



# THE CITADEL

A Great Life Alumni Association DFW Magazine

Vol 5 Issue 1 Mar 2025



## Ms. Olufunke Jinadu

**Board Certified Mental Health  
Nurse Practitioner takes a plunge  
into issues of mental health**

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**GIAA DFW Branch Members Meet during one of its monthly sessions**



**THE CITADEL**

Volume 5 Issue 1, January 2025

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**THE CITADEL** is a Great Iife Alumni Association DFW magazine, available on-line @ [www.greatifealumni.com](http://www.greatifealumni.com).....

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# Publishers' NOTE



## Greeeeat Ife !!

**I**T is with great joy and gratitude that I welcome you to the first edition of our alumni newsletter for 2025. As we embark on another year filled with purpose and service, we celebrate a remarkable achievement that under-scores our unwavering commitment to giving back to our beloved alma mater.

I am thrilled to announce that through the generous contributions of our members, we successfully awarded

104 scholarships to deserving students of Obafemi Awolowo University at a memorable and colorful event at Oduduwa Hall, on Tuesday, February 18, 2025. This milestone is a testament to the power of collective effort and the impact we can make when we come together. To every donor who made this possible—your kindness and dedication are shaping the future of these students, and we cannot thank you enough. With this success behind us, we must now set our sights on the future. The fundraising for the 2026 scholarship awards has already

commenced, and I encourage everyone to continue supporting this life-changing initiative. Your contributions, no matter the amount, go a long way in securing educational opportunities for the next generation.

Beyond scholarships, our roadmap for 2025 is ambitious and inspiring. We are set to support the much-needed renovation of Mozambique Hall, ensuring that students enjoy improved living conditions. The donations to our goodwill store on campus have steadily increased, providing essential items to students in need. Additionally, we are amplifying our presence within the broader community through impactful volunteer events, and we are launching a renewed drive to engage new members while also bringing back those who have been less active in recent times. Our association thrives on participation, and we look forward to welcoming more members into our fold.

Another exciting highlight in our calendar was our first family event of 2025, organized by our hardworking Events Committee, which held on Sunday, March 16. It was indeed an amazing event as we gathered to celebrate friendship, family, and the unbreakable bond that defines us as Great Ife alumni. Enjoy the images from the event beautifully captured by our PR and Editorial team.

As always, our strength lies in our unity. Together, we continue to uphold the values of excellence, service, and camaraderie that make our association special. Let's press forward with renewed energy and commitment, ensuring that 2025 is a year of even greater impact. Thank you all for your unwavering support. Here's to a fulfilling year ahead! Warm regards,

## **Dolapo Ajayi**

President, Great Ife Alumni Association  
Dallas-Fort Worth Branch, USA

1. Why did the physics professor break up with the biology professor? There was no chemistry.
2. The term “**Alma Mater**” comes from Latin, meaning “**nourishing mother.**” It historically referred to any caring, nurturing mother and now is used to denote a school or university from which one has graduated.
3. What do you call a sad cup of coffee at college? A **depresso.**
4. The University of Bologna, founded in 1088 in Italy, is recognized as the oldest university in continuous operation.
5. Why was the geography book so stressed? It had too many land-slides!
6. In the United States, “**Ivy League**” refers to a group of eight private colleges and universities in the northeastern part of the country, known for their historical prestige and academic excellence.
7. How do you make a tissue dance during a college party? Put a little boogie in it!
8. The term “freshman” dates back to the 16th century and originally meant a “**newcomer**” or “**novice.**”
9. A professor has a classroom filled with students about to take a philosophy finale. The only question on the test is, “Why?” All of the students begin to write feverishly. One student, however, writes, “Why not?” & leaves. The professor instantly give him an “A.”
10. A young man was putting himself through college as a waiter. When he gave one diner the bill, the diner asked. “What is the usual tip?” “Well, this is my first day here, but the other guys say if I get a quarter out of you, I’ll be doing great,” the college student replied. “Is that so?” snorted the diner. “Well, just to show them how wrong they are, here’s \$5. “Thanks!” replied the student. I’ll put this in my school fund.”  
“What are you studying?” asked the diner. The student smiled and said, “Applied psychology.”

