

**VICE-CHANCELLOR'S ADDRESS AT CONGREGATION:**  
**NOVEMBER 2015**

Your Lordship Justice Samuel Kofi Date-Bah, Chairman of University Council;  
Members of University Council  
Pro-Vice Chancellors;  
Registrar;  
Provosts  
Guest Speaker,  
Members of the College Advisory Boards  
Niimej, Naamei, Nananom;  
Members of Convocation  
Invited Guests  
Graduating Students;  
Parents and Guardians;  
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen:

**Welcome**

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you all to today's congregation ceremony. This is the second set of ceremonies for students who completed their studies in the 2014/2015 academic year.

Six ceremonies are being held over two days with a total of 5085 students graduating from the four Colleges with degrees and diplomas. The graduands are made up of 4025 undergraduates, 964 graduate students and 96 Diploma students. For the first time two ceremonies will be held concurrently for the morning session and one for the afternoon session on each day. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the students, faculty and other employees who have worked to make this possible.

**The State of the University:**

Mr Chairman, I would like to report that the state of the University is very good. A number of recent developments should make us feel very good about our university.

## **Teaching and Learning**

In the area of teaching and learning, I am happy to observe that many of the initiatives we put in place for strengthening our academic programmes, following the recommendation of the Visitation Panel, are beginning to yield positive outcomes. Our class sizes have been reduced significantly to place not more than 300 students in a class in most cases. The facilities and equipment available to lecturers have seen steady improvements following significant investments made by the University using internally generated funds. Most lecture rooms and residential facilities for students have been rehabilitated and continue to be rehabilitated. The latest of such rehabilitation works is the ongoing complete overhaul of student residential facilities at our Korle Bu campus.

Earlier in the year, the University took over newly refurbished facilities under the Chinese Phase II project to support our distance education programmes. These included well equipped computer labs at the various regional learning centres that facilitate e-learning using video conferencing facilities. All students entering those programmes, beginning from the last academic year were provided with Android tablets loaded with the relevant course material to make learning easier.

Mr Chairman, today as many as 65% of the men and women teaching our students have terminal degrees, namely a doctorate. This is up from 45% less than a decade ago. This is the result of steady staff development initiatives. Through our recently restructured PhD programmes more than 450 persons are currently registered for PhD programmes. With the anticipated growth in this area we will be in a strong position to build the capacity of our own staff as well as that of other institutions for careers in research and teaching.

As a result of the improvements taking place in our teaching and learning environment, our students continue to excel internationally. Ms Gifty Tetteh, an alumna of this University, having graduated with a degree in Biomedical Engineering and currently studying for a PhD at University of Sheffield, received the International Biomechanics Prize for the Best Biomechanics Paper at the Medical Engineering Centre annual meeting in 2014 held at Imperial College, London.

The improvements in our teaching and learning environment have made it a lot easier for our students to find internship places with reputable institutions. Three of our recent Pharmacy graduates have participated in an internship programme at Merck Millipore's global

headquarters in Darmstadt, Germany. More and more of our students are receiving international recognition for their work.

Ladies and gentlemen, the University continues to receive large numbers of applications for admission each year. However, due to the limited facilities and human resources, the University was able to admit only a fraction of the potentially eligible undergraduate applicants.

For the 2015/2016 academic year, new enrolment figures show that 8,541 students registered, made up of 6,121 undergraduate students and 2,420 graduate students. The University's efforts to achieve gender parity in the admission of students have yielded some results in that, the percentage of females admitted to all programmes now stands at about 43%.

The University continued its policy of giving opportunity for university education to qualified applicants from Less Endowed Schools on concessionary basis. In addition, for the second year running, the University offered admission to talented sportsmen and women based on their sporting abilities, in line with the policy on the Admission of Student Athletes. Students admitted under the policy must first satisfy the general entry requirements of the University and also show proof of athletic ability. It is our expectation that these students will work hard to effectively combine participation in sports with academic work.

University of Ghana, as part of its internationalization policy, strives to attract international students to deepen cross-cultural experience on campus. For the 2015/2016 academic year, 2,967 undergraduate and 1,593 graduate international applications were received. Out of this number, 844 undergraduate and 310 graduate students of various nationalities were admitted into our programmes as regular or special admission students. Altogether, a total of 291 undergraduate and 90 graduate international students have registered.

Our international students come to us mainly from the sub-region but there are also students on exchange programmes from our partner institutions in Europe, United States of America, Canada and Asia. The University has engaged Recruitment Officers to assist the Office of International Programmes achieve international enrolment targets set by the University. The University has also began implementation of some useful recommendations made by the University of Ghana Internationalization Review Committee, regarding improvement in

student experience and mobility, teaching to international standards, attitudes and perceptions.

