

Welcome to First Year 1978.

(is to extend to you, a very hearty
welcome)

My first pleasant task this afternoon, as
fellow Rhodians. In this I am joined by my colleagues
[check] Approx 850 : (almost) biggest freshman
group ever.

You form $\pm 1/3$ of the 2500 odd full-time
students currently attending the Univ.

But you are part of a much larger, unseen
body > 12000 Old Rhodian Union

It is a proud title to be a Rhodian

Old Rhodians are proud of it

Fellow Rhodians proud of it

I am sure that you will rapidly absorb
the spirit of Rhodes and that you will be
equally proud of your allegiance

I have met hundreds and hundreds of
Rhodians ~~and~~ of all circumstances and all vintages,
and I have yet to meet one who does not
look back on his/her period at Rhodes and
in G'town with affection and nostalgia.

That you will enjoy yourselves here is
thus a virtual certainty. You will meet so
many lively people, have such a variety of
activities staking a claim to your time that
you would have to be a very strange person
indeed not to enjoy yourself here

What is perhaps not quite such a
pleasurable subject is, what will happen to
you and what you will do apart from, or
in addition to enjoying yourselves?

First year students, not only here, but throughout the land, are currently a very much in the limelight.

You are being prodded and probed as never before. We are interested in your English language competence. Questions have been asked about you in Parliament, especially about your proneness (and those of your predecessors) not to pass exams satisfactorily. The Committee of University Principals, a very august body of which I have the honour of being Chairman this year, are arranging a conference about the difficulties you face in the transition from school, to universities — academic difficulties, social, ^{emotional}, your ability to handle the quantum leap in personal freedom of action. Enormous questionnaires have directed all the reasons for failure to cope with the university environment.

The figures are indeed alarming.

± 30% dropout rate during or at end of 1st year
only ± 55% achieve the degree or diploma at which they are aiming

<u>Example</u>	1971 BA entry
237	16 out during the year (inc 4 transfers)
	66 (inc 14 transfers) out at year end
	16 repeated 1st year
	141 promoted to BA II

in %

27%	just during or end of 1st year
7%	repeat 1st year
34%	

only 59% proceeded directly to BA II

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<u>At far end</u>	95	BA in 3 yrs	40%
	26	BA in 4 yrs	11
			51%
	1	> 4 yrs	

(+ a few of the transferees might have obtained other degrees eventually, here or elsewhere)

Costs of a wasted year

① (Parents or bursary grant)

*

Res	900
fees	500
books, clothes pocket money + travel	500

1900

② Tax payers.

direct	1800
indirect	500

2300

subtotal	4200
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③ Lost earnings

2800

* also indirect losses to community.

7000

Total cost of GDP thus $\pm$ 900 p.m. for the 8 months you are here.

R 30 per day !!

The economic loss to the community is enormous — no wonder so much concern is being felt. If you have ~~just~~ come here just to have a good time, with no serious commitment to your studies then it might actually pay the community to let you do it in style, and put you up at the Beacon Island, the Edew Ree or even the Carlton. This realisation is slowly sinking in, and to a considerable extent explains some of the current disenchantment with universities — expressing itself in tax cuts, etc.

Let us dwell a little further on some factors relative to the question

I Why have you chosen to come? As many reasons as there are students but some of the major ones

Vocational training . perfectly honorable but blinkered. expand. "Will this come up in the exam?"

Academic excellent, interest in the chosen subject for its own sake - echo the inclinations of the academic staff

Liberal education, broaden your outlook
dissipative, too many extramural interests

Reformers. They know exactly what is wrong with the world, and they are out to mend it - in a hurry. Zeal gets the better of them, and fall down on main objective

Social Either because it is the thing to do, or prime motivation is to enjoy themselves. likely to find not able to stay the pace for very long

II What does the Univ expect of you.

(a) Specifically orientated course. Accountancy, Journalism, Teaching, Pharmacy etc.

That you gain vocational competence yes, but not that alone. Take a professional outlook, become a more broadly based human being with some understanding of the human condition

Whether you are academic, ^{commitment to one subject for} broad liberal or reform minded, Univ has no serious ~~growing~~ misgivings about you, provided you bring with you an attitude of making a firm commitment to profit from what ~~you~~ we have to offer you

If you have no such commitment, either because social butterfly or social conformist, then the sooner we part company the better. As V-P said at summer ^{school}, cause for congratulation rather than condemnation if you realise Rhodes is not for you and decide to withdraw. University educ is not an essential prerequisite for a successful life. Many other paths to prepare yourself - many famous - perhaps most well known - Churchill

II(b) What does society expect of you more particularly your future employer? (or what amounts to same thing your future clients).

He expects

Give examples of
Pilot, dentist, lawyer
(mid-air)

Minimum threshold level of knowledge
Minimum level of competence, below
which you will not fall

Minimum threshold of reliability.

