

**OFFICE OF THE VICE-CHANCELLOR**



**2023 AUGUST CONGREGATION**

**ADDRESS BY:**

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

**SATURDAY, AUGUST 19, 2023  
GREAT HALL, UNIVERSITY OF GHANA**



Lady Chancellor and Lady Chair of Council, who are joining us online;  
Representative of the Chancellor and member of the University Council, Ms.  
Doris Ansah;  
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**

It is my pleasure to warmly welcome you all to the first congregation ceremony for the 2022/2023 cohort of students. A second series of ceremonies will take place in January 2024; for undergraduate and postgraduates students from the various disciplines in the four colleges of the University and the School of Graduate Studies.

This ceremony is dedicated to undergraduate students of the University of Ghana School of Law, College of Humanities, and the University of Ghana Medical School and School of Biomedical and Allied Health Sciences, College of Health Sciences. A total of 310 students who have successfully completed their programmes of study will be awarded degrees.

## **The State of the University**

Ladies and gentlemen, since my appointment as Vice-Chancellor, I have championed the strategic objectives that lead the University's vision to become a 21st century world-class research-intensive University, as indicated in our strategic plan (2014-2024). Within this broad vision, my personal vision is to create a culture that promotes research, teaching and learning, administrative processes and extension activities driven by technology and anchored in humanism. The realisation of this vision is driven by six key strategic objectives (KSOs). These KSOs are expected to drive the University towards achieving its nine strategic priorities, provided for in the University's strategic plan, which runs from 2014 to 2024.

### **New UG Strategic plan**

With the University of Ghana's current 10-year strategic plan coming to an end in July 2024, I have set up and inaugurated a committee co-chaired by Prof. Eric Danquah, Director of the West African Centre for Crop Improvement and Prof. Nana Akua Anyidoho, Director for the Centre for Social Policy Studies, to come out with a new 5-year plan; to run from 2024-2029. The Committee is currently conducting stakeholder consultation and working toward submitting a draft in October 2023.

It is my expectation that this plan will propel us towards a more engaged university, while taking into account the emerging trends in science, technology, innovations, machine learning and artificial intelligence as well as respond to the fast-paced social and economic transformations currently going on across the globe. The intensity of the changes happening around us underpins the rationale for the short-to-medium term plan we are currently developing. In that way, the University of Ghana will continue to be responsive to emerging trends and be agile enough to adapt to rapid changes happening all around us.

### **Review of Collegiate System**

Ladies and gentlemen, as you may be aware, the University of Ghana adopted the collegiate system of governance in August 2014. A panel, chaired by a former Vice-Chancellor, Professor Akilagpa Sawyerr, was appointed to conduct a thorough review of the system, and has presented its recommendations to the University.

Subsequently, Madam Chancellor, after extensive discussions by the Colleges and the Academic Board, I commissioned eight taskforces to study the report and propose strategies for implementing the recommendations and drive implementation of the proposed changes, necessary to ensure that the University derives the full benefit of the collegiate system of governance. Key outcomes of the work of the taskforces include, decentralisation the activities of the School of Graduate Studies and the Office of Research, Innovation and Development, using technology to drive accreditation and promotion of academic staff, restoration of the Accra City Campus to a semi-autonomous unit of the University, among others.

### **Academic and Student Affairs**

The University is gradually moving toward reversion of the academic calendar to the pre-Covid era. Teaching, tutorials and examinations are conducted predominantly in-person mode, while allowance has been made for faculty to engage students via the Sakai Learning Management System and other online means of facilitating teaching, learning and assessment.

Indeed, we continue to embrace the use of technology for teaching and learning, and using key lessons we learnt during the pandemic, we are actively exploring ways in which Artificial Intelligence can be used to improve our academic processes. In line with our strategic objective to develop technology-driven and robust processes in various aspects of our work, the Department of Computer

Science, University of Ghana Computing Systems working with the Academic Affairs Directorate has introduced an IT solution for determination of results to fast-track our graduation processes. This IT solution known as DiGradSys has significantly cut the length of time it takes to determine student results for graduation. We continue to work to improve upon the system and we are already seeing improvements in this regard.