## NEW MEMBERS



**Ayotunde Itayemi**

A Computer Science & Economics graduate from OAU in mid-2000, Ayotunde worked in several companies before moving to the US in 2016. He secured an MSc (Management) from Minot State University (North Dakota) in 2017; moved to Utah in 2018; and then to Lewisville TX in 2023. Ayotunde loves table tennis, pool/snooker, basketball and guns.

**Ayodeji Aladegbami**

A dynamic and versatile professional with a strong foundation in economics and extensive experience in the financial industry, Ayodeji Aladegbami is a graduate of the prestigious OAU, where he earned a degree in Economics, and later, post graduate degree UNIBADAN. A risk management, and strategic decision-making expert, Ayodeji is driven by a passion for tech-solution leading him to transit into cybersecurity in the US where he now excels as a Security Engineer.



**Sola Awe**

A 1995 set and graduate of the Faculty of Agriculture, Sola Awe is a proud alumni of Obafemi Awolowo University. Thrilled to finally connect with fellow alumni who share the rich legacy of excellence and innovation that defines our alma mater, Sola looks forward to collaborating and building lasting connections, celebrate achievements, share opportunities, and foster a stronger network that uplifts us all.



## DEBATE LIVES ON

# Ancient Roots, Modern Brilliance

"I disagree with what you have to say, sir, but I will defend, to the death, your right to say it" – *Voltaire*



Photo for illustration purposes only. Courtesy: The Internet

AT A POINT IN TIME, in the ancient communities, where humans first began to gather, the art of debate was born. Picture it: men, women, and even children huddled together under the shade of a great tree or within the walls of a bustling marketplace, passionately discussing the pressing matters of their day—how to share resources, defend their lands, or ensure a bountiful harvest. These lively exchanges weren't just chatter; they were the lifeblood of progress, the spark that ignited growth and innovation in societies bold enough to embrace them. Fast forward a few millennia, and here we are, still debating, still striving to make our voices heard. But let's be honest—

some things have changed, and not always for the better.

Enter the OAU Debating Society, a shining beacon of resilience and dedication to this ancient art form. These modern-day rhetoricians deserve a standing ovation for keeping the spirit of debate alive in a world where social media has turned discourse into a chaotic free-for-all. Sure, *Twitter threads* and *Instagram rants* have their place, but let's face it: they're often more about clap-backs and cynicism than meaningful dialogue. Where's the rigor? Where's the inspiration? Where's the grandeur of a well-structured argument delivered in a space that demands respect and attention?

This is where institutions and corporate sponsors come in. Imagine if we had more spaces dedicated to the glorification of free speech—places where ideas could clash and spark like flint on steel, where the next generation of policymakers and thought leaders could hone their craft. OAU, for instance, has already given us a treasure trove of artistic talent through its dramatic arts theatre—names like Asake, Boy Alinco, Fireboy DML, and Biyi Bandele have all graced its stages. Now, imagine if OAU also boasted a world-class debate auditorium, complete with a robust academic program. The possibilities are endless! We could be nurturing the next wave of brilliant minds to walk the corridors of government, armed with the power of persuasion and the wisdom of well-reasoned debate.

So, here's to the OAU Debating Society and all the other societies across the country keeping this ancient art alive. Let's celebrate their vocational choice, their spirit, and their unwavering commitment to the noble tradition of debate. And to the leaders and sponsors out there: let's build those inspiring spaces, those modern-day agoras where ideas can flourish. After all, as history has shown us, societies that debate together, grow together. And who doesn't love a good growth sport?

*Tayo Olajide, Editor,  
GIAA, DFW, USA*



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By Tokunbo Adejuyigbe



# Scholarship Initiative Empowers Students at Obafemi Awolowo University



A REMARKABLE stride in educational support was taken recently with the second edition of the Dallas Scholars Award, hosted by the Great Ife Alumni Association, Dallas Branch, at the esteemed Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU) in Ile-Ife. This year, 104 deserving students from all 13 faculties of the university received scholarships that collectively amount to an unprecedented value of 20.8 million naira, marking a 100% increase in beneficiaries compared to the previous year.



