

The Essence of Matriculation - A Trajectory for Enduring Success

The Honourable Vice-Chancellor, Professor Abel Idowu Olayinka, the Chair of the Ceremonials Committee, Professor Omolola Atalabi, the entire membership of University of Ibadan's hierarchy here convened, my mother, Chief Folake Solanke, SAN, the first female Senior Advocate of Nigeria, leading the contingent of my life village here today, ladies and gentlemen, parents and families of the matriculating students, matriculating students, I bid you all a most cordial good morning.

There ends my adherence to protocol. I now embark on my lecture titled -The Essence of Matriculation - A Trajectory for Enduring Success. I hereby proffer my profound gratitude to the Hon. Vice-Chancellor, Professor Olayinka for graciously extending to me, the kind invitation, to serve as the Matriculation Lecturer at this propitious occasion at the University of Ibadan (UI), the premier university of Nigeria, the first, which must always remain the best. As an alumna, I am most humbled to be accorded this high privilege. I would like to take a few moments to express my sincere appreciation to UI for the superb and comprehensive education I received here. Wherever the latitudinal and longitudinal coordinates of my life journey have directed my steps, no matter the course of study, country, task or human dynamics, UI prepared me to face all the circumstances competently and to succeed. Although, the words may appear sorely inadequate, permit me to articulate a most sincere, thank you. Matriculating students, my ardent hope is that, likewise, this experience will become reflective of your adventures.

I hereby convey very warm greetings to the matriculating students from the alumni of the University, especially the 1977 MB.BS and the 1984 LL.B admission sets, both of which I was most fortunate to belong to. I personally bid you a most earnest welcome to this esteemed guild of spectacular scholarship. I congratulate you on the attainment of this commendable milestone to wit: matriculation at the University of Ibadan. This occasion is a confluence of two important aspects of life; the prior hard work, expended to arrive at this juncture and the present commitment, to embark on a university odyssey.

The overarching goal of this lecture is to inspire the matriculating students to aspire for success here at the university and beyond. Thereby, I venture to amalgamate the ensuing sequence of words towards that intention.

Rallying Call

Before I delve into the specifics of the lecture, I crave the indulgence of the Hon. Vice-Chancellor, to engage, under our phenomenal banner of distinction, in an age-old tradition of University of Ibadan students, whereby we collectively invoke our rallying call, the "Great Ultes" exhortation. For UI students and alumni, the invocation represents an enduring shared belief system that reminds us of our paramount obligation to embrace our

unique destiny, as a community of the premier university and motivates us to continuously aspire for excellence in all realms of human endeavour. This is our collective commission and lifelong responsibility as UI's ambassadors.

Matriculating students, literally, I was first in your position forty-two years ago. Although, you may consider that time in ages past, certain principles regarding achieving success at UI remain constant. Therefore, because I have successfully achieved the desired goal you seek, graduation, many times, including twice from this university, it would be most expedient for you to listen attentively during this lecture. In addition, I have effectively guided three children to collectively attain nine tertiary level credentials. Moreover, as your matriculation lecturer, I am invested in assisting you to achieve success here at UI and thereafter. To which end, I have commenced discussions with the university to determine how, as may be permissible under the regulations of the university, I may correspond with you through your respective graduation years to offer words of encouragement. This is my promise to you, and I expect nothing less than an unrelenting reciprocal commitment to your studies and quest for distinction.

Respect for Lecturers

I would be abdicating my solemn responsibility attendant to this address if I failed to mention the importance of respect and due deference for your university lecturers. In that regard, matriculating students, there are certain expectations during this lecture, as follows:

1. Sit up straight in your seats;
2. Turn off all your personal electronic devices, (note that I did not say "off the..."; a linguistic abomination unfortunately permeating through our national dialogue. No UI student must ever say that.);
3. Refrain from engaging in side commentary;
4. Do not fall asleep during the lecture; and
5. As it pertains to future lectures, abstain from arriving late.

