



KAIMOSI FRIENDS UNIVERSITY

3RD GRADUATION CEREMONY SPEECH

BY PROF. PETER N. MWITA

THE ACTING VICE-CHANCELLOR

**DURING THE 3RD GRADUATION CEREMONY OF KAIMOSI FRIENDS
UNIVERSITY**

HELD ON FRIDAY, 29TH NOVEMBER 2024 AT 9.00AM

THEME: SHAPING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE WITH KNOWLEDGE AND INNOVATION

1. SALUTATIONS

Distinguished, Ladies and Gentlemen;

2. WELCOMING/PREAMBLE

I am pleased to welcome you all to Kaimosi Friends University, on this auspicious occasion of our 3rd Graduation Ceremony. Today, we are proud to present 896 graduands from the following four out of our five schools:

- 1) School of Business and Economics with 77 graduands,**
- 2) School of Computing and Information Technology with 28 graduands;**
- 3) School of Science with 58 Graduands, and**
- 4) School of Education and Social Sciences with 733 Graduands.**

Our fifth School, that is, the School of Health Sciences will not be graduating students this year because the pioneer students are in their fourth year.

In terms of gender distribution, of the 896 graduands, 389 are female while 507 are male representing a ratio 43%: 47% which is a positive indicator towards achieving gender parity. I am happy to mention that among our graduands this year is the Deputy Governor of Vihiga, Mr. Wilberforce Kitiezo who will be conferred with a masters degree in Business Administration.

Ladies and gentlemen please join me in applauding the class of 2024 graduands. Congratulations!

3. STUDENT MATTERS

Madam Chancellor, ladies and Gentlemen;

I am happy to report that during this year, our students excelled in various co-curricular activities besides their academics:

1. In sports and Games our Freesbie Team represented Kenya during the East Africa competitions held in Kampala Uganda from 21st -22nd September, 2024. The team emerged the best, hence they are East Africa Champions. Following this good performance, one of our student, Nelson Samba, who was the best player, got a fully funded sports scholarship to study at Davenport University in Michigan, the United States of America. Further, our students featured favourably in several inter University sports and games.

2. Drama and Music clubs participated in the national competitions, in which our University Student Band emerged National Champions.

4. ACADEMIC PROGRAMMES

Ladies and Gentlemen;

On matters academics, I am pleased to report that our University currently offers 43 Academic Programmes approved by Commission for University Education, with an enrolment of 6721 students. We are continuing to review our programmes to align them with the Competency Based Curriculum as we prepare to receive the first cohort in the year 2029; this is besides reviewing them to ensure they are desired and relevant to market needs.

Madam Chancellor,

The University has its niche in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) with bias in the field of Health Sciences. Already, the University has started investing in Basic Sciences and Health Sciences with the construction of the following underway:

- a) Anatomy laboratory;
- b) Physiology laboratory;
- c) Optometry laboratory
- d) Optometry workshop

Besides the above, the University is building an ultra-modern library which will be adequately equipped with teaching and learning materials upon completion.

The Curriculum for Clinical Medicine is already underway, paving the way for the introduction of Medicine and Surgery programs.

5. RESEARCH, INNVATION AND OUTREACH

- 1) **Research and Publications:** In research, we have five externally funded new projects valued at KES. 24 Million, and this is expected to grow significantly, as more focus is put in research activities at the University, considering that this is an important pillar for academic excellence. With regard to publications, appropriate measures have been put in place to ensure increase in the number of publications in reputable journals.

Along these lines, we hosted our 2nd Annual Conference in May this year, from which, 65 research papers were generated. This Academic Year the University has supported 15 members of staff to attend and present papers in international conferences. Furthermore, one of our staff, Dr. Victor Shikuku who is a lecturer in the Department of physical Sciences was honored with the prestigious National Outstanding Research Award in the Young Researcher Category at the inaugural Kenya National Research Fund.

In order to promote research and increase outputs, the University is gradually increasing budget for research. In the current 2024/2025, the research budget stands at KES.8, 000,000, representing 0.83% of our total operational budget of KES.1, 081, 365,923, up from 0.28% in the Financial Year,

2023/2024 which had an operational budget of KES.705,660,246.

2) **Innovation:** Madam Chancellor, in order to stimulate innovation facets both among our students, staff and the neighborhoods, the University is set to start holding Annual Innovation Week, with the 1st one scheduled to take place in March, 2025. On innovation outputs, I am glad to mention that two of our staff, Dr. Remmy Shiundu and Mr. Bonface Jiveri have patented an innovation titled *“Sustainable Production and Delivey of Biodegradable Sanitary Pads.”* These are made from sugarcane bagasse and other ingredients. In addition, another innovation by Dr. Shiundu and Mr. Jiveri on Biogel won KES. 25 Million from Bioinnovate Africa towards branding of the product. This innovation is focused on the production of a cost effective and environmentally friendly cooking fuel. Branding will start once funds are received.

