

OFFICE OF THE VICE-CHANCELLOR



LAUNCH OF DIGITALISATION PROGRAMME TO ENHANCE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

ADDRESS BY:

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

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 20, 2022
GREAT HALL, UNIVERSITY OF GHANA**

The Honourable Minister for Education, Dr. Yaw Osei Adutwum

Chair of the University Council, Her Ladyship, Justice Sophia A.B.

Akuffo (Rtd)

Former President of the ECOWAS Commission, Dr. Mohamed Ibn

Chambas,

Pro Vice-Chancellors,

Registrar,

Provosts,

Deans, Directors, Heads of Department,

Government Officials present,

Representatives of Partner Institutions,

Faculty and Staff,

Past and Present Senior Officers of the University, Alumni

and Students,

Invited Guests,

The Press,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen present in the Great Hall and those joining us virtually;

Introduction

A very good evening to you all.

I am indeed elated and expectant for this evening's event. I appreciate all of you for responding favourably to my invitation to the launch of this programme – Enhancing the UG student experience through digitalization.

On 26th October, 2021, when I was inducted into office as Vice-Chancellor of this noble institution. I shared my vision, which is to *'create a culture that promotes research, teaching and learning, administrative processes and extension activities driven by **technology** and anchored in **humanism**'*. This vision hinges on the University's aspiration to become a “world-class research-intensive University” and its mission to “create an enabling environment that makes the University increasingly relevant to national and global development through cutting-edge research as well as high- quality teaching and learning”.

The University of Ghana's second strategic priority is Teaching and Learning. With this priority we seek to “promote academic excellence using the highest international standards of teaching, learning and leadership development”

As Vice-Chancellor, I have expatiated by vision through six key strategic objectives (KSOs). KSO 2 is to “develop technology-driven and robust processes in research management, teaching and learning, and all other institutional processes”.

The launch of today's programme is intended to create the needed synergy between my KSO 2 and the University's second strategy priority. As a university poised to distinguish itself both on the national and international front, there is the need to enhance stakeholders' experience through the use of technology. As I indicated in my induction speech, “my goal as Vice-Chancellor [is] for the University to train students who are critical thinkers, technologically adept, humane, culturally sensitive and ready to provide leadership for the country and the continent”. I mentioned that “I will focus on developing 21st century citizenry skills of our students”. It is within this context that we seek as a University to

create a technologically enabling environment that allows for a thrilling and fulfilling experience for our students and lecturers. This programme is intended to also give our lecturers comfortable workspaces and facilitate the work of our supporting staff. As we execute these ideas, we hope to “create a sense of ownership and commitment among students, faculty, staff and alumni, to promote creativity and innovation” which is my sixth KSO.

Today’s programme has three focal areas, as follows:

1. Classroom Modernization

This relates to expanding and modernising lecture halls and updating them to deliver inclusive learning spaces that utilise technology. The proposed expansion and modernization solution involves refurbishment and installation of information technology (ICT) equipment and gadgets and an integration into the UG Learning Management System to allow for both synchronous and asynchronous virtual learning to take place as required. It will also create an appropriate learning environment for face-to-face lectures and allow for off-site learning and examinations to manage the large student population. Additionally, we seek to

improve and enhance our assistive technology laboratory for our differently-abled students

2. One Student One Laptop (1S1L)

Although couched ‘One Student One Laptop, this initiative seeks to employ innovative mechanisms to equip both students and staff of the University with affordable and free laptops/hand-held devices through partnerships with established Information Technology (IT) and other companies to enhance teaching and learning and bridge the digital divide. Needy students will be provided free laptops while non-needy students, faculty and staff will be able to acquire affordable laptops with flexible payment plans.

3. Hot-spot Comfort Zones

This initiative aims at providing designated areas around the University campus equipped with Wi-Fi where students can sit, unwind and have interactions in between classes in order to make the best use of their free periods. Fifteen (15) Hot- spot Comfort zones are anticipated to be constructed across campuses of the University, including the Legon Campus,

Accra City Campus, Korle Bu campus, Kumasi City Campus,
and Takoradi City Campus.

Call for Partnership & Benefits to Partners

Management of the University of Ghana has started to finance the project with funds raised from donors or partners from within and outside of the University including corporate bodies. Already, we have external strategic partners like Ecobank, Pheonix Insurance and Republic Bank committing to support this programme. I will leave the details of their support to Pro Vice-Chancellor Awandare to disclose. Each of you present at this ceremony is encouraged to give-off your best; no amount is too small nor too big. Alumni can consider a One Alum One Laptop approach.

In the course of the programme you will be provided with details on how to make your donations. You may also reach out to the contacts provided on page 15 of the brochure. Individuals and organisations who contribute generously to these projects will be duly recognized through various avenues which will be explained later.

Honourable Minister, Madam Chair, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, the University is making steady progress towards its

digitalisation agenda. On March 25, 2022, I had the pleasure and honour of joining the Vice-President's representative to commission the Office Complex and Digital Centre (OCDC) for the Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER). A few units of the University including the West Africa Centre for Crop Improvement (WACCI) and West African Centre for Cell Biology of Infectious Pathogens (WACCBIP) have their lecture halls well equipped with state-of-the-art equipment to enhance teaching and learning. However, in this era of digital revolution, deployment of technological advancements should not be restricted to a few privileged units of the University. There is therefore an urgent need to catch up with the wind of digital transformation blowing around the world.

Appreciation

Honourable Minister, Madam Chair, before I end, allow me to express my profound appreciation to the men and women who have caught on to this vision and are running with it. The Classroom Modernization Implementation Committee is chaired by Prof. Gordon Awadare, Pro Vice-Chancellor with responsibility for academic and student affairs. The 1S1L Implementation Committee is led by Prof. Peter Quartey, Director of ISSER. The

Planning Committee for this event is co-chaired by these indefatigable gentlemen, and the teams they have worked with are simply amazing. I am grateful to them, and they know we are in for the long haul.

Conclusion

Honourable Minister, Lady Chair, I am optimistic that both internal and external stakeholders of the University will put their shoulders to the wheel and commit to the realization of this ambition, as we together seek to provide our students (and by extension our staff and faculty) a memorable and satisfying teaching and learning experience.

Thank you.

***Professor Nana Aba Appiah Amfo
Vice-Chancellor***