

**SPEECH BY PROF. PAUL MUSILI WAMBUA  
CHANCELLOR, UNIVERSITY OF EMBU, DURING THE 2<sup>nd</sup> CHANCELLOR'S  
STATE OF THE UNIVERSITY ADDRESS HELD ON 26<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2019**

- ✓ Invited Guests
- ✓ Chairman of Council, Dr. Margaret Gikuhi
- ✓ Members of Council,
- ✓ Chairman and Board of Trustees, University of Embu Endowment Fund
- ✓ Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Daniel Mugendi Njiru
- ✓ University Management Board,
- ✓ Members of the University Senate,
- ✓ Staff and students,
- ✓ Distinguished Guests,
- ✓ Ladies and Gentlemen

**Good Morning**

I thank God for enabling us all to gather here today for this important occasion in the University Calendar. We are indeed privileged to welcome our guests who have spared time in their busy schedules to join us as we review the state of our University. I also appreciate the members of the

University Council for coming. I recognize and appreciate the University Management, Senate and Staff for organizing this colourful event and for working hard to steer this University from success to greater heights.

In addition to this, I am honored that members of the newly elected Student Council and the entire student body have found time to participate in this important occasion even as they prepare for the end of the year examinations which I am told are due to start on Monday, next week.

I also acknowledge the presence of community partners in our midst and thank all our stakeholders for coming and for your willingness to walk the journey with the University of Embu.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

As I have stated on previous occasions, It is an honor for me to be the Chancellor of the University of Embu and I am truly grateful to all of you who have made my work enjoyable since my appointment.

This is my second 2<sup>nd</sup> State of the University Address following the inaugural address that I made in January 2018.

The purpose of this annual address really is to report on the work of our staff and students in the furtherance of the University's Mission and objectives.

I am proud to report that 2018/2019 marked yet another historic year in our short history as a chartered university. Because of the efforts of our Council, Management, Staff and Students, and the collective contribution of

our stakeholders and the community, the state of the University continued to improve for the better.

Let me highlight a few of the milestones that we recorded during the year 2018/2019. These achievements are true representations of the commitment and resolve of the University community to serve as well as work tirelessly for the prosperity of the Institution.

## **1. Academics**

The University of Embu academic portfolio has continued to grow since the establishment of the University; currently we have five Schools which house ten academic Departments offering a diversity of academic programmes.

The number of academic programmes has also increased to cater for the needs of our students and the market in general. Currently, the University offers 25 Ph.D. programmes, 27 Master's programmes, 34 Bachelor's degree programmes, 14 Diploma programmes and 7 Certificate programmes. The University continues to develop and review programmes designed to meet the ever changing market and industry needs. Plans are ongoing to establish more schools in the areas of Engineering, Law, Medicine and Hospitality.

In fact, the establishment of the School of Law is at an advanced stage and God willing, the first cohort of students may be joining the University by September, this year.

## - Accreditation of University of Embu Programmes

On the issue of accreditation, Last month – on 19<sup>th</sup> February, tensions ran high in Kenyan universities when the media carried headlines on ‘useless degrees’, predicting that approximately 10,000 students enrolled in various universities might be forced to discontinue their courses, and the academic papers for those who have already graduated may not be recognized. This elicited mixed reactions and anxiety from students, parents, employers, job seekers and other stakeholders.

University of Embu was listed as having 6 unapproved programmes. I would like to state the following facts on the University of Embu academic programmes.

- i) All programmes offered at the University of Embu are duly approved by the University Senate and accredited by CUE following the applicable regulations and procedures.
- ii) The six programmes that were referred to in the list published in the media as unapproved, were actually programmes that are still under development or review and are due for submission to CUE for accreditation. The programmes are yet to be launched.
- iii) The University Management is working closely with the Commission for University Education (CUE) to correct the anomaly in that report.
- iv) All the programmes currently offered at this University are clearly listed on the KUCCPS website after having gone through the due process of clearance by the Commission for University Education.

