

MATRICULATION ADDRESS BY THE Ag. VICE CHANCELLOR, MURANG'A UNIV. OF
TECHNOLOGY ON MONDAY, 4TH SEPTEMBER, 2017



MURANG'A UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

Prof. Dickson M. Nyariki, PhD

Ag. Vice Chancellor

During the Occasion of Welcoming First Year Students

on Monday, September 4, 2017

at

The University Students' Recreational Ground

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Deputy Vice Chancellors

Registrars

Deans and Directors

Heads of Departments

Academic and Administrative Staff

Chairman and Members of the Student Governing Council

And our NEW students

Good afternoon:

It is with a lot of delight that I stand here today to give a matriculation speech to a congregation of Murang'a University of Technology 1st year students. Today is indeed a great day for you because it is your first day to be formally addressed by your Ag. Vice

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Chancellor. It is also a great day for me because it is my 2nd address to a new cohort of students admitted to this great University.

We have been waiting expectantly and preparing for your arrival. I warmly welcome you to this University, an Institution that is going to be your academic base for the entire period of your four years of study. I wish to assure you that you could not have made a better choice, given that the environment here is extremely conducive to learning.

My dear students, since your arrival here a week ago, you have been taken through most of the University processes. You have also met and been addressed by staff in the various Schools/Faculties, Departments, and Administrative Sections. It is my hope that you have found the orientation week beneficial. You have also been exposed to University Rules and Regulations. In some instances, you have clearly read and understood the rules governing your stay at the University. Indeed, you have appended

your signatures in the said documents promising to abide by the rules as spelt out by our Statutes. I expect you to follow all these rules to ensure a comfortable and peaceful stay in the University. Of particular importance are the rules governing your examinations that I encourage you to read again and again, with great care, and abide by them. I underline this because failure to follow the set out examinations rules and regulations would lead to serious consequences, which you must avoid as a student.

Unlike your past experiences, at the University, you will be given guidelines for your lectures and left to supplement them through individual reading. Both intensive and extensive reading will be essential, if you expect to earn good grades. To facilitate this, the University has a well-stocked library, from which you can borrow books or read. In addition, your lecturers will guide you regarding the basic textbooks to buy. HELB does

also provide some support for your textbooks and other stationery requirements for those who are eligible; so I advise that you make use of it.

About Murang'a University of Technology...

You have chosen to study at what we believe is a distinctive University of Technology which is among the 34 or so Public Universities and University Colleges currently operating in Kenya. It may also be important to note that this University that is expected to fundamentally shape your future and be a part of your history was established through Legal Order No. 129 of September, 2011 as a constituent College of Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, and was named Murang'a University College. The College was chartered by His Excellency Uhuru Kenya, the President of the Republic of Kenya and Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Forces on 7th October, 2016

at State House, Nairobi; and was re-named Murang'a University of Technology. We salute the founders of this promising institution.

The University is positioning itself to develop a distinctive profile as a progressive and international University, growing its enrolment strategically. It currently offers degrees, diplomas and certificates in Engineering, Information Technology, Institutional Management, Business and Applied Sciences, among others.

This year we have admitted one thousand three hundred and ninety six (**1,396**) young men and women, the largest number of students to be admitted in a single year so far. With this, the University expects to hit an enrolment of **3,500** or more in the year.

We have admitted for the first time students to our newly introduced undergraduate programmes, namely: Bachelor of Science in Computer Technology, Bachelor of Science in Computer Science, Bachelor of Science in Actuarial Science, Bachelor of

Science in Analytical Chemistry, Bachelor of Science (General), Bachelor of Technology (Electrical and Electronic Engineering), and Bachelor of Education (Science). Apart from these new programmes, the University has established a new School—the School of Education—due to demand from this region.

I wish to proudly inform you that, unlike at other huge universities, each one of our students is a person with a name and a face; not just a number or statistic. We are successfully striving to maintain our reputation as an outstanding institution that provides high quality formative education for its students.

