

VALEDICTORY SPEECH BY MS. HARRIET NAA QUARNOR DODOO, SCHOOL OF  
NURSING AND MIDWIFERY, COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES, UNIVERSITY OF  
GHANA ON THE OCCASION OF THE CONGREGATION CEREMONY OF THE  
UNIVERSITY OF GHANA HELD ON SATURDAY, 20TH JULY, 2019 AT THE GREAT  
HALL

The Chancellor

Chairman of Council,

Vice Chancellor,

Pro-Vice Chancellors

Registrar,

Members of Convocation,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am humbled and deeply honoured to present the valedictory speech at this graduation ceremony. I thank the Almighty God for His grace and favour.

To all graduands gathered here today, I congratulate you for coming this far. Indeed, we have travelled a path of sacrifice, sleepless nights, fear of

failure, strict deadlines and high expectations. Our conferment today reflects the success, achievement, teamwork and resilience that we have exhibited throughout our stay at the University of Ghana. We are proud that we chose Ghana's Premier University, and were offered the opportunity that many continue to dream of. We could not have been in a better one.

I had my nursing diploma at the 37 Military Nursing and Midwifery Training College (NMTC). It was during my first year at the college that I was inspired to attend the Premier University.

Madam Chancellor, during my time at the 37 Nursing and Midwifery Training College (NMTC), I used to sweep a portion of the compound that faced the highway every morning before parade as part of my morning chores. It was one of such occasions that I saw the School of Nursing and Midwifery bus drive by. In the bus were students in pristine white clothing, some of them were reading books, others looked asleep while the rest were happily chatting away. Generally, they all looked so cool and serene. Though I had an initial plan to continue my studies in

one of the universities in the country, my admiration for the student nurses in the School of Nursing and Midwifery bus further heightened my urge to follow through with my academic plan by opting for Ghana's Premier University, the only University in Ghana, the best in the country and among the best the world over.

It was a dream comes true when I had admission right after my diploma training to pursue a bachelor's degree at the University of Ghana School of Nursing and Midwifery in the 2015/2016 academic year.

As diploma nurses, the university environment provided us with experiences different from the training school. Though matured, we were 'greenhorns'. I thought getting a degree would be my greatest achievement, but after I stepped foot here, I realised that this is just the beginning and the possibilities are endless.

For those of us graduating, we joined the University of Ghana, with fervor to improve ourselves, determined to be the best we could. The moment classes began, we understood that the kind of effort we had to

put in our studies were enormous. Extended study hours became the norm, adjusting social life was not an option and team work was an essential skill each one of us had to acquire.

For us from the School of Nursing and Midwifery, no one understands the excitement we felt when a 7:30 a.m. class was cancelled or the fear and trepidation we went through when pathology results were released at the end of examinations. To most of us, the subject was a monster that wanted to terminate our academic pursuit abruptly. By the way, thank you Nurse Ahambuah a. k. a MIS POLICE for the heart ache you gave us for scouting the MIS Web and informing us of grades as soon as they were released. No lecturer was to expect the correct time from our class; we had a special watch/clock that was always fifteen minutes ahead of the normal time. I remember my class being so excited whenever a School bus that was scheduled to convey us to a health facility for clinical instructions broke down because it meant, either there would be no clinicals that day or we would arrive at the facility late: An excitement we felt just to let off a bit of ‘steam’.

Madam Chancellor, Monday mornings in particular were always scary for our colleagues from the School of Pharmacy especially when Prof. Okine comes in to teach Chemistry at 8.00 am. He was one very strict lecturer, and when he asks a question and you do not get it right, he will just shout the word '**rubbish**'! This is simply to tell you that if you cannot get it right do not guess. All night group studies were fun; people dosing off in very funny ways, we studied together, prayed together and had fun together.

For our graduands from the School of Medicine and Dentistry, the transition from Legon to Korle Bu campus during their clinical years offered them wonderful experiences. They recall very well the times when they had to chase the bus from their various halls of residence so they do not miss the School bus, only to return sleepy from the formalin effect of their dissecting rooms. Getting a ride on other schools' buses to Korle Bu was always a fun when they took advantage of the situation and fraternised with other colleagues. All these varying experiences, some of which I must say were quite frightening and discouraging neve

dampened our spirits. Rather, they strengthened us the more to work harder to reach this level.

Madam Chancellor, we are not leaving this campus with just a degree, but with worthwhile experiences, life-long relationships and memories of skills learnt for which we are most grateful to the UNIVERSITY OF GHANA.

Fellow graduands, as we step unto this new stage, one word I wish we will take along in this life journey is Grit, spelt G.R.I.T. Grit is the strength of mind, resilience and the unwavering desire to succeed.

Permit me to share with you, a core message from Angela Duckworth's book 'GRIT: The Power of Passion and Perseverance'.

Often times we believe that people are more talented than we are so we cannot achieve what they have achieved. According to Angela Duckworth, 'Talent counts once, and effort counts twice.' This is to say that, Grit supersedes Talent. Therefore, in anything we set out to do, one way of ensuring success is the continuous application of effort.

Grit is when we find work to do instead of waiting for government posting, grit is when we collaborate with our colleagues to set up home care institutions, grit is waking up early in the morning, hustle in traffic just to get to work and serve the communities, grit is when we push forward even when circumstances are hard; grit is a combination of passion and perseverance.

Madam Chancellor, I wish to acknowledge our parents and guardians for all the sacrifices they made toward our education, to our faculty, we say thank you for training gallant nurses, medical doctors, pharmacists, and allied health scientists who are well prepared to serve the nation. Today, you are all here with us celebrating our big achievement.

It is said that to whom much is given, much is expected, and in the same way also we, the graduating classes are expected to give back to society, and our professions compel us to do so. As we have taken something out of the university, we are obliged to bring something significant in return in through alumni activities.

Madam Chancellor, though excited, I know many of us are plunged with fear and self-doubt of what lies ahead in the future. Saying goodbye to the flexible but purposeful structure of university life and stepping foot into the real world which is unknown can cause fear and self-doubt. Nonetheless, I will urge my fellow graduands to be steadfast and let us look into the future with hope and optimism.

Congratulations graduating class of 2019! Ayekoo

Thank you.