

Sahara Group, UNILAG collaborate on sustainability, global competitiveness

Sahara Group's School of Innovation and Extrapreneurship at the University of Lagos to serve as a platform for promoting inventions and solutions in Africa.

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Leading energy and infrastructure conglomerate, Sahara Group has announced the establishment of the Sahara School of Innovation and Extrapreneurship at the University of Lagos (UNILAG), Akoka to serve as a platform for promoting inventions and solutions that will facilitate sustainable development and global competitiveness in Africa.

Ejiro Gray, Director, Governance and Sustainability at Sahara Group said Sahara would collaborate with UNILAG to make the school a world class facility that will proffer solutions to future challenges today, with emphasis on areas like the future of energy, entrepreneurship, data science, digital arts and culture, artificial intelligence and robotics, and fintech, among others.

The sod-turning ceremony of the proposed school held on Friday October 28, 2022. "This project reinforces our commitment to giving back always and serves as one of Sahara Group's contributions towards building a



Ejiro Gray, Director, Governance and Sustainability



Sod-turning of Sahara Group School of Innovation and Extrapreneurship building

formidable legacy for sustainable development. For over 26 years, innovation and extrapreneuership have driven Sahara's growth across Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. We are confident that working with the University of Lagos, a foremost institution of global repute, the school would deliver sustainable value for the benefit of Africa and the world at large," said Gray whose directorate would drive the project..



Sod-turning of Sahara Group School of Innovation and Extrapreneurship building

Commending Sahara Group for the initiative, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Lagos, Professor

Oluwatoyin Ogundipe, FAS, stated it is particularly gladdening that the drivers of the project are alumni of the University from different Faculties who have by their achievements, individually and jointly, demonstrated to the world the quality of UNILAG products. He noted that the Sahara Group School of Innovation and Extrapreneurship project hallmarks the repositioning of

UNILAG as a "University of The Future", a vision that has shaped its pursuits over the last five years and informs its 60th anniversary theme: UNILAG@60: Eyes on the Future.

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*Ejiro Gray, Director,
Governance and
Sustainability*

“We, at the University of Lagos are committed to building on our heritage of excellence to continue to produce graduates that are locally relevant and globally-competitive as the alumni before us today. We aim to instill in our students, more than ever, the culture of innovation, entrepreneurship,” the VC added.

Gray said a timeline of 24 months has been set for the completion of the project with clear sustainability indices in terms of seamless maintenance, inclusiveness,

transparency, relevance and scalability of modules/inventions, access to strategic/financial advisory and collaboration for regional and global impact.

She also announced the launch of the Sahara Scholar Award aimed at “energising excellence” through rewards to university students with outstanding performance in select disciplines. The Sahara Scholar Award will commence from the University of Lagos as a pilot scheme, and progressively expand in scope across Africa.

“The unique thing about the first phase of the Sahara Scholar Award is that it is wholly funded by the Group Executive Directors of the Sahara Group as a way of giving back to the University of Lagos where most of them received their university education and some also had parents who taught at the university. The award will be N1 million yearly for each category, including provision for annual sponsorship of exchange programmes for lecturers within Africa,” she added.

Categories under the Sahara Scholar Award include one-off prizes for 26 outstanding students to mark Sahara Group’s 26th anniversary, Temitope Shonubi prize for Best Improved Student in Architecture, Moroti Adedoyin-Adeyinka Prize for Best Graduating Student in Economics, Wale Ajibade Prize for Best Improved Student in Economics, Ade Odunsi Prize for Best Student in Finance, and Kola Adesina Prize for Best Graduating Student in Business Management.

Others are: Dr. Folashodun Shonubi Prize for Best Graduating Student in Mechanical Engineering, Zacchaeus Odunsi Prize for Best Entry Level Student in Civil Engineering, Mr. Adegoke Adeniji Prize for Best Graduating Student in Library and Information Science, Dr. John Falegan Prize for Best Graduating Student in Insurance and Actuarial Science, Asharami Prize for Best AI/Fintech invention and Sahara Group Prize for Best Entrepreneurial Dissertation in Architecture, Engineering, and Economics.

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