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**COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES &
COLLEGE OF BASIC AND APPLIED SCIENCES
PROCEEDINGS OF CONGREGATION
NOVEMBER 18, 2016**

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ORDER OF PROCEEDINGS

Friday, November 18, 2016, 9.00 a.m.

Procession

The Congregation is asked to stand

National Anthem

Welcome/Declaration of Purpose:

Professor Kwamena Ahwoi, Chairman of Council of the University of Ghana

Vice-Chancellor's Address: Prof. Ebenezer Oduro Owusu, Vice-Chancellor

Guest Speaker: Dr. Paul Sekyere-Nyantankyi

Conferment of Degrees: Presentation of graduands

- PhD • MPhil • MPH • MSc. • MBChB
- BDS • BSc. • BPH • Diploma in Agriculture

Valedictory Address: Ms. Dorcas Boateng

Chairman of Council dissolves Congregation

University Anthem

The Congregation is asked to remain seated until all officials and graduands have left the Hall.

**OPENING ADDRESS BY PROFESSOR KWAMENA AHWOI,
CHAIRMAN OF COUNCIL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA**

Members of the University Council,
Vice-Chancellor,
Guest Speaker,
Members of the Advisory Board of the College of Health Sciences and
College of Basic and Applied Sciences
Members of Convocation,
Staff and Students,
Alumni,
Graduands,
Invited Guests,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, Chancellor of the University, I welcome you all warmly to this morning's ceremony. I also extend Mr. Annan's greetings and best wishes to all of you gathered here on this important occasion.

The Congregation ceremonies that have been planned for this weekend are significant in two weeks. These will be the second set of congregation ceremonies for the 2015-16 cohort of student. The first set of graduating student were held in July 2016. As you may know the University of Ghana adopted the collegiate system of governance in 2014, since that time congregation ceremonies have been organised on college basis.

I take the opportunity to wish the graduands, who are being presented today, the very best on this very important occasion. We share in your joy on the successful completion of your programmes of study and we are very proud of you.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, I am delighted to declare this morning's assembly, duly constituted for the award of degrees and diplomas of the University of Ghana to successful graduands.

It is customary for the Vice-Chancellor to give a report, at Congregation, on developments in the University over the last academic year. I invite the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Ebenezer Oduro Owusu to present his report to congregation.

Thank you.

VICE CHANCELLOR'S ADDRESS AT CONGREGATION BY PROFESSOR EBENEZER ODURO OWUSU

Chairman of the University Council
Members of the University Council
Pro-Vice Chancellors
Registrar
Officials of sister universities
Your Excellencies – Members of the Diplomatic Corps
Niime, Naamei, Nananom
Members of Convocation
Graduating Students
Parents and Guardians
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

Introduction

It is my privilege and honour to welcome you all to today's Congregation Ceremony one of the sessions in my first series of congregation ceremonies since I assumed office as the Vice Chancellor of this great University.

Congregation is a very important occasion in the life of a University. It is a time to recognise the academic progress of the graduands and to publicly acknowledge their achievements. It is also an occasion to review the work of the University during the last academic year in line with its stated vision and to inform stakeholders about the true state of the University and the way forward. Today's ceremony focuses on the second batch of students who completed their programmes of study in the 2015/2016 academic year; the first batch having graduated in July 2016. It is my fervent hope that all of us here present will help in making the ceremony a memorable one.

Acknowledgement

I assumed office as the 12th Vice Chancellor of the University of Ghana on 1st August 2016 to provide leadership and an enabling environment for the realization of the University's vision of “becoming a world class research intensive 'go to’ university over the next decade”.

I would therefore like to acknowledge the immense contribution of all my predecessors and hardworking employees of the university (past and present) for

the visibility and respect the University of Ghana currently enjoys on both the local and international scene. By dint of their collective vision and foresight over the past 68 years, our university is today ranked as one of the best Universities in Africa. Consequently, Mr Chairman, I am glad to inform you that, The University of Ghana has been chosen to host the next (16th) conference of the International Association of Universities, together with the Association of African Universities.

Vision

At my induction, I outlined my vision for making the University of Ghana a first choice establishment in the circle of academic institutions in Africa and beyond.

