

VICE CHANCELLOR'S ADDRESS FOR 2019 GRADUATION

Good morning to all of you – to the Chancellor, Chairman of Company, Chairman of Council, Distinguished guests, the academic body, support staff, the graduating students, and the families and friends who are here to support you. You have had a long, grueling journey in getting here; you have completed this leg of the race, congratulations, well done.

In all our celebration today, it is important to remember the families, partners, friends and all those people who have sacrificed and supported to get you to where you are now. They are the ones who kept you sane (or made you crazy) during exam time, the ones who worried more than you did about getting assignments in on time, the ones who were your foundation during this voyage of discovery.

Let's give them a big round of applause.

To the professors and teaching staff, who sometimes (often?) despaired that you would ever graduate. Thank you for your hard work, effort and dedication in shaping the next generation of DU Alumni.

I feel really honoured today in sharing with you the distinction of honouring Prof. Stephen Talitwala our founding Vice Chancellor. This is an occasion of joy and deep reflection for all of us as we put our past into perspective and truly recognize one of our true heroes at Daystar. Prof. Talitwala you have allowed those of us coming after you to re-fashion our imperfections around your vision and achievements for Daystar so that Daystar can remain the beacon of hope for producing servant leaders who strive for excellence and search for the transformation of fellow human beings. It goes without saying that your recognition for this award is and will remain amongst my most treasured occasions at Daystar as it provides all of us with an opportunity to reflect on the past and focus on the future. You shan't be forgotten.

Please let us all give Prof. Stephen Talitwala a standing ovation for all that he has done for this university!

Daystar is immersed in the new dawn with a deep desire to regain its very being and as your Vice Chancellor I have made a blood debt to take Daystar to the next level of *performance* and *recognition* as a university worthy its creation. Matters related to infrastructure development, faculty recruitment and promotions, spiritual nurture and research engagements are receiving due attention and appeal to the community to share in my intentions and offer your prayers.

What is our Philosophy as Daystar University?

Daystar aspires to embed knowledge and skills in its learners so as to transform them into functional persons guided by biblical teachings for the delivery of excellent service to church and society. While there is joy in the

discovery of knowledge for its own sake, Daystar recognizes its bias towards the beneficial use of knowledge within a Christian context and a strong submission to servant leadership. Our mission is driven by a desire to serve fueled by a sense of involvement- involvement in Christs' teaching and living; involvement in the needs of individuals and their communities; involvement in discipleship and evangelism, involvement in the nurture of inquisitive minds; involvement in the transfer of ideas from the campus to the marketplace; and involvement in societal problems in our country and beyond.

It is my hope and desire, that the graduating class of 2019 will hold high the principles and values that this university was founded on Christ-centeredness, servant-hood and excellence. I pray that you will be Alumni who will change the world in a positive and profound way, wherever you may find yourselves.

When you leave today, you will enter a world struggling to cope with the impact of forces never before seen such as mass automation, the effects of the 4th Industrial Revolution, AI and the circular economy, green technology, and an ever-expanding population, hungry for resources. All of these forces impacting the way that we work, the space we work in and the career choices that will be available to you.

Let me share with you some wisdom: I have found that as *my cheese moves* and *my icecap melts*, the following basic principles win out in the long run:

Cheese a metaphor for what you want to have in life. It could be a good job, loving relationship, money or health. Explaining how change is an essential ingredient for success.

Who Moved My Cheese?

Who moved my cheese is a fable about four characters who live in a maze and they all love cheese. When the cheese disappears, Scurry and Sniff enthusiastically head out into the maze to find new cheese. On the other hand Hem and Hall feel betrayed and complain. They waste their time and energy hoping the old cheese will return. Hall realizes the old cheese won't return so he sets out into the maze in search for new cheese. He writes what he learns on the walls hoping that Him will follow him. Eventually he discovers new cheese and sees that Scurry and Sniff were already there. Cheese a metaphor for what you want to have in life. It could be a good job, loving relationship, money or health. The very core message of the book is this: things constantly change so we must adapt. The quicker we adapt a change the more satisfied will be with.

Oprah, who has overcome massive failure in her life, said" It doesn't matter how far you might rise. At some point, you are bound to stumble. If you're constantly pushing yourself higher and higher, the law of averages predicts that you will at some point fall. And when you do, I want you to remember

this: There is no such thing as failure. Failure is just life trying to move us in another direction”.

- Be curious about everything and keep learning
- Be disciplined, persevere and endure
- Be consistent
- Be honest with yourself and those around you
- Be compassionate
- Be humble
- Be kind

But mostly:

- Work hard, no one likes a freeloader
- Look after family and loved ones, they are more important than any title or achievement you may get, cherish them, as they will still be there for you after the company has found you superfluous to current operational requirements and discarded you for that new, bright, shiny graduate.

But where to from here as a graduate? Is it just all about me, or should you not be considering your place in society as a whole?

And to those of you here who are also receiving degrees, just remember this is only but a commencement. Indeed you should not feel shy to be proud today. But if I put myself in your place, I suspect there are those among you who feel a measure of trepidation about the future. What will be the next step in your journey? Relax. Forget the intimidating unemployment statistics. They are a gift in disguise. And not, as Winston Churchill said after being unceremoniously voted out of office, “a gift that is indeed very well disguised.”

Depending on the statistics and sources you access, it is estimated that approximately 1.5 % of all Kenyans graduate from university, compare this to America where over 80% of the population have the equivalent of a bachelor’s degree... we are indeed the privileged, regardless what the sceptics say.

It is also worthwhile to remember **Kenya** is the sixth most competitive country in Sub-Saharan African, according to the **Global Competitiveness Report 2019**. Additionally, the report by **World Economic Forum ranks Kenya** at 95th out of 138 countries globally with remarkable performance as a business environment. Kenya scored 54.14 points out of 100 on the 2018 Global Competitiveness Report published by the World Economic Forum. The variables are organized into twelve pillars with the most important including: institutions; infrastructure; ICT adoption; macroeconomic stability; health; skills; product market; labour market; financial system; market size; business dynamism; and innovation capability. The GCI varies between 1 and 100, higher average score means higher degree of competitiveness. Kenya is also one of the most uneven countries in the world.

The question becomes, what you will do with the privilege that you have been given? Will you be the graduate that fights for the right to drive a BMW or will you be the one that will reach out and help your fellow man, wherever you may end up after graduation? You are the future and you will help shape and create someone else's tomorrow.

Be wise with the choices you make.

As I conclude;

Your life may be a long and winding road that doesn't always lead to the door you were expecting. But when fate opens a door to you, leave room for it to work its magic. You may find it leads to a life of excitement, service and satisfaction beyond your wildest dreams.

My final charge to you is this. Your professors have armed you with the most powerful weapon on earth. A weapon of mass instruction. They have taught you how to think, to analyze and keep learning all the rest of your lives. You have been educated. Most people in this world are fortunate to have completed elementary school. And they have not been educated but programmed. As such you a part of global elite. This carries with it a great responsibility. Go forth and create something. Improve something. Change peoples lives for the better. Change the world. But always remember as a Daystarian I will expect that you carry out this responsibility with a caring heart, a strong mind and hands that are yearning to serve.

Once again, congratulations to all of you, and I wish you everything of the best as you begin your professional lives.

Prof. Laban P. Ayiro

20/12/2019