### **City Campuses**

Ladies and gentlemen, the University Council has approved the restoration of the Accra City Campus to a semi-autonomous unit of the University. Approval has been granted for the establishment of the Takoradi and Kumasi City Campuses of the University by the Ghana Tertiary Education Commission, and accreditation processes are almost complete for the campuses to start admitting students from the coming academic year. The establishment of the new campuses will bring the UG brand and standards to the Ashanti and Western regions, and will open up more places for the admission of undergraduate students.

Ladies and gentlemen, students have just completed their second semester examinations and started their vacation. This time around, the vacation period is quite short, as the University has had to make adjustments to the academic calendar to accommodate the Africa Games, which take place in March 2024.

It is my hope that students, faculty, administrators and staff will all use the vacation period to get some well-earned rest, resetting their energies for the commencement of the 2023/2024 academic year in October. This is particularly important, because for three years running, the University has not had a significant break, in our attempt to catch up on the time lost because of the Covid-19 pandemic, and from various industrial actions. Faculty, administrators and staff have had to work back-to-back to make up for lost time, and we all need the rest to ensure our health and continued productivity.

## **Infrastructural Development**

A major constraint confronting the university is infrastructure, especially lecture halls, staff and faculty offices and halls of residence for our students. The available facilities are under severe pressure affecting the capability of the University to expand even further.

To help address these challenges, the university with its limited resources is aggressively expanding academic and residential infrastructure. The University is working hard on completing a 1200 bed student hostel for use next academic year. Sod has been cut for the Ghana University Staff Superannuation Scheme (GUSSS) student hostel. Additionally, work on the PhD apartments is progressing steadily. Our private partners such as Bani hostel are also expanding their facilities. All of these initiatives, when completed, will add significantly to the stock of beds available, and we will also continue with the policy of prioritizing allocation of places in the traditional halls to fresh undergraduate students.

Just a month ago, we cut sod to begin the construction of the second phase of the University of Ghana Business School. In a couple of weeks, the University of Ghana School of Law will also cut the sod for the construction of a multi-purpose modern faculty building complex. This facility, when completed, will increase access to legal education in Ghana and beyond. Since these projects are capital intensive, the UGSOL is appealing to alumni, parents, corporate entities, development partners and the general public to support their efforts to make this project a reality. I am grateful to the Dean of UGSOL for his unwavering commitment to ensure the realization of this project.

## **Ranking**

Ladies and gentlemen, I am proud to announce that the University of Ghana has achieved a remarkable milestone by ranking among the top 6.1% of world-class universities in the 2023 edition of the Global 2000 List developed by the Center for World University Rankings (CWUR). This outstanding recognition solidifies the University's position as the leading institution in Ghana.

The CWUR's rigorous assessment process evaluated 20,531 universities worldwide, with only the top 2000 making it to the Global 2000 list. The rankings were based on seven objective indicators across four areas, which are, education quality, alumni employment, faculty quality, and research performance.

Scoring an impressive 69.1, the University of Ghana secured the top spot in Ghana. In the West Africa Region, the University of Ghana's remarkable performance positioned it as the second-best University.

### **Supporting Student Innovations**

UG is proactively working to harness the creative and entrepreneurial potential of its students. In July 2022, as part of the Innovation for African University's programme, 27 student ventures were equipped with the skills to develop and package their businesses ideas which they pitched before a live audience at the National Demo Day. In July 2023, a founder from Feathery Care, the winning group from last year's hackathon, participated in the NextGen Accelerator Program, organized by Harvard Innovation Labs and Amazon Web Services (AWS) at the Harvard Business School, MA, USA. The two-week programme gave insights into fundraising, customer discovery, pitching and networking with key entrepreneurial figures.

The innovation ecosystem at UG is spearheaded by the Office of Research, Innovation and Development in partnership with both internal and external partners, such as the University of Ghana Business School Innovation and

Incubation Hub, School of Agriculture, Kofi Annan Enterprise Hub for Agricultural Innovations and Imperial College London. Our industry partners include, Impact Hub Accra, Agricultural Manufacturing Group Limited, Kosmos Innovation Center, KGL Foundation, Hollard Insurance, MTN and the British Council.

### **Achievements by students, faculty and alumni**

Our students, faculty and alumni continue to excel in various fields and contribute immensely to our global eminence. Permit me to share a few of these laurels:

- The University of Ghana placed first in the 2023 Philip C. Jessup International Law Moot Court Competition, securing them a place at the 2023 Championship, which was held in the United States. Members of the UG team were Miss Emenyo Afi Nutakor, Miss Lois Osei Sekyere, Mr. Emmanuel Kabu Nartey, Mr. Emmanuel Akpagli, and Miss Maame Aba Asiedu.

