GC UNIVERSITY, LAHORE

7th

CONVOCATION

COURAGE TO KNOW
ESTD 1864

THE
VICE CHANCELLOR’S ADDRESS
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Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have witnessed in recent months many unusual events taking place inside and around our country. These incidents were shocking, disturbing and disruptive. The irreparable losses caused by aggression and violence are just beyond our imagination and alien to South Asian culture. The world seems to be in a deep crisis which is born of hatred and intolerance for others' beliefs. Guided by dogmatism and fundamentalism, polarized groups are resorting to irrational acts of repression of dissident voices, even denial of fundamental rights to others. All this has started sapping the vitality of the society and set it on a downhill course.

Vitality of a society is to be judged from the way it builds up a vision for itself and regularly rejuvenates the system with a fresh vigour. This requires an ability to choose between alternatives with maturity. It calls for an efficacy to deal with the contradictions that the social transition may generate and lead transition into desired transformation. In essence, vitality flourishes when 'authority of the idea' and not the
‘idea of authority’ is in operation; when hierarchical power structure is replaced by decentralized governance.

One may ask a fundamental question: wherein lies the vitality of society? The simple answer is: in freedom, individualism and the spirit of enquiry. A doubt leads to enquiry; enquiry to freedom of thought; freedom of thought to diversity of opinion; diversity of opinion to tolerance which creates the necessity of listening to all kinds of views on matters of mutual interest. This atmosphere of enquiry and tolerance for diverse viewpoints on issues provides the very basis of vitality of a society.

And what ensures the emergence of a “vitality enriched society” are the “fresh ideas” that come from a genuine educational institution of higher learning – an institution like GC University, Lahore. The crucial role of such institutions is to produce persons with imagination and feelings; and the rest automatically follows. It would be true to say that many amongst us are governed by the weakness of our imagination. It is this weakness which should be the paramount purpose of education to dispel because it is impossible to build a vision without persons of feelings and imagination.
It is our duty to educate ourselves as well as others as to the means of setting up a sane society – a society that does not promote hate and conflict among people. Instead, it helps people to have convictions rather than opinions, faith rather than superstitions, vision rather than narrowness. What would ultimately make it possible is our faith in man's reason and his goodness. So rational thinking, objectivity and logical reasoning be made the means of developing the collective force of likeminded people. This is the primary role of higher education in the contemporary world. Without this role, education is likely to give way to irrational fears and phobias which give birth to all kinds of negative forces that abound in today's world.

Fortunately Government College University, Lahore has maintained wonderful traditions of academic excellence, research, promotion of new ideas and, above all, respect for others' views. Our Alma Mater — Government College, Lahore — was set up in 1864 in the tradition of liberal education. In essence, liberal philosophy puts faith in individual's ability to take right decisions and denies the role of absolute judgments as are often espoused by theologians. In our view, the best intellectual outcome of liberal philosophy was the idea of 'Sapre Aude' — Courage to Know — which Immanuel Kant called the best motto of enlightenment. Many historians consider the dawn of
enlightenment as the true beginning of modernity. It is our good luck that ‘Courage to Know’ is our motto.

It is worth mentioning here that Pakistan’s poet philosopher — a very distinguished Ravian — also took inspiration from Sapare Aude. Doctor Muhammad Iqbal’s ideas are held in high esteem by all who subscribe to the philosophy of reason as against the dogma of blind following. We believe as Iqbal’s Alma Mater, GC University has a special role to promote a culture that ensures creativity. Creativity implies a ceaseless quest for self realization, a yearning for new visions and a constant struggle to attain the unattainable. Thus, creativity becomes the supreme human virtue. Creativity is born of strong intellectual tradition associated with centres of learning like GC University, Lahore. All this is unique to our Alma Mater and is a part of the historical legacy of this great educational institution.

