

THE MOMBASA POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE

PRINCIPAL – PROF. J. Z.K. MWATELAH’S

ADDRESS TO THE 2010 1ST YEAR STUDENTS

ON

8TH JANUARY, 2010

IN

THE ASSEMBLY HALL

PRINCIPAL’S ADDRESS TO FIRST YEARS

CLASS OF 2010

Greetings and best wishes for the New Year 2010. We thank God for enabling us celebrate the end of 2009 and usher in the new year with a lot of expectations.

On behalf of the entire Mombasa Polytechnic University College fraternity, may I take this opportunity to welcome all of you to join the MPUC fraternity?

You have joined the college to embark on an academic journey that will define your career in the years ahead. In this institution you are not only expected to acquire knowledge and skills but also the right attitude and values that will prepare you for future assignments in this country and beyond.

The Mombasa Polytechnic has the distinction of being not only the youngest University College but also the oldest in Kenya if not in East Africa offering technical knowledge. It has a rich history dating back to 1950’s before some of us were born. It started as an institute culminating to its current University College status in 2007 through Legal Order No. 160 of 2007.

Many great men and women have passed through the institution either as workers or students and have a mark in this country both in the public and private sector. It is now your turn to go through the institution and much is expected of you.

VISION

The college’s vision is to become a World Class University of Engineering and Technology for development. This vision is anchored in the our philosophy of endeavoring to offer opportunities for access to commensurate scientific, technical, entrepreneurship education, research skills, innovation and creativity to enhance employment opportunities for wealth creation.

The college's vision and philosophy would be achieved by offering quality technological education and training through the promotion of scholarship, entrepreneurship, research and innovation and outreach for community as industrial and technological benefits.

COMMITMENT

We are totally committed to excellence and quality delivery of services by being prompt and accountable to all our undertakings in line with good corporate governance. We expect you to reciprocate the same in all your undertakings.

STRUCTURES

The college has put in place the necessary structures, systems, and resources to achieve its vision in line with Vision 2030 which aims at making Kenya a newly industrialized country.

This can only be possible if we are able to produce people who have the right values and attitudes towards work.

ORIENTATION

Today is the final day of orientation. The primary purpose of orientation apart from welcoming you is to enable you to get to know the place and the people before embarking on your academic programs. You have had the opportunity to meet your respective faculty and other staff and toured the facilities and have had the opportunity to appreciate what is in place. Please create time to visit other Departments and get to understand how each unit in the College fits in as one great institution.

EXPECTATIONS

Your joining the MPUC comes with a lot of expectations on your part, to society in general, parents, colleagues and us. We all have one thing in common; to see you succeed, in your studies, failure to which will lead to disappointments and frustrations to yourselves and society. Do not let us down!

ACADEMICS

Gratified to note that you chose this University College to pursue your program of choice, the successful accomplishment of your course is both your dream and ours. This dream should be a guiding star as you navigate through your academic world. We believe the career you have chosen is not by accident but a well thought decision of meeting your aspiration. However, you will face many challenges in the course of your studies, but you have what it takes to achieve your dream as our motto says "Endeavour and Achieve". It is well known that greatness comes with a prize. Great people all over the world are ordinary men and women who achieved

greatness through extraordinary determination. You are one of those people whose history is yet to be recorded.

VARIABLES THAT WILL INSPIRE AND SHAPE YOUR DESTINY AT MPUC.

1. DREAMS

You are all here for a reason which is to pursue your dreams. It is dreams that drives our adrenaline and keep us going. Do you have a career dream? We all dream of a range of issues and even build castles in the air without even accomplishing all. It is often said that the poorest man on earth is a man without a dream and the most frustrated man on earth is the man with a dream that never became a reality! When passion for your dream is unquestioned, then quitting is unthinkable and that makes victory inevitable. Never give up on your dream despite the odds against you! Soldier on and victory is assured. Be the latter day Martin Luther King Jnr. and his focused speech. **“I have a dream”**.