3) Outreach and Community Service

Madam Chancellor, Our Chief Guest, Ladies and Gentlemen;

Community Service is a key area of excellence for our University. In this regard the University has in place strategic partnerships to enable the sharing and transfer of knowledge and technology solutions to the communities we serve. I am happy to report the following:

- a) Kaimosi Friends University, the East Africa Yearly Meeting Friends Church Kaimosi and Number One Wood Company (China) have established a partnership that has resulted in the establishment of a plywood processing plant within the Kaimosi Complex. The University played a role of linking Number One Wood Company with the Friends Church as part of her community service engagement. This Plant, on completion, will contribute to economic well-being of the community. The University on her part will enhance her research and innovation infrastructure besides supporting general teaching and learning.
- b) The University is on the forefront of promoting of cultural and social life of our society as one of the objectives of University Education in Kenya under the Universities Act, 2012. In this regard, Kaimosi Friends University, members of the university's neighboring communities, Friends Church leadership, and local leaders enthusiastically endorsed the establishment of a Cultural Preservation and Research Center within the university premises. This initiative signifies a collective dedication to safeguarding cultural identity, preserving the environment especially the replacement of the extinct flora and fauna, besides promoting scholarly inquiry into local traditions.
- c) Kaimosi Friends University through the School of Health Sciences has continued committing herself to community service and practical education by organizing a series of eye screening camps throughout Vihiga County. Beginning this year, every July and August of every year, the University will be providing vital eye care services to a broad spectrum of residents of Vihiga County and the country at large.
- d) The University has cemented a partnership with Vihiga County Teaching and Referral Hospital towards improving the provision of healthcare services through capacity building, research that

generates new knowledge as well as innovative approaches and technologies in healthcare.

We believe that community engagement service justifies the existence of the University in this part of the country.

6. CONTRIBUTIONS TO BOTTOM UP ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION AGENDA

Madam Chancellor, Our Chief Guest, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The University is alive to the effect that the Government Economic Recovery Agenda is anchored on the Bottom-up Economic Transformation. This is geared towards driving economic turnaround and inclusive growth, with priority sectors being, Agriculture; Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME); Housing and Settlement; Healthcare; Digital Superhighway and Creative Economy. Kaimosi Friends continues to support this Agenda as contained in our Strategic Plan 2023-2027. Particularly:

- 1) Through our School of Health Sciences, we are not only developing human resource, but also offering healthcare services through medical camps and strategic partnerships for best practices. This will in the long run ensure access to healthcare, which in turn leads to a healthy working populations for the rest of the economic sectors.

- 2) In Agriculture, the University is investing in her agricultural farm to achieve a level of being a demonstration centre of excellence and best practices in Agriculture. We are also revitalizing our academic programmes in agri-business to harness opportunities in the marketing and selling of agricultural produce to support farmers in getting value for their agricultural produce.
- 3) **Innovation:** Starting the Year 2025, the University will be holding Innovation Week and take part in other innovation showcasing forum with intention to incubate and actualize innovations and technology transfer to the communities we serve. Our innovations on Biogel will produce environmentally friendly energy thereby supporting efforts to combat climate change, while Biopads will support healthcare for women. The University will continue to support innovations in various sectors of the economy, among them: Climate Change, Water, Agriculture, health, to mention but a few.
- 4) On Digital Superhighway and Creative Economy: Our Strategic Plan 2023-2027 takes into account the utilization of the widening digital space. Through this, the University is

reforming her programmes and ICT infrastructure towards promoting digital literacy and mainstreaming in her programmes.

7. OUR UNIVERSITY VISION AND GOING FORWARD

Madam Chancellor, Our Chief Guest, Ladies and Gentlemen;

In the early months of this year, a deliberate move was made to review the University's Vision to realize the desire of Kaimosi Friends University achieving world status. In this regard, our University has taken on a new vision, changing from "A centre of excellence in teaching, innovation and holistic development" to "A world Class University of Excellence in Teaching, Research and Community Service." This change is an incubation to position our University as an international actor, in combating societal challenges. To this end I am happy to mention that we launched our Strategic Plan 2023-2027 on 26th June this year and it is now being implemented.

Further I am pleased to report that on 7th November, 2024, we launched our Centre of Excellence for Climate Action and Research, with the support of the County Government of Vihiga, a ceremony officiated by the Governor, His Excellency Dr. Willber Ottichilo. The

Centre plays a critical role in shaping climate policy, driving research, and developing actionable solutions in key areas such as adaptation, mitigation, and climate financing and training.

8. APPRECIATION

Madam Chancellor, please allow me to appreciate the following who relentlessly support our endeavours:

1. Graduands of Class of 2024, for having chosen Kaimosi Friends University as gateway to growth. Alongside this I appreciate their parents, guardians, spouses, sponsors, friends and relatives for supporting the graduands.
2. The East Africa Yearly Meeting Friends Church Kaimosi for being there for the University, in prayer, spiritual nourishment and general mentorship and guidance in times of need.
3. The Tiriki Elders, local administration and business community for their friendship;
4. Leadership of Hamisi Constituency CDF and that of Muhudu Ward Fund for direct financial support for to our students who hail from these areas through bursaries.
5. Members of National and County Assemblies of this County for representing our University's interests.
6. The County Government of Vihiga County, led by Hon. Dr. Wilber Ottichilo for supporting our teaching and research infrastructure,
7. The Western Regional Commissioner and the County Commissioner of Vihiga County

8. Representatives of various invited guests.

9. And finally, all of you for finding time to attend this memorable occasion.

To our beloved graduands

You now stand at the threshold of limitless possibilities. As you step out today, you are not just graduands but empowered individuals with the knowledge to innovatively shape the future, thereby underscoring our 3rd Graduation Ceremony theme. You are the human resource base needed to drive our society's aspirations. Be bold, brave, creative and dynamic and make a positive impact in whatever you may encounter.

Once again, congratulations. I wish you all, a Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year 2025!

Madam Chancellor, I take this opportunity to invite the Chairman of Council, Kaimosi Friends University to address this congregation.

Thank you.