**GCU Vision and Academic Programmes**

GC University, Lahore is a modern, demand-driven, research-based, quality-conscious, futuristic and affordable public institution. Guided by this vision, we attempt to ensure three things in our academic programmes: (i) quality assurance of teaching; (ii) high standards of research and (iii) organizational and managerial efficiency.
The GCU now offers various courses, including a number of new subjects at different levels. At the undergraduate level, the University offers BA/BSc 4-Year (Hons.) Degree Programme in 20 disciplines of Science & Technology, Arts, Social Sciences and Languages. GCU also offers BS in Computer Science, BSc Engineering in Electronics and Telecommunications and BSc in Applied Management. At the postgraduate level, the University offers MBA, EMBA, MSc Telecommunications, MPhil/MS and PhD degrees in 27 disciplines in a highly research-conducive environment.

While working within the stimulating environment of GCU, some of our postgraduate departments have taken a lead in certain areas of specialization. I must mention the excellent performance of Abdus Salam School of Mathematical Sciences (ASSMS) and Salam Chair in Physics. In its five-year existence, the School of Mathematical Sciences has a remarkable record. It already has the largest full-time doctoral programme in South Asia, with 93 PhD scholars, many of whom have already published their work in highly reputed international journals. This academic programme has attracted a number of overseas post-doctoral fellows to pursue their studies in ASSMS, thereby reversing the traditional flow of graduate students away from Pakistan. On the international scene, the School has initiated two new journals — one for research and the other specifically for
graduate students — hosted a number of international conferences, workshops, seminars, international schools and introduced exchange programmes with numerous universities in Asia, Western Europe, Eastern Europe, Russia and the USA. According to the latest release of ScienceWatch.com, a website which tracks trends and performance in Basic Research and provides citation rankings of scientists, institutions, countries and journals, Pakistan is now among the list of countries with the highest percent increase in total citations in Mathematics. Honestly put, without ASSMS, Pakistan would not have achieved this honour.

**Quality Assurance of Academic Programmes**

The Quality Enhancement Cell at GCU focuses on dissemination of information on current quality practices in curriculum, research, examination, assessment, etc. so that the overall quality of academic and research activities of the University is constantly improved. The mission of the Quality Enhancement Cell (QEC) at the GCU Lahore is to monitor and enhance academic processes, procedures and practices within academic administrative departments, keeping in view the International Quality Assurance Standards.
— Realizing that organizational efficiency essentially depends on individual competence, a plan is afoot for staff development in our University. In addition to a comprehensive QEC programme with a focus on staff training, 26 teachers of GCU are at present studying for PhD degree abroad and 03 in Pakistan. Two teachers of the Statistics Department have recently been selected for the Fulbright / HEC/ USAID PhD Scholarship Programme for 2009. Hopefully many more will go aboard soon for higher education so as to build a strong human resource base for the future development of GCU. I am pleased to put on record that, courtesy HEC, our University has 56 foreign professors in various departments — the highest number in any Pakistani university. Their presence is a big advantage to us. Over all, there are 415 faculty members, of which 145 hold PhD degrees while the rest are MPhil. The GCU also has a large number of staff working under Tenure Track System which assures excellent salary to the productive researchers.

Research Activities

— In a short period after gaining university status in 2002, GC University, Lahore has attained a distinguished place among Pakistani universities owing to its strong commitment to academic standards and research work.
These research explorations range from pure Biological Sciences to Economics and other Social Sciences. In all, GCU students produced 361 theses in various disciplines during 2007-08, while the staff and students’ publications in international and national journals was 363, of which ASSMS’s share was 190.

— Recently, Pakistan Council for Science & Technology (PCST) has announced an award for eight faculty members of GC University Lahore with Research Productivity Allowance for the year 2007-08 in recognition of their outstanding research contribution in Physics and Biological Sciences which were published in international impact factor journals of high repute.