Such conduct constitutes an absolute disregard for lecturers and is not reflective of the outstanding standards our university seeks to perpetuate. I hereby instruct you to refrain from engaging in any disrespectful behaviour, for such, does not comport with the image of the educated personalities you aspire to become. Lecturers deserve our immediate and continuing deference. Not only have they acquired vast knowledge, but also deem it a worthwhile enterprise to steer others successfully through challenging academic excursions, a noble cause indeed. The sheer quantum of their knowledge commands enduring respect. Trust me when I convey that you do not know

more than your lecturers. If you harbor that erroneous notion, please dispose of it with all immediacy. Rather, seek with humility to gain from their founts of knowledge.

The University of Ibadan Phenomenon

Matriculating students, the chance of studying at the University of Ibadan is indeed a remarkable privilege because UI is steeped in distinction and presents a transformative opportunity that propels you towards attaining lifelong success. Extolling the magnitude of UI's stellar legacy is not a vacuous proclamation, to the contrary, it is firmly established in verifiable facts. To highlight the enormity of this occasion and to motivate you, I will briefly attempt to explicate a snapshot of UI's monumental legacy.

The archives of University of Ibadan are replete with many famous alumni including, but in no measure limited to, the incumbent Vice-Chancellor, Professor Abel Idowu Olayinka, Professor Grace Alele Williams, the first female Vice-Chancellor of the University of Benin, Professor Emeritas Dunning Olaniyan Taylor, the first African to receive the L'Oréal-UNESCO Award for Women in Science, Adebayo Faleti, Africa's first newscaster and Chinua Achebe, an acclaimed author. Last, but certainly not the least, the literary colossus, Professor Wole Soyinka, the first black African to win the Nobel Laureate prize for literature. What an amazing coalition of superior intellect! In the arena of sports, UI also holds notable distinction. Irrespective of other historical accounts, Emmanuel Ifeajuna, a UI student, was the first black African to win a gold medal during the 1954 British Commonwealth Games in the high jump competition with a personal best of 6ft 8in. A commemorative illustration of his accomplishment was etched on the cover of exercise books when I was a child. Undoubtedly, for that feat, another great UIte indeed.

Matriculating students, their profiles of brilliance resoundingly exemplify the realm of spectacular legacies that are forged right here at UI. The common denominator of their stories is that, just like you, they were students matriculating at this university decades ago and now we behold with awe what they dared to accomplish. Pause, for a moment to contemplate the magnitude of their achievements, and from this instant believe that you can attain such impressive statures. Why not? I ardently challenge you to aim for the pinnacle of your dreams, not to circumscribe the dimensions of your vision, rather to, court audacious optimism and develop an unwavering belief in yourselves. Similarly, you can attain magnificent heights if you commit to determined industry.

I was incredibly inspired by the fact that I was studying at UI, where many legendary scholars walked amid students, the mere academic mortals. Famous lecturers dedicated to the propagation of scholarship, populate the volumes of the university's records in all its faculties. To spotlight a few: Professor Latunde Odeku, Nigeria's first neurosurgeon, Professor Emeritus Adenuga Oyenuga, UI's first professor emeritus and first African professor of

agricultural science, Professor Ayo Bamgbose, the first professor of linguistics in Nigeria; Professor Theophilus O. Ogunlesi, Nigeria's first professor of medicine, Professor Jimoh Oyawoye, Africa's first professor of geology, Professor Oyinade Odutola-Olurin, renowned ophthalmologist and the first female professor of medicine in Nigeria, and last but by no means the least, Professor Emeritus Toriola F. Solanke, the "King of Surgery", the first Professor Emeritus of surgery in West Africa.

In addition, the university's administration prides itself as a celebrated bastion of integrity and estimable standards. A historic occurrence in 1972 during Professor Adeoye Lambo's tenure as Vice-Chancellor highlights the university's commendable ideals. A petition was received from the University's Visitor, requesting that UI confer the Emperor of Ethiopia, Haile Salassie, who was visiting Nigeria, with the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters. The request was denied by UI. Reasons advanced by the revered UI Senate included the inability to honestly justify such conferment. Authors report that the Senate was concerned that the Emperor had done nothing to improve the lives of his subjects suffering under one of the worst conditions of poverty in Africa.

The Senate's decision could have subjected the university's hierarchy to untold ramifications during a military regime. Nonetheless, UI's bravery remained resolute. The Emperor, upon return to his country, was toppled by a coup, in part, and as permanent vindication of UI's decision, for the same atrocious conditions his people were subjected to. Thus, the chronicles of UI shall always reflect that the first university in the nation relied on merit and the authentication thereof in its decision-making process. What a quintessential act of institutional bravery and exceptional pride. And for UI, please join me in a resounding ovation and a spirited Hear! Hear!

