

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S ADDRESS AT CONGREGATION:
JULY 2013

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;
Pro-Vice-Chancellors;
Registrar;
Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps;
Colleague Vice-Chancellors;
Members of University Council and Members of Convocation;
Niimeɪ, Naameɪ, Nananom;
Graduating Students;
Parents and Guardians;
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen:

WELCOME

It is my pleasure to welcome all of you to today's graduation ceremony. You may recall that several months ago, the University of Ghana committed itself to graduating students in the same year that they complete their final examinations. We have finally been able to do this and are happy to be able to present, over the next two days, students from the faculties of Science and Engineering Sciences, the Schools of Nursing and Pharmacy, the University of Ghana Business School, the Distance Education programme and graduate students from across the University, all of whom completed their programmes this year. Another set of congregation ceremonies will be held in November. It is our hope that the smaller, more intimate ceremonies will enable us focus more on our graduating students.

As we move into the collegiate system, which I will talk about shortly, congregations will be organized by colleges, and each college will be

encouraged to incorporate its own individual identity into its graduation ceremony.

GOVERNANCE

Reappointment of Chancellor

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, I am happy to inform you that the University Council and the Academic Board have, through the Electoral College, approved a second term of office for our Chancellor, His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan. During his first term in office, Mr. Annan worked tirelessly to make the University more visible internationally, and spearheaded several initiatives which have significantly strengthened the research and teaching capacity of faculty as well as provided much needed infrastructure. We would like to congratulate our Chancellor on his reappointment, and look forward to several years of working together for the continuing growth of University of Ghana.

Collegiate System

The University Council has generally approved the recommendations of the Business and Executive Committee for the restructuring of the University of Ghana into four colleges. The recommendations were the outcome of several consultations that began with an initial set of recommendations submitted by Professor Jerome Djangmah and Mr Miguel Ribeiro. These recommendations were subjected to community-wide discussion and accepted by the Academic Board and University Council. The recommendations were further used by four University Restructuring Implementation Committees to propose the structure and composition of each college, in a process assisted by Professors Peter French and Jophus Anamuah-Mensah as Consultants. The four colleges are:

- College of Humanities
- College of Basic and Applied Sciences
- College of Education
- College of Health Sciences

Much work remains to be done, and the schedule for implementation of the collegiate system will be as follows:

The process of realizing the four colleges will begin from 1st August 2013 when Acting Provosts and College Secretaries will assume office. It is expected that between August 2013 and July 2014, these officials will oversee the setting up of the college structures, including the formation of statutory committees and boards, rationalization of academic programmes, the transfer and hiring of staff, preparation for admission of students, and the preparation of physical facilities for the colleges. The period will also see the review and adoption of the appropriate statutes to support the new structure of the University.

We will need the support of all stakeholders to ensure that the adoption of the collegiate system results in less bureaucracy, enhanced efficiency and effectiveness, and a level of uniformity in running the University.

Retirement of Registrar/ Appointment of New Registrar

The Registrar, Mr. Joseph Maafo Budu, retires from the University in a few days, on July 31. On behalf of management, and indeed the entire University, I would like to thank Mr. Budu for his service to the University of Ghana over the years, culminating in his appointment as Registrar in August 2009. As Registrar, he has ably led the administration of the University, and has worked hard with other members of management to steer the affairs of the University. We wish Mr. Budu

well in his future endeavours, and welcome Mrs. Mercy Haizel Ashia, who takes office as Registrar on August 1, 2013.

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, in the 2010/2011 academic year, the University introduced a new four-year undergraduate programme, which saw the introduction of mandatory University required courses, smaller class sizes, the reintroduction of interim assessment and the counting of all courses taken by students in the determination of their final grade point averages.

We are constantly engaged in reviewing the various aspects of the programme, and feedback indicates that staff and students are in support of the programme, and are working hard to ensure its success. A Committee tasked to examine the challenges of the new grading system, and the appropriateness of the classification system, recommended a revision of the undergraduate degree classification, which proposal has been approved by the Academic Board. The ranges for classification for undergraduate degrees have therefore been revised, to ensure that the performance of students is adequately represented.

