



UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

Office of the Vice Chancellor

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WELCOME SPEECH BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR, PROF. S. G. KIAMA TO FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS (ACADEMIC YEAR 2022/2023), SEPTEMBER 22ND, 2022 AT TAIFA HALL, UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

To all Freshmen and Women!

It gives me great delight to receive you at this prestigious institution, the University of Nairobi. Your admission into this Institution is not a mean achievement. You are the best. Your life will change for good.

All undertakings at this University are guided by our Philosophy. A philosophy is a theory or attitude that acts as a guiding principle for behavior. So, what is our Philosophy?



ISO
9001:2015
CERTIFIED

Quality Management System Excellence in University Education and Training

Our philosophy is ***“the need to connect to and inspire the Kenyan community, to provide leadership and stewardship, and to give hope and faith to the Kenyan society that it can excel in whatever it chooses to do with passion, moral responsibility, and a strong sense of patriotism”.***

This in many cases becomes the guiding philosophy of all those who graduate from here and hope it will be for you too. The need to connect with the Kenyan Community; the need to Inspire the Kenya Community; the need to provide leadership and stewardship to the Kenyan society; the need to give hope and faith to the Kenyan Society. Simply put, we prepare you for service and not to be served. This University is about service to mankind. Our founding President and the First Chancellor, the late President Jomo Kenya said this about this Institution--

“My government and I wish to emphasize in this way, that here is an Institution of the highest importance, integrating into the life of the republic”

***“If the mind of the Nation is to flower through this University, the professors and lecturers must be free to teach their subjects while students and research workers must feel free to pursue the truth and publish their findings”
(President Jomo Kenyatta, 1970)***

Two years ago, this University celebrated 50 years since President Jomo Kenyatta pronounced these words. The University has lived true to its mandate. Consequently, we have contributed immensely to the social and economic transformation of this country. The country is better because we are. The University of Nairobi has a desire to make the country and the world better and for our contribution to be clearly visible. We labor every day in Unity to fulfill this desire. This can only be possible through equipping students with skills and knowledge to subdue the earth. Our own existence is threatened if we cannot tame the earth, contain diseases, adapt or mitigate against climate change and eradicate diseases to name but a few challenges.

“To equip the students with skills and knowledge to subdue/conquer the earth is the reason for our existence”. Our graduates are at the forefront to provide solutions to food security, combating diseases, containing locust invasions, providing sustainable housing, in dealing with problems of climate change among others.

Our alumni have been entrusted with leadership positions in this country and globally. The current president of the Republic of Kenya, H.E. William Samoei Ruto is our alumni. He studied here for his bachelor's, master's, and doctorate degrees. The current deputy president, the current Speakers of Parliament that is the National Assembly and Senate as well as the President and all the judges of the supreme court are from this University. This is a clear endorsement of our training. We produce problem solvers. Those who are ready to subdue the earth. How do we do this? We have a human resource that is well trained. The Professors, the technical staff, the administrators, and the support staff who work as a team. The University is designed into 12 campuses that offer diverse environments.

The academic programs are clustered into 10 faculties headed by a Dean. The environment and support services provided are very conducive to skills, knowledge development, discovery, and mentorship.

For the 4, 5, or six years you will spend at the University of Nairobi, we shall provide you with the knowledge that will help you to critically analyze the world you live in and impart you with skills that will help to change it to a better alternative- where people are happier. We shall begin by bringing out the past, and then walk you through the present. However, before you become too comfortable with the present, we shall lead you to a pathway to the future-the unbeaten path - a path of discovery. A future that shall be shaped by your contributions, and your interventions. You will be enabled to envision a better future and to develop skills to look for solutions to current problems.

To equip our students better for discovery, the Senate is committed to soon rolling out a new common course on innovation and entrepreneurship.

This will assist students to develop their innovations- new ideas that lead to business opportunities. I am often shocked whenever I read this sign—'**USIKOJOE HAPA**'. This is often written on a wall where passers-byes, particularly men urinate. There is always a trodden path leading to that wall. At this University we aim at developing young men and women who provide solutions. To need not be told- USIKOJOE HAPA. Men and women who create alternative pathways and better ones.

Majority of you are joining the University of Nairobi at 18 years old or thereabout. You will leave at about 22-, 23- or 24-year-old. We recognize that this is a critical period of your personal development. The University appreciates the role it must play in impacting you with critical life skills to succeed. Consequently, we have deliberately put in place various structures for mentorship. These includes: the dean of students and career office, sports and games department, the chaplaincy, the student counselors, professional clubs, the student's leadership council, religious groups, class groups, work-study programs, chairmen of

departments, and deans of faculties. In addition, the programs of study you will be undertaking provide attachments and experiential learning opportunities to allow you snippets of the outside world. Altogether, we are alive to the fact that you require several skills to conquer the earth: critical thinking skills, writing skills, public speaking skills, teamwork or collaborative skills, skill for creativity, IT skills, and leadership skills. We shall provide opportunities to develop and nurture these skills.

As a university student, you will be required to make crucial personal decisions concerning your studies and other issues in life. These decisions will impact prospects in the field of work. What kind of friends you keep and what value they will add in your life! Which extra-curricular activities you want to pursue and why? Some of you will be lucky to meet their spouses during your studies. Some of you will develop business plans before they leave. Ensure you build good networks while you are here. However, as you do so make your academic pursuits a priority in your decisions and everything else will fall into place.

The University will accord you the necessary support to ensure that you complete your studies successfully and on time.

Make it your business to expand your curriculum vitae. You came with a curriculum vitae with two entries-KCPE and KCSE results. Expand this by engaging in several other life-changing activities. Otherwise, you may end up with only one entry after 4 years, the bachelor's degree. We admit the best students from the region. It is no surprise that our students excel in their academic and research activities. Graduates of the University of Nairobi rank highest when it comes to employer preferences in the country. Take advantage of your stay here and tap into the vast knowledge of our brilliant lecturers and Alumni who are ready to teach and mentor you.

You will get opportunities to interact with many alumni and learn from them through our student mentorship programs under the Dean of Students' Office. You will also have access to an enormous collection of reading materials that are available online.

Those who wish to use the physical libraries are welcome to visit the Jomo Kenyatta Memorial Library at the main campus, The Mahatma Gandhi postgraduate library, and the campus-based libraries.

The University has clear guidelines on all issues pertaining to the academic conduct of students. I believe your deans and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor; Academic Affairs have already provided you with all the information you require on this. We expect you to attend all your lectures as programmed. Submit your assignments on time. Prepare and sit all your exams. Avoid academic malpractices! The University is devoted to the value of academic integrity. There are basics to be fulfilled to earn a degree from the University of Nairobi, kindly acquaint yourselves with these basics and comply with all academic procedures and processes. The dean of your faculty is available to give you guidance on the registration of courses.

Become a brand ambassador of your university. The University of Nairobi is the home of talents.

One of the world's fastest men, Ferdinand Omanyala is our student. Our teams continue to excel in music, sports, moot competition, and in hackathons. All these values add to the University community through the excellent performance. Let's aim at adding value to others through excellence.

FINALLY,

I wish you a fruitful stay at the University of Nairobi. It is a nice place to be. We shall continue to meet in other activities across the University.

May God bless you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and strokes, likely belonging to Prof. S.G. Kiama.

PROF. S.G. KIAMA, PhD
VICE CHANCELLOR