Matriculating students, the brief but captivating historical account was provided to illumine the commendable values of this grand institution, serve as a beacon of possibilities, and charge you to embrace its legacy through diligence, ethical conduct and dignified comportment. At this point, I pose a question to the students: Who is the Olubadan of Ibadan? The reason behind the inquiry will become evident as the lecture progresses.

The Essence of Matriculation

Matriculation is defined as enrolling in a university as a candidate for a degree. Research places the origin of the verb matriculate in *circa* 1570s. The word originates from the Latin word "matriculatus" which is the past participle of "matriculare" which is defined as to register, and from "matricula" which means public register. The word university is derived from the Latin phrase "universitas magistrorum et scholarium" which means a community of teachers and scholars. The word university from the Latin word "universitas", means "a whole", and is described as an institution of tertiary education and research which awards degrees in various academic disciplines. Thus,

students at this ceremony, are being registered at this institution of tertiary education and research, which awards degrees. Matriculating students, this ceremony, arranged for you, not only conveys the significance of the occasion, your formal registration at UI, but officially grants you an exclusive portal to the richness within this academic cosmos. Matriculation, a transformative landmark, commands this ceremony, is the singular reason for this assemblage and should resonate loudly with you as a defining moment in your lives. It presents a profound opportunity laden with the possibility of exponentially increasing the realm of your viable options in life.

Apart from the inspiring academic culture, scholars also espouse that the dynamic university experience provides opportunities for personal growth by exposing the students to an interesting social milieu, a stimulating environment that permits students to meet and interact with people from different social and cultural backgrounds. During your studies, you should not only gain academic qualifications through an exacting curriculum but also competencies in conflict resolution, diplomacy and human relations. I emphasize the word “should” because the nature of the competences achieved by each of you will be directly proportional to the vigour expended on this vital undertaking. I implore you to purposefully invest in your advancement and challenge your intellect to elevations not previously imagined. Do not be content with intellectual lassitude.

A new adventure may usher in some anxious moments. Hence, I would like to allay any trepidation regarding this academic exploration. If your predecessors could do it, so can you. In preparation for this lecture, I created a survey to elicit empirical data from individuals who have successfully attained university degrees. The survey results revealed that irrespective of the underlying reason for attending university, the survey participants did so successfully. Some of the participants even found the experience easy and most offered you advice, including, focusing on your studies, effective time management, stress reduction and balancing the university experience.

Attaining Enduring Success

A compelling argument regarding a technique for sustained success is embedded in the words of a towering legend and statesman, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, GCFR, SAN, (hereinafter referred to as “Papa Awo”) who inspired me greatly. In 1960 in his autobiography “Awo”, he stated as follows:

“The usual recipe for success is not wanting in my life story, a single-minded definiteness about one’s object in life, an intense concentration of all the energies of one’s body and all of the forces of one’s brain and mind on the attainment of one’s chosen objective, and finally, in pursuit of one’s aim, perseverance. Those who desire to reach and keep their places at the top in any calling must be prepared to do it the hard way.”

The intellectual celebrity underscores personal drive, unwavering focus, diligence, discipline, hard work, and fortitude as indispensable components of the long journey to success.

Success Optimization Strategies

Certain guidelines instructive to the university expedition can be extrapolated from Papa Awo's prescription for success.

