

**ADDRESS BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR, UNIVERSITY OF GHANA AT  
CONGREGATION: MARCH 9, 2013**

Your Lordship Justice Samuel Date Bah, Chairman of the University Council;

Minister of Education Professor Naana Jane Opoku-Agyeman;

Our distinguished Guest Speaker, Ms Enyonam Kumahor

Ministers of State;

Members of Parliament;

Pro-Vice-Chancellors;

Registrar;

Members of the Diplomatic Corps;

Colleague Vice-Chancellors and Registrars;

Members of the University Council and Members of Convocation;

Niime, Naame, Nananom;

Graduating Students;

Parents and Guardians;

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen;

**Welcome**

I warmly welcome you all to the University of Ghana and to today's Congregation ceremony. Today, undergraduate and sub-degree level students in the faculties of Arts and Social Sciences, as well as graduate students from across the University, who have satisfied the requirements for graduation, will be awarded the degrees due them. There will be another Congregation later this month, at which students from the College of Health Sciences will be graduated. That will

be the last *en masse* congregation before we finally move to graduating our students in smaller ceremonies, by College or Faculty, soon after they complete their studies. Starting from this year, two sets of weeklong graduation events will be held, in July and November each year.

I will present some statistics about graduation a little later, but for now, I will briefly touch on a few important recent developments at the University.

## **STUDENT AFFAIRS**

### **Driving on and around Campus**

Tragically, in January we lost three Level 100 students in two separate traffic accidents just outside the University campus. Lordina Fobih, Deborah Benaye and Kwadwo Agyapong Boampong were bright young people who had their whole lives ahead of them; and as a University, we share the pain of their families and friends on their tragic demise. We are working with the Accra Metropolitan Assembly, the police Motor Traffic and Transport Unit (MTTU) and the Urban Roads Department to find ways by which we can make roads on and around our campuses safer for our students and staff. At the same time, I implore pedestrians and motorists on our roads and walkways to be patient and cautious at all times, to avoid the repetition of such needless accidents.

### **Leadership Seminars for Student Leaders**

The Office of the Dean of Student Affairs has recently organized a leadership training seminar for student leaders of the University. The students were taken through topics such as Managing Problems and Challenges, Accountability and Audit Process, and the Concept of Leadership. It would appear that this and

similar training programmes are paying off.

Things have been relatively calm on the student front, and I must say the relationship between management and our current student leaders has been mutually rewarding. It is refreshing to have student leaders who are committed to work to move the University forward. I applaud the leaders of the Students Representative Committee, the Graduate Students' Association of Ghana and the various Junior Common rooms, and urge prospective future student leaders to learn from them.

### **Meal Plans for Students**

The University is proposing to introduce improved food catering services to students by getting them to sign on to meal plans starting from the 2013/2014 academic year. The idea is to give students more nutritious and healthy food within a safe environment and at a reasonable price in their halls of residence. This service will initially target fresh men and women, but will be available to continuing students as well.

## **GOVERNANCE**

### **Collegiate System**

We have for some time now been working towards grouping faculties and schools in the University into Colleges, to allow for more efficiency and less bureaucracy in our operations, considering the rapid rate of growth and expansion that the University has experienced over the past several years.

The implementation committees appointed to structure academic programmes and see to the take off of each of the four proposed colleges are working hard, and are on course to completing their assigned tasks by the end of this month.

Professors Jophus Anamuah Mensah and Peter French have been appointed as Technical Advisors/Consultants and are providing technical support to the four committees, and will also support various units of the University in the restructuring of their academic programmes to fit into a well-functioning collegiate system. The consultants are expected to lead in the design of the appropriate administrative structures for each college with a view to minimizing cost in their operations, smoothing relationships with the central administration and ensuring internal cohesion in the administration and management of colleges.

The committees are working with the Change Management Team to ensure a gradual transition to the collegiate system starting from the 2013/2014 academic year, with fully functioning decentralized units expected to take off at the beginning of the 2014/2015 academic year.

### **Strategic Plan**

It has been largely agreed that the way forward for the University of Ghana, in the light of the changing environment for higher education in Ghana, is to become a research university, and work is being done towards formulating a new strategic plan for the University, which will have this direction as its main focus.

