



**FIRST YEARS ORIENTATION SPEECH  
BY  
THE VICE-CHANCELLOR**

***THEME: 'DO NOT BE AFRAID'***

**VENUE: NS GROUNDS**

**DATE: MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 3<sup>RD</sup> 2018**

TIME: 10:00AM

- University Management Board members
- Deans and Directors/Members of Senate
- Staff
- Student leaders
- Continuing Students/Our Alumni Officials
- And our 2018 1<sup>st</sup> year students

**Good morning!**

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you all to the University of Eldoret “*the flame of knowledge and innovation*”.

I would like to congratulate you all for your excellent performance during the 2017 KCSE examinations, that ensured your direct admission to one of the leading institutions of higher learning in Kenya, as well as internationally. You worked hard and I congratulate you for your achievement.

**Dear first years;**

The vision for the University of Eldoret is “*to be a premier University that is globally visible in knowledge generation and technological innovations*”. This vision is our goal.

The academic and non-academic staff have the responsibility of ensuring that our core mandates of teaching, research and dissemination of knowledge are fulfilled. Know that an expert in something was once a beginner. We all started our careers at the same level, we were once seated at the same forum as you. We do understand the importance of humble beginnings and hard-work. We succeeded and why not you? *'Do not be Afraid'*. The four or more years you will be here will be filled with opportunities, choose to grasp them, take advantage of what will be laid before you.

I would like to urge you to allow these words be the basis for your success. Do not be Afraid to seek advice, do not be afraid to maximize on the bountiful resources within your

surroundings. And finally do not be afraid to strive for your academic excellence.

I know the past week has been a busy one. You have gone through the orientation sessions. I urge you to learn as much as possible about the University, learn about our values and principles and let them be your foundation. You are now part of an institution that will form the next stage of your life and indeed your future. As it is said *“If you are not willing to learn no one can help you. If you are willing to learn, no one can stop you.”* (Anonymous). So *‘Do not be Afraid’*.

I can assure you that we have adequate resources, both human and infrastructure, which will enable you get the benefit of a

hands-on academic adventure to make you the innovators, entrepreneurs and decision makers of your time. You have chosen to be in the right institution and you are embarking on a journey of new beginnings to your future.

With this in mind, dear students, I now speak to you not only as the Vice-Chancellor but as a mother. University life opens doors to freedom like never before. There is freedom of movement, freedom of thought, freedom of expression amongst others. Your parents and lecturers will not look or follow you around to see if you are doing the right thing. You are on your own. Freedom is a choice, and the decisions that you make will greatly influence your future.

Drugs and alcohol are a reality now. Peer pressure and bad influences are real. I would urge you to desist from activities that will derail you from your studies and the opportunities that have been placed before you as this would lead to poor performance or outright failure. Take care of your bodies for they are the temple of God. If you choose to take up risky sexual behaviour, know HIV and STD's are real. I humbly ask you to visit the University clinic and get further Advice.

My advice though - abstinence, abstinence, abstinence.

**Dear Students,**

Keep your bodies healthy by engaging in co-curriculum activities and your minds renewed by visiting the library. There are various clubs you can join to keep yourselves busy.

Be modest and decent in your dressing, it will give a direct impression to the kind of person that you are.

Just as the University vision stipulates, be our ambassadors and enable us reach that destination. Kenya is investing in you, do not let us down. You are the leaders of tomorrow. In you I see a generation that will transform this country to greater heights. Our country is in need of innovative and resourceful intellectual '*Do not be afraid*', just have a personal Action plan and work towards your goals. As the country strives to implement the 'Big Four Agenda' (Food Security, Affordable Healthcare, Affordable Housing and Manufacturing) and Vision 2030, you are the right beneficiary and ambassadors for these initiatives. Please don't fail us.



Our University provides skills in areas of Agriculture, Science and technology, which are the necessary pre-requisite for steering ahead these national development agenda.

Our society fabric has changed; social media influence is rooted within our society. Be cautious on the impact of social media. Cyber-bullying is a modern phenomenon, let it not affect you. Be in control of your time. As it is said '*Until you value yourself, you won't value your time*' (Anonymous). So '*Do not be afraid*'.

Radicalism is yet another serious scourge that has affected our society. Teenagers and youths are being recruited into gangs and terror-related groups. Please desist from such. Peer pressure and social pressure are things which you will encounter. '*Do not be Afraid*' use your morals and choose wisely.

Always remember choices have consequences. Choose whom you shall serve. But above all remember the sacrifice made by your parents/guardians to bring you to this level.

Dear Students,

We are living in a world where digitalization and technological innovation are a key reality to achieving Universal Sustainable Development Agenda. Science and technology is rapidly taking over all entities of our lives. Smart technologies such as Artificial Intelligence, 3D printers, Genetic Modified Organisms and even digital currency are some of the modern changes of technological innovation we are witnessing worldwide. However, I am happy to inform you that you are in the right place. Our vision and mission highlights the University objectives of enhancing technological innovations. *'Do not be*

*Afraid'* we shall make you become a global brand on matters to do with Science, Agriculture and technology. Have the faith and determination, as Helen Keller once said '*Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement. Nothing can be done without hope and confidence*'.

In the coming days and weeks, you will begin your discovery and learning experience. This will be the best time in your life to learn great things and ask big questions. '*Do not be Afraid*'. Please take advantage of this time to benefit to the fullest. Never stop learning because life never stops teaching. Everything you learn is preparing you for the next level.

As you work through your programme, remember "Democracy and Advocacy" are key in the life of a student. You have the freedom to express yourself but ensure it is

within the limits of the students' rules and regulations. These rules will govern your conduct both socially and academically in this institution.

When in doubt always consult, when you need any assistance, ask for help. *'Do not be Afraid'*.

The University has its administrative structures that are clearly spelt out in the University statutes. The structures guide the operations of the University. The structure starts off at the departmental level, the school boards, the Deans, the Senate to the University Management Board headed by the Vice-Chancellor. The Vice-Chancellor then reports to the University Council and The Chancellor. I am sure during your orientation you interacted with some officers of the University at various levels.

There is the students' organization (UESO) that presents your views to the University management. You are encouraged to channel your issues through the organization as well as the Dean of Students and they will be addressed. The University has an open door policy. You can seek guidance from the Management as well as the academic team. So *'Do not be Afraid'*

Look for a mentor, someone who can guide you through your campus years. Open your mind and explore impossibilities. Don't ask what the University can do for you but ask what can you do for yourself. For as it is always said the "the answer my friend is in your hands"

Take advantage of your time here and learn. An anonymous writer said *'If you want to be successful in life, educate yourself, it is that simple'*. Engage and make good use of the resources at your

disposal. Settle in well, find your niche, study and you will succeed.

Your immediate environment will play a key role towards achieving your goals.

Allan Bloom once said “*Education is the movement from darkness to light*”. Today, we usher in the most unforgettable and rewarding experiences in your life as you build your career at the University of Eldoret.

Lastly, keep your faith in God (Allah) while you are in the University, do not turn away from your spiritual life just because you have come to University; trust in God (Allah) to take you places that you may have never dreamt of before.

Once again I welcome you all to the University and to begin your lifelong association with UoE. Chase after your dreams, explore, discover and fulfil your own destiny. Above all, '*Do not be Afraid*'. Just Run your Race. Reach for your destiny.

God bless you. God bless UOE.

**Prof. Teresa A. O. Akenga**  
**Vice-Chancellor**