

# VC's SPEECH FOR AWARDS CEREMONY, 26 April 2016

Ladies and gentlemen

What a great day, what a great evening! I am grateful for the opportunity to welcome you tonight! **Our core values of excellence, innovation, collaboration and accountability** are the foundation of our commitment to help you grow - intellectually, personally, professionally, and culturally.

Our mission is to provide each student with an outstanding education that's affordable and accessible. We are committed to serving you in a manner that challenges you to learn and achieve while supporting and strengthening your ability and capacity to do great things. We are thankful for your confidence in us and we pledge to justify that confidence as you continue your education at this University.

And so, I'm honoured and pleased to welcome you here tonight and to thank you for accepting our invitation to share this moment of joy with us.

Tonight, we acknowledge and reward the "academic celebrities" for their performance. A performance rooted in focus, dedication, hard work and a desire to excel. I believe I would not be too presumptive to think that these "academic stars" all have humble beginnings. Humble in their societal ranking, humble in their upbringing and humble in their conduct. But humble does not mean poor in spirit or the lack ambition or intelligence, because even the seemingly timid ones have shown us that their determination is simply concealed by their appearance. As the saying goes, *"don't judge a book by its cover."*

Surely, every parent holds the dream that their children will excel in everything they do, especially in education. Equally, every student aspires to be at the top of his or her class. For the university and the professor, this presents an opportunity to complement and reciprocate the goodwill, ambition and intellect of the student. And thus a perfect match is made, because an excellent teacher deserves an excellent student, and *vice versa*. And excellence is what drives the world.

But excellence has not just come to the students. They have excelled in spite of the challenges, not because they are given everything they want. They have excelled because they come from ordinary and extraordinary adverse conditions but their determination has overcome the obstacles. They have excelled because they have put their talent to good use - they have mastered the subject matter, they have done us proud.

To the top performers, I need to remind them that their life journeys as professionals have yet to begin. But with confidence, I can say that any of our students can stand up to any other student from another university and as they say, give them a run for their money.

I look forward to a prosperous future for our students, for their communities, and for the world as a whole. I look forward to your graduation one day soon and to you realizing your goals. In fact, I look forward to working with you in your promising future.

Let's enjoy the event tonight, let us congratulate the top performers, and let us give thanks to all who have made this occasion possible.

I thank you.

