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**COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES
(UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMME)
PROCEEDINGS OF CONGREGATION
JULY 21, 2017**

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**OPENING ADDRESS BY CHAIRMAN OF COUNCIL
(REPRESENTED BY PROFESSOR AKUA KUENYEHIA,
MEMBER OF COUNCIL)**

Vice-Chancellor,
Guest Speaker,
Members of Convocation,
Staff and Students,
Alumni,
Graduands,
Invited Guests,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

It is with great pleasure that I take on my first official duty at Chairman of the University of Ghana Council. I wish to congratulate all Council members for their appointment to this high office. I pledge, on behalf of all fellow council members, to give of our best to uphold the University of Ghana tradition.

I now welcome you all warmly, to this morning's ceremony on behalf of the Chancellor of the University of Ghana, His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan.

I have been duly informed that the Congregation ceremonies that have been planned for this weekend are the first set of congregation ceremonies for the first batch of students graduating in the 2016-2017 academic year. Another set of congregation ceremonies for the 2016-2017 cohorts of graduating students will be held in November this year.

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.

We know that these ceremonies are memorable for the graduands who are being presented. I take the opportunity to wish you all 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, diplomas and certificates of the University of Ghana to successful graduands and also to receive a report from the Vice-Chancellor.

It is customary for the Vice-Chancellor to give us his report, at this forum, on developments taking place in the University over the last academic year. I therefore invite the Vice-Chancellor to present his report to congregation.

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

Chairman and Members of the University Council,
Pro-Vice-Chancellors,
Registrar,
Provosts,
Distinguished Guest Speaker,
Chairmen and Members of College Advisory Boards,
Officials of Sister Universities,
Your Excellencies,
Members of the Diplomatic Corps,
Members of Convocation,
Niime, Naamei, Nananom,
Graduating Students,
Parents and Guardians,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen:

WELCOME

It is my singular privilege and honour to welcome you all to this Congregation ceremony. When I assumed office as Vice-Chancellor in August last year, I became even more fully alive to our role as custodians to the many lives we are mandated to mould for societal advancement. I am very grateful to all faculties, administrators and other stakeholders for the support provided in charting this course. We also appreciate the time parents and invited guests have taken off their respective schedules to converge here to celebrate with our graduands.

This ceremony is part of the first of two sets of graduating ceremonies for students who completed their programmes in the 2016/ 2017 academic year. A total of 3858 students will be graduating today and tomorrow at various levels from all four Colleges in the University. This number is made up of 1148 at the post graduate level, 2449 at the Bachelor's level and 261 at the Diploma level. Another set of ceremonies will be held in November this year.

Update on the State of the University

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, kindly permit me to use this opportunity to give an update on the state of the University of Ghana.

Strategy Execution

In line with the University's vision to position itself as a "world-class research-intensive University" over the next decade, a strategic plan was launched in 2014 to serve as a roadmap towards attaining this vision. Thus, nine strategic teams were formed and inaugurated in November 2016 to drive this University to the status of a "Go to University" which potential students around the world would desire to attend. These teams are the:

Institutional Advancement Team

Agricultural Centres Commercialization Committee

University of Ghana Rebranding and Marketing Team

Medical and Dentistry School Expansion Team

University of Ghana Regional/World Ranking Team

Vice-Chancellor's Green Project Team

Independent Power Supply Team

Laboratory Modernization Team

Committee to Review the Four-year Undergraduate Programme and Grading System

Through the collective efforts of the strategic teams, a lot of progress has been made with regard to the achievement of the core mandates. May I use this platform to express my heartfelt appreciation to the chairpersons and members of the respective teams for championing the progress of the University's strategic direction. The common motive of the strategic teams is to ensure resource mobilization, create a university that has immense international visibility, and create an environment that is green to ensure the

needed congenial atmosphere for teaching and learning is hugely provided. Through the efforts of the respective teams,

- Some private companies have expressed interest to collaborate with the University to generate electricity supply through solar and biogas systems, redesign our grounds as part 3 of the green project, and partner us to ensure there are enough trees and green coverage, as well as develop and complete a waste disposal system that will rely on separation of waste, to serve as a model for our dear nation.
- Several investors have approached the University to invest in commercial activities operated by the University's Agricultural Centres.
- One-day seminar series on Living the University of Ghana Brand through Enhanced Customer Service have been held for all categories of staff. The seminars educated participants on how to; represent the University brand through great customer care; maximize productivity through proper work ethics and conduct; and ensure professional and pleasant interactions with stakeholders.
- The Registrar's Office, in June this year, organised the 2017 Registrar's Seminar on the theme, Achieving Research-Intensive University Status: Walking the Talk. This seminar prepared Senior Administrative and Professional Staff and selected Senior Staff as ambassadors to facilitate the strategy execution.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, the University is making a headway in work on achieving the goals of the Strategic Plan, and I am hopeful that the relentless efforts of the strategic teams and the input by all categories of staff and stakeholders, will add the much needed push to advance the vision.

