



## **SOUTH EASTERN KENYA UNIVERSITY**

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### **SPEECH BY PROF. GEOFFREY M. MULUVI, PHD, VICE-CHANCELLOR, SOUTH EASTERN KENYA UNIVERSITY ON THE OCCASION OF THE MATRICULATION OF FIRST YEAR STUDENTS ON WEDNESDAY, 30<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2017 AT THE GRADUATION SQUARE**

Deputy Vice-Chancellors,

Registrars,

Deans,

Directors,

Chairs of Department,

Teaching and administrative staff,

Members of the Students' Governing Council,

Freshmen and women

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to welcome you all to this year's matriculation ceremony. On behalf of the Council, the Senate, Management, Staff and continuing students of South Eastern Kenya University, I congratulate this year's freshmen and women, who have been admitted to various programmes at SEKU. I would like you to know that you have come to a world-class university. SEKU is a great university. It is now ranked position eight in Kenya among both public and private universities.

This is an important step in your academic life which give you reason to rejoice. It is my hope that you will build onto this success to achieve even greater things in your pursuit of academic excellence. This ceremony ushers you into a new and unique life experience as students of this great University. It gives you the sense of identity as a full member of South Eastern Kenya University, a membership which, if well executed, they will forever hold and cherish.

Today, through the administration of the Matriculation Oath, you are enjoined to the Charter and Statutes of the University and all other policies and regulations that govern it. In taking the Oath, you have committed yourselves to be an integral part of the SEKU community, with its culture, values and practices.

Our dear new students. As you officially start this leg of your academic journey today, you will find great opportunities, experiences and challenges that will last you a lifetime. They will define your university experience and set you on the path to personal development. Specific things will be fundamental in determining your success or otherwise. These are your senses of responsibility, discipline and integrity, to mention a few.

A university setting accords you tremendous freedom as student. But this freedom comes with responsibility. Please bear in mind that you have a duty to acquire and apply education for the good of society. I urge you, young scholars, to strive for excellence and emulate the icons that have come before you. By taking inspiration from those who have gone ahead of you, you will be building a firm foundation to inspire those to come after you. This should be your foremost goal; for life is a relay.

However, you will need discipline to achieve the desired excellence. We live in a civilised society and civility must reflect in all our actions. Uphold decorum and respect in the way you deal with your fellow students, the staff and the outside community. Remember that your conduct tells a story about SEKU. Individually and collectively, you carry with you the culture and ethos of SEKU, as espoused in the rules, regulations and procedures. Internalize these instruments, as they will be your guide as you navigate the exciting life of a student.

Our dear students, a university set up accords you a lot of freedom. But the most important freedom is the freedom to think on your own. It is incumbent upon you to think and behave constructively and logically. It is not freedom to do whatever you want. It is freedom to do the right thing. I wish to warn you of the several vices that accompany this freedom. They include alcoholism, drug abuse and irresponsible sexual behaviour. Apart from interfering with your academic work, these vices will expose you to the risk of HIV/AIDS. The University has vibrant drugs and substance abuse and HIV/AIDS control units help students on how to deal with these issues. Seek help where you think you are not moving in the right direction.

Dear students as you settle down, you will identify some values and ethos that the University hold dear. Key among these is integrity. We do not only seek to achieve academic excellence but also the moral uprightness of our students. We believe that such holistic approach in our training will set us and our products apart from the rest. We have over the years built a reputation of high academic standards and we shall remain steadfast in this.

For the sake of utmost clarity, I would like all of you to remember this: that there are three offences which are unpardonable in this University. They are: Cheating in examinations, theft, and fighting or terrorizing other students

The biggest sin you can commit in this University is to cheat in examinations. I urge you not bring shame to yourself and your family by engaging in this vice. Here at SEKU, we believe that it is far better to fail honourably and repeat a course than to attempt to pass fraudulently and be disgraced out of the University. I need to mention to you that every semester, a number of students are expelled because of exam cheating. We are working to install CCTV cameras in the lecture rooms to completely eliminate cheating. But even before this is done, I can assure you that you will not steal and escape.

There are several other acts that constitute unpardonable misconducts. Theft in the hostels or anywhere else within the University is prohibited. Also prohibited is cooking in the hostels. While the University has tried its best to accommodate all of you in the hostels, this does not bar any student who feel that they would like to stay outside, where they can cook in their rooms, to do so. Use the lecturer rooms and other learning facilities prudently. Keep them clean. For whatever reason, do not take chairs out of lecture rooms. We have put benches under tree shades for students who wish to study outside. The rest of studying must be inside the lecture rooms.

As you begin your studies, you are assured of a friendly academic environment where both teaching and non-teaching staff are dedicated to preparing you for your success. The University has been working to achieve its mandate through a series of innovative and transformational processes in teaching and learning with a view to turning out graduates with unquestionable output.

As a global institution, our University has been working to build partnerships. We are aware that in this knowledge age, knowledge generation is not confined to the universities but extends to the industry and other organisations. Over time, we have established linkages and partnered with several institutions to share ideas and provide platform for student and staff exchange as well as provide practical training grounds for our students for the benefit of industry and the University. You are the intended primary beneficiaries of these partnerships.

SEKU is a vibrant community with a number of curricula and extra curricula activities such as sports, clubs and societies. I urge you to focus on how to spend your time constructively within these societies.

We are proud that we have made major strides in the areas of infrastructure and learning facilities within the relatively short period of the University's existence. We have invested in science equipment, academic buildings, including lecture rooms,

laboratories and offices, roads, ICT, and the library. Our laboratories and library are well equipped and I urge you to use them fully. The University is also installing fiber optic cable from Kwa-Vonza to boost our internet capacity.

However, while SEKU is steadily rising to claim its position as world class centre of excellence in education, research and innovation, we have challenges in various areas. But we believe in solving our problems through dialogue and consultation. We have a vibrant student representation system through which we deal with all the challenges as one united SEKU Family.

I am happy to report that the tarmacking of the SEKU-KwaVonza road has begun in earnest. This will offer a permanent solution to the current transport problem experienced by both staff and student. I urge all of you to remain patient as we await the completion of this important project.

I wish to inform you that because of the current dry spell the University is experiencing an acute water shortage which is likely to inconvenience you during your stay. I would like to appeal to the student community to bear with us as we do everything possible to mitigate this situation. I urge you to use the little available water well.

As I conclude, I would like to assure you that life in the University can be very exciting both intellectually and socially. All of us are here to offer assistance if required. Do make time to engage with your lecturers and make the best out of them.

On behalf of the entire SEKU community, I wish you a happy and fruitful stay here.

Thank you.