent socio-political changes developing in the country, which began with disputes over elections and a national census and led to two successive military coups and, finally, a civil war. The institutional level experienced a progressive politicization of the governing council of the university—a phenomenon that threatened institutional autonomy. The tribal dimension of this politicization later manifested itself in the polarization of staff members and even students along ethnic lines.

The Turbulent Years: 1967–99

Ibadan’s turbulent years coincided with a period of grave challenges to the building of the Nigerian nation. The period was characterized by the civil war of 1967–70 and its aftermath of prolonged military rule with a civil interregnum (1979–83), often referred to as Nigeria’s “Second Republic.” The political turbulence in the nation had pronounced effects on the university.

The civil war years: 1967–70. The civil war years were a period of deep-seated political upheavals in Nigeria and of complete stoppage of all developmental activities. The University of Ibadan underwent an exodus of academic and other staff members of Igbo origin, in the same manner in which hundreds of thousands of Igbos had escaped from all other parts of Nigeria to their home regions. This impact was further worsened by the departure of a large number of non-Nigerian staff members because of the security threat. The vice-chancellor resigned, and the institution had to be managed by the university librarian as acting vice-chancellor. Importation of books and equipment was almost impossible, while government funding dwindled because of the pursuit of war efforts. In spite of all these events, courses were held and degrees awarded. Academic links with external sources were not broken, while staff development efforts continued.

One explanation for the maintenance of academic activities and a relative sense of stability at the university was the continued support (academic
and financial) from the university’s external partners, who continued to inject funds into the institution to support research, indigenous staff development, the secondment of academics (from Europe, North America, and the Middle East), and the provision of physical facilities (a university postgraduate library, a Faculty of Education building, and new departments of Nursing and Forestry). Moreover, the acting vice-chancellor had belonged to the original Ibadan–London school (as did most of the senior academics in the institution). These factors helped to ensure that well-established academic traditions and links with foreign institutions were maintained, in spite of the civil disruptions of those years.

The immediate postwar years: 1970–79. These years began with a phase tagged in Nigeria as “reconciliation and reconstruction” that ran from 1970 to mid-1975, marked by the reign of General Yakubu Gowon. During this time, some concerted efforts were made to direct Nigeria’s overall socio-economic development, with particular emphasis on the development of education. It also marked the first period of direct confrontation between universities and the military authorities. Finally, it marked the beginning of Ibadan’s decline in quality and prestige.

Free primary education was introduced in 1975, while a National Policy on Education was published in 1977, along with an implementation blueprint and a national implementation secretariat (Federal Ministry of Education 1977). A new university (the sixth in the country, originally called Midwest Institute of Technology and now the University of Benin) was established in 1972. In the same year, Ibadan established a campus in the middle region of Nigeria, which became a full-fledged university in 1975, the year in which the number of universities grew exponentially. Through a military decree, the federal government took over the state-owned (regional) universities in Nsukka, Zaria, and Benin City. The same decree also converted university colleges (campuses of existing universities) in Calabar, Jos, Maiduguri, and Port Harcourt into full-fledged universities and created new ones in Ilorin and Sokoto.

From the government’s viewpoint, it was important to have a fair geographical distribution of universities. However, the approach lacked a sustainable strategy to allocate resources to run and manage these institutions. For Ibadan, the move presented three major threats. First, experienced staff moved from Ibadan to more attractive contracts at these new universities. Second, government subvention drastically declined, as it was stretched across a greater number of universities. The military regime devised ways of distributing available resources to universities that were
patently unfavorable to Ibadan with its large staff strength and aging facilities. Third, the emergence of other universities in the country entailed greater competition and thus the need for the University of Ibadan to expand into new programs and attract a broader range of students, overstretching its resources.

The impact of Ibadan’s policy choices throughout the decades had evident repercussions in this period. The university began in 1948 as a fully residential institution and had to take on municipal services (access roads, residential accommodations for staff, water, and electricity) that were then not readily available in the city of Ibadan. Over time and with increases in student and staff numbers, these services became too costly and difficult to maintain. New programs had been added throughout the years to respond to increasing demand and shifts in interests. Initially, the new programs were financed by government and external assistance. Thus, Ibadan was able to build a research library; introduce programs in nursing and forestry; modernize its science laboratories; and erect modern buildings for the social sciences, agriculture, and education. Arrangements with external bodies were also largely responsible for sustaining the university’s staff development programs. This progress came to a halt with the political unrest caused by civil war and military rule.

