

**VICE CHANCELLOR'S ADDRESS TO 2018 FIRST YEAR STUDENTS
ON TUESDAY, 2ND OCTOBER 2018 AT THE MAIN CAMPUS,
KAKAMEGA**

Deputy Vice Chancellors,
Members of the University Management Board,
Senators,
Deans, Directors, CoDs and Coordinators,
Rest of academic staff,
Other cadres of University Staff,
Students Executive Council Leaders,
Fresh students,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Afternoon!

I am greatly delighted to welcome you to Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology (MMUST), 'the University of Choice'. I wish to congratulate each of you for securing a chance at this great university. Make the best out of this opportunity.

As a university, we are delighted not only to receive you as our fresh students but also due to the fact that MMUST fraternity has grown bigger and richer by your presence. We thank you for choosing MMUST-the University of Choice. You have made an excellent choice. At MMUST, we put the student at the center of everything. Your success is important to us. You join an institution that strives for excellence in areas of teaching, research, consultancy and innovation.

As a student-centered institution, MMUST strives to give personal attention to students and is committed to providing high quality education that can be used to transform the lives of students and the economy of our country. We have, during this September 2018 intake, admitted over three thousand (3000) students. Among these are our pioneer students in the School of Medicine.

My leadership will ensure you study in a conducive and tranquil atmosphere. We do this in recognition of the fact that education is still the best bet for a better life. We have the requisite manpower and resources that will aid in making us achieve our objectives and lay a firm foundation for you to pursue and achieve your dreams. We seek your cooperation in achieving these objectives.

As I look at you seated here today, it takes me on a journey several years ago, as a fresh man at the University of Nairobi. I had feelings of isolation, anxiety, confusion and home sickness. I am sure some of you can identify with these. The good news is that all these feelings will go away.

Take responsibility for your actions

Being at the university is being in a free environment unlike the secondary schools where you have come from. A word of caution though; 'It is left to you to decide how to organize your time at

MMUST by maintaining the right balance between academics and your social life.' I appeal to all students to keep this in mind. As you join the MMUST family, you will be expected to conform to the culture of MMUST. Team up with your lecturers and other University staff by fostering strong and lasting relationships that will propel you into the future. From the little you may have encountered since you were admitted, it is my hope that you appreciate the great potential that this University holds. We pride ourselves in producing well rounded graduates who make a positive impact on fellow Kenyans. Therefore, remember that academics above everything else is the primary reason of being here. In cases of doubt, consult our able staff who are always willing and at hand to serve you.

Be part of a community of Learners

I would like to mention a common cliché that is true all times, '**hard work pays**'. Success is meaningless if it is founded on deception and short cuts. Our University strives to maintain a climate where every student is encouraged to reach his or her full potential. Form strong collaborative networks with your peers for academic success. Make use of available opportunities to make valuable contributions through active participation in various activities at the university. Extend your learning beyond the lecture theatre to application in real life situations. Refrain from practices that are likely to put you on the

wrong side of the law both within and without the University. Top on this list is **cheating in examinations in whatever form**. We wish to warn all of you to refrain from such because the consequences are dire.

Be focused

I would like to urge all of you to keep and maintain your focus. We have students who sat where you sit today but did not graduate from this University. That is because they failed to live up to their dreams and lost focus on the primary reason that brought them to the University. Some of the distractions could be in the form of: **unhealthy relationships, drug and substance abuse, un planned pregnancies, procrastination, negative peer pressure, missing classes** just to mention but a few. Your ultimate goal, therefore, as you start this journey should be to graduate and with good grades. This will define your destiny for the rest of your lives.

Embrace diversity

You will meet people from different backgrounds and communities. Some things will be familiar while others less so. Embrace positive differences. Use the differences to gain a better understanding of yourself, your biases and your strengths. As **Correta Scott King aptly states 'The greatness of a community is most accurately measured**

by the compassionate actions of its members'. Let us learn to be compassionate and tolerant with one another in our diversity.

We are in the ICT revolution era where there is constant innovation and inquisition. I would like to urge you to use technology well; be careful not to spend too much time on social media at the expense of your studies. It can be expensive all round. Also note that life at MMUST is a lot more than academic activities. We have a whole array of sports and other extra-curricular activities and we encourage all of you to be part of these. Some of you have joined us courtesy of the Talent Scholarship that you were awarded. We will strengthen this to more areas as time goes by. We encourage you to take part in at least one extra curricular activity.

On Safety Issues

As a community, let us strive to stay in harmony at all times. We should embrace and use dialogue at all times and avoid destructive behavior. There is a Students Executive Council (SEC) which is an elected body to facilitate communication between the students and the administration of MMUST. Working together, we believe we can solve any problems related to the students for a better Campus life. Let us desist from any acts of hooliganism that will mar the good image of MMUST and devalue the qualifications you get from here. It is NOT worth it. Let us work together to solve any challenges. As **Theodore**

Roosevelt says, 'To educate a man in mind and not in values is to educate a menace to society.' May you be well educated in knowledge, values and skills.

Today, our country is in serious security threats; universities included. We appeal for all to be vigilant and to help self and your neighbour. There will be lessons on how to deal with situations of a threatening nature. We appeal for all to take these seriously. You also need to exercise your rights in a responsible and patriotic manner and avoid going into harm's way. Avoid such habits as: moving alone at night, walking in dark alleys, meeting strangers alone, inappropriate behaviours at places of residence and especially so for students staying off campus. These and other behaviours may compromise your safety.

To recap,

1. Take responsibility for your actions
2. Be part of a community of Learners
3. Be focused
4. Embrace diversity
5. Keep safe

In conclusion, I encourage you to live a full life all through your stay here at the University. Be a responsible citizen throughout so that at the end of it all, you will be able to be a job creator or be employable. I

wish all of you the best of stay at Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology; the University of Choice.

Eleanor Roosevelt says "The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams." As you begin this journey, have a dream and believe in it.

Thank you. God bless you all. God bless MMUST. God bless Kenya.

Prof. Eng. Fredrick .A.O Otieno, FAAS, MIEK, FSAICE

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