

VICE CHANCELLOR'S SPEECH DELIVERED DURING ORIENTATION OF FRESHERS ON 6TH SEPTEMBER, 2016

Deputy Vice Chancellors

Deans and Directors

CODs

Student Leaders

Staff

Freshers

Ladies and Gentlemen

I wish to take this enviable moment and singular privilege to welcome you to Kibabii University. It is an occasion that deserves celebration. What else can a head of institution do after receiving 2000 plus students who excelled in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examination; famed to be one of the toughest in the world.

This five year old institution is driven by the motto of knowledge for development which is anchored in the philosophy that the knowledge you gain here will enable you utilize the resources on the planet earth appropriately for the transformation of mankind. Your objective then should be to aspire to gain the ability to do this through the development of your mental, physical, emotional and spiritual capacity.

So, today you are making your first step in a journey of several years. The time and place where this transformative journey begins is known. It is today and at Kibabii. The end however will only be determined by you. I will emphasize this by pointing out that a number of students joined this institution in 2012 but while their colleagues graduated last year, they are still waiting to be admitted to second year. To set out on a journey, you must know the destination, the means of getting there and the resources you need to get there. In the case of an academic journey the destination is graduation while time, commitment and attitude form the other requirements.

Your journey here could be explained through the analogy of the journey motif in creative writing especially in the satirical novels such *Walenisi*, *Nagona* and John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. The theme of all such works is usually the

search for identity, the truth and more fulfilling life. They underscore the fact that mankind is in a serious predicament and heading toward self destruction unless it undergoes a revolutionary change. Your journey in this arena called Kibabii should enable you undergo change. It is predicated on a simple mathematical formula representing the four pillars of attitude + intelligence (character) = achievement.... Literature captures this appropriately in the statement that “**attitude determines ones altitude**”. That is character will lead to achievement/ success or failure.

I know most of you are not at ease. You are preoccupied with the idea of being in an unfamiliar environment. For most of you, this might be the first time you are away from your teachers or parents. You must be wondering about what it is like to be away from the familiar and predictable life in high school or comfort zone at home. However you are not the only ones who have left familiar territory to join university.

The world is replete with successful personalities who went through university like you. Close to us is Dr. Mukhisa Kituyi. He did his secondary education in local schools within Bungoma County, joined university and went on to become the Secretary General of UNCTAD, a coveted position.

Kibabii University is founded on a core conviction to develop you to the utmost end of life like those other personalities who have excelled. In a few days time you will find out that the programmes offered across the four faculties and schools are carefully designed to give you the recipe required to do just that. In addition, the mix and pool of faculty and administrative staff are dedicated to combining their resources to instil in you the requisite skills and competencies. The recommendation by external auditors for the University to be awarded ISO certification is testimony of the quality and commitment of staff. Staff are prepared to:

Give you the ability to use reason and sharpen your critical thinking

Prepare you for life in the world outside. You will accomplish this in a record 48 months. Just the same time it will take me to clear my bank loan.

Take you through the rite of passage from teenage to adulthood where you are expected to make decisions and solve problems.

Help you achieve additional professional growth. The training you are getting here is not just tailored to make you employable but importantly to enable you create employment. So apart from pursuing the programmes you have been admitted to, you will be better off if you pursued other professional courses.

As you can see, there are numerous opportunities at the university. These come in many forms; They may come in the form of sports and games, areas that develop talent like music and drama, professional circles where you interact with your future employers, social networks with the potential of providing a future spouse, spiritual growth and even honing your acumen in student politics.

This however is easier said than accomplished. Like mines in a war zone, university life is littered with challenges that will make your dream difficult to realise.

University life has excess freedom which opens doors to sweet life. For the first time you have the opportunity to date and go out without the watchful eyes of your parents or older siblings. But let me caution that this takes time and money. So strike a balance between social and academic life.

Life is more materialistic today than during our time. The products are also varied and more tempting. They range from sophisticated electrical appliances, drinks with strange colours catchy names, to fancy clothes and even gambling activities. The temptations will push your financial demands to the limit and sometimes even tempt you to divert your fees. Careful and prudent utilization of finances is your only way out.

Styles of learning are different particularly with the onset of Mass Open Online Contents (MOOCS). Sometimes you may confuse time spent on your smart phone or computer device with learning.

Modern lifestyle if not handled carefully, could easily open doors to promiscuity whose outcome could be disastrous.

The individual freedom coupled with the absence of someone to watch over you as well as unfamiliarity with the new environment may lead to confusion normally manifested in the form of failure to register for the right courses, truancy, missing classes, inability to keep timelines and so forth.

Then there is the issue of peer pressure, bad influence. Seek counsel, choose good company.

When one gets overwhelmed by all the challenges narrated above they become easy prey for radicalization and recruitment into militant groups. At the moment this is the biggest threat to the completion of your journey at Kibabii.

But all is not hopeless. Like thousands who have made it before, you too can excel. The following simple statements make the road map that will keep you on track.

- You know what brought you here. To study. Set your goals right and stick to your lane.
- Uphold values
- Familiarize yourself with the rules and regulations.
- Ensure you are always in the right place and at the right time. Further, always make sure someone knows where you are.
- Respect the laws of the land.
- Live within your means and manage your finances.
- Be yourself and uphold your values. Don't pretend to be what you are not.
- Seek counsel and assistance.

In conclusion: This day is a beacon that marks the end of one stage in your life. It also represents the beginning of a different but fulfilling stage. Embark on your studies with vitality, valour, virility, vigour and you will never go astray. You will complete your journey and get your degree. Then all of us present here will be happy to witness you being given the power to read and do all that appertains to the degree.

Thank you, Ahsante sana.