I spoke among other things about my commitment to position the University of Ghana as a world class “Go to University”; I identified key actions that I intend to roll out during my tenure to make this vision a reality. These include: my passion to tailor the teaching and research in the University to the needs of our stakeholders; review the curricula to ensure that students educated at this institution are equipped with the skill-set needed to adapt quickly to the demands of the job market; promote learning, research and scholarship by providing the needed enabling environment to maximize achievement and excellence.

The others are to make our surroundings and environment green; improve upon our global and Africa-wide rankings by aligning budgets to support effective implementation of actions that would promote the core business of the university; promote positive attitudinal change and character-moulding as the underlying theme of all our engagements; and to subject our institution to external review.

Chairman of Council, ladies and gentlemen, Currently, management is trying to redouble efforts to diversify funding sources, manage our financial resources judiciously and have a prudent debt utilisation and management system aimed at making the University financially viable over the next five years through engagements with government, the private sector, industry leaders, and donor partners.

I am happy to report that the vision to position the University of Ghana as a "Go to University" has started in earnest. Management has set up Strategic Teams with the responsibility to come up with strategies that would advance this vision. The teams which were inaugurated on 3rd November, 2016 are;

- a. Institutional Advancement Team

- b. Agriculture Centres Commercialisation Committee
- c. University of Ghana Rebranding and Marketing Team
- d. Medical and Dental School Expansion Team
- e. University of Ghana Regional / World Ranking Team
- f. Vice-Chancellor's Green Team
- g. Independent Power Supply Team
- h. Laboratory Modernization Team

The teams are made up of highly qualified members and I am confident that they will come up with the roadmap for the realization of our “Go to University” vision. It is our expectation that all members of Convocation, staff, students and other key stakeholders will give the teams all the necessary support to make their work fruitful.

New Appointments

The tenure of the University Council, under the able chairmanship of Professor Justice Samuel Date-Bah, came to an end on 31st July, 2016. I would like on behalf of management, staff and students to extend my sincere gratitude to members of the former Council for their sacrifice and tireless contributions to the development of the University. I would also wish to welcome the new Council under the Chairmanship of Professor Kwamena Ahwoi. I take this opportunity to assure the new Council of our unflinching support in defining and steering the strategic direction of this University.

Some senior administrative appointments also took effect from 1st August 2016. New Provosts, Deans, Directors and Heads of Departments, have been appointed to provide academic and administrative leadership in the various units of this university. I would like to extend my sincerest gratitude and thanks to all Heads, Deans and Directors whose tenure came to an end in July 2016. Your services to this university are well noted and I hope we can fall on you to take up other assignments in the future. I would also like to thank the new Provosts, Deans, Directors and Heads for their willingness to serve. I trust you will share in the University's new transformational agenda built on the pillars of the 2Rs i.e., Respect and “RINER” which stands for Relevance, Innovation, Excellence and Resource Mobilisation.

It is my fervent hope that all the new appointees will bring their varied experiences and skills acquired in University administration over the years to advance the vision of this great university.

Admissions

For the sixth year running, the University created the platform for Ghanaian and other applicants in the West African sub-region who completed their WASSCE in May to enter the University in the same year. I salute the teams who worked hard to make this a reality.

At the beginning of the 2016/2017 academic year, for the main campus, Accra City campus Korle-Bu campus and Distance Education programmes, the University offered admission to a total of 24,312 applicants made up of 20,621 undergraduate students and 3,691 graduate students. At the undergraduate level 3,841 or 50.47% of the registered students are male while 3,770 or 49.53% are females. At the graduate level, 1,702 or 57.89% of the registered students were males while 1,238 or 42.11% were females. The figure shows that the University has made significant progress in reducing the gap in access to higher education between the genders. We are therefore close to achieving the national objective of 50:50 male - female ratio in tertiary admissions. Further admissions will be made during the course of the year for Special programmes and Sandwich programmes.

The University continues to increase access through its policy of offering the opportunity of university education to applicants from Less Endowed Schools and applicants with disability. The admission of sports men and sports women through the UG Policy for the Admission of Athlete Students (PAAS) policy is also in its third year and already bearing fruit.