- First and foremost, assume personal responsibility for your future and be accountable to yourself.
- Expeditiously ascertain the requisites for graduation in your respective courses of study, discuss them with your faculty advisers early in the academic years and thereafter periodically, and strategize accordingly.
- Create a personal plan for success with a clear pathway to your academic destination. Steadfastly execute the plan. From today, start planning towards graduation. Set goals, priorities and deadlines and be prepared to work assiduously to accomplish them.
- Develop a routine for your university experience and embrace persistent discipline.
- Engage in effective time management to assure that you fulfill all the university's requirements.
- Figure out your way around the campus quickly and become cognizant of the methods the university utilizes to dispatch notices to students so that you are intimately aware of all developments.
- Commit your individual lecture schedules to memory or put them on a calendar or personal electronic device. Essential to your success is being aware of where you ought to be and arriving there on time.
- Take both written and mental notes during lectures. After lectures challenge your brain to recall what you heard in class without looking at your notes. This strategy served me well.
- To assist you with your progress, continue to learn about yourself to capitalize on your strengths. Pushing yourself to your healthy limit depends on the full appreciation of your abilities. Do you prefer to study in silence or with background noise, are you an early riser or one that can keep late vigil studying, can you study for long periods or elect to study for shorter periods? One size certainly does not fit all.
- I caution you to beware of procrastination, for indeed, it is the thief of time. Endless procrastination will result in academic bankruptcy. Tomorrow is elusive, therefore attend to arising matters in a timely manner.
- Periodically, conduct a risk assessment of your progress to graduation. Evaluate your strengths, weakness, opportunities and risks, and adjust accordingly.
- Seek help when required. Do not wait until the penultimate hour before examinations are to start or assignments are due to request assistance. That would be an exercise in futility.

- Develop a voracious appetite for the acquisition of knowledge and study like you have never done before. My father, Professor Emeritus Toriola F. Solanke, tirelessly emphasized the virtue of adopting a persistent practice of regular review by saying – “Eternal repetition is the key to success”, mind you, not repeating classes, but repetitively reading your textbooks so that the information becomes imprinted in your brains. My roommate in the final year of the MB.BS program, Dr. Nike Etomi, (nee Afilaka), now a psychiatrist, will testify that I woke up prior to 5:00 a.m. daily for over a year to prepare for the final MB.BS examination. I strongly encourage you to adopt methodical study habits.
- Create mnemonics to help you retain information and principles. As examples, while studying medicine to commit the twelve cranial nerves to memory, I created - O³ T² A² Grand FVSH and during my law studies to recall the elements of negligence - DBIC¹.
- Consider yourselves as students participating in global pedagogic Olympics wherein you are competing with students around the world and study extensively. The technological tools at your fingertips open doors to extensive information. However, as part of enhancing your objectivity, validate the sources of information on the internet and social media because not everything on those platforms has an iota of credibility.
- Practice, practice and practice properly obtained past examination questions. My mother, Chief ‘Folake Solanke, SAN, instilled this routine into me since I could read and write, and it proved invaluable to my academic quests, a convention I firmly believe in, and passed to my children.
- Carefully read and answer the examination questions posed not the questions you thought were asked or hoped would be asked. That would be calamitous. Answer all the questions. Employ speed and accuracy.
- Confront your studies with confidence. Do not focus on how difficult things may be, but rather, concentrate on methods to overcome those difficulties.
- Plan for contingencies, be flexible and organized. Regarding good organizational skills, I encourage people by saying – a place for everything and everything in its place. The time expended looking for things, is valuable time that could have been applied to advancing other matters. It is no good searching for items required for examinations just before the test, rather, make sure that the items are in the same place every day so that they are readily retrievable when needed.
- Learn from the lessons garnered from mistakes and use them to expand your personal toolbox for survival. Human existence is a continuous pilgrimage of endurance. I remind my children that there is no perfect script in life, not to let life win, rather to overcome life itself. Navigating life is the ultimate chess game.

¹ Cranial nerves - Optic, Olfactory, Oculomotor, Trigeminal, Trochlear, Abducens, Auditory, Glossopharyngeal, Facial, Vagus, Spinal Accessory and Hypoglossal, and the elements of negligence – Duty, Breach, Injury and Causation.

- Eschew the perils of the unchecked ego or the “I know it all” mentality, for pride surely comes before an academic fall. Life is a maze of continuous learning. Nobody knows it all.
- Adopt healthy habits. Any type of deleterious behaviour, for example, excessive drinking, smoking, lack of sleep and illegal drug use, have long term consequences. Do not abuse your bodies and invest in your health. You have only one body, protect it.

Implementing some of the practical strategies should assist you with forging ahead steadily. In addition, your personal safety is of utmost importance. Therefore, assume vigilance as your creed and ensure that you are acutely aware of all matters pertaining to your surroundings. There is no substitute for your personal safety. In this regard, I advise you to create a “Buddy System”, so that at least one friend always knows where you are or supposed to be.

