

**VICE-CHANCELLOR'S ADDRESS
NOVEMBER 2019 CONGREGATION CEREMONY
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES**

Chancellor
Chairman and Members of Council,
Pro-Vice Chancellors,
Registrar,
Provosts and Deans,
Guest Speaker,
Chairman and Members of Advisory Board of the College of Humanities,
Members of Convocation,
Staff and Students,
Alumni,
Graduands,
Invited Guests,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning!

It is my pleasure to welcome you all to the November Congregation Ceremonies for the 2018/2019 cohort.

The State of the University

Academic Affairs of the University

Admissions

The University of Ghana enrolled a total of **18,212** (Eighteen Thousand, Two Hundred and Twelve) applicants, made up of **15,167** undergraduate and **3,045** graduate students into various programmes mounted at its campuses in the 2019/2020 academic year. The total enrolment this year shows a ratio of female to male of **51:49**, which implies that 9,288 females enrolled compared with 8,924 males. By this feat, the University has already exceeded its target of achieving female to male enrolment ratio of 50:50 by 2020.

Accommodation

The University's capacity to undertake any further investments to augment the housing stock has largely been impeded by judgment debts and other financial obligations. The University, therefore, has for some time now decoupled admission from accommodation. University admission is, therefore, not linked to the provision of beds and students have had to compete for the few beds on a first-come basis.

Towards addressing the accommodation challenge, and in anticipation of the influx of the first cohort of graduates from the free senior high school policy, management is considering various approaches towards improving the situation. Currently, the University of Ghana's Land Lease Committee is in negotiation with a number of private bodies to expand housing options on campus. The Student Representative Council of the University has also initiated a process of embarking on a 2500-bed capacity hostel project.

Worthy of note is that on Wednesday, November 6, 2019, a sod-cutting ceremony was held for the construction of a state-of-the-art annex facility for Commonwealth Hall by the Old Vandals Association (OVA) and their partners, KPMM Civils Limited with a possible completion of the first phase (2500 beds) within one year. This project is expected to deliver fully-furnished 4660-beds facility, made up of 302 one-bed block, 552 two-bed block, 3806 four-bed block, 32 two-bedroom lecturers flats, among others.

Affiliation of Six Colleges of Education to University of Ghana

Madam Chancellor, as you may be aware, the Government of Ghana has initiated policy reforms in teacher education to improve the quality of teaching and learning at basic schools. As part of the reform, all 46 public Colleges of Education are being converted into University Colleges of Education of public Universities that train teachers through a special affiliation agreement for a transitional period of four years to deliver the new four-year B.Ed. curriculum.

This agreement is expected to guarantee the institutional integration of Colleges into their affiliated Universities.

In consonance with the above, six Public Colleges of Education have been assigned to the University of Ghana with effect from October 2019. The Colleges are Accra College of Education, Enchi College of Education, Evangelical Presbyterian College of Education at Amedzofe, Peki College of Education, Gbewaa College of Education at Pusiga, and Mount Mary College of Education at Somanya.

Strategic Directions

Madam Chancellor, strategic teams were set up in November 2016 to drive the transformational agenda of the University of Ghana.

The Independent Power Supply Team is spearheading the effort to re-condition the biogas plant at Hilla Limann Hall to generate gas for the four new Halls.

Through the instrumentality Team, the Chief Executive Officer of Virtual Security Africa (VSA)/Aventura has made a commitment to supply, install and commission a solar backed CCTV Surveillance System at the University of Ghana. The initiative forms part of the corporate social responsibility of the company and the personal capacity of the CEO as an alumnus of the University. The University is grateful to VSA for this noble gesture.

As part of the efforts of the team, the University recently gave approval for Bui Power Project to undertake geological and geotechnical surveys, and transmission right of way needed to conclude the feasibility studies for a proposed 2.5 Mw solar project.

The Green Team Project is also advancing on its mandate of increasing tree density, ensuring green coverage of campus grounds, developing paved walkways and improving waste management. The Team has also earmarked a number of activities on the main campus this year. The University of Ghana

Plastic Recycling Project's (UGPRP) effort at institutionalizing source segregation of waste in the university community is commendable. So far, it is estimated that about 23 metric tons of plastic waste has been collected and transferred for recycling. The recycling project is spearheaded by students.

Fundraising Strategy to Modernize Laboratories and Research Facilities at the University of Ghana

Distinguished Guest, a fundraising strategy to modernize laboratories and research facilities at the University of Ghana has been developed by the Laboratory Modernization Implementation Committee as part of the Strategic Initiatives. Establishing state-of-the-art laboratories and developing world-class facilities at UG will help bridge and better link theory and practice. A well-resourced University with modern facilities for research can help deliver and advance Ghana's national agenda of self-sustaining development, as well as meet the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and Africa's Agenda 2063. It is expected that all stakeholders will join our four-year fund-raising campaign to mobilize the target of US\$ 500 million needed to modernize our laboratories when the initiative is rolled out later this year.

