

Vice-Chancellor's matriculation ceremony speech held on 26th August 2015 at SEKU Main Campus

The Deputy Vice Chancellors
Registrars
Deans/Directors
Chairman of departments
Students
Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Morning.

On behalf of the University Council, Senate, Management Board, staff and on my own behalf, I am pleased to welcome you all to South Eastern Kenya University. It is indeed a great honour to have you as the 7th Government Sponsored intake of undergraduate students of South Eastern Kenya University.

Matriculation ceremonies are undertaken in all Universities the world over. It is during the matriculation ceremony that you formally acquire studentship status of the University by taking the "matriculation oath" like the one that you have taken today and after signing the nominal roll.

We note that that your long journey through Primary and Secondary education has ended, and another important journey of being a University Student has just begun for you. You have now joined a community of scholars, gaining the envious status of student in an institution of higher learning.

I therefore take this opportunity to congratulate all of you for being able to gain admission to South Eastern Kenya University from thousands of aspiring High School candidates.

You have every right to feel proud to be students of this institution. It is my strong believe that you will learn, nurture and develop knowledge and skills that will propel you forward in the challenging world of the 21st century. We have a strong team of professors and lecturers to ensure you fulfill your dream.

I am well aware that you are currently being oriented to the systems and running of the Institution. I believe you will take the opportunity to familiarize yourselves with the institution and also get to know your lecturers and fellow students.

I would wish to give a brief overview of SEKU, your home for the next four years. SEKU started in the 1970s as Ukamba Agricultural Institute (UKAI). The Ukamba Agricultural Institute was elevated to the status of a University College in July 2008, as a constituent College of the University of Nairobi and given the name South Eastern University College (SEUCO). SEUCO was elevated to a fully-fledged University by his Excellency Former President Mwai Kibaki on 1st March 2013 to become South Eastern Kenya University (SEKU). You are therefore the third group of students to be admitted by SEKU after being elevated to a fully-fledged University.

This Main Campus lies on a 10,000 acres piece of land. The University has other campuses at Kitui Town, Machakos Town, Wote Town, Mtito Andei and Nairobi. Currently the University has over 7,000 students registered for various degree programmes, diploma and certificates. Out of this number, 82 are PhD students, 580 are masters' students and 6,540 are undergraduate students.

The University is governed by the University Council and guided by the University Act No. 42 of 2012, the charter and the statutes. The University is headed by the Vice-Chancellor who is assisted by three DVCs and three registrars and a Finance officer. That group constitutes the University Management and deals with the day to day running of the University. There is also a University Senate which consists of members of the University Management Board, Deans, Directors, Chairmen of Departments and Full Professors. The Senate is in charge of all academic matters in the University. We do have School and departmental Boards which deal with issues at the School level.

There are various Diploma, Bachelors degree, Masters and PhD programmes being offered under the 10 Schools at the University. Each School is headed by a Dean. Get to know your Deans and Chairmen of departments well as they will play a key role in your studies during your stay at the Institution.

At SEKU, we have well trained academic staff and they are, therefore, well qualified to tutor and mentor you. You are all about to embark on a unique life experience, one that you will refer back to at all periods in your life.

One of the many things that you should look forward to over the next four years is establishing lasting friendships both with your lecturers and fellow classmates. You will encounter other students who are quite different from you. Get to know them. We learn from our differences. From your records, it is clear that you have all come from diverse geographical and ethnic backgrounds. Together therefore, we all represent the diverse and universal nature of the University where the main goal is pursuit of knowledge. Diversity is not about how we differ but about appreciating and embracing each other's uniqueness and enriching ourselves with other's tremendous body of knowledge and experiences.

Kindly appreciate early enough the fact that your future is in your hands and that it is really up to you to succeed in making it or failing to realize your dreams. Students who do not have a vision and a dream of what they want to achieve, are like boats without sails in turbulent waters. While concentrating on your studies and pursuing your dream, make excellent use of all the extra-curricular opportunities offered to you by the University. Some of the valuable lessons you will learn from this Institution will occur outside the classroom. You will soon encounter numerous opportunities to get involved in, in this community. Some of you will spend a considerable amount of time participating either in the University sports teams, volunteering in the community, and the church choir, drama and dance, among other activities. Each of these activities represents important learning opportunities to acquire life skills that will add to the quality of your lives.

As an adult, you must weigh the consequences of your individual and collective actions. What you do individually or collectively will affect your future. As you enroll in SEKU, you have done so as an individual and you are the only one who can protect your future. You should therefore never forget your individuality within the collective and do not let your individuality be swallowed up by the collective. Always think seriously about the consequences, to you as an individual, of collective decisions.

I wish to emphasize that SEKU takes examinations very seriously. Consequently, you are encouraged to carefully read all regulations regarding the conduct of examinations here at South Eastern Kenya University. You need to conduct yourselves properly during all the University examinations but most importantly, never cheat in examinations because cheating leads to discontinuation.

We expect you to keep off trouble. Avoid excessive drinking and undesirable behavior which is likely to land you into trouble. Many of your loved ones have sacrificed to ensure that you pursue university education. Honour their sacrifice by behaving responsibly and making the most of this opportunity. HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases are still prevalent. Ensure that you behave responsibly to avoid these self inflicted diseases.

Finally, our dear students, may I remind you that you need to stay focused on your goal to attain your degree in the shortest time possible. In order to do this, you must plan your time wisely and use all the opportunities and facilities provided effectively. Similarly, when you have concerns to raise, please make use of the laid down channels for doing so and avoid any form of behaviour that may ruin both your studies and your future.

You must have noticed that there is quite a number works going on in the Institution. The University is in the process of upgrading its infrastructure to the level of a World class Institution of Higher Learning. We have in the last few months improved our library significantly and more improvements in the library will continue as this is the cornerstone of the University. We have also invested heavily on security having fenced almost all the hostels, improved on the lighting system and advertised for CCTV cameras. We will soon advertise for installation of electronic gate access. We have also deployed a huge number of armed security officers. We are also working hard to expand accommodation for our students. A new hostel block is currently coming up and another one will be constructed next year. These facilities are aimed at making the students' stay at the University both comfortable and productive. I urge you to be part of this development as this goal cannot be realized without your contribution. The student body is one of the main components of an Institution. SEKU is incomplete without you.

May I once again thank you for choosing to study at South Eastern Kenya University and assure you of my willingness and readiness to assist you reach your goal of becoming an accomplished scholar. As the University Management, we will continue to improve the Institution's infrastructure and mainstream quality management systems in order to ensure you will get the best of your time as a student of SEKU.

We look forward to teaching and interacting with you during your stay at this Institution. Be proud of your institution as we are proud of you. Make a difference, leave a mark to emulate.

Always strive to do what is good. Make this institution a better and more peaceful place.

As you matriculate here today, I look forward to your graduation in four years from now.

Thank you.

Prof Geoffrey M. Muluvi,
Vice-Chancellor
SEKU