

Protocol

The Vice Chancellor Dr Badat

Deputy Vice Chancellors Drs Mabizela and Clayton

The Registrar Dr Fourie

Dean of Students Dr Vivian De Klerk and the Deans of all Faculties

Members of the University Administration

And the academic staff

Honourable members of the SR Council, SRC Alumni and former Presidents

Members of student parliament

Members of House Committees

Parents, Grandparents, Aunts, uncles and most importantly the new purple people, our First Years!

Ndithi botani, Sanibonani, Absheni, Dumelang, Goienaand, Good evening, Atha-

Ola!

Introduction

My name is Sakh'usomeleze Badi and I am the SRC President for the year 2013 I must say I am extremely honoured, to welcome you on behalf of all Rhodes University students, to our beloved institution.

In welcoming you, I feel it is also important for me to make it known to you, that your application was precisely chosen amongst thousands of applicants, *so you must*, with very high regard, consider yourself as one, fortunate, and in good standing, to have been granted the opportunity to be a part of such a prestigious university. But, it also goes without saying that these are the fruits of your hard-work, you have come this far because you had a goal and a purpose, remember that!

Words of wisdom

Nonetheless you have arrived, after the long distance you have travelled, filled with excitement and anxiety of all the unknown things life has in store for you. Although these things we may never know, but today rest assured that this journey you are starting and that you have chosen to start with Rhodes University, is one filled with challenges, lots of apprehension, turmoil and heartaches, from boyfriends and girlfriends (of course for third years only) but I

promise you one thing, that through these life incidents, your family will not recognise the women and men you will soon become, in a good way.

Yet I must caution you;

If you want to become a social light, you will become a social light and if you want to become an academic, you can be. "The secret in student life lies in finding a balance" as our Vice Chancellor in his rhetoric's would prudently say. But if I may give you my humble advice keep the main thing the main thing, qha qwaba.

Now, as a side note, a South African tribe known as the Xhosa tribe has a well-known philosophy amongst them, that is, indoda ayikhali meaning a man does not cry. But being a Xhosa man I must admit, I have cried during my time here at Rhodes, I remember it like it was yesterday when I was writing a 3500 word weekly assignment and everytime I wrote it the sun would set and rise (without sleeping), my frustrations drove me, to call my parents asking them if I could go back home once, ok I lie, maybe more than once.

This is by no means a way to scare you because when I think back to those moments, I look at them as a reminder of the discipline, determination and perseverance it took to obtain a well renowned Rhodes University degree. Ask your senior students, they will tell you, ok maybe not the part where they cried, but that they too can share in my sentiments.

Do not worry though because in making up your academic life you will have support from; Lecturers, tutors, class mates and friends. However another piece of advice I can give you, free of charge is that you should choose your degree wisely, don't feel pressured in choosing a degree simply because of the way it may sound to others, or because of its name, choose it based on your capabilities, sometimes that's all it takes, just being honest with yourself.

Secondly don't let your quest for money determine your degree of choice, let your quest for knowledge be the determinant. Tiger woods once said he plays to master the game...and money is just the measure of his mastery, so in essence do what you will master!

I would like to take a moment to applaud the Parents, Grandparents, Aunts, uncles both present and in absentia:

You too have travelled the same distance encouraging your children or child every step of the way. Thus I wish to comfort you, as you are about to depart from those you consider your little ones. With a piece of poetry by Alfred Lord Tennyson which many of you may be familiar with, I quote " Though much is taken, much abides; and though we are not now that strength which in old days moved earth and heaven, that which we are, we are; one equal temper of heroic hearts, made weak by time and fate, but strong in will.....To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield" close quote, what I am essentially saying is that only you as the parents have the will and power to be nearby in the most dreadful times even though you may seem unneeded, to affirm what no one else can. So rest assured, for your little ones will always need you because those moments in life or at least in this institution, have a way of creeping up on you.

Now perhaps, many of you may be wondering, who the individuals seated in front of me, in uniform are. I wish to answer that with great pleasure:

These people I speak of are referred to as the Student Representative Council (in short the SRC). The SRC, whose offices are in the Bantu Stephen Biko Building, was established essentially to serve the students. Thus, the task of all SRC members is to serve the students loyally and selflessly, without expectation of material reward, personal gain or praise.

Moreover, we remain committed to you, the students, minority or majority, who approach us not only in distress and anguish, but also in the joys of your journey. After all we are a purple people preparing a path, a purpose in each stride carrying pride, perseverance in reaching prosperity.

I must humbly say that these individual I admire, because they are students that have chosen not to subject neither confine themselves to what reigns supreme amongst the African Youths. An African youth that has self-imposed limitations, as a result of abiding to the so called societal standards and norms, which are to do things right and not to do the right things, I challenge you to make the best of your Rhodes University experience by rising above the narrow limitations of your personal concerns, to the broader concerns of all humanity.

Do not be ordinary students, please I beg of you, question the unquestioned; as Martin Luther King Jnr said, and I quote, “The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character - that is the goal of true education” close quote. This is what will truly develop our respective nations; a desire to be knowledgeable about our surroundings whether it be social, economic, environmental or political, this is an essential step towards the emergence of a new humanism.

In concluding, I would like to leave you with the words of Frantz Fanon, I quote, “Each generation must, out of relative obscurity, discover its mission, fulfil it, or betray it” unquote. And so tonight I ask you; what is your mission and will you fulfil it!

WELCOME TO RHODES UNIVERSITY WHERE LEADERS LEARN