Let me share with you some important statistics about Murang'a University of Technology:

- Over **30%** of our students are women, which means that we are respecting the constitution which sets a threshold of **1/3** of either gender.

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- Our students come from all corners of this country. The ethnic and cultural diversity we have here makes us an exciting place. It is also this diversity that creates a vibrant intellectual, social and cultural environment which is key to achieving academic excellence.
- Over **500** of our students can live in the University residences on campus and we are putting up more hostels in order to accommodate over **1,200** students.
- More than **270** staff work at MUT.
- The university is located on about **87** acres of land.
- The University has eleven (**11**) academic departments and six (**6**) Schools.
- We have graduated **one** group of students this year totalling **675, 257** of them with degrees.

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- As a student at Murang'a University of Technology, you will be taught by academics who are actively engaged in advancing the frontiers of knowledge.
- About $\frac{1}{4}$ of our academic staff possess doctoral qualifications, and we will strive to improve the proportion of these staff to at least **2/3** in the shortest time possible.

Our responsibility is to enhance the standing of our University as an outstanding institution of higher learning and academic excellence.

Our Purpose, Our Values...

As you join this special community of Murang'a University of Technology, you need to know and understand what its purposes and core values are. We are a community engaged in the generation, dissemination and application of knowledge.

Our University exists to develop leaders and professionals through serving **five core purposes**:

- Our first purpose is to **teach** in ways which allow and encourage our students to engage critically with *knowledge* and its production. Through our teaching, our students should develop a “critical appreciation of the ways in which we gain knowledge”. This suggests that our curricula and pedagogy should be designed with a view to fostering student inclusion in the journey of discovery.
- As our second purpose, we seek to produce graduates who are knowledgeable and well-skilled/**well-trained**; graduates who are critical and are ethical leaders; graduates who are committed to human rights and environmental justice; graduates who will not just see our society or the world as it is but can imagine a better society

and a better world and act with courage and conviction to change our society and the world for the better.

- Our third and fourth purposes are to develop **research** and **consultancy** capacities so that we can advance the frontiers of knowledge, human understanding and wisdom.
- Our fifth and final core purpose is for MUT to discharge its critical *social responsibility* through **innovations** and *community engagement/service*. In these activities, we endeavor to forge respectful, reciprocal, mutually-beneficial and knowledge-driven innovations and partnerships with our external community.

These five core purposes constitute our overall *academic or intellectual purpose*. This is what it means for us to be a University that takes **knowledge, scholarship and learning** seriously and that works hard to create an institutional culture that embraces

academic freedom and **intellectual enquiry**, and values **creativity**, knowledge and scholarship.

As we pursue our overall intellectual purpose, we are guided by a set of **core values**, which are a commitment to deliver **innovative** solutions in the delivery of our services; upholding **professionalism** and a commitment to stand ethical scrutiny and to high standards of excellence in our day to day operations; promotion of **teamwork** among staff as well as mutual exchange of information and experiences; promotion of **diversity and inclusiveness**; encouraging **autonomy and freedom of enquiry**; and **entrepreneurship** in which delivery of innovative solutions in our key business areas is envisaged.

Our core values are in line with the National Constitution of 2010 which sets out the character of our nation, proclaiming the values of 'human dignity, the achievement of

equality and the advancement of human rights and freedoms.' The *Bill of Rights*, as set out in Chapter 4 of the Constitution, unambiguously proclaims that no institution or individual 'may unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly any person against any ground, including race, sex, pregnancy, marital status, health status, ethnic or social origin, colour, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language or birth.' As MUT we are all enjoined to 'respect, protect, promote and fulfil the rights in the Bill of Rights.'

Some Important Messages...

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 enquiry is pushed forward 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 innovation to enhance technological processes, methods and entrepreneurships. 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.

