

***STANDING ON THE SHOULDER OF GIANTS ...***  
**An address presented by the Vice Chancellor, Professor**  
**K. O. Adebowale**  
**During the 2021/2022 Matriculation Ceremony**  
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*Deputy Vice Chancellor (Administration)*

*Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic)*

*Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research, Innovation and Strategic Partnerships)*

*Registrar*

*Bursar*

*University Librarian*

*Provost, College of Medicine*

*Provost of the Postgraduate College*

*Deans of Faculties, and of Students*

*Directors of Institutes and Centres*

*Members of Senate*

*Members of Congregation*

*Heads of Departments*

*President General & Members of the University of Ibadan Alumni Association*

*President of the students Union and members of the executive*

*Members of the University Community*

*Celebrated Matriculants of Today*  
*My Lords Spiritual and Temporal*  
*Gentlemen of the Press*  
*Ladies and Gentlemen*

I want to begin my address by congratulating the matriculants of today, on your successful admission to the University of Ibadan, the first and the best university in Nigeria. I congratulate your parents, guardians and all well-wishers. I congratulate also all of us gathered here for the privilege of witnessing a significant landmark in the lives of these young people.

A matriculation ceremony is a formal event for declaring new students as fully recognised members of the university community. It is, therefore, a significant event in that, it is the university's way of marking and celebrating the steady inflow of young people into its fold.

For the matriculants, however, matriculation symbolises a transition of many types but time will permit me to mention just two of them.

First, there is the transition being pupils into studentship. This particular transition comes with far-reaching implications. For

instance, as students you would be treated as those who have the ability to engage in independent learning, rather than as pupils who have to be spoon-fed. As students, you would be expected to explore your course contents beyond what is taught in the classroom. As students, you would even be expected to decide which elective courses you take based on your preference.

Second, there is transition with reference to what the society expects from you. As undergraduate students of the University of Ibadan, you would be required to meet a high level of expectation from the society. In your speech and action, the society expects excellence, decorum, depth of analysis and insight, far more than it expects from others. You probably have heard the saying: “if it is from UI, it is of the best quality possible”. It is a true statement based on the track record of excellence for which our university has become known.

That track record of excellence is the past that we treasure so much. All of you here will be walking on the walkways that Wole Soyinka once walked; some will receive lectures on the exact spot where Chinua Achebe penned the first sketches of *Things Fall Apart* when he was a student here; you will eat in the cafeteria once used by S. Tunde Bajah whose Chemistry books you most probably would have read; and take up

spaces in the library once used by Adetowun Ogunsheye, the first female professor in Nigeria. In the University of Ibadan, even the dew drips history, and every square foot on which you step brings you in contact with the giants of old, too numerous to be listed here. Giants who modelled academic excellence, devotion to humanistic values, and service to the nation and humanity. From this university have emerged leaders of thought, leaders in business, the best of professionals, inventors, and founders and leaders of charities.

So, you have both a unique opportunity as well as a challenge ahead of you. Opportunity because you have giants on whose shoulders you can stand. Isaac Newton once wrote a letter to Robert Hooke in which he said, "If I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants". In some places, may be there is a scarcity of giants on whose shoulders people can stand; in the University of Ibadan, however, there is an abundance of giants.

The challenge, however, is that the bar in the University of Ibadan is rather high. Each succeeding set of giants raised the bar significantly: bar of academic excellence, morality and proper conduct, and service to humanity. They set a standard for you to beat, or at least, maintain. Every year, in national

and international competitions, students from the University of Ibadan bring in awards and laurels in large numbers: that is a standard you must maintain or beat. In the Nigeria Law School, University of Ibadan graduates excel in ways not paralleled: that is a standard you must beat or, at least, maintain. In professional associations, University of Ibadan products lead in the number of honours, distinctions and fellowships; that too is a standard you will soon have to beat or, at least, maintain.

How do we stand on the shoulders of these giants? First, it will take sharing similar values with the giants. Values of hard work, honesty, respect for others, kindness and respect for the law are values that the giants all share. If these giants had been involved in criminal activities, they would not have been the models we celebrate today. The entire world is groaning under the burden of growing criminality but young people who want to be the giants of tomorrow must abstain from whatever can tarnish their image such as violence, examination malpractices, theft, occultism, gangsterism, yahoo-yahoo and ritual killing among other vices.

Second, it will take spending time “with the giants” and learning at their feet. Some of these giants walk up and down on the corridors every day. Your lecturers and instructors are people who have carved a niche for themselves, well

respected scholars within and outside Nigeria, giants on their own rights. You would do well to learn from these ones so as to stand on their shoulders. There, however, are those who have retired or even passed on. Spending time metaphorically with such giants requires reading their biographies and published works. Fortunately, the university library system, headquartered in the Kenneth Dike Library is equipped with over three million volumes including life-changing biographies of giants from the University of Ibadan.

And for us, the question is not whether or not you can stand on the shoulders of these giants or even beat the standards they set. We know you can. You are here today because you are among the topmost best in the country. Let me briefly explain.

By the day that the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) closed its application portal to your set of applicants, a total of 63,791 applicants had selected the University of Ibadan as their university of choice. Out of these huge number, 22,777 managed to score 200 or above in the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME). Out of these, 13,998 sat for the post-UTME in the University of Ibadan. Among these over 13,000 candidates, only 7,265 scored 50 or above in the post-UTME. From among these, only 4,255 were offered admission based on the rigorous and transparent admission process of

the University of Ibadan. This is what I am saying: only 6.7% of those who chose the University of Ibadan finally got admitted – and you are one of that small number. You deserve our congratulations.

<b>Applicants</b>	<b>UTME</b>	<b>DE</b>	<b>Total</b>
Applicants who chose UI	61,813	1,978	63,791
Applicants who scored 200 or above in UTME	20,799	1,978	22,777
Applicants who wrote UI's post-UTME	12,798	1,200	13,998
Applicants who scored 50 or above in post UTME	6,065	1,200	7,265
Applicants finally offered admission	3,811	444	4,255

What does all this mean? It means you are best of the best. You are among the top 6.7% of over 63,000 applicants. It means you are the head; not the tail. It, however, also means that you have a lot of work to do. All of you who are being matriculated today are champions in your own right. And now we will have champions not just studying along with one another but in fact competing with one another.

Therefore, you need to be aware that at the end of your stay here, there will be another sorting process. At that point the champion of champions will emerge. Therefore, while you celebrate your entrance into the University of Ibadan today, you should also gird your loins for the exciting journey ahead.

On our part, we continue to do everything possible to make your university life both memorable and productive. In order to make you comfortable, we are devoting significant funds to maintaining the halls of residence while encouraging the development of private hostels that satisfy our requirements in terms of your comfort and security. We are expanding access to the University internet services and maintaining our subscription to international journals, books and other resources so that you do not have to labour before you can access good materials. We continue to maintain the 24-hour library system to cater for the study-time preferences of different students. Our colleagues work hard to update the contents of instructions so that our courses and programmes, and therefore, our students can compete with their colleagues anywhere in the world without being disadvantaged. Our service units, including the University Health Centre, the Works and Maintenance Division, among others, are being supported for better services to students and staff.

Therefore, given your past academic achievements, the history of the University of Ibadan, the opportunities available to you, and the efforts being made by management, you have everything you need to stand on the shoulders of giants and see farther than they did. If you see farther than they did, you should achieve more than they did. And the race begins now.

I congratulate you once again for successfully making it to the University of Ibadan, and I wish you success in the journey ahead. Welcome to the place to be; welcome to a great citadel of learning; welcome to the home of giants; welcome to the University of Ibadan.

God bless