

**VALEDICTORY SPEECH BY Ms. MELODY ASARE (BSc.
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Chairman of Council,
Vice-Chancellor,
Pro Vice-Chancellors,
Registrars,
Guest Speaker,
Members of Convocation,
Invited Guests,
Fellow Graduands,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

A fortnight ago when I was called forth to the Dean's office, I least expected it was geared toward my standing here today to deliver the valedictory speech for the class of 2014, considering the succession of failures I have experienced in recent times but guess who else failed? Abraham Lincoln-he failed in business, lost his better half at a tender age, had a nervous breakdown, defeated in eight elections, yet became the 16th president of America; Albert Einstein-was regarded as being "mentally slow, unsociable, and adrift forever in foolish dreams"- yet against all odds, won the Nobel prize in physics; Walt Disney-faced ejection from his newspaper firm due to speculations that he lacked talent, originality and creativity, his concept of the Disney land was rejected by the city of Anaheim, went bankrupt several times, yet became one of the biggest creators on earth. So in the end, the words of Aaron Sorkin are confirmed, that "we must take the risks, we must dare to fail, and remember that the first to get through the wall always gets hurt".

I perceive the outflow of emotions as I stare at the crowd before me, the pride filled in the eyes of family and friends, the sense of achievement by fellow graduands. It was just yesterday when we all gathered for a ceremony like this-our matriculation and today we are all seated again, albeit for a life-determining purpose-our graduation, although not as a whole. We forever hold dear our fellow mates who left us for other places, and those who met the unfortunate incidence of repeat along the way. But we are most grateful to the Almighty that our souls were not snatched by the cold hands of death.

Our walk through the premier university has indeed been an indelible one. Our diligence and drive determined our fate and we knew that for sure. We fought through all odds to make it to the all "prestigious" health field, from the biological science program in first year. It was our champion's league and many resorted to

long hours of studying and solitary in order to be accepted into the College of Health Sciences.

Second year was not any less dramatic. Our daily bus escapades saw to the leaving behind of many. I for one was regular and it is certain that the university owes me transportation balance since for the better part, I journeyed on my own to Korle-Bu campus. We do reminisce the arduous lessons like the anatomy we practiced with those cadavers and their awful formalin smell, the all experimental physiology practical, our very interesting biomath and stats class with our lecturer DNA who read a sensual meaning to every harmless sentence, just to mention a few. We had to part ways for our various departments but we did experience the beauty of reunion in our final year.

The journey was not all rosy. For most of us, we reached the stage where a mere pass in subjects like pathology and biochemistry was all we prayed for. Many of us experienced the scare of resit and the uncertainty of its outcome, but the Lord has been faithful indeed. Being here today proves that we are not the product of those circumstances, but that of our aspirations and hard work.

Beyond academic pursuits, we had some fun times-our sporting activities with neighboring schools in the college, the fun trips, the exciting health week celebrations and we boldly lift our heads up high for being the batch with the most intriguing and well-organized health week celebration-a record worth emulating by the coming year groups.

All in all we lived the moments, we served our purpose, we did what we could, with what we had, where we were and today, we are not just graduating with a degree, but we are graduating with a mission to serve. We may not be remembered for that which we possessed, but certainly we will be remembered for the lives we touched.

Maya Angelou once said, "But nobody, nobody can make it out here alone" and to our family and friends present here today, we want you to know that we could not have survived out there without you. With your fervent prayers, love and support, the journey was pleasurable indeed. To our lecturers, friends and all else whose sacrifices brought us this far, we are truly grateful. I specially wish to acknowledge my parents for their relentless drive to educate me and the lifelong morals they have instilled in me. I owe it all to them.

Mr. Chairman, before I step down, I would like to sign off with some wise words by Richard M. Nixon to live by;

"Never let your head hang down,

Never give up and sit to grieve,

Find another way.

And don't pray when it rains if you don't pray when the sun shines".

Class of 2014, if Abraham Lincoln, Albert Einstein and Walt Disney defied all odds to achieve their dreams, then it's time to go out there and make an impact. It's that

time to throw our hats in the air, say farewell to the premier university and hello to our prospective futures. We are the class of 2014.

THANK YOU