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“ Dream to read and to write- to become a reader and a writer. Through you visit and explore other worlds, enter the minds of other characters, enjoy the best, avoid the worst and in so doing shape your life and times. Dream to try your hand at creative writing. Yes you can write. ”

— Dr. Hukka Wario, Chairman of Council

“ Speech by Dr. Hukka Wario, Chairman of Egerton University Council

**Delivered on Friday, 18th June 2021, During the 43rd Graduation Ceremony of Egerton University**

Our Chief Guest,...

Cabinet Secretary Education, Prof. George Magoha

Principal Secretary, University Education & Research, Amb. Simon Nabukwesi

The Chancellor, Egerton University Dr. Narendra Raval

Members of the Egerton University Council

The Vice-Chancellor Prof. Isaac Kibwage



Deans of the Egerton University Senate, Deans of

Faculties and Directors of Schools & Institutes, Chairs of Departments

Members of the teaching and non-teaching staff

Members of the Egerton University Students Association,

Graduands, continuing students, Members of the Egerton University Alumni

Parents, guardians and friends of Graduands and friends of Egerton

University who are watching and listening to this graduation ceremony,

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

### **Mr Chancellor Sir,**

First, I would like to welcome you all to the 43<sup>rd</sup> graduation of Egerton University.

Secondly, let me begin by some house-keeping by informing you about some changes in the University Council and in the University Management Board, over the last one year or so.

In the Council, Mrs Alasa Hirsi retired from the Council in March 2020 having served for two terms of two years each and was replaced by Dr Wilson K. Ronno in November 2020. Mr James M. Ndung'u, an alternate to the Principal Secretary Ministry of Education was replaced by Dr John Nyangena in February 2021. Other Council members, Ms Esther Wabuge, Dr Charity Nyaga, Dr John Ondari, Mr Joshua Otieno and Mr Julius Mutua, the alternate for the Principal Secretary, the National Treasury, were re-appointed on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2020. I would

like to thank those who have left, for their dedicated service to Egerton University and welcome those appointed and re-appointed, as we continue to steer the University into the future.

In the University Management Board, the former Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Rose Mwonya's contract ended on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2021 and she took her retirement. The former Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs), Prof. Alexander K. Kahi's contract ended on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2021 and is carrying out his academic duties as Professor. The former Principal, Nakuru Town Campus College, Prof. Lenah N. Wati and former Registrar (Academic Affairs), Prof. Seth F. O. Owido's contracts ended on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2021 and are now carrying out their academic duties.

The above Officers were replaced by the following in acting capacities Vice-Chancellor – Prof. Isaac O. Kibwage, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs) – Prof. Julius K. Kipkemboi, Prof. Richard M. S. Mulwa as the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration, Planning & Development), Principal Nakuru Town Campus, - Prof. Daniel Auka, Registrar (Academic Affairs) – Prof. Mwanarusi Saidi, On behalf of the Chancellor and on

believe of Council, I would like to thank those who have served in various capacities mentioned for their  
 de and service to Egerton University and welcome those who have taken up the new posts Council looks  
 forward to working with you in the service of the University.

### Mr Chancellor Sir,

I just want to challenge the graduands to dare to dream. To simply dream, fly high and soar like an eagle.  
 Have faith in the power of your thinking. Believe in your hard work and change your circumstances. Let me  
 quote from a famous African American poet, Langston Hughes:

Hold fast to dreams

For if dreams die

Life is a broken-winged bird

That cannot fly

Hold fast to dreams

For when dreams go

Life is a barren field

Frozen with snow




The ICT revolution would not have been realized without the dreams of people like Bill Gates of Microsoft  
 who dreamed of putting a personal computer or a PC in every home. It would not have been possible  
 without the dreams of Steven Jobs whose genius was behind the making of the i-pod, i-pad, i-phone and the  
 mac-book.



Do you know the talents that you have? You probably have talents and abilities which you are not aware of.  
 A friend of mine told me a story of a Kapsabet High School student who did not do well at school. He did not  
 pass his KCSE. But he won an Athletics Scholarship to the US and became a great runner and earned  
 international fame and made some money too. One day when he came back home the Principal of Kapsabet  
 High asked him to address the school. He said, 'I did not find my talent in my brain when I was here. I found  
 it in my legs when I got to the States.'

Have you found your talents? Is your talent in fine art such as in painting or sculpture, or drawing? Is it in  
 outdoor activities such as sports? Is it in agriculture and agro-business? Is it in fluent speaking and debating,  
 a skill that might get you elected to the County Assembly or to Parliament? Is it in entertaining others? Is it in  
 story telling? Is it in playing a musical instrument? Is it in writing? Is it in mechanical skills? Is it in acting on a  
 stage or a theatre? Take time to discover your talents. You might be unaware that you are sitting on a gold  
 mine- you have a skill that can earn you good income.