Academic Affairs

Admissions

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, our admissions process reflects the diverse nature of our student population. I am happy to note that during the 2016/2017 academic year, the University admitted students to the various programmes run on the Main Campus, Korle-Bu Campus and Accra City Campus and by Distance Learning. A total of 12,405 students, made up of 9,465 undergraduates and 2,940 graduate students enrolled.

These numbers include a total of 754 international students from across the world who accepted offers of admission and enrolled on programmes in the University of Ghana. Let me, however, note that the 2016/2017 academic year saw a slight decline in international students' enrolment following some external factors. The University is taking the necessary measures to address this and other factors that militated against enrolment during the 2016/2017 admissions session.

Research, Innovation and Development

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, any higher educational institution worth its salt must ride on a vibrant research portfolio. Having declared our intention to become a research-intensive university, the Office of Research, Innovation and Development (ORID) is taking the lead in ensuring that we meet our set goals.

Research, Faculty Development and Conference Grants

At the end of the review process for the most recent call for proposals for faculty development grants, eight grants with a total value of GH¢244,302 (two hundred and forty four thousand, three hundred and two Ghana cedis) were awarded to faculty. The tenth call for research proposals by ORID yielded 17 awards with a total value of GH¢881,733 (eight hundred and eighty one thousand, seven hundred and thirty three Ghana cedis). This year, ORID has disbursed 82 conference grants with a total value of US\$111,142.00 (one hundred and eleven thousand, one hundred and forty two dollars).

Capacity Building

The University of Ghana was part of a consortium of five higher education institutions which were awarded an amount of EUR 1,359,975 (one million, three hundred and fifty nine thousand, nine hundred and seventy five euros) to run the Africa Regional International Staff Student Exchange (ARISE II) programme under the Intra-Africa Project. Under this project, applications are being reviewed for both staff and student exchanges. Through the efforts of ORID, the University is hosting two full time master students at the Department of Crop Science under the ARISE Phase I project

Ladies and Gentlemen, the University of Ghana is one of seven universities that have been selected by the World Health Organization (WHO) to host an international postgraduate training scheme for masters and PhD students. The first cohort of students under this scheme completed their programme in July 2016 and the second is expected to complete later this month. The third call of applications has been processed and five applicants have been selected to receive awards.

In addition, the University, through ORID, co-ordinates the Climate Impact Research Capacity Leadership Enhancement (CIRCLE) programme under which four CIRCLE visiting fellows from Tanzania, Nigeria and Uganda have been admitted to one-year fellowships with departments in the University.

The University of Ghana (the Lead Institution), together with its partners (Aarhus University and University of Copenhagen) has submitted a proposal for a grant of 13 million Danish Kroner to run the Building Stronger Universities (BSU) Phase III programme. Under the current phase of the programme, four PhD scholarships have been awarded and six short courses on research have been organised for faculty and postgraduate students.

Faculty and Student Fellowships

Faculty members have also benefited from the Cambridge-Africa Partnership for Research Excellence (CAPREX) Phase II programme, the Commonwealth Academic Staff Fellowship and the Fox International

Fellowship Scheme to spend time teaching at prestigious universities in Europe and North America.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am sure that you agree with me that our investment in research is paying off. As a university, we will continue to dedicate resources to research as we work towards attaining our vision.

Partnerships/Collaborations

I will now touch on a few major partnerships and collaborations that have been entered into in the 2016/2017 academic year.

The Government and people of Japan through a bilateral agreement, have provided US20 Million for the construction of an advanced state-of-the-art laboratory at the Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research (NMIMR). The sod-cutting ceremony was held on 3rd May 2017. The provision of the facility is a commitment by the Government of Japan to support the University's research into infectious diseases. When completed, the laboratories will enable the University to:

- Increase capacity for conducting clinical trials;
- Undertake research into molecular characterization of laboratory animal strains, including research into diseases such as Diabetes and Hypertension;
- Increase the number of journal articles and conference reports for policy initiatives.

The University, through NMIMR continues to function as a supporting centre for the World Health Organization (WHO) and the African Region in the following capacities:

- Hosting students from the School of Engineering Sciences for industrial internships;

- Offering workshop facilities to students from the School;
- Provision of tools and equipment worth USD 2,000,000 to the School over a period of ten (10) years.
- Provision of a 30-seater bus by TGCL to shuttle students from the School to the training centre.
- Establishment of a scholarship scheme for bright but needy Engineering Science students.

