



MURANG'A UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

Vice Chancellor

Prof. Dickson M. Nyariki, PhD

**During the Occasion of
Welcoming First Year Students**

on

Friday, August 31, 2018

at

The University Students' Recreation Ground

Deputy Vice Chancellors

Registrars

Deans and Directors

Heads of Departments

Academic and Administrative Staff

Chairman and Members of the Student Governing Council

Our NEW students

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good afternoon:

It is with great pleasure that I cordially welcome our new students to Murang'a University of Technology. As new students, today should be considered an important day to you because it is your first day to be formally addressed by your Vice Chancellor. I take this opportunity to congratulate you on your performance in the Form Four Examinations— which were popularly named 'the Matiang'i exams' by virtue of their

toughness. You are, therefore, among the few who have gained admission to study in Universities; and that is not a mean achievement.

As you may have realised from the reception you have been accorded, we have been enthusiastically preparing for your arrival. I welcome you to join this great community of Murang'a University of Technology. I suppose this is your first time too in Murang'a County, for some of you. Join us in this beautiful part of our country.

Since you reported at the beginning of the week, you have had the opportunity to be introduced to the University officials in charge of various departments of the University from which you would require services. You have been taken through most of the University processes. You have also met and been addressed by a number of our staff in the Divisions, Schools or Faculties, Departments, and Administrative Sections. It is my hope that you have found the orientation week beneficial. I further believe you have

been adequately exposed to University Rules and Procedures. I encourage you to carefully read and understood these rules and procedures and abide by them because they will guide your stay at the University, and help you to avoid difficulties and troubles. Of particular importance among these rules are the rules governing examinations. I must stress from the outset that it would be of great help to you to take a keen interest in these rules and closely abide by them. I underline this because some students have lost the opportunity to complete their studies here because of examination malpractices. In any case, I expect you to earn your degrees through hard work, and that's the only way our degrees will be respected out there in the job markets. Needless to repeat, I expect you to keenly follow these rules to ensure a comfortable and peaceful stay in the University.

It is important to recognize the fact that there are many of your colleagues who would have liked to join the university but didn't make it;and therefore I urge each and every student who has joined us to take the opportunity

afforded you seriously and concentrate on your studies, and not to engage in behaviour that would jeopardize the studies. You should take cognisance of the fact that you have been privileged by way of a reduced burden in terms of fees that parents and or guardians would otherwise have to pay for you to acquire a university education through self-sponsorship.

Dear Students,

You have been selected to study at what we believe is a distinctive university, which is among the 31 full-fledged public universities in Kenya. The University is steadily building a reputation for academic excellence; and is deservedly ready to join the league of internationally recognized universities.

It may be of interest to you to know that this University that is expected to be your home for the next four or five years and should fundamentally shape your future and be part of your history was founded in September

2011 via the Murang'a University College Legal Order No. 129 of September, 2011 as a Constituent College of Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT). Murang'a University College was chartered by His Excellency Uhuru Kenyatta, the President of the Republic of Kenya, on 7th October, 2016, at State House, Nairobi, and was renamed Murang'a University of Technology.

We continue to salute the founding fathers, and of course mothers, of this institution. It is because of this recognition, that the University, in her graduation of 10th August, 2018, decided to honour Dr. (H.C.) Charles Rubia with an honorary doctorate degree. Dr (H.C.) Rubia was one of the founders that made a significant contribution in the establishment of the original institution in the early 1970s, which provided the foundation for the current University.

Since the award of Charter, the University has continued to grow steadily in respect of student enrolment and infrastructural development. This week we have registered about 1,017 students to join our various programs. Therefore, if we considered the numbers of continuing students as well, in total, student numbers now stand at around 4,000. This number is expected to grow systematically to more than 10,000 in a period of five years, all other variables being equal.

You may wish to take note of the fact that, unlike other universities, we have admitted you as scheduled. I am proud to let you know that this has been possible because during the long strike by the lecturers in the early 2018, we were among the very few universities that did not experience the effects of that strike, mainly because of the dedication of our staff to serve. Therefore, university activities are still within the calendar and those students who successfully completed their studies during the January–April,

2018 semester graduated on schedule during the graduation of August 10th this year.