The Dallas Scholars Award 2025 initiative represents not only a significant commitment to academic excellence but also a strategic response to the financial barriers facing students today. Since its inception in 2024, the initiative has quickly established itself as a cornerstone of alumni engagement within the OAU community. The latest round of scholarships brings the total number of awards, since inception, to 156—a testament to the initiative's success and the growing support

## CAMPUS NEWS



from the alumni base.

During the university's 48th convocation ceremony in 2024, Professor Simeon Bamire, the Vice Chancellor, publicly recognized the Dallas Branch and Great Ife Mainland Metro (GIMM) for their sustained contributions to the university. Professor Yomi Daramola, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration), reiterated this sentiment during the recent award ceremony, thanking the Dallas Alumni Branch for their unwavering dedication to promoting academic achievement among students.

"We are delighted to witness the growth of this noble initiative," Prof Daramola stated. "The Dallas Alumni Branch has consistently demonstrated its commitment to enhancing the academic experience for our students amidst tough economic conditions." He further underlined the importance of the scholarship by highlighting that 16 past beneficiaries had already graduated with outstanding results, demonstrating the lifeline this support can provide. This year's initiative not only renewed scholarships for last



year's recipients who maintained exceptional academic performance but also extended the program to 68 new students. This expansion has been met with enthusiasm, as it allows more students to focus on their education without the looming anxiety of financial burdens. Daramola urged all recipients to fulfill their roles as am-

bassadors of the scholarship program, emphasizing the importance of academic dedication and personal integrity. Mr. Dolapo Ajayi, the President of the Dallas Branch, addressed the competitive nature of the scholarship during a media interaction, revealing that the selection committee received a staggering 1,350 applications for the 2025 awards—indicating a growing interest that reflects the initiative's prestige. Ajayi expressed a commitment to continuous educational support and encouraged prospective applicants to seek guidance from previous beneficiaries to bolster their chances of success in the future. "The aim of our Association is clear," Ajayi commented. "We are here to support our alma mater, making every effort to give back to the community that shaped our futures. Whether through infrastructural improvements or providing scholarships, our mission is to ensure that students can concentrate on their education and eventually inspire others as alumni themselves.

The Scholarship Committee Chairman of the Dallas Branch, added a heartfelt welcome to the new beneficiaries, highlighting the introduction of a mentoring program aimed at providing comprehensive support to this year's awardees. "In a world full of challenges, we want to be there for you," he said. "When you look back, we want you to remember Dallas."

As the Dallas Scholars Award initiative continues to thrive, it serves as a significant example of how alumni communities can influence educational landscapes and foster generations of successful graduates. The effort not only enables more students to pursue their academic aspirations but also strengthens the bond between OAU and its global alumni network, creating a legacy of support and inspiration for years to come.





By **John Oluwagbemiga**

# The Great Relocation: Why people and businesses are flocking to Dallas, Texas



Photo for illustration purposes only. Courtesy: The Internet

**I**N THE WAKE OF THE COVID-19 pandemic, a notable trend has emerged across the United States: the migration of people and businesses to economically vibrant regions, with Dallas, Texas, at the forefront. This dynamic city, which boasts a thriving economy, a favorable business climate, and an exceptional quality of life, is becoming a magnet for individuals and corporations alike.

## **Economic Resilience and Growth**

Dallas has demonstrated remarkable economic resilience, emerging from the pandemic with robust growth. The city's economy is diverse, anchored in sectors such as technology, finance,



healthcare, and logistics. According to the Bureau of Economic Analysis, Texas accounted for a staggering 44% of the nation's job growth in the last year, with the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex (DFW) leading this charge.

Data from the Dallas Regional Chamber indicates that the DFW area is home to over 56 Fortune 500 companies, including prominent names like AT&T, Texas Instruments, and Southwest Airlines. This concentration of major corporations not only fuels job opportunities but also creates a vibrant ecosystem that attracts talent from across the country and around the globe.



### Business-Friendly Environment

The allure of Dallas is further enhanced by its business-friendly environment. Texas offers no state income tax, which can be particularly appealing for both individuals and corporations. This tax structure allows businesses to allocate more resources towards growth, research, and development rather than government contributions. According to the Tax Foundation, Texas ranks high for business tax climate, encouraging new startups and established firms to relocate and expand their operations.