The University, through the Institute of Applied Science and Technology, has established several partnerships with local and international companies targeted at promoting contract research, student internships, product development and capacity building. Notable among these partnerships is an agreement signed with Fuji Oil Group in March 2017 to conduct a one-year research into Shea Butter Quality and Yield Improvement.

Physical Development

Ladies and gentlemen, for the University of Ghana to have the required capacity to achieve its vision and to absorb the increasing need for higher education across the world, quality infrastructural facilities are necessary. Walking around our campuses, one would notice a plethora of projects which when completed, will provide lecture halls, residential facilities and office spaces for our staff and students. Currently, there are about 15 ongoing projects which are at various stages of completion. These projects include the multi-purpose School of Performing Arts facility, new blocks for the School of Pharmacy, the Department of Nutrition and Food Science and the Department of Earth Science; the West African Centre for Cell Biology of Infectious Pathogens (WACBIP) building, the multi-purpose building for the West Africa Centre for Crop Improvement (WACCI), and buildings to house each of the four Colleges.

We thank our local and foreign partners who have contributed to funding for

these projects, and as a University, we will continue to prudently source for funds to complete these and other ongoing projects.

ICT

The University has made huge leaps in in the provision of ICT services. The University of Ghana Computing Service (UGCS) has been able to migrate the email system to the cloud to ensure stability, availability and excellent performance. In addition, a number of installation works have been done to augment internet access. A major wireless replacement exercise has been conducted to provide student hostels with Wi-Fi. Installation works have been completed at the Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research to serve as a Data Backup Site. UGCS has also been instrumental in the use of the SAKAI Learning Management System and TurnitIn Plagiarism Software for academic purposes as well as the provision of eLearning services to the various units of the University.

UGCS has been very resourceful in the development and redesign of websites for units in the University as well as the development of a security management system to safeguard the University's integrity and online services.

Training programmes continue to be organised to equip students with skills in digital literacy and Microsoft Office, and in this vein, a two-week boot-camp for IT skills was recently organized for visually impaired students to enhance their academic work.

Financial Aid to Students

Ladies and gentlemen, the Students Financial Aid Office was set up to ensure that financial need does not deny any student equal access to quality education. Donors to the needy brilliant students fund span individuals, students, alumni, corporate and international bodies to units of the University. Contributions are also made by the University through internally generated funds, and by the

student body through the "SRC Yi Bi Boa" scheme.

During the period under review, 429 scholarships worth a total of GHc931,494 (nine hundred and thirty one thousand, four hundred and ninety four cedis) were awarded to students. This amount represents an increase of 27 per cent over the GHc681,842 (six hundred and eighty one thousand, eight hundred and forty two cedis) worth of scholarships disbursed in the 2015/2016 academic year.

Sporting Activities

Ladies and gentlemen, physical activity, sports and games are an integral part of who we are as a University. The University's Sports Directorate has made significant contributions to our sports output by lifting the name of the University through recent competitions.

At the end of the 2017 Bilateral Games held in April 2017, the University emerged the overall winner in Badminton, Basketball, Chess, Table Tennis and Debate. The University also placed second with 10 gold medals, 12 silver medals and 11 bronze medals at the Universities Sports Association (GUSA) games held in January 2017 at the University of Cape Coast.

Just last week, the 2017 University of Ghana Staff Games were held, and I am glad to note that attendance and participation by all categories of staff in the various activities was very encouraging.

The University of Ghana Sports Fund (UG-SF) has been instituted to support needy brilliant sports students and to retain their interest in sports while pursuing their studies. I encourage everyone interested in supporting our student athletes to contact the Sports Directorate to discuss ways in which they can support the initiative.

Issues Affecting the Smooth Running of the University

Ladies and gentlemen, I have spoken extensively about matters that are

affecting the University in a positive way. Permit me to speak briefly about a number of issues that are hindering the smooth running of the University.

The absence of a Council over the past seven months meant that many important decisions affecting the University could not be taken. I am pleased to announce that the newly constituted Council of the University has now been inaugurated. We look forward to working with Council to move the University forward.

The continued lack of financial clearance for recruitment means that the University is severely constrained in the employment of faculty, administrators and other staff to replace those who leave the services of the University. This situation is adversely affecting academic work as there are simply not enough staff to teach and provide the necessary support services.

We have received notification that public universities are required to cede 34 percent of their Internally Generated Funds (IGF) to government. The University of Ghana, like other public universities, depends heavily on its IGF to operate, as government funding is woefully inadequate. For instance, allocation for goods and services for the tertiary education sub-sector ranges between 1 and 3 percent of the sub-sectors total budget, making it virtually impossible to carry out planned activities. Also, as I mentioned earlier, the university has not received clearance to employ new full-time staff, a large chunk of IGF therefore goes towards paying critical staff whom the University has taken on, to ensure that academic work is not negatively affected. Having to relinquish 34 percent of IGF will put the University in a very dire financial state.

