

VALEDICTORY SPEECH
BY AMANDA A. A. AWADEY

Look and see that God is good..!!

I woke up this morning and I knew that as I walked up and across the dais with all my colleagues, a new dimension of life had just begun for us. One, which would require that we harness all the skills and knowledge we have acquired and honed on campus to our fullest ability. Our time here was not an end in itself but a means to an end - a training ground. Andy McIntyre once said, "If you think education is expensive, try ignorance."

Chairman of the University Council, Vice-Chancellor, members of the University Council, Pro-Vice-Chancellors, the Registrar, Niime, Naamei, members of the Diplomatic Corps, members of Convocation, fellow graduands, distinguished ladies and gentlemen. It is my singular pleasure to represent the 2014 year group as we reach this checkpoint in our lives and march on into the world.

Approximately 2,160,000 minutes ago, many of us walked onto this campus for the very first time with so much excitement and expectation. This was against the backdrop of diverse experiences and news our friends, family, and social media had relayed to us. If any of us had been asked what exactly gave us the bubbly feeling, we would have been dumbfounded and looked at the person in shock. The answer must have been obvious, we would have thought. We were on campus! As honoured members of the Junior Common Room of this prestigious university.

Fellow graduands, the friendships we have developed here are invaluable so let's cherish them. We started together and unfortunately lost a few along the way, but we console ourselves with the fulfilling times we shared when they were with us.

Lectures began. We went to our classes for the very first time, eagerly strutting along towards the lecture halls, where we were confronted with the fact that this

was a whole new ball game. A more exacting curriculum, a whole new register of words and definitely more members in a class and always that one person usually, who managed to stand out on the first day. For each of our eight semesters on campus, we saw the examination timetable sheets change from white to pink and then finally to green. Through this, we learnt that you had to work hard and juggle your time really well. Dreaming your semester away was not an option. You would not want to be left standing behind a lecturer's door because you were 10 minutes late in submitting a term paper. For some of us, it didn't come so easy to fully adjust. But the evidence is clear by our presence here. Just like the computer game Mortal Kombat, it wasn't a flawless victory, but we can confidently say that we have fought the good fight and we have run the race to the finish.

Though we worked hard at our studies, we tried to balance it with some fun and boy the Vandals really spiked it up!! We interacted with people from varied backgrounds and this variety spiced up our lives and broadened our social network to our advantage. Unlike the close control we experienced in our senior high schools, the freedom and independence that tertiary education offered, allowed us to spread our wings and explore, which we did, tempering it with wisdom. I am sure we will all miss the atmosphere on campus when the football season begins, especially with the Barclays Premiership. Times at Legon Hall Annex A or Tyme-Out where die-hard fans cheered for their favourite teams; An all-time favourite was the special boxing match between Bukom Banku and Ayitey Powers where even the ladies joined. We will never forget the long queues at the night market when the lights went off and the special lady who served a favourite meal for many guys.

I like to think of our year group as a special year. In our first year, the new grading system was introduced along with UGRCs which were initially difficult to adapt to, but we overcame.. Oh yes we did! Then in our second year, there was the decongestion exercise with the opening of the new halls of residence popularly known as the Diaspora. In our third year, there was the possibility of a meal plan being rolled out and lastly in our final year, the asphaltting of roads on campus. Just

as new structures were introduced on campus, so also have we evolved over the four years. Fellow graduands, take a moment to recollect when we first came in, and you would acknowledge that we have been transformed, most likely, increased in maturity and the quality of our decision-making improved. With the passage of time, we have gained certain rights, which however come with responsibilities. As mature people, let us embrace both.

Right after here, there will be a time of celebration and merry making for most of us and rightly so. Then, some of us would finish outstanding graduate school applications and prepare to pack our bags to travel far and near into a whole new environment and level of learning. Some would want to work and earn a livelihood, while others would get married and start families. Whichever way we go, whatever we find ourselves doing, let's ensure that we are doing our best. Why be mediocre just because everyone seems to be, when you have it in you to do over and above what you are doing now? Why wait for someone else to initiate progressive change when you had an idea first which just could have been a better solution? Let's go out there and leave a mark- an indelible mark. Gathered in here is a graduating year of 4,172 stars who can go out there and change the world. With our nation in real need of well-informed and dexterous human capital, we can contribute in remedying some of the inefficiencies in the system.

The time has come for us to look beyond this university and into the outside world. It's a tough and daunting world out there. Let's promise to be diligent in all we do, have integrity and persevere while we do it, live the life and be happy. We will make mistakes that's for sure, we may have fears but let us not give up because courage is not the absence of fear but the ability to pursue our goals in spite of our fears. I once saw an inscription that said, 'Do not let the fear of striking out keep you from playing the game.' I want to be a catalyst of change - I can, You can, Yes we can...!!

THANK YOU AND GOD BLESS US ALL