Additionally, the Dallas area has invested in infrastructure that facilitates seamless connectivity. The DFW International Airport serves as a major hub, with over 200 destinations worldwide, reinforcing Dallas's status as a global business center. This connectivity not only supports corporate travel but also aids in the efficient distribution of goods and services.

### Affordable Living Amidst Prosperity

A significant driving factor behind the relocation to Dallas is the relatively affordable cost of living compared to other major metropolitan areas, such as San Francisco and New York City. The National Association of Realtors reports that the median home price in Dallas is approximately \$325,000, significantly lower than the national average. This affordability allows families and individuals to find desirable housing options without compromising their financial stability, making it an attractive destination for newcomers.

Furthermore, residents enjoy a lower cost of living in terms of everyday expenses, including transportation, healthcare, and groceries. This economic advantage enables families to enhance their quality of life while enjoying the benefits of a bustling urban environment.



### Cultural and Recreational Appeal

Beyond economic incentives, Dallas offers a rich tapestry of cultural and recreational opportunities that enhance its livability. The city is renowned for its vibrant arts scene, world-class dining, and diverse communities. The Dallas Arts District, one of the largest urban arts districts in the United States, is home to renowned institutions such as the Dallas Museum of Art and the Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center.

Outdoor enthusiasts find solace in the

city's numerous parks and recreational areas, with more than 20 miles of trails for cycling and walking, along with lakes & green spaces that provide a welcome escape from urban life.

As of 2025, Dallas continues to draw attention from individuals and businesses seeking a blend of economic opportunity, cultural enrichment, and a high quality of life. The area's population has seen a notable increase, with an influx of over 1.5 million people projected by 2030, according to the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex Regional Economic Development report. Businesses will likely continue to expand and invest in the region, ensuring that Dallas remains at the forefront of economic and cultural growth in the coming years.

In conclusion, Dallas's unique combination of a resilient economy, favorable business conditions, affordable living, and rich cultural offerings makes it a prime destination for relocation. As both individuals and corporations flock to the city, it solidifies its position as a hub of innovation, diversity, and opportunity in the 21st century.

# Monthly Meetings





# DfW NEWS



# BIRTHDAYS

A KEY EVENT at every monthly meeting is the birthday celebration of members within that meeting month. This is usually coordinated by the Membership Committee and the

Office of the Welfare Secretary, **Mrs Vera Edebiri**. Birthdays for registered members, on the registration portal of the Association's web-site, are always announced on the WhatsApp plat-

form, and collectively celebrated at the monthly meetings. For **January, February and March 2025**, the usual celebrations were held. Celebrants for this quarter are shown below.

## JANUARY CELEBRANTS



Prof. Simeon Banire



Mrs. Nwokeji



Kayode Olumiyiwa



Kunle Segun



Mrs. Lade Solarin



Seun Banjoko



Yinka Oshe



Busayo Adeyemo

## FEBRUARY CELEBRANTS



Tayo Olajide



I.K. Egharevba



Vivian Arden



Tosan Aduayi



Pastor O.J. Kuye



Mrs. Opedile Adeyemo



Ayokunle Kolawole



Tunde Lawal



Omoniyi Afolabi



Ehis Osezua

## MARCH CELEBRANTS



Ayoade Akintayo



Mrs. Anu Ogunlari



Joan Mbachii



Mrs. Titilayo Esho



Ayotunde Itayemi



Olusesan Olotu





# Ms Okeni *on the* spot

**Please introduce yourself** (Name, marital status, country of birth, country of citizenship, current location, educational status, profession). Olufunke Okeni, born in Lagos, Nigeria. I currently reside in Dallas, TX. I graduated with a BSc Microbiology from OAU in 1999.

**Describe your educational development journey.** (Kindergarten to Post-Graduate). I commenced schooling in Waterford, Ireland but completed my primary education at the University of Lagos, Staff School in 1987. I attended Federal Government Girls' College, Akure from 1988 – 1993. After graduating from OAU, I obtained an MBA from Lagos State University (LASU) in 2005 and finally, I bagged a BSc. Business Economics from the University of Central Florida in Orlando in 2016.

