



**Address**

**By**

**Prof. Mabel Imbuga PhD., EBS**

**Vice Chancellor**

**Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology**

**to**

**New First Year Students**

**At**

**Graduation Pavillion**

**Friday, 6<sup>th</sup> September, 2013**

Deputy Vice Chancellors, \_\_\_\_\_ ( 1 ) \_\_\_\_\_

Campus Principals,

Deans of Faculties,

Dean of Students,

Directors of Institutes,

Chairpersons of Departments,

New Students,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me a rare sense of pleasure in joining the entire university fraternity to welcome all the new students to Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT).

I take this opportunity to congratulate you for joining this academic giant of higher learning with the full knowledge that you had a long list of other universities to choose from. We do not take your choice of JKUAT for granted. To us, it is a sign of the overwhelming confidence you and your supporters have in us as an institution, and we are very proud of you.

Comrades, we are delighted that by joining JKUAT, you have consciously become part of the wider Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology family. For the next couple of years, JKUAT will be your home. And I am optimistic that in the fullness of time, you will do your best to maintain the good networks that you are going to establish while here, just like your predecessors.

Following your registration, the last few days have been characterized by several induction activities and procedures. It is my hope the entire orientation process has adequately prepared you to adjust to the new academic environment.

During this 2013/14 academic year, we expect to admit a total of over 4200 new students under the Joint Admission Board (JAB) and the Alternative Degree Programme (ADP) to undertake studies in various undergraduate degree programmes offered in the College of Health Sciences, School of Human Resource Development, School of Architecture and Building Sciences, Faculty of Science, College of Engineering and Technology, and the Institute of Computer Science and Information Technology (ICSIT).

Already, over 2800 new students have reported in 77 degree programmes, and we expect this number to go up because some of your colleagues are making arrangements to join us next week. We wish them all the best as they make their way here.

In terms of distribution, the School of Human Resource Development has attracted the highest number of 646 students, followed by the Faculty of Science which has attracted

525 students; College of Engineering and Technology has 466, while the Institute of Computer Science and Information Technology and the School of Architecture and Building Sciences have each attracted 236 and 150 new students respectively. Under the Alternative Degree Programme, the College of Pure and Applied Sciences is expected to receive 168 new students; College of Health Sciences has admitted 372 students while the Faculty of Agriculture will admit 296 freshmen and women.

Ladies and gentlemen, one major highlight of this intake is the introduction of 13 new academic courses such as Bachelor of Medicine & Surgery, Bachelor of Science in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, Bachelor of Science in: Industrial Biotechnology, Applied Bioengineering, and Bachelor of Architectural Technology, to name but a few. While welcoming these good tidings, the University is committed to continue with its bid to address the traditional asymmetrical gender representation in accessing educational opportunities at university level which has, and is still skewed in favour of the male gender. We will work towards sustaining this momentum witnessed in some of our programmes in order to progressively improve gender representation in other programmes.

Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology has distinguished itself from its peers as a trend setter in training top notch scholars, researchers and innovators in a broad spectrum of fields and disciplines. The positive reports we receive from the private and public sector indicate that this University has continued to produce highly competitive graduates who are better attuned to the demands of an equally fast-changing and dynamic world. These reports have reinforced our commitment and renewed our resolve to live to our University Vision of making JKUAT “*A University of Global Excellence in Training, Research and Innovation for Development.*”

You will be interested to learn that the university has also taken conscious steps to ensure all our academic programmes meet the criteria of relevance, quality and demand among others. This explains the reasons that compel us to review our entire curriculum at the end

of every cycle. For example, during the 2008/9 Academic Year, the Engineering curricular was overhauled so that our students are offered an all round and holistic training. In addition to core engineering skills, our students are currently taught law, management as well as communication skills to make them effective team leaders and managers.

