

2019 School Opening

Good morning, my dear freshmen from the 4-year college program and our youngest Wenzaorians from the 5-year college program. I met most of you last month in the Falling in Love with English Camp and in the New Life for New Students Camp and I hope you have spent a very happy and fruitful summer vacation by attending our camps and by preparing for your new stage of learning. Welcome back to Wenzao. This is your first day of school and I am glad that I have the chance to talk to you again.

If you don't remember me, or if you don't know who I am because you missed the camp, then please allow me to introduce myself again. I am the Present of Wenzao University and I would like you to catch up with the important ideas about Wenzao before you begin your first class this afternoon. Today I am not going to repeat the same talk I made last time, so you need to lend me your ears, i.e. to listen carefully to me. The more you know about Wenzao, the sooner you can adjust to the life here and enjoy it.

First, I would like to congratulate you that you have a new role; you are now Wenzaorians. As students of Wenzao Ursuline University of Languages, you are part of the Ursuline education. Do you still remember the word "Ursuline"? Please raise your hand if you do.

Great! The Sisters of the Ursuline Order 吳甦樂修會 established this school more than 53 years ago. The Ursuline Sisters are a group of sisters who devote themselves to educating and helping young people to develop potentials and be responsible for what they do. Ursuline education actually started about 500 years ago in Italy and later spread to the rest of Europe and to many different places of the world. You will find our sister schools in Europe, in America, in Africa, in Australia, and of course, in Asia. Even in Taiwan, we have two sister schools in Hualien.

In addition, our global links spread further from studies to career opportunities. Wenzao has signed up with many universities for cooperation and for exchange programs and there are opportunities for internship abroad. In other words, some of you will have the

chance to study or work abroad for one semester to enhance your language skills and to experience different cultures for your career development. In different fields of studies and in different walks of life around the world, you will find our alumni, i.e. students who graduated from Wenzao. On the other hand, you will also find international students on our campus for short-term visits and long-term studies. In short, you are now a part of Wenzao's network that has a long history of development and has many international connections for studies and for work. Wenzao is a university that offers different programs of superior quality. Our 5-year junior college program, 2-year and 4-Year college programs, and graduate programs have enjoyed an unfading reliable reputation. The high academic status today is the result of years of efforts made by teachers, students, and especially those friends who share our values and appreciate our achievements. It is the pride and honor you should cherish. As new Wenzaorians, you are expected to live up to Wenzao's good name and follow its great work in this globalized Ursuline university.

In what ways are Wenzaorians unique? When you meet Wenzaorians, you will find their unique DNA. Take a look at your "school sisters and brothers" and you will be quickly attracted to their common characteristics. To you, the DNA for typical Wenzaorians may mean D—dynamic, i.e. full of energy, N—neat, i.e. clean and tidy, and properly dressed, and A—amiable, i.e. friendly and good-natured. Without doubt, these characteristics are usually the impression we receive on the surface. But what exactly are the inner qualities that lead to the charming personality of Wenzaorians? Let me give you some hints. Firstly, Wenzaorians have great love for themselves, for the people around them, and for the world. They are very sure about their core values; they can tell clearly what is right and what is wrong, and they stand firm to defend their beliefs. Secondly, Wenzaorians are also confident in the way they speak to the people around and to the world. They give their voice clearly and fluently to show truth, kindness, and the beauty of different people and cultures. Thirdly, true Wenzaorians are never selfish or self-centered and they know how to work best in a team. They are willing to help and share when they cooperate with other people. As a result, they win great respect and support when they care about others and encourage them. Now I am going to ask you a question. What are the secrets of Wenzaorian characteristics? Can you give me the answers? What are the three most important things they learn here?

Exactly, the 3 Ls: Life, Language and Leadership. Please repeat after me: Life, Language, and Leadership.

I earnestly hope that you have come to Wenzao because you chose to come here, not because you didn't have any other choices, and that you are determined to go through a journey of discovery of yourself and the world you live in. You should make yourselves ready for a lot of challenges in Wenzao and in your future career. Wenzao is the only university of languages in Taiwan. It's not a surprise that your first challenge is English and you need to pass the English proficiency test in order to graduate. Also, English is the language for teaching in a lot of our classes and in some extracurricular activities, and this is the reason why I am speaking English to you. To some people, English is only a tool to help them find a good job. For us, English is certainly a useful and necessary tool, but what does English or a foreign language mean to you?

