

MATRICULATION SPEECH

FEBRUARY 2022

The Vice Chancellor, Professor Kayode Adebowale,
The Deputy Vice Chancellor Administration, Professor E.O Ayoola,
The Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic, Professor Aderonke Baiyeroju,
The Deputy Vice Chancellor Research, Innovation and Strategic Partnerships,
Professor Oluyemisi Bamgbose,
The Registrar, Mrs Olubunmi Faluyi,
The Acting Bursar, Mr. Adewuyi Popoola,
The University Librarian, Dr Helen Komolafe-Opadeji,
Deans of Faculties, the Postgraduate School and of Students,
Directors of Institutes and Centres,
Chairperson of the Ceremonials Committee, Professor Omolola Atalabi,
Gentlemen of the Press,
Parents of Matriculating Students,
Matriculants of today,
Distinguished ladies and gentlemen.

It is indeed an honour to be here today. Dr. Demola Lewis, thank you for the kind recommendation, and thank you to the Vice-Chancellor for giving me the privilege to speak with this 2021/2022 set of matriculants.

Before I present my remarks, I will like to take this opportunity to thank all the lecturers of this great University, who are and always have been committed to the success of every student and continue to take a personal interest in their academic and social development.

With deep felicitation, allow me to welcome you to the commencement of a life-defining experience and a magical opportunity. I heartily congratulate all of you for achieving success in getting a seat in this reputable university.

When I received the invitation to be the commencement speaker for today, my mind ran back to 14 years ago when I matriculated. I tried to extrapolate from many experiences from matriculation in 2008 to graduation in 2012, and share with you the many lessons I have learnt along the way, while also drawing your attention to steps and thoughts you can guide yourself with as you journey on the path of achieving greatness on this campus.

The first is that you need to know you are here for a reason, and that is - to learn. If you have been given your dream course, you are lucky. If you have not been given your dream course, you are no less lucky. The best you should do is to make a dream out of the course you have been given. There is no irrelevant knowledge. You need to know that so many extremely successful people passed through the same department you are in right now, so it's nothing about a department or a course but everything about you.

Most of you matriculants must have chosen this institution for different reasons. I chose the University of Ibadan as both choices of institution because of her reputation. You might have chosen because she is the citadel of learning, her quality of scholars, her high level of intellectualism amongst others, but bear in mind that the primary objective of being here is the same- to explore and attain the best academic excellence in your diverse fields.

Set a high academic standard for yourself and start now. I will use my example. I graduated from the Department of English and Literary Studies with a borderline CGPA. But do you know my CGPA of 5.8 didn't happen in my final year? The close call happened from the very first year and laid a foundation for what I graduated with.

The best time to start building a solid foundation for a successful academic is now, and the most crucial way to survive this is to avoid piling up your notes, waiting for the announcement of tests and exams before reading. How I sailed this, very simply, was by managing my time properly. I'd block out 2 to 3 hours in the evenings to read each day's lecture, before the next. Always remember a saying, "you can write a 365-page book every year if you only write one page per day".

Imagine if you start reading from the day of your first lecture; two things will most likely happen. The first is a good level of comprehension, which means you are not just memorizing, but building a depth of understanding that will remain valuable to you forever. The other thing is, you will end up with good grades, and just like the opportunities it presents; high grades imply intelligence, personal excellence, and dedication.

You have come from across the country to learn, in the classrooms, from one another and acquire skills and knowledge that will make our society a better place. The road that led you here has not been smooth and I am not promising you that the journey ahead will be smooth either but perseverance is key. As a student put failures and mistakes into a growth perspective. I remember in my second year how I had a 'C' in an examination for which test I had an 'A'. I was destabilized, I blamed myself for reading too much which led to a response mismatch, and re-

blamed myself for reading too little by focusing on the subjects that interested me in the course. After taking needless hits on myself, I spoke to a senior colleague who encouraged me to see failure as an expected part of the learning process that actually helps to build stamina. Analyze what went wrong, seek help where needed, try again, and try again. Do not avoid persevering by giving up on courses or activities that don't come easily.

Relationships matter. You are at the beginning of adulthood now and it is so tempting to hastily feel like you are already a full grown-up. In my first year, I used to respond to many suggestions with "I know what I am doing" "I make my decisions now" and many objectionable responses but as time flew by, I started realizing that I needed help and help would only come when I try to seek it.

Your peers, your senior colleagues, your lecturers; just because they have Ph.D. to their names is no reason to believe that they are only interested in your books. Learn to make acquaintances of them and listen to them. Most of them teach more than books, there are so many life lessons and opportunities they share. Learn from your senior colleagues too. They have gone ahead of you and made mistakes that you can only avoid if you ask them questions and allow them to provide valuable and timely advice. Also, learn with friends, no man is an island. Join study groups for your exams or tutorial groups for the courses you seem to be having challenges with. Treat past questions together, do the 'hot seat' quizzing where you allow your study peers to ask you difficult questions in preparation for tests and exams.

Networking is important. But choosing your network wisely is more important. For me, I randomly found people during faculty registration, hostel check-in and we started talking from my first day. Of course, everyone was excited and welcoming

and socializing. Then after a few days of settling in, I started knowing more about everyone; their interests, ambitions, priorities, and that helped me to sieve out. I chose my friends and knew my acquaintances.

Choose your friends carefully. Friends can support you in your efforts to maximize the benefits of being here. Friends can also distract you by setting on having a good time at the expense of your studies. Get to know people who express high social, academic, and personal values that align with yours.

Embrace self-discipline and self-care. Self-discipline does not come naturally, but is deliberate. Make personal plans to attend your classes and get to the lecture venue on time. Learn to stay off social media sometimes, put away your phone and other distractions. Set personal deadlines and meet up with them. Make sure to stay healthy by eating fruits and vegetables, as well as carbs and protein- maintain a balanced and budget-conscious diet. You are responsible for your health now, so when you have an injury or feel ill, visit the University clinic as quickly as you can for treatment. A healthy body leads to a healthy mind.

Seek out special opportunities. This is a time to expand your mind and your skills. Consider all four dimensions of life as you strive to educate yourself – physical, spiritual, intellectual, and social. Today, anywhere in the world where I get to share my entrepreneurial journey, I always mention the University of Ibadan. Why? Because my story started here, this campus made me discover my inclination and gave me wings to fly with it, I joined the University Entrepreneurship and Innovation Society and because I didn't hold myself back, I found life purpose. So, getting involved in activities beyond academics, it will help you to build life-long skills. It could be a sports team, a recreation club, an artistic group, or an entrepreneurship society. However, be careful not to join too many organizations

and be specific about your choices. It should be based on interests and skills development.

Finally, school is not a scam. The essence of education is not only for certification, but it is deeply rooted in the last lines of the University anthem “For a mind that knows is a mind that is free” You have started strong, make sure you see this through.

I am certain that you will find these 4 to 6 years the most inspiring years of your lives. I hereby wish you all a very happy and academically fulfilling journey ahead. You are opening an outstanding chapter. Welcome to the First and the Best!

Long live the 2021/2022 set!

Long live the University of Ibadan!

Long live the Federal Republic of Nigeria!

Thank you all for listening.

Submitted by Ms. Ifeoluwa Tryphena Olatayo