

KENYA POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
3RD GRADUATION CEREMONEY: 18TH NOVEMBER 2011
DRAFT SPEECH BY PROF. DR.-ING. FRANCIS W. O. ADUOL PRINCIPAL

The Chancellor (Dr. Joseph B. Wanjui)

The Minister for Higher Education Science and Technology (Prof. Margaret Kamar);

The Permanent Secretary Ministry of Higher Education Science and Technology (Prof. Crispus Kiamba);

The Council Chairman (Arch. Zubedee Bukania);

The Vice-Chancellor (Prof. George Magoha);

Members of Council, Kenya Polytechnic University College here present;

Members of Council, University of Nairobi here present;

Vice-Chancellors of other Universities here present;

Principals of other colleges here present;

Graduands;

Staff of Kenya Polytechnic University College;

Our Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Introduction

I take this opportunity to welcome our Chancellor and Chief Guest Dr. Joseph B. Wanjui together with all his guests to the third graduation ceremony of the Kenya Polytechnic University College. Mr. Chancellor Sir, I feel very honoured that you found time to be with us in this occasion. This particular graduation is very special to the History of Kenya Polytechnic University College particularly for the reason that at this congregation, you will be conferring degree on the first cohort of our bachelors' degree graduands. As you are all aware, the institution admitted her first cohort of bachelor degree students in January 2009. That cohort comprised Joint Admissions Board admitted students and Kenya Polytechnic diploma graduates who were continuing with studies pursuing Bachelor of Technology degree. Twenty one students who were in the first cohort of Bachelor of Technology (Electrical Engineering and Electronic Technology) have satisfied our examiners and the Senate and we proudly present them to you for conferment of the respective degrees. Another group of thirty five (35) graduands are former Kenya Polytechnic Higher Diploma holders who have now successfully completed a two year programme leading to the Bachelor of Philosophy in Technology. These graduands are also in this congregation ready for conferment of their respective degrees.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, preparing these groups of graduands gave us enough challenges but which we were prepared to meet. When I joined the University College in 2008 I had to very fast organize my team to identify lecturers qualified for the task that was a head of us, develop curricula for the different degree programmes and mount the programmes. With your support and that of the Senate of the University of Nairobi, we successfully put in place all the requirements and here we have the product of this hard work and cooperation. I will be saying more about our programmes and progress in a short while. Mr. Chancellor Sir, on behalf of employees and students of the Kenya Polytechnic University College, please accept our appreciation for the support you have extended to us.

Over view of recent development projects

Mr. Chancellor Sir, may I now highlight some very recent developments at the Kenya Polytechnic University College.

As I have alluded to in the introductory remarks, the Kenya Polytechnic University College require highly qualified academic staff to enable it take its new role of offering degrees in addition to the TVET programmes. We have made successful recruitment exercise for professors from all over the world. We have convinced Kenyans working abroad to come home and join us in our pursuit to put in place a world class university of technology. These are very competitive scholars in their areas of specialization. Our zest towards this aggressive recruitment was informed by first and foremost the need to keep the good works of the predecessor institution (Kenya Polytechnic) and secondly to bring the teaching and training to a higher level. This required that we satisfy the requirements of the Commission of Higher Education for accreditation of Universities. We are proud to say that the team we have put together has strengths that are only comparable to those found in those very well established universities but we are strategizing to outperform the established universities in raising the quality of our graduates a notch higher.

We are also determined to improve the skills and capacities of the teaching staff that were in the employment of Kenya Polytechnic. These staff members are valuable resource for propagation of the techniques of TVET training. We have now concluded a staff development policy that shall guide the advanced training of these staff members. To achieve excellence however, we shall require the newly recruited professors also to attend tailor-made training suitable for them to adopt the techniques of

TVET training and to infuse innovation culture in classroom teaching. Non teaching staff members will also benefit from this staff development policy so that all personnel in our institution are well placed to make positive contribution in their areas. I believe you will find the policy acceptable to you and give it the support it requires.

Kenya Polytechnic, right from its inception, was intended to be a small institution with a maximum capacity of 2,000 students. Changing circumstances have resulted in revision of this target and presently we have a student population of 11,000. To accommodate the needs of such a large population of students, it has become necessary to focus on infrastructure development. This is well captured in our new master plan. I am however happy to report that the Government of Kenya has given the institution substantial support towards infrastructure development. In the ended financial year, we managed to extend one tuition block by adding a floor that has six classrooms. In the current financial year we are constructing two stand-alone buildings; one will accommodate the Faculty of the Built Environment and the other will accommodate the School of Engineering. These improvements will reduce the current congestion in the tuition block facilities for a short period only as the University College's expansion is a continuous activity.