It is my humble appeal that government will revisit these two issues and grant financial clearance as well as allow public universities to retain 100 percent of their IGF, so that they can operate at optimal level and continue training the next generation of leaders for the nation.

Well Wishes to Graduands

And now, I devote my attention to our graduating students, who are the reason we are gathered here today.

Your graduation today is a testament to the fact that you have worked hard and burnt the candle at both ends; you have withstood challenges in the academic arena and have sacrificed your energy and time to achieve success. Today, the University is officially dispatching you into the wide world as its able ambassadors.

I challenge you to raise the bar of excellence, and to be team players wherever you find yourselves. As you go out and make indelible marks on the world, I encourage you to reflect on these thoughts:

- Nothing can stop your aims in life when you work out of a clean heart and your determination is to achieve your goals rather than to challenge others.
- Great success lies in the joy of achievement and the thrill of creative teamwork effort. The secret of getting ahead is getting started.

I wish you well, and once again, congratulations on your achievements!

Ladies and gentlemen, I thank you for your attention.

**GUEST SPEAKER ADDRESS
BY MR. KOJO ADDO-KUFOUR**

Thank you for inviting me to speak today.

I am very pleased and honoured to join you here to celebrate this wonderful occasion.

I would like to start by congratulating the graduating class. You should be very, very proud of yourselves for accomplishing this goal. In spite of the growing number of tertiary institutions in Ghana, it is important to remind ourselves that only a small percentage of our population are fortunate to hold degrees. So today, you too join this very privileged group. Well done.

To the parents, guardians, and families of those being awarded degrees, I say congratulations. It is your financial, moral, and spiritual support over the years that has made today possible. I am sure you are delighted that your wards have successfully completed this stage of their lives and are now ready to begin their careers.

I should also say a big thank you to the dedicated faculty, lecturers and staff, who have managed to transform these students from mere SHS starlets into potential captains of industry and future leaders of our dear country. It is my prayer that, one day, our young friends will remember to come back and show proper appreciation when they receive their appointment letters from Flagstaff House.

When I mentioned to a good friend that I had been invited to deliver the guest speaker's address, he was curious to know what had informed this choice.

His curiosity then got me thinking about what really qualifies me to offer any kind of meaningful advice to the Class of 2017. This is because it would be a major understatement to say that things have changed since my time on campus.

Indeed as I prepared for today's ceremony, my thoughts drifted back to 1991, when my mates and I said our final goodbyes and left the School of Engineering at UST.

The world was a lot different then. Ours was a simple, analog existence, which is quite hard to describe to a digital generation, but let me try.

In our time, when you had a date, you arranged the time and place weeks before hand, often by way of a handwritten note delivered by an emissary.

At the appointed hour, you would turn up at the agreed location, in the blind hope that the other person would also be there.

If they failed to show up, you were left guessing as to whether they had been sent on an errand by their parents, they had mistakenly gone to a wrong location, or they had been kidnapped by aliens from planet Mars.

You would have to sadly go home and wait another week or so to find out which one of these very plausible outcomes was the reason for the no-show.

These days, you would obviously pinpoint the location beforehand, using google maps to eliminate any possible confusion between you and your date.

Come the time, there would be a non-stop exchange of messages and images via whatsapp, snapchat, and Instagram, every step of the way, to provide regular updates as you make your respective journeys to the agreed venue.

For good measure, you would also share these uninteresting details with all your friends around the world, whether they wish to know about your rendezvous or not. Pictures and video clips of the date would then clog the inboxes of all your contacts before, during and after the encounter.

Again, in our days we simply prayed and proceeded to eat the carbohydrates, also known as food, that was placed in front of us.

These days, no decent meal is complete unless a picture of the food, fully adorned with genetically modified vegetables and drenched in oil, is taken and sent around the world via facebook, accompanied with a suitable emoji that reflects the mood of the grateful consumer.

By the way, in our days when you took a picture you did get to see your handiwork immediately. That would be too exciting. The snap, as we called it, would be on a roll of film. You would have to use all the other exposures on the roll, which meant some 24 or 36 more snaps later, before you sent the fully exposed roll to a studio to be developed and printed. That was when you would see the picture you took several weeks before.

You can therefore understand my amazement when a young friend of mine said she had never heard of Kodak, the global giant that dominated the film industry and actually produced the first digital camera in the 70s.

I could go on with the comparisons, but I am sure you get my drift.

A lot of what is common place today is possible because of something which happened in the late nineties, several years after I had graduated.