In June-July 2016, Team UG participated and performed excellently at the Federation of African Universities Sports (FASU) Games in South Africa. The team competed in five out of the nine disciplines and won 4 Gold medals, 7 Silver medals and 5 bronze medals to place 7th out of 35 universities. We are extremely proud of Desmond Aryee, who was ranked the 4th best performer in athletics by the competition organizers, after running an impressive personal best 10.40 seconds to take the men's 100m final in the track and field championships. It has been reported that more than half of the medals were won by athletes we admitted through the UG-PAAS. There is therefore no doubt that our strategy to use this means to enhance our performance at various national and international events is working and we need to continue firming up these achievements by investing in our sporting infrastructure.

At Legon, we place high premium on the cross-cultural experience that is made possible by the presence of international students on our campuses. We are happy

to report that for this academic year, 761 undergraduate and 229 graduate international students of various nationalities were admitted into our programmes.

Undergraduate Studies

Mr. Chairman, in the 2010/2011 academic year, a new four-year degree programme was implemented with the introduction of new courses and programmes and revision of existing ones. The grading system was also overhauled and the thresholds raised with the aim of improving the quality of graduates from the University of Ghana.

We are in the seventh academic year since the implementation of this restructured degree programme and today's graduating undergraduate class is part of the fourth cohort of students under the revised programme. The University will review the programme and provide recommendations to make our graduates and programmes more relevant to national development.

This academic year also saw the offer of new programmes. It includes the re-introduction of the Bachelor of Arts in Administration programme in the College of Humanities to offer students the opportunity to combine business related subjects with other subjects in the Humanities.

The College of Education has also rolled out new programmes. These are the Bachelor of Arts in Education and Bachelor of Science in Education to offer more choices to our undergraduate students.

Graduate Studies

Mr. Chairman the new four (4) year Ph.D. programmes which commenced in the 2012/13 academic year are also on course. The adoption of the 4-year research programme is in line with the University's vision of becoming a world class research-intensive institution. Most departments have revised their doctoral programmes and are also developing new ones to meet the exigencies of the times. We look forward to graduating the first cohort in 2017.

The University has also developed the following new Masters programmes which have received accreditation from the National Accreditation Board:

- MA in Educational Leadership and Management
- MSc. in Geo-Information Science

Students' Financial Aid and Scholarship

Mr. Chairman, I am happy to announce that the Students Financial Aid office which was established in 2005 has contributed immensely to providing access to university education to many bright but needy students. An average of 120 students are sponsored each year through the benevolence of some corporate bodies, churches, NGOs, individuals and alumni. To date 2,596 students have benefited from the fund. On behalf of the management of the University I wish to thank all our benefactors for their kind gestures and their services to humanity. I would like to encourage all who wish to support these students to come forward, to help us to put a smile on the face of a student in need, bring hope to a family and support capacity building for our nation's development.

Let me make special mention of the aid initiated by the students themselves. This is Yibiboa under which a percentage of SRC dues paid by all students is assigned to support the Students Financial Aid initiative.

Careers and Counselling Services

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, enhancing the educational experience of our students outside the formal setting is one of our cardinal outputs. Our Counselling and Placement Centre, which has been renamed Careers and Counselling Centre, offers us the opportunity to achieve this objective. The name change is to reflect how the services of the Centre have significantly evolved to embrace new requirements in the world of work.

The Centre's strategic goals which are in tandem with the University's strategic priorities, includes working with recruitment experts to identify students with leadership potential. It also provides opportunities for experiential learning for our students and makes counselling support easily accessible for employees and students. We believe the centre is well placed to achieve its set objectives.

Research and Staff Development

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, the University recognises its human capital as its primary asset. It therefore continues to develop strategies to enhance its capabilities. The University continues to experience growth in its research portfolio with funding from both internal and external sources and a general push to enhance research governance and management structures, to facilitate cutting-edge research and dissemination.

