

## **DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR (ACADEMIC AFFAIRS)- GRADUATION MESSAGE 2022**

Congratulations, Class of 2022, the back-to-normal cohort on whose graduation we have all met again in person. Very well done!

We live in VUCA- volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous times. I commend your individual and group resilience and adaptability, which are imperative for survival. Dieter F. Uchtdorf rightly said, “it’s your reaction to adversity, not adversity itself that determines how your life story will develop”. You have written the first pages of your story well.

The unpredictability of the COVID-19 pandemic required that we set up flexible, agile and limber systems, steepen our learning curve and quickly come up with contingency measures like embracing Open, Distance and e-Learning. Graduands, you cooperated by attending hybrid classes, video conferencing, virtual office time, alternative assessments, and meeting course requirements while acquiring skills that set them apart in the world of work. You embraced technology which is increasingly valuable in breaking down location barriers.

Cavendish University Uganda (CUU) had an extraordinary response to a challenging moment, surpassing pre-pandemic performance and steering us forward while transforming and inspiring students to reach their full potential in employment, entrepreneurship, and ethical leadership. CUU opted for Coursera for Campus for students to tailor qualifications and competencies at the exit to the requirements of employers and entrepreneurship partners.

CUU acknowledged the need for growing involvement of government, enterprise and civil society in helping us to shape learning outcomes, influence career guidance, provide internship programmes and additional educational pathways, advise on faculty fitness and performance, and evaluate research projects and their impact. We are happy to recognise the entities that have journeyed with us, particularly: CISCO, IBM, HUAWEI, ACCA, The American Embassy, Capital Markets Authority, Institute of Corporate Governance of Uganda, Uganda Red Cross Society, Joint Medical Stores, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Uganda, The Public Interest Law Clinic (PILAC), the Network of Public Interest Lawyers (NETPIL), Rotary Club of Kampala Metropolitan, Center for Health, Human Rights and Development (CEHURD), Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), Barefoot Law, Human Rights Network for Journalists-Uganda, Africa in the Moot Foundation, Uganda Law Society, Embassy of South Sudan, Media Challenge, Ultimate Media Consult, Parliament of Uganda, Office of the Prime Minister, Rubaga Hospital, Kiruddu Hospital, NWSC, KCCA, City abattoir, Vector Control Division, Kiteezi Dumping Site for Solid Waste Management and the Education Collaborative. We appreciate the awarding companies at this graduation event for partnering with us to recognise our leading performers, helping us build confidence and skills, and providing training opportunities.

The pandemic brought enormous mental, physical and emotional strain to the students and staff alike. Students have experienced feelings of loss of purpose and doubt about their value, judgment and compassion; they have also suffered high levels of burnout trying to catch up with lectures and exams. At CUU, we prioritise students’ mental health and well-being by implementing trauma-informed pedagogy. We are in the process of starting a psychotherapy centre at Cavendish University to support mental health more comprehensively and help the Community and beyond heal from the trauma of the pandemic.

Graduands, skills can only take you so far in a career; mindset is equally important. We have guided you to become opportunity-minded learners that can drive innovation, identify pain points and enable value creation in your respective fields. Grow the innovation mindset and embrace risk moving forward. Tap into lessons from your university and other organisations. As much as possible, continue learning every day.

Congratulations once again to the graduates, parents and guardians, the staff, and all CUU stakeholders.

Dr Olive Sabiiti, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs)