



## **Statement**

**By Prof. Mabel Imbuga PhD, EBS**

**Vice Chancellor**

**Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology**

**during the**

**Students Leadership Seminar**

**Clayfish Hotel, Naivasha**

**Thursday November 3, 2011**

It is with great pleasure to welcome the students leaders to this forum designed to instil new ideas on modern leadership skills and practices. I once again take this opportunity to sincerely congratulate you for winning the confidence of the student's fraternity through your election. This training is an annual event organized by the University to train newly elected student leaders. We have found these workshops useful as demonstrated by the high quality of leadership exhibited by your predecessors. It is this kind of visionary leadership that has contributed to the harmonious peace that has made JKUAT a unique and distinguished university.

We are resolute in building on this achievement. Enormous resources have been lost in the past through lack of effective leadership from students. When mobs of self-seekers assume leadership positions, they tend to propel institutions into a situation of anarchy. In a global setting where we are competing against other nations, our local universities afford to waste the limited resources on resolving unwarranted conflicts arising from petty concerns.

As a university, we are aware of the challenges that students' leaders continue to face in the course of their duties. Your most important role as leaders is to be agents of influence to the rest of the students' community. As JKUSO leaders, you have the ability to influence the perceptions and behaviour of most of your colleagues. In all, your key objective as leaders is to accomplish your predetermined individual and organisational goals.

You will be effective leaders only when you are able to accomplish all or most of your set objectives. To achieve this, you should aspire to acquire core leadership elements. You should be men and women of great integrity, visionary, articulate, resilient and most of all you should seek the virtue of magnanimity. It is magnanimity that will enable you to be guided by great mind and heart. It encompasses, usually, a refusal to be petty, a willingness to face danger, and actions for noble purposes. Magnanimity is an elevation or dignity of soul, which encounters danger and trouble with tranquility and firmness, and raises the possessor above revenge, making him or her to delight in acts of benevolence. It

makes one to disdain injustice and meanness, and prompts him or her to sacrifice personal ease, interest and safety for the accomplishment of useful and noble objects. These are qualities that we as a university intend to inculcate to all of our student leaders. In addition, we have stressed that any student aspiring for leadership in JKUAT must be of sound academic record.

With skills acquired from a workshop such as this one, you could change the course of events at JKUAT. This could be achieved by your overall effort to motivate the rest of your comrades to realize the university's vision, which is to make JKUAT **a university of global excellence in Training, Research and Innovation for development**. The vision presents a tall order, which requires all of us at JKUAT and particularly the student leaders to put all their energy in this noble undertaking.

This is why for instance Senate maintains that those of you vying for JKUSO offices must be of sound intellectual ability. As an academic institution set to be felt on the global arena, we cannot allow our student body to be lead by students not well endowed intellectually. Indeed it will also be burdensome for weaker students to shoulder

leadership responsibilities alongside their academic portfolios. Remember that students wishing to contest leadership positions in the Ivy League of universities in the USA consider not only university academic performance but also their previous performance in high schools. You should be at the forefront in encouraging your companions to transcend their personal interests for the good of all the student community.

The notion that leaders are born and therefore need not struggle for leadership knowledge continue to dog many political science scholars. The Lord God for instance declared that the priesthood in the governance of Judaism was an exclusive preserve of the Levites i.e. priests have to come from the House and kindred of Levi. In Europe the royal families and certain trades and professions are still a preserve of specific lineage, a fact that tends to support the notion that leadership is inborn and predetermined. This is however not true. It is now accepted that leaders can be made through for instance training such as the one you are undertaking. And this is what we as a University are trying to accomplish here, to sharpen your ability to lead the rest of the folks.

Finally, as a reminder to your present task of leadership, I would wish to quote Theodore Roosevelt one of the greatest leaders ever produced on earth by the United States during World War 11era. When asked about the difference between a leader and a boss, Roosevelt answered “...The leader works in the open, and the boss in covert. The leader leads and the boss drive”. That is how different these two positions are. Let us not confuse the two. Once we get the difference, the university will continue to be a haven of peace.

Let me at this juncture wish you all the best in your new tasks. My office and that of my deputies as well as the registrars and deans will always be open for dialogue with you. I want to assure you that we are all there to assist you shape your lives at all times. That is why we took this interest to bring you here for this workshop.

I wish you fruitful discussions and thank you for listening to me.