That was when the real revolution occurred – the IT revolution. It was around that time big money fell in love with technology and the two 'got married' in Silicon Valley, setting off a chain reaction which has changed the world forever.

Since then, billions of dollars in investments have been pumped into relatively small companies and start-ups, converting them into global giants and making it possible for internet browsers, search engines, mobile phones, communication devices, and the ubiquitous personal computer to evolve from simple laboratory experiments into mainstream everyday items.

For the digital generation that has grown up with mobile phones, laptops, and the internet, real time communication and instant access to information are a way of life.

Just over a couple of decades ago, all of this this was simply unimaginable.

So please believe me, when I say to you - this is a wonderful and exciting time to be a fresh graduate. There are really amazing opportunities, begging and waiting, for those who are prepared and willing to seize them.

I know that by simply listening to the natural born pessimists in our society, it is very easy to conclude that most of you will pick up your degrees and promptly join the unemployment society, where you shall remain all the days of your life. Whether that happens or not is an individual choice you will have to make.

However, let me challenge you a little. Whether or not the job hunt works out for you, start a small venture, some endeavour which does not need any capital. Something simple, such as picking up the neighbourhood kids from school, taking care of residential properties for non-resident Ghanaians, or even establishing a small cleaning service for elderly homeowners.

I promise you, I guarantee you, that because of technology you will generate business leads from people you have never met and with time that little business will grow in ways even you could never have imagined.

Because of technology, all kinds of ventures that were previously impossible are now very compelling and making fortunes for their owners. All that is required is a little effort, imagination, initiative, discipline, and a good dose of persistence.

And that, my dear friends, is where the problem usually lies – the self-control to remain focused, the discipline to consistently deliver on your promises, the single-mindedness required to specialize, and the stamina to stay the course.

It takes a lot of commitment to grow a business slowly. It is much easier to go after the latest money making scam that is in fashion. Long term commitment is even more difficult in a digital era where everything is expected to happen within seconds. But commitment always pays off.



**Professor Akua Kuenyehia, Member of University Council
delivering the Opening Address.**



**Professor Ebenezer Oduro Owusu, Vice-Chancellor,
addressing the gathering.**



Professor Samuel Agyei-Mensah, Provost of the College of Humanities acknowledging International students of the College.



Mrs. Mercy Haizel-Ashia, Registrar, delivering opening Remarks at the ceremony.



Mr. Kojo Addo-Kufuor, delivering the Guest Speaker's address



Mr. David Agyeman-Duodu delivering the Valedictory Address



Graduands being congratulated by Officials and Dignitaries.



Graduands seated at the Congregation ceremony.



Some parents, guardians and invited guests at the ceremony

So I return to my friend's question and my sober reflection on what qualifies me to advise the Class of 2017 besides the fact that I have been invited to do so, and also that I am older than most, if not all, of you.

Consider this - while things have changed, a lot still remains the same. And that is because even though technology has considerably changed the world, human beings ourselves have not really changed that much.

We are driven by the same curiosities, weaknesses, passions, ambitions, and feelings that have made and destroyed civilisations since the beginning of time.

I am sure we all have an example of a modern day Judas, who would easily betray their boss for an iPhone 7, and for 30 I-phones, would definitely betray an entire country.

Similarly, you must know a modern day Samson, who would promptly share a password or a national secret in return for instant carnal gratification, regardless of the physical attributes of the Delilah making the request. As we were in the beginning, so are we now. It is because of these predictable, time tested, characteristics of mankind throughout the ages, that I boldly offer my counsel.

Nevertheless, please let me preface my advice with the obligatory caution made famous by investment advisors the world over- all of what follows have worked very well for generations past, but past performance is no guarantee of future results. So with that caveat in firmly place, I shall begin –

- **Advice 1 - Save for your pension as soon as you start working –**

I know that sounds ridiculous and I am sure many of you will be quick to remind me how difficult it is to save money that you don't have. However even if it is GHS20 a month, find a trustworthy investment scheme and start putting money away. Retirement will come sooner than you think. Before too long, it shall be your turn to stand here and deliver a similar address, and you will wonder how quickly the years

have passed. The nature of my day job, and my firm belief in real estate, compels me to also advise you to make home ownership your number one priority. You should plan, work hard, and save to ensure that you acquire at least a decent parcel of land, with good title I hasten to add, within 5 years of graduation. I am happy to offer free consultation on this assignment, as my graduation gift to all of you.

- **Advice 2 – Consider every job as an interview for your next job-**

Most of you will undoubtedly get your dream job straight from University and will always be on the fast track to the top. A small minority shall, unfortunately, have to make do with some tedious, low paying, nail breaking, frightfully mundane job with some non-name establishment.