**GCU and International/National Academic Linkages**

— In this age of synergy, globalization and internationalization, GC University, Lahore believes in developing and strengthening academic links with the leading national and international universities and research institutions. At present, GCU has 36 international and 42 national linkages with universities, industries and national organizations of repute.
We have been receiving quite a positive response vis-à-vis joint research projects, exchange of students and faculty, seminar participation etc. from various renowned universities of Australia, Canada, China, Germany, Hong Kong, India, Iran, Italy, New Zealand, Netherlands, Singapore, Thailand, Turkey, UK, and the USA with whom we collaborate in areas of mutual interest.

Conferences, Seminars and Invited Lectures

We have vigorously pursued the policy of arranging conferences, seminars and invited lectures for the last few years. In 2007-08, GCU arranged 70 conferences, seminars and invited lectures. Our University held a number of national conferences on very significant topics such as the State of Social Sciences in Pakistan, Drug Abuse, and Clinical Psychology in Service of Community, and Financing of Higher Education in Pakistan. We also held International Conference on Statistical Sciences with special reference to Survival Data Analysis, and an International Symposium on Psychology and Literature, which were attended by experts from other countries also.
**Academic Results and Awards 2008**

— GC University has upheld the tradition of excellence in academic work at all levels. At Intermediate level, this year 09 out of 12 top positions in various groups in the Lahore Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education were won by the GCU students. GCU student Ahsan Ismail, topped the results in all academic groups and scored the highest marks of 1,026 out of 1,100. The GCU students also grabbed the top three positions of the Pre-Engineering group and all three positions of the General Science group. Moreover, 37.07% of all the A+ candidates were from our University. The overall pass percentage of GCU students was 95.19%. This is not an ordinary achievement. This was the 15th year in a row that GCU was placed on top of all institutions on the basis of Intermediate results in the country. In recognition of the good work of teachers, the Chief Minister Punjab gave a special honorarium of Rs. 7.00 lac to me which has been distributed among the teachers of the high achieving students. This good gesture of the Chief Minister has been warmly received by the teachers.

— At graduate and postgraduate levels, the number of degree holders progressively increase every year. It gives me immense pleasure to announce that at today’s Convocation
834 graduates of BA/BSc MA/MSc MPhil and PhD have received their degrees. In this Convocation, the Honourable Chancellor has conferred 19 PhD degrees to the students.

**Co-Curricular Activities**

— GC University Lahore has traditionally promoted the notion that cultural refinement is the corner stone of genuine academic institution. No wonder, some of the most renowned cultural icons, men of letters and scholars discovered their true mettle and groomed it while they were students at Government College Lahore, which is now a University.

— The University has long-established traditions of first-rate academic and co-curricular activities. At present, there are 44 societies and clubs in our University, which organize extra-mural events in line with the cultural, intellectual, and national dynamics of Pakistan. In line with the old traditions, Majlis-e-Iqbal, Majlis-e-Sufi Tabbasum, Punjabi Majlis held regular weekly literary meetings throughout the year and also arranged special invited lectures of foreign and Pakistani scholars and writers. These meetings provide excellent opportunities to young students to interact with senior scholars and writers and find fulfillment of their natural talent. Besides these, there are 06 student
publications, which are published on weekly, quarterly and annual basis.

Life at GCU is coloured by co-curricular activities. The University takes pride in its pioneering work in histrionics under the GCU Dramatics Club, its rousing orators from the Debating Society, its galaxy of respected editors of the prestigious publication *The Ravi*, editorial boards of *The Gazette* and *The Scientific Ravi*, its sports galas, and of the other bustling co-curricular activities round the year. The University thus provides ample opportunities to its students to discover themselves, to realise their potential and prepares them for the challenges of life. Just to name the most prominent students, Dr. Muhammad Iqbal, N.M. Rashid and Faiz Ahmad Faiz – three stalwarts of the 20th century Urdu poetry learnt their robes while they were studying at Government College, Lahore. Rafi Peer, Imtiaz Ali Taj, Hakim Ahmad Shuja, Balraj Sahni, Patras Bokhari, Zia Mohiuddin and many others discovered their fascination for the theatre during their student life at GC, Lahore.

