



**NAMIBIA UNIVERSITY**  
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Remarks

By

Adv. Esi Schimming-Chase SC

Chairperson of the NUST Council

At

April NUST Graduation Ceremony 2019

Thursday, 25 April 2019

Safari Court Hotel

Director of Ceremony  
Chancellor of NUST University and Speaker of Parliament Dr peter Katjavivi  
Minister of Higher Education, Training & Innovation, Hon. Itah Kandjii-Murangi  
Dr Mary Seely, our esteemed guest speaker  
Distinguished Members of Council  
Acting Vice Chancellor  
Deputy Vice Chancellors  
Faculties, Staff and Students  
The President of Student Representative Council  
Graduating Class of 2019  
Family and Friends  
Distinguished Invited Guests  
Representatives of the Media  
Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning

It is an honor and privilege to stand before you just at the moment when you are leaving this great University and about to step into the next stage of your life, the script of which is yet to be written.

As Chair of Council at the Namibia University of Science and Technology, I have loved graduations because they embody those rare moments in our modern culture when ritual, tradition and pageantry brighten and inspire our lives.

Let me start by thanking the faculty members who have committed themselves to provide you with the best education and guidance, so as to empower each of you to take the next step forward in your purpose and journey. I am sure each and every faculty member here present today is imbued with pride and a sense of accomplishment in the knowledge that they have contributed to the addition of Namibia's future work force in the form of those graduating today.

In the expression of my gratitude to you for imparting knowledge, I am reminded of the words of philanthropist and social activist Web du Bois, immortalized by him in 1988 at Fisk University when he said the following:

“Education must not simply teach work. It must teach life.”

It is also my last graduation as Chair of the NUST Council, as my tenure comes to an end on 31 August 2019. As I reflect on the work we have completed in implementing NUST’s transformation to a University, and when we speak of NUST as a world-class University, we are addressing its potential, as well as the significant steps taken over the years whilst the institution has been in existence in its various forms.

I therefore take this moment to thank my fellow Council members for their commitment, work and dedication at NUST over the past three years. Each of them have brought something special and different to the Council, from their own specific area of expertise. They all know and have experienced my motto and brand, that honest conflict has more social value than dishonest harmony, and that transparency, integrity and authenticity are the most important tenets of our fiduciary duties. We owe a duty to NUST and to its students to give them the best possible education so that when they leave, they can start a life having received a proper foundation for the economy in which they are to contribute as Namibian citizens, and also to be able to compete with those Namibians that have received foreign tertiary education.

This brings me to our most important stakeholders and beneficiaries, the graduates. Let me take this opportunity to congratulate the graduates and their families. The word “graduate” in Latin, *graduati*, essentially means step. Your graduation is but a step on a journey, a new beginning that is important and worth celebrating.

Dear Graduands

It gives me great pleasure to note that the number of students enrolled in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) fields of study that are aligned to Namibia’s national development goals continues to increase, and that we are seeing more and more students graduating in STEM related fields of study. And I am particularly happy to see that the majority of graduates here today are young women.

This year NUST is graduating a total of 2352 students, of which 1279 are females. This is an indication that the gap is closing and that more and more females are

breaking through into traditionally male dominated professions and careers. Well done and keep up the momentum of change and gender mainstreaming!

New cohorts of students are graduating for the first-time with Masters degrees in Natural Sciences and in Health and Applied sciences, respectively. This is a noticeable achievement and we should congratulate them. We are also very proud to have a number of PhD graduates here today.

According to the 2018 National Graduate Survey, the employment situation of NUST graduates in Namibia, three to four years after completion of their studies, is noteworthy, if not impressive. Four out of five (81 per cent) graduates were employed and an additional 2 percent were self-employed. Only 17 percent were not employed. This is a very encouraging outcome in view of the economic downturn that surrounds us today.

## Graduands

In spite of our fast changing world, it matters not your gender, your colour, your ethnic or religious background, your orientation, or your social status. Our struggles in this world are similar and the lessons to overcome those struggles and to move forward - changing ourselves and the world around us – still apply equally to all. As anyone who succeeds knows, discovering your life's purpose and getting on the path to doing what you love is the most incredible feeling in the world. It's exciting, exhilarating and energising, but at the same time there is an element of fear that comes with venturing into the unknown.