Another major part of the new programme is to improve conditions for teaching and learning and to upgrade the facilities for delivering these. The University has significantly increased equipment purchases for teaching units, and also spent large amounts in improving facilities in the halls of residence.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, in a few months we will begin undergraduate admissions, and look forward to welcoming a new batch of students, many of whom completed their Senior High School programmes only a few months ago. While we are committed to offering admission to as many

qualified applicants as we can, we also owe it to our students to ensure that they study and live in a conducive environment. We will do all we can to admit as many undergraduate and graduate students as our facilities will appropriately support.

We have been working with our affiliate institutions to ensure that they have the requisite faculty strength and facilities to offer quality tuition and learning experiences for younger students. I once again call on government to provide more meaningful support to private tertiary institutions in the country to enable them offer quality education to young people desirous of continuing their education.

Transforming Legon into a Research University

As part of the 65th anniversary celebrations of the University, a workshop was organized on the theme 'Transforming Legon into a Research University'. The workshop which was attended by stakeholders from within and outside the University, provided an opportunity for the Government of Ghana, represented by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, to commit to a transformation of the University of Ghana into a research university. The workshop was designed to open discussions with Government on how to position the University of Ghana to play a newer and more relevant role for an accelerated transformation of Ghana for the future. The Government of Ghana was called upon to support the initiative of transforming Legon into a research university and this was done by Government.

As a Research University greater emphasis will be placed on post-graduate work and a significantly increased amount of rigorous research. It is proposed to achieve a ratio of 50:50 between regular under-graduate and post-graduate students over the next decade. That is why graduate admissions will be

increased by 15 percent in the next academic year. This will be enhanced by the establishment of colleges, putting together large research projects in related disciplines, as well as systems of recognition to ensure that our programmes are comparable to others throughout the world. This will be done through:

- Collaboration with other universities
- Establishing and joining research networks
- Establishing competitive research studentships
- Creating a greater focus on inter-disciplinary research; and
- Placing more emphasis on research in high-impact areas which will help us reach our goals as a University and as a nation.

The University will focus on four thematic areas by developing centres of excellence for them. The four areas are:

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

Research universities are generally expensive but essential for the transformation of any society and economy. We have placed before the Ghana Government our essential requirements for financial assistance in this endeavour and have made a very strong case for that. We will also soon embark on a significant capital drive to mobilize resources for this endeavour.

Restructuring PhD Programmes

In line with the move towards becoming a research university, with its greater emphasis on post graduate training and research, starting in the 2013/2014 academic year, PhD programmes in the University will have a new format. Some features of the new-format PhDs include the possible admission of first degree holders into MPhil/PhD programmes; the introduction of comprehensive examinations before research work begins; the introduction of compulsory course work; a year of practical research training and the formal presentation of thesis proposals. The restructuring seeks to address concerns about the quality, methodological and analytical rigour, and the theoretical depth of the University's PhD programmes. It will lead to a significant increase in the numbers graduating without massification and also provide a clear schedule for the completion of PhD work. The University will provide facilities, resources and faculty development to deliver the high quality PhD output expected. All PhD programmes will be run through international partnerships as part of the internationalization drive, and will actively canvass for international students.

45 PhD programmes under the new structure have been provisionally approved and are ready to take off in the 2013/2014 academic year. The University expects to graduate more than 200 PhDs in another four years. I am confident that with hard work and dedication, the University of Ghana will be able to train a new breed of academics, who are more analytical, and better placed to make an impact in research and teaching at all of Ghana's universities and beyond, while making important contributions to national and international development.

RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The Office of Research, Innovation and Development (ORID) continues to engage in activities that will promote research in the University.