It is expected that the strategic plan to guide the University's future growth and development will be launched next month. When ready, the plan will provide the benchmark for future monitoring and evaluation of the University's projects and activities.

## **ACADEMIC AFFAIRS**

### **Admissions**

We have started the process for 2013/2014 admissions, and are prepared for the daunting task of offering admission to applicants from two cohorts of Senior High School graduates: the last batch of students who undertook the programme in four years, and the first batch of the reintroduced three-year programme. We will do our best to admit as many qualified applicants as we can, but we do not intend to go back on the measures we put in place a few years ago to decongest our halls of residence and lecture halls in order to offer places to the increased number of applicants. That would be defeating our attempts to turn the University of Ghana into a world class institution and to give our students the excellent learning and living environment that they deserve. This is the difficult situation we find ourselves in, but we are committed to working together with other stakeholders to ensure that our young men and women coming out of senior high school later this year do not face untold hardship while trying to further their education. One of the proposals that might be considered by Government is to provide financial support to eligible young applicants admitted into private universities.

### **Affiliate Institutions**

We are working to assist the 22 institutions that are affiliated with the University of Ghana build their capacity. We have held various discussions with them, and recently organized a workshop that brought together decision makers of these institutions to discuss among other things, policies concerning quality assurance, admissions, new programmes and infrastructure.

These institutions go through stringent mentoring processes to ensure that their standards are at the highest level, and their products can rub shoulders with students from any part of the world, and we call on government to assist them to enable them continue to offer quality education to thousands of young people.

## **Restructuring of PhD programmes**

We continue to work on restructuring our PhD programmes and have approved a number of the new programmes this semester. Most departments are, however, planning towards rolling out programmes under the new structure at the beginning of the 2013/2014 academic year. The new structure is aimed at ensuring that our students perform better in research methodology, clarity of data collected, do better data analysis and provide more in-depth discussion in their theses. Professor Yaa Ntiamoah Baidu has been appointed as Coordinator at the Graduate School to provide technical assistance in the management of the new PhD programme and also provide advice to departments on how to structure their PhD programmes in line with the new policy.

## **New Programmes**

A number of new programmes have been approved at both the undergraduate and post graduate levels recently. These include:

- Bachelor of Science programmes in Information Technology, Actuarial Science, and Agricultural Extension;
- a Masters' programme in Climate Change and Sustainable Development, which will receive support from the Open Society Foundation, under the University of Ghana project: Building Capacity for Climate Change. The goal of the programme is to produce much needed climate expertise and invigorate research in the areas of climate change assessment, adaptation and mitigation, and
- a Masters' programme in Research and Public Policy, which is a collaborative programme in social science research for public policy with 15 other African universities, and coordinated by the Partnership for African Social and Governance Research (PASGR). Funding for the

programme is to be provided by the United Kingdom Department for International Development.

### **Diploma Programmes**

The University of Ghana has decided to phase out all diploma programmes. This will be done over the next four years. It is our understanding that such diploma programmes can be very well run by other tertiary institutions, including the polytechnics. This is also in line with our stated objective of focusing more and more on post-graduate training. The last admissions to diploma programmes at the University of Ghana will be in the 2015/2016 academic year.

### **Undergraduate Degree Classification System**

Ladies and gentlemen, you might recall that at the start of the 2010/2011 academic year, the University introduced a new structure for its undergraduate degree programmes, key features of which were that all of a students' work is taken into consideration in the determination of his or her final class of degree. Another major feature was the introduction of what we call University Required Courses, which are in-depth general education courses which all undergraduate students are required to take as part of their programmes. After operating this system for two years, we have reviewed it and examined some of the challenges faced by students and staff, particularly with the new grading system, and the degree classification system.

In order to better deliver classifications that are representative of the academic performance of our students, the Academic Board has approved the revision of the undergraduate degree classification system to take effect starting from those students who entered Level 100 in the 2010/2011 academic year. We will

continue to periodically review the new structure as we go on, to ensure that the efforts of our students are properly recognized.

### **Internationalization**

Ladies and gentlemen, internationalization has become an integral part of higher education, with numbers of international students and faculty now featuring in university rankings. It is therefore imperative that the University better defines what it hopes to achieve through internationalization, and strategically plans towards the resources and partnerships required for this, and how to manage them. To this end, a committee to formulate a policy on internationalization for the University has been set up, chaired by Professor Chris Gordon. The Committee has been charged to develop policies and strategies that will help renew the interest of international students in the University and also help feed the University's broader goal of achieving higher international students' participation in its programmes.