These programmes can also be accessed on the University of Embu Website.

I therefore call upon the students, parents, guardians and prospective students to ignore that information and seek clarification from the University in case of any doubt. There is no unapproved programme offered at the University of Embu.

In fact, it is just recently during the year 2017/2018 that the Commission for University Education conducted a Quality Audit for all universities in Kenya. The results indicated that the University of Embu was one of the few Universities in the Country that were fully complying with the CUE University Regulations and Quality Standards.

#### - Confidence In University of Embu Programmes

I believe that this is the best University to be for our students. The climate in Embu County is friendly and among the best that you can find anywhere in Kenya. The University is located in an excellent and serene environment that is conducive for teaching and learning. With a blend of perfect weather and a rich ecosystem, the University is blessed with plenty of clean water, consistent supply of food throughout the year and reliable electricity. Plans are underway to embrace green energy use in the University by adopting solar energy to supplement our power supply for greater sustainability.

I am glad to inform you that during the last three years, students who applied to KUCCPS to be admitted to the University of Embu chose the University of Embu as their **FIRST CHOICE**. This is because as a community,

we have managed to build such confidence among students and our stakeholders. We mean business and we shall deliver fully on our promise to provide high quality education and training.

Our students come from across the Country; they are ambitious and high achievers. They are proud to be here, they mingle well, and form a supportive, friendly community where every member is appreciated and supported.

Tremendous growth has been recorded in the area of student enrollment. In the current Academic Year 2018/2019, the student population stands at 6,332. This represents a 10% increase in student numbers compared to the 2017/2018 Academic Year. Despite the challenge of reduced number of students qualifying to join university brought about by the unpredictability of K.C.S.E candidates' performance in the last few years, the University has continued to attract students courtesy of the good image that we have managed to nurture both nationally and internationally. This year we anticipate an enrollment of over 1000 new students from the 2018 KCSE group during the forthcoming September 2019 intake.

In September 2018, more students graduated from the University of Embu than the previous years. We had 593 graduands who were awarded various Certificates, Diplomas and Degrees up from 278 who graduated in 2017. The University has so far graduated three cohorts since its inception. The next graduation ceremony is in September, 2019 when we expect an increase in the number of graduands.

## 2. Quality Management and Performance Contracting

On 28<sup>th</sup> June 2018, we celebrated certification to ISO 27001:2013 (Information Security Management Systems) becoming not only the **first Education institution in Kenya** to achieve this certification, but also among the very few organizations in the Country certified to this International Standard. The implementation of ISMS guarantees Confidentiality, Integrity and Availability of information in the University as appropriate.

On the same date, the University transited from ISO 9001:2008 to ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management System. Implementation of this International Standard ensures consistent delivery of quality services by the University in order to ensure satisfaction of both internal and external stakeholders.

I am also pleased to inform you that the University of Embu has, for the fourth year in a row, attained an **Excellent Score** in Performance Contracting. The FY 2017/2018 Performance Contract was evaluated on 17<sup>th</sup> December, 2018 by officers from the Performance Management and Coordination Office in the Executive Office of the President. The University scored **1.9965** which falls in the *excellent category*. This translates to over 130% achievement in the implementation of the targets signed between the Government and the University. I am reliably informed the University of Embu was one of the very few State Corporations in this category.

I commend and congratulate the University Council, Management and Staff for this exemplary performance. Let us keep up the spirit.

### 3. Physical Environment

Another area in the University manifesting great change during the year under review is our physical environment. This year, we welcomed the completion of the magnificent Prof. George Magoha Library which was officially opened by H.E the Deputy President of the Republic of Kenya, Dr. William Ruto on 25<sup>th</sup> October, 2018.

