

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S ADDRESS AT CONGREGATION:

JULY 26, 2014

Chancellor of the University of Ghana, His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan;
Chairman of University Council, His Lordship Justice Samuel Kofi Date-Bah;
Honourable Minister of Education, Professor Jane Naana Opoku-Agyeman;
Honourable Ministers of State and Members of Parliament;
Members of the University Council
Pro-Vice-Chancellors;
Registrar;
Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps;
Colleague Vice-Chancellor, Professor Isaac Adewole;
Representatives of sister universities
Members of Convocation;
Niimeɪ, Naameɪ, Nananom;
Graduating Students;
Parents and Guardians;
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen:

1. WELCOME

It is a great pleasure to welcome you all to today's graduation ceremonies, the third and final in the series of ceremonies for the 2013/2014 academic year. The University has had a very busy, fulfilling and yet challenging year, and while I will later talk about some of the triumphs and challenges we have had as an institution, I would like us all to remember that our main reason for gathering here today is to celebrate the men and women who, having satisfied the requirements for graduation for their programmes, will be graduated today.

1,442 students are graduating today at various levels. At the Bachelor's level, a total of 45 students representing 7.2 percent of the graduating class, obtained First Class Honours, 229 or 36.6 percent Second Class Upper, 306 or 49 percent Second Class Lower and 34 or 5.4 percent, Third Class.

26.7 percent of Certificate and Diploma students obtained distinctions, with the remaining students obtaining passes.

The 437 post-graduate graduands include 33 Doctor of Philosophy candidates.

2. REMEMBERING DEPARTED COLLEAGUES

I would like us to take a minute to remember Professor Kwadwo Asenso-Okyere, seventh Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ghana, who passed away in May, and was laid to rest last week.

We have also learnt in the last few weeks, of the deaths of two other colleagues, Professor Samuel Kwesi Gaisie of the Regional Institute of Population Studies and Professor John Maxwell Assimeng, of the Department of Sociology. We recall the long association of each of them with the University and their invaluable contributions to the University's growth and development.

(PAUSE)

May they each rest in perfect peace!

3. A REVIEW OF UG ACTIVITIES

Mr Chancellor, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, I start my second term as Vice-Chancellor on August 1, and I think that now would be a good time to examine some of our activities and outcomes as a University over the last four years. In my induction speech I spelt out a vision of what needed to be done in

order to make the University of Ghana a world-class institution. In my first meeting with the University Council I brought out the ideas embedded in my vision and these were endorsed by Council. I have spent the last four years pursuing that agenda as best as I could, with the assistance of colleagues at various levels in the management of the University.

This section of my address covers some of the activities and outcomes in the priority areas that I identified in my vision statement. The priority areas were:

- Promoting Academic Excellence through Enhanced Teaching and Learning and Leadership Training
- Promoting Academic Excellence through Significantly Expanded and Relevant Research and Extension
- Overhaul of Governance Arrangements in Administration, Teaching, and Research
- Better Management of University Assets and Facilities
- Scale-up Efforts Towards Equal Opportunity in Gender Diversity
- Enhanced Fund-Raising Activities at Unit and Central Administration Levels
- Mainstream and Enforced Structures and Processes for Monitoring and Evaluation

a. Improvements in Teaching and Learning

Our focus has been to improve significantly the environment for teaching and learning for both students and faculty. Improving the quality of academic staff has been crucial in this quest and creating a better set of learning opportunities

has always been a major motivation. The following initiatives have been pursued:

Restructuring PhD Programmes

The University adopted a restructured format for PhD programmes starting from the 2013/14 academic year. The main aim of the restructuring was to improve the quality of the University's PhD output, and also to place PhD programmes at the University in line with international standards, making them more competitive and attractive and thereby improving recruitment and completion rates. It also aims to make our PhD graduates more versatile in their understanding and application of the intellectual and practical traditions of the selected programme of study.

Provisional approvals were given for a number of departments and centres to begin their programmes at the start of the year, while full vetting of those programmes was being done. The School of Graduate Studies, through its PhD Technical Committee later recommended for approval a number of programmes. 27 PhD programmes have since been approved for full take off.

Mr Chancellor, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, I am pleased to announce that the University of Ghana has won a grant of USD650,000 to support PhD training through the project: Accelerated PhD Training through University of Ghana - Diasporan Linkages (APT-Ghana). The goal of the project is that the University becomes a hub for African regional doctoral training, drawing on its diasporan partnerships to enhance its PhD programmes, thereby attracting top performing PhD and post-doctoral candidates and enhancing its research outputs. The concept of the project derives from UG's new direction for PhD training.