Disputes over university autonomy and academic freedom characterized the 1970s, when the University of Ibadan came under military dictatorship. The appointment of the vice-chancellors had hitherto been the sole responsibility of the Governing Councils of Universities. However, with Decree No. 23 of 1975, when the federal government took over the regional universities, the power to appoint and remove vice-chancellors was vested in the head of state or the federal military government. A joint committee of the senate and council sent names of three eligible candidates to the head of state (the “Visitor” to the institution), who exercised the right to appoint any of the three. The choice has not often been based on academic stature and managerial competence. The senate of the University of Ibadan also experienced an erosion of its statutory powers by 1978 as pressure was increased from the federal Ministry of Education to reduce the number of students failing (Ekundayo and Adedokun 2009, 63).

Faculty members who went on strike in 1972–73 against the expropriation of a number of institutional rights were fired on the spot. The government sacked Marxist-oriented lecturers from Nigerian higher institutions in 1978. These lecturers had raised the level of intellectual discourse on campuses and had contributed to a rising climate of critical appraisal of the military regime by the wider Nigerian society. Government saw this group
as instigators of an academic staff strike that rocked the nation in 1977–78 and ordered their dismissal. Radical scholarship in the country and in Ibadan began a steady decline from this period onward, while the university began to lose its ground as a hub of knowledge sharing and debate.

The quota system, otherwise known as “federal character,” is another way the autonomy of the university was eroded. The quota system, included in the 1979 constitution, aimed to rectify the recruitment imbalances that, in the past, had made one ethnic group or state the majority of personnel in federal parastatals (universities included). The system was also intended to ensure equity and fairness in the admissions process. With the quota system, the university was under obligation to admit students not entirely on merit but on the quota per state as stipulated by the government (Ekundayo and Adedokun 2009).

Thus, as a result of poor strategy, competition for limited funds from government sources, increasing government encroachment on university autonomy, and rising capital maintenance demand, Ibadan’s financial-coping capacity withered severely. All these issues were happening when the government had decreed free tuition in universities. Nigeria had also at that time become a petroleum-producing country and a strong member of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and therefore was ineligible for external financial assistance. The country was, in fact, financially buoyant (though not economically so) during this period, and yet this phase marked the steady fall of the University of Ibadan in its national and international prestige.

**The second republic: 1979–83.** This period of Nigeria’s brief return to civil rule was marked by high and dashed hopes. People were relieved to see military rule come to an end but were unimpressed by the return to wasteful spending and corruption. Revenue from petroleum was already on the downward trend in the last year of military rule (1978–79), and government had imposed a number of austerity measures, which were soon overturned by the civilian administration. There was massive importation of rice and related abuses of import licenses. The civilian-supervised elections of 1983 were believed to have been massively rigged. Another fiasco occurred with the conduct of a national census, and the economic downturn worsened. All these conditions prepared the grounds for yet another military coup that took place on December 31, 1983.

The short-lived civilian regime, however, tinkered with the education system. The 1977 National Policy on Education was revised in 1981, the major change being an encouragement for private sector participation in
education. This policy immediately led to the mushrooming of private universities, established without any strict regulatory guidelines.

The civilian government also pursued a policy of “fair geographical spread of universities” and in the process established federal universities of technology in Akure, Minna, Owerri, and Yola—a continuation of unplanned and unstrategized expansion. As usual, this development led to a further erosion of the staff strength of Ibadan, as it lost a number of experienced academics and administrators to the new universities. Ibadan extended its programs to include three new faculties: technology, law, and pharmacy. In the early 1980s, the courses taught by the three new faculties were already well established in some other universities in the country. These are all capital-intensive programs, and gaining international-level staff for them was not easy. Despite critical resource constraints, expansion continued with the creation of new departments within existing faculties, especially in arts, education, the social sciences, agriculture and forestry, and natural sciences. The extent to which advances in development in the respective disciplines guided this process is not clear. What is clear is that the process further overstretched the resources of the university and also constituted a heavy threat to standards.

By 1983, the end of the Second Republic, Ibadan still maintained the image of Nigeria’s premier university and had the largest concentration of researchers, academic journals, and research output in the country. However, the decline that had set in during the earlier phase had increased—especially as the provision of human, financial, and technical facilities had become clearly unsustainable.

