

**VICE-CHANCELLOR'S ADDRESS AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE 24<sup>TH</sup> ORIENTATION PROGRAMME FOR THE 2018/2019 FRESH STUDENTS ON MONDAY, 4<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 2019 AT ANYIM PIUS ANYIM AUDITORIUM.**

Principal Officers,  
Professors,  
Deans and Directors,  
Heads of Department/Units,  
Resource Persons,  
Great Umudykes,  
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is with great delight that I welcome you all to the 24<sup>th</sup> Orientation Programme for Fresh Students of this University. On behalf of the Governing Council, Management, Senate, Staff and the older Students of this University, I welcome you heartily to this great citadel of learning. I also congratulate you for scaling all the hurdles to secure admission into this University. Many other qualified candidates were not so fortunate. This immediately confers a heavy responsibility on you right from the onset, to settle down quickly and make the best out of this opportunity to acquire sound University education.

In the course of your studentship, we shall ensure that you are exposed to all the skills that you will require to function productively in an acutely competitive and challenging global

environment. How much you take away and the success you make out of this learning enterprise depends entirely on how clearly you have articulated your goals in life and the degree of your commitment and dedication to the achievement of these goals. Every season has its people, and every person has his/her own time. You are the people of this season. How you make use of this season is what history shall record for you. The choice is clear: success or failure. Every generation has its own stock of successful and unsuccessful people, men and women who utilized or failed to utilize the opportunities before them. For the one group, life has so much to offer; for the other group, life after the University is full of frustration, regrets, bitterness and decline. If you are wise, you shall choose today, the path of success which is travelled by only disciplined and hardworking individuals.

This brings me to the other component of your training here. This University insists on the character component that accompanies learning in order to make man a decent and moral being. The problems of this country are caused and exacerbated by the educated elite who are without character and who are driven by base, primordial, selfish and self-serving motives. It is the determination of this University not to contribute this stock of deleterious manpower to this nation. We insist on wholesome,

civilized behavior here, conduct that takes into account the greatest good for the greatest number at all times. Our University Anthem clearly states where we draw our strength from, and the ideals that drive us as an institution. We have zero tolerance for anti-social behaviours and tendencies as a University. As a consequence, cultism, examination malpractice, indecent dressing, extortion, violent behavior of any description, sexual harassment, prostitution and other manifestations of anti-social behavior have no place in this University.

Senate will deal decisively at all times with any student involved in such acts.

Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike is, by all accounts, a young but rapidly growing institution. As a consequence, there are limitations and challenges that we face in the area of infrastructural facilities. However, over the years, we have worked very hard to improve our physical infrastructures in an incremental mode. During your time here, things can only get better as we build on, and improve on the facilities available. We have a small but serene Campus that is rapidly moving towards providing an ideal and conducive physical, psychological, social, and academic environment for you to maximize your potentials for excellent intellectual attainments. We want to keep this Campus neat and beautiful at all times, and as a

heritage for the generations of staff and students coming after us. We therefore encourage you to develop, right from the onset, a stakeholder mentality and attitude that commits you to join passionately in the care for the University environment and facilities, realizing that damage to existing facilities and the environment, in any form, will impact negatively on your comfort, your training, and, consequently, your future.

Several Resource Persons shall speak to you on various aspects of life on Campus and shall introduce you to the concepts that are ingrained in University education. We have carefully arranged this Orientation Programme to point the way you should go if you want to make a success of your stay in this University. We believe that you shall take advantage of this rare privilege. Listen attentively to your lecturers, and seek further information from your Head of Department or the Dean of Student Affairs. Remember to address the issue of your HIV/AIDs status. Visit our Voluntary Counseling and Testing Unit at the Medical Centre to ascertain your status and get counseled if you are either infected or affected.

Once again, I wish to return to the issue of cultism because of the dangers it poses to unsuspecting students and our corporate life as an institution. Cultism has ruined many lives and brought

untold grief to many families. Cultists use all sorts of seemingly benign strategies to recruit innocent students and this includes persuasion and deceit. They paint all kinds of false but attractive pictures and scenarios to lure prospective members. They promise power, security, wealth and immunity from all kinds of hazards as dividends accruable to members. These are all false promises because, cultism leaves in its wake debasement, low esteem, failure, despair and sorrow.

It is imperative to make it abundantly clear that anyone of you who allows himself/herself to be lured and initiated into cult groups shall be shown his/her way out of this University. It is an integral part of your Orientation programme that we expose you to all that will set you on the path of success so that you are never enticed to deviate from the path of wholesome living. If you were initiated before you arrived here, you have an opportunity to renounce cultism and repudiate it completely. For such people, we advise you to submit yourselves immediately to the Dean of Student Affairs or to the Guidance Counselor so that you can be helped now, before it is too late.

We have instituted a prayer session in Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike which holds on the 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of Every Month at 8.30 am. Please don't miss this!! – Moslem staff and students also hold their prayers simultaneously. Please, don't

ever miss the MOUAAU PRAYS Session.

Once again, I congratulate you on your admission into this unique University. In the next few days, you will formally sign the register of Students of MOUAAU during the Matriculation Ceremony. We pray that God will guide and protect you in your journey through this University and give you all the wisdom, knowledge and understanding that you need so that, in the end, you shall emerge joyful with your degrees and shine like gold that has been passed through the furnace, to the glory of God.

Thank you and God bless.

**Professor Francis O. Otunta**

Vice-Chancellor