

VALEDICTORY SPEECH DELIVERED BY FRANK KOFI BOADI AT THE CONGREGATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, FRIDAY, JULY 24, 2015

Acting Chairman of the University Council, Professor John Hyde;
Vice-Chancellor, Professor Ernest Aryeetey;
Members of the University Council;
Pro-Vice Chancellors;
Registrar;
Guest Speaker;
Members of Convocation;
Fellow Graduands;
Friends and families;
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.

Today is the day. Graduating Class of 2015; today is our day. Talking of “our day”, I reckon, many of us still hold nostalgic memories of our young years, when “our day” marked one of the most exciting times at school. I’m sure like me, you all yearned for that last day at school. My interest then was not so much about my report card, which depending on your home determined whether you got gifts because you were top of your class, a beating or a scolding because you were perched at the bottom of the class or just ignored because you were placed somewhere in between the top and bottom. I was most excited about the fact that “our day” was different from all the other days at school. We had drinks and food in lunch boxes and baskets, colourful decorations in our classrooms, and there was music for us to dance. On that day, I was guaranteed that there would be no caning for being naughty. After all it was “our day”.

And like today, many of us have waited and yearned for this day. For some, it has been just a few months of waiting; for others, the wait has been longer. However, no matter how long we have waited, there could be no better day than this day, this time, and this moment.

The many nights we lay awake, haunted by the words “this is not a good research topic”, are officially over today. For those of us who are married, our abandonment of our matrimonial beds, to meet if not beat the fast approaching deadline for chapter submissions of our theses will no longer be the case, at least for now. And for my colleagues from the Communication Studies Department, summaries are over. Today we crown all the sacrifices that we and our loved ones have made in our pursuit of higher academic credentials. Today we sing, dance, and shout with thanks to God that we have come out successful.

The story of our individual journeys and varied experiences in this great institution cannot be told in any single book. Some experiences have marked turning points for some of us, yielding breakthroughs we have so long prayed for. Others may have had not so pleasant experiences. While some of these can be expressed in words; many others remain unspoken. In all our struggles, gains, achievements and joyous moments while traversing this great campus, one thing has remained clear in our minds: our primary purpose; to attain higher education. The education that makes our country, societies, our families and us better. An education which would reveal the treasures latent in us and which mankind would benefit from.

No matter what the road has been for us, we must be thankful. We must thank our professors, lecturers, administrators and all the other workers who have honoured their duties to ensure that this one purpose is achieved. At this juncture, I kindly request all graduands to please rise and show our gratitude with applause to every person whose work

whether directly or indirectly has contributed to the success we celebrate today. Thank you.

Ladies and gentlemen, gathered here, are people who hold the key to the advancement of this nation. I see before me potential achievers and thinkers, academics, politicians, musicians and other intelligent people whose work would have significant effect on the course this country takes towards becoming the great nation its founding fathers so dreamed of. However, Ghana's quest to greatness is no longer laid on the shoulders of Nkrumah and the Big Six. It requires that all of us here, who are such a good representation of the Ghanaian community work at upholding our civic responsibilities.

As graduates, it is our charge to effect change in our society, in our communities and in our homes. We have learnt theories that help us understand phenomena better, anticipate incidences and explain why things are as they are. It is not enough to recite these theories if we can't internalise them to improve our society. The changes occurring in this nation require that the learned, and that includes us, show the way by exhibiting strong civic virtues. It is our responsibility to this institution and to this nation. I pledge today to work at that; to build on my civic character and be more responsible than I have ever been, and I pray you will all do the same.

Acting Chairman of Council, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, I would have acted prejudicially if I, having been granted this rare privilege to speak at this august gathering, failed to mention the many transformations presently going on at the University of Ghana. I see the dream to transform the university into a world-class institution as not just a dream in an individual's mind, but a reality which posterity can benefit from and be proud of. In the year 2001, when I enrolled into a Bachelor

of Arts programme, registering for courses was as wearisome as engaging in manual labour on a construction site. Today, course registration is done online. Again in 2001, I wavered in my decision to polish or clean my shoes while preparing for lectures, because they were bound to be discoloured from red dust after every walk to “tingi tingi” from Commonwealth Hall. Today many parts of the university have been paved and students walking around in their white apparel and white shoes has become a common sight.

Now this is what excites me the most. The fact that I could pay, and actually paid, my graduation fees through UG pay. This means no more queuing and long hours in the bank. Kudos University of Ghana for showing the way.

My fellow graduands, a few years back, a gentleman in a similar capacity as I have now, called out to his graduating class to be ambassadors of change. Four years on, I echo that call today. I call on us all “to proceed with integrity, as the motto of this great institution urges us, for we owe this to generations to come.”

Congratulations to us all!!

Long live the University of Ghana,

Long live mother Ghana

Thank You.