



Pan Africa Christian University

**41st Graduation Ceremony
Friday, 8th July 2022**

CHIEF GUEST'S DRAFT SPEECH

Amb. Simon Nabukwesi, CBS

- The University Chancellor, Bishop Calisto Odede
- Members of the Board of Trustees and Governing Council
- The Vice Chancellor, Professor Margaret Muthwii
- The entire University leadership and community
- The Graduating Class of 2022
- Ladies and gentlemen

I am delighted to have been invited to preside over this graduation ceremony because Pan Africa Christian University has retained its faith, values and uniqueness across the different phases of its evolution. It feels excellent to be unique and faithful to your mission and vision otherwise you get lost in the pool. Congratulations on the courage to remain faithful to your calling as a Christian university.

Allow me also to congratulate and celebrate the 2022 graduands for this great accomplishment where you get counted as having been disciplined enough to keep focused on your academic pursuits to the point of graduating today. Your unrelenting efforts will from this day open paths of opportunity for you as you pursue excellence in line with the theme of this year's graduation ceremony theme. I know without a doubt, that the completion of your various degrees and certificates was a gruelling task, especially coming from a pandemic. I congratulate you for forging forward against all odds.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am cognizant of the fact that the shift to online learning, in some ways, was a challenge to many Universities and students. I congratulate PAC University for being a trendsetter in online learning and



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patiently walking with the students to embrace this great tool of our times. I am aware that PAC University's engagement with online learning dates back to 16 years ago. Today, the university is renowned as a leading centre of excellence in online teaching and learning in the region. Indeed, I congratulate you for having been chosen to train 30 universities in the six East African Community countries on how to adopt digital skills for online learning. This is a great feat for the university and Kenya in general.

Further, I am also informed that in 2018, PAC University strategically invested in the acclaimed Blackboard Learning Management System (LMS) platform, which is arguably one of the best platforms for online learning used by leading universities in the world.

At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, many universities in Kenya struggled to transition to online learning as captured in a report by KMPG that asserts, "For many universities, the future arrived ahead of schedule, abruptly and without invitation."

Ladies and gentlemen, disruptions will continue to be witnessed in our world, and that leaves us no choice but to be steps ahead. Universities must therefore embrace emerging technologies to remain globally competitive. Online learning allows you the flexibility to more easily balance work, life and schooling than any other mode. When learning online, you can revisit past material or stop the lecture to perform additional research or organise your notes. When you transfer these technological skills to the work environment, you will find yourself more effective because you have developed critical leadership skills by utilizing the online specialized knowledge, creating efficient processes and making decisions about the best communication processes, such as what should be discussed in-person or electronically.

Because of the ability to log on from any location, class discussions feature a broader range of perspectives, helping you enhance your own cross-cultural understanding, and providing the opportunity to network with people from around the globe.



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The corporate world is looking for people who can innovate, and innovation often comes from seeing life from outside the confines of your immediate environment as you get exposed to new ideas from professionals and fellow students in other countries, sparking the creativity of your own necessary for overcoming emergent obstacles and challenges in your workspace. This problem-solving ability is the most critical skill for a leader in the contemporary world.

Ladies and gentlemen, PAC University has already made a name for itself in leadership training, with the Master of Arts in Leadership and the acclaimed PhD in Organizational Leadership programs. Leadership involves collaboration. We must think about how to collaborate with universities in the country and internationally. We must see what we can learn from centres of excellence in different universities, especially other universities like yours that have embraced values-based leadership. Without a focus on value-based leadership, there can be no real authenticity to the guiding principles an organization seeks to live and operate by.

As you move out of PAC, you will realise that values-based leadership instils a common set of values in all employees, improving their cohesiveness and willingness to work together. Knowing that a leader has similar beliefs often encourages employees to follow their instructions, increasing the chance of success with every goal. This enhances engagement, performance, and even retention – all of which foster growth and profitability. Values-based leaders take time each day to reflect on their recent decisions and motivations. Doing so offers them the chance to reevaluate their values, determine their purpose and discover what really matters to them as leaders and members of a team. Strong leaders have the willingness to assess themselves in these areas and the honesty to diagnose the truth.

As value-based leaders, your self-reflection must often start with open feedback from those above you, your peers, and direct reports. This ensures the leader has the ability to identify and address blind spots in how they engage others, make decisions, and accurately communicate the vision.



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Pan Africa Christian University has the value proposition as the place where values-based leaders are made. You must, therefore, as graduates from this great institution look at situations from different viewpoints and integrate the diversity of thought from the teams you will be working with while leveraging the core values in all decision-making. You must know when to lead, when to follow, and when to set the direction and get out of the way. As value-based leaders, you are expected to be more effective at decentralizing decision-making and leadership because higher degrees of trust exist up and down the chain of command.

This kind of flexibility calls for humility and authenticity in leadership. These two are founded on the belief that the leader is not different from the people she or he works for. These leaders believe that every employee holds just as much value to the organization as they do. Humble leaders do what it takes to lift their teams and ensure they are well taken care of for their work.

As a value-based leader, your ultimate goals involve protecting the team, pushing praise down, and taking total ownership over mistakes and missed opportunities. You will seek to understand that the performance and results delivered by the team rest with you. You will continually ask yourself and others, "What can I do to be a better leader for this team?"

Authenticity will compel you to be honest and transparent with your teammates. And equally as important, your words will of necessity need to match actions consistently on and off the battlefield. Authentic leaders are highly self-aware and are mission-driven and think long-term. This must now define your life beyond the confines of the lectures and lecture theatres that have released you to the labour market today.

Due to the natural traits of authenticity and humility, I urge you to never be satisfied with the status quo. You must seek continuous improvement, and life-long learning, for yourself and for the people you will lead.

I challenge the university administration to embrace participatory decision making process in order enhance effective communication. Such



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communication helps to avoid suspicions and conflicts that are so rampant in our universities. As you embrace participatory decision making and practice values-based leadership you will be able to drive this university to higher levels of performance by selecting and developing talent that connects with the purpose and mission of the University. This will again create an environment where members are supported and feel a sense of belonging. Faculty should be especially sensitive to power dynamics and should provide support to advisees as developing scholars and unique individuals.

This again calls for students and the university administration to engage in transparent, recurring conversations about mutual expectations in areas that include frequency of meetings, communication preferences, and response times for expected feedback. Similarly, milestones should be clearly communicated and included in program materials.

Students should be provided with the support and tools needed to develop the skills required to successfully navigate their graduate careers and to prepare them for their chosen profession. Faculty and staff should support career exploration and identification of relevant career resources by partnering with the corporate world more deliberately.

Finally, I urge all members of the PAC community to foster an environment that encourages appropriate care for each individual's mental and physical health.

Once again, congratulations to the Graduating Class of 2022 and my prayer is that you will pursue excellence as you participate in the great work of transforming the society with the right values since you have yourself been moulded into transformative godly Christian leaders in line with the University's Mission.

God bless you as you face tomorrow with confidence. Thank you for listening to me.