The second era of military rule: 1983–99. This period from December 31, 1983, to September 30, 1999, was a very trying one for the Nigerian state, covering four military regimes. The period witnessed a national International Monetary Fund–dictated structural adjustment program accompanied by massive devaluation of the national currency—the naira. In an import-dependent economy, devaluation resulted in high increases in the costs of goods, while people’s real income fell drastically.

Mismanagement of the economy had been a feature of Nigerian life since independence, but it intensified during the military years as dictatorial rule meant the complete erosion of transparency and accountability in public affairs. By the mid-1980s, massive wasteful spending by government, the introduction of many white-elephant government initiatives, the creation of a multiplicity of parastatals for every government department, the bloating of the staff strength of government ministries, and the
swelling of the executive arm of government all combined to fuel corruption on a phenomenally large scale.

On the education scene, the major development was the proliferation of universities and other tertiary institutions. In 1962, only two of the five existing universities belonged to the federal government, while the other three were regional universities. By 1976, the federal government had taken over all universities and created more to bring the total number to 13. The number has continued to increase since then.

The civilian government in 1979 allowed the states to own universities. Most of the states saw this capacity as a sovereignty symbol and rushed to establish their own universities. The private universities that mushroomed during the 1979–83 civilian regimes were closed down when the military returned to rule. The federal government took over more of the old regional universities (University of Uyo in Akwa Ibom State, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University in Bauchi State, and Nnamdi Azikiwe University in Anambra State). It also established specialized universities of agriculture in Makurdi (Benue State), Abeokuta (Ogun State), and Umudike (Abia State) and even went on to transform the military academy into a university.

The policy of proliferation succeeded only in stifling higher education in the country. Government interference in running universities reached its apogee, while haphazard funding became the norm. Universities began to outdo one another in currying government favor. Academic pursuits became severely constrained, limited to face-to-face teaching. Intellectual ferment became a forgotten phenomenon, because free discourse cannot thrive under a military dictatorship.

Again, the University of Ibadan bore the brunt of this highly unfavorable political and socioeconomic climate. In the days of structural adjustment, the university was unable to shift from a monopoly to a competitive strategy as other institutions were born. The pull of management and administration between political interests, inept appointees, and stagnating bureaucracy led to the exodus of faculty and the disrepair of facilities and equipment. Scholars from different disciplines moved in large numbers to Europe and to South Africa and the United States. What was left of the university’s non-Nigerian staff also left the country.

This period thus ended with Ibadan drained of its senior academics, its facilities depleted, its flawed policies still yielding large student numbers and a burgeoning administrative structure, its subvention from government barely covering only staff salaries, its external links severed, and its research output in deep decline.
Attempts at Revitalizing the University

The previous sections have highlighted how the state, under different political regimes and at distinct historical conjunctures, can form a mechanism for either social change or social control. The university becomes a site for power struggle in the domain of intellectual freedom and knowledge production, reflecting the political and social environment of the country.

Nigeria is currently characterized by 10 years of uninterrupted civil rule—a way of saying that the country has returned to the path of political stability. This new state of affairs has also influenced efforts since 2000 at giving the University of Ibadan a renewed lease on academic life.

This section summarizes the institutional choices and trends that characterized the development of the University of Ibadan in the past decade and the way it has been shaping its policies to build academic excellence.

Autonomy and Accountability

As part of the ongoing restoration and democratization efforts in Nigerian public institutions, the government policy on university autonomy was introduced in 2000, followed by a new law to establish a permanent legal basis for these changes in 2002. The Academic Staff Union of Universities sponsored the Universities Autonomy Act of 2003, which makes new provisions for the autonomy, management, and reorganization of the universities in Nigeria. Major features of the bill include the restoration of the powers of the council on administrative matters and those of the senate on academic matters, as well as the participation of students in aspects of university governance (Onyeonoru 2008). The new policy framework gave university councils the responsibility of setting institutional policies, hiring new management, and forwarding institutional budgets to government; provided institutions control over their own student admissions; limited the role of the National Universities Commission to quality assurance and system coordination; placed curbs on the right of employees to strike; and legally unlinked universities from the public service—thereby ending their adherence to government civil service policies with regard to employment, remuneration, and benefits. This was a major step forward to empower the institutions on academic matters such as curriculum, quality assurance, staff development, and information access. It is unclear, however, if this legal framework was accompanied by requisite changes in the composition of university councils and senates. A typical university council in Nigeria today has about 55 percent of its membership from within the institution, 25 percent from government, and 30 percent from various
other places including the private sector. The chair of the council is appointed by the head of state, whereas the other members are appointed by the minister responsible for higher education (Saint and Lao 2009).

