



EMBU UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

SPEECH

BY

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PRINCIPAL

EMBU UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

1<sup>ST</sup> GRADUATION CEREMONY

EMBU UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

FRIDAY 30<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER, 2016

- The Chancellor, University of Nairobi, Dr. Vijoo Rattansi
- Chair of University of Nairobi Council, Dr. Idle Farah Omar,
- Vice-Chancellor, University of Nairobi, Prof. Peter Mbithi
- Chair of Embu University College Council, - Dr. Margaret Gikuhi
- Chancellors from Sister Universities
- Vice-Chancellors and Principals of Universities and University Colleges
- Members of University Councils,
- Members of Universities Management Boards and Senates
- Embu University College Staff and students
- Invited guests,
- Graduands and their families and friends
- Colleagues, Members of Staff and students;
- Ladies and Gentlemen.

**A very good morning to you all.**

It gives me great pleasure to warmly welcome you all to Embu University College, a constituent College of the University of Nairobi.

Today's Ceremony is the first ceremony of its kind since the establishment of this University College in 2012.

The graduation is the most significant and meaningful occasion for our graduands as well as the University's calendar, and for this reason I would like to especially welcome our Chancellor, Madam, Dr. Vijoo Rattansi to this big occasion. I also extend a very special welcome to our guests from our Mother University led by the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Nairobi, Prof. Peter Mbithi. We are indeed honoured to have you all here today.

Allow me also to warmly welcome back our graduands, their parents, family members and friends to Embu University College; it is because of you that we are gathered here today. On behalf of the entire University Community I would like to express our deep gratitude to you all for gracing this occasion.

Let me also thank my colleagues and all members of staff from Embu University College and the University of Nairobi for finding time to join in these celebrations.

**Madam Chancellor,**

Please allow me to begin my address by announcing that today, we have 123 students graduating with various certificates, diplomas and degrees broken down as follows;

- Bachelor's Degrees - 95

- Diplomas and Certificates - 25

I am also pleased that we have **1** PhD graduand and **2** Master of Science Graduands.

**To the graduands;** – Congratulations, you have done very well and we are very proud of you. You are our pioneer students and I am personally overjoyed to see you through your university academic journey. This has been my dream since I joined this University College as the Principal.

I can confidently announce to the gathering today that the students graduating today have been indeed a great blessing to this University College.

They have worked extremely hard sometimes under difficult circumstances as well as other challenges and teething problems associated with a new University.

**Madam Chancellor,**

The graduands in front of you have upheld high standards of discipline and strict commitment to their academic work during the last four academic years. I have no doubt in my mind that they meet the standards of our great mentor, who is none other than the great University of Nairobi.

Ladies and gentlemen, as the saying goes “*The Sea of knowledge knows no boundaries.*”

This phrase reminds me that learning does not begin or end with a university education.

All of us here today are swimmers in the sea of knowledge, we are moving on a continuous journey of learning, there are no borders or boundaries, whether at home or at work, whether in employment or in business, whether we are graduating today or are here to support our graduands, we are all in the journey of searching for knowledge to improve our lives and make a contribution to society.

**Dear graduands,**

I know that some of you may be leaving the University to pursue various interests in life while some of you may want to continue with higher level studies. Whatever choice you take, may I take this opportunity to welcome you back to Embu University College for higher education including Postgraduate degrees. Those of you who will chose to return we will be glad to have you back in the University so that we can continue building this young institution.

May I also take this opportunity to remind you of the important role that you could play as pioneer students and alumni.

First, you can become good ambassadors of the University and be role models in your respective counties and most importantly live and promote a sense of high integrity and moral values.

Second, one of the most important themes that the University has been keen on since inception is promoting the University's

transformation for excellence. I challenge you to apply this principle throughout your lives.

Third, be grateful to your families, your sponsors – Government and communities, your lecturers, and mentors – they have sacrificed a lot to get you to where you are today – they deserve a “big thank you”. As you celebrate today, be grateful for all the support that you have received, and go out into the world a much better person, equipped with new knowledge and skills, willing to share and contribute to the betterment of your communities and our country Kenya.

## **Significant Achievements**

**Madam Chancellor,**

I would now like to briefly highlight a few of the University’s recent significant achievements and developments that we continue to be proud of

- In 2013/2014 Academic year, the University College admitted **123** students to pursue various academic programmes during its first intake and just 4 years down the line in 2016/2017 Academic Year, the student enrollment stands at **4,125**. This is a whopping 3,000% percent increase.

- Courtesy of the University of Nairobi, the Embu University Library has continued to offer unparalleled services to users in the University and in the Region. The Library is endowed with current and relevant reading materials for all levels of study. The resources include: over 20,000 volumes of print material and over 100,000 electronic resources from more than 15 licensed online sources.
- In a special way, I wish to thank Dr. Vijoo Rattansi, who is also our Chancellor, for gracing this occasion. Also, allow me to thank you, Madam Chancellor, and through you, the Rattansi Educational Trust for your continued support to Embu University College Library through provision of books and book grants. So far, The Rattansi Educational Trust has provided grants worth Kshs. 1.9 million to the Embu University College Library for purchase of books and other library materials. We thank you very sincerely and we look forward to even greater engagement with the Rattansi Educational Trust for the betterment of our Library and our Students' Welfare.
- This year we started a programme to assist selected secondary schools and tertiary institutions in Embu County to upgrade their libraries and offer modern library access innovations to students. The project has been very successful and we are receiving requests to extend the modernization programme to other schools in the County.

