

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2ND ALUPE UNIVERSITY (AU) GRADUATION CEREMONY HELD ON 8/12/2023 AT 8.00AM AT THE UNIVERSITY GROUNDS

The program kicked off at 9.00 am as follows.

1. Chancellor's Procession led by the Mace Bearer
2. National and East African Anthems led by Salvation Army Band and Alupe Scouts
3. Prayer by Bishop John Okude of ACK Katakwa Diocese. He advised graduands to be a reward to their parents and communities around them. He further prayed for the Vice Chancellor and entire staff to continue with the teamwork that has brought them this far.
4. Entertainment. Jua Kali dancers, AU choir, Akisuk dancers among others thrilled the audience.
5. At exactly 10.10am, the VC Prof Peter Barasa constituted the assembly as a congregation of AU.
6. Address by the VC. He started by introducing Merlin Papo, an alumni who graduated in 2022, now pursuing Masters in Clinical Psychology at USIU. This, he reiterated, is an example of how AU not only nourishes, nurtures and thoroughly prepares their graduates, but are ready to hold their hands all through. Introduction of all dignitaries in attendance followed, among them H.E the Deputy Governor Busia County Arthur Odera who represented Dr. Paul Otuoma, the KICD Director Prof. Ong'ondo and Prof. Fabian Esamai (the first Principal and Ag. VC of Alupe University). Also acknowledged for their support to the institution were the Iteso Cultural Union (ICU) Prime Minister who represented King Emormor, Hon. Mary Emaase, Hon. Oku Kaunya and all other political leaders, of course not forgetting the Students Council. He urged graduands to go plant seeds out there, challenging each one of them to bring five more students. The icing on the cake was a proposal to give graduands coming back to AU to further their studies a discount on fees payable. Through the ICU, the possibility of getting students from Uganda is being explored.

The Government of Kenya's support of Ksh 200million for a laboratory, a 2,000 bed capacity hostel and tarmacking of roads and lighting up of the campus and adjacent areas due to be launched next month were also lauded. This paved way for speeches by other dignitaries in attendance, thus:

i) Prof. Fabian Esamai

He recalled how, in 2017 students who were admitted had no campus, pointing out that the current graduands were the pioneers of this new campus, with the fifth class being admitted in 2022.

ii) Snr. Counsel Akide Kenneth. He converted the Chair of Council Dr Virginia Wamuyu Kimani to be Chancellor by virtue of the Universities Act 2012 and the AU Charter. This is because "Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates are awarded by the Chancellor".

iii) Prof. Chacha Nyaigetti-Chacha, Chairperson Commission of University Education (CUE).

Started by acknowledging that the VC, Prof. Barasa was making significant strides towards making AU a Centre of Excellence and cut out its niche in Sciences, reiterating that resources be put into prudent use. With the Master plan religiously followed, world class hostels lined up, quality training in research and

educated, best Human Resource, embracing of ICT and linkages with leading universities worldwide, the journey towards making AU a premier institution of learning was firmly on course.

He congratulated the graduates for their hard work and resilience, noting that learning had just started. Knowledge gained here prepared them to score goals, but not own goals! It's not the degree they have acquired today to work for them, but themselves as persons. Their good conduct to be associated with AU, by us observing how they behave in their places of work. AU exemplifies community development.

He observed that AU had immense potential for growth and excellence. Earlier on, the East African Community had identified Alupe to be a research centre for leprosy and other maladies, and continues to be so. The mantra of CUE is quality and quantity. They saw this potential at AU. The university sector is very dynamic, but in Kenya it is faced with myriad of challenges. To overcome this, creativity and innovativeness are key for survival. It is evident AU will grow and maintain quality since this environment is attractive to students. Stakeholders ought to own the institution and make it their brand for life.

The focus should be to make AU be a destiny and destination of choice by making it a world class university. World class universities fully support their students by giving them excellent education. The tell tale signs towards attainment of this is proper record keeping. He noted that none of the graduates who had been thoroughly educated, trained, examined and passed in this science based institution had missing marks, giving the university a thumbs up. First class honours graduates to remain and work for AU.

iv) Prof. Charles Ochieng Ong'ondo, Director KICD. In his opening remarks, he posed the question, "Are universities ready for the new curriculum?" Though KICD develops curricula/materials for basic educational institutions, universities are to build up on that especially on the three pathways students end up taking. He emphasized the need for Education graduates to be competent in CBC. They should be realigned now so that they aren't trained again after graduation. To this end, he is ready to honour an invite from the University aimed at achieving this objective.

v) H.E Deputy Governor Arthur Odera :

He thanked all stakeholders for their devotion towards making AU the greatest it can be. He further reiterated the County Government's commitment towards providing quality medical services for students and staff. Alupe Hospital to get all necessary facilities. The mother and child hospital to be completed within the next one year. Police post to be established around to boost security.

vi) PS Higher Education and Research Dr Beatrice Inyangala, represented by Karanja. In her speech, she pointed out that

graduates are placed in good standing ready for more academic and professional pursuits having been moulded into well rounded men and women. Assured the university of Ksh 2 billion for hostels, Ksh 500 million for Administration Block, tarmacking and lighting of areas within and adjacent to the university. Ended by suggesting three areas AU must embrace to be at par with the very best which are:

a) Kenya Digital Economic Project to connect all universities in the republic and digitize their courses. This will help AU connect through the national superhighway grid.

b) Higher Education Science and Technology (HEST) by the African Development Bank (AfDB)

c) Adopting the Open University of Kenya's new model of learning. AU to ride on this to build own model for new knowledge, skills and expertise.

7. The Congregation was dissolved by the VC at 12.07 pm.