I believe you will understand the need for continued infrastructural development from the perspective that the institution has taken the task of developing new syllabuses to help improve skills of graduates of Kenya Polytechnic in all areas that TVET training covered. In the last two years we have developed 43 syllabuses for degree programmes and we hope to progress with that pace until we cover in excess of 100 thematic areas. Whereas our concentration has been in areas of engineering and technology, we have now introduced a few liberal subjects including Music. It is our informed opinion that such variety will make the learning environment more enabling for both students and the employees. Music as you know has therapeutic effects and soothes the nerves at the end of a hard day's work. In these selected liberal subjects we have recruited highly skilled lecturers and they led in the entertainment presentations which were displayed here at the beginning of the ceremony.

Aspirations of the University College

Our plans for the Kenya Polytechnic University College are well captured in the recently completed strategic plan. We are committed to produce graduates who will actively participate in the technological transformation in our country. For rapid result, we believe that Kenya Polytechnic University College

should train a large population of students. We target to have a student population of 21,000 by the year 2015. To retain the students, we will not only put them in the hands of the very highly trained teaching staff but also provide them with quality service that invites customers to return for more services. Today we have concluded development of our service charter which I believe you have seen posted in strategic locations. The service indicators are particularly aligned to our dream of being a top rated university of technology. To our public customers, we have created avenues for you to communicate directly with us and help us improve our service provision. Your communication with us is very important as through it we will better understand where we have not done well and make improvements. In partnership with you the public, Kenya Polytechnic University College's aspiration of becoming a world class university of technology should be a reality soon.

Challenges

Mr. Chancellor Sir, in any institution there will always be challenges. Our challenges at the Kenya Polytechnic University College are numerous but surmountable. Our recruitment drive has been relatively successful but we believe we could improve our success rate if the work environment was better than it is now. Most of our lecturers work from small common rooms where we cannot install enough facilities for them. Our classrooms are overcrowded and the lecture hours are extended beyond the normal working hours. The rate at which we are admitting degree students is too high for the available teaching spaces. Our computing facilities are far inadequate for the registered student population. We have no accommodation facilities for our students which make it very difficult for students coming to Nairobi for the first time to adjust. Worse still, we are the only University College in Kenya without sports facilities. Indeed it is evident that Kenya Polytechnic University College should aggressively expand its infrastructure.

Our efforts are however dampened by lack of physical space for expansion and inadequate resources mobilization. The institution covers an area of 31.461 acres. This is less than 50% of the ideal space acceptable to the Commission of Higher Education. Unfortunately this space is also fragmented all over the City of Nairobi making expansion decisions challenging. We have on the other hand been lucky to secure government support in some areas of development. Governments' allocations alone may not be adequate. Through you Mr. Chancellor Sir, we seek special intervention for increased support by the government and our good development partners. I believe that when our stakeholders and the government come together to chart a common course in support of the Kenya Polytechnic University

College, we shall be able to mobilize adequate resources for our expansions and modernization of our facilities.

Thank You to the Government

Mr. Chancellor Sir!

The Kenya Polytechnic University College has received great support from the Kenya Government that I would like to highlight. In the current fiscal year the government has accepted to finance construction of two tuition blocks in addition to expansion of a teaching site in Mandera. The government has also approved modernization of our Mechanical Engineering Workshops. These workshops will be installed with the state-of-the-art manufacturing machines that are computerized. These training facilities will be the only ones of their kind in this region. We have also been favoured by yet another government project that will result in installation of equipment in our science laboratories. These are the development that the Kenya Polytechnic University College requires to succeed in educating and training innovative students who should transform technological development in Kenya.

Through you Mr. Chancellor Sir, May I send our thank you to the government for the support we have received. It is very encouraging and we believe we shall continue to receive such support.

Graduands

To our graduands, we worked together in molding you to be the best educated and trained personnel in the respective industries you will be serving in. You have the capacity and the skills that should make you serve this nation well. I am convinced you will be our good ambassadors in the industry. You are at the very beginning of your knowledge accumulation. There is a lot of room for you to expand your knowledge. I look forward to receiving some of you back in our classrooms for more advanced learning. I wish you well in the industry.

Thank You.