



SPEECH

BY

GUEST SPEAKER

*Doctor Henryk Stefanek*

*President / Chancellor & Founder  
Vincent Pol University, Poland*

DURING 13<sup>TH</sup> GRADUATION CEREMONY OF MOUNT KENYA  
UNIVERSITY

ON

15<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER, 2017

*(Represented by the Vice President - Dorota  
Stefanek – Langham)*

## **Salutation**

- MKU Founder and Chairman of the Board of Directors, Professor Simon Nyutu Gicharu,
- Madam Jane Nyutu, Co-Founder of Mount Kenya University,
- Members of the MKU Board of Directors,
- Madam Chancellor, Professor Victoria Wulsin,
- Chairman of the University Council, Prof. David Serem,
- Members of the University Council,
- The Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Stanley Waudu,
  
- Members of the University Senate,
- Mount Kenya University staff,
- Distinguished Invited Guests,
- Graduands and students,
- Ladies and gentlemen,

First of all allow me to pass to you all the very warm greetings from the President, Chancellor & Founder of the Vincent Pol University in Poland, Doctor Henryk Stefanek who has sent me to represent him here today and read his speech on this auspicious occasion of the 13<sup>th</sup> Graduation Ceremony of the Mount Kenya University.

Dr. Stefanek would have very much wanted to be here today but due to some unavoidable circumstances he could not come. However, I assure you that he is ably represented by the strong delegation that is here with me. I now request you Madam Chancellor to kindly allow me to introduce them as follows;

- 1) Rector VPU - Prof. Witold Kłaczewski,
- 2) Vice Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences - Prof. Waldemar Jurkiewicz,

3) Head of the International Students Office- Monika Wróbel,

4) Przemysław Terejko - Lecturer

5) Geoff Notcutt - Lecturer

Madam Chancellor, as representatives of VPU we greatly appreciate the honor bestowed upon us to have our university's Founder and President serve as the Guest Speaker during this occasion. We note with equal amount of appreciation the relevance of the theme of today's graduation ceremony, namely, **"The Role of Partnerships in the Implementation of the University Mission"**.

Indeed, the theme was a good choice given today's conduct of business in all realms of life all over the world.

, This theme has a very significant impact, for it is all because of partnerships that we got to know each other as MKU and VPU. The same spirit of partnerships has made

us be here today as a sign of great milestones that shall be covered by the two universities together in the future.

Allow me Madam Chancellor at this moment to mention a few things that define success in a partnership.

### **Partnerships defined**

Ladies and Gentlemen, first of all what is a partnership?

A partnership is commonly defined as “an association of two or more people”, whose synonyms include, “cooperation, association, collaboration, coalition, alliance, union, compact, league, confederation, affiliation, relationship, fellowship, connection; among others. Thus, university partnerships are strategic alliance between two or more universities.

## **Benefits of partnerships in the Implementation of the University Mission**

Second, what are the benefits of partnerships?

- 1) Presenting the university with an opportunity for internalization through exchange of culture, academic staff, students, skills and knowledge.
- 2) Opportunities for bench marking with the best in the spirit of continuous improvement.
- 3) For institutional visibility and marketing thus allowing more students from across the globe to join our universities.
- 4) To enhance community outreach and research activities as two vital outputs from a university.
- 5) To enhance networking locally and globally.

### **Strategies for successful partnerships**

Third, in order for partnerships to succeed, there has to be some strategies to be adopted. These include;

- 1) Every partner has to know his/ her priorities well as they get into a partnership.
- 2) Set some optimum objectives to be achieved in a partnership and ensure all activities are directed towards the expected goals.
- 3) Bring all persons at the university on board to appreciate and understand the new, and ongoing partnerships and ensure as a wide representation as possible.
- 4) Appraise every partnership promptly and be bold to drop those that do not work as well as avoiding burnout in course of undertaking the partnerships.

### **Approaches towards best partnerships**

Madam Chancellor, in addition to observing the above strategies, allow me to indicate that, the greatest success in partnerships will be reaped if universities embrace the following two approaches in their partnerships.

1) First a quad - helix partnership model as expounded by Robert Arnkil, Anu Järvensivu, Pasi Koski and Tatu Piirainen (2010) in their publication entitled **“Exploring Quadruple Helix: Outlining user-oriented innovation models”**. This approach requires universities to work with all organizations. In other words, the quad - helix partnership model allows universities to bring together all organizations in a country, at regional level, continental level as well as at a global level. That is universities work with each other (academia), with the government (public sector), with private sector, with the industry, with civil service as well as with pertinent individuals in the society hence achieving the quad-helix partnership model..

2) Second, we must strive as partners to adopt the blue ocean strategy and blue ocean leadership. These two are new dimensions in management science that have been unveiled and championed by the world-



renowned Professor Chan Kim and Professor Renée Mauborgne. These are potent concepts that shall enable us as partners to avoid cut-throat competition in our core-businesses but innovatively and synergistically open up new horizons of joint achievements guided by Blue Ocean Leadership which provides a systematic way to unlock unrealized talent and energy in our partnering organizations. This applies to all of us both at individual as well as at organizational or institutional levels.

Madam Chancellor, we must strive to adopt these two indispensable approaches in our businesses. In so doing, we shall jointly reap the unlimited benefits where the sky remains our lowest limit.

Before I finish, Madam Chancellor, allow me to comment briefly about the MKU - VPU partnership

as a model case towards the theme of this ceremony on University Partnerships in helping achievement of our mission.

I start by explaining that, the famous ERASMUS program has for many years facilitated strong partnerships among European Universities where staff and students were sponsored on exchange programmes. However, today, a new policy has been unveiled that allows ERASMUS programme to support staff and student exchange between European Universities and other Universities in the World including Africa. This is a development which is destined to see strong partnerships developed between European universities and universities from other parts of the world.

Madam Chancellor, it is against this background that I congratulate the Management of MKU and the

students for having been ready to respond to the invitation in early 2016 when documents were sent for signing and an invitation was made to MKU to join as a partner. Madam Chancellor, the required information was provided by MKU very promptly which enabled us to submit our ERASMUS Program proposal for funding with MKU and other few East African universities as our partners. The proposal received a 100% funding which has seen MKU benefit on a 100% Erasmus programme sponsorship through VPU as follows;

- 1) Two academic members of staff visited VPU in December 2016
- 2) Two MKU Students participated in a student exchange program at VPU between February and May 2017.
- 3) Today as we celebrate this occasion, there are 3 MKU students are studying at VPU who reported in

October and will be there for 5 months all the way to February/ March 2018.

Madam Chancellor, the choice of the students who have benefitted so far has been based on merit and we are happy to note that these have been very outgoing and bright students and we are sure the experiences they gain at VPU will be of positive and tremendous, lifelong impact in their lives. I therefore congratulate the 5 students who are beneficiaries of this partnership.

I am happy to also note that, as the two institutions, namely, MKU and VPU, we have now taken the MKU - VPU partnership several notches higher. However, as we move on, like in a marriage, we have a commitment to ensure sustainability of this relationship and also to ensure that, its impact is felt positively by our communities both in Kenya and in

Poland. So far we have started well but we need to upscale this partnership so that it could be a living model of what university partnerships ought to be.

Finally, I once more thank Mount Kenya University for this invitation and also congratulate the graduands and parents for making it this far.

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR.

&

GOD BLESS YOU ALL!