Then just a year later, a bill on university autonomy passed, which partially undermined university autonomy by placing key academic powers in the hands of the National Universities Commission, including determining course content, the academic calendar, and so forth. The bill also vested large arbitrary powers in the Visitor, including the power to determine the composition and tenure of governing councils. The powers of the vice-chancellor were also magnified to include the power to hire and fire, coupled with the power of the senate to discipline students and the power of the council to discipline staff (Pereira 2007, 173).

One of the major constraints on institutional autonomy still exists: financial decision making. The federal government maintains a policy of no tuition fees in federal universities; in 2002, it issued an order **forbidding** the charging of tuition fees at all 24 federal universities as these universities were contemplating charging tuition fees as a cost-recovery strategy. Such policies impede flexibility in identifying options for financial sustainability of academic programs and staff and also make it harder for Ibadan to compete with the array of state and privately owned institutions that are allowed to charge fees (a count in 2009 recognized 26 state institutions and 34 private universities).

Other measures limiting the power of the institution represent pressure by the government to control the disbursement of internally generated revenues and to set percentages on the origin of revenues (more discussion on these aspects is in the section titled “Financing.”

The University of Ibadan also needs to address the assurance of a diversified staff and student environment that is at least somewhat representative of the ethnic and religious diversity of the country. This diversification entails some distance from the concept of academic freedom in selecting, teaching, and examining students, because of the need to use some form of affirmative action.

**Strategic Planning**

Instability and power struggles of the past 50 years have caused fragmentation and discontinuity in the university’s institutional vision and strategy. More long-term strategies began in 1975, in search of social relevance (1975–80), prioritization of expansion (1980–85), and, more recently, a focus on revision and restrictions on budgets (1985–90). A number of strategies were developed afterward without a focused strategic planning
process. A strategic plan to internationalize the University of Ibadan was produced in March 2008 for the 2009–14 period, in realization of the competitive environment presented by the growing number of private institutions and by the international outlook and standards that institutions are required to follow.

The strategic plan for 2009–14 provides the road map for achieving the vision of a world-class institution with academic excellence geared toward meeting societal needs (University of Ibadan 2009b, 7). The then vice-chancellor of the University of Ibadan, Olufemi A. Bamiro, emphasized the importance of linking the work and aspirations of the university to national economic priorities:

Technological innovations and the development of entrepreneurial capacity are pre-requisite to the success of modern economies. Universities have a central role to play in this regard. The University of Ibadan must provide leadership to achieve the desired science-and-technology-led development of Nigeria by fostering among others government-industry-university partnerships. (University of Ibadan 2009b, ix)

In this framework, the university has identified 12 strategic issues that will drive the overall strategic plan. Some priority issues relevant to this chapter are mentioned in table 7.1 and include establishing an effective and efficient governance structure and management process; developing an environment that is conducive to teaching and learning and that promotes the development of excellence and innovation; and having globally competitive and locally relevant programs geared toward producing knowledgeable, entrepreneurial, and responsible individuals.

**Undergraduate, Graduate, and International Students**

The university has been able, in past years, to consistently lower the marginal intake of students, while focusing on increasing the number of graduate students (37 percent of students were at the graduate level in 2009). The plan is to progressively transform Ibadan into a research-focused university with a graduate-to-undergraduate student ratio of 60 to 40. Increases in graduate outputs from the University in recent years seem to confirm this direction (figure 7.1).

