

**OFFICE OF THE VICE-CHANCELLOR**



**INAUGURAL LECTURE OF PROFESSOR AUDREY SITSOFE GADZEKPO**

**THEME:**

***“TAKING THE GOWN TO TOWN: REFLECTIONS OF A SCHOLAR-ACTIVIST ON MEDIA IN GHANA’S DEMOCRATIC JOURNEY”***

**ADDRESS BY:**

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

**THURSDAY, APRIL 28, 2022  
GREAT HALL, UNIVERSITY OF GHANA**

Madam Chancellor,

Registrar,

Provosts,

Deans, Directors, Heads of Department,

Our Distinguished Lecturer, Professor Audrey Gadzekpo,

Faculty, Staff and Members of Convocation,

Past and Present Senior Officers of the University,

Alumni and Students,

Family and Friends of the Lecturer,

Corporate Executives,

Government Officials,

Members of the Diplomatic Corps,

Esteemed Traditional Rulers,

Eminent Clergy,

Friends from the Media,

Invited Guests,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen present in the Great Hall and those joining  
us across our various media platform:

Good evening.

Once again, I have the pleasure of chairing another inaugural lecture, the third in the series of inaugural lectures scheduled for this academic year. I am particularly enthused about this evening's lecture because it is the first this year to be organized by the University in recognition of the achievements of a female scholar since I assumed office as Vice-Chancellor. This is another feather in the cap of our female scholars, and we are so proud of this accomplishment.

The University periodically organizes these inaugural lectures in recognition of the contributions of academics on their promotion to the rank of Professor. These lectures also serve as a platform for our new professorial colleagues to share some insights of their innovative research work over the years.

Tonight, we are privileged to celebrate a significant milestone in the academic career of Professor Audrey Sitsofe Gadzekpo, a seasoned expert in Media and Communications and a former Dean of the School of Information and Communication Studies who has distinguished herself by dint of hard work and a resolve to change the narrative while setting and maintaining standards for the younger generation, particularly females, to emulate. Professor Gadzekpo has contributed immensely to research pertaining to media and its interaction with gender, democracy and governance, health, and conflict.

On this occasion, I would like to congratulate you, Professor Audrey Gadzekpo for the impactful contributions you have made to the field of Communications both as a researcher and practitioner. The University community salutes you. **It is revealing to note that since the establishment of the Department of Communication Studies in 1974, Audrey Gadzekpo is the second professor to deliver an inaugural lecture. At the College of Education, however, she is the first female professor to deliver an inaugural lecture.** Ladies and gentlemen, I think she deserves a round of applause for attaining this enviable feat.

As a linguist with keen interest in pragmatics, the topic for this evening's lecture, ***'Taking the Gown to Town: Reflections of a Scholar-Activist on Media in Ghana's Democratic Journey'*** excites my curiosity and I am sure that like me, many of you are eager to find out how Professor Gadzekpo has 'taken the gown to town'.

Indeed, Ghana has built a strong media presence over the years and the role that media organizations have played in Ghana's governance cannot be underestimated. Following this, the media, has become a force to reckon with, and is often credited as being the fourth arm of government. Although, we all have concerns about how some sections of the media sometimes go about their business.

With the rapid spread of media outlets such as radio and television stations across the length and breadth of the country, many citizens easily access content from these avenues and share their views on them. The advent of social media has further heightened citizens interest in issues pertaining to governance and this has been demonstrated by citizens constantly engaging and making suggestions on these platforms in a quest to seek redress of what may often be considered as issues that threaten our peace and stability as a nation.

I envisage that this is going to be one of the most intriguing inaugural lectures to be hosted by the University, with all of us eager to listen to the details from our media scholar and activist. At this point, please permit me to briefly introduce our distinguished lecturer, Professor Audrey Sitsofe Gadzekpo.

## **PROFILE**

Professor Audrey Gadzekpo is a Professor of Communication Studies and a former Dean of the School of Information and Communication Studies, University of Ghana. She has close to 30 years of experience in teaching, research and advocating on issues relating to media, gender, governance, and development.

She attended Achimota Primary School, and proceeded to Achimota Secondary School, and OLA Secondary School, Ho. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from the University of Ghana, a Master of Arts in Communications from Brigham Young University, Utah, USA and a Doctorate degree in African Studies from the University of Birmingham, U.K.

Her early career was as a journalist with 'The Indianapolis Recorder' in Indiana, USA where she rose to become editor, before returning to Ghana and co-founding and editing the women's magazine, AWO. She also wrote a regular socio-political column in the Ghanaian Chronicle and later, the Mirror.

Since 1993, Professor Gadzekpo's academic career has been centred primarily at the University of Ghana. She has held adjunct positions at New York University in Ghana and at the Ghana Institute of Journalism (GIJ). She has served as a visiting scholar at the Program of African Studies, Northwestern University, U.S.; a guest researcher at the Nordic Africa Institute in Uppsala, Sweden; and a

research fellow of the Africa Oxford Initiative, University of Oxford, UK. She is also a regular guest lecturer at the Police Staff and Command College, Ghana Armed Forces Staff College, and the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre.

## **Teaching**

Professor Gadzekpo's teaching portfolio includes courses such as print journalism, media and gender, health communication, media ethics, media, culture, and society, communicating climate change, communicating public policy, international communication, qualitative research methods in communication studies, and political communication.