Please perform that role with a big smile and all the enthusiasm you can muster. Learn as much as you can, take time to understand the industry dynamics and why such a business exists in the first place. Pretend it was the job you always wanted.

Treat every client you serve like a potential employer, because they could be just that. One day, from that lowly position you will land your dream job and it will all make sense. I should know – that is exactly what happened to me.

- **Advice 3 – Time is precious-**

You will lose money and make it back, many times over. You will lose a dream job and get an even better position later on. The one thing you will never get back is time, so please do not waste it. Personally, I have found a good way to track time is by always making sure I have a long list of to-do items for each week.

These lists regularly prompt me that I have things to do, whenever I find myself having a drink and simply staring into space. My dear friends, it is very easy to spend an entire lifetime in front of the television set, watching some pointless drama from a distant land

where all the women are slim and beautiful, all the men are tall and strong, and where all the kids are smart and well-mannered. Those hours you spend admiring those screen heroes are lost forever.

Whenever you catch yourself doing that, slap yourself on the wrist, switch off the set and take a trip to your local market. Walk around for while, and remind yourself what the real world looks like. I repeat, time is precious, spend it wisely. Hang out with older folk and find out from them what they wish they had done in the twenties, they will give you some ideas on how to spend your time.

- **Advice 4 – Strive to justify your degree-**

These certificates - the grades you have sacrificed so much for, the sleepless nights, the irritating course mates, the long lectures, the demanding project work, the tough exams, and the unbearable room-mates and their dodgy visitors who only show up at night – these certificates that you proudly pick up today, shall invariably end up on some dusty shelf and will have little or no bearing on what happens next in your lives.

From tomorrow, what will matter is how you can propose practical solutions to real life problems.

Indeed, tomorrow morning, when you go to town, please don't be disappointed if nobody seems to care that you have a newly minted degree from University of Ghana. It is only when you can convince people that you understand their pain, that you can work with them and explain why their businesses are failing, when you can introduce them to a new way of thinking and offer technologically driven solutions - that is when they will appreciate the relevance degree you have toiled for.

That is when they will insist that their children should also strive hard to attend this great university. Work hard to bring practical meaning to all that you have learnt here in campus.

- **Advice 5 – Never burn your bridges-**

You will quickly realise that Ghana is a very small place. As a matter of fact, the entire world is a very small place and getting even smaller. Always make sure that you do the right thing, leave a good impression, and work hard so that your employers and associates are happy with you and would gladly have you back if asked to.

All too often, some young graduate will misbehave and storm out of a job thinking that they have a better position and brighter prospects with another company. They are later horrified to realise that their current and former bosses are either old mates from school, attend the same church, are next door neighbours, are cousins, or worse still, are married or were married, or about to get married.

Trust me, they will compare notes and discuss your future. You should believe that everyone and every opportunity that comes into your life does so for a reason. One day it will all come together and you will see why God such sent such relationships your way. As such, I encourage you to nurture all relationships and never burn bridges, even the ones you don't need or particularly like.

- **Advice 6 – Constantly assess and upgrade yourself –**

My business school professor shared this advice with our Organizational Behavior class. Simply put, the skillset that serves you well during one stage of your life and gets you to the next level, may not necessarily be the same skillset that lets you succeed at that new level. Let me explain. Some of you got to university because you were model SHS students.

You stayed out of trouble, ate what was served at the dining hall, practically lived in the library, obeyed school rules to the letter, and you kept quiet in class. Having successfully arrived on Legon campus, it was possible to get along fine and get good grades by not fidgeting or talking in class, by diligently taking notes, not asking questions or

challenging the status quo, never being part of any club or society or movement. Even your roommates barely knew who you were and could never be sure whether you were on campus or had gone home. Come exam time you would simply reproduce everything you have been taught and pick up a good grade.

There were definitely some guys like that in my engineering class but I do not know if there are any people like that in your class. Take this from me. You are about to enter the university of life and that institution has a slightly different set of rules.

Depending on where you find yourself, you may realise that sitting quietly at the back, not asking questions, not being part of anything - those same attributes that gave you good grades, may not be the best approach to get you ahead. From tomorrow, you shall be required to take your destiny into your own hands, do what it takes to be noticed by speaking up and changing the direction of things in your favour.

You may have to fidget a bit, stir things up a little, even challenge authority and do things for which you would have been reprimanded in your earlier life. You will have to reach deep inside to reinvent your personality and acquire a new skillset in order to succeed in a competitive, unforgiving, fast changing, and aggressive world where nothing is handed over on a silver platter.

- **Advice 7 – Find your passion and pursue it –**

Some of you came to this university because it was expected of you. Given the pressure from parents, family, and friends, you could hardly have done otherwise. Now that you have picked up the degree, it is important to identify what you are really good at, what really excites you, and pursue it.