Mr Kabu Nartey was also named best oralist of the competition.

- Ms. Princess Korkor Boateng, a Level 400 student of the University of Ghana Business School, became the youngest person ever, at age 18, to qualify as a Chartered Accountant in Ghana.
- Ms. Gifty Atampugbire, a final year MPH student, was one of the 700 young African leaders selected to participate in the 2023 edition of the Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders.
- Professor Nana Ama Brown Klutse, Head of Department of Physics, has been elected as the Vice-Chair of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) working group.



- Mrs. Theodosia Adanu, the Acting University Librarian, has won the 2022 Grand Prize Osmosis ‘Raise the Line’ Faculty Award, Librarian category. The work culminating in this award recognises the incredible work of health educators who are helping to “raise the line” by increasing healthcare capacity around the world.
- Prof. William Kwabena Ampofo, former Head of the Virology Department, Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research, has been appointed the Chief Executive Officer of the National Vaccine Institute (NVI). NVI is to develop policy direction and implementation for vaccine production and manufacturing in Ghana. Prof Gordon A. Awandare, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Academic and Student Affairs and founding Director of the West African Centre for Cell Biology of Infectious Pathogens (WACCBIP), and Prof. Alex Dodoo, former Director of the Centre for Tropical, Clinical Pharmacology & Therapeutics, University of Ghana Medical School, are also members of the Board.
- The Centre for Gender Studies and Advocacy (CEGENSA) has been awarded a grant of \$1.7 million by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) to set up an *Africa-based Gender Technical Platform for Gender Responsive Malaria Advocacy and Policy*.
- Professor Amos Laar, of the School of Public Health and partners have been awarded a \$1.2 million dollar grant by Fogarty International Center of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), USA. This award, which is the second phase of the “New York University–University of Ghana (NYU-UG) Research Integrity Training Program” is aimed at building sustainable research ethics and integrity capacity in Ghana.
- The University of Ghana and 25 partner organisations have been awarded 12 million euros by the European Union to transform Africa’s urban food

environments. The award is the culmination of a strategic collaboration with international partners across Europe and Africa.

We congratulate these members of our community, and many more, too numerous to mention, on their achievements. It is achievements such as these that contribute to keep us in the limelight, and I encourage all of us, as members of the UG community, to play our part towards reaching towards excellence and maintaining high standards in our work.

### **Vice-Chancellor's initiatives**

Madam Chancellor, at my induction ceremony, you may recall that, I shared my strategic vision of furthering the strides towards a world class status of the University. Towards that direction, various initiatives are being pursued to enhance stakeholder experience through digitalisation. The approach is anchored on the following three-pronged technology-driven initiatives to enhance the experience of students, faculty and staff:

- Classroom Modernisation
- One Student One Laptop (1S1L)
- Hot-Spot Comfort Zones

### **Classroom modernisation**

Ladies and gentlemen, I set up a committee chaired by the Pro Vice-Chancellor, ASA, to mobilise internal and external resources to modernise our classrooms and thereby enhance the student learning experience. A lot has been achieved under this initiative with the following facilities fitted with state-of-the-art IT equipment to enhance the teaching and learning experience: K.A. Busia, Oracca Tetteh/Larway Building, the N-block, New N-block, the Jones Quartey Building (JQB) and the Accra City Campus.

I am proud to note that many of our alumni groups are giving back to enhance the experience of our students. The University of Ghana Medical School Class of 2000 has fully renovated and refurbished the Clinical Lecture Theatre (CLT) of the School, with state-of-the-art audio-visual and video conferencing facilities fitted in the Theatre to aid in the training of clinical students. The 1996 year group of the Medical School has also renovated and updated the basic science lecture halls, the histology laboratory and the dissection room and donated 16 modern microscopes and four (4) teaching cameras, making it possible for students to be in different classrooms and laboratories and yet participate in the same class.

I urge other groups to also step up and partner with us to provide our students with quality equipment and facilities to enhance their academic work.