The UG-APT is funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York for an initial period of two years and will support:

- the establishment of the UG Pan- African Doctoral Academy - (UG-PADA) to enhance PhD output,
- the expansion and institutionalization of the UG-Diasporan Linkage Programme to support post-graduate programme delivery, and
- the development and delivery of new PhD programmes.

I sincerely thank Professor Yaa Ntiamo Baidu, PhD coordinator and the PhD Technical Committee for putting together the winning proposal.

Procurement of Science Equipment

Management developed a programme for the acquisition of modern equipment for the various units of the University undertaking scientific research. We purchased a GC Mass Spectrophotometer to be used by faculty and graduate students. A nitrogen plant has also been set up at the Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research to produce liquid nitrogen for the use of Legon scientists. The total budget for the purchase of equipment was \$2.5 million. The University also took delivery of other science equipment procured for the various science units. The HPLC equipment for the Department of Biochemistry, Cell and Molecular Biology has been delivered and installed. Delivery of basic science equipment to facilitate practical work in various departments has also been done. XRD equipment has been installed at the Departments of Physics and Chemistry, while NMR equipment is being installed at the Department of Chemistry. Renovation work has been undertaken in these departments to prepare them for the new equipment.

Decongestion of Halls of Residence

A major aspect of the programme for revamping academic life at UG involved creating a more conducive environment for learning for our students. A first step was to reduce the number of students occupying student rooms from an average of 8, to 3 or 4 and to provide them with better facilities. The process of decongesting halls of residence started in the first semester of the 2011/2012 academic year and was successful. Today, students do not have to suffer from overcrowding.

New Programmes

A number of new programmes have been introduced at both the graduate and undergraduate levels.

- M. Eng and M Phil in Biomedical Engineering
- M. Eng and M Phil in Material Sciences and Engineering
- M Phil in Seed Science and Technology
- M Phil in Molecular Cell Biology of Infectious Diseases
- MSc in Medical Laboratory Sciences
- MA in Theatre Arts
- MSc and MPhil in Applied Geochemistry
- BSc in Dental Laboratory Sciences
- BSc in Respiratory Therapy
- BSc in Geophysics

The introduction of these programmes is in response to the needs of industry, and as we enter the collegiate system, I urge other departments to continue to rationalize their programmes and come up with revised and new programmes that equip our students for the needs of today's competitive job market.

b. Research and Extension

Management continues to support the work of the Office of Research, Innovation and Development with increased resources and also research leadership. In addition to the work of ORID, the Institute of Applied Science and Technology and four Centres of Excellence have been created to lead the process of “Transforming Legon into a Research University”, a major pillar of our vision and programme for the University.

The four centres of excellence are:

- Malaria Research
- Enhancing Food Production and Food Processing
- Trans-Disciplinary Research into Climate Change Adaptation
- Development Policy and Poverty Monitoring and Evaluation

These four centres have been created by bringing together multidisciplinary groups of researchers from different academic units to focus on the chosen thematic areas and develop a large body of relevant studies.

The President of the Republic has emphasized government’s support for the concept of turning Legon into a research university and has promised to work with the University towards finding the resources needed from various places.

To get the process of transformation going, two of the research teams from the four centres of excellence have recently won \$16 million of research grants from the African Centres of Excellence initiative of the World Bank. The Malaria Group yesterday hosted a symposium on malaria vaccine research aimed at building an African Consortium for Malaria Vaccine Research.

Publication of Readers

As part of the efforts to enhance the quality of teaching and research at the University of Ghana, especially in view of the difficult access to published historical material that has been re-examined and re-evaluated in light of more recent developments, the development of “Readers” or Collections of related essays on disciplines or sub-disciplines was initiated. A total of 31 have so far been published and launched, and another 20 Readers are at various stages of revision for eventual publication.

This book publication initiative has been very useful for the faculty and provided reading material both for our students and for other students and scholars across the world. The endeavour is partially funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York with a grant of US\$80,000, and by the University of Ghana from its internally generated funds.

Technology Development and Transfer Centre

The University of Ghana Technology Development and Transfer Centre (TDTC) has been established to facilitate the development and transfer of technologies with the aim of solving key problems in industry and local communities.

