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ORIENTATION OF FRESHERS

*ADDRESS BY THE VICE CHANCELLOR, KABALE UNIVERSITY,
PROF. JOY C. KWESIGA*

23RD MARCH 2021

1. WELCOME

On behalf of Kabale University, and on my own behalf, I want to welcome you all; first, to Kabale University; and second to Kabale Municipality and District, as this may be the first time for some of you to come to this area of Uganda.

2. CONGRATULATIONS!

I know that you have been here for some time, but this being my first time to interact with you, I must congratulate you on your achievements so far!

- First, on successfully going through your A-Levels or whichever examinations you did in order to join the University.
- Second, on being selected to do the academic programme you have been admitted to.
- Third, on surviving the CORONA-19 pandemic, so far!

3. APPRECIATION

I want to thank you for opting to join Kabale University. There are many universities in Uganda, but you chose to be here!

LET ME ADD THAT SINCE YOU HAVE CHOSEN TO JOIN US, WE OURSELVES, AS UNIVERSITY LEADERS, WE SHALL DO ALL WE CAN TO MAKE YOUR STAY AT KABALE UNIVERSITY FRUITFUL, ENJOYABLE, EDUCATIVE, AND PRODUCTIVE.

INTRODUCE OTHER MANAGEMENT MEMBERS PRESENT

4. WHAT IS KABALE UNIVERSITY?

By now, of course, you should be able to answer some questions about Kabale University as an institution. Let me just add a few words to your current knowledge so far.

This is a very young University, which started off as a private community owned institution, by the people of the Kigezi Region. Later, this community requested the Government of Uganda to take it over. Since 2016, therefore, the University now is one of the nine (9) public universities in Uganda. KAB, therefore, is still in its foundation stage – hence the levels of infrastructure and the number of students (3,000 plus).

However, we want to see it a vibrant institution, and welcoming to its visitors.

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING:

VISION

MISSION

CORE VALUES

UNIVERSITY ANTHEM

From all the above, today, I just wish to emphasise the importance of a people-centred institution. People centred means that the University is responsive not only to students' needs but also to those of the other stakeholders – the community around us, as well as the staff. People centred means that the University is friendly to its

clients. It means that diversity is a valued and practised concept where all people are welcomed and accepted.

I also want to emphasise only one of the values that Kabale University upholds: **ACCOUNTABILITY**. If and when you take up this to guide you as part of your personal **CODE OF CONDUCT** – how you should behave, you will be able to succeed. You will account to your parents/guardians through class attendance; account for your tuition fees – by the manner in which you utilize your time, and the results of the course. You will account to your teachers again through the results. You will be accountable to KAB and society through your behaviour as a useful citizen. This word “accountable” will guide you when you are going off your chosen path. **EMBRACE IT.**

I want to pose here and ask just 4 volunteers to come forward, to let us know one thing they have liked at Kabale University so far, and what one other thing they would want improved. TWO WOMEN AND TWO MEN.

We thank you, all, and we shall work with you to improve – on both the good and not so good.

The reason I asked this question was to let you know that Kabale University is what you will make of it. As students, you are the most valuable common factor. If you are not there, there is no University. In the same vein, it is the students who make the University what it is. If you want a good, famous and high-quality university that you will be proud of in your later life, then do your best to make it good – through your work, through your behaviour. It is you to build it into what you would wish it to be – what will make you proud. If you cheat in examinations – then you are building negatively. If you demand that a lecturer teaches you when they should, then you are contributing to its positively to its quality assurance. If you behave well in your village, or indeed in your Hostel, then you are building Kabale University.

When you build – we shall not hear such comments as “Ah! These Kabale University Hooligans!”

Others have already put their brick. They tell us we need to fill this and the other gap. They continue to build even after leaving the University, and so today, we are requesting you to **PLEASE ADD YOUR POSITIVE BRICK.**

Learn the Mission, Vision, Core Values, and University Anthem.

The Guild President and your team, and the Dean of Students and your team – this is your task. Let us all be able to sing the University anthem – in the way you sing others.

5. SOME FEW WORDS OF ADVICE

This is a new life for each of you. Whether you are fresh from School or you are a mature student, starting anything new involves its testing. There will be moments of doubt and times of despair. But if you are steady-fast, and focused, you will soon discover **HOW MUCH YOU LIKE UNIVERSITY LIFE.**

In this context, I know that you have already received a lot of advice at your Faculty level, and throughout the central orientation programme. I will not repeat all that - but only pick a few issues to interact with you about.

