Today marks a coming of age for you. When you walked through the gates of this great Pan-African University those two years ago, many things were on your mind, and many dreams, fantasies and fears probably made you shiver with anticipation and apprehension. Some of you had come from beyond the borders of this country and had spent a year or more learning a new language in order to finally start your degree programme. You were embarking on an adventure of a lifetime.

Then finally came time to choose a degree programme or be chosen by one and, one way or the other, you ended up signing for this BA in International Relations & Diplomacy. And today, here you are, and the rest is history.

You are now embarked on a unique and not so common career path for a young African man or woman. Your dreams are now less scattered, haphazard and unfocussed. You can now imagine yourself becoming a successful professional in international relations, diplomacy and related sectors, and, for that, you can be proud of yourselves.
You have come a long way and it has not been easy. Imagine coming from the DRC, Mozambique, Angola, or Uzumba Maramba Pfungwe, speaking very little or no English, hating the news, knowing very little of foreign affairs, diplomacy, politics or geopolitics, and now doing so well that, in the next few months, an organisation will be relying on your expertise for its success and growth.

Is it not therefore time to take another look at your lecturers and acknowledge their contribution to your growth and empowerment? They are the very best in the trade and you are blessed to have them. Spare a thought for the VC, I/DVC and E-Cabinet, who work extremely hard to keep this Africa University one of the best institutions, not only in this country but across this African continent. Remember also the support staff (cleaners, cooks, security guards, secretaries, IT technicians, Chaplain) who make sure you have the best environment in which to learn.

Finally, remember your parents without whom you would not even exist. Read Exodus 20:12 every day when you wake up and learn the recipe for your success as an individual and nation. Also, read Matthew 1:1-22 to learn the importance and sanctity of your ancestry, which is the ‘narrow’ path chosen by the Almighty for you to be here among us. Finally, praise the Almighty for all these blessings without which you wouldn’t be here and wouldn’t be looking forward to a professional industrial attachment.

Today is a day dedicated to preparing your initiation into professional life in an exciting and fast-changing life. Pay attention to each and every presentation. It is food you will require at various stages of your year-long journey. Remember to register before the beginning of each semester you will be on industrial attachment. No unregistered student will be supervised or assessed.

Go, therefore, and show the world what your nation, your forebears, and your parents have delivered to Africa and the world as a sacred gift from the Almighty. Go and represent them well, diligently and with dignity. Above all, go and be the best ambassador for this Africa University and its VC who loves you all dearly and prays for you incessantly.

Go speak well of our CSSTHE and Department of International Relations and Diplomacy. Work hard, be a team player, show leadership, initiative and innovation, always be willing to go the extra mile, be innovative, and show that you are a God-fearing child of Africa.

Our VC has enabled you to receive transformative education for you to impact your generation and set the pace for future generations. As your Dean,
I am therefore giving you a sacred mission: help take Africa out of bondage and build our Dominion in the global community of nations.

Finally, remember that you can only ever have one life and one body. Your life is your first and most important treasure. You do not have spare parts, so take good care of your body, your mind, and your soul. Remember the prophetic instruction of our Chaplain, Rev. Maudy Muchanyerei: “Do not be careless”. And, as you begin to fly on your own wings, like young Senderayi who has just represented us so well in Dubai, do not leave your parents and siblings behind you.

In the meantime, do not forget to prepare thoroughly for the imminent end of semester examinations. Only those who pass their courses can go on industrial attachment.

As your Dean, I wish you well. I love you all and this College also loves you.

STAY BLESSED!

Prof. Andrew Tichaenzana Manyawu (PhD)
Dean, College of Social Sciences, Theology, Humanities & Education