

Vice Chancellor's Speech at Fourth Graduation Ceremony

H.E. Dr. Yahya bin Mahfouth al-Manthri
Chairman of the State Council
Sponsor of our ceremony

H.E. Shaikh Mustaheel bin Ahmad al—Mashani
Chairman of the Board of Trustees

Excellencies, Shaikhs
Dr. Hassan Diab, Vice President of AUB for Regional External Programs
Families of Graduates
Colleagues- Faculty and Staff
Graduates:

Salamu Alaykum

Today you are journeying from the phase of university education during which you developed substantive knowledge and technical and social skills to a new phase in your life, a phase that has its own features and determinants of success.

On the importance of quality of education and predilection of quality over quantity, HM Sultan Qaboos bin Said said:

"... quantity is useless unless high standards are maintained in order to advance scientific and applicable skills." (from the Royal speech to Oman Council, 2006)

Quality is one of the requirements for success in the 21st century knowledge society whichever place or country you work in, and regardless of your specialty or position.

As aptly put by Dr. Muhammad Zwail, Nobel Laureate in chemistry, "Arab and Islamic society needs an innovative, learning individual, not a holder of a degree."

Innovation and quality are prerequisites for success. An innovative engineer at a factory or company has greater ability to upgrade equipment. An instructor who is able to find innovative teaching methods is effective in meeting learning outcomes. A businessman with original ideas has greater success in expanding his business and creating new job opportunities. An innovative social worker has greater ability to find creative solutions to social problems.

Emphasizing the significance of innovation and its role in society, Dr. Muhammad Yunus founder of Grameen Bank for small loans in Bangladesh and recipient of Nobel Peace Prize, said: "I have discovered that people have a huge ability to innovate, which, if utilized properly, would lead to solving many social ills."

Dear graduates:

Quality and innovation are closely related to inquiry, discovery and lifelong learning. These are values that we at DU have sought to nurture in you. It is sufficient that one would think about one small aspect of the hidden secrets of the universe every day, as the noted physicist Albert Einstein once stated, and not give up at all on the sparkle of

discovery. The words of this scientist resonate well with the Quranic verse: "Behold! in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of night and day,- there are indeed Signs for men of understanding," who "contemplate the (wonders of) creation in the heavens and the earth..."

The quest for inquiry and discovery is a driving force behind self-learning, continuous improvement, and lifelong learning, which are the principal values that DU has strived to nurture in you.

Learning does not stop when you receive your university degrees or practice your profession irrespective of its seniority. Rather, it is the beginning of a new journey, one that begins at birth and ends at death.

Is there a more succinct and wiser call for more learning than in God's directive to Prophet Muhammad in the verse: "but say O my Lord advance me in knowledge"?

Ladies and Gentlemen:

At this evening where graduates are happy to receive degrees from Dhofar University and parents are ecstatic to see their children graduate, we acknowledge the great efforts made by many people to establish this educational institution, thanking everyone who contributed either financially or by providing moral support.

I thank God that this nation has a wise leadership that directs us toward quality and innovation and has awarded all private universities a generous grant. So our deepest gratitude goes to HM for his grant.

Thanks to HE Yahya bin Mafouth Al-Manthri for honoring us with his sponsorship of this ceremony.

Many thanks to the founders of this institution, members of the Board of Trustees, who have and continue to provide all possible support so that DU would occupy a recognized position among quality higher education institutions.

I also would like to thank HE Rawya Bousaidiya, Minister of Higher Education and her staff for their cooperation in developing higher education at the Sultanate. AUB deserves special thanks for its administrative and academic support.

Finally, my thanks go to all those who contributed to the success of this function notably the organizing committee and the volunteer students.

Dear graduates:

Congratulations to you and your families. Remember that just as DU has been there for you for years, it shall continue to rely on your assistance and shall be proud of your successes and achievements, so stay in touch. DU will also be proud when you maintain strong filial ties to your parents and serve your country with your strong arms and innovative minds in order to contribute to the development of Oman under the leadership of HM Sultan Qaboos bin Said.

May God help us all to serve this generous nation.
Assalamu Alaikum