



UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

REMARKS BY PROFESSOR GEORGE A.O. MAGOHA, VICE CHANCELLOR, UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI, DURING HIS ADDRESS TO 1st YEAR STUDENTS ON 16TH OCTOBER, 2008 IN TAIFA HALL AT 2.30 P.M.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs), Prof. Jacob Kaimenyi

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration & Finance), Prof. Peter Mbithi

Principals of Colleges

Deans and Directors

Heads of Departments

University Administrators

Student Leaders

All first year students

Ladies & Gentlemen

It is with great pleasure that I welcome all of you to the University of Nairobi. I congratulate you for your excellent performance in the KSCE Examination which enabled you to gain admission to the most prestigious institution of higher learning in the country and region.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the University of Nairobi has been providing quality higher education since inception as the Royal Technical College more than 50 years ago. The University offers over 400 academic programmes, has over 1,500

academic staff including 107 full professors and 240 Associate Professors, about 3,500 administrative technical and support staff, and 36,000 students, half of whom are self-sponsored (Module II).

You are therefore joining a distinguished institution with a proud tradition. It is undoubtedly the number one university in this country and among the top in Africa. We have a team of highly qualified and committed scholars to guide you through the system by way of

lectures, tutorials, practicals and examinations to mould you into world-class intellectuals equipped with the necessary skills to deal with the challenges of the 21st century.

The University is an institution of higher learning whose core activities are teaching research and dissemination of knowledge. You will be expected to attend all classes and do your assignments as directed by your lecturers. Experience has shown that students who take their academic work seriously from the very

beginning end up performing well. You have a rare opportunity to acquire knowledge and skills that will enable you to pursue successful careers in your chosen fields and make effective contribution to the development of your community and society in general. Do not squander this chance by engaging in pursuits likely to distract you from your studies and result in either poor performance or failure.

This brings me to the rules and regulations that govern your conduct. For the past three days

you may have discovered that there is more freedom on campus than in any of the former institutions you attended. Indeed even more than most of your homes. However, this freedom is not absolute and you will be subjected to rules that will govern your conduct both in your academic and social life. It is important that you acquaint yourself with these rules and regulations as you will be subject to them during your entire life in this University. The consequences of violating them are also spelt out clearly and I do not expect any one of you to

become a victim.

The University of Nairobi has a clearly defined governance structure established to cater for your needs. It runs from the departmental level all the way to the Vice-Chancellor who reports to the University Council and the Chancellor. Please feel free to consult any office including that of the Vice-Chancellor whenever need arises.

The University encourages the participation of

the students in the management of its affairs through the various students' organisations. The umbrella students' body, SONU whose membership is compulsory is represented in all University organs right from the Halls of residence to the Council. Its role is to articulate students' interests for attention by management. You are expected to utilize your representatives to bring to the attention of the administration issues that need to be addressed. Acts of indiscipline and any form of misconduct likely to disrupt academic programmes will not be

tolerated. In addition there exist professional and welfare organizations whose membership is voluntary. For more information on student activities, please contact the Office of the Dean of Students in your College.

Ladies and Gentlemen, as I indicated earlier, University life will accord you a lot of freedom, which many of you may not have experienced. This freedom comes with its own social risks. Among these is the HIV/Aids pandemic that is claiming many lives in the country including

those of members of the University community. I urge you all to lead responsible lives and avoid risky sexual behaviour. Let abstinence be the norm and if you cannot, please use condoms which are readily available in our University Health Services free of charge. We also have voluntary counselling and testing services which are available in the University – utilize these services. An HIV/Aids policy document is also available in your libraries and I urge you to read it carefully as it contains very useful information.

Another emerging problem which students must guard against is alcohol and drug abuse. For starters, possession and use of illicit drugs is both a breach of the rules and regulations governing the conduct of students and also a criminal offence punishable under the penal code. Those found to be in possession of drugs risk expulsion from the University and prosecution in the courts of law. Please resist the temptation to engage in these destructive habits because the consequences are dire.

Your safety while at the University is very important to us. There are areas which are dangerous especially after 7.00 pm and must be avoided. Some of these areas neighbour the University and include but are not limited to Nyerere Road, Serena Bus Park and the adjoining footpath, Chiromo Bridge, the Museum Hill Roundabout and the Uhuru Highway Tunnel. In addition, when venturing outside the University in the evening make sure that you are accompanied to reduce the risk of being mugged. Avoid walking on lonely and dark streets.

Ladies and gentlemen, the University does not have a dress code for both students and staff save for the College of Health Sciences. It is however important for all students to observe a modicum of modesty and decency in dress and manner. Avoid forms of dressing that are likely to cause discomfort to those around you or attract unnecessary attention to your sexuality. All cases of sexual harassment must however be reported to the relevant authorities immediately for appropriate action without fear of intimidation.

To make your life complete on campus, we also have co-curricular activities – we have good sporting activities, both outdoor and indoor at your disposal. Please make use of the Sports and Games Department to advance your talents in sports and for healthy living.

Today we are formally inducting you into University community, other orientation activities will continue until you start your classes. You will find your undergraduate life to be the most interesting and enriching. Many

things that you will learn to a large extent may define what you become in future and the friends you make while here are the ones you are likely to turn to in time of need. The University of Nairobi will endeavour to provide a suitable environment to nurture and fulfil your dreams.

With those few remarks, I wish you the most successful life at the University of Nairobi.

Thank you