Allan Watts, the British-American philosopher put it most aptly, when he said: "By replacing fear of the unknown with curiosity we open ourselves up to an infinite stream of possibility. We can let fear rule our lives or we can become childlike with curiosity, pushing our boundaries, leaping out of our comfort zones, and accepting what life puts before us."

"Sometimes the only way to overcome your fear of the unknown is to take the first step and do something. Turn your fear into curiosity. You have nothing to lose and everything to gain!"

Please, cherish and nurture the friendships and connections you have made during your years of study at NUST and do not forget to plough back into your communities. Also do not forget those who have helped you along the way. Maybe a decade from now many of you will have forgotten the theories you

learned in class, but you will remember the love and friendship you shared at NUST. And at the end of the day, it will be this love, your friends, your University and humanity that will make a difference in your lives.

The challenge before us is to prepare you to be able to participate in the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution. It is characterized by a fusion of technologies that blur the wires between the physical, digital and biological spheres. It is marked by emerging technology, breakthroughs in a number of fields, including robotics, artificial intelligence, nanotechnology, quantum computing, biotechnology, autonomous vehicles and 5<sup>th</sup> generation wireless technologies. The breadth and depth of these changes herald a transformation of entire systems of production, management and governance. This is the world you are graduating into!

So

Congratulations, you have done well and deserve to celebrate today.

It remains a distinct pleasure to share in the intensity of emotions filling this room as you who are graduating close the first chapter of your life's story. Graduations mark the end of one journey and the beginning of another more important journey— the journey of life.

You are the technology natives, born and educated in a technological world that was found in science fiction stories at a time in history when our world is dealing with enormous challenges, but also at a time when the opportunities created by those challenges have never been greater. You Twitter and tweet, have access to all information in the world online and yours is the generation that is poised to take the technology of today into new and dizzying dimensions.

New beginnings in life are full of possibilities for you. I know that some of you may be leaving the University while some may continue at NUST to undertake higher level studies. Whatever choice you take, may I remind you of the important role that you play as a NUST graduate and alumnus. And whatever you do going forward, allow me in conclusion to be so bold as to hazard some advice that I hope will stand you in good stead in whatever you choose to do.

First, you must be good ambassadors of NUST. Be role models in your community and more importantly live and promote a sense of high integrity and authenticity.

Second, be good representatives of your parents and those that sacrificed to educate and empower you. They might not be technologically savvy or astute but they love you and will climb mountains over and over to give you everything they did not have.

Third, be excellent. Excellence is about being the best, you can be irrespective of your circumstances, striving to be better, with an eye to delivering to the highest quality. People are not born with excellence. They cultivate it over a period of time through hard work, wise work, and smart work. It emerges from continuous improvement. It is a corollary of passion and performance.

Fourth, embrace innovation and entrepreneurship as a possible future for you. As graduates, you should become employers rather than being employees. Create jobs rather than look for them. And when you find work as an employee, be the best employee you can be. Work harder than the rest so you can climb higher than the rest.

Also, be grateful for all the support that you have received, and go out into the world a much better person, equipped with new knowledge and skills, willing to share and contribute to the betterment of your communities and Namibia. This includes being grateful to your families, your sponsors – Governments and communities, your lecturers, and mentors – Especially your parents, some of whom have worked so hard to either contribute financially to your education, or just to give you love and kindness when you needed it most- on those late nights when you prepared for exams. They have sacrificed a lot for you to get you to where you are today – they deserve a “big thank you”.

Finally, be resourceful. Success is never an accident. It is always the result of high intention, sincere effort, intelligent direction, and skillful execution. When you add teamwork and passion to this it allows us to reach the heights of excellence and to perform the extraordinary!

Exceptional achievements are within our reach when we stand tall on a foundation of personal integrity, hard work and unwavering determination. That

is why, we must continue to nurture a love for our world today with all its challenges.

With those few words allow me once again to congratulate our graduates, their families and relatives, our faculty and staff on a job well done.

I thank you