The African Council for Distance Education Newsletter

Right, the NOUN Management team and the ACDE President pause for a photo after the consultative meeting.
Left, the NUC team, NOUN team and ACDE team pause for a photo after a consultative meeting

https://acde-afri.org/
April 2022

Introduction

The African Council for Distance Education (ACDE) is a continental educational organization comprising African universities and other higher education institutions, which are committed to expanding access to quality education and training through Open and Distance Learning (ODeL), including e-Learning. The Council is registered under the laws of Kenya as an international non-profit organization, with its headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya. It is currently the African Union’s lead implementing agency for Open, Distance and e-Learning in Africa.

ACDE Achievements in 2021

The ACDE member institutions have recently engaged in a joint British Council research project with the Open University UK. The aim was to explore how institutions and staff make decisions at the conflux of pedagogy, technology and student support, and the impact of these decisions. The idea was to identify good practices that could be used as institutions were forced to move to online almost overnight to ensure that learning continues even during the pandemic. However, many institutions were not ready for this move. The study that was conducted at the Kenyatta University, National Open University of Nigeria, University of South Africa and Laweh University revealed that staff lacked essential knowledge and skills needed to teach online. Using findings from the study, the research project team co-created a professional development resource that summarises key areas of decision making and related good practices: Making Digital Decisions. This resource encapsulates findings on good practices in a practical format, with a set of ‘Key decisions’ and guidance on how to go about making decisions for teaching online. The research report on ‘Digital decisions understanding and supporting key choices in online and blended teaching in Sub-Saharan Africa” is available on the ACDE website.

The 6th ACDE Triennial Conference

Due to Covid-19 pandemic that curtailed people’s movements, the ACDE successfully hosted the 6th ACDE Triennial conference which attracted over 170 participants via Zoom and over 600 participants following through YouTube. The participants for the conference were drawn from different countries in Africa and globally.
The 6th Conference was held virtually from Accra Ghana on 28th and 29th September 2021. The conference was hosted by Laweh Open University College, in partnership with the Association of African Universities (AAU), All-Africa Students Union (AASU), Ghana Tertiary Education Commission (GTEC), Ministry of Education, Ghana and the International Council for Open & Distance Education (ICDE). The 2021 conference was presided over by the honour of His Excellency Chief Professor Olusegun Obasanjo, former President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, under whose leadership the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN), was established. During the conference, it was resolved that ACDE will certify and publish on their website member institutions that adopt and implement the ACDE Quality Assurance standards in collaboration with national education regulatory bodies.

During the conference, ACDE was able to recognize and award individuals and organizations that have made outstanding contributions in ODeL a tradition ACDE would want to embrace going forward to motivate more individuals and institutions to support ODEL initiatives in their countries. ACDE also held a preconference training focusing on quality assurance which attracted 41 participants from different higher institutions of learning.

The ACDE 2021-2025 Strategic Plan

In 2021 through a committee constituted by the ACDE Board, the ACDE 2016-2020 was reviewed, leading to the development of the 2021-2025 ACDE Strategic Plan which was adopted in the 42nd ACDE Executive Board meeting held on 18th February 2022.
The New ACDE Executive Board

Occasioned by COVID 19, the ACDE held the 6th General Assembly virtually and successfully elected ACDE Executive Board members. The Elected Board members include:

Prof. Goski Alabi, ACDE President and consulting President Laweh Open University College Ghana

Prof. Olufemi Peters, Vice Chancellor National Open University of Nigeria: First Vice President

Dr. Karviraj Sharma Sukon, Director General, Open University of Mauritious: Second Vice President

Prof. Paul K. Wainaina, Vice Chancellor, Kenyatta University: Secretary General
Prof. Douglas Kunda, ACDE Representative, Southern Africa & Vice Chancellor, Cavendish University, Zambia

Prof. Puleng LenkaBula, Vice Chancellor, University of South Africa: Treasurer

Prof. Altayeb Hayati, Vice Chancellor, Open University Sudan: Immediate former President

Prof. Elifas Bisanda, Vice Chancellor, Open University of Tanzania: Representative East African Region

Prof. Mohamed Elamin Ahmed Mohamed, Vice Chancellor, Alneelain University: Representative North African Region

Prof. Doutor Filipe Sungo, Rector, Catholic University Mozambique: Representative Lusophone Countries

Prof. Dibungi Kalenda, University of Kinshasa-Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences: Representative Franco-phone Countries

Prof. Musa Garba Maitafsir, Director General, National Teachers Institute Nigeria: West African Representative
The ACDE Programme Directors

As a tradition, the African Council for Distance Education board appoints ACDE Directors to manage ACDE programmes. In 2020/2021, the following ACDE Programme Directors were appointed to serve as Directors for three years.