### **Financial Aid for Students**

Ladies and gentlemen, the 2014/2015 academic year ended with a total donation inflow from both local and foreign donors of GH¢639,912.09 towards financial aid for students. I am proud to note that the University contributed GH¢103,932.00 of this amount from its internally generated funds. Additionally, the University and General Electric, have signed a memorandum of understanding covering a US\$100,000 scholarship package for needy but brilliant students of University of Ghana. Under the agreement, one hundred students will have their tuition and residential fees fully paid until they complete their studies.

We salute all our donors and encourage other corporate sponsors and individuals to assist us to fund the education of students who would otherwise have to interrupt or terminate their studies.

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

Mr Chairman, Ladies and gentlemen, in the area of research, we have declared our intention of working to become a world-class research intensive university over the next decade. A number of initiatives have been undertaken to ensure that this vision does not remain a dream. The Office of Research, Innovation and Development has become our main vehicle for achieving our goal as it facilitates and coordinates the conduct of research in all units of the University.

The four centres of excellence established at the University have been allocated Gh¢1 million each as seed money to develop research areas in Climate Change Adaptation; Malaria Research; Food Production and Processing; and, Development Policy and Poverty Monitoring and Evaluation to address key developmental issues in Ghana and beyond. The University has earmarked US\$5 million for refurbishment of laboratories and the replacement of obsolete scientific equipment. Through the Chinese phase II ICT project, the University is now in a position to house large datasets for research and also do more computing research than before.

At the end of the review process for the 8<sup>th</sup> call for proposals for UG Research Grants, 31 grants with a total value of GHC 996,723 were awarded in the three grant categories.

39 applications for UG Conference Grants with a total value of GHC 187,990 were approved for funding in the 2014/2015 academic year. A total of GHC 284,538 was awarded as faculty development grants in the last academic year. Since the inception of this scheme in the 2008/2009 academic year, a total of GHC 1,083,250 has been awarded to 85 faculty members. Out of this number, 31 have successfully obtained their PhDs or other terminal degrees, and returned to active teaching and research duties at the university. We are also exploring alternative faculty development schemes such as a UG postdoctoral research fellowship scheme.

Faculty and students of the University continue to benefit from a number of capacity building grants. Some of these are CAPREx, where faculty members spend up to 6 months at the University of Cambridge to work on a research topic with a Cambridge based collaborator; the Climate Impact Research Capacity and Leadership Enhancement (CIRCLE) Programme, which offers one-year fellowships to support early career researchers on the impact of climate change in Africa; the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan; and the ACU STARS (*Structured Training for African Researchers*) Project.

Others are the Trans-Disciplinary Training for Resource Efficiency and Climate Change Adaptation in Africa – Phase 2; ARISE (Africa Regional International Staff/Student Exchange); Food Security and Sustainable Human Wellbeing Project; P4HPT (Partnering for Health Professional Training in African Universities); CSAA (Inter-University Cooperation to Train Crop Scientists for Enhancing Agriculture in Africa) ; One Health (Enhancing Community of Practice in One Health for Infectious Diseases through Postgraduate Training).

Since the beginning of the 2014/2015 academic year, 37 research grant agreements with a combined total value of USD9,579,086 have been signed, while 76 research proposals have been submitted to various sponsors/funders with 24 proposals so far approved with a total value of \$21,221,754.

Earlier this year, we received the good news that Dr. Kwaku Kyeremeh, of the Department of Chemistry was a member of an international research team that collaborated in the discovery of Legonmycins, a set of new alkaloids from a novel Ghanaian microorganism which has great potential as future microbial and cancer fighting agents. Ghanaian participation in this break-through research was made possible by significant investment made by the University in modern science equipment.

Mr Chairman, I believe we can safely conclude that our investment in research is paying off.

### **Governance**

Ladies and gentlemen, the collegiate system of governance adopted by the University is in its second year of operation and it is important that we all continue to work hard to ensure that the colleges meet their targets of increasing efficiency and reducing bureaucracy.

All the four colleges are making strides in the area of research productivity and visibility and continue to explore opportunities for fund-raising and to carry out ground breaking research with collaboration from local and international partners.

The first batch of undergraduate students was admitted directly into the four new Colleges at the beginning of the 2015/2016 academic year. The colleges are all working towards ensuring that their students have a positive student experience during their time here. It is expected that a thorough review of the collegiate system will take place after the system has been in operation for three years.

As part of our efforts to enhance governance at University of Ghana, the University has completed work on its new Human Resources (HR) and Administrative Policies and Procedures Manual. The manual has been drafted with the following objectives in mind:

- To provide a single reference manual on HR (employee) and Administrative Policies and Procedures aligned with University of Ghana's (UG's) Statutes, Schemes of Service, Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs) and related policy documents;
- To serve as a single reference point on all HR and administrative issues;
- To ensure uniformity and consistency in decision making and action across the Colleges to which various activities and responsibilities are to be devolved.