The University is keen to support its faculty members by raising the profile of research and thus has increased the amount of funding available to faculty members for research. Since 2008, the university has through its own internally generated funds (IGF), provided about 5 Million Cedis to 182 faculty members to undertake various research projects. Some of these projects have also leveraged additional external support for bigger projects. In the year under review an amount of GH¢ 901,526 was awarded as research grants to faculty members. Again through IGF, an amount of USD 123,582 was provided as conference support to faculty members in the year under review. As you may be aware the University, in 2008, set its self the target to support faculty development to ensure that all teaching faculty acquire PhDs or terminal degrees by 2018. Each year the university provides some funding support to faculty members enrolled on PhD programmes as part of this scheme. To date, 93 faculty members have benefited from the scheme which has helped to chalk a 98% success rate before the end date.

The University will now focus on post-doctoral fellowships to provide the necessary capabilities to its faculty. The Colleges are also developing continuous development programmes for staff.

Based on the success of these initiatives, Legon has received tremendous support from its donor partners, notably the Carnegie Corporation of New York which in October this year, provided its third grant to the university since 2010 to implement the Building a New Generation of Academics in Africa (BANGA-Africa) Project. The project is a follow-up to the UG Next Generation of Academics in Africa (UG-NGAA) Project aimed at helping to build a critical mass of a new generation of academics in UG. All these initiatives are to enable Legon develop a critical mass of faculty to achieve its research-intensive academic outlook.

We have also won a grant for the Building Stronger Universities (BSU II) project, which is funded by DANIDA. The overall objective of the project is to enhance the capacity of the University of Ghana to achieve its objective of transformation into a first-class research University. To achieve this laudable objective the university will, through the project, strengthen its capability to deliver high quality research PhD education and training; strengthen newly established Centres of Research Excellence and improve research administration processes, support and training.

All these initiatives continue to contribute to the University of Ghana's effort to reach a threshold where a critical mass to faculty are well equipped to help the

university achieve its research-intensive outlook and also raise its research profile.

Infrastructural Developments

Mr Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, as you drive through the Okponglo entrance to our beautiful campus, you will notice that the road has been named "Academic Freedom" road; very soon, the arch which is under construction will be completed to create the - "Academic Freedom Arch". Let me emphasize that the arch is to serve purely as a security post and not as a toll booth!

Our physically enabling environment is being developed block by block to ensure that our students and employees live in a decent and sanitized environment. To this end, Mr. Chairman, I am happy to inform you that the Green project which is expected to turn campus green and ensure efficient waste management system, has begun in earnest.

Work on physical infrastructural projects started by the previous Vice-Chancellor are on-going and have reached various stages of the construction process.

We recently cut the sod for a construction of the West African Centre for Cell Biology of Infectious Pathogens (WACCBIP) at the Department of Biochemistry, Cell and Molecular Biology (BCMB), College of Basic and Applied Sciences, (CBAS). All these facilities when completed will add to our stock of physical infrastructure to enhance the delivery of our academic programmes.

Global Trends in Education and World Rankings

Globalisation is here to stay and education can and should play a role in changing the behaviours, attitudes and expectations that make a difference. Education as a powerful tool for reducing inequity and its role of providing skills and competencies needed to operate in this new world cannot be over emphasized. The new Global Education Monitoring Report by UNESCO shows the potential for education to propel progress towards all global imperatives outlined in the new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It has also been reported that education needs a major transformation in order to fulfil that potential and meet the current challenges facing humanity and the planet. We are very much aware that some major transformations should take place in order for us to achieve this potential and meet the current challenges. Our University is therefore working hard to place its self at the forefront of this role expected to be played by the education sector.

World university rankings are very important to our work at the University of Ghana's. As has been reported, it is from these rankings that the viability of our working processes get interrogated, potential donors secured, best crop of students won over and collaborations for major research work forged.

The 2016 Times Higher Education (THE) World Rankings once again placed the University of Ghana ahead of its peers in Ghana and West Africa. It is my pleasure to inform you, Mr. Chairman that the University of Ghana was ranked in the 5th decile of this year's ranking; and our strongest pillar this year was research. This is definitely a great achievement, given that we were ranked in the 4th decile in 2015, with our strongest pillar that year being international outlook with a rank in the 5th decile. It is worthy of note that our efforts at becoming a world class research intensive University is well on its way.

