

MESSAGE FROM THE VICE CHANCELLOR

ON THE 31ST GRADUATION CEREMONY OF UGANDA MARTYRS UNIVERSITY

Good day to you all and a very warm welcome to this 31st Graduation Ceremony of Uganda Martyrs University with the theme: **Innovation for Socio-economic Transformation through Technology and Enterprise, Science.**

Thank you for honouring our invitation.

A. Overview of Achievements in the Last Year

In addition to the celebration of academic achievements, today's graduation is special for several reasons:

1. Today marks 32 years since UMU opened its gates on **18th October 1993**. We glorify and praise the Lord for all the favors He has bestowed on UMU through the years, and the Holy Uganda Martyrs who continue to intercede for us.
2. In a special way we celebrate the presence of our Cardinal Emmanu Wamala, under whom our auditorium, which has been re-commissioned today, is named. We thank the Lord for the gift of your long life and health. We are named. We thank the Lord for the gift of your long life and health. We continue to celebrate as a university because of you, our patron, and after whom our university opened its doors. Bernard Robinson Magulu, a seasoned banker and financial expert; Please stand up for recognition. Mr. Stephen Alinatwe and your other member of the Council will be introduced by the chairperson.
3. Today, we have another reason to celebrate as a university. It is the highest number of graduands in UMU history — a sign of growth in our contribution to the global workforce and socio-economic transformation. We congratulate and thank the graduands for persevering through.

Summary Statistics of Graduands 2025

ITEM	Number of Students	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (100%)
PhDs	5	3 (60%)	2 (40%)	5
Masters	20 (52.7%)	311 (56%)	18 (44%)	38 (44%)
Bachelors	496 (53.5%)	309 (40.3%)	431 (46.5%)	556
PGC Diplomas	—	—	—	768
Diplomas	—	25 (24%)	459 (57%)	927
Certificates	—	—	80 (76%)	105
TOTAL	1,164 (48.5%)	1,164 (48.5%)	1,235 (51.5%)	2,399

4. Furthermore, with the current enrolment of 6,500 students, UMU has witnessed its biggest ever student population, from only 84 students in 1993. This year we were faced with a severe shortage of student accommodation and over 2,500 graduands. This is a good challenge and so I invite the investors to tap into this business opportunity. I take this opportunity to thank the RUFORUM–Mastercard Foundation program, FAWE, HESB, State House, and all our partners that

have sponsored students to join UMU. We thank you for endorsing us as worthy partners in developing Uganda's youth and human capital.

5. I wish to make special recognition of some of the graduands today for their great contributions to the University:

i. **Soruh Kusima Kyaligonza (BScIT):** She designed our online voting system that proved to be very efficient in the recently concluded Student Union elections. (I wish we could engage the electoral commission to go digital in the next elections.)

6. Our guest of honor, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, in February this year the University Council was reconstituted and is under the leadership of His Lordship the Bishop of Soroti Catholic Diocese, Rt. Rev. Dr. Joseph Eciru Oliech. Importantly, we now have two representatives of the alumni on Council. We aim for our alumni to be to their alma Council.

iii. Former UMUSA President H.E. Kenneth Muhumuza graduating as a lawyer, and member of the 30th UMUSA cabinet.

7. I take this opportunity to once more warmly welcome the new members of staff at UMU, among whom:

i. Associate Prof. Martin Lwanga – Faculty of Business and management, staff of UMU, among Lira

ii. Dr. Alex Okot – Director of Nketa Campus, Lira

iii. Eng. Gladys Ejotaru – Director Estates

iv. Ms. Jane Ndibarekera – Head of Public Relations and Marketing

v. Dr. Geoffrey Okot – Lecturer

vi. Br. Dr. Anthony Kiwanuka – Lecturer

vii. Sr. Dr. Rose Kyaligonza – Lecturer

viii. Br. Dr. Anthony Kiwanuka – Lecturer

ix. Mr. Conrad Kuzooka – Teaching Assistant

x. Mr. Polycarp Ocan – Head Cook

We thank those who have left us, for the great services rendered to UMU and wish them success in their new undertakings.