Strike a healthy equilibrium between your studies and social life. That constitutes part of the university experience. My spouse, Dr. Kunle Koya and I were in the same C-79 group as medical students, but he will affirmatively attest that he knew that my focus on graduating was not negotiable. He is now a distinguished nephrologist. During my preparation for this lecture I asked him to describe UI’s impact on his life. He was momentarily speechless. Then, with palpable gratitude, he said as follows:

“My experience at UI had an inestimable impact on my life and what I have become. I am what I am today because of the comprehensive education I received at UI. The experience exposed me to remarkable role models, taught me self-confidence, the value of meticulous work, commitment to scholarship and excellence, not to settle for the minimum but aspire for a higher purpose in life and greater expectations of myself. It was a life changing milestone. I do not know where I would be without UI.”

Matriculating students, similarly, I hope this will become representative of your stories. Seize the opportunity!

To capitalize on the expansive nature of this golden opportunity, it is crucial that you do not attend university in a cocoon of oblivion. That is why I asked you whether you know that Kabiyesi, Oba Saliu Akanmu Adetunji I, is the reigning Olubadan. Attending UI and not being aware of who the paramount traditional ruler of Ibadan is, would be emblematic of not being aware of your ecosystem, and tantamount to walking with your eyes closed. While at UI, broaden your horizons by astutely observing the myriad of occurrences transpiring around you.

As an enriching adjunct to your scholastic progression, I counsel you to learn from people, places, periods and particulars, I refer to as the “4Ps” of life. I was profoundly inspired by Chief Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti, the “Lioness of Lisabi, a commanding heroine of women’s rights in Nigerian and the first woman to drive a car in the nation. My role models motivated me to excel academically, not to be self-absorbed, and to advocate for important

matters. Hence, I find myself a staunch advocate for the rights of children and women, civil rights and social justice. To elevate the oppressed, students kindly nurture the best of humanity's causes. Songs and poetry influenced my life. For example, I resolved not to engage in Fela Anikulapo Kuti's zombie "jorojarajoro" march, rather I wanted to be an independent thinker. Inspiring me till the present, is a short poem from my childhood - "good, better, best; I will never rest, till my good is better and my better best", and likewise the song, "bata e a ro kokoka to ba ka we re", which loosely translated to English means, your shoes will make a prestigious jangle if you read your books.

Students discard not, the inherent scourge of shame and the terror of embarrassment. They are powerful effective deterrent mechanisms bearing peculiar hallmarks. At UI, the humiliation attached to receiving the dreaded "Advised to Withdraw" notice for failure to meet the university's standards should electrify you to surpass the academic requirements. An overwhelming sense of mortification must irrevocably attach to malfeasance, including criminal conduct and violations of the student code of conduct, which may result in the rustication of students from the university. I implore you to review the applicable student handbooks because asserting ignorance of the university's regulations will be fruitless mitigation, especially since I have provided you with due notice.

Avoid capitulating to negative peer pressure at the expense of your future. It is absolutely imprudent to adopt unscrupulous conduct just to be accepted by your peers. Refrain from welcoming peril with open arms for fleeting acceptance. Develop strategies to address negative peer pressure before you are confronted with it. The presence of the frightful cults in UI represents contemptuous sacrilege of the university's norms. Students, please regard those cults as pestilence and categorically denounce them. Steer clear of danger!

Adverse Effects of Technology and Social Media

The virtues of technology are evident but beware of the enticing charisma and pervasive nature of the internet and social media. Steadfast willpower is essential to overcome the alluring addiction of time wasters. All work and no play may make us dull, but all play and no work results in squandering precious possibilities. Tiwa Savage, Teni, Simi, Olamide, Davido, Kiss Daniel all contribute to the entertainment sector. However, their music and videos are a consequence of the judicious use of their time. Do not advance their careers to the detriment of yours. Restrict your surfing, sharing, retweeting, liking and posting. Time is finite. Manage your allotment wisely.