The Centre has been set up to bridge the gap between the University of Ghana and industry through the transfer of human driven technologies developed at the University of Ghana. It is my hope that the University of Ghana will be identified as a major player in innovative research as it repositions itself as a world class institution.

I therefore urge researchers and scientists in the University to work closely with the Centre to ensure a successful technology transfer process that will benefit the society as a whole. I acknowledge the World Bank for providing a grant of about USD 500,000 to fund the Centre, and COTVET and the Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI) for their support in the realization of this project.

ACE Project

As I mentioned earlier, the University of Ghana has won two grants, each worth eight million dollars, in the Africa Centres of Excellence Project (ACE) Project, which have resulted in the establishment of:

- The Africa Centre of Excellence for Cell Biology and Infectious Pathogens hosted jointly by the Department of Biochemistry and Cell Biology and the Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research, with Dr. Gordon Awandare as the Centre Leader; and
- The Africa Centre of Excellence for Training Plant Breeders, Seed Scientists and Technologists, hosted by the West Africa Centre for Crop Improvement, with Professor Eric Danquah as Centre Leader.

The development objective of the World Bank funded Project is to support the recipient institutions to promote regional specialization among participating universities in areas that address regional challenges and strengthen the capacities of these universities to deliver quality training and applied research. Such awards are a major boost to the University's movement towards strengthening its research focus, and I congratulate the teams that put forward the winning proposals.

The Cambridge Africa Partnership for Research Excellence (CAPREx)

Project

Following the second call for applications for CAPREx post-doctoral research fellowships, three University of Ghana faculty have been selected for the next cohort of Fellows after a rigorous shortlisting, matching and interview process. The three selected are from the Departments of Biochemistry, Cell and Molecular Biology, Animal Biology and Conservation Science and Material Science and Engineering.

Ladies and gentlemen, faculty members continue to attract significant research grants to the University, often collaborating with partners from other institutions. Recent grants include:

- Department of Geography and Resource Development/ISSER/IDRC grant of 497,000 Canadian dollars for research on Urban Crime in Ghana
- Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation institutional support for ISSER on monitoring and Evaluation US\$ 1,413,627
- RIPS/IDRC project on Climate Change Adaptation US\$1,400,000
- Institute of African Studies grant of US\$1, 11,364 by the Open Society Initiative for West Africa for phase one of the project African Presidential Papers and Libraries.

c. Governance at UG

A major observation I made about the University of Ghana in my induction speech was the fact that it had an over-centralized and unnecessarily hierarchical structure. The outcome of various consultations has been the adoption of a decentralized structure working through a collegiate system.

The migration to the collegiate system was meant to add value to the colleges to be formed and prepare the University for transformation into a research

university. The idea was to free the officers at the centre; especially the Vice-Chancellor and Pro-Vice-Chancellors from some administrative duties in support of academic work and to allow more room for innovation at the school and college level. Colleges would be semi-autonomous and be able to take more decisions on their academic programmes and administration.

As part of the process, the University's statutes have been amended, thus paving the way for the establishment of the Colleges of Education, Humanities and Basic and Applied Sciences, and for the amendment of the structure of the College of Health Sciences. Provosts and other officers for the new colleges will take office on 1st August 2014.

Financial Governance and Regulations

The University Council approved a new policy on Financial Regulations and Governance which guide all financial transactions and management within the various units of the University. The policy is intended to bring financial management at the University of Ghana in line with best practices around the world.

Development of Human Resource Policy

A consultant is currently working on a document to develop and consolidate the HR policies of the University. When completed, it will be the first time the University has put in place a Human Resources Policy and Manual to guide policy implementation. The intention is to streamline the relationship between the University as an employer and all the different categories of staff. The new policy document is expected to among others, set the standards and procedures for the assessment of staff performance.

d. Management of University Assets and Facilities

A major area of interest in this regard has been to take better care of the University's facilities and infrastructure. We have put in place measures to ensure a more regular maintenance schedule for University buildings and other facilities. This has been made possible by strengthening the Physical Development and Municipal Services Directorate. As a result most university buildings are seeing some rehabilitation while our roads are being redone and improved. There have been a number of new physical developments and I would like to talk briefly about these.