Prof. Christine Ofulue from National Open University Nigeria, Director Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency

Dr. Teresa Mwoma, Executive Director Africa Council for Distance Education

Prof. Mpine Makoe from University of South Africa Director Database

Eng. Haider Hitham from Open University of Sudan Director Information Communication Technology
Following a resolution by the ACDE Executive Board in its 42nd board meeting held on 18th February 2022, the ACDE President, Prof. Goski Alabi and the Executive Director, Dr. Teresa Mwoma, visited Nigeria from 2nd to 6th March 2022 with three objectives:

1. To hold a consultative meeting with the Vice Chancellor National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN), with a view of coming up with strategies of implementing the ACDE Quality Assurance toolkit which is hosted by NOUN.

2. Pay a courtesy call to the National University Commission (NUC) of Nigeria to explore opportunities for partnership and collaboration in rolling out implementation of the ACDE Quality Assurance (QA) toolkit leading to certification of all higher institutions of learning using ODEL or blended learning.

3. Present the award to the former President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria His Excellency, Prof. Olusegun Obasanjo who was the Chief Guest of the 6th ACDE Triennial Conference.

Consultative Meeting with the National Open University of Nigeria

On 3rd March 2022, the ACDE President held a consultative meeting with the Management team of NOUN with regard to the strategies to be used in implementing the ACDE QA toolkit and certification programme.

The ACDE President acknowledged the role that the VC NOUN played in organizing for the meeting. She thanked the VC and NOUN staff who have enabled ACDE to succeed amongst them, Prof. Ogidan, Prof. Tanglang, Prof. Ofulue and Prof. Olufemi Peters who is the ACDE 1st Vice President ACDE.
The President observed that Prof Tanglang made efforts to initiate implementation of ACDE QA Tool Kit. He did a great job in laying the foundation on which we are working to ensure full implementation. She added that, at the 6th ACDE conference delegates resolved to use ACDE QA Tool Kit to certify ACDE member institutions. The ACDE QA toolkit has been developed in such a way that institutions are able to do self-assessment followed by external assessment. She further mentioned the need to manage the political aspect of certification through involving the national education regulators. The President proposed that it will be helpful to use the term certification instead of accreditation as this is the role of regulators.

The Vice Chancellor NOUN advised that it was important to introduce ACDE to the National University Commission. He shared that, there is need for the ACDE President to highlight on the process that was used to develop the ACDE QA tool kit and the policy framework on QA. The President would also talk about the process involved in training of certified trainers who would later train their institution on use of the ACDE QA tool kit. According to the VC, NOUN, certification would be seen to be an enabler of NUC. The NUC to acknowledge ACDE presence and that they can partner to enhance quality in ODEL in higher institutions of learning.

Consultative Meeting with National University Commission of Nigeria

On 4th March 2022, the ACDE President accompanied by the ACDE 1st Vice President and the ACDE Executive Director together with a team from National Open University of Nigeria visited the National University Commission (NUC). The NUC lead by the Deputy Executive Secretary welcomed the President on behalf of the Executive Secretary NUC who was away on duty. The ACDE President thanked the NUC team for a warm welcome to the ACDE team. She thanked the Executive Secretary in absentia for agreeing to have a meeting with the ACDE team.
The president gave an overview of ACDE highlighting on when it was established, launched, membership, recognition and the technical committees. She pointed out that the purpose of her visit to the NUC was to explore the opportunity to collaborate in implementing the ACDE Quality Assurance tool-kit in higher institutions of earning implementing open and distance/blended learning leading to certification.

The President maintained that the certification programme would have a five-year life span and the process of certification would involve:

- Training the Trainers on the use of the QA Toolkit.
- Institutional Self-assessment using the toolkit.
- An external peer review leading to the certification.

The Deputy Executive Secretary on his part thanked the president for sharing the ACDE QA tool-kit with NUC for consideration. He observed that certification was not in lieu of accreditation which is the role of NUC. He indicated that the NUC Management would review the QA tool-kit and the ACDE request and revert back.
Presentation of the African Strategic Leadership in Education Award to Former President Federal Republic of Nigeria H.E Olusegun Obasanjo

In order to present the award to the former President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, His Excellency Olusegun Obasanjo, sought appointment for the same in the month of March 2021, where the 1st Vice President and the Executive Director ACDE accompanied the President to Abeokuta. The 5th March 2022, which was the third and final day of the mission to Nigeria was spent in Lagos Abeokuta where the ACDE President presented H.E Olusegun Obasanjo the Award on African Strategic Leadership in Education during his 85th birthday celebration.
THANK YOU

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