



# **MURANG'A UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY**

**Vice Chancellor**

**Prof. Dickson M. Nyariki, PhD**

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

**on**

**Friday, September 11, 2020**

**at**

**The University Students' Recreation Ground**

**Deputy Vice Chancellors**

**Registrars**

**Deans and Directors**

**Chairmen/Heads of Department**

**Chairman and Secretary General of the Student**

**Governing Council**

**Our NEW students**

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

**Good afternoon:**

I am greatly delighted to welcome our new students to Murang'a University of Technology, in a rather special way.

As new students, today is an important day to you because it is your first day to formally meet your Vice Chancellor, even though not face-to-face.

May I take this opportunity to congratulate you on your performance in the Form Four Examinations, and for having secured a place at this University. This should be a memorable day for you as it is a culmination of over 12 years of hard work.

I wish to assure you that you made the right decision to pursue your studies at one of the most distinctive Universities in Kenya. Our University has remained

steadfast in its tradition of focusing its scholarship on the chosen fields, and is steadily building a reputation for academic excellence in order to join the league of internationally recognized universities. In support of my statement, if you have been keen, you should be aware that the University has been gaining ground as shown by the webometric rankings which have consistently placed us among the best universities in the country, in the recent past. This performance should assure you of our determination to train you to the highest possible standards to meet emerging challenges in our country and beyond.

## **Dear Students,**

As already alluded to, this year is a unique one, not only to the Murang'a University of Technology community but also to the country and the whole world. Following the outbreak of the COVID-19 disease, institutions are now operating virtually; it has become the so-called 'new normal.' It has, therefore, necessitated the need to conduct our activities online, and one of such activities is today's virtual address by your Vice Chancellor.

To emphasize what I already stated, from when you started your registration and orientation early this week, you have noticed that all activities are being conducted

online. The reason for this is that the Ministry of Education, in consultation with the Education stakeholders, made a pronouncement in July this year that institutions of learning, including universities, reopen for face-to-face learning in January next year. Further to this, the Ministry advised that universities continue offering online learning and examinations but in adherence to academic quality measures set by the Commission for University Education and in line with the health guidelines set by the Ministry of Health to combat the pandemic.

Following the pronouncement, the University Senate approved online registration, orientation, examinations,

and virtual learning for all our students as we prepare to reopen for face-to-face sessions in January next year. It is on this basis that we have called upon you to register as students and begin your classes online, as we work towards achieving the conditions that would allow for face-to-face teaching and learning. We encourage all students to embrace the use of technology that enables virtual classes and examination, because it does not look like we are going back to the 'old normal' any time soon. In fact, even when we reopen, it will be challenging to achieve social distancing for large classes and we might continue to conduct some degree of online teaching, even on campus.

## **Dear Students,**

I am informed that the process of online registration and orientation has gone well from the beginning of the week and you have had the opportunity to access online messages. I hope that you have found the online orientation week beneficial. I further believe you have downloaded, printed, and properly read the University Rules and Procedures. I encourage you to carefully read and understand these rules and procedures and abide by them because they will guide and help you to avoid difficulties and troubles while at the University.



## **Dear Students,**

It may be of interest to you to know that this University was awarded a charter to operate as a full-fledged university in October 2016. Before then, it was a constituent college of Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT). The University has continued to grow steadily in respect of student enrolment and infrastructural development. In total, student numbers now stand at around 8,500, if we include you (the new students) and the continuing students. This number is expected to grow systematically to more than 10,000 in two to three years, other variables being constant.

This year, we have admitted two thousand six hundred and seventy-three (2,673) freshers. These students will pursue careers in Business and Economics; Pure and Applied Sciences; Health Sciences; Education; Computing and Information Technology; Engineering and Technology; Hospitality and Tourism Management; Agricultural Sciences; Humanities; among others.

As we expand our programmes and student numbers, we are conscientiously increasing our academic staff numbers as well as improving them in terms of quality and capacity. Through this endeavor, 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.

In pursuing excellence, we are constantly guided by our Vision which is to be *a Leading University in Technological Innovation, Research, and Training*. You have now, therefore, become part of our wider plan to realize this Vision. Our solid reputation has been built through concerted efforts by our students and staff. You are called upon to make a contribution towards enhancing our values at all times. I say this because the name of an

institution is as good as its community. Students build the culture and character of a learning institution. We must, therefore, aim to maintain our national character that has largely been made possible by the continuing students and your predecessors, who have always engaged the University through dialogue on all the issues affecting them. We expect you to emulate them.

**Dear Students,**

As your Vice Chancellor, it is my obligation to pass some important messages to you, which I always do to fresh students during this occasion. These messages are relevant and applicable wherever you are, whether at

home or later at the University. Since I wouldn't have another opportunity like this to address you when you report for face-face lectures at the University, let me take this opportunity to stress the following, to which I request your greatest attention:

First, the major ingredient of success, in addition to academic excellence, is good discipline and hard work in all spheres of life. You must, therefore, strive to be well disciplined in order to achieve success in whatever you aspire to do.

Second, for harmony and good co-existence, every person in our University, whether a colleague-student or a staff, must be treated with respect and dignity. It does not matter what social station a person occupies – they deserve to be treated with respect and dignity.

Third, excessive and irresponsible consumption of alcohol and experimentation with drugs is not acceptable. Such behavior will impair your ability to study. Excessive drinking and drug use have destroyed the lives of many young people. Don't allow yourself to be a victim.

Fourth, we, at the University, do not condone sexist or any form of prejudice, or, chauvinistic behaviour. This is extremely discouraged.

Fifth, we strongly disapprove sexual harassment. 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.

Sixth, university students are as vulnerable as any other citizen of this country to HIV infections. As a young adult

with great independence and freedom, you must now rely on your wisdom and inner strength to guide you in navigating life and its pitfalls while at the University. It is my plea to all students, therefore, to 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; there is time for everything.

Seventh, crime associated with religious extremism is still a reality in our country. Universities are not immune to the problems of criminal activity 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 while on campus.

Eighth, COVID-19 will be with us for some time to come. While either at home or later at the University, you are expected, as appropriate, to keep social distance, to frequently wash your hands and/or sanitize, and to wear a mask. For your safety and the safety of others, we expect you to strictly follow these protocols when you come to the University next year.

Ninth, 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 for 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. In short, never lose sight of what you will be here for.

Tenth and finally, as you begin your online classes on Monday, you owe it to yourself to ensure you attend your

classes without fail. The online lectures will enable you not to fall behind your peers, but more importantly to finalize your studies on time. In order to efficiently achieve this, you must have at least a phone with an Android application to attend lectures. However, for exams, you must have a computer with minimum specifications as communicated to you by our Registrar through various circulars. We are aware these are difficult times for everybody; but consider that if you were to be on campus for face-to-face lectures, you would finance your transportation to and from the campus, accommodation, and subsistence, which would probably be more expensive than purchasing internet bundles and a refurbished laptop.

Should you experience difficulties, however, be assured that your first-contact staff such as the Dean of Students, the Registrar in charge of Academic Affairs, and other academic and administrative staff, are on hand to support you; they are there to make your experience as a university student a positive and rewarding one. You can always call on any one of these staff to help you with a variety of personal challenges. Do not suffer in silence; seek help.

As I conclude, I once again welcome you to the University, albeit virtually, and hope to meet with you on campus

when you report physically, so we may get acquainted with each one of you.

Thank You and God Bless.

**PROF. DICKSON M. NYARIKI, Ph.D.**

**VICE CHANCELLOR**