Mr. Chancellor, I have noted that world class universities attract students and faculty from all over the world. I will believe that we have become a world class university when students completing degree programmes at good universities in Uganda, Kenya, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, U.S.A., U.K. and many other places decide to come to the University of Ghana for their masters or PhD programmes, first for the reason that they are interested in Africa, and second for the fact that the degree from Legon will once again be highly regarded internationally."

Mindful of the interlocutory injunction placed on the University by a court of law in this case, I need to be careful in what I say about this matter.

The Executive Committee has already taken a decision to comply with the court order granting a relief sought by the complainants. But the bigger picture of this university’s future and how Commonwealth Hall fits in remains to be addressed. I would like to see Commonwealth Hall play a lead role in the process of transforming this University into a world class university. I also accept the right of Commonwealth Hall students to contribute to discussions of what form this would take. That is why I would like to bring to an end as quickly as possible the current difficult situation.

There is nothing to be gained from a protracted legal battle on who is right and who is wrong. The university management will be willing to sit down with all the relevant parties to discuss issues related to the case and the future of Commonwealth Hall within the context of the University’s broad vision.”
Vice-Chancellor acknowledges work done by Predecessors

Professor A. A. Kwapong (1966-1975)
I would like to acknowledge the significant contributions that my predecessors have put into that process over the last sixty-two years. In my several conversations with Professor Alex Kwapong over the years, I have come to appreciate a lot the unwritten history of this great institution. It is he who has on a number of occasions told me interesting stories about how Conor Cruise O’Brien managed this university in the early post-independence years, trying to bring it to levels comparable to those of some of the best British universities. Through these stories I have learned how a good leader must remain steadfast to the principles of the institution, even under trying circumstances. Prof. Kwapong’s own exploits, first as a Pro Vice-Chancellor and then as Vice-Chancellor remain legendary. I have learned from him how a Vice-Chancellor can make difficult students come to appreciate authority without being an autocrat. He has taught me how to manage academic staff with some of the biggest egos. Looking back, I now believe that many of those conversations over a beer or two, were part of his efforts to prepare me for this job, and I thank him for that.

Prof. Daniel Adzei Bekoe (1976-1983)
“Prof. Adzei Bekoe became Vice-Chancellor just when the political landscape was becoming a lot more difficult in the absence of democracy. His experiences teach us how to manage a university with rapidly declining resources.”

Prof. Akilagpa Sawyer (1985-1992)
“Prof. Akilagpa Sawyer was Vice-Chancellor in a period with still dwindling resources and a strong pressure from outside to reform the university system in Ghana. Managing strong external pressures and an academic community with entrenched positions on education policy was never going to be easy and offers useful lessons for current times.”

Prof. George Benneh (1992-1996)
“Prof. George Benneh has been the ultimate diplomat in this rich history, struggling to stretch limited resources as far as possible, particularly in a new struggling democracy.”

Prof. Ivan Addae-Mensah (1996-2002)
“He became Vice-Chancellor not too long after Ghana reverted to constitutional rule and felt the tensions associated with the constitution and its treatment of public universities. He responded to this as appropriate.”

Prof. Kwadwo Asenso-Okyere (2002-2006)
“He, as Vice-Chancellor focused on infrastructure development, a very important element in the history of this university.”

Professor Clifford Nii-Boi Tagoe (2006-2010)
The Vice-Chancellor singled out his immediate predecessor, for special mention.

“He (Professor Tagoe) became Vice-Chancellor under the most difficult of circumstances. The University had been shaken by examination malpractices made possible by a breakdown in our examination management system. This had occurred over several years. The crisis affected the governance structure of the University as the University community became split on how to handle it. Cliff Tagoe emerged as the leader of the team that had responsibility for managing the crisis and finding a way forward. Through him, the University invited a Visitation Panel to assist in the process of re-defining our mission and developing new procedures for doing business that reflected the changing times. There is no doubt that he has excelled in this mission and helped to stabilize this university in a significant way. For this, I personally owe him a debt of gratitude.”

Equal Opportunities For Men And Women

Professor Ernest Aryeetey said that in a world class university, men and women should have equal opportunities to pursue their dreams and ambitions, and learn from each other.

“That is why this university should have all of its residential facilities as co-ed structures eventually.”

Acknowledging that the university has made considerable progress in the pursuit of gender parity in student numbers, the Vice-Chancellor mentioned that the policy would continue, and the University will seek to remove any remaining obstacles in the way of women seeking higher education.
1980s with the exit of lecturers to Nigeria and other places, when this was convenient for us, and forgot to raise them again when times changed.