8. On the research and grants front, the University had an output of 102 research publications and won several new projects over the last year including:

i. **Strengthening Avocado Value Chain for Resilient Climate-Smart Agriculture in Uganda's Mountainous Regions** Funder: World Bank through Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries | Project Lead: Dr. Bosco Bwambale | Total Amount: \$250,000

ii. **Strengthening University Delivery of Entrepreneurship Skills for Community Engagement and Action Research** Project Lead: Dr. Marius Florian Murongo | Total Amount: \$913,000 | Funder: Mastercard Foundation | Project Lead: Mr. Felix Idaruku and Mr. Cyprian Ssebagala | del Sacro Cuore | Catholic University of Sacred Heart / Università Cattolica

iii. **Internationalizing Italian Academia with Africa (ITACA)**

iv. **Building Socio-Ecological Resilience of Communities to Flash Flooding in the Rwenzori Mountains** Project Lead: Dr. Bosco Bwambale | Total Amount: Euros 299,774.40 |

Funder: Vilnius Belgium

v. Mainstreaming AICCRA modules in the Curricular at Uganda Martyrs University Project Lead: Dr. Simon Peter Musinguzi | Total Amount: \$5000 | Funder: RUFORUM

vi. Innovating Sustainable Construction: Alternative Materials for Climate-Resilient Building in Uganda Project Lead: Assoc. Prof. Mark Olweny | Total Amount: £13,143 | Funder: Mastercard Foundation and University of Cambridge (Climate Resilience and Sustainability Research Fund)

vii. Strengthening Equitable partnerships in International Research collaboration in Uganda Project Lead: Dr. Albert Luswata | Total Amount: £5,696.6 | Funder: British Academy

viii. Piloting the Supervision and Mentorship Framework for Graduate Training and Careers in East Africa Project Lead: Mr. Simon Esibo | Total Amount: \$1500 | Funder: International Development Research Centre

ix. Proliferation of Local Expertise in the Development of Green Economy Project Lead: Prof. Patrick Kyomuhangi | Total Amount: TBC | Funder: European Commission (ERASMUS+ 2025–Cooperation Partnership, Strand 3: Structural Reform Budgets)

x. Building in Higher Education Collaboration in Germany

B. Aspirations to Help Position UMU in the 21st Century

As we position ourselves to remain relevant to our stakeholders in this century, our theme today gains even more relevance. However, in this, lose sleep are the following questions: "What does success for UMU look like? What would make one want to be part of UMU?"

1. Guest of honor, Ladies and Gentlemen, we cannot ignore the growing impact of digital technology on our lives. As one of the top five universities, Uganda Martyrs University has as one of its five strategic goals. As such, we upgraded our bandwidth from 160Mbps to 500 Mbps and to enhance the infrastructure to support it, completed at the 6 campuses to bridge the gap for those unable to acquire the gadgets through the mechanism already set up by the infrastructure. However, it is in no way sufficient and so we call for cross our has helped increase the speeds and utility of the Internet access. This has helped increase the speeds and utility of the Internet access. In January this year, we aim at installing at least 100 computers at all the 6 campuses of UMU. We aim to extend these services to the communities we serve. We believe that every UMU student, staff, graduate and youth in the communities we serve deserve to be an active digital citizen, and that digital literacy is now a basic requirement. In this day, a computer is no longer for non-negotiable for any non-negotiable requirement. In this day, a computer is now a basic requirement. We are grateful to our Partners PENU, Group, UCC, and all who continue to offer support in setting up the infrastructure, acquiring hardware and software, and skilling the users, both students and staff.

2. As we continue to bridge the digital gap and prepare our students to be active digital citizens, I am happy to report that UMU is on Eduroam — a global internet connection that gives users free internet roaming capability around the world. Our staffs and students remain connected and do not have to look for Wi-Fi passwords when they travel to other universities and big cities around the world.

3. In keeping with our theme of the day, and to continue our relevance in national and global development agenda, Uganda Martyrs University seeks to expand its niche beyond governance,

ethics and business to embrace STEM. In so doing, we have embarked on giving a home to the sciences by constructing a multi-purpose science and innovation building.

