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NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2020

GCU RESTORATION PROJECT: 2019 STATUS UPDATE

Dear Umuahian,

The Board of the Fisher Educational Development Trust would like to wish you and your family a Happy New Year. The year 2019 was a pivotal one for Fisher Trust and the GCU Restoration Project.

At the turn of the year, the focus of the Trust was on increasing the pace of activities, consolidating on the gains of the previous year and putting in place all outstanding processes that will lead to commencement of the construction phase within the shortest time possible.

The program action points for 2019 included:

- Hiring of Educational Consultants,
- Progressing the drawings from conceptual to construction stage,
- Recruitment of a Principal,
- Developing of the Bill of Quantities,
- Deepening of stakeholder involvement in the GCU Restoration Project,
- Developing of GCU Masterplan and Roadmap,
- Costing of the project,
- Contractor pre-qualification,
- Facility rehabilitation
- Structural Integrity Test of all the buildings in GCU
- Soil Test
- And most importantly securing Funding for the project.

Though it was an ambitious program, many of the milestones were accomplished in the course of the year.

1. HIRING OF EDUCATIONAL CONSULTANTS

In August, Fisher Trust engaged the services of an internationally renowned educational consulting team, BEL Consultants. The consultants will lead the effort of the Fisher Trust in the restoration project of Government College, Umuahia. The consulting team comprises of Mr. Sukwinder Bassi, Mr. Tony Little and Mr. Tony Eysele.

Mr. Little is an Old Boy of Eton College and was also a Headmaster of the College. He, Sukwinder Bassi and Tony Eysele have extensive school management experience. They have between them set up over 30 schools across the world including Africa. Their knowledge and experience is critical to the project's success given that Government College Umuahia was modeled after Eton College.

Since, the BEL Consultants commenced work, they have made significant and substantial contributions into all aspects of the Restoration Project.

2. DRAWINGS

Conceptual drawings for Phase 1 projects have been produced and they have been advanced to architectural and construction drawings. These new drawings contain the input of the Consultants and the proposed facilities have been designed to be fit-for-purpose.

Phase 1 Projects cover all the basic facilities required to re-open the School. These projects have been grouped in batches as Batch 1, Batch 2, Batch 3 and Batch 4. They include Classroom Blocks A, B & C, Dormitories, Assembly Hall, Dining Hall, Laboratories, Workshops, Gate House, Perimeter Fencing and Library to be delivered as Batches 1 and 2.

Batches 3 and 4 include the Administrative (AD) Block, Sport Facilities, Staff Housing and External works, including roads.

3. RECRUITMENT OF PRINCIPAL

Fisher Trust has had successful discussions with a reputable international recruitment agency, LSC Education. Infact, an agreement has already been executed. This agency will work with the Trust and the BEL Consultants in recruiting a suitable Principal for the new GCU. The recruiting agency has commenced work.

4. PRODUCTION OF BILL OF QUANTITIES

The Bill of Quantities (BOQ) for the Phase 1 of the restoration project is ready. The BOQ is being subjected to Value Engineering and is critical in linking the infrastructure specifications with educational quality planning at the least possible value for money cost.

5. CREATION OF NEW COMMITTEES

Fisher Trust created new committees that will work with the Trust in delivering the new GCU. These committees will expand and deepen stakeholder involvement in the GCU Restoration Project. The committees include:

- Finance Committee
- Academic Committee
- Infrastructure Committee
- People Committee (Human Resources)
- Fundraising and Development Committee

These Committees are made up of only Umuahians.

6. CREATION OF GCU MASTERPLAN AND ROADMAP

The Masterplan and Roadmap were developed by the BEL Consultants. These documents show the various implementation stages for the restoration process. It also demonstrates the delivery process for all infrastructure projects.

7. CONTRACTOR PRE-QUALIFICATION

In October 2019, the Trust put out an advertisement for contractor expression of interest. The advert was circulated across all channels and was also published in The Sun Newspaper. About a dozen companies applied, some of which include establishments owned by Umuahians.

The aim of the pre-qualification process is to identify and select a pool of qualified companies that will execute the construction work. It is a transparent process that guarantees that the best contractors are selected for the project. The process is ongoing.

8. TENDER DOCUMENTS

Tender documents for the contracts have been prepared and will be distributed to contractors who eventually succeed at pre-qualification in the coming weeks.

9. IDENTIFYING AND SECURING FUNDS FOR THE PROJECT

To underline the importance of funding to the entire restoration vision, the Trust secured the services of a Financial Adviser who has been working with the Board and the appropriate Committees to secure a bridge facility and explore funding sources.

The Bill Of Quantities for the GCU Restoration Project will be known shortly after the value engineering process referred to in Item 4 above. The Board will be approaching the GCU Alumni Community on the fundraising and other sources.

10. SOIL AND STRUCTURAL INTEGRITY TEST

A comprehensive Soil Test has been carried out in the College for the first time. Also, Structural Integrity Tests of all the buildings have been concluded.

As is evident from the above milestones, most of the beacons necessary for the construction phase to commence have been put in place. This includes a Business Plan.

For the first time since the commencement of the GCU Restoration Project, we are on the verge of starting the construction phase. In other words, we are at the cusp of implementing the GCU facility restoration plan.

We therefore implore every Umuahian to actively participate and support the GCU Restoration Project with your resources.

As we head into 2020, it has become clear that optimism alone will not deliver the school.

Let us donate generously today or adopt a project.

Thank you.

Dr. Okwesilieze Nwodo
Chairman