Dear Students,

You will agree with me that a day like this one should be memorable as it reflects a culmination of over 12 years of your toil. I suppose it is a fulfillment of your dreams and those of your parents and guardians that one day you would secure a place in the University. You should, nevertheless, be careful not to be complacent and jeopardize your effort towards achieving academic excellence. You must by now be aware that, different from what was happening in High School, you will enjoy a great degree of independence at the University. This calls for greater responsibility, therefore. There will be no duty master to check if you attended classes; there will be no matron to check if you cleaned yourself or you made your bed, and so on and so on. You will now have responsibility for everything from eating right, keeping fit, getting enough

sleep to getting to classes on time. It's important to remember that it's up to you to make good choices. Though there are others around you to offer guidance, no one but you can keep you healthy and safe and successful. Over the next four or five years, depending on the degree course you are pursuing, you will learn how to become self-sustaining. Your new situation at the University would definitely demand more sacrifices than ever before and it's only those who will make the right choices will succeed.

At this juncture, I guess you've realized that I've been letting you in on what happens in a university like this one. Most of you probably understand a University as an institution of higher learning with the authority to award degrees and conduct research. While this is true, there is much more that goes on in a modern University. It is a place where inquiry is pushed to the limits and discoveries verified and perfected, and errors exposed, by the collision of mind with mind, and knowledge with knowledge. A University is a place where everybody including Professors

are students; a place for communication and circulation of thoughts; a place where knowledge is generated, preserved and transformed to useful innovations to enhance technological processes, methods and entrepreneurship. A University must also be at the forefront in community participation through the transfer of technology in the sense that all research activities should be geared towards value addition to society.

Our University is a budding institution that intends to develop into a Centre of Excellence in Technological Innovation. However, we do recognise that all the programs we offer in this University are important as they will be required to support the growth of our economy in all the sectors. As we expand our programs and student numbers, we are conscientiously increasing our academic staff numbers as well as improving them in terms of quality and capacity, despite limited resources. We now have a significant number of lecturers with Ph.D. qualifications, and some proportion of teaching staff with good and relevant M.Sc. qualifications that

will ensure you acquire quality training. Further, we have acquired a reasonable number of administrative staff that will be useful in supporting essential academic and non-academic functions of the University.

Our dear Students,

You might have appreciated by now that the University is located in a serene environment conducive to learning; it is kept clean and green. I urge you, therefore, to support the culture of keeping it that way—do not litter the environment, do not destroy the grasses, do not damage the trees; help us maintain the highest standards of cleanliness and serenity.

Since its inception, this institution has remained steadfast in its tradition of focusing on its chosen areas of scholarship. In pursuing our mandate, we are constantly guided by our Vision and Mission statements which you must embrace. In our Vision, Murang'a University of Technology aspires to

be "***A Leading University in Technological Innovation, Training and Research for Socio-Economic Development,***"while our Mission is "***To Advance Knowledge in Science and Technology through Teaching, Learning, Consultancy, Research and Innovation for Socio-economic Development***"

Your presence in this institution is, therefore, part of our wider plans to realize our Vision and Mission. Our solid reputation has been built through concerted efforts by our staff and students. You are now part of that community and you should strive to enhance our values at all times. I say this because the name of this institution is as good as its community. Students build the culture and character of a learning institution. We shall aim to maintain our national and international character that has largely been made possible by the continuing students and your predecessors, who have largely engaged the University through dialogue on all the issues affecting them. And that is the main reason why we have not had any form

of turmoil experiencing in similar institutions since the inception of the institution. We expect you to emulate them.

Dear Students,

Our responsibility is to enhance the standing of our University as an outstanding institution of higher learning and academic excellence. Therefore, let me share with you details of a few of the activities and development programs the Senate and the University Management are spearheading in order to assist our students:

- One, the University has introduced the Vice Chancellor's Innovation Competition Award for students. Those successful shall not only qualify for some financial support but the University shall put in place mechanisms to pay for patenting their innovations and commercialisation of their products.
- Two, over **500** of our students can live in the University residences on campus and eat in our dining hall/cafeteria, where we serve a variety of

meals. Further, the University is currently building a modern hostel which shall accommodate approximately 800 students. The hostel shall be fitted with a kitchen and spacious reading and recreation spaces.

- Three, the University is currently putting up a state-of-the art Science Complex. This complex shall accommodate most of our laboratories for science related courses.
- Four, we have established a new 60 capacity N-Computing Lab for students undertaking computer related courses. We shall endeavour to establish a similar one as soon as we can.
- Five,we recognize top performing students (those with 1st Class Honours) by hiring them as Graduate Assistants as soon as they graduate, under our academic staff development program, so that they would eventually replace the aging professors. I am, therefore, alerting you early to work hard so you may join this small group of colleagues who will secure such appointment. It is also worth noting that those appointed as Graduate Assistants automatically secure a scholarship

(through fee waiver) to pursue their postgraduate degrees. I, therefore, challenge you not to miss out.