- During the 2015/2016 Academic Year, the University College received over Kshs. 12 million worth of research grants. In the last three years, the University College has established collaborations and partnerships with other organizations mainly for research activities. Our partners include; University of Toronto, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU), Indiana State University, Kirk House Trust, Seeding Labs, Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, Sasini Limited, Embu Level 5 Hospital, KUPPET, KNUT, among others.

### **Ladies and gentlemen**

- Embu University College has continued to take a leading role in the region in hosting various research conferences. For instance, during the month of July, Embu University College successfully hosted the *10th Decolonizing the Spirit Conference* held from 19th – 21st July, 2016. It was the first time this Conference was held in Africa. The Conference attracted participants from Kenya, Canada, United States of America, South Africa, Uganda, Tanzania and Ghana. I am happy to inform you that after this conference, our students and staff are much enlightened and we will continue to expose them to more international conferences to enrich their academic and research potential.

- Embu University College has continued to excel in Performance Contracting by recording major improvements on performance since its inception. During its first performance contracting evaluation in the Financial Year 2012/2013, we got a score of 2.6897 which is rated as **Very Good** while in the Financial Year 2014/2015 we attained a score of 1.9826 which is rated as **Excellent**. Embu University College remains the only University College in Kenya that has attained the **EXCELLENT** score in performance contracting and we intend to remain that way.
- Embu University College was certified to ISO 9001:2008 Standard on 2nd November, 2014 by Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS) and with this we became the first Constituent College in Kenya to get the ISO certification. We are currently in the process of transiting to ISO 9001:2015 so that we can make our institution an even better place for all our customers who include staff, students and all our stakeholders.
- Charter Award; in 2015 and early this year the Commission for University Education (CUE) completed the inspection exercise for Embu University College and recommended the award of Charter to make Embu University College a Full University. Soon the University College will attain a full-fledged University status.

- In the Universities Webometric Rankings, Embu University College has continued to show remarkable improvement in ranking which has seen us move from position 63 in January 2015 to 36 out of 140 learning institutions ranked in Kenya as at July 2016.

**Madam Chancellor,**

Although the infrastructure and facilities that we inherited from the former Embu Agricultural Training College are limited, we strive to offer the best experience to our students. As you drove to Embu University College, this morning you must have noted some buildings that are coming up along the road. The University College has renovated the inherited buildings and continues to develop new infrastructure as guided by the Physical Master Plan and the strategic plan (2014-2018). Some of the notable facilities currently under development include:

- An Administration Block
- A Modern Library Complex
- An Office Block and
- A Multipurpose Hall

## Appreciation

Madam Chancellor,

Our concerted efforts to build and maintain a premier national institution of higher learning at Embu University College and our drive towards excellence has received enormous goodwill and support from many quarters.

I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank our Mentor the University of Nairobi for their unwavering commitment to support us in all ways. I wish to acknowledge and recognize the support and encouragement that we received from the former Vice-Chancellor – Prof. George Magoha during our formative stages.

This morning I also want to thank our Vice-Chancellor – Prof. Peter Mbithi. Sir, you have been a pillar of inspiration to us; you have listened to us whenever we called for advice; you have given us full access to your office, access to the Senate, and access to Academic programmes of the University of Nairobi. Since we lack words to express our gratitude, we can only pray to the Almighty God to bless you abundantly.

I also want to thank the Government through the Ministry of Education Science and Technology, our development partners, and our friends for their continuous support. It is because of this support that we have continued to excel as a University College.

I must as well sincerely thank the County Leadership led by the Governor of Embu County, His Excellency Martin Wambora, the Senator, Hon. Lenny Kivuti, Elected Members of the National and County Assemblies for their support and willingness to participate in the development of the University College.

I also thank the University Council and its Committees, the UON Senate and the Management, the staff and students of Embu University College for supporting us in transforming Embu University College from good to excellent on its way to being a great University. Our staff have been working very hard and embracing a lot of changes and I wish to make special acknowledgement of this.

**Madam Chancellor,**

I wish to reassure you that the University College has strong built foundations to successfully implement its Strategic Plan which aims at transforming Embu University College into a formidable University that is deeply engaged and makes demonstrable contributions to the development of our country.

**A Final Word**

Madam Chancellor, ladies and gentlemen, I have a final word to the graduands – I congratulate you all and wish you the very best in your endeavors. Much is expected of you; I am very confident that each and every one of you will excel in your chosen paths. Be

excellent ambassadors of Embu University College and make us proud by your strong, innovative, ethical and excellent contributions.

**Madam Chancellor,**

With those remarks, I once again appreciate you for gracing our graduation today. I wish you a long life and many blessings so that you can continue guiding us in our efforts to transfer knowledge through teaching, Research and Service to humanity.

I wish you all a wonderful day as you celebrate the achievements of our students and thank you for listening to me.

**Thank You.**

**God Bless you.**