Family Support and Social Network

Students after this ceremony, I entreat you to thank your parents, families and support systems again for their unwavering devotion and support. Within your consciousness, must always reside a treasured place for them. They have invested love, time and resources in your upbringing. Reward them positively. Cherish the

friendships you made before university and those you will make while here because as social beings, we generally are not configured to be islands. Support each other and refrain from forming exclusionary cliques. During this voyage, you need individuals who will drop everything to help you, remind you when assignments are due, urge you to go to the Jaja Clinic when you are feeling poorly and encourage you when you feel overwhelmed. Besides, when in the future, you become astronomical juggernauts, you should have reliable friends who will unapologetically tell you the unvarnished truth.

Matriculating students, whether or not you were ranked first on the admissions list, you are here now. The past cannot be deleted, but certainly you can orchestrate the evolution of your future. The journey ahead may not always be easy. However, life's challenges are not the ultimate import, but rather, the lessons extracted from the complexities of life and the application of those therefrom to the ensuing phases, are more significant. Therefore, systematically and with resilience, pursue the full potential of this period and translate it to enduring success.

The Parental Balancing Act

Parents and family members of the matriculating students, I congratulate you on successfully steering your charges to this noteworthy milestone. Your support of these young individuals is not over but continues. Although parenting never ends, henceforth, you will have to adopt a delicate balancing act of love that permits the students to exercise some independence while still operating in the background as their safety nets. Allow them to blossom and they will pleasantly surprise you. Henceforward, the value system that you instilled in them as a moral compass will also guide them. However, I enter a "caveat" for the benefit of the parents. When exerting their independence, should the students appear to ignore your advice, remind them that their matriculation lecturer communicated that parenting never ends and they must still listen to your advice.

The University's Obligation

I hereby recognize and commend UI for all its accomplishments. Considering the world's feverish pace in pursuing new frontiers in education, technology and the varied fields of human endeavour, I am obligated to address some of my comments to the university. The academic reputation and ranking of universities increase their local and global prominence making them more attractive to prospective students worldwide, potential investors and industry collaborators. As lasting testament to its celebrated birthright as the preeminent university in the nation, and to maintain relevant to an ever-evolving global marketplace, UI must, with invigorated and sustained intensity, tactically assess its curriculum, national and international rankings and strategically effect the changes warranted.

To safeguard UI's national distinction and elevate its global standing, I respectfully commend to the university's attention "inter alia", the concurrent consideration of the following:

1. Embarking on a comprehensive rebranding campaign to revitalize the UI brand through a consistent commitment to a new narrative towards enhancing the public's opinion. Towards the goal of becoming a world-class university, UI's public relations office must ensure that UI dominates the news through active media engagement and strategic marketing. This initiative will require maintaining a dynamic, interactive, cutting-edge and effective website. The university's website is its electronic international entrance, which must never be shut and must always positively communicate the stature of its premier identity.
2. Actively recruiting the best administrators and lecturers who continue to challenge students to surpass expectations. Further, the best students, like those matriculating today, must always be admitted.
3. Increasing academic collaborations with international universities and investing in numerous well-coordinated exchange programmes for the faculty and students.
4. Expanding industry engagements at home and abroad, by increasing student internships and the frequency of seminars to attract company moguls and entrepreneurs as guest speakers and potential donors.
5. Maintaining data on the university's graduate recruitment rate and regularly publishing information regarding the number of UI alumni recruited upon graduation.
6. Intensifying the research conducted by UI academics independently and in collaboration with other researchers from other institutions.
7. Increasing scholarly publications by the faculty members which will result in more citations of UI authors by other scholars, nationally and internationally.
8. Methodically adopting a dynamic academic programme planning and prioritization process to continuously assess the relevancy of the syllabi to the escalating needs of industry and globalization. The current world configuration dictates the exploration of new frontiers in education, including but not limited to, facilities management, genomics, translational biology and medicine, biomedical engineering, robotics, artificial intelligence, biosecurity and biotechnology, cybersecurity, new languages, supply chain economics and management and women's studies.
9. Improving the performance of the alumni on professional examinations, for example, at the Nigerian Law School. This requires identifying the requirements for success and guiding students accordingly.
10. Embracing innovative fundraising initiatives. International universities regard their alumni as an indispensable lifeline to resources and advancement because the alumni are securely entrenched in the labyrinths of industry and revenue. The universities conscientiously invest in collecting and maintaining the

contact information of their prospective alumni and employ diverse communication methods to request donations from them. Additionally, the universities study and use effective fundraising strategies. UI must expand its efforts to obtain the contact information of prospective alumni prior to graduation, track its alumni at home and abroad, retain the information, study and effectively use innovative fundraising strategies.