The Committee is also expected to deliberate on ways to offer training to individuals on how to manage international affairs, advise University management on becoming relevant in global affairs and organize conferences and workshops which will offer students an opportunity to network internationally.

### **65<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS**

Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, you may recall that the University's 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations were officially launched at the beginning of the year, and I will outline some of the activities that will take place during the year-long celebrations. A special feature of the anniversary year will be the Readers

Project, a Carnegie Foundation-funded project that is aimed at enhancing the quality of teaching at the University and students' access to published historical material. There will be a number of discipline-specific Readers that will contain a collection of short essays that will portray changing perspectives in the specific discipline over the last 60 years, and also bring into focus homegrown learning experiences. The project is being coordinated by a team headed by Professor Mary Esther Kropp Dakubu, and is shaping up nicely. We expect the Readers to be completed before the end of the year, and I encourage all of you to take the time to go through as many of the Readers as you can when they are completed, as they promise to offer a depth of knowledge on the changes which different disciplines have gone through over the years.

Other activities during the anniversary celebrations will be lectures, open days, international conferences and interactions with different groups of alumni. I would like to invite all of you to actively participate in the programmes when they are advertised.

### **Aggrey-Fraser-Guggisberg Lectures**

Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, Professor Thandika Mkandawire, the first person to be appointed to the new chair in African Development at the London School of Economics (LSE) and also the Olof Palme Professor for Peace at the Institute for Future Studies in Stockholm, Sweden, has accepted our invitation to deliver the 2013 Aggrey- Fraser-Guggisberg Memorial Lectures from April 17-19, 2013. Professor Mkandawire is also a former Director of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development.

### **Honorary Degrees**

Also as part of the anniversary celebrations, a special congregation will be held on April 19<sup>th</sup> to award honorary degrees to various individuals who have distinguished themselves in their fields of endeavour.

I invite all of you to the various programmes that will take place as part of the anniversary celebrations.

## **INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT**

The University is working with consultants to select investors through the Public-Private Partnership to undertake various projects on our campuses. The projects include the completion of the University's sports stadium, the construction of a modern private hospital and diagnostic centre, the development of a public transport system for staff and students, construction of a shopping arcade and commercial centre, staff housing development, rehabilitation of dining halls, the provision of student catering services and the management of roads and car parks.

In the near future, we intend to revamp our infrastructure with some new GETfund projects, including new buildings for the proposed College of Humanities, the Institute of Applied Science and Technology and a Central Administration Annex. We will also soon begin work on the extension of the buildings housing the School of Pharmacy and the small animal hospital.

Projects currently being undertaken include the re-roofing and re-wiring of all staff housing units. We have also begun work on the asphaltic resealing and tolling of selected roads on the Legon campus, and it is expected that work, which started recently, will be completed within six months.

Mr Chairman, over the last five years the University of Ghana constructed four additional halls of residence at a cost of GHC43 million. This was done with a loan facility provided by a consortium of banks. I am happy to announce that, as part of government's strong desire to improve the quality of education at Ghana's premier university, the Government of Ghana has agreed to take over the loan facility and service the principal and interest accrued. The University of Ghana is very grateful to the Government of Ghana for this gesture.

### **600-Bed Teaching Hospital for University of Ghana**

Ladies and gentlemen, we performed late last year a ground-breaking ceremony for the construction of a 600-bed Teaching Hospital for the University. The \$175 million project, which is located close to the Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research, is being funded through a loan facility to the Government of Ghana. The Hospital will have state-of-the-art facilities for trauma and emergency services, heart surgery, medical imaging, and a heliport.

It is expected that the project, when completed, will enhance interaction between students and faculty of the College of Health Sciences and those in the rest of the University, and provide greater opportunity for inter-disciplinary research. The hospital will eventually be expanded into a 1,300-bed facility to ease the pressure on Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital.

On behalf of the University of Ghana I would like to thank the President and Government of Ghana for this significant investment in health education at the University.

### **64th Annual New Year School and Conference**

The 64th Annual New Year School and Conference has been held on the theme "The Key to Future Health of our Nation: Improved Water, Sanitation and

Hygiene”, with Dr. Joseph Siaw Agyepong, Executive Chairman of Zoomlion and Jospong Group of Companies delivering the keynote address.