Since 2015, she has also regularly taught at the Pan-African Doctoral Academy (PADA), University of Ghana, where she co-designed and co-teaches two training modules on 'presentation skills' and 'communicating scientific results to academic and non-academic audiences.'

## **Research**

Professor Gadzekpo's research focuses on the nexus between media, and concerns such as gender, health, climate change, democracy and governance, conflict, and history. She is currently engaged in COVID-19 related research with a team of international researchers and colleagues from Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research. She is also collaborating with partners from the

University of Leeds and University of Nairobi on gender and climate change related research.

### **Extension and Training Activities**

Professor Gadzekpo has conducted numerous training seminars, workshops, and lectures for organisations such as: the Ghana Journalists Association (GJA), Private Newspaper Publishers Association of Ghana (PRINPAG), Ghana Community Radio Network (GCRN), Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), World Health Organisation (WHO), The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Bank, Ghana Institute of Consultants, Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA), STAR-Ghana Foundation, Friedrich Ebert Foundation, Friedrich Naumann Foundation, European Union, Centre for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), Newmont-Ghana, Barclays Bank, Standard Chartered Bank, Enterprise Group, Electoral Commission of Ghana, Ghana Statistical Service, and Trades Union Congress, Ghana.

### **Advocacy**

Professor Gadzekpo has considerable experience engaging in media, gender, governance and behavioural change advocacy work. She has been involved in election monitoring in Ghana and other countries in Africa, anti-corruption campaigns and initiatives, empowerment of women initiatives, media



development projects and initiatives, and health/environmental issues. For more than four years she chaired the Inter-Agency Coordinating Committee for Health Promotion (ICC-HP) in Ghana and was in 2006 a focal person for the Ghana Sustainable Change Project, a collaborative project with five institutions that led among other things, to the development of a health communication syllabus and training manual titled “Communication, behaviour change and health: A trainer’s manual.” She was also a member of the ‘Specialised Committee on Culture/Communication,’ for the Ghana National Commission for UNESCO from 1997-2000 and continues to collaborate with UNESCO on projects, most recently in the development of Media Development Indicators for Ghana and on Media and Information Literacy.

### **Consultancies**

Professor Gadzekpo has served as a consultant on many communication/media related projects for organisations such as the International IDEA, the Public Information Unit, United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), World Bank, Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa (PACA), UNICEF, UNESCO, UNDP, EU, Electoral Commission of Ghana, Institute of Policy Analysis (IPA), and Ghana Statistical Service. Most recently, she was the lead consultant for the National Risk Communication and Community Engagement Strategy for COVID-19 Pandemic in Ghana. She has also designed and facilitated workshops

to support the media in the Gambia and Liberia to improve coverage of transitional justice processes.

Professor Gadzekpo was also part of a team of academics responsible for developing curricula for a Master's in Research and Public Policy (MRPP) Programme for the Partnership for African Social and Governance Research (PASGR), which was rolled out in 12 African universities. She also served as the governance expert for Ghana on the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), UK, Mwananchi action learning programme aimed at strengthening citizen engagement with governments in seven African countries.

## **Editorial Boards**

In addition to serving on numerous boards and committees at the University of Ghana, Professor Gadzekpo is on international editorial boards including African Journalism studies, Feminist Media Studies, and the Journal of African Media Studies (JAMS). For several years, she was also co-editor of the Codesria journal titled 'African Media Review'. She has also edited or been co-editor of special issue journals, including: the Ada special issue on 'Emerging Gender, Media and Technology Scholarship in Africa'; the African Journalism Studies issue on 'Journalism and Foreign Aid in Africa' and the African Communication Research issue on 'The image of women in African media.' Professor Gadzekpo is also a reviewer for a variety of scholarly manuscripts.

## **Governing Boards**

Professor Gadzekpo currently chairs the board of Panos West Africa (PIWA), a media development organisation based in Senegal, and is vice-chairperson of the board of the Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana). She also serves on the boards of the following organisations: West Africa Democracy Radio (WADR) in Senegal; Centre for Journalism, Innovation & Development (CJID) in Nigeria; Solidaridad Continental Supervisory Board for Africa; STAR-Ghana Foundation; GHACEM Foundation, Webster University-Ghana Campus, and Tema International School (TIS). She is also patron of the Alliance for Women in the Media (AWM).

In the past, she has chaired the board of the Ghana Integrity Initiative (GII) and served on several other boards and commissions, including: The National Media Commission (NMC), Ghana Broadcasting Corporation, Ghana News Agency, Public Agenda Newspaper, Vodafone Foundation, Joyce Ababio College of Creative Design (JACCD), and African Literature Centre in Kitwe, Zambia.

Professor Gadzekpo is the second of four children born to Fred Gadzekpo (deceased) and Margaret Gadzekpo. She is anchored by two brothers – Frank and Keli –, her sister Sese, and two daughters – Nubuke and Paulina. Link to full CV is available at: <https://www.ug.edu.gh/commstudies/prof-audrey-gadzekpo-cv>

Tonight, I have the singular honour to welcome Professor Audrey Gadzekpo to the podium as we *'take the gown to town'*.

Thank you for your attention.

***Prof. Nana Aba Appiah Amfo***  
***Vice-Chancellor***

*April 28, 2022*