Very often the level of knowledge and competence that he will be content with is below what you will have acquired if you successfully complete degree course

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Why then does he then value that degree and insist that you have it?

It proves that you are capable of setting yourself a nontrivial task requiring sustained effort, and successfully completing it* will not let him down in court.

Give examples from my own experience, esp

Computer programming, of hiring nongraduates

* Without detailed and close supervision - one of the reasons why we do not mollycoddle you too much at Univ - though it is often suggested that we should

III What goes wrong?

Poor school preparation

Poor advice or no advice sought of questionnaires

Shortcomings of the Univ (esp lecturing)

Believe me, we are conscious of this and we are trying. Cite UTACA.

Lack of ability

Crisis of expectations between school + Univ

For every student who comes short for above reasons I can show you two who is unsuccessful for the most common reason of all - lack of MOTIVATION

Simply not hungry enough for that degree is the way Gary Player is hungry for golfing excellence or Bernie Loefer } for a crack at Mohammad Ali
Katie Kneetzer }

I am sure you will all agree that present situation is no longer tenable.

What can you do about it?

Keyword is PROFESSIONALISM. In a very real sense you are all serving an apprenticeship in professionalism.

You must be dedicated to acquiring the minimum acceptable level of knowledge for your chosen walk of life.

Let me expand a little on this question of motivation, the Gary Player-like hunger to make the grade, or as the people in the entertainment world put it "The show must go on".

If I took off a month to interview each one of you at some length - say 15 mins - I am certain nearly everyone of you would say "Of course, Dr. H, I ^{am} ~~am~~ ^{committed to} ~~have a serious~~ ^{about my} ~~COMMITMENT to~~ studies". You ~~will~~ would be prepared to swear it on the Bible, and you would mean it.

The trouble comes in following out the implications in all their minute particularities.

It means every day, beginning Thursday ^(to-morrow) ~~Not Monday~~. I am going to attend all lectures, tuts and 3 to 4 hours of private study.

My experience: 2 out of every 3 a.m., p.m., eve. + 1 sat.

Survey: 18 to 20 hours formal commitments

failures 12 hrs: passes 15 hours. (even that minimal)

Those Three hours crucial.

No shortage of excuses: Rag, dances, important friends → pub. Weekend at the Kowie

If you are falling behind in your self-imposed programme - discipline and self-will to say NO

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Professional shows concern: fellow man → wants to know more about them → not immediately practical courses, public lectures, societies etc.

property self tape, furniture energy.

Your task is to take full advantage of the opportunities presented to you over the next 3 or 4 years in

- (1) A right attitude to consistent study - first responsibility whatever else you do
- (2) Opportunity for improving your communication and leadership skills - becoming is the process a ~~rather~~ fuller and more mature human being
- (3) Sporting + social facilities

Plus sana in sano corpore

All work + no play makes Jack a dull boy

(No danger of this at Rhodes)

- (4) Learn something of Grahamstown.

Not just another platteland doop. 1820 traditions. "Thus came English". Rhodes students leave woefully ignorant.

{ Private schools
Law Courts
Library for blind
Historical Churches.
Museums
Fingo Village
Monument
Artifacts to
~~Hogback~~ Historical monuments + beauty spots

Hogback, Coast, Salom, Alexandria Forest

Bathurst (No thrust like Bathurst) Toposcope, St John's.

19th Cent history created here - many of S.A.'s attitudes, problems originated here
S.A. + World as microcosm

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and calls on your time

All of these conflicting objectives / you have somehow to keep in harmony and balance. Not always an easy task — No wonder some 1st years come unstuck.

Don't be hesitant to seek advice.

Dean of students.

Deans, Profs, Lecturers.

Wardens, housecoms, hallcoms, SRs,
more experienced students.

Parents

Chaplains

Don't try
to go it
alone, use
them

That's why
They are there.

Final

At this time of the year V-C at all univs speak. Some of them have been doing it for years. I am not naive enough to think that all of you will heed all that I have said. If you all did 90% would survive not 70. But if you 80, 75, even 71% rather than 70 do so, then I shall have achieved something to-day, and your patience in listening to me to courtesy will not be rewarded.

If of all the 3000 words I have delivered then I shall be well content if you remember only three

PROFESSIONALISM, MOTIVATION, COMMITMENT

Thank you for your courtesy, God bless you and Good Luck.

I am not going to end by wishing good luck, because it is not a question of luck, but of good management — setting priorities, budgeting time and sticking to the task

If you cannot achieve something ~~worth while~~ here it is a bad portent for your realizing your full potential in life, and that would be a great tragedy.

~~Ultimately how well you choose to do here is primarily your decision~~

Nothing would please me more than to see you all back here next year. Whether that actually comes to be depends on positive decisions and commitments on YOUR part. And whatever else you do or whatever excuses you can think off you will NOT be able to say "Nobody told me; nobody warned me what was expected of me."

{ v-ca are like Cassandra. Please God that won't be true this year }