UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

REMARKS BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR PROF. PETER M.F. MBITHI, DURING THE LAUNCH OF BARCLAYS BANK’S READY TO WORK PROGRAMME HELD ON FRIDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2015 AT 9.00 A.M. AT THE CENTRAL CATERING UNIT
• The CEO, Barclays Bank of Kenya
• The Bank Officials present
• The Deputy Vice-Chancellors (UoN)
• College Principals
• Deputy Principals
• Deans and Directors
• Other staff present
• Our dear students
• Ladies and Gentlemen
Let me start by warmly welcoming you all to this very important forum which has been organized by Barclays Bank, to launch their Ready to Work Programme. I am made to understand that the programme is designed to offer university students and graduates, people, work, entrepreneurial and money skills so as to prepare them for the job market.

Allow me, therefore, to thank Barclays Bank through their CEO, for selecting to launch this programme at the University of Nairobi. It is an honour to us but also an indicator of how our institution is regarded in the world of employers. The University has a long standing working relationship with Barclays Bank who are the University’s
main bankers at the corporate level. Indeed, all school fees from Modules I and II are paid through Barclays Bank. On account of the university running several accounts with various branches of the bank, the bank therefore, is the chief manager of the University’s cash flow process. As you may be aware, it is only Barclays Bank which runs a branch at the University.

The idea of a Ready to Work Programme for Kenyan students is opportune and most welcome. As you are aware, the university (and colleges generally) teaches from a theoretical perspective, with some internships and industrial attachments, with the expectation that the students will readily adapt to the working environment.
However, owing to dynamics in the working place and changes in technology, it is not always that our graduates fit into the working place environment fast enough. This programme, therefore, is meant to transit the students from the classroom to workplace.

However, while we appreciate the programme as conceptualized by the bank and whose workings will be demonstrated today, it is still the responsibility of universities and colleges to produce graduates who are ready to fit in the workplace with minimal effort.
Let me point out for the record that our graduates (and their degrees) are highly recognized and very well regarded regionally and internally. We have aspired to provide a learning environment that is innovative, supportive and of high quality. We expect our students to develop an intellectual and cultural curiosity both within their academic and professional disciplines and also across discipline boundaries. Further, we expect them to develop problem solving work-ready skills as required in our dynamic and changing world. In readiness for the work environment, we expect them to demonstrate cultural awareness, develop a global perspective and cultivate respect and tolerance for others.
In summary, we appreciate our challenge as a university to produce graduates who have the following attributes:

- Are knowledgeable
- Can apply their knowledge
- Can communicate effectively
- Can work independently
- Are solutions oriented
- Are collaborative
- Value ethical behaviour
- Connect across boundaries
Apart from these attributes, the graduates are supposed to have the following:

- A commitment to involvement in service to the community.
- Secure grounding in their academic field and awareness of possible cross-disciplinary application.
- Possess essential research related skills including knowledge of IT.
- Have strong analytical skills and capacity for independent critical thinking.
- Possess problem solving qualities.
- Be capable of imaginative and sound planning.
- Have both the capacity and desire for lifelong learning.
As a University, we recognize that one of the key elements towards producing quality graduates is to be flexible and to develop a close relationship with industry. It is therefore important for us to hear what employers are saying. They can advise us on what is good to put in our curriculum, or indeed the modes of teaching. If we are teaching a technology that is out date, we would like employers to tell us it is out of date so we adopt a modern one.

Our target, therefore, is to shape our graduates into well rounded individuals ready to make an impact in society and on the workplace.
Currently, the university has an undertaking to enhance experiential learning as one of the key elements in the process of producing holistic graduates who meet the requirements of the market. It is therefore most encouraging that Barclays Bank has come up with an online programme tailored to prepare our graduates for the job market.
I urge our students to embrace it as they prepare to join the job market once they graduate.

Thank you very much and have a good day.

PETER M.F MBITHI, PhD, EBS
VICE-CHANCELLOR
AND
PROFESSOR OF VETERINARY SURGERY