**Provide us an insight into your days at the OAU** (Not more than 100 words). I recall the first time I bought the legendary Risky Burger, who would call food Risky? I felt so cool until I found myself exclaiming over the unwashed pan the seller used in preparing the burger. Before I could wipe the horror off my face she was done frying the eggs. It finally dawned on me how the burger got its name. That was a real indoctrination into Great Ife. Thereafter, I explored almost every restaurant in school, except those in Old Buka.

Great Ife's vibrant Christian community remains unmatched, particularly Christ Love Fellowship. Great friendships were forged there. Winning the first major *karaoke* competition was also cool. I am so proud of my alma mater, for all it stands for.



**Which teacher or mentor has impacted you the most and how?** Professor Akonai and Dr. (Mrs.) Ajisebutu were my favorite teachers. They were always willing to assist whenever their attention was sought. They also made Micro-

biology fun.

**If you could change one thing about your personality, what would that be?** I really enjoy being in my home, cuddled up with a book, a glass of wine and chocolates. I recognize however



## PERSONALITY SPOTLIGHT

that it can tend towards isolation and so I have begun stepping out more, increasing my engagement in the communities I'm part of.

**What hobbies or sports are you involved with outside of work?** Tennis (I owned my first racquet at age 3). I also write poems.

**What drives you in your professional life?** I've always been driven to excel at any endeavor. I'm too analytical to be satisfied with the bare minimum or throwing buzz words around. However, recently, weaving an understanding of my purpose in life into my career has been rewarding.

**Describe a time when you dealt with change?** Relocating to the US was a bolder step than I initially understood. Starting a career all over required mental fortitude, moving against the grain when and where it served me. It took me a few years to own being multifaceted without the need to dim my light. Ultimately, I remain curious, open to exploring various experiences and cultures, living with joy rather than just working through the day. Like Abe Lincoln said, "the best thing about the future is that it comes one day at a time". And to that I say, "Keep walking".

**Describe your experience as a member of the Great Life Alumni Association, Dallas Branch.** I really enjoy GIAA Dallas. The camaraderie in our midst is bar none, the most fun. I love it and salute the immediate and current executives for a phenomenal job.

**Tell us about a goal you set for yourself, and how you went about accomplishing it.** Upon my arrival in the US, I was advised to pursue a career in the medical field, particularly nursing. The Nigerian community in Orlando, FL was greatly employed in this field. Well-meaning, but my preference was to remain in business technology. The first hurdles came from recruiters who claimed I was overqualified for jobs and/or I lacked an American education.



So, I obtained a degree from UCF in Business Economics. Nobody around me understood my decision but I stuck with it. I knew what I enjoyed doing and I embraced the understanding that I'd be a life-long learner in my chosen field. It remains one of the best decisions I have made. My first job in Business Intelligence opened the eyes of many folks around me to opportunities in technology. The number who have pivoted to tech, who are also PMP-certified, never ceases to amaze and encourage me. Who knew I would make such an impact?

**Tell us about how an unexpected problem derailed your planning. How did you recover?** Losing my Mum the week of my Dad's funeral hit me so hard. Being the eldest, I shut down and couldn't grieve. Over the years, being pragmatic has been a powerful coping mechanism. However, there are those tough days when kindness towards the woman I see in the mirror is what pulls

me through. Nobody can teach me how to grieve and the premise that I am doing well, no matter what, is one I have embraced. Of course, my faith in Yah strengthens me.

**Tell us about your proudest accomplishment.** That is a tough one to identify. While I'll say my greatest accomplishment lies ahead of me, a sure admirable thing I have been made aware of is my handling of all the family factions in the months preceding my Dad's demise up until his funeral, without quarreling with anyone. Career-wise, I look forward to doing more great things in the IT industry and in my other love, real estate investing.

