



SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF KABIANGA TO THE FIRST YEAR STUDENTS – KAPKATET SCHOOL OF HEALTH SCIENCES ON FRIDAY 17TH NOVEMBER, 2023.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellors,

Deans of Schools,

Directors,

Dean of Students,

Registrars,

Heads of Departments,

Members of Staff,

Student leaders,

In coming first year students of 2023,

Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of the Chancellor, University Council, Management Board, Senate, members of staff and students, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate and welcome all the First year students of 2023/2024 cohort to UoK; School of Health Sciences. We are really delighted to welcome you as the newest members of University of Kabianga family.

I believe you have already adjusted to the environment; made new friends and already know your way around here well. You have started your learning experience already.

I assure you that the years you will be here will be filled with academic, spiritual, social and physical growth opportunities.

The University has indeed put in place the necessary facilities to accelerate your personal and intellectual development. The University has recruited highly qualified members of staff who are dedicated to the realization of the University's mission of providing quality education, research and service to humanity and are eager to impart specialized knowledge; as well as equip you with the necessary skills and technical know-how to help you make impact in society and globe at large.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me briefly highlight on the history and growth of our institution. University of Kabianga was formerly Kabianga Farmer's Training Center (FTC). Upon being transferred from Ministry of Agriculture to Education in 2007, Moi University immediately incepted it as its Kabianga Campus with only fifty five students. In 2009, it was elevated to be a Constituent College of Moi University and subsequently chartered as a fully fledged public university in 1st March, 2013.

When it began, there were only four rooms which became lecture rooms. Since then, there have been positive developments in infrastructure, student enrolment, academic programs, staff recruitment and more

Campuses began at Kericho Town, Sotik and Kapkatet School of Health Sciences.

University of Kabianga has a management structure with key players as follows:

The Chancellor titular head of the institution vested with the powers to confer degrees, and award diplomas. The Chancellor also offers advice on how to improve the university.

The University Council makes policies governing the operations of the University.

The University Management Board is charged with the daily operations of the University.

The Senate comprises the University Management Board, Deans, Directors, Chairpersons of Departments and Professors, is charged with the responsibility of running the academic programmes, examinations, academic calendars, student matters, admission of students and graduations.

The Student Governing Council made up of elected student leaders is a link between students and management bodies of the University.

Dear Students,

I would like to hint to you that some of our graduates (from here) are serving in Britain, Canada, USA, Ireland, Germany, Australia and China. On this note, I would like to address you on very important life issues that will inform your stay here and shape you to fit and succeed.

The Little Foxes

Learn to reflect on, evaluate your experiences and to work with others to improve on those experiences, so as to come up with better or new ways of doing things. Sir Thomas Buxton (1786-1845) once said: "With ordinary talents and extraordinary perseverance, all things are attainable." However, Song of Solomon 2:15 introduces an aspect of spoilers.

"Catch for us the foxes, the little foxes that ruin the vineyards, our vineyards that are in bloom", he says. Right now, you are ready to move on, your vineyards are in bloom but what are these foxes?

1. Alcohol and Substances abuse

Alcohol and substance abuse, especially among the youth, is increasing at a high rate. The scourge has not spared university students, and the effects are far and wide.

2. Social groups

I know that you are ardent users of social media like Twitter, Facebook and TikTok.

I, therefore, urge you to use these platforms for your short and long-term benefit.

3. Internet abuse

Here at the University, we take internet abuse seriously. Examples of internet abuse are cyber harassment, using insults and vulgar language on social media, spreading disinformation, cyber fraud,

and recording, sharing, streaming of indecent videos and photographs. Please take note that we have laws that prohibit such behavior. Therefore, I urge you to be responsible and respectful cyber citizens even as you engage with each other and with the University's administration.

4. Laziness

My experience with students has taught me that laziness is a very dangerous fox. Your four years here require that you put effort into your academic work.

5. Friends

Peers have an important role to play both socially, emotionally and academically among first-year students. Feggie, Maeorg & Michell, (2014) argues that students who relate well to fellow students; either supportive friends or disciplined specific peers, will have a successful university transition. From this, my plea to you is to be careful and choose your friends very carefully.

6. Sexual involvement

This vice has taken toll of university students lives. My plea to you, my sons and daughters is; "Don't make a mouse of yourself, or else you will be eaten by cats" (German proverb).

I count him/her braver who overcomes his/her desires than him who conquers his enemies; for the hardest.

7. Betting

According to Wood, Griffiths and Petry (2007), university students have been identified as the largest group with high risk in relation to gambling activities especially online gambling. The space that comes with joining university provides students with a lot of freedom that allows them to effectively understand the gambling terminologies and how effective and efficient technology has made it possible.

We have seen many students who have become miserable and made it worse for family and friends because they became proficient conmen. Trust God to meet your every need.

8. Mental health

I am sure you are now familiar with our Student Counselors and the Chaplaincy department members. They are here to support you and have very good programmes to help you.

They can assist you get treatment, guidance and support, connect you to peer support services and many other services.

9. Security

As the University puts all necessary measures for your security while you are here, it is important that you endeavor to be mindful of your own security.

This includes:

- a) observing traffic rules while walking along the tarmac highway
- b) avoiding walks at night
- c) visiting right places at the right time
- d) avoiding taking photo selfies on risky points like along the river

Think about good things for personal victory in any situation.

Furthermore, to be a winner, the students' handbook will be one of your close documents. Freshmen, be assured of the support of the Governing Council, my own support and that of the University Management Board, the Schools and every office in this great University that seeks excellence. You have come to the right place. Colin Powell asserts that "excellence is not exception; it is a prevailing attitude". Thus, from the onset you should abandon the myth that universities are places of living carelessly. Instead, fold your sleeves and work hard and smart for excellence.

Bear in mind that excellence is not automatic even if you are in the right place but it requires an investment of your time, energy and resources. In short, it needs an investment of your life! Be like an eagle!

Dear Students,

Please take your academic journey at this University very serious. As I mentioned earlier, we have staff who are ready and willing to assist you. Our academic staff will be your allies in your learning experience. They are your greatest resource.

Learn to work with your academic supervisors and each other as well. We value teamwork in this institution and it is necessary that you do so as well.

Your stay at Kabianga is very short and hence we advise that you use your time well. I urge you to use your time to engage in meaningful scholarly work, join student groups from where you will interact with each other. We have student leadership positions from where you can sharpen your leadership skills.

Volunteer at the community to help the needy, plant trees, clean the environment and participate in Christian and spiritual activities led by University chaplaincy or other religious organizations in campus including Muslim and Hindu.

A key component of your academic journey is taking examinations. Always observe Examination Regulations. Avoid the temptation to cheat in the examinations because the consequences of being found guilty of examinations malpractice are severe.

Attend all your lectures on time and without fail. Do your Continuous Assignments Tests (CATs) promptly and submit them to your lecturers on time. Check the examinations timetable twice; confirm the venue and the time of your exam again and again – misreading of the timetable or oversleeping are not acceptable as reasons for missing an exam.

Always be checking the website for information regarding your studies here at the University. We always update our website on a regular basis and I believe with most of you having access to internet, the excuse of saying “*you did not know*” will not be acceptable.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Once more, I wish you well in your academic pursuance in the Four years to ahead.

Thank you all.

God Bless You. God Bless University of Kabianga

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