Participants discussed how the nation can deal with the challenges of inadequate safe drinking water, poor sanitation conditions, inadequate hygiene education, poor physical planning strategies, indiscipline and lack of enforcement of sanitation laws among other things. Speakers at the School called for a drastic change in behaviours to ensure that Ghana does not miss the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) target for improved sanitation by 2015.

We are grateful to Zoom Alliance Company Limited, who supported the School and Conference with a gift of GH¢100,000.

### **STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND CAPACITY BUILDING**

Ladies and gentlemen, the University continues to build the capacity of its staff, both through its own efforts and with assistance from external bodies.

The Academic Quality Assurance Unit has intensified its education of lecturers to improve on their course delivery via the development of course outlines and lecture delivery plans for every semester by organizing training sessions for newly appointed lecturers in teaching and learning methods. This training is enhancing lecture delivery and examination systems in the University.

Four young members of faculty have received scholarship awards for PhD programmes from the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs under the Building Stronger Universities (BSU) initiative, which is a partnership between research and higher education institutions in developing countries and Danish universities.

The University, through the Office of Research, Innovation & Development continues to award Faculty Development Grants for PhD research to faculty, as part of its drive to ensure that all UG faculty hold a PhD or other terminal degree.

Participation in workshops organized by the University and its partners to develop the research and writing skills of faculty has been encouraging, and I encourage both 'old' and 'new' faculty to take part in these workshops when they are advertised.

### **Conference Grants**

The University of Ghana conference grant facility continues to award conference grants to enable faculty attend and present papers at various conferences. The total amount awarded since August 2012 is US\$18,000. In October 2012, the Office of Research, Innovation & Development (ORID) introduced a quarterly review and award system to ensure an equitable distribution and availability of funds for faculty to attend conferences. The system will address the challenge of funds allocated for conference grants being exhausted before the end of each academic year.

### **Research Grants**

A total of 17 grants were awarded in the Seed Fund, Investigator-led and Large Multi-disciplinary grant categories following the 5<sup>th</sup> Call for Proposals by ORID. A total amount of GHC566,044.30 was awarded to applicants.

### **Research Grants and Contracts**

The ORID External Funds Unit is currently administering a total of 47 research projects at various stages of completion across a number of disciplines. Notably, the University was part of two consortia that were selected to receive funding of 2 million Euro each under the EU funded Intra-ACP Academic Mobility Scheme. Implementation of the University's component of the projects is being coordinated by ORID, the Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research and the School of Graduate Studies.

## **Fund Raising**

The University is in the process of pursuing collections from firms and individuals that made financial pledges to the University during the homecoming celebrations in November 2011.

The Ghana Airports Company Limited has recently pledged to support the rehabilitation of the laboratories of the Department of Nutrition and Food Science with a donation of \$50,000. We are indeed grateful for this, and encourage other donors to assist us in our efforts to raise funds towards attaining world class status.

## **GRADUATION STATISTICS**

Mr. Chairman, 5046 students are graduating today at various levels. At the Bachelor's level, out of 4038 graduands, a total of 657 students representing 16.3 percent of the graduating class, obtained First Class Honours, 1181 or 29.2 percent Second Class Upper, 1711 or 42.4 percent Second Class Lower and 445 or 11 percent, Third Class.

As many as 24.4 percent of Diploma students obtained distinctions, with the remaining obtaining passes.

The 503 post-graduate graduands include 12 Doctor of Philosophy candidates, the majority of whom are University of Ghana faculty.

## **WELL WISHES TO GRADUANDS**

Let me once again congratulate all our graduands. As you go out into the world of work, I challenge you not to give up when you are faced with difficulties, but rather use the skills and training you have received at the University of Ghana to face your difficulties head-on and come up with creative solutions to them.

Endeavour to seek excellence and integrity wherever you find yourself, and to be disciplined and modest in all you do. Believing in yourself and having a can-do spirit is what will set you apart from others, and it is having that kind of mindset that will make you stand out and excel. Once again, congratulations and best wishes as you move on to the next phase of your lives.

Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, I thank you for your attention.

**Professor Ernest Aryeetey**  
**Saturday, March 9, 2013**