UG Funded Research Grants:

Since the 2008-2009 academic year, GHC 2,257,394 has been awarded as research grants from the University's Internally Generated Funds. Recently, following the 6th Call for proposals, 24 awards totalling GHC 669,862 were made to faculty members in the seed fund, investigator-led and large multi-disciplinary categories. University Management is committed to providing the equivalent of \$500,000 to the pot of funds available under these categories of grants each year.

Intellectual Property and Ethics Policies are being drafted, and are expected to be approved and become operational within the next academic year. It is expected that with the introduction of these policies there will be a clearer framework for the use of University intellectual property for the benefit of society, and for maintaining the highest ethical standards in the activities of all persons connected to the University of Ghana.

Staff Development

A total of 11 UG Faculty Development awards totalling GHC147, 474 were awarded as PhD support grants to faculty members for the 2012-2013 academic year.

The Carnegie Corporation of New York provided additional funding to the University of Ghana in October 2012 for the 2nd Phase of the "Next Generation of Academics in Africa" project. The project will provide support for both MPhil and PhD scholarships as well as continue the implementation of the Diaspora Linkage Programme. The first call for PhD scholarships under the 2nd Phase was

made in January 2013 and the awards for three beneficiaries have been processed.

In October 2012, the University of Ghana, in partnership with the University of Cambridge, UK and Makerere University, Uganda, began the implementation of the Cambridge Africa Partnership for Research Excellence (CAPREx) Project. The project is funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York and aims at reinforcing the existing strategies employed by the African partners to enhance research activities and thereby promote faculty retention. The main beneficiaries of the project at UG are the Faculty of Science, Faculty of Engineering Sciences and ORID - through the provision of post-doctoral research fellowships and research management fellowships. Seven faculty members have been selected as the first cohort to benefit from the Fellowships after going through a competitive application process.

Five graduate students, from the Department of Accounting (UGBS) and the Department of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness (CACS) have been selected as beneficiaries for the 2012-2013 Bromkamp Endowment awards. The award is valid for a two year period and has a total value of USD 4,000.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENTS

Roads

The asphaltic re-sealing of selected roads on the Legon campus is in progress. It is expected that the project will be completed in the next few weeks. Upon completion of the project, all entry points to the University will have toll booths for the purpose collecting tolls from road users. The funds raised from this will be

used for the servicing of the debt incurred for the reconstruction and for the regular maintenance of roads on campus into the future.

Wi-Fi Internet Access

University Management has made it a policy to introduce Wi-Fi internet access to all student rooms in each residential facility. Within the scope of a Chinese Government assisted project, fibre optic cables have been laid around the campus. The University has additionally acquired 165 Wi-Fi Access Points through internally generated funds. Within the 2nd Phase of the Chinese project, the University will expand Wi-Fi connection to the Korle-Bu and Accra City Campuses as well as complete the extension on the main campus.

The aim is to ensure access throughout the University before the start of the next academic year. In line with this initiative, University of Ghana Computing Systems (UGCS) is in the process of training its personnel in large scale Wi-Fi expansion. These are welcome developments as we move towards increased use of electronic resources for all functions within and across the University.

Buildings

In view of the challenges the University has faced in accessing GETFund facilities for its infrastructure developments over the past three years, the University is committing itself to looking elsewhere for additional support to complete three buildings as soon as possible. These are the Faculty of Arts Building, the School of Performing Arts Building and the School of Allied Health Sciences Building. We also plan to raise additional resources to complete the Multi-purpose Lecture Theatre which originally began with support from Ghana

Commercial Bank. With the support of our students through a Development Levy we hope to complete work on these projects without further delay.

65TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS OF THE UNIVERSITY

As you may recall, the 65th anniversary celebrations of the University were launched last year. Activities marking the anniversary include symposia, homecoming events at Faculty and Department levels, as well as various University-wide events. Let me talk briefly here about some of the highlights of the celebrations so far.

2013 Aggrey Fraser Guggisberg Memorial Lectures

The 2013 Aggrey-Fraser-Guggisberg Memorial Lectures under the theme “Beyond Recovery” were delivered from April 17-19 by Professor Thandika Mkandawire, the first Chair in African Development at the London School of Economics. In the well attended lecture series, Professor Mkandawire traced Africa’s beleaguered attempts at growth and development since the independence era, the attempts at recovery and the road to sustained development.

