

A RETROSPECTIVE LOOK OF NAHPI FROM CREATION TILL DATE: By DIRECTOR OF NAHPI

The National Higher Polytechnic Institute (NAHPI) (dubbed School of Engineering) was created by Presidential Decree n° 2017/582 of 24 November 2017 as a school of The University of Bamenda (UBa). The text of application guiding the functioning of the Institute is laid down in Decree no 2017/581 of 24 November 2017. The pioneer Director of the School was appointed on the 29th of January 2018 and the first batch of students were admitted into Year One of the First Cycle in six departments on the 24th of February 2018. The inaugural lecture was given on the 6th of March 2018 in Amphitheatre 340 of UBa, for the 2017/2018 academic year.



Professor Fidelis Cho-Ngwa, Director of NAHPI

NAHPI was created with the **missions** to:

- provide initial and continuous training as well as research in the fields of engineering and technology;
- carry out the retraining and further training of professionals in the aforementioned fields;
- provide development support, particularly through service provision and sustainable development management

The **vision** of NAHPI is to become a leading school for hands-on training in the engineering and technology disciplines, excelling in research and providing engineering solutions to development problems of Cameroon, Africa and the world at large. NAHPI was the third of presently four Public Polytechnics owned by the Cameroon Government.

The First Batch of Bachelor of Engineering students of NAHPI completed their B.Eng programmes in four years and received their diplomas in late 2021. A year thereafter, the Institute is graduating its first batch of students with the Master of Engineering (M.Eng) degrees (in December 2022) in six programmes, namely **Civil Engineering, Computer Engineering, Electrical and Electronic Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Mining and Mineral Engineering, and Petroleum Engineering**. Thanks to strong and fruitful collaborations on the use of expertise and laboratory equipment of older engineering and technology schools, as well as with industrial setups around the country, we were able to get the students thoroughly trained. We were therefore, not surprised when many companies started requesting us to send some of our graduates for recruitment as Engineers even before their graduation. The NAHPI model has been based on **Gold in – Gold out**: the quality and hardworking nature of the student is considered paramount right at the level of entry into the school. The present convocation ceremony (of December 2022) is therefore, without an iota of doubt, a day of celebration with all the pomp and pageantry.

Since creation, the full-time teaching staff of NAHPI has increased from 11 to 72, with 6 in Professorial ranks and two of them coming in from the Diaspora. The 72 teachers include 31 Instructors who are being paid from the functioning budget of the Institute. Student numbers also increased steadily from 334 to presently about 2,000. To improve quality and conform with the norms of professional bodies, efforts to recruit practicing engineers as part-time teachers or practicing engineer instructors is continuous. Members

of socio-professional circles are continuously being engaged in curriculum development, teaching and research. NAHPI is actively and continuously establishing MOUs within and out of Cameroon. The latest being the finalization of MOUs with **Laser Engineering and Consulting, Port Harcourt, Nigeria; KAPPA Engineering, Paris France; the Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC); and SONARA.**

The search for international funds for research projects and for the construction and equipment of NAHPI is also continuous. This has been the case with an **Austrian Government grant scheme amounting to 3.35 Billion CFA francs** and facilitated by Bit Media (now eee) Austria that is nearing finalisation at the service agreement level. This project already received the **matured project validation visa** of MINEPAT in March 2022.

Five years after creation, NAHPI still has no dedicated infrastructure. However, the construction of a pedagogic and administrative block at the selected campus site just below the Bambili Health Centre is on-going and will provide 11 lecture halls and 24 offices upon completion, hopefully in 2024 or early 2025. NAHPI and the UBa Development Office are also finalizing plans to construct 15 temporal lecture halls with accessory structures and pavement at the site, based on the 2023 functioning budget of the school, to add to the permanent bloc under construction.

Permit me seize this unique opportunity to publicly thank my immediate collaborators and the Heads of Department who have been steadfast in the past five years to enable us achieve this great success. The Institute is grateful to all its partners, including the other schools and faculties of UBa who have collaborated so well to enable the timely production of the present graduates.

We are grateful to the top administration of UBa under the astute leadership of her great and highly dynamic Vice-Chancellor, **Professor Theresia Nkuo-Akenji**, for the enormous support and coordination provided to ensure we have the quality of graduates we are sending out today.

The Institute is very grateful to the Minister of State, Minister of Higher Education, **Professor Jacques Fame Ndongo**; other Ministerial Departments; the Prime Minister, Head of Government, **His Excellency Chief Dr. Dion Ngute**, for providing the means necessary for the smooth functioning of NAHPI; to the former Prime Minister, **His Excellency Philemon Yang** and to **all members of the Paul Mingo Ghogomu Committee** for championing the creation of NAHPI; and most especially to the creator of NAHPI, the **Head of State, His Excellency President Paul Biya** for providing the means required for take-off and proper functioning of his creation. Thank you, Mr. President.

Long-Live the National Higher Polytechnic Institute of UBa; Long-live the Republic of Cameroon.

Professor Fidells CHO-NGWA
Pioneer Director of NAHPI