

***Congratulatory Speech at the Gauteng City Regional Academy (GCRA) Graduation
Ceremony on 13 May 2011 by***

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Master of Ceremonies, The MEC, Members of the MC, Councilors, Members of the GCRA and DUT Council, Members of the Executive of DUT, Colleagues, Parents, Relatives, Friends, Guests, Graduands, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

It is my pleasure and honour to welcome you, on behalf of the Durban University of Technology on this special occasion, where we celebrate the Graduation of a number of our students, members of the GCRA.

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. Today we honour students who have studied towards supervisory Development Skills as a First Line of Management

Each year hundreds of our people start studies at different levels 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 at this level. 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 Durban University of Technology, we are proud to be chosen for this role and today's awards once again confirms that we have the ability to fulfill this role.

As a University in the 21st century, we pride ourselves on sending out graduates and graduands with among others the following attributes:

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

In short – our University output – you our graduates - are used as input for the industry and the development and building of a better South Africa.

Distinguished Guests, 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 today 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. I also wish to heartily congratulate you for your hard work and success.

Before I end, let thank those who supported you directly or indirectly to ensure that you achieved what you wanted- Your employers, Staff of the GCRA, your Spouses, Parents and or Guardians, friends, Lecturers and other staff in the University whom we collaborate with and provide us with the basis of excellence among other things. I also wish to thank The Acting Executive Dean of Management Sciences Dr Rishi Balkaran and the Associated Head of Department and Staff for efforts in running this programme and to those who organised this wonderful function.

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. I equally look forward to seeing some of you studying further.

The Faculty of Management Sciences and the Durban University of Technology salute you.

God Bless you all, God Bless South Africa and Africa.

We thank you

Prof FAO (Fred) Otieno

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