Special Congregation

A Special Congregation to confer honorary degrees on 17 personalities who have distinguished themselves in various fields of endeavour was held on April 19, this year.

At the ceremony, which was presided over by the Chancellor, His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, the 17 honorees were awarded Doctor of Letters, Doctor of Science and Doctor of Law degrees in the following categories: Distinguished Scholarship, Contribution to Tertiary Education, Alumni of whom the University

is especially proud, and Contribution to Industry. Two former Vice-Chancellors; Professors Kwadwo Asenso-Okyere and Clifford Tagoe, as well as the Aggrey-Fraser-Guggisberg Memorial Lecturer: Professor Thandika Mkandawire also received honorary degrees.

Readers Project

The Readers Project is intended to showcase the growth in thinking in various disciplines at Legon over the years through publications. The Readers are expected to show how disciplines have evolved in the University over the last 65 years and the contributions of Legon scholars to that evolution.

Emerita Professor Mary Esther Kropp Dakubu is the Project Coordinator for the project. She is also responsible for the Arts submissions. She is assisted by Professor Ama de-Graft Aikins who oversees the Social Sciences, Professor Charles Mate-Kole has responsibility for the Clinical Sciences and Professor Kwadwo Koram for the non-Clinical Sciences. Drafts for 34 books have been received so far, and are in various stages of review. The coordinators expect that at least 20 Readers will be published before the end of the year. When completed this will be the most significant initiative at book publication in any African university ever. They should provide very useful reading material for our students and other African students. The Readers Project is being financed largely from the University's Internally Generated Funds as well as a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York.

GRADUATION STATISTICS

Mr. Chairman, 2080 students are graduating this July at various levels. At the Bachelor's level, a total of 252 students representing 14.2 percent of the

graduating class, obtained First Class Honours, 475 or 26.7 percent Second Class Upper, 911 or 51.2 percent Second Class Lower and 136 or 7.6 percent, Third Class.

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

The 230 post-graduate graduands include 26 Doctor of Philosophy candidates.

WELL WISHES TO GRADUANDS

Now, to the graduating students! We wish you well as you graduate today and begin the next stage of your lives. For many of you, today will bring mixed emotions. Most of you entered this institution barely out of your teens; you have gone through the challenges of pursuing a university education, and in the process, you have grown up and become the confident young men and women graduating today. We know that it has not been easy for you, and you might have faced numerous obstacles along the way. Yes, there were challenges; but the fact that you are seated here today waiting to be graduated and to receive your certificate means that you managed to overcome these, and were able to make it. This should teach you an important lesson that will serve you well, wherever you may find yourself: there will always be challenges in life, and what will determine the direction your life will take is how you confront the obstacles, what you make of them, and the steps you take to turn these into situations that will work to your benefit.

It is tough to be a young person today, yet some young people have made it to the top of their chosen professions, and I am certain that the University of Ghana has imbibed in you the discipline, hard work and a can-do attitude that you will

need to make it. Our advice is that you should get your priorities right, and use your resources and energies on pursuits that will be of benefit to you personally and to society at large. Think about how you can become the instrument for bringing a better life to others.

Your graduation makes you alumni of the University of Ghana, and I trust that wherever you find yourselves, you will be good ambassadors for the University, and give a good account of the academic, moral and social training you have received during your stay here. We look forward to welcoming many of you back in the not-too-distant future, for further studies, and as faculty members or administrators; and we hope that you will always continue to closely identify with this institution that has played a major role in shaping you as a person.

You the members of the graduating class, your parents, guardians and teachers have sacrificed so much to make this day possible, and I know that each and every one of you will continue to make all of us proud.

Once again, do accept our congratulations and best wishes for all your future endeavours.

Thank you and enjoy the rest of the ceremony.

Professor Ernest Aryeetey
July 25, 2013