Dear Students,

As your Vice Chancellor, I am obligated to pass some important messages to you, at the risk of repeating myself. It must be clear to you all by now that education alone is not enough in life; it simply improves your chances to succeed, whatever the success. The major ingredient of success in life, in addition to academic excellence, is good discipline and hard work in all spheres of life.

I would like, therefore, to stress the following, to which I request your greatest attention:

- First, every person at the University must be treated with respect and dignity. It does not matter what social station a person occupies – whether one is a cleaner, a gardener, a lab technician, a cook, or a

distinguished professor – they deserve to be treated with respect and dignity.

- Second, Murang'a University of Technology does not condone sexist or any form of bigotry, prejudice or chauvinistic behaviour.
- Third, excessive and irresponsible consumption of alcohol and experimentation with drugs is not acceptable. Such behavior will impair your ability to study and will make you vulnerable to crime. Excessive drinking and drug use have destroyed the lives of many young people and have left many families in situations of despair. Don't allow yourself to be a victim.
- Fourth, one issue that we take seriously is sexual misconduct—that is, sexual harassment and assault. We are committed to working with students to help prevent all forms of sexual misconduct both by staff and students. We shall take prompt action against those who will be found culpable.

- Fifth, you are all aware that HIV/AIDS is still prevalent among our people, and university students are as vulnerable as any other citizen of this country. As a young adult with great independence and freedom you must now rely on your own wisdom and inner strength to guide you in navigating life and its pitfalls. In this regard, it is my plea to all students to always strive to behave responsibly by ensuring that you avoid this self-inflicted ailment. Please ensure that you are well-informed about HIV/AIDS and that your behaviour protects you from the risk of contracting HIV. Stay safe and endeavour to make the best of your youth. Don't rush into or be pressured into being sexually active. If you must, don't have unprotected sex, be faithful, and avoid multiple and concurrent sexual partners.
- Sixth, crime associated with religious extremism is a reality in our country nowadays. Universities are not immune from the problems of criminal acts related to radicalization. We ask you, therefore, to be very vigilant wherever you are. Each one of us should develop a heightened

sense of crime awareness. For example, do not allow people you do not know in your residence, as your action will place everyone in that residence at risk.

- Seventh, reading for a degree is demanding. If you don't perform and meet our academic requirements, you will face one or other of the following: repeated exams, repeated years or discontinuation of your studies. Failing your exams would not be an event that suddenly happens at the end of the semester or year. It would happen over a period of weeks and months when you neglect your work. What happens at the end of the year is just a confirmation of what would have been happening over a long period of time. In short, never lose sight of what you are here for.

If you heed these messages you will have a great time of growth, development and learning at this University.

Should you experience difficulties, however, be assured that our academic and administrative staff are there to support you; they are there to help you realise your dreams and aspirations; they are there to make your university experience a positive and rewarding one. You can always call on anyone of our experienced staff to help you with a variety of personal challenges. Do not suffer in silence; seek help.

You should therefore remember that you won't be embarking on this journey alone. You will form close friendships and make many enduring relationships during the next four or five years. The bonds you will form as you help one another grow will fortify your friendships for many years to come. These friends will be with you through all your major life events. Remember to look out for one another. Use your cell phones to let each other know where you are, especially if you are off campus. There is nothing more important than keeping one another safe. However, no

matter how wonderful your friends are, you are still your own best asset, and it is up to you to take care of yourself.

As I conclude, I wish to express my deep appreciation to our Registrar in charge of Academic and Student Affairs, Dr Richard Juma, under the supervision of the Deputy Vice Chancellor in his Division, and the rest of his team for managing the registration and orientation process with professionalism; our 2018 orientation team together with the Deans, Directors and Heads of Department who were on hand at all times to lend a hand; and our Student Governing Council (SGC) for all their work in ensuring that our new students settle-in and feel welcome at Murang'a University of Technology.

I look forward to getting acquainted with each one of you, the new students, during your time at the University. Today, you begin a new

chapter of your life at this University and from the position I hold, it is a privilege for me to be part of it.

Thank You and God Bless.

Prof. Dickson Nyariki, PhD
VICE CHANCELLOR