

**OFFICE OF THE VICE-CHANCELLOR**



**CONGREGATION CEREMONY FOR THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES,  
UNIVERSITY OF GHANA MEDICALSCHOOL AND UNIVERSITY OF GHANA  
DENTAL SCHOOL**

**ADDRESS BY:**

**PROFESSOR NANA ABA APPIAH AMFO  
VICE - CHANCELLOR, UNIVERSITY OF GHANA**

**FRIDAY, JULY 29, 2022  
GREAT HALL, UNIVERSITY OF GHANA**

Madam Chancellor,

Lady Chair and Members of the University Council, Pro

Vice-Chancellors,

Registrar,

Provosts, Deans and Directors,

Distinguished Guest Speaker,

Members of Convocation,

Staff and Students,

Alumni,

Graduands, Invited

Guests,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen joining us from all around the  
world,

## **WELCOME**

I warmly welcome you all to the first congregation ceremony for students who completed their programmes of study during the **2021/2022** academic year. This ceremony is for graduate students from the four Colleges, graduating through the School of Graduate Studies, and undergraduate students from the University's Medical and Dental Schools. Additional Congregation ceremonies will be held in September, for students from the School of Law, and in January 2023 for other students.

Madam Chancellor, as you noted in your introductory remarks, this congregation ceremony is being held in-person, after two years of holding virtual ceremonies, as part of measures to prevent the spread of Covid-19. We are mindful that Covid-19 is still here, in addition to other viruses, and we therefore continue to practice preventive measures, to protect the health and wellbeing of all our stakeholders.

This ceremony will confer various degrees on a total of 661 students, including 103 PhDs, 530 at the Masters level, and 28 undergraduate students.

## **THE STATE OF THE UNIVERSITY**

### **Initiatives to improve upon Student Experience**

Madam Chancellor, the University is only as good as its key stakeholders, and various initiatives are being undertaken to improve upon the experience that students have while they are at the University of Ghana.

*Enhancing UG Student Experience through Digitalization* The University launched three related initiatives in April under the theme “*Enhancing UG Student Experience through Digitalization*”. The three-pronged technology driven initiatives are:

#### ***1. Classroom Modernization Initiative***

The Classroom Modernization Project has been initiated to modernise teaching and learning facilities and expand access to same. The project is expected to be completed in phases through internally generated funds and with the support of corporate institutions and individuals. The first phase of the classroom modernisation project has been awarded on contract and work has already commenced. The scope of work covers about seven (7) buildings with several classrooms/lecture halls and is estimated to

cost a total of GHS 5,500,000.00. The second phase of the classroom modernisation project will cover several other classrooms/lecture halls and will cost between USD 65,000 and USD 170,000 per lecture room, depending on the size of the classroom, the level of renovation needed and the equipment to be installed. We acknowledge an initial support of GHS100 000.00 from CAL Bank for this initiative.

### ***One Student /One Laptop***

The One Student/One Laptop initiative seeks to employ innovative mechanisms to equip students and staff of the University with affordable and free laptops or handheld devices through partnerships with established Information Technology (IT) companies. Engagements are being held with government to secure tax waivers to bring down the cost of laptops. Needy students will also be supported to acquire laptops through this initiative. A number of institutions have committed to support this initiative, and I am happy to announce that Stanbic Investment Management Services has made good on a pledge made during the launch, and has delivered 35 laptops worth GHS 150,000.00. The Vice- President Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia has supported also this

initiative. Last Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> July 2022, we received a contribution of 20 laptops from Ghana Chamber of Bulk Oil Distributors.

### ***Hot-Spot Comfort Zones***

Madam Chancellor, with the increase in student numbers and the challenges associated with the infrastructure deficit at the University, students often have difficulty finding places to sit in- between lectures. There is also a lack of adequate washrooms, hence the Hot-Spot Comfort Zones initiative.

The provision of these Comfort Zones around the University campus will improve on students' experience and potentially enhance their academic fortunes. Additionally, these zones will be equipped with Wi-Fi and other digital technologies to enable students make the best use of their free periods.

FBN Bank Ghana has made commitment towards the construction of two zones, while a number of other companies have also made commitments to the project.

## ***Student Hostels***

In our bid to address the shortage in student accommodation, the following projects have been initiated, to alleviate the stress that students, parents and guardians encounter as a result of the shortage in student residential facilities:

- Two additional blocks at Bani Hostel are under construction , which are expected to add 424 beds.
- Project overheads are being mobilised, under the Infrastructure Development Fund, to complete the Africa Integras Project hostel, projected to add 1,000 beds.
- GUSSS Hostel Project: Tenders are being evaluated for the commencement of work on construction of a GUSSS Hostel Project, intended to add 4,500 beds.
- Sod cutting for construction of PhD apartments has been held. The first phase of the project, when completed will provide 60 studio apartments for our PhD students. The complete project will add 240 Units to our student housing stock.

