

Speaking Notes @ the Polytechnic of Namibia

Work Integrated Learning Programme

26th July 2013, Kalahari Sands Hotel, Windhoek.

Thank you for the opportunity to say a few words by way of encouragement at this wonderful occasion.

Firstly, I would like to congratulate the students for reaching this important milestone. You are close to graduation as the first engineers from the soon to be renamed the University of Science and Technology. That is exciting historic moment you are about to experience. You are on the verge of commencing a very exciting period- exactly how exciting it would be, will be up to you.

It is not every student who gets an opportunity like this in their student lifespan. Today event provided you a rare opportunity to interact and learn from industry players. The PoN is well known for producing industry ready graduates. Their goal is to ensure that you are valued for your abilities to generate ideas and to do so while having the courage and confidence to be creative and innovative. This I believe is at the core of the PoN's Work Integrated Learning programme. I therefore urge you to use the opportunities presented by this programme and to be the best you can be in all you pursue.

Many of us went through our universities days pursuing our field of studies with vigour and determination to become somebody someday and to make a difference. We thought we will be able to solve all societal challenges once we graduate. But few of us got the opportunity to stand before industry players and present our learning and experiences from internship programmes.

It was very interesting and enlightening listening to what you shared with us.

You still have other opportunities to improve upon your observations and prepare for the world of work. As engineers, you are very good process focused and systematic in approach. You are taught to believe that things must fit together well. In the event they do not, you have the skills and capacity to break them up and fix them until they work. You are taught to start at a conceptual phase through to design and to test hypothesis and then come up with an engineering solution.

Out in the world of life the theoretical skills you gained will be very critical in how you approach challenges and numerous complex situations you will be faced with. Your training as engineers will assist you in navigating through complexity and uncertainty.

Here are a couple of tips I wish to share with you.

1. Embrace the fact that you are still young and do not have answer to all the complexity of life. But do not listen to those who say there are rules and limits. Remain inquisitive and ready to learn new things and challenge the status quo.
2. Engineering is soon to be your calling, stay on track and keep moving. There will be hurdles and personal sacrifices along the way, but you know where you are going. Keep moving
3. Accept that you will make mistakes along the way, some big and glorious ones. That will be a sure sign that you are out there trying new things and learning along the way. We learn from our mistakes. If Steve Jobs stopped trying, then

you probably can guess what would have happen to the iPads and iPhone gargets we have come to love so much!

4. When life get hard as it will sure get from time to time, find something that you are passionate and focus on that. This could be a hobby or render service to those in need.
5. Enjoy the ride to professionalism and career opportunities along your journey. Do not fret at change. Change is inevitable part of life. Life is a wonderful journey. Eleanor Roosevelt said “the future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams”.
6. So as you step out into the world of work with your minds prepared and your skills tuned, set your direction with a positive attitude and strong spirit. Spiritual well-being is as much an important part of the journey as is physical well-being. Be sure to nurture both with equal measure and attention. Always make a difference in whatever you do.
7. Celebrate your successes and always be prepared to tackle challenges head on. Continue learning. Lifelong learning is part of life.

Allow me to close off with very wise counsel by Frank Outlaw, who said “Watch your thoughts, they become words. Watch your words, they become actions, Watch your actions, they become habits. Watch your habits, they become character. Watch your habits, they become destiny”.

I thank you.