



UNIVERSITY OF EMBU

SPEECH

By

Dr. Kennedy Okong'o
Chairman, University of Embu Council

6th Graduation Ceremony
Friday 17th September, 2021

SPEECH BY DR. KENNEDY OKONG'O
CHAIRMAN, UNIVERSITY OF EMBU COUNCIL DURING THE 6th
GRADUATION CEREMONY AT UNIVERSITY OF EMBU ON FRIDAY,
17TH SEPTEMBER, 2021

- Chancellor, University of Embu, **Prof. Paul Musili Wambua**
- Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Education, **Prof. George Magoha**
- Vice-Chancellor, University of Embu, **Prof. Daniel Mugendi**
- Vice-Chancellors of Sister Universities
- Embu County Government Representatives present
- Members of the University of Embu Management Board and the Senate
- Graduands, families and friends
- University of Embu Staff and Students
- Distinguished guests
- Ladies and Gentlemen

GOOD MORNING

Mr. Chancellor Sir,

It gives me great pleasure to join the Vice-Chancellor in welcoming all our guests to the University of Embu for the 6th Graduation Ceremony. On behalf of the University of Embu Council, I would like to specially welcome the Cabinet Secretary for Education to this event. Thank you *Waziri* for gracing this occasion. Your presence makes this event so much more special for us. A very warm welcome to our graduands, the remarkable Class of 2021. I am delighted and excited to see you; and it is a great honour to welcome you alongside the diverse community of friends, relatives and well-wishers – whether you are joining us in person or remotely. I welcome our alumni, family and friends, University staff and continuing students. We are truly happy to be with you this morning.

Mr. Chancellor Sir,

This is one year that has brought suffering and loss to many families due to the emergence of the more potent variants of the COVID-19 virus. Even if one hasn't been directly affected, the tons of devastating news have been exhausting. We join the County and National Governments to empathize with those who, in one way or another, have been impacted. We honour the heroism of our frontline workers, our universities and the scientific community who have helped forge new paths in managing the crisis; and we dedicate ourselves to observing the laid down protocols to keep the virus at bay and help save millions of lives under threat.

Let me start by recognizing and thanking the people who made this day possible for our graduands; these include, your parents and families, your teachers and lecturers, your guardians and sponsors, your friends and relatives. We appreciate your efforts in helping shape the lives of our graduands up to where they have reached today.

Secondly, I appreciate our Special Guest, the Cabinet Secretary Prof. George Magoha for finding time to come and witness the achievements of our Staff and Students. We thank you, Sir, for gracing this occasion, your presence gives the occasion the flamboyance and colour that it deserves. On behalf of the University Council, and the entire University of Embu community, I wish to express our sincere appreciation to the Government through the Ministry of Education, for the support you have continued to give the University of Embu for the implementation of the 10-year Strategic Plan, currently in its 3rd year. This has enabled the University to be where it is and what it is today. Through your support, the University of Embu has been able to develop a culture of excellence, innovation and openness

during its 5 years of growth. With established strengths in quality teaching, learning and research, this University has become internationally recognized for its academic excellence and service to community. It is my sincere hope that we shall continue to closely collaborate to provide equitable, inclusive and quality University education. We thank you.

On behalf of the University Council, I also take this opportunity to recognize the Chancellor, Prof. Paul Musili Wambua for his good leadership. This has enabled the University to make great strides. Mr. Chancellor Sir, we have truly cherished your visionary leadership and continuous engagements with the Council, Management, Staff and Students over the last 5 years. You have immensely inspired us and propelled us forward with your great ideas, eagerness, energy and determination to serve and to see that the University stops crawling and begins to walk and run. It has been our privilege to be in the arena with you these several years. We thank you and hope that our Cabinet Secretary will humbly intercede for us to have our Chancellor' term renewed.

To the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Daniel Mugendi, the University Management, Senate, Staff and Students, we as a Council also say 'thank you'. You have advanced the mission of the University. You have promoted good governance and in the process the University of Embu has built a reputation for excellence and we have become a highly respected higher education institution.

The ranking of the University as the Number 1 top performing State Corporation in Kenya was the climax of our success. This is proof that the

governance structures are strong and have enabled efficient service delivery.

Mr. Chancellor Sir,

The Staff continue to demonstrate excellence even during crisis and we look forward to more and more accolades and awards for the University in the next phase of development. I thank the Vice-Chancellor for leading the teamwork on campus.

Mr. Chancellor Sir,

A special appreciation goes to our partners and collaborators, especially the Embu Community and the Embu County Government for supporting our cause and effort to create a favourable environment to stimulate intellectual growth of our students and the community. I thank you and wish you continued social impact.

Mr. Chancellor Sir,

I salute the parents, guardians, relatives, sponsors, partners and friends who have supported our graduands in the course of their academic journey., The last one and a half years have been very difficult years for parents. Two major upheavals conspired against the education sector. As COVID-19 pandemic was raging, an economic shock was visited upon us. Schools were closed indefinitely, Universities experienced budget cuts and it was difficult for us. Our parents, guardians, sponsors, and partners - have been truly supportive. We are incredibly humbled; receive our sincere appreciation.

To the Class of 2021

This is your day! It is a significant accomplishment worth celebrating together and as a Council, we are delighted to be here with you today. As you move to the next chapters of your lives, it is my hope that you will be of value to society. Many people will delight in knowing you and your talents. As you step into new waters, be brave, be honest, be realistic, be open-minded and keep learning. For some of you, this day signifies a point of inflection, from studying to a new stage of life. This date ushers opportunities to make a mark in your life and the lives of others. Whilst the University has instilled in you a set of qualities to prepare you for a future ahead, the true value of those qualities will be seen in how you apply them in life. I hope you'll continue to live by the core values of the University of Embu - operate with integrity, embrace professionalism and celebrate diversity. While doing all that, I hope you will exemplify excellence - never settle for the second best!

As a Council, we are also proud of the Class of 2021 because of the endurance, perseverance, creativity and sheer determination that has characterized their studentship. We believe, you are headed for greater things in life. **Congratulations.**

Graduands, let me close by quoting one American author, Felice Leonardo. Leo was born into a family of Italian immigrants but while teaching at the University of Southern California was moved by the students' behaviour. He chose to focus his research on the true meaning of life. He rightly observed that *'change is the end result of all true learning'*. This is a relevant and a perfect quote for our time. Unless there is a change, nothing has happened. I encourage you to be our ambassadors and apply the skills you gained 'here' to change 'there'; make that 'place' you are headed to a 'better place'!

Mr. Chancellor Sir,

To advance the dissemination of knowledge through training and research and a conducive learning environment at the University of Embu, the Council continues to bias the allocation of resources towards academic strengthening and development of the support infrastructure. I would like to appreciate the Council members for living this mission. I thank each member so much for the leadership and wisdom in their effort to better the experience of the Staff and Students. We are focused on effectively addressing the needs of the market and establishing an international reputation through meaningful and strategic partnerships that enable resolving the national development issues while aware these are inextricably linked to the global imperatives.

I conclude by thanking all stakeholders once more, for the dedication to the University's mission. Indeed, we still have too much to do to sit on the sidelines.

May God bless you.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, I now have the pleasure to invite our Guest, the Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Education, Prof. George Magoha to address the congregation.

Dr. Kennedy Okong'o

Chairman, University of Embu Council