For a good number of you, the degree you offered is in line with your true area of interest. You are lucky, you may carry on. But for others,

your real dream lies in a totally different field of endeavor. If you sincerely believe that that you can become a world star doing something else, other than what you have studied for, and you want my advice— then I say please go pursue that dream.

When the young Rowan Atkinson completed a Master's degree in Electrical Engineering at the world famous Oxford University, he could have spent his life designing circuit boards and you may never have heard about him. However he pursued his true talent in comedy and is now a global icon, immortalized by his depiction of Mr. Bean, the world famous character even 4 year olds in Ghana can easily identify. Similarly, after picking up an Ivy League degree from the prestigious University of Pennsylvania and getting a coveted job with the Boston Consulting Group, the young John Legend could have settled into a routine, albeit rather well-paid job, as a management consultant. He however quickly concluded that his true interest and passion, was in music and so he quit his job and pursued a path that has made him a world star.

When I interview national service applicants, I often ask the question – what is your passion, what excites you, what would do if money wasn't a problem? I am often saddened by the blank, expressionless faces that stare back at me. My friend, passion is what will drive you to success. Passion will make you keep trying when the going gets tough. Passion is everything. You must find your passion. My last advice – Set Ambitious Goals – In my quieter moments, I often go online and get the latest update on the Voyager programme. This is a NASA mission launched in the late 70s to send two spacecrafts, Voyager 1 and 2, beyond our solar system. These unmanned crafts have since completed orbits around all the outer planets, have gone around Pluto and are on their way into deep space. I have already described the rudimentary nature of computing science in the pre-digital world, so you must appreciate the effort it took to launch these objects into space and then control them from earth for almost 40 years.

The mind blowing bit is that almost 40 years later, Voyagers 1 and 2

are still out there somewhere beyond Pluto, travelling at over 30,000 miles per hour, through interstellar space and sending back to earth signals and pictures from the beginning of time. I would invite you to think about that for a minute. The level of ambition, the degree of effort, the sheer extent of collaboration across various disciplines required to deliver such an accomplishment. How do you even start with a blank sheet of paper and build a set of calculations that sends an object into deep space when you don't even know how place looks like? That always challenges me to be up and doing. Why does this challenge me? Because I ask myself how it is that kids who went to studied mathematics and engineering just like I did, can achieve launch interstellar crafts while I struggle to figure out my mobile phone. Now you can give excuses about differences between their advanced system versus our basic environment— but my response to that will be who built their advanced system in the first place.

I would encourage you to find your Voyager mission - something that gets you constantly challenged to move on. Spend time reading the life stories of national and international business titans, inventors, activists, and leaders. Understand how they set out to change the world they came to meet. You should ask yourself this question - if a fellow human being, with or without a degree, has built such a legacy – what am I doing with my degree?

Surely somewhere in your studies, you would have been told to think outside the box. You would later have been told that, actually, there is no box. Ladies and gentlemen, that is really the case. There is no box so please don't box yourself in with some imaginary boundaries.

Plan big things for your life.

Dream big or wake up.

My dear friends, the long suffering tax payers of this nation have made a significant contribution to your education. Please make sure you never forget that.

I wish you all successful careers in your respective fields of endeavor.

I wish you good health, abundant wealth, and true happiness. Whenever in difficulty, pray to God and may God always answer your prayers.

God bless us all and God bless our homeland Ghana.

I thank you.

**VALEDICTORY ADDRESS DELIVERED
BY MR DAVID AGYEMAN-DUODU**

The Acting Chairperson and Members of the University Council; Vice-Chancellor; Pro-Vice Chancellors; Registrar; Provosts of Colleges; Deans; Members of College of Humanities Advisory Board; Distinguished Guest Speaker; Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps; Members of Convocation; Niime, Naame, Nananom; Parents and Guardians; Fellow Graduands; Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

Take a quick look at the person seated next to you. We were once strangers from our different worlds with one inspiration for which we gathered here some 1,402 days ago. However fuzzy the memory, we all had the same vision of this day, to be seated here and honoured as graduates. Day after day, it became clearer and gave us some verisimilitude. And today, we live this vision from 4 years ago and we sit no longer as strangers, but as a family and a network of interconnected worlds. We are leaving the school with loads of unique memories. Class of 2017, we have indeed come a long way. Congratulations! We are extremely grateful today; and I admit in humility that I am greatly honored and elated for this opportunity as the valedictorian, the voice of the inspiring class of 2017. It is my hope that we can all reflect on the memorable years thus far and be spurred by these words towards greatness.