Additionally, UI must commit to investing in modern technology and infrastructure. Just as visionaries deemed it fit to establish UI in 1948 to foster comprehensive tertiary level education in Nigeria, UI's current strategic objectives and sustainable development goals must anticipate and continuously implement comprehensive plans that advance its mission. If other universities can accomplish this, I remain confident that UI can and will.

Matriculating students, during this lecture, I have endeavoured to provide an overview of the accomplishments of alumni to inspire you, a panoramic view of possibilities attainable with education at UI to motivate you, practical tips to encourage you to successfully navigate the university exploit and life, as well as personal examples to persuade you that accomplishing this academic feat is indeed possible. Additionally, I underscored the predominant theme of tireless hard work to galvanize you into action and stressed the value of authoritative role models to encourage you to become altruistic. As your academic metamorphosis ensues, as one of your first assignments this week, write a letter to yourself, expressing your hopes and dreams regarding this expedition and life generally. Keep it safe and review it at the inception of each academic year to determine if you are on track with your goals or need to adjust accordingly.

Furthermore, I now instruct you with the persuasive argument of John Fitzgerald Kennedy, the 35th President of the United States of America, delivered during his famous Rice University speech in 1962 to rally the citizens to embrace an expedition to the moon, wherein he charged them as follows:

“We choose to go to the moon. We choose to go to the moon in this decade and do other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard, because that goal will serve to organize and measure the best of our energies and skills, because that challenge is one we are willing to accept, one we are unwilling to postpone, and one which we intend to win and others, too.”

To answer inquiries that may arise questioning the reference made to an American at the matriculation of UI students in Nigeria, I boldly say, but why not. I believe that aspiring for the zenith in life requires panoramic vision regarding advancements of all humanity, and not operating with myopic vision and in a vacuum.

In furtherance of my intrepid declaration, Americans conquered part of the galaxy by landing on the moon, first in 1969, and have advanced human endeavour to superior heights, invented products improving human existence, which we take for granted, including cars, airplanes, ships, computers, personal electronic devices, social media platforms, medical therapies, et cetera. Remarkably, during the “Miracle on the Hudson” as the world beheld in utter amazement, they landed a plane on water with no casualties, and thereafter, landed another plane with a calamitous engine explosion safely on a tarmac, male and female pilots respectively. All feats I verily believe are possible here in Nigeria should we maximize all our intrinsic talents. Thus, I implore the newly minted great Ultes to strive for excellence and become a generation of UI students and Nigerians that dramatically increase our inventions and manufacturing, and thereby, minimize the nation’s extreme fixation on exorbitant importation.

It is not surprising, since great minds seldom differ, that there are powerful similarities in the words of two men of extraordinary character, Papa Awo and President Kennedy. The common themes, which thunderously echo from the past through the present; reinforce that determination and the coalition of the best energies of one’s body and full measure of the forces of one’s brain and mind are essential to attaining any chosen objective in life.

Conclusion

In moving to conclude, matriculating students, henceforth, I charge you as ambassadors of our “Great UI” to always raise high its emblem of excellence and assume dignified comportment. Moreover, whatever your reason for attending this prestigious university, you have chosen to attend, not because it will be easy, but because it is a challenge that must ignite your single-minded definiteness about your purpose in life. As the overarching goal will ultimately serve to increase the measure of your acumen, you must commit to intently concentrate all the energies of your bodies and all of the forces of your brains and minds on the attainment of the chosen objective of graduation, which will ultimately yield tremendous dividend. This academic enterprise, will prepare you to adopt the tenacity required to succeed in life, impact the nation and world, and gallantly pass the baton to the future. This is a challenge you have willingly embraced, one you must not be deterred from completing, and one you must wholeheartedly resolve to conquer, and finally, in pursuit of this trajectory, embrace steadfast perseverance. To which all important cause, I bid you good fortune, and to all here congregated, I thank you for your attention. Long Live University of Ibadan! Long live all Great Ultes!

Respectfully submitted by

Dr. Yemisi Solanke Koya, Esq., Golden Poet, and dated for the 26th day of June 2019.

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