My advice **No. 1** is therefore, **DO NOT BE DISCOURAGED.** When things are not easy for you, remember that it is possible to succeed, and persevere. You have come here for a purpose. Remember also that there is help from all corners – your teachers, we in the administration, fellow students, etc.

Number 2: Prioritise! You have a lot of time on your hands. You are the manager of that time, apart from scheduled lectures, practicals or any other arranged activity. But there are also many other events in which you can fit, social (such as sports, travel, religious worship and others). Follow the adage – **FIRST THINGS FIRST.** Always remember why you are here at KAB.

Number 3: Learn to be FLEXIBLE. A University is where you learn that there are many ways to reaching a solution. New ways, new people, new methods of work – everything that we call **DIVERSITY.**

There is so much to explore!

Number 4: Goes with the previous No 3. TOLERANCE! In a University, we learn that there are many views. All views may be right. We respect different ideas – because that is how we innovate. We know that we cannot be the same. Tolerance will take you far – even in your post university life when you are in the job market, and when you become a leader.

Number 5: INDEPENDENCE! You are not young adults – not adolescents any more. In a University, we learn to think, to research, reach conclusions, and take positions, of course, based on evidence. We are no longer at school where we are made to believe that the teacher is always right. *“We seek the truth”*. This is the traditional oath of a new university student; to seek the truth, but also to respect the system (in simpler words to obey those in authority at different levels). Learning to be independent will help you to steer through your studies and to fit in places of work in future. This is how we grow.

Peer Pressure has ruined many. They laugh at you that you cannot smoke or take alcohol or even drugs. You feel inadequate and then start, and become worse than those who persuaded you to learn these bad habits. Think and act with a purpose – not because your friends are doing this and that.

Number 6: *All work and no play makes Jack a Dull Boy!*

Carefully join clubs. Join in games and sports. Join community work where you live – not just when you are here but also when you return home. Too much of anything is bad!

6. OBSERVE ORDER AND CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION

You must have been told about this, mine is for emphasise. You have a Course Coordinator, a Lecturer, a Head of Department, a Dean or Director, the Academic Registrar, and the Vice Chancellor. The Vice Chancellor works with Deputy Vice Chancellors and therefore, these

Officers can also settle your matters. Welfare matters are in the docket of the Dean of Students, and of course here, you have the various leaders under the Student Guild who you can consult even before you reach the Dean of Students. For example, one should not invade the Office of the University Bursar or the University Secretary on matters that the Dean of Students can help you to solve.

As you follow the channels of communication here, please observe etiquette. How do people behave when they go to Offices? How does one make demands without applying “hooliganism”? Can dialogue, rather than defiance and insults work? Which other people-centred?

7. THE NEW NORMAL:

COVID – 19 has changed all our lives. It is still knocking at our doors. I urge you to take seriously, the new method – blended teaching and learning. We want to do our best to serve you so that you are not left behind the digital growth in Uganda. While we do our part – do yours – by shading off resistance. We can all catch up! We cannot do without modern technology.

7. SPECIAL ADVICE TO FEMALE STUDENTS

You come here as an individual. You want to achieve what brought you. You need to know that there are matters that may change your life forever and matters that may even shorten it. This is pregnancy. When you conceive in your second semester, your life changes and you may never recover. The First Class Degree that you were hoping for will be out of reach. Take the biblical advice that there is time for everything!

Simply because friends or room-mates are doing this or the other does not mean that this is also good for you! We cannot all be rich at the same level. Learn to live within your means – instead of selling your life – your soul.

AVOID PIMPS! Who knows the meaning?

I recall a very attractive Poster – that I saw once at an international conference – in 1995 in Beijing in China:

AS FOR MY DAUGHTER, EDUCATION FIRST, MARRIAGE LAST! I urge you to make this your motto! It will help you to become a woman of substance. It will help you overcome temptations of Sugar Daddies, whether they be your lecturers or people in the community where you live.

8. LAST WORD

My last word is that my doors are open. The doors of members of Management are open. Always come in for advice, for questions where you need answers, as well as advice beyond the class room. Even when you meet us in the streets of Kabale – or elsewhere in Kampala, please do not hesitate to consult, and/or even greet.

I welcome you once again to Kabale University. I wish you a very fruitful stay at Campus here.