Research Grants

Madam Chancellor, the Office of Research, Innovation, and Development (ORID, is spearheading the University's vision of becoming a world-class research-intensive institution. For the 2018-2019 academic year, the Office processed about 81 research grant agreements with a total grant value of over US\$ 42.5 m (Forty-two Million and Five Hundred Thousand United States Dollars). This represents an over 1,000% (one thousand percent) increase in grant revenue over the last three academic years.

African Centres of Excellence (ACE) Projects

Madam Chancellor, I am happy to report that during the year under review, the University of Ghana won funding to set up three Centres of Excellence under a funding arrangement by the government of Ghana and the World Bank. These Centres are part of the Africa Centres of Excellence II. They are:

1. The Africa Center for Excellence for Agricultural Innovation and Entrepreneurship.
2. The Africa Center of Excellence for Genetic Medicine.
3. The West African Centre for Cell Biology of Infectious and Non-Communicable Diseases (WACCBIP & NCDs).

The establishment of these centres will go a long way to dedicate funding for research and for the training of PhDs in Agriculture, Public Health and Medicine.

Allegations of Sexual Harassment

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, following the recent media reports of alleged sexual harassment cases involving some faculty of the University, Management has taken steps to enforce its Anti-Sexual Harassment regulations. Following the broadcast, Management set up a five-member Fact-finding Committee chaired by Her Ladyship Justice (Rtd) Vida Akoto-Bamfo to conduct an inquiry into the matter.

I am happy to inform you that the Committee submitted its report to me on Tuesday, 12th November 2019. Management will, therefore, study the report and ensure implementation of the recommendations using the appropriate adjudicatory processes stipulated under the Basic law and policies of the University.

Meanwhile, the University has created an e-mail address and a dedicated phone number to facilitate and create easy avenues through which all such sexual harassment cases may be reported. We particularly encourage people who may

have fallen victim to such unfortunate incidents to take advantage to report them for redress.

In response to the ongoing discussion on how to tackle sexual harassment issues, going forward, the Centre for Gender Studies and Advocacy (CEGENSA) has been tasked to lead in developing a training programme to educate members of the UG community on what constitutes harassment. It is envisaged that in the not too distant future, every employee of the University of Ghana would be trained in understanding what constitutes sexual and gender harassment and how to respond to it, either as a perpetrator or a victim. Once the framework is developed, it is proposed that the training would be available both online and in other formats and will also be extended to students.

We are counting on CEGENSA to consult widely and come up with a training programme that is suitable for the University of Ghana, and which will deal decisively with the issues relating to sexual harassment.

Financial Aid to Students

Ladies and Gentlemen, the students' Financial Aid Office has made it possible for less endowed but brilliant students to have equal access to quality education at the University of Ghana. I am glad to note that there has been an increase in donations from approximately GH¢1,000,000.00 (One Million Ghana Cedis) in the 2016-2017 academic year to approximately GH¢3,000,000.00 (Three Million Ghana Cedis) in 2017/18 academic year. This represents a 155% increase over the previous year.

During the period under review, a total of Six Hundred and Fourteen Students (614) out of Nine Hundred and Twenty (920) applicants were awarded Scholarships. This represents 66.7% of all Scholarship applicants.

Sporting Activities

The University of Ghana Policy on the Admission of Athlete Students (UG-PAAS), which was launched in the 2014/2015 academic year forms part of a broader UG Sports strategy. So far, a total of **Three Hundred and Fifty-Eight** (358) student-athletes have been admitted through the policy. **One Hundred and Ten** (110) females and **Two Hundred and Forty-Eight** (248) males.

Already, the UG-PAAS Policy has yielded some significant results. I am pleased to report that **Mr. Benjamin Azameti**, a level 300 Marine & Fisheries Science student of the University of Ghana is the fastest human in Ghana and a current 4x100 African gold medalist. Worthy of mention is **Ms. Grace Obour**, a level 100 Sports and Education student who is the 400 metres champion in Ghana, the 6th best in Africa and the 42nd ranked in the world. Similarly, the University's **male basketball team** has remained unbeaten in Ghana, West Africa, and Africa since 2013.

Well wishes to Graduands

To you, ladies and gentlemen of the graduating class, as we celebrate this milestone with you, I would like to conclude with the words of Winston Churchill: *Success is walking from failure to failure with no loss of enthusiasm.*

I, therefore, pray that your commitment to obtaining knowledge does not end with your graduation but that you will continue to seek knowledge to enable you to make significant changes in your lives and in society as a whole.

As you move on to the next stage of your lives, remember to uphold the values of the University – Respect, Commitment, Integrity, and Loyalty.

I wish you all the best in your individual endeavors. Once again, congratulations.

Professor Ebenezer Oduro Owusu

November 21, 2019

