

VICE CHANCELLOR'S CONVOCATION ADDRESS 2011

Honorable Chancellor- Dr. Ishrat-ul-Ibad Khan, Pro-Chancellor- Mr. Pir Mazhar-ul-Haq, Members of Senate and Syndicate of the University of Karachi, honorable members of the diplomatic corps, parliamentarians, provincial ministers, eminent citizens, distinguished guests, faculty members and my dear graduating students.

I welcome you all at the most grand event of University of Karachi, the Convocation 2011. This felicitous event provides us an opportunity to share with you the information about the country's highest seat of learning i.e. the University of Karachi. The University, at present, offers academic training and research opportunities in nine disciplines. Its nine faculties include faculties of Arts, Science, Islamic Studies, Law, Management and Administrative Sciences, Medicine and Pharmacy, Engineering and Education. The academic programs offered by University of Karachi include B.S., B.A./B.Sc./B.Com. (Honors), M.S., M.phil, BBA, MBA, BPA, MPA, M.A., M.Sc., M.Com., BE., B.L.I.S., M.L.I.S., Pharm-D, Ph.D., D.Lit., and D.Sc. In addition, certificate and diploma courses are also offered in various languages and technical subjects.

University of Karachi has over 60 years of experience of anticipating and responding to change. We pioneered Pakistan's first degrees in many subjects and have introduced a number of academic disciplines as well. Our research contributes to deeper understanding of issues that affects the entire nation, either directly or indirectly. Our courses are informed by the latest professional knowledge which is why our alumni in industry and the professions enjoy considerable status.

A Decade of University's Capacity Building and Infrastructure Development

During the period 2004-2011, University of Karachi has witnessed a significant era of growth in almost all the areas including academics, research and infrastructural development. I find it important to delve into some detail of the University's notable achievements and success stories. A comparative statistical assessment provides a clear view of University's phenomenal growth in every section. Beginning from students' enrolment till the successful completion of projects, the comparison marks a major difference.

Particulars	2003-2004	2010-2011
Number of Regular Students	17000	25646
Number of external/private students	38535	58053
Number of students enrolled in affiliated colleges	46594	64031
Number of affiliated colleges	108	151
PhD Degrees awarded	61	238
Number of Faculty Members	610	926
Number of projects (completed/in progress)	05	24

One of the most impressive facts is the number count of PhDs that the University has produced so far. Almost 1207 PhD degrees including D.Sc. and D.Litt. had been awarded till 2008 whereas this number will reach upto 1550 PhDs in the year 2011.

It is important to note that there were a number of projects which were left impended till 2004 and most of them had not even been initiated. By the grace of God, most of them have now been completed. Similarly, the University came up with a development plan for the first time in 2007.

- **THE KARACHI UNIVERSITY DEGREE AND NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL RANKING**

This happened for the first time, in 2009, when University of Karachi achieved the status of being in the list of world's top Universities. According to the QS (Times Higher Education – Quacquarelli Symonds) World University Ranking, University of Karachi is ranked among the top Universities of the world for the last three consecutive years. It leaves behind other Universities in the disciplines of Natural Science, Arts & Humanities, Life & Science, and Social Science. In addition, according to QS-Asian Universities Ranking 2011, University of Karachi stands 138th among 425 top Universities of Asia.

Since the entire nation accredits University of Karachi for its remarkable services rendered in higher education, the Higher Education Commission has ranked this University at number 03 among 97 public and private sector universities/institutes, in its national university ranking criteria 2010.

University of Karachi is publishing extensively in the field of Science and Social Sciences in reputed journals. It is also worth-mentioning that University of Karachi published 1447 research papers in the years 2007-2010. These papers were published in peer reviewed journals indexed by Thomson Reuters ISI Web Knowledge. Moreover, the University is accredited for having more than 60 patents in the field of scientific research both the national as well as international levels.

It is indeed prestigious to mention that our faculty members receive *Research Productivity Award* every year since 2002. This year 32 faculty members have received this honor.

- **INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT**

If we look back to assess the last few years, we realize that the beginning of the last decade embarked remarkable changes in the structural and academic stance of the University. The University underwent numerous achievements, the most notable of which is the infrastructural development. All stakeholders of the University will certainly endorse that the year 2004 marked the beginning of a new era of success.

