



Message from the VC to students

Happy Monday to you all!

New beginnings are always exciting and refreshing, as this new semester. For many reasons, this new semester at Cavendish University Uganda (CUU) is particularly exciting. This semester brings new policies, facilities at the Acacia Campuses, newly renovated spaces at our Siyani Nsambya Campus & Kingsgate Campus, new computers to serve the students better and some new CUU team members. We are also excited that this new beginning brings many new students!

One of the changes you will observe is smoother and more frequent communications for the management. This will include messages from me every Monday morning that I hope will challenge and encourage you all to seize and create as many opportunities as you can.

The most significant change is the shift that places the student at the center of teaching and learning and service. This paradigm shift will be critical for us to produce game-changers; the kind of graduate that is desired by employers and who begins businesses – an entrepreneur. This change, however, requires that all of us, students and staff at CUU, change the way we approach teaching and learning, and our roles in this partnership called education.

Today, I want to challenge us all to rethink our role in this most incredible journey; the journey to improve yourselves and the world (Freire, 1994). A great short essay that I think everyone enrolled at university should read annually is the convocation speech given at Douglas College in 1977 by Adrienne Rich titled “Claiming an Education”. In her speech Adrienne suggests that “if university education means anything beyond the processing of human beings into expected roles, through credit hours, tests, and grades... [then students] cannot afford to think of being [at university] to receive an education: [rather they] will do much better to think of being here to claim one.”

But what does it mean to claim an education?

To claim an education means to decide to be an active learner; it means not falling for shallow and easy solutions, or only reading pre-digested notes or shying away from challenging courses. It means owning your learning and expecting to be introduced to great and challenging ideas. It means agreeing to the important things – “clear thinking, active discussion, and excellent writing, [which are] all necessary for intellectual freedom, and that these require hard work” (Rich, 1977). Claiming an education means that one accepts the hard work required to truly transform into a responsible, knowledgeable, and skilled citizen, like attending every class, submitting assignments on time, being ready for class before the class begins. For staff it means finding student centered solutions, providing all the teaching material at the

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beginning of the semester, giving assessments and returning them to students graded within 10 days; it means focusing on excellence in how we learn and serve for all of us.

For lecturers it means empowering students to drive their learning; it requires providing students with more than just pages of notes, but rather introducing them to the critical thinking and application skills they will need to solve their problems and address the challenges of our communities both industrial and social.

Today, I challenge us all to claim our education no matter what we are studying or where we are working because we can only transform ourselves based on what we are able to learn. As we start this semester, let us commit to seeking more knowledge, honing our skills and developing our character in a way that it produces for us a competitive advantage.

To all our new students and staff, welcome to Cavendish University Uganda, a wonderful place to learn and work! We are so glad that you have chosen CUU as a critical partner in your life journey, whether you are a student or staff member. To the students and staff who are returning to learn and serve at CUU, we welcome you back and hope that your break has refreshed you to come back to learn and work with vigor.

As you settle in, please remember to let us know how we are doing so we can improve our services to you, our students & staff.

Have a great first week!

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