 Do not try your hand at self-employment. A small business start-up may lead to riches beyond your wildest imagination. If someone tells you, 'mind your own business,' it may sound rather rude. But come to think of it. Suppose you start a business and just mind your own business? What's better than minding your very own business? You have no boss to order you around. You are your own boss. You are not tied to the regimental way of working- reporting for work at 8.00 a.m. and leaving work for home at 5.00 p.m, perhaps rendered immobile by a bumper to bumper traffic jam that steals the best of your evening hours. Let me tell you something. Mind your own business.

It is of no use to have knowledge that you do not apply to solving a personal, family or societal problem. If you are graduating in Agriculture- any branch of Agriculture or Animal Health, can you go back to your rural home, dream big and bring about a small change? Can you improve how the land is used? Is there some manure from the livestock droppings which is just dumped in heaps and not used to increase soil fertility? Do you need to bring more water to the farm? Is

some small scale irrigation possible? Is there room for livestock keeping? Which livestock are already there and which ones do you want to introduce? Is it poultry or rabbits or goats or sheep or is it beekeeping? Do you need to plant more trees? How can you market your farm produce better to increase family income? I have seen fresh graduates come together to create jobs for themselves. They exploit the power of togetherness, of partnership, of doing things as a team rather than just as an individual. I have witnessed such graduates of journalism and communications come together and publish a newspaper in a region where there is no newspaper that reaches the ordinary citizen. The newspaper has since flourished to provide employment for the owners and information and knowledge for the citizens. This initiative of coming together and dreaming to start something, some business, may be applied to other professional areas such as law, medicine, agro-business, education and so on. The message here is simple- come together, form a group and start something to employ yourselves, earn a livelihood and give service to the community.

There are those of you graduating with master's and PhD degrees today. You have learnt to do research. Exploit the skills you have acquired here at Egerton You can dream to be a researcher. Be dedicated to the research method centred on two pillars- empirical evidence and deductive logic. Investigate, measure, analyse, synthesize, theorize, apply. In this way you may innovate, create and tell the world your findings. Through research you may patent your discoveries and protect your intellectual property rights. Talking about patents, Thomas Edison, the man who invented the electric bulb and the phonograph and the telegraph comes to mind. He had 1,093 patents and another 500 to 600 applications for patents that failed to go through, making him the most versatile inventor of all time. When he died, lights be switched off for one hour in his honour. Through research, you will extend the horizons of human knowledge. Welcome to research.

Dream to be a scholar. Read, write and do all that appertains to the degree that is just about to be conferred upon you by the Chancellor Dr Narendra Raval. A scholar is someone who is fascinated with knowledge. A scholar wants to find out more and more. He or she drinks at the well of knowledge but remains thirsty for





more knowledge. A scholar doesn't rest on his or her laurels on acquiring a PhD. Actually that's when the journey for the search for knowledge begins. But a PhD is not a requirement for you to become a scholar. You can be a scholar even without a degree. You just need to read, do

research and publish. I know of scholars who have only the first degree but are more published than those with a PhD. I know of a scholar, who only has a BA degree but widely published. He could not get a promotion at a local university because he did not have a master's degree or a PhD. One day, he travelled abroad and applied for a Senior Lecturer position. The interview panel were pleasantly surprised at his long list of publications in refereed academic journals. They called him in and asked him why he did not apply for the post of professor. He told them his story. He was asked to apply there and then for a professorship and with only a BA he was employed as professor. What matters to academia is your achievement in producing scholarly works. Not a PhD.

Thanks to Covid-19 the way we work and do business have changed dramatically. We can now work from home. You do not have to go to some distant office- wasting time and money on fuel. Your working space has been expanded. You are not confined between four walls and tied to a desk. Now you live and work in virtual space- the digital space in which your connectivity to the rest of the world through the internet is space unlimited.

You can stay at home and pursue a degree course or any other course online. You can do several unrelated jobs and earn a much needed income. The possibilities are unlimited.

In a certain University abroad that I visited, I found that even Professors are employed on annual one year contracts. There was nothing like permanent and pensionable employment. At the end of each year, they had to show cause why their contracts should be renewed for the following year. That meant that for survival, for you to keep your job from year to year, you had to increase your skills. It is called multi-skilling. You would do different courses while on one job, so that you will get another job if the job at hand comes to an end. That is a lesson

for all of you. Continue to study and do practical subjects and gain skills that may give you other jobs different from the ones you studied for here. It is not unthinkable for a teacher to convert to a lawyer, for an engineer to convert to agro-business and so on. Be flexible. A tree that does not sway if a strong wind comes will break. You must learn to sway even between profession.

Dream to read and to write- to become a reader and a writer. Through reading you visit and explore other worlds, enter the minds of other

characters, emulate the best, avoid the worst and in so doing shape your life and your dreams. Dream to try your hand at creative writing. Yes you can write. Perhaps you haven't tried, have you? Put pen to paper or your fingers on the keyboard and get going. Write the way you speak- naturally, relaxedly, conversationally. Make every word count, earn its space. With more mileage at writing you will learn economy of language, precise word choice, colourful vocabulary, vivid detail and you will discover the sound, rhythm, variety, the



be the music, the pulse, the heart-throb of language. You will be bitten by the writing bug. You will get addicted to writing. You won't put that pen or that laptop down. Writing will be as effortless as breathing. And along the way, you will earn some royalties to support your livelihood.

Dream to be a teacher. I mean all of you. Even those not trained to be teachers. Share your education and skills with others. I believe in teachers because I am a teacher myself.

In a famous play by Robert Bolt- *A Man for All Seasons*- Richard Rich, an academic is full of self-doubt, lacks confidence doesn't know what he should do for a living. Thomas More, one of the most celebrated thinkers of all time, tells him curtly, 'Richard, be a teacher.'

In your teaching, emulate the great teachers of the past. The first great teacher of all time is the Greek Philosopher Socrates. He used the Socratic Method- a method which uses probing questions to elicit answers from his learners. He believed that knowledge is already in the learner and only needed to be brought out through probing questions.

The teacher is only a facilitator. Socrates taught Plato and Plato taught Aristotle. Plato founded the Academy, perhaps the first University in the western world, and Aristotle founded the Lyceum, another institution of higher learning and a school of Philosophy. Other great teachers in history include Jesus Christ himself who taught through parables, thus using the *parabolic method*. Whatever method you choose to teach, be a teacher, and transfer your knowledge and skills to others. And you graduating to be teachers today- I am asking you to start an Academy like Plato or a Lyceum like Aristotle, but I hope it's not too much to ask of you to at least start a nursery school in your community. Who knows, it might just turn out to be the biblical mustard seed that became a big tree- in this case a primary school, a secondary school, a technical college and perhaps even a University.

Start something. It might cost you nothing. Let the community pick it up from there.

If you are graduating in law, I would like to share with you the story of the first law giver in history, Hammurabi (1810-1750) BC, King of Babylon, who governed by the rule of law. He crafted 282 laws. He chiselled them into an 8 foot tall stone slab, so that no one could change them and erected the slab in the city centre for all to read and abide by the laws. He also made sure all the citizens of Mesopotamia were literate so that they all were able to read the laws. Ignorance of the law was no excuse. A person was innocent until proven guilty. However, it was an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. If you gorge out someone's eyes, yours will be gorged out too. In Babylon, not many people wanted to study Medicine to become Physicians or doctors because one law of Hammurabi read, 'If a patient dies during or after surgery, the doctor's hand will be cut off. Hammurabi's dream of a harmonious and peaceful society governed by the rule of law was achieved, and this is about 4,000 years ago.

What lessons do we learn from Hammurabi? If he lived among us today, he would not allow the shooting down or killing of a suspect because a person is deemed to be innocent until proven guilty. All suspects, including terrorists, would be brought before a court of law and justice would be served.



Let me give my final word to those graduating in law today. The constitution was not given to the people by an individual. The people gave it to themselves in exercise of their sovereign power. As lawyers, advocates, magistrates or judges you will be the stewards, guardians and custodians of the law, and of the constitution as the law sacrosanct, the law Supreme. You must safeguard the Rule of Law. That is a duty that is not negotiable.

I have just a few words for those graduating in medicine today to become medical doctors. You will take the Hippocratic Oath in a moment. I will summarize the essence of this Oath in about six points. First and foremost, you will do no harm to a patient. Thankfully you do not live in Hammurabi's time, who would cut off your hands if you did any harm to a patient, especially if a patient died during or after your surgery.

Your duty is to deliver a patient from pain, disease and suffering, not to inflict more pain.

**Secondly**, give equal treatment to the rich and the poor. Don't give preferential treatment to the rich. Before you and before God, all patients are equal.

**Thirdly**, Keep a patient's information secret.

**Fourthly**, never use a patient's body, in part or as a whole for medical or scientific experiment-unless you had permission in writing from the patient.

**Fifth**, working in a government hospital and running a private clinic can raise a conflict of interest, A time comes when you may have to choose, although the law allows you to do both.

**Sixth**, if you are a medical officer of health at a County or a government hospital, please ensure that there is no illicit flow of drugs and medicine from that hospital to private pharmacies. Protect the taxpayer from unscrupulous profiteers.

**Seventh** and my last message for doctors- please uphold the Hippocratic Oath.

Finally, to all graduands, to be graduates in just a moment. Go back to your rural areas- go back to Kisumu, go back to Kakamega, go back to Mandera, to Weir, to Turkana, to Taita, to Narok, to Kitui to, to Embu, to Kirinyaga, to Marsabit, to all the 47 Counties. Revitalise traditional livelihood support systems with the knowledge you have gained from Egerton. Go out there. Be a shining star, a glittering jewel in the crown of Egerton University. May God bless and keep you.

**Thank you for your attention.**

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