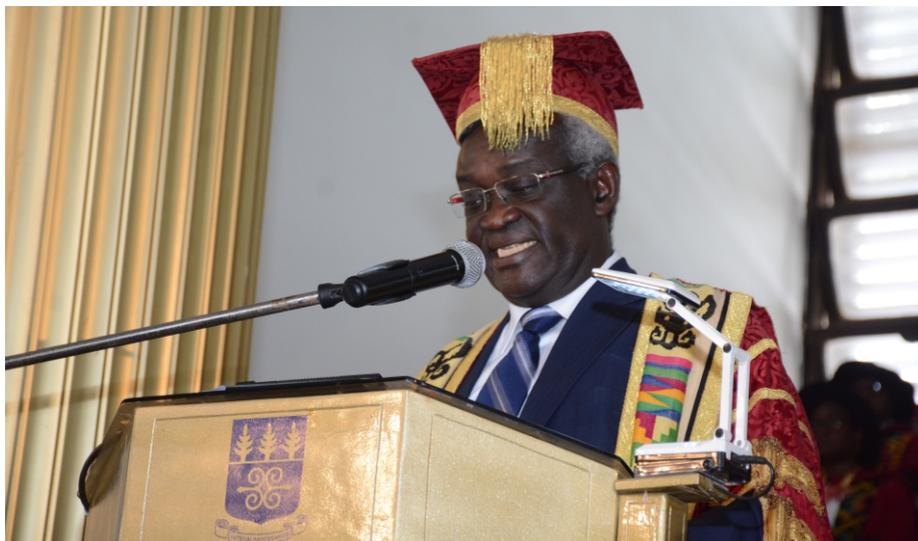
We are currently the highest ranked University in West Africa and the 7th in Africa. This enviable feat could not have been achieved without the concerted effort of all colleagues, students and stakeholders of the University. I am most grateful and confident that with the establishment of our Strategic Teams and continued support of all of us, our rankings will soar higher at both the continental and the international level.

Security

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, I can report that security on campus has witnessed tremendous improvement. The University has also recently put together a strategic document to combat security challenges on our campus. A major constraint however has been the fact that the security office is greatly understaffed. Management of the University is however working assiduously to find avenues to improve the current staffing situation. We have also organized face-to-face discussions to educate students on the need to be security conscious. The goal is to create individual and ultimately a holistic awareness of the necessity to be security conscious on campus. Let me take this opportunity to thank the Regional and District police command as well as national security for beefing up our security efforts, volunteering security briefs, and helping maintain law and order on campus.

Graduands

Mr. Chairman, this address will not be complete without acknowledging parents and guardians, some of whom are here today to witness this milestone achievement in the lives of our graduands. It is your love, sacrifice and dedication which has



Professor Kwamena Ahwoi, Chairman of Council, delivering the Welcome Address



Professor Ebenezer Oduro Owusu Vice-Chancellor, addressing the gathering



**Rev. Professor P. F. Ayeh-Kumi, Provost, College of Health Sciences
acknowledging international students of the College**



**Mr. E. A. Amartey, Director, Academic Affairs, making Opening Remarks at
the ceremony**



Dr. Paul Sekyere-Nyantankyi, delivering the Guest Speaker's Address



Ms. Dorcas Boateng delivering the Valedictory Address



Graduands seated at the Congregation ceremony



Some parents, guardians and invited guests at the ceremony

brought these graduands thus far and I salute you. I also entreat you to continue to nurture them in the next phase of their life's journey. It is my fervent prayer that you will enjoy the fruits of your labour in the coming years.

Now, graduands, today marks the beginning of another major milestone in your life's journey. Today, most of you are taking your first step into the career world and the knowledge you have acquired in this University will hopefully guide you to make the right choices.

The recent World Economic Forum held in June 2016 identified ten most critical skills needed for the job market in 2020. These are complex problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, people management and co-ordinating with others. The rest are emotional intelligence, judgement and decision making, service orientation, negotiation and cognitive flexibility. I believe you have developed some of these skills through the academic programme and the University of Ghana Required Courses (UGRCs) offered. You should also understand that education is expected to continue beyond the walls of the lecture hall into the community and the work place and into adulthood.

