

The acting Chairman and Members of the University Council, the Vice Chancellor, Pro Vice Chancellor and the Registrar, members of the Academic Board, and staff of the University, Your Excellencies, Nananom, Nii me, Naa me, distinguished guests, students of this great University, our graduates whose achievements we celebrate today with your proud parents, families and friends, good afternoon.

Let me first express my great delight and pleasure at being invited to speak at a congregation in no less a place than at this great citadel of knowledge, my own alma mater and a place I am proud to refer to as my home!

In the bosom of this great institution are where my first furtive steps were taken and my first words spoken. My formative years were molded amongst the great body of academia I came to regard as my family. I reap in joy today because of the seeds sown so painstakingly by George and Adelaide Benneh, my parents in this very community. It is an honour and a great homecoming for me! I am grateful for this opportunity.!

My heartiest congratulations go to all the graduates today. Like you, I also had the privilege of passing through this great institution. Some eighteen years ago I wore my acape and stood before an august body of dignitaries not unlike those you face now signifying not only an end to academic studies but also an end to an era of a particular phase of social development, one which we will perhaps never experience in the same way again. So I really hope you made the best out of it. From the raising and lowering of standards in the vandal city, to the numerous trips to and from various halls of residence in an attempt to consolidate friendships and relationships amidst stiff competition from external forces, life on campus could be very fascinating. All this whilst studying feverishly for mid semesters and exams! I have no doubt that your characters have been molded by these experiences and prepared you for your various futures ahead. Ayeekoo for making it thus far successfully!

In the relatively short time since I graduated, the world has seen some dramatic developments. We could not for example have imagined that almost all our music will be on our phones, iPods, tablets, and lately in the cloud. That our source of information would not be exclusively obtained from books, encyclopedias or libraries like Balme but mostly

accessed on Wikipedia and Youtube or on search engines and our social sphere like Google, Facebook or Twitter. . The Internet which used to be restricted to a chosen few is now accessible to most of the 25 million mobile devices in this country. Through online technology my son can now play a video game on Xbox with an opponent he has never met, based in a country he has never visited. We have the benefit of meeting and listening to world speakers and to participate in debates and lectures anywhere in the world via Skype, podcasts, webinars or webcast and social media allows us to have conversations sustained over days with many people at the same time. In other parts of the world, billionaires are being created literally overnight as a result of businesses based on these new technologies . The world has become much smaller with geographic distances playing less and less of a role in the access to knowledge and people. Thus Alice from 1996 could be forgiven in thinking that she is in wonderland in 2014!

So if this is the world you are coming into prepared as it were to make a difference, what then is your game plan? How can you make a difference in a world changing so fast leaving us all still grappling to get to terms with it?

My message to you today – is that knowledge is now not a preserve of the few and does not necessarily only come by studying or training in a particular part of the world or in a particular school. Now more than ever, inventions and new business models are popping up from the most obscure parts of the world and in every aspect of our lives the playing field is being leveled to give anyone willing to put themselves out to compete a fighting chance. As you go out there, create something out of your ideas and form partnerships with your mates to establish sustainable enterprises. A new dawn is being heralded In Africa and not a day goes by without some article or research work being published which points to Africa as the future of prospects for the world. As a result, expertise and knowledge about and from Africa is fast gaining premium as people from other parts of the world seek partnerships and collaborations to gain in depth knowledge of how our particular society works, in order to benefit from it. – We are in the right part of the world nowadays!

For the women amongst you, the time has never been better to leverage your unique strengths for a world that is increasingly appreciative of your abilities and skills. Everyday we see many role models locally and

in many other parts of the world who have become incredibly successful at what they do and are therefore creating an enabling environment for you to thrive.

So my appeal to you all is to be bold, to dare to dream and pursue your dreams relentlessly. Amongst you if you choose are future entrepreneurs, business leaders and captains of industry uniquely placed to put our country on the world stage. You have what it takes to create not only the best in Ghana but also the best in Africa and the best in the world in your chosen fields by taking advantage of the connectivity that exists today! The resources available to us have never been better and you have only to look at the exploits of companies like SMS GH and Sparrow Productions, wholly owned Ghanaian companies competing and winning awards on the world stage to confirm this. Here I would also like to acknowledge with deep admiration one of the venerable sons of our land, our very own Chancellor Busumru Kofi Annan, whose mark of distinction still remains at the centre of world affairs. Our time has come and you can and must dare to make it happen!

