

SPEECH BY PROF. DANIEL MUGENDI, PRINCIPAL EMBU UNIVERSITY COLLEGE TO FIRST YEAR STUDENTS ON THURSDAY, 3rd SEPTEMBER 2015 AT 10.00 A.M.

- ✓ The Deputy Principals,
- ✓ Members University Management,
- ✓ Members of the Academic Board,
- ✓ University Academic and Administrative staff,
- ✓ The Student leaders,
- ✓ Our beloved First Year Students,

GOOD MORNING!

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

I congratulate all of you for your good performance in the KCSE examinations. You are indeed among the most intelligent students in this Country.

I say this because out of the 483, 630 candidates who sat last year's KCSE examinations, only 149,717 scored the minimum University entry grade of C+. This represents 30% of all the candidates.

Of these, only 67,790 candidates were selected to join the 31 public universities compared with 57,250 during the 2013 intake. This is an increase of about 10, 500 students from last year's placement. This means that you are among the 14% of the best 2014 KCSE candidates who made it to the top.

Therefore, you now join the top cream of the country's intellectuals; you will be entitled to the best of the best in society; some of you will be great leaders in the fields of business, government, NGO sector, manufacturing, academic, agriculture just to name but a few.

Please clap for yourselves for this achievement.

Also 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 in Embu 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 differences for societal prosperity.

Diversity is about understanding each other and moving beyond simple tolerance and unnecessary 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 and intellectually stimulating 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,

You are now the Fourth (4th) group of students to join EUC since it opened its doors in 2012; the pioneer group of students is now in their fourth year and will be completing their programmes and graduating soon.

We wish our final year students all the best and thank them for embracing discipline, hard work, integrity and perseverance despite the challenges that they may have faced along the way.

Also, I take this opportunity to wish our students leaders as well as our continuing students, **who are reporting today**, an academically fulfilling time during this 1st Semester 2015/2016 Academic Year.

In the coming days and weeks, you will begin the journey of discovery and learning at the University level; 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 a concentration of great minds at your disposal. 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 personal and intellectual growth. The University has indeed put in place the necessary facilities and human resources in order to facilitate your comfort and we will continue improving on this.

In addition, the University has recruited qualified, experienced and highly competent 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 that you will receive at Embu University College, I can tell you with confidence that, it is the memories of your student experience that will stay with you the longest and probably influence the rest of your life.

This experience will impact heavily on your life because you will enjoy the fruits your good judgments if you make good choices while in campus. On the other hand; you may also find yourself regretting dearly because of the consequences of your bad choices or mistakes while at the University.

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

I know some of you are not completely new to Embu. 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 that you have made new friends and you know your way around here as well. For those who haven't, you need to settle down quickly.

Ladies and gentlemen;

Allow me to mention a few tips that will help you our first year students to settle down with ease so that you can begin your academic life.

Change: Adapting to change is key to successfully integrating into your new environment. This will involve almost all aspects of your life and may initially confuse or surprise you.

Some of the things that you should be prepared to change include:

- 1. You:** Remember that higher education is for your benefit. Being in the university provides you with great opportunities to expand knowledge and intellectual growth, learn different subjects and be exposed to various points of view. Take full advantage of it. Use this time to better yourself academically, personally and professionally. Embrace change if it is for your benefit. This does not mean you should change completely, but understand what is best for you as you strive towards academic success.
- 2. Independence:** Living on your own has a lot of responsibilities that come with it. This is one of the many transitions into adulthood and it is also an opportunity to prove that you can thrive even when left to fend for yourself. This is the right time to rely less on your family.
- 3. Home:** You will have to think seriously and figure out how often you will be communicating with your family and friends at home once you get into the full swing University life and the academic routine. Change here is inevitable; you must strike a balance if you have to succeed. We do not want students who are spending every free time they have rushing home and not getting enough time to do your assignments.
- 4. Time:** You will soon come to realize that your academic work at the University will require a lot more of your time than you did at school. Changing how you spend your hours of the day and taking the time to actually organize your life properly will not only involve keeping track of your academic work, assignments, CATS and exams, but also your personal life. You have to find the balance that will work for you in your academic and social life.
- 5. Studying:** Be open to changing your study habits. This will most likely involve figuring out; with the help of your academic advisors, how you study best or where you study best for example, in the Library, in your room, in the open grounds or whatever environment that suits you. I encourage you to adopt the best ways that you will find most beneficial to you.
- 6. Asking for Help:** You may or may not have asked for much assistance in your life, but Embu University is the place where help can be found easily and quickly. Please don't be afraid to seek assistance from your professors, Dean of students, University

administrators, academic advisers and your peers. You could even walk into my office or any of my deputies and we will be glad to assist you. Asking for help when in need and before it is too late is of paramount importance in the life of a student.

TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR LIFE

- 7. Individual Effort:** The gains that you will get from your studies at the University will largely depend on your individual effort and involvement. The time and energy that you will devote to your studies and other educationally purposeful activities, will positively influence your grades and your final results. In other words, the key to your academic success is your own effort and engagement.
- 8. Health:** Take care of yourself. Watch your health and stay healthy through proper eating, exercise and good sleeping patterns. These three can easily be overlooked in the bustling lifestyle of your new University life, but it will be to your detriment if you do not keep track of them and ensure that you get enough of each.

It is easy to stay up the whole night on the eve of an examination studying, but it will be harder for you to keep awake and function on the morning of the exam. Take care of your own health. Do not expose yourself to danger unnecessarily. Do not **strain** yourself, prepare in advance; be a good planner; manage your time well; there is time for everything.

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.

Learn to balance your private, social and academic life. If you become ill or feel overwhelmed contact the Student Health Unit or the University Counseling service.

- 9. 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.

Take advantage of all our support services, participate in co-curricular activities and interact with faculty members, new friends and fellow students on a meaningful level.

10. 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.

11. 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.

12. Control your desires; eg quick riches, peoples properties like laptops, phones etc. This may lead you to be tempted to steal. Work for your own success. Remember, there is time for everything!

13. Control your sexual emotions – If you don't, 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 and bring disappointment as well as regret:

14. Obey 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 is **EXPULSION**. This may be the surest way to terminate your studies prematurely. **PLEASE DON'T TRY IT!**

15.Lastly, Keep your faith and remember to seek guidance, wisdom and protection from **God**.

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.

It is now my great pleasure to welcome you all to the University 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