In addition to these, the University of Ghana Enterprises Limited (UGEL) is embarking on the following Strategic Initiatives to help address the accommodation deficit on campus:

- Partnership with Goldkey Properties Ltd to construct a 20,000-bed hostel.
- Partnership with Vanguard Properties International Ltd to construct a 5,432-bed hostel.

### **Off-Campus Student Accommodation**

Additionally, Madam Chancellor, an Off-Campus Students Accommodation Committee was set up to collate information on residential facilities close to campus. Information obtained was publicised on an online portal so interested students could reach out to facility owners to secure rooms. 18 properties were assessed and found suitable, and 75 students have, so far, accessed beds from these facilities.

### **Support for Students and Staff with Special Needs**

Madam Chancellor, the University is committed to the creation of the best environment for equal opportunity in



gender and diversity, as contained in our Strategic Plan. Continuous support is provided for students with disabilities and special needs through the Office of Students with Special Needs (OSSN). The OSSN has undertaken the following activities:

- For the 2021/2022 academic year, 33 students with disabilities were admitted to various programmes and assisted to obtain accommodation and settle in.
- Mobility training was organised for all visually impaired fresh students to facilitate their movement around the University campus.
- A sponsorship drive was embarked on in support of the Unit.

### **Establishment of Centre for Disability Studies and Advocacy (CEDSA)**

Madam Chancellor, Council has approved the establishment of a Centre for Disability Studies and Advocacy (CEDSA). The key objectives of CEDSA are to:

- Support differently-abled members of the University community, and to
- Encourage research and advocacy on disability

### **Digitisation of Academic Processes**

As part of efforts to digitise our administrative processes, in order to improve efficiency, the following steps have been taken:

- An Automated Graduation System has been developed to generate pass lists for graduation. The major programming of the system has been completed and awaits vigorous testing and probing to address all gaps.
- The University has rolled out an Online Student Academic Record Request Portal for the convenience of all stakeholders and to enhance the efficiency of our processes.
- A taskforce has been set up to decentralise and digitise the work of the School of Graduate Studies.

Madam Chancellor, the Vice-Chancellor's Academic Awards Ceremony for the 2020/2021 academic year has been held to recognise the accomplishments of graduating students of the 2020/2021 academic year, as well as some continuing students. A

total of 134 awards were presented, out of which 15 went to post-graduate students. Among the awards are the University of Ghana awards for the Male and Female Sports Personalities, the Vice-Chancellor's Award for the Best Graduating Students admitted under the University of Ghana Admission Policy for Less-Endowed Schools and the award for the Outstanding Doctoral Dissertation.

We are actively seeking additional sponsors both for our Academic Awards, and for our Students Financial Aid Office, which facilitates the provision of scholarships to students who require financial support for their academic work. I urge corporate bodies and individuals to step forward to help us support our students and award them for excelling in their academic work.

As part of efforts to promote entrepreneurship skills among students at the University, the Office of Research, Innovation and Development, in partnership with Impact Hub Accra, and Imperial College London, facilitated the "Innovation for African Universities Connecting Accra project".

The project, which is supported by the British Council, aims at building the capacity of students to enable them to develop successful businesses. 28 teams, made up of almost 100 students,

participated in the project which ended last Wednesday, and came up with some very interesting and innovative business ideas. The winning team, Feathery Care seeks to use innovative but affordable technology to reduce the mortality rate of chicks, thereby reducing the stress of farmers and increasing their output.

## **Sports**

The University of Ghana team performed remarkably well at the 10th Federation of African Universities Sports (FASU) Games held from 6th to 10th June, 2022 at the Kenyatta University, Nairobi, Kenya.

UG won four (4) gold, three silver (3) and three (3) bronze medals in Athletics as well as four (4) silver and three (3) bronze medals in racket games. In total, UG won sixteen (16) medals in three disciplines.

Ghana was adjudged the Overall Third Best Country at the Games.

## **Research, Innovation and Development**

Madam Chancellor, research is another key strategic objective for the University. So far this academic year, the Office of Research,

Innovation and Development (ORID) has reviewed 191 research grant agreements/contracts with a total value of nineteen million, two hundred and eighty two thousand, eight hundred and thirty nine dollars and twenty seven cents (USD 19,282,839.27) with an expected overhead value of USD 2,518,276.82

I congratulate ORID for the work done and take this opportunity to urge faculty to continue to apply for grants and to produce ground- breaking research.

### **Day of Scientific Renaissance of Africa**

In June, the University of Ghana participated in the Day of Scientific Renaissance of Africa (DSRA), an initiative of the African Union, with various activities organised by Units of the University. The University's participation, was planned to reflect the depth and diversity of research and innovation emanating from all constituent units of the University. The climax of the month-long celebrations was a University-wide Panel Discussion on the theme "**Ghana Asks: Legon Answers**" with specific focus on the challenge of managing plastics. Madam Chancellor, following the success of this programme, the month of June has been declared as the UGResearch month.

