

**Address at the LG SETA Graduation Ceremony – 7<sup>th</sup> September 2012  
At Durban University of Technology**

**By Professor FAO Otieno, Deputy Vice Chancellor: Technology,  
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Durban University Of Technology**

Master of ceremonies, Executive and Senior DUT Staff, HoD's, Head of EDU,  
Distinguished Guests, Graduands, Students, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure and honour to welcome you, on behalf of the Durban University of Technology to this special occasion.

This is indeed a very special occasion. To honour students - whether it is at a graduation ceremony, or at an academic awards ceremony, is always very special. It is special because it relates to excellence and success.

When you look into their eyes, you see the promise of an African spring – the plains awaiting the first rains to burst into bloom. You sense the abundant potential of an African summer – fertile, with hopes and dreams straining to challenge reality ...

Each year hundreds of first-year students join programmes at tertiary institutions in SA in the honest belief that it could build a brighter future for them. Many of these students fulfill the aspirations of whole families, in that they are the first family members who are privileged to study. The responsibility to help them realize their dreams is enormous, not only because each dream is precious, but also because their futures mesh with the desired future of the Southern African community.

At the Enterprise Development Unit of Durban University of Technology, we are proud to be chosen for this role and today's awards once again confirm that we have the ability to fulfill it passionately and carefully.

As a University of Technology in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we pride ourselves on sending out students with:

- the learning ability to make knowledge useful,
- to work in a team,
- integrative skills
- commitment to sustainable development
- and high ethical standards.

In short – the EDU's output – you our students - is used as input for the industry of South Africa and internationally.

Ladies and gentlemen, technological change in the workplace is occurring at such a rapid pace, that any given state of preparedness can be obsolete with years. We are drowning in knowledge and information, but we are starved for skills and innovation.

Dear students, there are some important lessons to learn from this. Firstly, pure knowledge is worthless – skills and ideas are everything.

The second lesson that I want to share with you is to learn from your mistakes. Asked about his company's success, an American businessman replied: "It's all about forgiveness. We give our employees big jobs and major responsibilities. Inevitably they make mistakes. We forgive them. They learn. You can only learn from your mistakes.

The last lesson deals with passion – passion for your profession – passion for your people – passion for your country and passion for your world.

Passion gives you the energy to keep growing and the means to enact healing change.

By receiving an award today, dear students, you have proven that you learnt the lessons well. I would like to express the wish that your success will inspire those who have not yet crossed the bridge to excellence.

Before I end, let thank those who supported you directly or indirectly to ensure that you achieved what you wanted- your Parents and or Guardians, friends, Lecturers and other staff at the Durban University of Technology and Industry whom we collaborate with and provide us with the basis of excellence among other things. I also wish to thank the organizers of this event for the excellent work that they have done and the University for the support that they give all of you to ensure that you learn in an atmosphere that is appropriate..

In conclusion, let me warn recipients of awards today that no situation is permanent and you have only started the long journey that can only be sustained through hard work. I look forward to your continuing this journey and to seeing most if not all of you in senior successful positions and or successful entrepreneurs in the years to come.

The EDU and Durban University of Technology salute you.

My very best wishes and I thank you all.

God Bless you.

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Durban University of Technology,  
Durban, South Africa  
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