**Give us an example of a time when you were able to be creative with your work. What was exciting or difficult about it?** Seeing technology power efficiency gains and revenue growth is truly exciting. I remember in the 2000s when I consulted with the then Chairman of Ecobank. He owned a feed mill that operated manually in every department. Collaborating with the software engineer to create and deploy was my first foray into the world of information technology. Change management proved to be quite intense as employees feared they'd be replaced by computers and thus attempted sabotaging the process. Getting the company's management onboard with an employee re-skilling program which I created was a win for me; it gained me broad support company wide. The biggest gains, however, were a 95% reduction in manufacturing waste within 3 months (avenues for theft were eliminated), achieving 11X monthly revenue within 6 months, and a motivated workforce with some of them successfully resuming educational pursuits, obtaining their GCE certificates and pursuing higher education. Automating operations led to the company expansion within 15 months. That project gave me so much confidence and opened doors of opportunities for me.



# Minnie's Food Pantry Volunteer Event

ON MARCH 15, 2025, volunteers gathered at Minnie's Food Pantry in Plano, Texas, for a morning of service dedicated to fighting hunger in the community. From 07:45 to 12:00, a diverse group of organizations and individuals came together to sort, pack, and distribute food items to families in need. Among the volunteers were nine members of the Great Life Alumni Association, DFW Branch (including myself), Bank of America staff, and numerous families and individuals. Volunteers of all ages worked side by side, fostering a spirit of community service and teamwork.

Throughout the morning, we worked tirelessly to organize food items, assemble meal kits, and assist families as they received their groceries. The uplifting energy in the room was evident, with smiles, laughter and heartfelt conversations making the experience even more rewarding. It was an honor for me to be part of such an impactful initiative. Seeing the smiles on the faces of families as they received their food supplies was truly heartwarming and demonstrated the impact of community involvement. The success of this initiative reinforces the idea that small acts of kindness, when multiplied, can lead to meaningful change.

Minnie's Food Pantry, a renowned North Texas nonprofit, has been tackling food insecurity for years by providing essential resources through generous donors and volunteers. Committed to its mission, the pantry continues to welcome donations and volunteers to ensure no family goes hungry.

*Ayokunle Kolawole  
PRO, GIAA DFW Branch*



By: **Ayokunle Kolawole**



# Great Ife Alumni Association Dallas Branch Family Event

THE Great Ife Alumni Association, DFW Branch, held a lively and memorable family event on Sunday, March 16, 2025, from 4:00 PM to 7:00 PM. The gathering brought together numerous members of the association, their families, and friends for an evening of joy, fun, games, bonding, and entertainment.

The atmosphere was filled with laughter and excitement as attendees engaged in various activities designed

to foster camaraderie and fun. The event featured energetic dancing, engaging games, and a series of thought-provoking riddles and jokes that kept everyone entertained. Whether it was the competitive spirit in the games or the shared laughter from witty jokes, there was something for everyone to enjoy.

This event reinforced the association's commitment to maintaining strong relationships among its members

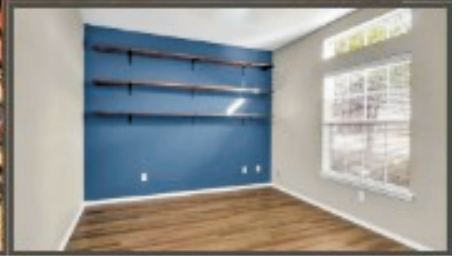
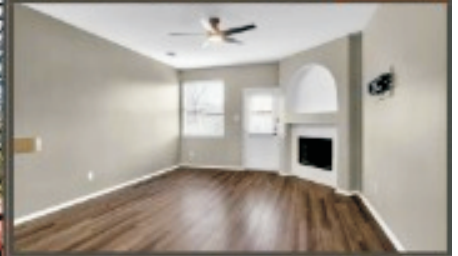
while also creating a welcoming space for their families to connect. It provided an opportunity for attendees to unwind, socialize, and strengthen the bonds that define the Great Ife Alumni community.

As the evening concluded, the sense of unity and belonging among members was evident. The success of this gathering sets the stage for future events that will continue to celebrate friendship, heritage, and community.



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By DR. OLUFUNKE JINADU



# Protecting Your Mental Health

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**Protecting your mental health is crucial for overall well-being. Here are some strategies that can help**

- 1. Practice Self-Care:** Engage in activities that promote relaxation and happiness, such as reading, taking a bath, or pursuing a hobby.
  - 2. Stay Physically Active:** Regular exercise can help reduce stress and improve mood by releasing endorphins.
  - 3. Maintain a Healthy Diet:** Eating a balanced diet with plenty of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains can positively impact mental health.
  - 4. Get Adequate Sleep:** Aim for 7-9 hours of quality sleep per night to help regulate mood and improve cognitive function.
  - 5. Stay Connected:** Maintain strong relationships with family and friends. Social support is important for emotional well-being.
  - 6. Manage Stress:** Practice stress reduction techniques like mindfulness, meditation, or yoga to help manage and reduce stress levels.
  - 7. Set Boundaries:** Learn to say no and prioritize your own needs to avoid burnout.
  - 8. Seek Professional Help:** If you're feeling overwhelmed, do not hesitate to reach out to a mental health professional for support.
  - 9. Limit Media Consumption:** Be mindful of the time spent on social media and news, as excessive exposure can lead to increased anxiety and stress.
  - 10. Engage in Positive Thinking:** Practice gratitude and focus on positive aspects of life to help foster a more optimistic outlook.
- Implementing these strategies can help you maintain and improve your mental health.

- Dr. Olufunke Mercy Jinadu  
is Board Certified Mental Health  
Nurse practitioner provider

# Succeeding in Corporate America II



Photo for illustration purposes only. Courtesy: The Internet

**T**HE PRIORITY YOU GIVE TO ONE versus the other should be determined by what competencies you must possess to make the most positive impact right now.

As you seek to develop skills and capabilities, my advice is to plan to master a core competency area with the aim of becoming an expert. I spent much of my early career in computer networking, security and software development. With time, I decided to make Security my primary competency area and it will be something I will be known for. Essentially my brand. I invested extensively in developing broad and deep skill sets in the security field. I read books, took a lot of training, acquired certifications, and ultimately earned a PhD in Security. Even then, I never stopped developing myself in Security. And I observed that deciding on a personal brand has been instrumental to some

of the advanced I experienced in my career. So, if you have not already done so, you should identify a core competency area where you will choose to become a subject matter expert.

I have also learned over time that becoming an expert in something give you some career freedom. It frees you up from needing to prove you know everything. It removes the unnecessary pressure to opine on every topic. As an expert in an area, people know when to come to you. You will also be able to say: "I don't know" when the topic is not in your core area. When I moved over from Canada to the US in 2007, my first job was at a large US Fortune 50 corporation. Huge business and IT operations. One of the first things that struck me was the share amount of people who worked in IT. It was a whole campus full of people with various skills. There was no

shortage of technology experts in this place. I was hired as a security analyst. And as I worked into project meetings, I found it interesting to hear many people with years of experience confidently saying "I don't know" to questions outside their area. And they were under no pressure to prove themselves. And this was when I made the decision to become a security SME.

**2. Comparing yourself today to yourself yesterday vs. comparing yourself to others:** One of the most indicative and self-destructing traits of the closed mindset is comparing oneself with others. The fundamental issue with this is that we all come with different potentials. So, comparing yourself to another person is built on a flawed premise. Rather, you should only compare yourself to yourself by taking stock of where you were yesterday versus where you are today;

and this is the growth mindset.

The goal of comparing your yesterday to your today is to determine if you are making meaningful progress in the core competencies that are helpful to your career. The fundamental reason why I said comparing yourself with others is flawed is that the baseline for such comparison is elusive. Since you are not aware of the acquired or natural capabilities of the other individual, therefore you are unable to determine their relative potential to perform compared to yours. For example, you could have someone with decades more of experience than you on a subject, therefore, have likely potential to perform better than you. Comparing yourself with such person will be anchored on the wrong baseline and could only lead to a situation of unnecessary stress. And, as earlier discussed, being under stress will take away your ability to be confident. And lack of confidence and stress could lead to negative experiences at work. On the other hand, the growth-mindset-based performance metric is one that considers where you were yesterday as the base-line to understand if you have improved over time when compared with where you are today.