As you enter the job market, I urge you to continue to improve upon these critical skills. Remember that it is a competitive world and to be in the lead, you need to always strive to make a difference; just a one degree shift from the norm and you will be in the lead.

As our fresh alumni let me encourage you to contribute to your alma mater. The University of Ghana will be 70 years in August 2018 and we believe we can count on your support to make Legon proud. To commemorate the 50th Anniversary, Jubilee Hall was constructed as a birthday present from the Alumni to the University. To make this happen the alumni contributed 1% of their salary for three years towards the project. We are anxiously waiting for the 2018 birthday present for which your contribution will be most appreciated.

Once again, we congratulate you on your achievements, and I thank you for your attention.

GUEST SPEAKER ADDRESS BY DR. PAUL SEYERE-NYANTAKYI

Chairman and members of the University Council
Vice Chancellor
Pro-Vice Chancellors
Registrar
Members of the Advisory Boards of Colleges of Health Sciences and Basic and Applied Sciences
Provosts
Deans and Directors
College Secretaries
Senior Members,
Nii Mai, Naa Mei, Nananom
Staff and Graduands
Proud Parents and Families
Representatives of the Media
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

I am greatly honoured to be invited by the Premiere University of Ghana and the 7th best University in Africa to this august occasion, Mr. Chairman, thank you very much for the honour done me.

Mr. Chairman, I am filled with ecstasy and awe for the opportunity to inspire these young men and women who are graduating into the world of work after successfully going through various academic programmes. I am delighted to share in your joy at this moment, and very proud, that you have diligently pursued academic excellence in various fields of endeavour — Medicine, Dentistry, Public Health, Allied Health Sciences and Agriculture.

Mr Chairman, it is the aspiration of every graduate leaving the university to secure themselves immediate employment so as to begin life on a good note and fulfil their aspirations.

These aspirations over the last couple of years have been challenged due to the dynamics in the world of work today. There is enough evidence to dispel the notion that since Government is the biggest employer; graduates should look up to the Government for employment opportunities. Meanwhile the private sector

which complements Government's effort in this direction is equally affected by the world economic dynamics.

Dear graduates, these revelations place enormous responsibility on you, to take advantage of this reality to live your dreams. It, therefore, calls for redefinition of your overreliance on the formal sector to rather come up with creative and innovative business ideas to create wealth to enhance your livelihoods. I am fully convinced that you have been offered the best of training that has imbued in you the knowledge, skills and entrepreneurial spirit that will position you to take bold steps to actualise your dreams. Take inspiration from your mentors and apply yourselves to the emerging trends in the global world where young entrepreneurs and scientists are driving innovations and contributing significantly to the growth of economies, thereby, improving their lives and creating opportunities for others. These young entrepreneurs operate in various fields of endeavours that are not in contrast to your disciplines.

Mr. Chairman, what makes these young business leaders (such as Arthur Zang from Cameroon; Raindolf Owusu from Ghana; Ellen Chilemba from Malawi; Ola Orekunrin from Nigeira and Best Ayiorworth from Uganda, to mention but a few) exemplary is their resilience and resolve to impact on their society. They defied all odds, they resisted the pressure to subscribe to the unemployment cadre but rather took advantage of the difficult situation to come up with innovative ideas and products; they persevered where they failed and pursued their dreams. Today they are countered among the best personalities around the globe. I can assure you young graduates, that with tenacity of purpose and determination, in the no distant future, you will be recognised among the next crop of world best entrepreneurs and people affecting lives if you develop the passion and zeal in their expert disciplines and other emerging areas of interest. Dear graduates, dream to become employers and business leaders.

Mr. Chairman, taking a critical assessment of the national health system, the agricultural sector, rural communities, the information technology world, the production sector, I perceive numerous abandoned opportunities awaiting courageous and zealous men and women to innovate cutting edge solutions to create wealth for themselves and the country as a whole. For example:

- a. Caring for the aged (geriatric care), do you have an idea the number of prospective clients willing to sign on to this service?