Research output in the university has not been adequately documented, and the nearest proxy available for it is the number of potential researchers (that is, doctoral graduates) produced. As table 7.2 shows, the percentage of PhD recipients—relative to the total number of postgraduate qualifications awarded—has not been impressive.
Table 7.1 Selected Strategic Issues and Objectives of the University of Ibadan, 2009–14 Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic issue</th>
<th>Objective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management and governance</td>
<td>Reform structure to reduce delays and duplications of functions. Build capacity for effective and efficient management of University resources. Develop effective communication strategy for dissemination of information for timely feedback.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching and learning</td>
<td>Create an atmosphere of teamwork and interdisciplinary effort in teaching, research, and service. Foster a culture of excellence and innovation in curriculum design, content development, and delivery. Institute a reward system that recognizes teaching and learning as key elements in the dissemination of knowledge; develop and implement an electronic learning policy. Exploit the benefits of University-industry links in the learning process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research, development, and innovation</td>
<td>Establish and develop an effective research management culture that ensures sustainable funding of pure and applied innovative research. Promote interdisciplinary research that will affect societal needs. Promote commercialization of research results. Promote research and documentation of indigenous knowledge systems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human resource development</td>
<td>Institute a reward system that attracts and retains high-quality staff. Promote excellence in staff recruitment and service delivery that emphasizes merit and performance. Motivate members of the University community to adopt a positive attitude to their responsibility, including jobs, learning, and research. Expand opportunities for staff members and students to acquire national and international experience. Strengthen commitment to equality, diversity, and equity in staff recruitment and development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community service and partnership</td>
<td>Engage alumni in lifelong relationship with the University. Expand and enhance the University’s interactions with governments, the private sector, civil society, and the local and international communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>Develop a mechanism to ensure that the University has adequate resources to achieve its vision, mission, and objectives. Improve efficiencies in management of University finances. Develop and implement a risk management and financial control framework for safeguarding of assets and mitigation of risks. Institute a mechanism for improved budgeting for all activities of the University.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continued next page)
Table 7.1  (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic issue</th>
<th>Objective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program development</td>
<td>Create demand- and needs-driven core academic and other relevant programs that are globally competitive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Review programs and curricula to promote interdisciplinary and skills development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Incorporate like skills training and strategic leadership development into program and curricula.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Integrate information and communication technologies and open distance learning delivery platform and practices into learning situation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internationalization</td>
<td>Be a university whose teaching and research are driven by modern and global trends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mainstream services and perspectives into the global academic agenda.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop strong relationships with international communities in Nigeria.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: University of Ibadan 2009b.

Figure 7.1  Enrollments in First Degrees and Postgraduate Degrees at the University of Ibadan, 1948–2009

Source: University of Ibadan 2009b.

Note: The figure does not show graduates from all programs.
Yet efforts have been made to improve the capacity and relevance of both students and staff members in research and to promote links to industry with the establishment of the Centre for Entrepreneurship and Innovations for private sector collaborations, the Student Leadership Development Programme, and the Multidisciplinary Central Research Laboratory. To inform performance-based policies, the university’s strategy includes an attempt at better documenting the status of publications and research findings by faculty.

In regard to geographical composition of the students, 12,863 of the students (68 percent) are indigenes of the southwestern geopolitical zone of Nigeria, where the University of Ibadan is located. The situation was better, though not quite satisfactory, a decade and a half earlier. According to available reports, there were 307 foreign students out of a total enrollment of 12,132 (2.5 percent) in 1983/84. In 1984/85, 316 out of 13,862 students (2.3 percent) were foreign nationals, with Cameroon, Ghana, and India accounting for the bulk. Indigenes of Nigeria’s southwest accounted for 37 percent of the student body in 1983/84 and 38 percent in 1984/85. Data on staff strength in the years before 1998/99 are not easily available.

**Internationalization**

Throughout the years, the University of Ibadan was able to maintain partnerships with several universities, donor agencies, and development organizations around the world. As of October 2009, Ibadan had links

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**Table 7.2  Potential Researchers (PhD recipients) Produced over a 10-Year Period, University of Ibadan, 1999–2008**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Bachelor diploma</th>
<th>One-year master</th>
<th>MPhil</th>
<th>PhD</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>% of PhD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>670</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>878</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>2,539</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>2,975</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>943</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>1,130</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>4,061</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4,079</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>349</td>
<td>3,355</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>4,051</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>2,203</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>2,674</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>2,271</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>2,876</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>2,132</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>2,577</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>2,220</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>2,603</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>462</td>
<td>2,852</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>3,559</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6,158</td>
<td>19,185</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>1,747</td>
<td>27,402</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: University of Ibadan 2008.*
with 111 institutions around the world (see figure 7.2). These partnerships have been in the form of exchanges of staff members and students, collaborative research, development of internationalized curricula, increasing joint internships, and other policies.

The University of Ibadan, with the assistance of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, has also established a Digital Learning Centre. In line with the vision of the University, the center has been developed to help provide a solution for access to higher education in Nigeria. To date, well over 15,000 students have been enrolled through the Distance Learning Centre. Further efforts to connect to global knowledge and networks have been made with the establishment of access to electronic journals and databases, at the Kenneth Dike Library, and the upgrade of the medical library to a world-class medical library with electronic learning facilities.