## **Scholarly Lectures**

Various types of scholarly lectures have been held during the 2021/2022 academic year. So far, seven Inaugural Lectures have been held. Schools and Colleges also continue to hold lecture series.

The 2022 Aggrey Fraser Guggisberg Memorial Lecture was held in March this year, following which a special congregation was held, during which an honorary doctorate degree was conferred on the lecturer, Dr. John Nkengasong, the first Director of Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention. His lecture was on the theme “Fighting the COVID-19 Pandemic: Africa at a Crossroad?”

The Conversation Africa facilitated a workshop on Scientific Communication for selected researchers across the four colleges to enhance the ability to communicate research to non-academic audiences.

## **Infrastructure and Movable Assets**

I will now speak on ongoing infrastructural development of the University:

***a. ISSER Office Complex and Digital Centre***

Madam Chancellor, it is gratifying to report that, the Vice- President, represented by the Honourable Minister of Public Enterprises, commissioned a ten-million Ghana Cedi (GHS 10,000,000.00) multi-purpose Office Complex and Digital Centre for ISSER. The building will help meet the Institute's need for additional space to support its continued growth and performance. The building comprises an office complex, a digital centre or data hub, a library complex, seminar rooms, and a gymnasium. It is worth mentioning that the project was financed entirely from the Institute's internally generated funds.

***b. Hospital Emergency Centre***

The University of Ghana Credit Union (UGCU) is sponsoring the construction of a 50-bed capacity Emergency Centre at the University Hospital to commemorate its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. The Centre, which is estimated to cost Three-million Ghana Cedis (GHS 3,000,000.00), will cater for all emergency services including consultation for emergency medical, surgical, and accident cases.

**c. Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU)**

Again, the East Legon Chapter of Rotary Club, Ghana, is funding the construction of a Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) for the University Hospital. The facility is expected to support the Paediatric Unit in caring for pre-term babies either delivered at the hospital or referred from other health facilities, among the provision of other services.

**d. WAGMC Building**

Madam Chancellor, I am happy to report that the West African Genetic Medicine Centre (WAGMC) has secured funding from the World Bank to construct a multi-purpose complex for the centre. Upon completion, the complex will provide offices, laboratories for internal and external research, and a 250-seater capacity auditorium for conferences. Sod was turned for the project last month, and I look forward to the completion of the building within the set timelines.



## **Visibility**

Ladies and gentlemen, the use of social media (Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram etc.) to disseminate activities of the University community has been stepped up. Our Public Affairs Directorate continuously shares information using these channels, and I urge all to follow us on our platforms, and also like and share material that is posted. (Pause and allow graduands to follow us on our various handles projected on the screen)

## **Review of Strategic Plan 2014-2024:**

Madam Chancellor, the University is undertaking a review of the 2014 – 2024 Strategic Plan with the view to:

- determine levels of achievement, factors and constraints that prevented the University from achieving some of its objectives;
- proposing a framework for a new Strategic Plan that will help the University address identified challenges and pave the way for continued achievements.
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## **Review of UG Statutes:**

Also, a Committee has been set up to review and update the University's Statutes. The review is to reflect the collegiate status

adopted in 2014, and various other changes in governance that have taken place since the current statutes were approved in 2010. It is expected that the review would be completed by early next year.

A number of Schools and Departments are celebrating anniversaries this year: the University of Ghana Business School, Medical School and the Department of Political Science are 60 years old. The Department of Communication Studies and the Regional Institute for Population Studies (RIPS) are celebrating their silver jubilees. Each of these units has an exciting line-up of activities, and I invite you all to take part in these activities.

### **75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

The University of Ghana will be celebrate its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2023, and planning towards celebrating this milestone has started. The anniversary celebrations will be launched during the University's 74<sup>th</sup> anniversary, specifically on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2022 at 10am. I take this opportunity to invite all of you to the media launch, and urge you to look out for the programme schedule when this is released, and plan to participate in as many of the planned activities as possible.

## **Well-wishes to Graduands**

I would like to conclude with a few words to our graduating students who are the reason we are gathered here for today's ceremony.

We are here to celebrate you, and while the journey thus far may not have been the easiest, you have made it. Today, you officially close this chapter of your lives and move on to the next. Your hard work and dedication have brought you to this point, and having made it this far, I urge you to continue to persevere and be resilient. Challenges will come, but you must be determined to overcome these.

As you go out to pursue your careers, I urge you all to register as alumni of UG, join the UG Alumni Association and help raise high the bar of excellence. (Pause and allow graduands to pick up the link and start to register). Proceed in truth and integrity in all you do, and make the University of Ghana proud. I wish you well, and once again, hearty congratulations on your achievements!

Ladies and gentlemen, I thank you for your attention.

**Professor Nana Aba Appiah Amfo**

**Vice-Chancellor**

**July 29, 2022**