University of Ghana Teaching Hospital

A major part of my induction speech was on the need to relocate the College of Health Sciences and all of its units to the Legon Campus, and the establishment of a teaching hospital was essential to facilitate clinical work. I am glad to report that construction has begun in earnest on the new 600-bed University of Ghana Teaching Hospital. This is being done with a loan facility of \$127 million arranged by the Government of Ghana.

Work is 30% complete. When completed, the Hospital will have state-of-the-art facilities for trauma and emergency services, heart surgery, medical imaging, and a heliport, and will eventually be expanded into a 1,300 bed facility to ease the pressure on the Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital and provide effective teaching, learning and patient care. Future construction will cover a Cancer Centre and a Rehabilitation Building.

UGBS Multi-purpose Graduate Building

The University of Ghana Business School's new Multi-purpose Graduate Building was opened a few days ago. The project, which began nearly two years ago, is to accommodate the ever increasing number of graduate students seeking admission into the School. The state of the art facilities are intended to sustain the Regular and Special graduate programmes in the School.

Wi-Fi Deployment

The University has made it a policy to introduce Wi-Fi internet access to all student rooms in each residential facility. In addition to the Chinese Government assisted project for laying fibre optic cables around the campus, the University has provided a number of Wi-Fi Access Points in all halls.

Other Physical Developments on Campus include

- Close Circuit Television for Examination Halls
- Faculty of Arts Building
- Rehabilitation of road at Tsito for ICDE
- University of Ghana Crèche
- Multi-purpose facility for the School of Performing Arts
- Extension at School of Pharmacy
- Construction of Small Animal Hospital for School of Veterinary Medicine

Upcoming Capital Development Projects include:

- College of Humanities building to be sited behind the Department of Geography and Resource Development to provide accommodation for all the Deans of the College, and the Departments of Computer Science, Social Work, Political Science, Information Studies, Psychology, and the Centre for Social Policy Studies

- College of Health Sciences to be sited close to the Teaching Hospital
 - College of Basic and Applied Sciences and Institute of Applied Science and Technology next to the Adzei Bekoe Building.
 - College of Education building between the Jones-Quartey Building and International House
 - Central Administration Annex to be cited next to School of Graduate Studies to provide accommodation for the Office of Research Innovation and Development, Academic Affairs, Student Financial Aid Office, Legal Counsel and additional offices for the Central Administration.
- ***Water Augmentation***
The University has drilled and mechanized 24 boreholes in the last three years to augment water supply.

e. Gender and Diversity

Anti-Sexual Harassment Committee

Following the passing of the Sexual Harassment Policy by the Council of the University, an Anti-Sexual Harassment Committee was inaugurated in the 2011/2012 academic year. The Committee was tasked to address sexual harassment and sexual abuse issues relating to the University community.

Since its inauguration, the Committee has intensified its efforts to educate the University community about the new rules and regulations on sexual harassment.

In addition to this, a segment on the Sexual Harassment Policy has been introduced as part of orientation programmes for students and for newly

appointed staff. More seminars have been planned to explain the main features of the policy.

Equity in Admissions and Employment

The University has intensified efforts to achieve gender parity in the admission of students and also in the hiring of staff and senior members. For admissions in the 2013/2014 academic year, 42% of all admitted students were female. In a number of disciplines, including Medicine, as many as a half of admitted students were female. Some progress is also being made in the hiring of female senior members.

4. UNIVERSITY OF GHANA STRATEGIC PLAN

The University has grown from a modest-sized liberal arts University envisaged under the 1961 framework, into a large public University with multiple aspirations that must be carefully restructured if it is to become a world-class University. The preparation of a University of Ghana Strategic Plan for the period 2014 to 2020 has been completed, to help rethink the longer term strategy for the University's development. The Plan has nine strategic priorities which should put the University of Ghana on the path to becoming a world class research university. The strategic priorities have been defined as follows:

- i. **Research:** Create a vibrant intellectual climate that stimulates relevant cutting edge research and community engagement.
- ii. **Teaching and Learning:** Promote academic excellence using the highest international standards of learning, teaching, and leadership development.
- iii. **Internal Stakeholders:** Provide an environment that will ensure fulfilling experiences for internal stakeholders.

- iv. Gender and Diversity: Create the best environment for equal opportunity in gender and diversity.
- v. Institutional processes: Overhaul all governance arrangements to achieve greater effectiveness and efficiency.
- vi. Financial Performance: Enhance the mobilization and management of resources of unit and central administration levels.
- vii. Asset Management: Strengthen the management of the University's assets and facilities.
- viii. Monitoring and Evaluation: Mainstream and enforce structures and processes for system-wide monitoring and evaluation.
- ix. Build stakeholder confidence in the capabilities of the University.