To lead the efforts toward internationalization, the university has also established the Office of International Programmes. Its mission is to enrich global awareness among staff members and students, expand the international composition of the University of Ibadan, promote a reputable international presence, and showcase the University of Ibadan’s role as a leading institution in Africa. To accomplish the mission, the center engages in coordinating and supporting international academic programs, generating and disseminating information on international opportunities, promoting and sustaining international partnerships, and advocating the internationalization of facilities and programs (University of Ibadan 2010).

Figure 7.2   Number of Collaborations per Region or Agency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>region or agency</th>
<th>number of collaborations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rest of Africa</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North America</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>international agencies</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: University of Ibadan 2009b.
Development of Academic Faculty

According to the latest figures (University of Ibadan 2009a), Ibadan had 1,197 academic staff members in 2008. With a total student enrollment of 18,843 in 2007/08, this figure translates into a student-to-staff member ratio of 16 to 1—a figure that varies among fields of study, as illustrated in table 7.3.

The hierarchical order of the university academic staff (figure 7.3) shows a relatively high proportion of senior-level academics who should be able to lead research teams (professors 19 percent, readers 5 percent, and senior lecturers 24 percent—a total of 48 percent). For supervising postgraduate work, staff in the Lecturer I category would also qualify. Thus, some 72 percent of the academic staff members of the university should be in a position to teach, counsel, and direct postgraduate students (that is, they possess PhD degrees).

A daunting challenge for Ibadan is the size of its nonacademic staff. The university has reported some rebalancing in this regard over the years. Thus, the number of nonacademic staff members fell from 4,988 in 1988/89 to 3,263 in 2007/08. During the same period, the figure for academic staff members rose from 1,135 to 1,197. Although there are still three nonacademic staff members to one academic staff member, these efforts are evidence of a new approach to improving efficiency in the allocation and use of resources.

What also remains a challenge is the international composition of academic staff. For example, 1,193 of the academic staff members of 1,197 are resident Nigerians, meaning that only four are non-Nigerians. This situation shows the difficulty in attracting and retaining talent. Even among Nigerians, the university has to compete with the private sector.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty members</th>
<th>Academic staff members</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Student-to-staff member ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>2,405</td>
<td>18:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social sciences</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>2,991</td>
<td>27:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>510</td>
<td>20:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>2,687</td>
<td>15:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>1,427</td>
<td>18:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>1,909</td>
<td>17:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>3,011</td>
<td>26:1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: University of Ibadan 2008.
for the best graduates. The field of academics is no longer seen as an attractive career, because compensation is not competitive enough.

**Financing**

Available data show that public funding for education in Nigeria increased from 2.8 percent of gross domestic product in 1999 to 9.5 percent in 2002, falling again to about 6 percent in the next three years before rising again to 9.4 percent in 2006 (Bamiro and Olugbenga 2010). This proportion is significantly higher than the averages for Sub-Saharan Africa and for the world, which currently stand at 4.5 and 4.3 percent, respectively. Conversely, fluctuations in fund flows challenge the capacity of the university to maintain consistency in its quality and provision of services.

**Income Generation**

The major sources of income for Ibadan and other federal institutions are government and proprietor allocations, the Education Trust Fund, students’ fees and levies, endowments, grants, and internally generated revenues.
Federal government budget allocation to higher education institutions is in the form of personnel costs, goods and nonpersonnel services, and capital projects. All federal universities receive the bulk of their financing (on average, about 90 percent) from the federal government through the National Universities Commission (Hartnett 2000). Latest financial statistics for Ibadan show that the average funding by government is 85 percent, average funding from student charges 1 percent, donations 1 percent, and internally generated revenues 12 percent—with the potential to increase to more than 18 percent (University of Ibadan 2009b).

University spending always outstripped the available budget for the university until 2005/06 when, for the first time in recent years, expenditures were less than the budget (see figure 7.4). This welcome change demonstrates the efforts being undertaken to implement the strategic objective of an efficient, accountable, and sustainable financial management system (University of Ibadan 2009b).

Analysis of the various allocations to universities showed that, on average, allocation to personnel costs accounted for 84.7 percent of the total allocation, goods and nonpersonnel services accounted for 4.6 percent, and capital projects took 10.7 percent. Federal universities’ budgeting processes and expenditures must adhere to the budgeting and expenditure formula stipulated by the National Universities Commission as follows: 60 percent for total academic expenditure, 39 percent for administrative

![Figure 7.4 Budget and Total Expenditures for the University of Ibadan, 2000/09](source: Bamiro and Olugbenga 2010. Note: Approximate exchange rate: US$1 = ₦150.)
support, and 1 percent for pension and benefits (Hartnett 2000) (see figure 7.5).

