It was celebrations galore as the acting Vice-Chancellor of the Rivers State University of Science and Technology, Professor Blessing Chimezie Didia marked his birthday on the 20th of April 2016. Prof. Didia was taken unawares as he walked into the office and was greeted with a simultaneous outburst of birthday songs.

The birthday surprise was put together by the Special Assistant to the Ag. Vice-Chancellor, Mr. Sydney Law Complex to Dr. Nabo Graham Douglas Complex in honour of a seasoned lawyer and Elder Statesman. It will be recalled that the Law Complex was one of the projects completed and commissioned by Governor Wike during his 100 days in office.

While congratulating the over 5,000 graduands, Governor Wike urged them to take necessary steps to make a living for themselves and not to rest on their academic achievements. He assured them that the present administration will assist to create employment opportunities, stressing that the State needs their

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knowledge to move to the next level.

The Governor expressed dismay over cultism and youth restiveness in the State, calling on the various tertiary Institutions to check the menace. "I hereby direct governing councils of tertiary Institutions to proscribe all cult and related groups, if they have not done so already and summarily dismiss and prosecute any student found to belong to such groups or participate in such devilish activities", he said.

Earlier in his address, the Pro-Chancellor, Justice Iche N. Ndu (rtd.) expressed appreciation to Governor Wike for the support given to the Institution amidst the era of austerity affecting the entire nation. He assured the Governor that the Council will ensure prudence and transparency in the management of the resources of the University.

Hon. Justice Ndu however observed that Universities cannot rely on Government funding alone. "We recognize that the time has come for this University to explore other avenues to generate more revenue from internal and other sources to...
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complement the support from the Government”, he said.

Also speaking, the acting Vice-Chancellor of the University, Professor Blessing Chimezie Didia stated that of the 5,067 graduands, 27 received Ph.D; 168 Masters and 415 Postgraduate Diploma. At the first degree category, the acting Vice-Chancellor said that 4 graduands finished with First Class, 317 Second Class Upper, 1,914 Second Class Lower, 1,754 Third Class while 468 graduated with a Pass degree.

Prof. Didia congratulated the graduands for their remarkable achievements, noting “May I specially congratulate the graduands of the 2014/2015 Academic session on their remarkable achievements, I must commend the tenacity, courage and doggedness with which you conducted yourself throughout your stay in the University. I advise you to go into the world with the same zeal and be good ambassadors of the University in wherever vocation you may find yourselves.”

Highpoint of the 28th Convocation was the foundation laying ceremony of the College of Medical Sciences and the commissioning of the Alumni Building.

The ceremony had several dignitaries in attendance including the executive governor of Ebonyi State, His Excellency, Engr. David Umahi.
Celebrations Galore As...
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Enyindah with some of the Principal Officers of the University and bank executives on campus who came to celebrate the man that has changed the face of things in RSUST since his assumption of office in August 2015. An elated Prof. Didia was surprised because he had not informed anyone that it was his birthday.

The celebrations continued after the close of work as Professors, Deans, Directors and Union members all converged at the newly renovated staff club to host the Ag. Vice-Chancellor. They all took turns to sing and eulogise the man they call “the game changer”. The club was a beehive of activities and there was a lot to eat and drink.

The climax of the day was the get-together organized by the Personal Assistant to the Ag. Vice-Chancellor, Mr. Omah David Sam. It was a gathering of important dignitaries from his kinsmen as the Chairman of Ikwerre Local Government Mr. Samuel Wanosike, led the friends and well wishers of Prof. Didia to celebrate one of their own that has made them proud.

Friends of Prof. Didia from the University of Port-Harcourt were not left out as they turned out to spend the day with the Ag. Vice-Chancellor.
The Forestry Association of Nigeria (FAN), has urged the government to conserve the wetlands as a means of tackling myriads of environmental challenges plaguing Nigeria, especially the Niger Delta region.

This was part of FAN’s resolution at her 38th annual conference on the theme “Mangroves and Wetlands of Sub-Saharan Africa: Potential for Sustainable Livelihoods and Development”, held at the Amphitheatre of the Rivers State University of Science and Technology, from Monday, March 7-Friday to March 11, 2016. The association also called for concerted effort by the government to increase the awareness of political institutions and community based organisations on sustainable utilization of mangrove resources and involve local communities in policy development and implementation.

In his remarks, the acting Vice Chancellor of the University, Prof. Blessing Chimezie Didia, described the theme of the conference as apt and timely. Prof. Didia, who was represented by his deputy, Prof. Boma Magnus Oruwari, lamented that the wetlands was fast disappearing in the country because of the activities of oil explorations. He urged the foresters to be more proactive in tackling the challenges of the Nigerian environment, adding that the conference should be used as a bastion to create solutions to the various environmental challenges, especially in the Niger Delta region.

Also, the Vice Chancellor of the University of Port Harcourt, Prof. Ndowa Laale, in a goodwill message, said that he was excited by the conference but decried the low turnout at the event. He said that the environment plays an important role in the Universe and urged the various stakeholders to brace-up for the challenges posed by the environment.

The President of FAN, Rivers State Chapter, Prof. Nkalo H. Ukoima, in his address, said that the association was poised to create more awareness about wetlands and the environment in general. He said that the association was willing to partner with the government and relevant stakeholders in bringing about sustainable development on the environment.

In a keynote address, The Coordinator of the National Wildlife Conservation Society of Cameroun, Dr. Gordon Ajonina, urged foresters to unite and create measures to forestall recurrence of disappearing wetlands. “There is need to create a concentrated wetlands’ policy and ensure private sector participation. More awareness should be created through capacity building, access to resources, good governance, restoration schemes and eco-tourism development”, he said.

On her part, the Government of Rivers State, charged FAN to create a centre for research in Agroforestry. The Governor of Rivers State, Barr. Nyesom Ezenwo Wike, represented by the Commissioner for Agriculture, Barr. (Mrs.) Onimim Jacks, said that the Government was desirous of conserving the forests as well as making commercial use of them, stressing that the government was committed to sustainable development in agriculture. “We are ready to collaborate with FAN because we believe that we must work together to achieve results. Researches must not be kept in the drawers. We want to increase our agricultural Gross Domestic Product, (GDP), and create employment”, she said.