

**SPEECH BY PROF. DANIEL MUGENDI, PRINCIPAL EMBU UNIVERSITY COLLEGE TO FIRST YEAR STUDENTS ON THURSDAY, 11<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2014 AT 10.00 A.M. AT THE PRINCIPAL'S SQUARE**

- ✓ The Deputy Principal– ARE; PAF,
- ✓ Registrar
- ✓ University Management Board Members ,
- ✓ Members of the Academic Board,
- ✓ University Academic and Administrative staff,
- ✓ The Student leaders,
- ✓ And our new students,

**GOOD MORNING!**

On behalf of Embu University College family, I take this opportunity to welcome you, our new students, to the University.

I congratulate all of you for your brilliance. You are all very intelligent because out of the 446,696 candidates who sat for KCSE Examination in 2013 only 123,365 (27.46%) obtained the minimum university entry qualification of a C+ and above.

Data from the Kenya Universities and Colleges Central Placement Service (KUCCPS) indicates that only 56,937 students were selected to join public universities. This translates to 12.74%.

Therefore I would like to request you to clap for yourselves for making it to the top cream of Kenyan intellectuals and for having secured an admission at a prestigious institution of higher learning.

I also ask you to clap for your parents; guardians and sponsors!

Thank you

You will agree with me that without their support, you would not have reached where you are today. Continue respecting them and praying for them.

We are glad that you arrived safely – I am informed that we have received students from all parts of the country – North, South, East, West – this is

wonderful because it brings to the University a rich **diversity** of talents and ideas.

The concept of diversity encompasses acceptance and respect. It means understanding that each individual is unique, and recognizing our individual differences for societal prosperity.

**Diversity** is about understanding each other and moving beyond simple tolerance and irrational conflicts to embracing and celebrating our strengths. I am sure that the diversity you have brought to EUC will go a long way in creating a safe, positive, intellectually stimulating and nurturing environment for each one of us.

Over the next few years, you will also get to know many fellow students whose background, culture or beliefs are different from yours. You may find your values and beliefs being challenged. I hope that you will discover a new understanding and appreciation of diversity in society and develop your skills in interacting with other people especially because the world is increasingly becoming a global village.

Dear students,

I know some of you are not completely new to this area. The environment may be familiar to you; while some of you have come to a completely unfamiliar environment.

I hope you have already adapted to the environment; and you have made new friends and you know your way around here well. For those who haven't you need to settle down quickly.

You are the Third (3<sup>rd</sup>) group to join EUC since it opened its academic doors in 2012; the pioneer group of students is now in their third year and will be completing their programmes soon.

I wish them all the best and thank them and the student leaders for embracing discipline, hard work, integrity and perseverance despite the challenges that they may have faced along the way.

Dear first years;

In the coming days and weeks, you will begin your discovery and learning experience; the four or more years you will be here will be filled with opportunities for academic and social growth. This will be the best time in your life to learn great things and ask big questions. You may never again in

your life have the same amount of time to do certain things that you will be able to do here with the same amount of expert advice and concentration. Please take advantage of this time to benefit to the fullest.

On our part as Embu University, we will strive to provide you with a variety of possibilities for growth and learning. The University has indeed put in place the necessary facilities in order to facilitate your personal development and comfort and will continue improving on this.

In addition, the University has recruited the best members of staff who are dedicated to the realization of the University mission of providing quality education, research and service to humanity and are eager to impart specialized knowledge; as well as equip you with the necessary skills and technical know-how to help you lead a fruitful life both in and out of campus.

Apart from the outstanding education you will receive at Embu University College, I can tell you from experience that, it is the memories of the student experience that will stay with you the longest and even for the rest of your life.

This experience will impact heavily on your life because you will enjoy the fruits your good judgments if you made good choices.

You will also find yourself regretting dearly because of the consequences of your bad choices or mistakes.

Please take care so that you won't have to regret!

One Professor of Education at Harvard University – Prof. John Gardener - has offered us some insights into the minds of the people who he says, will lead us into the future – he calls them “The minds of the future”.