In the AI age, what challenges would you be facing as a Wenzao student or as a liberal art university student? Different forms of Artificial Intelligence, or simply computers, can learn like mankind and now they are learning faster than before. When a lot of the jobs with repeated patterns are taken over and controlled by machines, what else is left for us to do? Could we really rely on language skills as our only competence for work? Do we still learn languages the hard way? A more tragic view would be that some students learn "from" computers. I don't mean they learn "with" computers or use computers as a tool for learning. I mean they learn like machines without much thinking, without ever using their brains for reasoning, but only google search and post information when they are given an assignment. Those students are in the danger of placing themselves in a less important position, inferior to machines. They are worse than their computers in intelligence because they have to wait for computers to work for them and without computers, they are nothing.

Fortunately, when God created human beings, human beings, as the children of God, were given part of God's power to create. The most precious part of learning all knowledge and particularly in liberal art is the ability to create. Creativity is not something that we pick up automatically, but it is a living thing that constantly needs soil, air, water, and sunshine to grow. Wenzao's liberal art education provides such rich

soil to make us more human than robotic. Our human values come from our ability to think, i.e. to select, analyze, interpret and review in meaningful ways. The advantage of being exposed to a variety of languages in Wenzao leads to acquiring, comparing, contrasting, and reflecting on different cultures, the scope of knowledge, and academic disciplines. In other words, language learning, with cultures and values, etc. in the background, is our goal as it is the source for inspiration and creation, rather than a simple tool for job-hunting. We will be humans with a soul instead of 工具人 a disposable tool to be thrown away after use.

My following two questions for you are “What do you want to become or expect when you complete the program at Wenzao and what’s your vision?” Maybe you can’t answer me right now, but please keep these questions in your mind in the next few years here. I want you to look beyond, and think way ahead of you about the future, maybe 5 or 10 years from now. I don’t have to tell you that we live in the high-tech world, in which knowledge explodes and evolves rapidly. When you graduate from Wenzao, it is not the end of your education but the time of putting your learning into real practice. It is said that a lot of the knowledge that we learn today may become expired or outdated 5 years later. Isn’t it an irony that what we learn in the university today will become useless when we graduate? Then, why do we bother to learn at all? Out of challenges, we learn not only knowledge or skills but, most importantly, an attitude. In fact, every step of learning paves the way to the future. New ideas grow from many of the old ideas. A lot of the new jobs we have today didn’t exist 5 years ago, but they were created to meet new needs and were given new perspectives. Being young gives you open-mindedness for the chance to explore ambitiously and try new possibilities without being limited by conventions.

What I really want to show you is that no one can teach you everything about the future, but everyone and every resource you find can teach you something, including your classmates and your virtual friends online. Especially you yourself are going to be your most important teacher. You need to act like a responsible teacher to guide yourself. For example, you need to see the true you and discover your interests. You need to be organized in your life. You need to boost your motivation for learning and plan your own steps of learning. You need to design your courses and schedule. You need to check

from time to time whether you have completed the assignments as planned earlier. Finally, you have to evaluate the results of your learning. Of course, there will be a lot of trials and errors, but there won't be any fears of being laughed at by other people. On the contrary, the payoff of being your own teacher is that you will have new horizons right in front of you as your classroom. You map out a future from your major 主修, minor 副修, track 學程 and many of your elective courses 選修課. Learning does not happen in the classrooms only; it happens in lectures and workshops on campus, in extracurricular activities, in community service, and even in your own social activities and part-time jobs. Learning also comes in many different forms. You can learn on your own, with a partner, or in groups.

Finally, I would like to you make the best use of all the resources that you can get from Wenzao. What classroom instruction can give you is only a very small portion of the unfathomable knowledge, just like the top of an iceberg. There is the Wenzao Cloud-Elearning platform with a lot of virtual classes to extend your studies and for review. Our library is renowned for its precious multilingual collection of books, journals and magazines. Its digital materials online allow you to read conveniently anytime and anywhere on your mobile devices. In LDCC, the Language Diagnostic and Consulting Center, you will find teachers, self-learning facilities, and tutors to help you finding your strengths and weaknesses in language learning. All you need to do is to take action and book online. In every department, there is also a specialized resource room where you will find reference on specific scope and facilities for professional training. Throughout the year, there are a lot of interesting lectures on campus not to be missed; they are given by speakers, who share their knowledge and experience like living books. All these are there for you. Your active involvement will bring more fruitful results than any passive learning in the classroom. Your independence from being taught to learn is your ticket to academic success.

Thank you for listening and I wish you a very enjoyable learning experience in the new semester.