

13TH GRADUATION CEREMONY
UNIVERSITY OF ELDORET VALEDICTORIAN'S SPEECH,
LAWRENCE MWANGI KAIREGI - MPE/005/19

The Chancellor, Chair of the University Council and Council members present, Vice chancellor, Deputy Vice Chancellors, Members of the Senate, Members of the university Management Board, Academic Staff, Distinguished guests, My fellow Graduands, Ladies and Gentlemen, Good morning!

On August 28, 2019, we matriculated at the University of Eldoret as eager learners, ready to absorb the knowledge and skills that would shape our futures. We arrived with dreams, with visions of what campus life might bring, perhaps imagining it as a smooth journey. But, soon enough, reality set in, and we faced the challenges of university life head-on—moments of skipping meals, financial pressures, and self-doubt. While these trials at times felt overwhelming, they helped us grow stronger with every step. Alongside lectures and textbooks, we learned valuable life lessons from each other and from the challenges we encountered.

The realities of campus life shaped us into who we are today—individuals forged by resilience and intelligence, capable of adapting to adversity and pushing forward. Every challenge became a lesson, teaching us to be resourceful, to collaborate, and to push our limits. My own journey was bolstered by support from lecturers and mentors who went above and beyond: Eng. Swaleh, who equipped me with practical and innovative skills; Eng. Kiptum, who has been a mentor since my first year; Eng. Kibet, who was like a father, encouraging me through hardships; Eng. Omenda, who taught me research skills;

Dr. Ruth Njoroge and Dr. Becky Aloo, who guided my innovation journey; and Mr. Raymond Koech, whose dedication as a technician helped me gain hands-on experience. I'm also grateful to Dr. Kollongei for his guidance, and to Dr. Grace Mwaura, Dr. Geoffrey, and the Rhodes Selection Committee, University of Oxford, who saw my potential to impact the world and honored me as a Rhodes finalist for Kenya at Kempinski hotel in Nairobi.

I want also to thank my friends who helped me in this journey including Kelvin Kinoti and his mother, Juannita Wambui, Hilary kamau, Godfrey Mwangi and Joseph Ngigi just to mention a few.

We each brought unique dreams and ambitions to this journey, but none of us was spared challenges along the way. I supported myself for five years, working in the "juakali" sector and living in a hostel, all while navigating the trials of a broken family. Yet, through these obstacles, we stood firm, each setback strengthening our character and resilience.

Today, we gather to celebrate not only our academic achievements but the strength, resilience, and determination that brought us here. Graduation is more than just a ceremony; it's a testament to countless hours of work, sleepless nights, and the obstacles we overcame.

Let us carry forward the lessons of resilience and adaptability that university has taught us. May we step into the world with confidence, prepared to make a difference and give back to our communities. We are warriors of knowledge, equipped to shape our futures

and uplift those around us. As we leave this place, let's remember that the journey ahead may not be easy, but we have the strength to rise above any obstacle. Let's continue to transform setbacks into fuel for progress and use our knowledge to make a meaningful impact on our world. May God bless you.

Thank you!