▲ Tunde Adeyemo, PhD

“The fundamental reason why I said comparing yourself with others is flawed is that the baseline for such comparison is elusive”

Going back again to the early 2000 when I arrived in Canada. I started to invest in Networking training and certifications. I got some decent certs in within a short amount of time. I eventually quickly rose to become the Network Manager from the Helpdesk Support role I was initially hired for. However, when I took stock of where I was in my career at the time compared to where I would like to be based on my goals, my conclusion was that my current skillsets will not likely get me there. I will cover goal setting later; but goal setting works hand-in-hand with the growth mindset. With this realization, I knew it was time to figure-out a new pathway within my chosen career. This was how I landed in Cyber-security, in the first place. I was to repeat the same type of career assessment 10 years later, when I realized I needed a change in my career to reach my set goals; enter my decision to move from industry to consulting.

#### Conclusion

The career suggestions I have offered are based on my learned experiences. I have also learned that these same tools are relevant for entrepreneurs. I chose to tackle the subject using myself story as one starting off in North American on shaky grounds. I feel my starting point as a first-generation immigrant made the journey relatively more arduous. However, the benefit seems to be that one has seen it all and can offer some advice to others that need it. Having a growth mindset helps almost anyone, whether immigrant or not, to bring value to yourself and, if applicable, your employer. It is only those who bring value that ultimately get rewarded. In subsequent articles, I will cover other tips that I have personally tried and found most effective in the workplace and marketplace.

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By **DELE AKANBI**



## AI AGENTS WITH NEUROSCIENCE: USE, CASES AND FUTURE EXPECTATIONS

### Introduction

AI AGENTS COMBINED WITH neuroscience aim to bridge the gap between artificial intelligence and human-like cognitive abilities. By leveraging neural networks, brain-inspired computing, and cognitive science principles, these AI agents can mimic human thought processes, decision-making, and adaptability.

### Use Cases of AI Agents in Neuroscience

- a) **Healthcare & Neurology**
  - 1. **Brain-Computer Interfaces (BCIs)** – AI-powered BCIs help individuals with paralysis control devices using brain signals.
  - 2. **Neuroimaging Analysis** – AI enhances MRI and EEG data analysis for detecting neurological disorders like Alzheimer's or epilepsy.
  - 3. **Cognitive Therapy & Mental Health** – AI-driven chatbots and virtual therapists provide cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) for anxiety, depression, and PTSD.
  - 4. **AI for Drug Discovery** – AI models assist in identifying potential neurological drug treatments.
- b) **Human-AI Interaction**
  - 1. **Neurosymbolic AI** – AI agents

integrate logical reasoning with neural networks to enhance decision-making.

- 2. **Personalized Learning** – AI tutors adapt to students' cognitive responses to optimize learning experiences.
- 3. **Emotion Recognition** – AI-powered facial and voice analysis detects emotional states, improving human-AI communication.
- c) **Robotics/Autonomous Systems**
  - 1. **Neuro-inspired Robots** – AI-driven robots simulate human sensory processing for better navigation & decision-making.
  - 2. **Adaptive AI Agents** – AI models continuously learn from human feedback, mimicking neuroplasticity.
- d) **Business & Productivity**
  - 1. **Cognitive Work Assistants** – AI assists with complex decision-making by modeling human problem-solving strategies.
  - 2. **Neural-based Predictive Analytics** – AI models forecast market trends based on neurological decision-making patterns.

### Future Expectations of AI & Neuroscience

- a) **Enhanced Human Cognition**
  - 1. **AI-driven neuroprosthetics**

may help boost memory and cognitive functions.

- 2. **Brain-to-AI collaboration** could extend human capabilities.
- b) **Ethical AI & Conscious Machines**
  - 1. **Future AI agents might** develop self-awareness by mimicking the human brain.
  - 2. **Ethical considerations** will be crucial in defining AI rights and responsibilities.
- c) **AI-Powered Neuromorphic Computing**
  - 1. **AI models based** on the human brain will lead to more efficient, low-power computing.
- d) **AI in Space & Extreme Environments**
  - 1. **Neuroscience-inspired AI** will enhance robots operating in space, deep-sea exploration, and disaster recovery.

### Conclusion

AI agents powered by neuroscience have vast potential in healthcare, robotics, education, and business. Future developments will refine human-AI collaboration, enhance cognitive abilities, and open new frontiers in artificial intelligence. However, ethical concerns, security risks, and regulatory frameworks must evolve to ensure responsible AI development.