- b. Using social software technology to distribute drugs to corporate clients and providing personalised healthcare service.
- c. There have been clarion calls on the health sector to overcome the distance between the physician and the rural patients. How do you leverage on the advantages of social media and e-health concept and ICT to achieve the same results as patient meeting face to face with physicians?
- d. How do we use IT to verify the authenticity and distribution of drugs to patients? Is this an area you can explore?
- e. Have you thought of the long hours patients spend at the hospitals to access medical care and laboratory services?
- f. Should the citizenry have to visit only the hospitals and health facilities to get cured?
- g. How can you prevent post-harvest losses and ensure food security?

You can successfully design business concepts to provide these services if you embrace the team approach, where you draw on individual experiences and expertise.

Mr Chairman, as we admonish our graduates to chart this course, the role of the alma mater and parents/families become paramount. Parents, avoid putting pressure on your wards in the first few months or years of a seeming inactivity or unemployment. This is the period to nurture ideas, do consultations, make various attempts. This is the time they need your prayers and parental support and encouragement to succeed in the implementation of their dreams. Faculty, these graduates will solicit your assistance to firm up their ideas and business proposals, be approachable and willing to support them without any form of hindrances, so that in future you will be proud to call on them as alumni.

Dear graduates, as I encourage you to go into self-employment to earn a living and address socio-economic problems of Ghana and beyond, I humbly beseech you to be guided by these principles: TRUST, SELFLESSNESS, SELF-DISCIPLINE, SELF-CONFIDENCE, PERSEVERANCE and PASSION. I am convinced that we have the next global entrepreneurs seated right here today.

To this end, I pray for your long life, good health and great opportunities and the courage to overcome every challenge that may come your way as you work hard towards the achievement of your life goals.

In all your endeavours, strive to make your countries proud, make the University of Ghana proud and most of all make a positive difference in this world of ours. God bless us all.

Thank you.

**VALEDICTORY ADDRESS DELIVERED BY
MS. DORCAS BOATENG**

Chairman of the University Council
Vice chancellor
Pro vice chancellors
Registrar
Provost
College secretaries
Guest speaker
Members of convocation
Deans
Members of faculty
Fellow graduands

I am filled with great joy and happiness to be standing in front of this congregation this morning to deliver this valedictory speech on behalf of the 2016 graduating class of the University of Ghana College of Health Sciences and College of Basic and Applied Sciences. I wish to congratulate all graduands for a job well done.

Approximately four and six years ago, we were issued with admission letters by this prestigious university inviting us to embark on an amazing journey towards the achievement of undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. At that time, this day seemed like it will never come. Indeed time flies. Alas! See how far Jehovah has brought us.

When I received a call a few weeks back about this particular speech, the first thing that came to mind was how I was going to combine each and everyone's experience into one speech. I pondered this until I came to the realization that it will never be possible. Everyone here has experienced and fought their own silent battles and so as I stand here to deliver this speech, my aim is not to speak about all of your experiences – I will not even try to do so. But I hope we could pause to consider this moment of oneness, a moment marking the end of four and six years that have been enriched with a plethora of experiences.

Many of you will agree with me that this journey has not been an easy one. I remember vividly how I broke down and cried after my first physics class. I remember those nights I could not sleep because of an arduous assignment I had to

complete. And Oh I remember that 5:30 am marathon from my room to Limann bus stop almost every morning just to catch the bus from Legon to Korle Bu because I always woke up late. Only to doze off in class because of insufficient rest. And how could I have forgotten how our predecessors scared us about general pathology? I sat in that class everyday devising a masterplan to help me pass that paper. Who would ever forget our 7 o'clock management lectures and how some of us got locked out a few times for coming in late? Hmmm. This reminds me of what my course mate Samuel Lartey said during our final year, when our research work was giving us sleepless nights and I quote “yabr3 but ebinom abr3 sin ebi “. And oh who would ever forget how we all feared being referred in a course? Referrals in SBAHS were the order of the day. So serious were such referrals that songs were even composed for them. You remember “3y3 normal”? For some of us, a mere pass in courses such as general pathology and management was all we prayed for. This is not to say that we did not have fun times in this institution. The fun trips and games were means by which we relieved some of the tension and most importantly the reason why we came to this university i.e. To acquire knowledge, was realised. Our abled bodied lecturers pushed us to achieve success with their unannounced IAs and difficult examination questions . I am very sure our medical, dental, agriculture, and our post graduate colleagues also have their own stories to tell and experiences to share.