Our dear Guest of Honor, I humbly invite you to be our champion in resource mobilization towards the support and the realization of the above strategic aspirations. The projects will help drive the University's income streams, drive job creation along the value chains, and transform livelihoods of the served communities. In so doing, UMU will become the University of choice and not an option.

Our strategic position as a sporting university will further enhance UMU's effectiveness in community engagement and socio-economic transformation.

Our guest of honor, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, addressing the head, UMU's ethos is to train exported, we are now feared as one of us in the East African region. It should also be noted that UMU is one of only two universities at the Equator with Maseno University in Kenya as the other. The universities at the Equator is boosted by a sports complex of international standard along the equator in Uganda. Uganda Martyrs University has the land and is ready to partner in developing a state-of-the-art sports complex for talent development, engagement, revenue diversification, and tourism support. My requests is to point us to the potential investors and partners willing to work with us in achieving this strategic project.

Secondly, UMU has over 300 acres of farm land and is only 85km out of the capital city and the airport. This offers a unique opportunity for agri-business targeting local and international markets. We are looking for partners to invest with us in poultry, dairy, pigery, and high value crops farming. I thank the Coffee Authority now under the MAAIF, for supporting us to plant 5 acres of coffee. We can do more. I therefore reach out to you to be bridges to the potential investors and investment financing.

Our strategic position as a sporting university will further enhance UMU's effectiveness in community engagement and socio-economic transformation.

C. Message to the Graduands of the Day

Allow me now to shift attention to the graduands of the day.

1. Dear graduands, congratulations on getting to this day! I am confident you have or what you will be as the UMU there. Here, I like to make a thread desire for quick wealth and power force you to abandon your values scored that runs through every aspect of a truly successful, most immoderate and lead with virtue and wisdom. Integrity is the single. The goal should be our motto, the task ahead and in accordance with our motto is to: you were to evaluate et Sapientia Duc Mundum. You have proven to be at UMU and remember only one thing from UMU, please know character, creative problem solvers confidence and confidence and confidence and confidence the intelligence, the knowledge and wisdom as you apply the knowledge to man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul?

2. Quoting Clayton Christensen, a big author on innovation, 'Remember, because you have feathers doesn't mean you can fly.' (Chicken and Bird). Therefore, don't be so moved by that but rather by the translation of that analogy into excellence there is not so much celebrating that analogy into excellence there is not so much celebrating that analogy into solvers and job creators, not problem people want solved, offer go 99 our to a saleable product or service. The world is looking for innovative problem and in whatever you commit to, never do less than your best. Be lifelong learners. Dream big. Be daring. Stretch your abilities and create a circle of friends who share your dreams and values. Robert Kiyosaki, the author of Rich Dad-Poor Dad reminds us that: 'Your

income tends to be about equal to the average income of your five closest friends'...so choose wisely as you gain your network. Also remember to be people of value so that others will want to network with you.

D. Conclusion and Appreciations

3. Finally, please remember that UMU remains your home, a place of love where it is good to be. You are always welcome back to your Alma Mater. Congratulations to you all. You are our new crop of ambassadors — take UMU to the world and bring the world to UMU. Remember to make a difference, and may God bless you!

To conclude, I most sincerely thank our Guest of Honor, Mrs. Gloria Evelyn Byamugisha, for sparing time out of your very busy schedules to be with us on this historic day.

We are deeply humbled by your kind consideration of our invitation, monitoring the Ambassadors of Denmark to Uganda for a very inspiring lecture on Uganda's graduation theme **Innovation for Socio-economic Transformation through Science, Technology and Enterprise**.

Not the least, I wish to thank the 31st Graduation Organizing Committee, headed by the Registrar Fr. Dr. Joseph Buchand Kisoga.

I pray to God, through the intercession of the Holy Uganda Martyrs, for a safe and safe travels back home!

Virtute et Sapientia Duc Mundum

I thank all our distinguished guests for sparing time out of your very busy capacities to be with us on this historic day.