Each of the strategic priorities has a set of strategic objectives and key performance indicators and metrics. The intention is also to draw up a number of projects together with costs within the plan period. It is planned to launch the strategic plan in the next few weeks.

Mr Chancellor, Chairman of Council, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, from all the points I have enumerated, while a lot has been achieved in our quest to make the University of Ghana a world-class institution, much still remains to be done. It is my intention to continue working hard to achieve our aspirations, and I hope that I can count on the support of all stakeholders in this quest.

Now, to other matters

5. PRO-VICE CHANCELLOR/ NEW APPOINTMENTS

Professor Kweku Osam, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor in charge of Academic and Student Affairs, steps down on August 1 after one term in office. Professor

Osam has been a crucial member of our team, and has been at the forefront of many innovations in academic affairs and improving the student experience. Kweku, we thank you for your contributions to our work, and we wish you well as you return to your teaching and research duties in the Linguistics Department. We welcome as Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Professor Kwame Offei, who has over the years, served in many capacities in the University. Kwame comes in with a solid track record as an academic of international repute. I look forward to working with Kwame Offei.

6. INTERNATIONALIZATION

The presence of international students in the University does much to enhance the quality of academic and social life on our campuses. 904 international students were enrolled in the University in the 2013/2014 academic year, made up of visiting, regular and occasional students at all levels. This number makes up just about four percent of our total student population. We have many international students as part of today's graduating class. I urge those of you graduating today to maintain ties with your Ghanaian counterparts and lecturers, and also act as worthy ambassadors of the University wherever you might find yourself.

Internationalization has become an integral part of higher education, and it is therefore imperative that the University pays more attention to it. There is the need to better define what the University hopes to achieve through internationalization, and strategically plan towards the resources and partnerships required and how to manage them.

A committee is currently working on a policy on internationalization for the University, to guide the work of the International Programmes Office.

7. ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Obtaining Students' Records

The University has approved guidelines to enable parents and guardians request access to the records of their children/wards. Many parents and guardians have been unpleasantly surprised by their wards being unable to graduate, or being withdrawn from the University because of poor performance. Details of the processes to acquire access will soon be available on the University's website.

Experiential Learning Course

There is the need for all of our students to have a component of experiential learning as part of their programmes. It is in light of this that an Experiential Learning Course, has been approved, to be run initially on a pilot basis. The course is meant to provide undergraduate students with a learning experience outside the classroom that will require the application of concepts and theories learnt in the classroom to real-life situations, and that will result in positive outcomes to both the students and the communities or organizations they work with.

Students on the course will spend 20 hours over a period of 9 weeks in a community or organization, working on a project that among others provides them the opportunity to apply theoretical concepts to real world situations.

Admissions

Applications to undergraduate programmes closed at the end of June, and we await the release of the 2014 WASSCE results to admit qualified applicants. As one of the few public universities that continue to allow students who completed their WASSCE examinations in May to apply for admission, we have had a deluge of applications, but will not be able to go beyond agreed admission quotas, as we must ensure that we do not overstretch our facilities and in so doing short change our students. For admissions in ensuing years, we will examine our options, and in consultation with our partners and the regulatory bodies, determine the patterns of admissions.

8. THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Financial Aid

While the University has been able to reach out to many students with financial difficulties through the Student Financial Aid Office (SFAO), we have been unable to mobilize enough funds to support all needy students. Many more students should be able to qualify for aid but are unable to, due to inadequate funds. We are extremely grateful to all those individuals and corporate bodies who continue to contribute to the financial aid scheme, and I call on others to do the same. I also encourage students who have benefitted from the fund and indeed, all our alumni, to be ready to give back to the University when they graduate, to assist other needy students. As the saying goes, “no donation is too small”, and you would be surprised at the difference that a modest contribution could make to a student’s life.

9. WELL WISHES TO GRADUANDS

Before I take my seat, permit me to once again salute our graduands, whose hard work and perseverance have culminated in today's ceremonies. Class of 2014, we are indeed proud of you and wish you well in your future endeavours. As you go out to conquer the world, may your graduation today be just the beginning of great things to come.

Ladies and gentlemen, I thank you for your attention.

Professor Ernest Aryeetey

July 26, 2014