Aside these academic difficulties, some of us faced one or two of these other challenges: financial problems, family problems, relationship problems and the loss of dear ones in death. I for one had my own share of such problems. Being here, however, proves that we did not allow those setbacks to define us; rather, they refined us. Our determination to succeed at all cost made it possible for us to get up anytime we fell; shake the dirt off our clothes and keep going. We have proven the truth in Winston Churchill's quote, “success is not final, failure is not fatal, it is the courage to continue that counts”.

A word of advice to my fellow graduands: this world is full of uncertainties. We may come from a rich family, may have the best grades, may be the smartest, we may even have all the connections in the world but I tell you, nothing is guaranteed. Now that we have life, let us work hard to achieve what we want. In the end, such feats will be ours and nobody can take that from us.

This day would not have been possible without the help of some amazing people. I would like to use this opportunity to thank some of them.

First, to the Almighty God for being our rock and the giver of life and wisdom. Oh God, how could we have made it without you? I would also like to thank our parents, guardians and sponsors for providing us with the wherewithal and morale, I would also like to thank the Student Financial Aid Office for their enormous support. We are really grateful. Our sincere gratitude goes to our lecturers for all the support and encouragements and also bearing our constant nagging and imperfections. You have no idea how those words motivated and spurred us on.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to our astute colleagues who constantly encouraged and helped us through our various programmes, we love you all and will forever remember and cherish u. Lets continue to keep the network and communication lines open as we venture to face the next stage of our lives. At this point, I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to a very special woman in my life, even as a single parent, she ensured that my sister and I received the best education there is. She believed in me to the point of I believing in myself. My dear mother, Madam Christiana Afreh, I love you so much.

As I bring my speech to an end, I would like to leave you with some wise words by *ELEANOR ROOSEVELT*:
“IT IS BETTER TO LIGHT A CANDLE THAN TO CURSE THE DARKNESS”

The recent graduate unemployment crises and its associated problems are very clear to us but focusing on the problem further dims the darkness and makes it unsurmountable. That's the thing about focusing on the problem, it becomes the lens through which we see reality, it surrounds us, and paralyzes us in the end. But I would like to urge all of us to light the candle in us and be innovative to see myriad opportunities in this canker to keep ourselves afloat and better the standard of living of our loved ones.

It's that time to throw our hats in the air, bid farewell to the premier university for now and say hello to our prospective future.
Mr. Chairman, We are the class of 2016!

Thank you.

**CLOSING ADDRESS BY PROFESSOR KWAMENA AHWOI,
CHAIRMAN OF COUNCIL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA**

Hon. Minister for Education
Members of the University Council,
Vice-Chancellor,
Guest Speaker,
Members of the Advisory Board of the College of Health Sciences and
College of Basic and Applied Sciences
Members of Convocation,
Staff and Students,
Alumni,
Fresh Graduates,
Invited Guests,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

As we end this ceremony, I would like to salute all who have worked hard to ensure a successful event, especially all those who played various roles in the planning and organisation of this event.

Our new graduates have also worked hard over the periods that they have been students at this University and they deserve all the laurels that they have acquired. You, our new graduates, have been part of the changes that have taken place at the University of Ghana over the past few years; we look forward to receiving some of you back soon, as faculty or as administrators, to support the university's drive to become a research-intensive University.

I congratulate you on your achievements and urge you all to be worthy ambassadors of your *alma mater*. I wish you success in your future endeavours.

Our thanks also go to all teachers, the management team and the managers of the various units, who have worked together to ensure that your stay in the University has been fruitful. The University appreciates the effort that everyone has put into this enterprise.

We are also happy that so many parents, guardians, family members and friends of the graduates were able to join in this celebration.

To our Guest Speaker for today, invited guests, alumni and friends of the University, we appreciate your presence and participation in the ceremony. I wish you all a safe journey back.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, it is now my privilege and duty to declare today's congregation officially dissolved.

Thank you.