Despite these difficult situations, I would like to argue that the University of Ghana is well placed to make a come-back and become eventually a world class university. The report of the Visitation Panel provides us with a huge opportunity for setting higher standards. It provides suggestions for improving governance systems in line with known practices in world class universities and indicates some of the practical steps we must take in order to get onto the path necessary to become a world class university."

Other highlights

Setting high standards for both faculty and students

"I believe strongly the need to set high standards for both faculty and students. That is why I endorse fully all the steps taken by the university administration to restructure the course-credit system in line with the recommendations of Professor French."

On Research and Graduate Studies

I am very committed to making this university a research university to support the process of structural transformation in Ghana and Africa. What this means is to increase significantly the amount and the quality of research being done by the faculty and students of the university. It also means increasing the proportion of the student population that is doing graduate work.

We should step up graduate admissions significantly, especially for new PhD programmes with a restructuring of current MPhil programmes in line with the latest trends. This will be accompanied by a continuing rationalisation of undergraduate programmes and student numbers to make the most efficient of use of space and human resources.

Tightening the system of examinations: a shared value

"I appreciate the effort made to tighten the system of examinations and will look at ways in which this can be tightened even further. But I must add that these efforts will come to nought if the university’s stakeholders do not share similar values in terms of what higher education and its examination systems are intended to achieve."

Responsibility of students

"If students do not believe that cheating in examination is a horrible thing morally and legally, then all our efforts will be in vain."

Responsibility of parents and guardians

"That is why it becomes the responsibility of parents and guardians to teach their children and wards that cheating in examinations is unacceptable behaviour. It is not any less dishonourable than breaking into another person’s home at night."

Responsibility of the University

"This University will devote time and resources to inculcating in its students a new culture which says that acquiring degrees is not the same as being learned. It is only ideal when the two go together."

What is a World Class University?

I have not come across any serious definition of what a world class university is. It is, however, becoming an increasingly standard practice to refer to Webometrics and look at the different league tables of the world’s universities to see how they are regarded by their peers and by a wider society. Will being among the top-ranked 500 universities make a university world-class? This will be a highly debatable proposition, particularly since there are many aspects of university development that are not captured in these rankings. One must inevitably come to the conclusion that, in addition to the various league tables of universities, a world class university is best defined by the aspirations of the academics and their societies.

When the University of Ghana began, the aspiration was generally to produce graduates who could achieve the same degree of learning and knowledge acquisition as they would have, had they gone to university in places like Edinburgh, Newcastle, Birmingham, Manchester, Reading, etc. In exceptional cases they could as well as the students of Oxford and Cambridge Universities. That was the world class aspiration at the time. There is a lot of competition among universities and the departments of universities; and the competition is tied to the flow of resources to universities and their departments. Higher ranked universities and departments attract more resources, both public and private. They also attract better students as well as better teachers.

As a result of these situations, world class universities are likely to have structures and characteristics that differentiate them from other universities.

• World class universities have a strong culture for learning as opposed to simply being institution for providing degrees.
• They generally appeal to students from different parts of the world. Their degrees are respected in the whole world.
• They are more likely to develop courses and programmes that are dynamic and respond to changing times and societal circumstances.
• World class universities are more likely to protect their rich histories by preserving structures and building on these over time.
• They pay a lot of attention to ethics in education.
• They tend to have higher standards for students and faculty, and these are known and accepted by all.
• World class universities do far more research than others. They attach considerable importance to graduate training.
• They have governance structures that have evolved slowly and have been adapted at the test of time.
• Their faculty members publish in the best international journals in all disciplines.
• The faculty members of world class universities are often able to work across disciplines.
• Students of world class universities have a culture of learning and social interaction that sets them apart from others.

I have slowly come to the view that being world class is more a matter of the goals and ambitions of a university community and its willingness to work at all times towards higher standards. The standards may move higher and higher with time, but the stakeholders are not tempted to bring them down for the sake of convenience."

Is the University of Ghana Well Placed to be a World Class University?

The University of Ghana already has a rich history, starting with its position as the oldest university in Ghana and as one of the best known in Africa. It has indeed produced some world class professionals over the years, and can be proud of that.

It is generally acknowledged, however, that its prestige and image in the world and in Africa are lower than they used to be thirty years ago. Lesser known universities have either caught up with it or it has failed to move as fast as some of its rivals. While we may quibble about the appropriateness of world and regional rankings, the report of the Visitation Panel leaves us in no doubt that there is some way to go before we can be satisfied with ourselves. The report demonstrates to us clearly how limited our aspirations and ambitions have been in the last two decades. We lowered standards considerably in the
Snap shots from Induction Ceremony

Snap shots from Induction Ceremony