2. BOOKS AND INFORMATION

The books you read and the information at your disposal shall determine your destiny. Those who read passionately end up being reed. You cannot separate leadership from success as the wise book says “People perish due to ignorance or lack of knowledge”. Books give us new insights, they provoke our imagination and as a result we become more creative and express ourselves in unique ways with an impressive personality. Look at people like PLO Lumumba and Barrack Obama, when you listen to their speeches you tend to envy them for their eloquence and presentation skills. You have the opportunity to acquire knowledge from books in the library, lecturers, and colleagues and become somebody who matters in life. You may have come from that forgotten village but knowledge would thrust you on the national and international scene.

3. FRIENDS

It is said that man is not an island, you are hence bound to make friends as you pursue your academic career. The people you associate with will ultimately influence and shape your destiny. A conversation with the right people can be more valuable than many years of study. Positive people tend to influence each other positively while the reverse is always true, true to the saying “Iron sharpens Iron”. Study your social environment, choose and surround yourself with people who will make you comfortable, inspire and mentor you positively and eventually make you become a better person in the future. Learn to be assertive in situations of peer pressure to avoid being victims/casualty of circumstances.

4. RESOURCES

We have endeavored and we shall continue to provide facilities in the form of reading/reference materials, equipment, laboratories, workshops and lectures to facilitate the programs. In addition to computer laboratories in departments, we have put up a Digital Centre with state of art machines for students to access the internet. We have included Computer Technology in all our programs to enable students be computer literate.

We have provided accommodation facilities that are clean and affordable. The rooms are limited and are issued on first come first served basis.

The catering department shall sell meals at pocket friendly rates.

The dispensary shall provide first line treatment as guardians and parents take other responsibilities.

We expect all students to take care of our resources, facilities for our own use and bequeath them to future generations.

5. RULES/REGULATIONS

Every student must have a copy of rules and regulations and be conversant with them. They cover academics, general discipline, accommodation, examination among others. Rules are put in place to enable us to leave our lives as civilized people who are aware of our rights and obligations.

6. GOD

Create time for your spiritual well being as you pursue your studies. We all need God in our lives and in whatever we do and whatever we are. Human beings have needs to be met and one of them is the spiritual need. The spirit man also provides a reality check in our lives by provoking our conscience apart from, being a source of strength and hope.

7. INDUSTRIAL ATTACHMENT

As part of the course requirement you are expected to go for industrial /internship attachment to acquire practical knowledge and experience relevant to your training. You are expected to adhere to the Company rules and exhibit a high degree of discipline and professional ethics wherever you'll be. You should realize that whoever provides you this opportunity is your potential employer. Learn as much as the opportunity provides. Your Lecturers/Internal Supervisors shall meet your supervisors at your placement and interrogate them on your performance. Take this seriously as it will go towards enhancing your curriculum vitae and for some programs you may not graduate without passing these units.

8. COMMUNICATION

Communication is an integral part of student's academic life. We have clear channels of communication to facilitate communication within the University College. We are transparent and operate on an open door policy. We encourage dialogue within the community to handle issues of whatever nature. Apart from the laid down procedures we communicate through notices, faculties and the class representatives. Always check on the notice boards for updates so that you don't miss out.

Let us exercise open and free communication to address issues that might cause misunderstanding. Let us use communication as a tool to enhance positive relationship and help each other to cope with situations. Use your communication skills in a positive manner.

9. STUDENTS GOVERNANCE

You are the leaders of tomorrow, that I have no doubt. You are the future CEO's and managers of big institutions. You are the people that will matter in the society, but to bring the point home, among you are going to be class representatives, club leaders, student leaders, coordinators and so on. But remember leaders are not born but they are made. You will hence have the opportunity to join the students' governance body whose elections were held in October 2009 to exercise your leadership skills.

Leadership requires humility and sacrifices. Leadership at whatever level accords you the opportunity to serve others. Always take the first line when there is danger and then people will appreciate your leadership.

General Collin Powel said that "Leaders are almost great simplifiers who can cut through arguments, debate and no doubt offer a solution anybody can understand" We hope you will be those leaders who are solution providers rather than negative critics through and through.

10. FEES

You are required to pay all your fees to access essential services. You cannot sit for examinations unless you have cleared your fees. Adequate reminders shall be given by the administration, please take them seriously!

11. INTERVENTION

We appreciate that some of you come from highly disadvantaged backgrounds and there could be interventions here and there which you must compete for, as per guiding rules and regulations. They are in the form of scholarships, Constituency Development Fund (CDF), and Student Works Program etc, but these can't guarantee to clear your fees, so your parents/guardians must strive

to meet their obligations of paying fees. You however should be aware that applicants are thoroughly screened to identify deserving cases.