Regarding student fees and levies, the University of Ibadan, as a federal institution, is not allowed to charge tuition fees for undergraduate programs. Federal institutions of higher learning are allowed only limited charges and levies for providing services such as accommodation in residence halls, sports, limited contributions toward the costs of municipal services (water and electricity), laboratory consumables in science-based programs, and other items. Attempts by the university to increase levies have been met with stiff opposition by students.

The government, through the National Universities Commission, mandates that all federal universities generate 10 percent of their total yearly funds internally through various revenue diversification means. This policy has led to diverse initiatives by the university with conflicting effects on the performance of their core research and academic functions. In internally generated revenue, the University of Ibadan obtained approximately ₦200 million in 2006 with distribution among sources shown in figure 7.6. This amount resulted in approximately 4.5 percent of the total allocation by the federal government of ₦4.4 billion during the year. Fees charged for postgraduate programs accounted for the highest source of internally generated revenue. Federal institutions are allowed to charge tuition fees for postgraduate programs.
Endowments

Traditional sources of income for the University of Ibadan are endowments, gifts, and donations. Endowments include professional chairs, student scholarships, donations toward programs of interest to the donors, and other forms. Campaigns to raise endowment funds in Nigerian universities date as far back as the 1950s when the University College of Ibadan started an endowment drive. From 1988 to 1994, the university generated approximately 22.02 million from endowments and grants (Center for Comparative and Global Studies in Education 2001). The university endowment fund for the execution of selected projects constitutes 30 million and is being managed by committed alumni of the university. Alumni and corporate bodies have been the major sources of investable funds.

Grants from funding agencies have also been an important contribution to the University of Ibadan. For example, since 2000 the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation has supported the university in the key areas of staff and infrastructure development of information and communications technology. Another contributor is the Petroleum Technology Development Fund, which established professional chairs.
related to capacity building in the oil and gas industry in six universities including Ibadan. Ibadan receives between ₦14 million and ₦20 million, annually, so far totaling ₦60 million under this fund (Bamiro and Olugbenga 2010, 62).

**Expenditure Patterns**
The university’s annual expenditure has consistently outstripped what is regarded as the budget needed to function optimally, as figure 7.7 shows. The total expenditure on overhead at the University of Ibadan during the 2005–06 session was ₦417.7 million while the total allocation for overhead by the federal government was ₦197.7 million. The university still maintains a policy of providing municipal services (electricity, water, and so forth), which take up the majority of resources (Bamiro and Olugbenga 2010, xiv).

**Financial Management**
At a country level, efforts to institute a uniform accounting system took momentum in recent years with the creation of a manual of recommended accounting practices for all Nigerian universities. The uniform accounting system was to be complemented with the computerization of the management information service, with data on staff members, students, and

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**Figure 7.7** Major Sources of Income and Required Estimated Budget for University of Ibadan

![Graph showing major sources of income and required estimated budget for University of Ibadan.](source: University of Ibadan 2009b.)
funds in the university system. Having this data available is critical for improved financial allocations as well as management of information (Pereira 2007, 177).

The University of Ibadan’s strategy for 2009–14 highlights a number of bold and progressive activities to manage the sustainability and consistency of financial resources. The university plans to strengthen links with foundations, develop a strategy to encourage the university’s philanthropists to endow prizes and fund research projects, encourage an alumni association, develop and implement a mechanism to increase internally generated revenue, and empower the Board of the Advancement Center and the Endowment Board with specific roles to raise funds.

Other measures include the developing postgraduate programs, charging economic rent on housing, eliminating subsidies on power and municipal services to university tenants, and developing a consultancy policy. Internally generated revenue will be a larger source by developing contract courses with government and private sector organizations, creating short summer courses and programs for overseas students, establishing an open university guest house in Lagos and Abuja, and forming incubator ventures and a joint venture in science and agriculture (University of Ibadan 2009b, 75).

Priorities also include strengthening financial processes and controls to eliminate waste and bureaucratic bottlenecks; implementing a policy to decentralize the bursary and audit units; developing a culture for financial planning and financial discipline at department, faculty, institute, and college levels; and carrying out a full-cost recovery policy, whereby every activity should be self-financing.