### **One student one laptop initiative**

This initiative, which was launched last year, has received tremendous support from within and outside the University. So far, close to 500 laptops have been donated, out of which 245 have been distributed to students to facilitate their academic work. The committee I set up to coordinate this initiative, chaired by Prof. Peter Quartey has been very proactive and supportive of this initiative, and I use this platform to thank the team for the excellent job they have done. I also wish to use this platform to extend sincerest appreciation to our donors for supporting us in this cause. We invite more organisations from within and outside the University to support this initiative, especially so against the backdrop of dwindling support from government due to competing national needs.

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

Ladies and gentlemen, the provision of Hotspot Comfort Zones around the University campus where students can access washrooms, have discussions and relax in-between classes has also taken off. These zones will be equipped with Wi-Fi and other digital technologies to enable students make the best use of their free periods. In May this year, construction started for one of such comfort zones sponsored by the UG Alumni Association. Two others to be constructed from the University's internally generated funds are expected to start soon. These will be constructed by Mendanha and Sousa, the construction company beautifying our Link Gate. Earlier this week, a sod cutting ceremony was held for a fourth facility, sponsored by FBN Bank. It is my hope that work will progress smoothly on all the hot-spot comfort zones, so that students can begin to benefit from these facilities.

We are most grateful for the kind support from all our sponsors, and encourage other sponsors to join us to provide an improved experience for our students.

### **Research, Innovation and Development**

Ladies and gentlemen, the University Council has approved the decentralisation of the University's grant management system, with implementation starting from September 2023. Towards this end, there has been engagement of Heads of Unit to understand and facilitate a smooth implementation of the new system. The office is also developing Standard Operating Procedures to harmonise implementation across units.

The Office of Research Innovation and Development (ORID) in collaboration with Radio Univers, has initiated a programme dubbed "Research and Innovation Agenda", a radio talk show to communicate evidence-based scientific research outcomes to members of the University community and beyond.

### **UG@75 Anniversary Celebrations**

Madam Chancellor, last Friday 11<sup>th</sup> August, 2023, marked the climax of the year-long celebration of the University of Ghana's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Following the launch of the anniversary celebrations in August 2022, on the theme '*Nurturing Resilience: Adopting Technology, Embracing Humanism*', an exciting line up of anniversary programmes was held. These included lectures, seminars, sporting activities and various events organised at College and unit levels. Yesterday, unfazed by the rain, we had a health outreach programme at Madina. We set up at six sites in various communities in Madina and provided health services including dental, optical, pharmaceutical and counselling services for community members. I am grateful to the UG@75 Planning Committee Co-Chair, Professor Clement Appah and Professor Richmond Aryeetey of the School of Public Health for coordinating this event. My appreciation goes to our faculty, staff and students who volunteered for the programme and to the Director of the La-Nkwantanang Directorate of Health Services, Dr. Priscilla Anima Addo, and her team.

The year-long celebrations were also a period for reflection; looking back at the University's journey since its establishment in 1948, and forward to the next 75 years and beyond. We are grateful to all members of the University community, stakeholders and friends who contributed to a successful celebration. There are a few additional activities lined up. I encourage you all to purchase the beautiful UG@75 fabric and take part in our wear UG Day on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2023. On this day, all members of the University community and friends of the University are encouraged to wear clothes made from the UG@75 fabric and upload pictures of themselves on any of the University of Ghana social media handles, with the hashtag UGIS75.

I also take this opportunity to speak briefly about the Legacy project for UG@75, which is a multi-purpose Student Experience Centre. The Centre will provide Leadership Training, satellite offices for Student Services, an Incubation Hub, a Students' Clinic as well as commercial spaces. A fund-raising dinner will be held

in December this year to raise additional funds for this project, and I encourage all to donate generously towards this worthy project.

### **Well wishes to Graduands**

I conclude with well wishes to our graduating students who are the reason we are gathered here for today's ceremony.

The path to your graduation today may have come with challenges, yet you have triumphed. Today, as you officially conclude this chapter of your journey and step into the next, we salute your resilience and dedication.

As you go out to make your mark in the world, I urge you all to raise high the bar of excellence, and always proceed in truth and integrity to make the University of Ghana proud. I wish you well, and once again, congratulations on your achievements!

Ladies and gentlemen, I thank you for your attention.

***Prof. Nana Aba Appiah Amfo  
19<sup>th</sup> August 2023***