No matter how success is understood, I believe everybody has the same potential for genuine success. It all hangs on what lies in our heads and within our hearts. Fellow graduands, we know of the exponential increase in our worth as underlying commodities in the future and as such, let us capitalize by taking the long position at an option premium of these 3 units of truth: The first is Covenant responsibility towards our visions: Every great operation requires cooperation for there to be a manifestation; for confession without profession will cause confusion. Until we appreciate covenant responsibility, people, we shall continue to live as liabilities in the global statement of financial position (Bishop Dr. David Oyedepo). When we raise our heads up high, let us see the reality of our estate as pacesetters, as front runners, as the people who mark a watershed which shall impact ours and many generations, and not only see.. No... but more integrally commit wholeheartedly to it.

The second unit of truth in taking our long position is adequate preparation. Luke 14:28, "For which of you intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he has sufficient to finish it?" Preparation causes us to embrace opportunity. Abraham Lincoln once said, "I will prepare and some day my chance will come. Give me six hours to chop down a tree and I will spend the first four sharpening the axe." As we step into greatness, greater opportunities will be thrown at us, and many doors will be opened before us. We live in a world which is ever growing at an imperceptible rate, and in order to catch up, we must also be readily available.

Fellow colleagues, the pivot of this address which couples as the 3rd unit is Continuous learning. If there is one thing I learnt in life as an undergraduate, it is simply that, "Learning is a continuum" and this... is the highlight of what I want us to appreciate this day. 2nd Timothy 2:15, "Study to show thyself approved..." We just never stop learning and I know most of my colleagues here have a testimony to that. We all remember our exuberance at the beginning of our first year at the business school. The first thing we heard of the University of Ghana Business School was that it was easy to sail through.

If there be anything, friends, which caused humility in most of us seated here today, it was the results of level 100 1st semester academic work. I do not know about you but personally I was humbled to appreciate learning. If we put aside the knowledge and grades acquired from our academic endeavors for a second, we immediately acknowledge that we have acquired much more than we paid for; the Profitability Index which is the ratio of the benefits to cost of our 4 year journey here was far exceeding 1.0. We have learnt a lot. We have tolerance and patience from living with diverse people, teamwork from working with people, marketing skills from campaigning for people, leadership skills from taking up positions, organizational skills from organizing seminars, extracurricular programs, organizing leavers' dinners and suchlike... and we have established strong networks... very strong ones.

One thing I took from the many stories our lecturers told us is that; in our many readings, it is not everything we come across that we may understand, but the beauty of it lies in desiring to know more, for which we shall read more, for knowledge is priceless. Therefore in all our getting, let us get

understanding. Be it in academia, in our workplaces, as entrepreneurs, we are always going to study and learn something.

The world outside of this hall plays by different set of rules. But guess what? That is not enough to stop us. Even the Simpson's rule and Decision Tree of Business Mathematics did not stop us; we still integrated our way through and made the right decision among alternatives. As we all know, entrepreneurs are the driving force of innovation in our world. Let us not sit back and wait for jobs; let us go out there and create enterprises. Let us embrace this freedom of failure, as a springboard for success. If somebody offers you an amazing opportunity but you are not sure you can do it, say yes – then learn how to do it later (Richard Branson).

The road is not going to be easy but then who ever said there were two roads? On this note, I want us to acknowledge the University of Ghana Business School for the incubation program they are initiating towards harnessing and growing entrepreneurs and innovators in our generation. World changers of 2017: Verily I voice out, we are the lighted ones; a land flooded with resources being and yet to be exploited. Amidst us shall be found exceptional student leaders at 4 various levels of leadership, poets, prolific writers, global contest winners, profound public speakers, entrepreneurs and ambassadors of this great university. Amidst us shall be found nothing... but greatness in progress. At this moment, let us appreciate the stakeholders of our success. Ebenezer, thus far the Lord has brought us! Our parents and guardians have been the lifeblood of our journey. Shall we kindly appreciate them with a resounding round of applause. To our lecturers and administration, throughout the years you have become our parents, advisors and career counselors; we say a big thank you. To our friends and other stakeholders, thank you very much for being with us. But we will also not forget Larry Tesler, inventor of copy and paste, as well as Larry Page and Sergey Brin, founders of Google. Now to my colleagues, Take a good look again at the people seated all around you; it may be your last. I conclude by saying, Necessity is laid upon us my friends, my brothers and my sisters; even as we leave the place and go out there, to be an illumination, a UGBS class of 2017 over others. Lift off from among the many, and be great!

God bless the University of Ghana, God bless Ghana and God bless us all.
Thank you.

**CLOSING ADDRESS BY CHAIRMAN OF COUNCIL
(REPRESENTED BY PROFESSOR AKUA KUENYEHIA,
MEMBER OF COUNCIL**

Vice-Chancellor

Distinguished Guest Speaker,

New Graduates,

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.

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, and the management teams 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, our 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.