The imposing new administration building which has now become the talk of the town, was also completed and occupied in February 2019 and, hopefully, as the year progresses, we will welcome a significant number of new facilities in the University e.g. the new Athletics Track, the Lecture Auditorium Building, currently under construction next to Dam 1 and the upcoming massive Tuition Block that will have 5 floors, 4 lecture Theatres, Academic Offices and Lecture Rooms with a capacity to fit 6000 students at one sitting. These are indeed great achievements for all of us to be happy and celebrate about.

### 4. Community Social Responsibility

In the year 2018, our Staff and Students continued to voluntarily participate in many Community Social Responsibility activities around the University and in the surrounding Community. In particular, we planted over 10,000 tree seedlings at Njukiri Forest, Irangi Forest and Jeremiah Nyaga Technical Training Institute under the **“Panda Miti, Penda Kenya”** and **“Panda Miti, Boresha Maisha”** initiatives. In addition, we planted over 5,000 trees within the University, all in recognition of the fact that environment and forests



protection is a shared responsibility that we all must tirelessly pursue for the benefit of the current and future generations.

Other Community Social Responsibility initiatives by the University include support offered to St. Angela - Embu Children Home; Staff members led by the Vice-Chancellor paid a visit to Embu GK Prison and shared Christmas joy with the male and female Prisoners (and their children). Our commitment to supporting Community Social Responsibility initiatives are intended to cultivate good relations with the community which dispels the community notion of the University as an ivory tower. More Community Social Responsibility activities are in the pipeline for the current Financial Year.

## **5. Impact on Community**

The presence of the University of Embu in Embu County has been a big blessing for the communities living around and the region in general. Some of the benefits that the University has brought to the community include:

- i). Economic empowerment to households and businesses;
- ii). Employment;
- iii). University Education and improved living standards;
- iv). Knowledge sharing for resolution of community needs; and
- v). Farmers training on modern agricultural and agribusiness trends, among others.

The University has managed to establish a vibrant community composed of staff and students from all over the Country and also internationally. This is an opportunity for the County Government of Embu to invest in good roads and infrastructure, good schools, well-equipped medical facilities,

improved security, reliable transportation system and consumer business establishments like malls and many more to tap into the business brought about by the University's presence in the region.

We are working hand-in-hand with the County Government of Embu to make this economic transformation for Embu County a reality. I am hopeful that a partnership that we have been discussing with the County Government of Embu in regard to Embu Level 5 Hospital will soon come to fruition with the establishment of a School of Medicine which will in turn make the Hospital a teaching and referral Hospital.

## **6. 2018-2028 Strategic Plan**

On 5<sup>th</sup> October 2018, we launched the University of Embu 10 year Strategic Plan. The Plan carries the vision of the University to be a dynamic centre of excellence in training and research for service to humanity. Some of the main aspirations of the new Strategic Plan are:

- i). To provide adequate facilities for Teaching, Learning and Research to enhance the students' and staff experience;
- ii). To maintain quality and compliance to high standards in all our operations; and
- iii). To build a strong University brand and reputation anchored on excellence.

Our Strategic Plan builds upon our current strengths and focuses on areas in which we believe we can achieve further excellence. We want nothing less than to be the best university we can be, and we are well on our way.

## **7. University Endowment Fund**

As you may recall, on 25th October 2018 we launched the University of Embu Endowment Fund. The University Endowment Fund is one of the ways of mobilizing resources to support needy and deserving students through bursaries, upkeep and scholarships to help them complete their studies with much ease. The Fund will in the future be diversified to cover other activities that contribute to the University mission. This was also a major achievement at University of Embu and other Universities are already benchmarking with us.

I humbly appeal to all of you present here today, to be part of this endeavor by donating generously to this kitty. I also extend our call to international organizations and corporates to support the initiative so as to help the University to provide better services to the community. This may also include supporting a needy student for part or full duration of his or her studies, donation of research equipment, financing a building or enabling exchange programmes.

