

VALEDICTORY SPEECH BY FREDERICK BOAMAH ON BEHALF OF THE CLASS OF  
2018/2019 AT THE GRADUATION CEREMONY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA.

JULY 20, 2019

Chancellor;  
Members of the University Council;  
Vice Chancellor  
Pro Vice-Chancellors;  
Registrar;  
Chair and Members of the College Advisory Boards;  
Provosts, Deans and Directors;  
Distinguished Guest Speaker;  
Members of Convocation;  
Staff and Students;  
Alumni;  
Parents and Guardians;  
Invited Guests;  
Members of the Press Corps;  
Fellow graduands  
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, good afternoon.

A big thank you to everyone present for making time to join us at this graduation ceremony. I have every reason to believe that today will be a success because you made the decision to be present. Today I feel proud, I feel very excited and most importantly, I feel humbled and it feels good because we made it! And, I get to share the journey of my year group and my own as an adult learner.

For many of us, embarking on a journey in pursuit of academic laurels has had enormous implications. It required numerous sacrifices not only from our family, friends, colleagues but ourselves. Many of us have lost loved ones and many years of friendship because we could not afford to commit our time and other resources to the numerous social activities we were invited to. Today, thankfully, we have reached the end of the journey and we are looking forward to making up for our lapses. I congratulate my colleagues for the endurance and perseverance they have shown throughout the duration of our study. We all know this journey was really tough but we should take pride in the knowledge we have gained by embarking on this journey.

Taking the decision to undertake postgraduate studies is a big decision for any prospective candidate. Once enrolled, you get confronted with many uncomfortable deadlines from your supervisors. The stresses, as I call them, from the demands of academic work, gave many of us moments where we questioned our decision to pursue further studies. Some of our colleagues who could not find enough time and reasons to continue with the programme dropped off along the line or sought additional time to reorganize themselves.

Life on campus was exhausting. It was exhausting mentally, financially, emotionally and socially. The financial and mental exhaustion gets to its peak when you have to undertake a PhD or an M.Phil programme, which are research loaded, with little or no funding grant.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, we all know that a good PhD is about high quality research which produces knowledge that is applicable and relevant to needs of today. High

quality research can support societies, especially, highly volatile ones like ours to be prepared for the future. Yet high quality research is very expensive and mostly unbearable for many PhD candidates if it has to be financed from personal sources.

Chancellor, Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, our humble appeal is simple, we cannot continue to pay lip service to addressing the funding grant challenges for producing good quality research if we want to be recognized as a World-Class University. If academia must contribute in a meaningful way to our societies, it must premise its contributions on high quality research.

We must be supported to produce credible research that looks at our unique requirements or help find practical yet sustainable solutions to our problems. The world around us is advancing quickly with cutting-edge research; our counterparts elsewhere are moving into the fourth industrial revolution with artificial intelligence (AI) and robotics propelling their advancement. We need to catch up quickly or be captives of a new kind of slavery. A seat around the table can only be secured if we invest in research. I am happy to note that, the University of Ghana, is spearheading innovations and committing resources towards improving the research environment on campus.

Life as a graduate researcher has been eye-opening as it gave my colleagues and I the opportunity to meet some very intelligent respondents who clearly understood the issues, knew how to handle them within their context but were helpless and constrained by many other factors beyond their control.

Life as a graduate student conducting research can be very frustrating when you meet local folks who hold so much indigenous knowledge that is relevant to our context, yet there is very little opportunity in the formal settings to utilize indigenous information in shaping the policy discourse.

But it is even more frustrating when we are not funding research enough to prepare our societies for the challenges/opportunities of the future. If we are to advance as a society and a continent, we need to trust national capacity for solutions that are tailor-made to our local context and conditions.

The opportunity to study again, gave me a deeper understanding of the true meaning and demands for academia, policy makers and industry to engage in a more progressive way to fashion solutions that are home-grown and fit into our development context as a people.

Chancellor, Members of the University Council, Distinguished guests, I make the humble plea that we must work together to achieve productive partnerships that responds to our unique needs and aspirations as a nation and a continent.

Today, as I recall some of the positive and not so positive experiences, I feel extremely proud that my colleagues and I have survived this journey.

To the many people who have helped us on this journey we are grateful. We can see further today because of your support and this is the reason why I cannot conclude without extending our deepest appreciation to;

- All of you gathered here today to celebrate with us,

- To the Community of teaching and non-teaching staff at the University of Ghana, we are indeed grateful.
- Our parents, spouses, children and the wider family, we say thank you for supporting us through this journey. It would not have been possible without your support,
- To the ever faithful pillar in our lives, Our Lord and Personal Saviour, thank you.

Thank you all for your kind attention and enjoy the rest of the day.