Let me summarize them for you:

1. The **disciplinary mind** – this is the mind that most of you already possess – self – disciplined, controlled and with an ambition for mastery of major skills in life (including talent and intellectual growth).
2. The **Synthesizing mind** – the ability to embrace diversity and integrate ideas from different disciplines or spheres into a coherent whole and to communicate to others.

3. The **Creative mind** – the capacity to innovate, uncover, generate new ideas and clarify new problems, questions, and phenomena. This is the mind that seeks to become an employer rather than an employee.
4. The **Respectful mind** – this is the mind that has awareness of and appreciates other human beings and their contribution. Shuns pride and respects nature and God’s creation.
5. The **Ethical mind** – this is the mind of the responsible person, who knows what is right and wrong and performs his duties well as a citizen.

If you cultivate this kind of mind-set, then you are on your way to becoming a great leader. It is just a matter of time!!

Dear students;

Here now are a **few** things that you need to observe to make your dream of completing your University education a reality;

1. **Good conduct** – there is a code of conduct set in the Students Handbook and circulated to all students, remember there are repercussions for misconduct; Stay clear of all **immorality, vices** and all manner of **bad behavior**; you are subject to the laws of the land – take care you don’t find yourself on the wrong side of the law.
2. **Good rest**; ensure you get enough rest despite your busy schedule; **Sleep** well – do not **strain** yourself, prepare in advance; be a good planner; manage your time well; there is time for everything;
3. **Good health** – eat well; ensure you get a balanced **diet**; keep warm – do not stay out in the rain, wind and cold unnecessarily; avoid anything that can interfere with your physical and mental wellbeing; avoid deliberate situations that may lead you to sickness thus interfering with your studies. **Avoid alcohol, drugs** and other **substances** that may be harmful to your health and which also can make you lose focus on your studies and lead to your failure.
4. **Confidence**; don’t be stressed, fooled or cowed by people or life; walk tall despite all the challenges of life; after-all, as I said you are the best, because you have made it where few make it.

5. **Friends**; Make friends; socialize; meet new people; but choose your friends wisely – A true friend is one who knows you, understands you, accepts who you are, shares in your dreams and still, **allows you to grow**. Keep peer pressure and bad company out of your life in campus.
6. **Control your desires (TAMAA)** ; especially sexual emotions – this may result in you contracting undesired diseases like HIV/AIDS, heartbreak, unplanned pregnancies which may lead you to lose of focus, interfere with your studies, bring disappointment as well regret: As I said earlier **there is time for everything!**
7. Always observe Examination Regulations while you are studying at the University
  - ✓ Attend all your **lectures** on time and without fail
  - ✓ Do your **assignments** promptly and submit them to your lecturers on time
  - ✓ Check the examinations timetable twice; confirm the **venue** and the **time** of your exam again and again – misreading of the timetable or oversleeping are not acceptable as a reasons for missing an exam
  - ✓ Avoid the temptation to **cheat in the examinations** because the consequences of being found guilty of examinations irregularity are severe. This may be the surest way to terminate your studies prematurely. **DON'T TRY IT!**
8. Lastly, Keep your **faith in God** while you are in the University, do not turn away from your spiritual life just because you have come to University; trust in God to take you places that you may have never dreamt of before.

With those few remarks, I know University life is a busy one and there is a lot of work to be done, people to see and places to be, but remember to take time for yourself and take care of yourself.

I now wish to conclude with this Irish poem titled;

**Take Time;**

Take time to work,  
It is the price of success.  
Take time to think,  
It is the source of power.  
Take time to play,  
It is the secret of perpetual youth.  
Take time to read,  
It is the foundation of wisdom.  
Take time to be friendly,  
It is the road to happiness.  
Take time to love and be loved,  
It is the privilege of the creator.  
Take time to share,  
Life is too short to be selfish.  
Take time to laugh,  
Laughter is the music of the soul.

It is now my great pleasure to welcome you all to the University and to begin your lifelong association with Embu University. I hope to meet and interact with many of you in the course of your studies in this University.

Thank you and May God bless you all

Prof. Daniel Mugendi, Ph.D  
Principal, Embu University College