## **8. Research Output**

The University of Embu has attracted and retained highly qualified faculty members who are not only involved in teaching but also research and dissemination of the research findings. Since July 2017, twenty-two (22) papers have been published in international journals and two book chapters in top publishers in the world. For us to achieve our mission, we have continued to forge collaborations, linkages and partnerships with local and

international universities, governmental and non-governmental organizations as well as private sector institutions. This financial year alone, University of Embu has signed Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with fifteen (15) organizations. It is our firm belief that these partnerships will strengthen and enhance the Institution's effectiveness by providing:

- i) Opportunities for joint research collaborations and grants;
- ii) Staff/student collaborations and exchange programs;
- iii) Infrastructural development;
- iv) Community development initiatives; and
- v) Knowledge transfer to the society.

Our faculty members continue to engage in research in their different disciplines while striving to attract external funding to support the research activities. During this financial year, thirteen (13) grant proposals have been submitted to different funding agencies and we are optimistic a good number of them will be funded. Our aspiration is to attract more funding which will translate to more research outputs in form of publications and innovations.

## **9. Governance**

I am pleased to note that the University of Embu management has embraced a governance model that is transparent, inclusive and participatory in the day to day running of its activities. This ensures that our customers and our stakeholders are involved in decision making through various forums that have been put in place. These include a vibrant Student Government, Staff Unions, an Alumni Association and regular stakeholder's forums.

The University management has entrenched an open door policy where staff and students alike are encouraged to channel their grievances to the relevant offices without fear of victimization or non-action.

The University of Embu is one of the universities' whose academic calendar is predictable, thanks to the stability that has been occasioned by the good relations between the University Management, Unions and the Students Government. In fact, many Universities have been coming over to the University of Embu to benchmark with us on the area of governance.

Indeed, on behalf of the University Community, I thank the Students' Council Leadership and the Staff Unions for maintaining harmonious relations with the University administration. I also challenge the Alumni Association leaders to make the association more vibrant and encourage its members to participate more in University of Embu affairs; especially by marketing the University in their workplaces and encouraging prospective students to choose University of Embu programmes.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

During my 1<sup>st</sup> State of the University Address, I talked about the rapid changes taking place in the higher education landscape in our Country. Indeed, we are witnessing changes and shifts in government policy on higher education with emphasis shifting slowly towards the TVET institutions. We are also seeing changes in public perceptions about higher education as well as stiff competition amongst Universities for the dwindling number of candidates qualified to join university. In addition, profound generational

and technological changes are taking place in the current times – driven by the rapid changes in ICT.

Public perception towards higher education has changed significantly. Many parents feel that their children must attain University education to be able to fit in the current world and the world of the future. This has led to increased demand for higher education amongst parents and students.

In this regard, we must continue to do our part to be a customer friendly University and provide high quality education in an efficient manner. We must, therefore, continue to be vigilant in our efforts to be the best we can be with the resources that we have been given by the Government.

Another challenge that we have all been talking about is the decrease in public funding for public Universities. Although the Government has continued to support Universities through public funding, it is clear that there will not be significant increase in government funding as the years go by. So, we must seek innovative ways of diversifying our revenue sources so as to be able to meet our financial obligations.

This is why we must continue to be diligent with our prioritization and prudence in our financial management. We must continue to seek more ways to improve our efficiency wherever we can and also be more strategic in our resource mobilization efforts. I commend the University Council and Management for taking this seriously over the years, resulting in tangible growth in the University.

## THE FUTURE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF EMBU

The future of any university will to a large extent depend on how it is able to make higher education more adaptable to new innovations and accessibility to the learner. It also requires appreciation of the need to personalize and individualize education so as to meet the specific needs of the learner. With these changes in the teaching and learning environment, I propose the following critical areas that we will need to address over the coming years for us to remain in the excellent category in all that we do and hence meet the expectations of the future University.

### 1) Adaptability and Accessibility

We must strive to provide more opportunities for access to quality education; which means,

- more industry-relevant programmes;
- embracing new ways of adaptive thinking and delivery methods; and
- ability to adapt to the changes in technology

We must adapt, embrace, and thrive in the midst of the current generational and the ever dynamic technological advances. We must bring adaptive thinking to all aspects of the University both internally and externally.