(a) Co-curricular activities

We encourage you to take time off from your busy academic schedule to participate in co-curricular activities. We have excelled at the national level in music and drama and your participation will ensure our continuing dominance. If you have talent you will have the opportunity to use it and who knows you can make a living out of it, as many Kenyans have done!

CULTURE

For most of you from upcountry and first timers in Mombasa you will be able to sample the rich cultural heritage that the Coast is well known for. Here at the Coast people are courteous, welcoming and value respect for each other. Just a simple greeting will earn you first hand service. Please exercise it whenever an opportunity presents itself.

RECREATION

Mombasa is a tourist town with many world class entertainment spots and historical sites, the Indian Ocean, the famous Fort Jesus etc., but please do not venture to swim in the ocean if you have no experience!

Do not be mesmerized by the pleasures of Mombasa and forget the main aim and objective of being here, that of "Education and Excellence"

SECURITY

Just like in any other urban centre take great care of your personal security we shall play our part.

CHALLENGES

As you pursue your studies, you will meet many challenges. Challenges/adversities cause some men to break others break records, so the ball is in your court, will you break or will you break records? Martin Luther King Jnr. once said, "The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in times of joy and comfort but where he stands in times of challenges and controversy."

Great men must go through challenges to become who they are in history look at Mzee Jomo Kenyatta, Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, many others.

To become great requires persistence as Sir. Winston Churchill, the former Prime Minister of Britain once said in his famous 10 seconds speech about the vision of his career, and the dream of his people in one sentence; "**Never, never, never give up.**"

- **FREEDOM**

As you have joined the University, some of you have started experiencing a lot of freedom which they have not had before.

We should all keep in mind that freedom comes with responsibilities. Bryan Tracy says, "The acceptance of personal responsibility is when you separate a superior person and the average person. Personal responsibility is the premium trait of leadership and the well spring of high performance in every person in every situation."

Accepting responsibility is the freedom of high self esteem, self respect and personal pride.

- **MANAGEMENT OF RESOURCES**

We all should appreciate that resources are limited Always prepare a budget on how to spend your resources. The following are some hints:

1. Set your priorities right. First things first. You must not only take care of resources but learn to manage them especially personal finances and time which are scarce. Exercise truthfulness in the management of your finances.
2. Have a time schedule – plan ahead of time.
3. Get rid of unnecessary friends, they are likely to influence you the wrong way!
4. Stick to your routine convictions.
5. Do not postpone action.

Make the most out of the time you have, because there will be no other time like today.

- **Peer Pressure – Drugs/HIV/Alcohol**

Many young people are confronted by many social challenges that derail them from their core goal(s). Many are swept away and fall by the way side and never attain their goals.

If you don't stand for something, you will fall for anything. There is a Chinese proverb that says, "A wise man makes his own decisions, an ignorant man follows the public opinion." There are many ways to kill a rat and hence many ways to terminate your studies. And as you all know AIDS and Drugs kill and would urge all of us to uphold the slogan that says "To chill from drugs, sex, beer." Be reminded that if we approach life casually we end as casualties.

Life is not a rehearsal and so do not learn safety by accident. We therefore expect you to engage in a responsible behavior that does not endanger your life.

FUTURE ASSURANCE

All in all you are highly advantaged to have chosen MPUC as your training destination. An institution with a global recognition in Engineering, Technical and Vocational Training.

We pledge to create the climate, provide the resources, focused leadership and environment for you to achieve your dreams and together we can. Oh Yes we can!

When I look in front of me I see vibrant young people with a lot of energy and enthusiasm. I hope that the energy you have, you shall use it to your best for the benefit of yourselves and others.

Many groups have come and gone, and yours is no exception but what you do is what will count. What do you want to be remembered for, during your study days at MPUC? Martin Luther King says, "If you are a sweeper, sweep like never before so that when you are no more, people will say that there used to be a sweeper who swept the streets clean."

In conclusion we have a dream of making Mombasa Polytechnic University College a world class University of Engineering and Technology for development and together as a team we can make it, can we? Oh, Yes we can. Thank you very much!

MAY GOD BLESS YOU!