- **Successful completion of the impended projects, approved in 2003-04:** There were numerous projects which were approved before 2003-04, but had not been initiated. The new administration did not only take keen note of it but fruitful efforts were made to complete the impending projects. Some of such projects include creation of *Centralized Instrumentation Facilities* for faculty of Science, improvement of teaching and research facilities at the Department of Chemistry, establishment of *High Speed Fiber based LAN* with wireless computing support within the entire University premises and strengthening of the department of Food Science & Technology.
- **University's First Master Plan ever:** Due to its futuristic approach the University administration, in 2007, came up with a *Master Plan 2050*, for the first time in the history of Karachi University. The plan for the long term perspective include the future needs of the growing economy, new departments, institutes, centres, convention hall power generation plant, hospitals etc. Constant efforts and strategic steps are being taken for the implementation of this plan.
- **Projects approved and completed during the last decade:** There are a lot many projects that have been completed during the last few years. Some of these projects have been completed as a result of an exemplary Public-Private partnership. However, there are numerous projects that the University managed to complete within its own resources. It is indeed a matter of pride that despite its financial constraints the University managed to complete all of them within the limited passage of time. Projects completed within University resources include numerous constructions, such as, the offices of Dean Faculty of Sciences and Directorate of Evening Program, a building for *Centralized Instrument Lab*, the department of Planning & Development and a 2150Ft long 34 Ft wide road within the campus. Extension of the building of Business Administration department, classrooms for faculty of Arts and Science and building for department of Public Administration and office of the Dean of Management and Administrative Science.

Syedna Burhanuddin Building of the Department of Genetics, Dr. Feroz Ahmed institute of Mass Communication, Umaer Basha Institute of Information Technology (UBIT), Dr. Pinjwani Centre for Molecular Medicine and Drug Research, Latif Ebrahim Jamal Information Centre, Dr. A. Q. Khan Institute of Biotechnology and Genetic Engineering (KIBGE) and National Institute of Kidney and Urological Diseases are some of the successfully completed projects that have been resulted from a dynamic public-private relationship.

- **Projects funded and approved by the Higher Education Commission:** Considering the remarkable academic and research output of the University, the HEC approved and funded a number of projects which were proposed by the University itself. It is, indeed, a prestigious moment for us that the Higher Education Commission also endorses the velocity with which we are achieving our goals and are taking this highest seat of learning to new horizons of academic and professional success.

The modern and multistoried building of the new administration block has recently been completed. This skillfully carved building with its impressive architectural style is one of the projects that have been completed with the funds provided by the HEC. In addition, National Centre for Proteomics, hostels for visiting faculty and students, Institute of National Capacity in Applied Economics Research Phase-II Extension, multi-storied blocks for staff residence and civil amenities, capacity enhancement of the faculty of Pharmacy, Botanical Garden and establishment of Herbarium at the University of Karachi are part of the list of those projects which the Higher Education Commission approved during 2004-2010.

- **INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION AND LINKAGES**

I find it important to mention that the University is well aware of the challenges of this rapidly changing and dynamic world. In order to meet the modern requirements, the University never hesitates in joining hands with the renowned international Universities and institutions. Our faculty and research fellows have extended frequent contact with various foreign Universities which have resulted in fruitful collaboration among Karachi University and foreign Universities of the world.

Some recent linkages include international consortium on Climate Change between the Institutes of Environmental Studies of the Universities of Pakistan-China-Netherland-France. University of Karachi has also been selected for a European Union Consortium titled *Erasmus Mundus Europe Asia Scholarship Program*; a number of students are awarded fully funded scholarships in the European Universities, under this consortium. In addition, several collaborative research projects are in process with the University of Giessen; Germany, University of Hannover; Germany, Gene Research Centre – University of Tsukuba; Japan, Soil and Fertilizers Research Institute; Vietnam, University of Dundee; Scotland, Newcastle University; UK etc.

University of Karachi is also accredited for having the world's only UNECO chair on *Halophytes*. The chair has been established in the Institute of Sustainable Halophyte Utilization, KU, as a response to its remarkable research work in this field.

- *Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs)* signed between Karachi University and various foreign and local Universities, organizations and institutes, indeed, open the doors of wide opportunities for our students.

- **EFFORTS MADE TO FACILITATE STUDENTS AND FACULTY MEMBERS**

We are highly concerned about the facilities that are imperative for a better environment for learning and research at the level of students as well as teachers. Some of the many efforts that we have made in this regard should be brought to your knowledge.