The university is performing remarkable efforts to manage and generate resources. The challenges endure as long as it is dependent on the government to cover recurrent and capital costs for facilities, programs, and services. Issues of financing also involve attaining the strategic vision of excellence in research and teaching and world recognition.

**Conclusion**

The conditions under which a university operates are a critical factor to the success or failure of its drive for excellence. The University of Ibadan demonstrates this notion and emphasizes the centrality of the national environment to the development of an institution.

The intricate constitutional and legal frameworks and the three tiers of government in Nigeria complicate accountability, the division of
responsibilities, and the capacity for planning and implementation. These factors cause duplication, inefficiency, and mismanagement—not just in education but also in the general economy and in society. The complexity of the system further complicates policy development and planning, given the lack of comprehensive and easily accessible data regarding financial resources as well as population projections (World Bank 2006). Inevitably, these conditions affect the capacity of the University of Ibadan to plan and to create an innovative and flexible environment to attract the best students and staff members.

The lack of a diversified private sector and of a dynamic labor market that has a demand for the leading-edge research, technology transfer, and high-level graduates originating from universities makes it difficult for any institution to generate and maintain academic excellence. Though still nascent, Nigeria’s private sector has been growing at an impressive rate (particularly in the telecommunications sector), and the country has one of the most dynamic labor markets on the continent. This potential strength could be tapped to accelerate growth.

Strategically, the country needs to keep focusing on diversifying the economy and promoting the private sector, aiming to increase productivity and expand employment. It is encouraging to see that the government is beginning to take critical steps to establish and improve necessary infrastructure—such as the Internet backbone, electricity, water, roads, and housing—to compete globally.

The international image of the country also depends on the capacity of the government to project stability and opportunity. Measures in this realm would support attracting talent from abroad (including Nigerians in the diaspora) and also international scholars and students to the country’s universities. The efforts already under way to transform the country’s image are noteworthy and need to be intensified.

On policy issues, the government needs to develop a consistent national policy on higher education, through a participatory approach with key stakeholders. It must play a balancing role between ensuring that institutions have a high degree of autonomy and ensuring that they remain accountable to their students and the community. For this approach to work well, the government should consider institutionalization of a benchmarking mechanism to allow an institution (and the entire higher education system) to assess its progress at different points in time and to benchmark itself against other comparator institutions and systems.
Establishing a performance-based financing environment grounded on a solid monitoring and evaluation mechanism is highly desirable. This system will entail a revision of the way financing is allocated and an increase of the autonomy granted to universities to govern, manage, and generate funding. Granting more autonomy to universities allows flexibility in hiring the best staff members and students and incentivizes universities to link up with industry to remain relevant and establish new sources of revenue.

Ultimately, the drive for excellence must be led by the University of Ibadan itself. Lessons from other universities around the world have shown that global recognition is shaped by an institution’s shared purpose, consistent strategy, and long-term outlook. Fundamentally, a strong leadership can make the institution an attractive center for research and teaching.

As mentioned by Jamil Salmi (2009, 7) in a recent publication, the attributes of world-class universities comprise three complementary sets of factors at play among most top universities, namely (a) a high concentration of talent (faculty and students), (b) abundant resources to offer a rich learning environment and to conduct advanced research, and (c) favorable governance features that encourage strategic vision, innovation, and flexibility, and that enable institutions to make decisions and to manage resources without being encumbered by bureaucracy.

Achieving excellence in these three components will still take time for the university, but the process has already begun. It is moving into new ways of generating revenues, strengthening links to the private sector, and cutting subsidies to housing and utilities. The university is also developing mechanisms for financial management and accountability, which will raise efficiency and transparency.

Regarding governance, more steps must be taken toward greater institutional autonomy. A new law under consideration that increases autonomy to universities sets the platform for a range of new policies to better manage and drive the vision of the university. With an advanced system and an enabling legal framework, the university will be better positioned to define and manage its own development trajectory and venture into strategic partnerships with global beacons of excellence (universities, research centers, think tanks, and so forth) to share knowledge and exchange staff members, students, and researchers.
The University of Ibadan’s vision to transform itself into a leading regional knowledge hub and to upgrade its international status is also a step in the right direction. Its strength, integrity, and sphere of responsibility not only are nested into Nigeria’s development strategy, but also are relevant to the entire region.

References