**GCU Dramatics Club**

Functioning since the last decades of the 19th century, GCU Dramatics Club (GCUDC) pioneered theatre activity in pre-partition years and after independence. In keeping with its
tradition of producing quality theatre and training the younger generation of Ravians in the theatrical arts, GCUDC held and participated in several dramatic activities during 2007-08. GCUDC toured various colleges of the University of Delhi, India in December 2007 where they performed Ishfaq Ahmad’s play Behan Bhai and Bano Qudsia’s play Amar Beil. The Club staged Henrik Ibsen’s play The Doll’s House as the GCUDC’s annual performance for the connoisseurs of theatre. Apart from our Annual Play, GCUDC arranged 2nd Pak-India Inter-Collegiate Drama Festival in which 16 institutions from India and all the four provinces of Pakistan staged their drama productions in Urdu and English. In today’s conflict ridden South Asian region, this initiative has been widely appreciated by the peace loving people on both sides of the border.

**GCU Debating Society**

The GCU Debating Society is the oldest forum for various genres of public speaking in the Subcontinent. Having introduced the House of Commons Style Debates in 1952 and the GCU Style Parliamentary Debates in 2002, the Debating Society has groomed hundreds of renowned orators over the last 144 years who went on to make their mark as jurists, academicians, civil servants, politicians and scientists.
During the session 2007-08, the GCU Debating Society bagged a total of 108 prizes which include 25 Team Trophies, 07 Runner-up Trophies and a total of 76 Individual Prizes, including 37 'Best Speaker Awards', 22 '2nd Positions', 13 '3rd Positions' and 04 'Consolation Prizes'. Besides this, the Society organized Annual Internal Debates, 27th All Pakistan Allama Muhammad Iqbal Bilingual Declamation Contest 2007, Inter-varsity Parliamentary Debating Championship, 13th Annual All Pakistan GCU Style Parliamentary Debates, N.M. Rashid Monthly Debates and Weekly Training Camps for Debates and Declamations.

A high point of this year's debating activities was the announcement of Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Medal and cash prize of Rs. 25000/- by Prof. M.A. Khan, a retired professor of Government College, Lahore for the most talented English Speaker to be awarded annually at the Allama Iqbal Declamation of the University. The first medal was won by Maheen Hasan of Kinnaird College at a recently held Declamation at GCU. This kind gesture of Prof. M.A. Khan has been widely appreciated across the country. We hope this medal will become a symbol of inter-provincial harmony besides being a perpetual tribute to the exceptional contributions of Mohtrama Benazir Bhutto Shaheed to the cause of democracy in Pakistan.
Nazir Ahmed Music Society

— Established in 1930, Nazir Ahmed Music Society has been active in promoting musical activities in GC University. It offers daily training classes for students interested in playing eastern and western musical instruments and learning various genres of light, semi-classical, classical and pop music. The Society hosted the Annual Heritage Concert during 2007-08, which showcased the musical prowess of the GCU students. At present, Pakistani classical and pop music scene is dominated by Ravians. They include, among others, prominent singers like Waris Baig, Shafqat Amanat Ali Khan, Rustam Fateh Ali Khan, Hadiqa Kayani and Ali Zafar.

Athletics and Sports Achievements

— Ladies and Gentlemen, people also admire the smooth blending of academic and sports activities in the GC University. This is an old tradition which we have kept alive with great zeal and would like to maintain it in future too by providing all incentives to sportsmen. Our achievements in the world of sports are as impressive as in the realm of academics.
GC University took part in 18 games held by the Lahore Board of Intermediate Education during 2007-08 and won 05 Trophies in Squash, Hockey, Tennis, Gymnastics and Volleyball. We were runners-up in 06 games and got various positions in 07 games. At inter-varsity level, GC University participated in 21 games and won 01 trophy and got 3 runners-up positions. Details are available in the Compendium.