It must, however, be clear that education alone is not enough in life; it simply improves your chances to succeed. The major ingredient of success in life, in addition to academic excellence, is good discipline and hard work in all spheres of life. As Albert Einstein (a Nobel Prize winner for his work on electronics in the early 20th Century) put it, "Genius is 1% talent and 99% hard work..." Or put differently by Thomas Edison (an American inventor and businessman who lived in the mid 19th Century to early 20th Century), "Genius is 1% inspiration and 99% perspiration." Thus, no effort should be spared to

inculcate high standards of discipline and a sense of purpose among students and their lecturers.

I would like to pass across several important messages to which you must pay great attention while studying at Murang'a University of Technology.

- 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 professor – they deserve to be treated with respect and dignity.
- Second, this University will not condone sexist, xenophobic or any other form of bigotry, prejudice or chauvinistic behaviour.

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- Third, treating another person in a demeaning and dehumanizing manner has no place at this University.
- Fourth, excessive and irresponsible consumption of alcohol and experimentation with drugs will not be tolerated at the University. Such behavior will impair your ability to study and will make you vulnerable to crime, and will finally lead to the destruction of your life.
- Fifth, HIV/AIDS still remains a scourge that is touching nearly everyone's life. As a University community, we are vulnerable to HIV/AIDS, and it is young adults like you who are most affected by HIV/AIDS. While there have been advancements in medicine and in the management of the condition, HIV/AIDS continues to pose a threat to the survival of the young and productive people. 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 that would lead to self-destruction. 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 endeavor 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, considering the foregoing, sexual misconduct—especially sexual harassment and assault—should be a no-go-zone for MUT students. There will be dire consequences if you get involved. We are committed to working with students to help prevent all forms of sexual misconduct both by staff and students, and we will take every allegation seriously.

- Seventh, crime associated with religious extremism is a sad reality in our country these days. Universities are not immune to the problems of criminal acts related to radicalization. We ask you to be very vigilant wherever you are. Each one of us should develop a heightened sense of crime awareness. For example, allowing strangers into your hostel at any one time is placing everyone in that hostel at risk.
- Eighth, reading for a university degree is demanding. You must take your academic studies very seriously. 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 to achieve your degree would not be an event that suddenly happens at the end of your stay at MUT. It would happen over a period of weeks and months when you neglect your work. What happens at the end of your four or so years here is just a confirmation of what would have been happening over

a long period of time. What I'm trying to emphasize is that, never lose sight of what you are here for.

- Ninth, MUT has a large team of qualified and dedicated lecturers who will see you through your academic work. They spend long hours preparing their lectures. They will give you all the help you need. But you must co-operate with them. Ensure you attend all lectures and other scheduled academic activities. Participate actively in all these activities. Take challenges from your lecturers. Interact with them in the lecture rooms, in the workshops and in the laboratories, and turn the knowledge they possess into your own knowledge.

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

However, should you experience difficulties, be assured that our academic and administrative staff are in hand to support you; they are available to help you realise your dreams and aspirations; they are available to make your university experience a positive and rewarding one. You can always call on them 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 years. The bonds you will form as you help one another grow will fortify your friendships for many years to come.

You will now have responsibility for everything from eating right, keeping fit, and getting enough sleep to doing your own laundry and 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 years, you will learn how to become self-sustaining.

While self-sustenance is important, you should 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, you must take cognizance of the fact that, 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. After all, you're the one who must live with the consequences of your actions.

As I conclude, I wish to acknowledge with a deep sense of appreciation all the staff involved in the orientation of the students. I particularly wish to thank our Registrar in charge of Academic and Student Affairs and his team for managing the application and

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registration process with utmost professionalism; our 2017 orientation team who were on hand at all times to lend a hand, including the Dean of Students and Director of Catering and Accommodation, and for assisting our new students settle-in in their residences; and our Student Governing Council (SGC), led by their Chairman, for all their work in ensuring that our new students feel welcome at MUT.

I look forward to getting to know each of you, the new students, better during your stay at MUT. Today, you begin a new chapter of your life and it is a privilege for me to be part of it.

Thank You and God Bless.

Prof. Dickson M. Nyariki
Ag. VICE CHANCELLOR