For example, for us to remain afloat in the current competitive world of higher education, we must continue to innovate and adapt new strategies of recruiting new students while also improving on how we use technology to reach those prospective students.

We must also think differently about how we deliver education and how we provide our services to our customers. The current generation is always challenging us to adopt new innovations and advanced technology-based approaches to customer service. As we all know, today's learners have no problem interacting with automated systems.

## **2) Life Skills**

The future graduates who will be sought after by the market will be those with the requisite soft skills to enable them navigate through life and the workplace with minimum difficulty. Universities must equip students with both knowledge and the essential skills that are deemed important by business and industry leaders. These skills include the ability to communicate verbally and in writing, to appreciate diversity, to be able to function in a global environment, to solve complex problems, and appreciate the contribution of every person in society through teamwork.

## **3) Partnerships and collaborations**

The other aspect that will shape the future of our University is appreciation of the critical role of partnerships and collaborations across all aspects of the academic enterprise: employers, community members, parents, governments, organizations and other academic institutions. The future, will demand that we actively partner with business, industry leaders, and community members to provide a state-of-the-art and state-of-the-need education for our students.



## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, as I said earlier, this is the time to look carefully and critically at the emerging generation of students who will be joining the University over the next few years. Currently, all the students joining universities around the world are high tech youngsters who were born from the year 2000 onwards. This is a generation that has never known life without the internet or a smart phone. They are more inclined to stream videos, read their notes on the laptop or phone, and get instant news on-demand instead of tuning into live radio or television for outdated 1pm and 7pm news.

Already, the generation has changed the way we communicate with each other - texting more rather than calling or verbal communication; they have changed the way we get news - decline in print newspapers; changed the way we read - proliferation of digital books, and changed the way we shop - online vs. in the shop.

This generation is not only the most diverse and advanced of all the other generations that preceded it, but also more embracing of diversity than the old generations. Because this generation has literally grown up with technology in their hands and with content available all the time, the generation demands immediate answers and prefers instant online delivery mechanisms.

These generational changes will re-define the future of the University and the whole education and learning paradigms and we must make a deliberate effort to adapt to their needs.

While many of these changes have been slowly coming our way and we are still reluctant to embrace them, we have reached a point where we cannot ignore them any further. This is a change that will not go away. And, in fact, subsequent students of this University will have an ever-growing expectation of technology-driven services and pedagogy than manual based queues and hand-outs from lecturers.

I commend the University of Embu management for taking bold steps to address the challenge of making the University more responsive to the information and technology needs of the modern society by implementing the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software to run University operations. Plans are also underway to install CCTV surveillance cameras around the University to enhance safety and security. I am sure that as we move ahead, more and more interventions will be adopted to make it easier for our customers and stakeholders to access quality and efficient services through this platform.

**Ladies and gentlemen;**

With those many remarks, allow me to end my address with the following five statements

1. To be successful in the next phase of our history, we need the talents and contributions of all members of the University community and our valued stakeholders.
2. We call upon our most important partners to share in our mission to uplift lives and communities, in the region, across the Country and around the world.

3. We need to create more opportunities for our staff and students to excel and to support them with the best and most conducive environment including the necessary facilities.
4. We need to constantly remind the community that their support is very crucial to our University — and always ask them to continue to partner with us, for our mutual benefit.
5. Let us join hands and together show up every day to do outstanding work that will always maintain the name of our great University in high esteem.

Finally, let us continue to rely on one another for ideas and suggestions on how we can achieve our bold aspirations over the coming year and beyond. Together, we will continue to educate, to create knowledge, to engage with our communities, and to make our world a better place. I am filled with great pride when I see our students become successful and when our staff accomplish great things.

Thank you all for listening to me today and for the work you do for the University.

**God Bless the University of Embu**

**PROF. PAUL MUSILI WAMBUA**