Dear All,

Members of the University community are hereby informed of a PhD Viva being organized by the Institute of African Studies, College of Humanities and the School of Graduate Studies as follows:

**Date**:  **Monday, 18th August, 2025**

**Time**:  **10.00AM**

**Virtual, Via Teams Link**:[**https://tinyurl.com/9wmkfvu4**](https://tinyurl.com/9wmkfvu4)

**Candidate:** Miss Lydia Amoah

**Title:** Queen mothers and dispute resolutions among the Asante of Ghana: A Study of the

Asantehemaa’s Traditional Courts

**ABSTRACT:**

The Chieftaincy institution in Africa which has existed since the pre-colonial, colonial, and postcolonial periods has proven formidable and more enduring than several modernist scholars anticipated. The institution has survived precisely because it is susceptible to change and reforms, by adapting and adopting Western modernity which drives political, social, and economic changes in Ghana. In Ghana, the role of women in traditional governance keeps changing. In this thesis, I explore the position of the Asantehemaa of the matrilineal Asante through the rejuvenation of the role of her court. A significant role of the Asantehemaa is the arbitration of disputes in her court, and the study examines the role of the Asantehemaa’s court in resolving community disputes that arise in Asanteman. In Ghana, legal pluralism is recognised and citizens have the choice of seeking justice at either the state or traditional courts. I interrogated the various mediation and resolution practices employed in the Asantehemaa’s court as an aspect of the politico-judicial roles of the Akan Queenmother. I also examined changes at the court, its position on changing national legislation, and respondents’ experiences and response to the court rulings. The study employed ethnographic research and employed participant observation, the collection of oral histories, and in-depth interviews with Asantehemaa’s court officials and patrons of her court. The study revealed that the Asantehemaa’s court employs customary arbitration techniques and customary law (Ammamere) to mediate, adjudicate and resolve disputes. These disputes cover domestic issues such as imprecation, insults, and marital challenges, to conflicts around the use of resources including access to land and land use, disputes from markets in Asanteman, and other forms of moral wrongs or spiritual or ritual-related disputes. The Asantehemaa’s court is evidence of legal

pluralism in Ghana. The Court serves as a legal institution that interacts within the state. An important finding is that Asantehemaa’s role in dispute mediation and resolution has not declined, but faces changes fueled by socio-economic factors such as rapid urbanisation and access to natural resources such as land. Through the use of indigenous dispute resolution mechanism such as negotiation, fines (bo ne ka) mpata (pacification) and forgiveness are critical practices at Asantehemaa’s court that aligns with the three main principles of restorative justice which are acceptance of guilt, repairing harm caused by offences and forgiveness.