- **Student's Financial Aid Office:** This has been the utmost priority of the University that not a single student may leave his/her education incomplete just because of the financial constraint. In this regard, the University's motto is that no student would be left alone during their financial crunch. Karachi University is the only University of Pakistan that has a well-established Student's Financial Aid Office which looks upon the matter of financial assistance to the needy and deserving students. In addition, a number of scholarships and fellowships are offered time by time.
- **Well-equipped digital libraries:** The University of Karachi has state-of-the-art digital libraries which are well equipped as per the need of today's student. The LEJ Digital Library is a bench mark in this regard and is considered as the best in the entire region. It has high-speed internet connectivity (16MB) through NTC along with educational intranet connectivity with all major universities in Pakistan through PERN (Pakistan Educational Research Network). The facilities include on-line literature survey through Sc-Finder Scholar and over 11,500 full text journals. Moreover, Dr. Mahmood Hussain Library also has a digital library with similar facilities of internet as that of the LEJ.
- **Campus Radio Station:** For providing hands-on training to the students of Mas Media Sciences, an FM-90.6M.Hertz Campus Radio has been installed in the University which also serves as a source of knowledge for common listeners.
- **Sports Facilities:** Since the development and improvement of sports facilities is one of the priorities, the University administration takes keen interest in adding up in the facilities provided in this regard. Despite the renovation and improvements of playgrounds, which have been completed, a new Gymnasium for female students and a fitness center is also in the process of construction.
- **Health Care Facilities:** In order to strengthen the in-campus health care facilities, a new building for the University clinic has been constructed which will soon be

equipped with modern diagnostic laboratory, ultrasound, x-ray and CPO facilities. Because for us, good health is imperative for a healthy learning environment.

- **NEWLY ESTABLISHED CHAIRS AND DIRECTORATE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION**

- **Directorate of Distance Education:** We at Karachi University do not think that distance is a hurdle in attaining quality education and a successful professional career. Thus, to shrink down the physical distance between higher education and the youth of Pakistan and to cater the needs of the ever increasing number of the external/private candidates, a Directorate of Distance Education will soon be established at the University of Karachi. This directorate will also strive for improving the quality of education for those students who do not have this opportunity of attending lectures in the classrooms. To resolve the problem of such students, online or recorded lectures and other learning aid will be provided by this directorate. In relation, a *Professional Development Centre* has been established, the facilities for which have been provided by Mr. Sardar Yaseen Malik. I would like to extend my gratitude for him in this regard.
- **Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Chair:** To acknowledge the services of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto for implementing the true ideal of democracy in the country, a chair in her name has been instituted which also tries to unveil her strategic political stance and leadership style.
- **Data Ganj Baksh Hijweri Chair:** In order to disseminate the contribution of the Persian Sufi and great religious scholar of the 11th Century, a chair has also been established in the name of Abul Hassan Ali Hijweri commonly known as Hazrat Data Ganj Bakhsh.

- **OUR VISION FOR FUTURE**

You would be delighted to hear that because of its futuristic approach, University of Karachi has always turned dreams into reality. The innovative ideas always help in discovering new horizons of intellect and success in every field.

- **Internationalization of Education:** To meet the challenges of globalization and in order to satisfy the demands of the 21st Century, University of Karachi, has planned to internationalize its educational programs by establishing its foreign campuses in Dubai – Middle East and Mauritius – South east Africa. The agreement for Dubai campus is in meaningful progress and the project will soon be finalized. However, initial discussions for the Mauritius campus is in progress

these days. I positively feel that the establishment of these campuses will further strengthen the country's academic standards.

- **Industry Liaison Cell:** The University will soon establish an industry liaison cell in the University, which will work as a bridge between the academia and the markets. With the passage of time, Universities around the world are functioning as marketing hubs for their countries. Along with this vision, University of Karachi will be able to help its graduates in finding the right place in the right market. This cell would explore the opportunities for our students in the market. Not only this, but it will also diagnose the weakness, catering which our students could easily adjust themselves in their professional career.
- **Endowment Fund:** As you all know that the University has to cater with the financial constraints most of the time. In order to solve this issue and to generate its own resources, a grand endowment fund will soon be established.

While concluding this, I must say that in the last few year, despite many financial constraints, University of Karachi has successfully manage to keep the process of development continued. Most notable of them are the infrastructural developments. But the caravan of intellect is still at pace with the changing times. Our journey is yet continued and we will keep exploring new horizons in the future as well because our vision is at par with our missions.

I would like to extend my felicitations to the graduating students who have successfully completed a major phase of their life but my dear students, you must keep this in mind that the journey towards knowledge never ends, it simultaneously brings the gift of success. On this arduous accomplishment of attaining a degree, you must be thankful to your teachers and parents whose support and guidance have led you to this grand event.

May Allah bless this nation with unity and provide all of us the strength which is imperative for taking our country out of the difficult times.

I extend my heartiest gratitude to the Honorable Chancellor and Governor Sindh, Dr. Ishrat-ul-Ibad Khan, not only for his gracious presence in the convocation 2011 but for his immense support throughout. His support has enabled us to achieve our goals.