As you may have been informed during your orientation, the University offers a mandatory unit in HIV/Aids across all degree programmes. This move is geared towards creating awareness among our students about the HIV/Aids pandemic. I hope you will find time and visit our VCT facilities to know your status, so that you are in a position to make appropriate decisions as you chart your destiny through positive behaviour.

As a university, we do recognize that ICT has become an important driver of knowledge production and dissemination. This is why the University Management has made arrangements to facilitate our new students to access computer laptops at discounted prices of about Ksh.40, 000 as opposed to the current market value for each of the computers that is way over Ksh.70, 000. Furthermore, we have broken down the payment into two instalments to make it easier for students to pay and access the laptops for use. While the amount may pose a challenge, the expected benefits surpass the “pain” of acquiring the laptops. With these laptops, you will be able to access some taught units which will be offered through our online mode of delivery. In addition, you will be able to access free of charge University subscribed *e-books* and *e-journals* and other academic materials from the library. We will roll this laptop programme to our other campuses as well very soon.

Another important issue that I would like to share with you revolves around the challenge of striking a balance between freedom and individual responsibility. It is a matter that is central to your studies and we need to engage in a very honest conversation amongst ourselves in regard to the advent of Information and Communication Technology. Although the application of ICT remains the source of global development, it also has the

“unintended” potential to derail young people like you from achieving career ambitions if misused. Remember, you are responsible for whatever you do. Make the best out of ICT. Emulate some of your seniors who have applied their ICT knowledge to come up with outstanding innovations which have earned them recognition in Kenya and beyond. This is why JKUAT graduates are the most sought after by leading employers like Safaricom, Samsung and Microsoft to name just three.

Finally, my motherly advice to you as my daughters and sons is this: get your priorities right and avoid the pitfalls that have befallen university students who once held lots of hope and great promise. Avoid examination related vices such as cheating. It is imperative for you to maintain high moral and disciplinary standards. Desist from the enticing excesses of life such as irresponsible drinking, drug abuse and sexual immorality. These vices can ruin your career aspirations as young scholars.

I urge you to positively utilize the rare opportunity that JKUAT has granted you. As students, in case you are confronted with challenging and pressing issues, the Office of the Dean of Students is accessible to you, in addition to our student counsellors. Have the confidence to talk to us freely and openly. We will listen to you and offer the assistance you require.

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Most importantly, besides academics, I encourage you to take a strong interest in co-curricular activities available at JKUAT. The University will encourage and support you to identify, explore and fully exploit your God-given talents in the areas of sports, entertainment among many others. These co-curricular activities go along way in shaping the character of the young people like yourselves; sharpening their social skills while at the same time promoting the spirit of tolerance amongst you.

As you settle down to the business of learning, I want to urge you to be your brother’s or sister’s keeper. This is particularly to the segment of students who we were unable to accommodate within the University. As a University, we would have liked to provide accommodation to all of you within the University. But due to the popularity of JKUAT

courses, we have registered the highest number of students during this Academic Year. Consequently, this has posed a number of challenges particularly in accommodation which is now overstretched, a fact that has conditioned us to seek alternative accommodation outside the normal radius. To address this challenge, Council is exploring possibilities for expanding our internal accommodation space. However, it is instructive for you to be conversant with existing public policy of delinking university admission to bed space in Kenya's public Universities.

In conclusion, comrades, my address to you will be incomplete, if I do not implore you to make the best out of your student life at JKUAT. Take your work seriously. Exercise diligence in and outside the classroom. This is the only way we can do proud to our parents, guardians and other stakeholders who continue to make great sacrifices in order to provide the best to us so that we can succeed and achieve our life dreams. There can not be any other better way of reciprocating this rare gesture from our supporters other than doing the right thing that will add value to our own lives and those of others.

Once again, congratulations for excelling in your Kenya Certificate of Secondary Examination and making it to this “University of Choice”. As you prepare to aim even higher, I wish you all the best in your academic endeavours and a very bright future at JKUAT.

Thank you for your attention.