



UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

**SPEECH TO BE DELIVERED BY THE VICE
CHANCELLOR, PROF GEORGE A.O. MAGOHA DURING
THE ORIENTATION WEEK FOR FRESHERS 2012/2013
ACADEMIC YEAR ON THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 6, 2012
AT 2.30 PM AT TAIFA HALL**

The Deputy Vice Chancellors

The College Principals

Dean and Directors

Staff and students

Ladies and gentlemen

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to the University of Nairobi - Kenya's Premiere University, committed to providing quality and holistic education and training.

I am aware that this has been a hectic week for you as you have been registering, and familiarizing yourselves with various facilities and amenities available to you at your respective colleges. I therefore want to take this opportunity to congratulate you for your excellent performance in the KCSE examinations that enabled you to join this great University. Today, you are among the over 6,000 new students who start on this academic journey, it may look like a long journey but I

assure you that it will end soon, and perhaps you can look forward to successfully completing the course.

Ladies and gentlemen, the University of Nairobi prides itself in being a pacesetter, not only in Kenya, but in the region as well. We have trained over 136,000 graduates in different professions who are now serving the world in various sectors, 60,000 enrolled students and over 5,000 members of staff. The University of Nairobi is indeed a top university in Africa and the rest of the world.

Internationally, the University of Nairobi is placed in position one in Kenya and 14 in Africa by two world renowned web ranking organizations – webmetric ranking and 4ICu. Locally, the government ranked this University in the Excellent category in the 2010/2011 performance contract year – indeed we are the only state corporation to score the excellent mark in performance contracting since the inception of performance contracting in 2004.

This strong positioning is due to the quality of the students we admit, the quality of the academic staff the University engages, the quality of learning and teaching resources that the university avails to staff

and students and the quality of the learning environment and services enjoyed by our staff and students. It is my belief therefore, that in pursuit of your academic goals, you will play your role in uplifting the standards of this great University.

Ladies and gentlemen, the University is an academic environment and as such you will be expected to attend classes, undertake tutorials, practicals, assignments and examinations as directed by your lecturers. Stiff penalties are meted out to those who fail to meet our academic expectations. The lecturers are ready and committed to teaching you and empowering you with new skills and you are expected

to consult them whenever you have any academic problems. In addition, the office of the Dean of Students and the Special Students' Advisor are open to deal with other problems that a student might have. Therefore, as students of University of Nairobi, I encourage you to make good use of the resources availed to you. We believe that you will find your niche and settle down to learn, and to succeed.

Ladies and gentlemen, we expect you to be exemplary achievers, world champions, and trend setters in whatever endeavors you undertake during your studies here at the University. We expect you to participate actively in club activities and professional associations which will provide you with opportunities to acquire

leadership and the personal skills, which you cannot get in a formal class or lesson. Whatever the duration of your course, the time you will spend in the University will be important for each one of you in specific and personal ways. But overall, each one of you should experience growth in intellectual knowledge, personality, cultural enrichment, building personal friendships and career planning. I also urge you to be conscious of the environment around you. For starters the University of Nairobi is a very safe environment, however its location in the CBD, predisposes it to various security risks. The Chief Security Officer may have alerted you of the dark spots, but for emphasis I caution you to avoid certain places at night especially when you are unaccompanied. The areas around the

Uhuru Highway Tunnel, Museum gate, The Serena Bus Stop among others, should be avoided at all costs, after 7.00 p.m. Also avoid going to town at night unaccompanied. It is the responsibility of all of us to do security policing and ensure our safety rather than that of the security personnel. Please feel free to report any suspicious looking persons to the security offices so that appropriate action can be taken immediately.

Ladies and gentlemen, I wish to encourage you to enjoy your time and experience in campus, especially as you interact with people from different parts of the world. Do not be cocooned in your discipline. A university education means a holistic experience. In the words of

Martin Luther King Jr., “*intelligence plus character is the goal of a true education*” – this implies that for one to be successful, self-discipline is key. As the newest members of this community therefore, I urge you to abide by the rules and regulations that govern student conduct. At the end of the day you will only have yourselves to blame if you do not achieve what you came to this University to achieve and that is; a good education.

Ladies and gentlemen, University life will accord you a lot of freedom which most of you may not have experienced. This freedom comes with its own social risks. I implore you to keep off activities that will not contribute positively to your future. Such activities

include: use of drugs which as you all know have ruined many promising careers; destructive habits; and, bad association, among others. The choice of who to associate with is yours; the sort of company you keep determines how empowered you will be or how it will lower your opportunities. Again, recognize that political groups will try to woo you, be discerning as identifying with the wrong groups can cause you to lower your opportunities.

I know you are well aware of the HIV/ AIDS pandemic that is claiming many lives in the country. I urge all of you to lead responsible lives and avoid risky behaviors. Let abstinence be the norm and if you cannot, please use condoms which are available in our clinics. We also

have voluntary counseling and testing services and an HIV/AIDS policy document is also available in the libraries and on our website. Once again, make use of the available resources.

Ladies and gentlemen, the University of Nairobi has not prescribed any formal dress code for students, save for the College of Health Sciences. It is however the responsibility of all students and members of staff to observe standards that subscribe to modesty and decency in both dress and manner. By so doing, you are respecting yourself and those around you and above all you are a point of reference or mentor who will influence others. Mentorship starts with you.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I know that you are from diverse backgrounds with different opportunities, but this should not blind you to believe that where you come from counts, I know that it is not where you were born that is important, it is what you do with the gifts given to you. So today, I want to appeal to a majority, who have come from humble backgrounds, to know that success is a habit, a habit of being focused and consistent, being effective with time, being disciplined, hard work, utilizing the resources at your disposal and facing up to the challenge of inspiring others.

Today, we are formally inducting you into the University community, with other orientation activities

especially at the residential and college level expected to continue until you start your classes next week. The orientation week will usher in the most unforgettable and rewarding experiences in your life as you build your career at the University of Nairobi.

With those remarks, I wish you the most fulfilling and rewarding experience at this great University.

Thank you.