I have a few suggestions for you our deserving graduates as you embark on what should become the most defining part of your lives. A wise man once told me that to succeed, one must guard against a sense of entitlement. He admonished me to let my achievements be in spite of what I had or did not have rather than because of what was or was not available to me. There are many stories of heroes and heroines who have done many great feats sometimes with very little at their disposal. In our part of the world we are constantly challenged to make do with very scarce resources but I trust that the 'can do' spirit that has been nurtured in you during your stay on campus will spur you on beyond your expectations despite the lack you may sometimes face.

The friendships and relationships you have made and will make as you progress in your life will make the difference in how successful you are in endeavours you undertake. The relief I have often felt when I bump into a familiar face whenever I have needed a favour or some help in a particular organization, country or place has taught me how invaluable these relationships can be. Many times I have met a V mate, a course mate or even people who used to study alongside me during the long nights at N block in the most unlikely places. These connections have usually made all the difference. It is important that we never discount

any encounter with anyone and maintain any relationships we are lucky enough to make. It certainly will come in handy one day!

Even as we celebrate the completion of your studies, it is beneficial to cultivate a habit of learning and one of teaching. Some of you may already have mentors and have come to know the value of the wisdom of those who have trod the path before us. In all aspects of our lives we find such people, sometimes not in the most obvious positions that lends itself easily to our perception of their ability to point us in the right direction. But the listening ear and a mind that is not hasty to judge will often uncover the pearls of wisdom available. Therefore it is often good to suspend judgment until we have listened and had an opportunity to assess the information against the prevailing circumstance.

Conversely we are told that some of the best insights come from the dialogue that occurs whilst passing on our knowledge to others. Too often we wait to become more knowledgeable. We also can't seem to find the time. But there is no time like the present to start, especially in a world where so much is freely accessible everywhere. We are most likely to be surprised about what we will end up learning from the experience.

My dear graduates, the fast paced and intense nature of our world today has left many prone to stress and its related ailments. One of the ways I have sought to neutralize this has been through the inspiration of the Divine Mercy of Jesus Christ who has been my ever present Shepherd! I still have fond memories of my days as a member of Pax Romana, the student catholic community on campus. I acknowledge the mentorship of Archbishop Palmer Buckle my teacher and father and the many other men and women of God who I owe a great deal for my ongoing spiritual development! I do recommend that we all cultivate and develop our own anchor. One we can lean on. It is a real treasure especially in those turbulent periods that we encounter along the way.

Our stories cannot be complete without acknowledging the role played by the love, support and prayers of our family members and closest friends who will always remain our biggest fans and the ones most likely to stick with us through thick and thin. I have been blessed with

parents, siblings, my nuclear family, close friends and mates who have shown me the value of these relationships with their advice and unflinching support that have often been a tremendous boost in very discouraging moments. My home is the oasis I run to after the hustle and bustle and pressures of the day. So remember to nurture these relationships and never take them for granted. Some have realized just how much they have lost only after it was too late.

Finally, I know there is a tendency by some of us to cherish the memories of our fun times and active social lives on campus as the “good old days” to be forever used as a reference point when we need to reminisce. But if we are going to work hard to make an impact on the world then we have to make time to celebrate our milestones and release tension as it were! Despite all its challenges and stresses it still is a beautiful world for those who create one. If we accept that our time on earth is not a dress rehearsal, then we must strive to be happy every step of the way so us to ensure that the society around us derives pleasure from our presence!

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, I would like to end by once again extending my warmest wishes to our new graduates as they celebrate the successful end of their stay on campus and look forward to the beginning of the next chapter of their lives.

Remember that your nation needs you, our alma mater expects you to be a beacon in the world and your families, some of whom are proudly gathered here today look up to you to succeed!

We wish you well knowing that your best years are ahead of you!

God bless our homeland Ghana and God bless us all!

Thank you!