**Development Projects**

The university status has given us access to funds of HEC for development projects. At present, we are implementing various development projects worth Rs. 282 million with the support of HEC. Equally important development projects funded by the Punjab Government are either completed or in the implementation stage. These include: Renovation/Upgradation of Existing Building and Purchase of Land for GC University Lahore. The other projects include Establishment of Pakistan Botanic Gardens Network Secretariat funded by Federal Ministry of Environment. We are grateful to the HEC, the Government of Pakistan, and Government of the Punjab for providing funds for these projects.

Today GCU faces a delicate situation in so far as its space requirements are concerned. The University is housed in a
land-locked small campus with its historic neogoethic style building built in 1876. This building is insufficient to cater for the space needs of the new departments, but this needs to be conserved and kept in shape as it is a part of our architectural heritage. This job requires funds, which are in short supply.

— On the other hand, we have bought land to set up a second campus at Kala Shah Kaku with Punjab Government’s special grant. Now is the time to start designing and building the new campus to be ready for meeting the ever increasing space requirements at the earliest. So we turn to the Federal and Provincial Governments to request them to help in building up this historic educational institution for the future by endowments and liberal development grants.

**GCU Endowment Fund**

— For the last many years, we have done everything to support the financially disadvantaged students by way of fee wavers, transport subsidy and even for payment of hostel dues. In 2007-08, the University allocated over Rs. 10.00 million for the needy students of GCU. However, the financial need of the disadvantaged students is ever increasing. In fact, we request for your kind support for this noble cause so that bright students of GCU can continue
their studies without mental stress. It may be appropriate to mention here that the students of GCU mostly come from lower and middle income groups.

— The world over, societies have moved forward by means of developing educational institutions with the support of alumni and the friends of the universities. To mention only a few, in 2008 the Harvard University has an Endowment fund of $34 billion, Oxford £90 million, MIT $10.1 billion and Yale $22.53 billion. In 2003, the GCU established an Endowment Fund Trust for raising Endowment Fund in a planned manner which could sponsor educational and development projects of the University. The contributions of philanthropists to the universities are extremely valuable for their overall development and we urge the Ravian alumni and other philanthropists to make their valuable contributions to the cause of educational progress by building up this historic institution for the future.

The Future

— There is little doubt that universities are – and will be – key players in the country’s future economic success. Promoting ‘knowledge-based economy’ will be vital to Pakistan’s economic prospects. It is very important that universities, and particularly institutions like GCU, with their
known strengths in the relevant disciplines, should continue to work in partnership with government, industry and research organizations to ensure that there is effective technology transfer and maximum take-up of university advances in research by the industry.

The GC University, Lahore takes pride in maintaining high standards in academic, co-curricular, sports and other activities. Nowhere in Pakistan you may find such a rich blend of peace on campus, academic discipline, research excellence, rich cultural life and vibrant sports activities as seen in the GCU. This is a kind of island which we have built with patience and hard labour. And we wish and hope that GCU will be facilitated to function according to its grand traditions and won’t be turned into another kind of campus where the academic activities become subservient to political expediencies. We wish to remain fully committed to work for the glory of our Alma Mater, constantly striving for academic excellence rather than dissipating energy in wasteful activities such as often witnessed on other campuses.

— Ladies & Gentlemen,

Whatever good work is done in GCU is attributable to the dedication of my colleagues. I thank them for their untiring
and selfless work which they continue to put in as a team for the benefit of students & society.

- Dear Graduates, your Alma Mater takes pride in the success of its alumni. I congratulate you on receiving the degrees. This is the fruit of your efforts in pursuit of knowledge. As you progress in practical life, never forget the deep debt you owe to your country and to your Alma Mater and pay it off as much as you can. In fact, by serving them you will be building up your own future. Above all, never ever forget that you are Ravians and thus expected to be always tolerant, patient, decent and progressive in outlook. May Allah bless you all.

Honourable Guest of Honour, Honourable Chancellor, Honourable Chief Minister, distinguished guests and graduates, I thank you all for your patient listening.