University Management has been forced to put a temporary freeze on all employment until such time that University of Ghana receives financial clearance from Government to appointment new staff. In this regard, even though some employees retired at the end of the last academic year, no new appointments are being made that require payments by the government. This problem has become a major obstacle to the development of academic programmes.

### **Physical Developments at Legon**

Ladies and gentlemen, a number of projects are currently underway at the University, and I will touch briefly on some of the major ones.

#### University of Ghana Medical Centre

Work on the construction of a 600-bed Teaching Hospital for the University is proceeding steadily and the first phase is about 80% complete. The Hospital, when completed, will have state-of-the-art facilities for trauma and emergency services, heart surgery, medical imaging, and a heliport. It will eventually be expanded into a 1,300-bed facility to provide effective teaching, learning and patient care.

Future construction will cover a Cancer Centre and a Rehabilitation Building. This project is an integral part of the 'Medical Village' concept that is to enable the University produce world-class health educators, experts and researchers in all sub-specialties to make health delivery in Ghana independent, sustainable and progressive. When completed, the University of Ghana Medical Centre will place the University of Ghana as one of the most advanced medical training institutions in West Africa. As part of the project package about 80 Ghanaian personnel are to receive training at the Sheba Medical Centre in Israel. 20 Senior Specialists and Consultants have already started their training in Israel; nurses, administrators, biomedical engineers, and pharmacists will also receive training in the coming weeks. The Hospital is expected to start operating by the middle of 2016.

#### University of Ghana/Africa Integras Project

Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to highlight some initiatives being pursued by the University towards the modernization and improved efficiency in service delivery at the University of Ghana. The University signed a US\$64 million landmark agreement with Africa Integras earlier this year, structured as a 25-year Build, Operate and Transfer (BOT)

Project. The project involves the construction of an expanded facility for the College of Humanities, a new building complex for the College of Education, a new dedicated facility for the College of Basic and Applied Sciences, as well as a new facility for the College of Health Sciences to be located near the new medical centre.

1,000 new student hostel beds will be provided under the project, to be divided between undergraduate and graduate students, mostly to serve the College of Health Sciences. This project will undoubtedly boost the University's infrastructural development, propel its decentralization efforts and enhance immensely its capacity to attract and train more graduates. The Vice-President of the Republic of Ghana, His Excellency Kwesi Amissah-Arthur, performed the ground-breaking for the commencement of work on Monday, September 14, 2015, with a planned completion date of September 2017. Presently, site preparation for all facilities is 100% complete.

Generator Sets have been procured and installed at the various halls of residence to ensure that academic life continues even when there is a power outage on the campus. The University's effort was supported with significant contributions from our students. Generator sets have also been procured and installed at a number of other academic units on campus to stabilize electricity supply to the University campus. The University is at the same time looking at alternative ways of generating electricity.

Mr Chairman, we have recently completed work on all residential facilities for staff and are now continuing with the rehabilitation of all of our roads, including the development of pedestrian walkways along some of the major ones.

### **Reports from the Colleges**

I will now turn my attention to some of the activities that took place in the four colleges during the year under review.

#### ***College of Basic and Applied Sciences (CBAS)***

##### **Donations**

- On behalf of the Marie Curie Library of the International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP), Mrs. Ylenia Pinelli of the Embassy of Italy donated 20 different



books to the Department of Materials Science and Engineering to augment the stock of collections of the Department at the Library of the School of Engineering Sciences.

- The West Africa Centre for Crop Improvement (WACCI) had donated a 4x4 Toyota Prado to the Forest and Horticultural Crops Research Centre (FOHCREC). WACCI and FOHCREC were partners in the Envirodome Vegetable Laboratory Innovation trials.
- CBAS had also donated a tractor it received from the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA) to FOHCREC.

### Renovation

- The Constantine Leventis Computer laboratory at the School of Agriculture has been given a facelift to support teaching, learning and research.

### CBAS Lecture Series

- The first two of the College of Basic and Applied Sciences (CBAS) Public Lecture Series were held on April 30, and September 30, 2015. The CBAS Lecture Series was established to provide an excellent forum for interaction and engagement between researchers, industry players and other stakeholders and enrich the knowledge base of students. It will also enhance the visibility of the College, provide an avenue for identifying solutions to industry related problems and to help build the investment portfolio for the College's endowment fund for Graduate Students.

### ***College of Humanities***

#### **Establishment of a Centre for Asian Studies at the University of Ghana**

- The College has received approval to host a Centre for Asian Studies at the University from the University Council. The centre will provide expertise and attention to Asian Studies and research.
- The School of Languages held its first international conference from 27<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> October 2015 on the theme "*Multilingualism in the African context: Resource or Challenge*".

- The College has introduced an Annual International Research Conference. The maiden conference was held between June, 18-20, 2015 on the theme *Multidisciplinary Research and Transformation in Africa*.

The College Research Board has approved the introduction of the Provost's Paper Awards Competition for doctoral students; early career and mid-career faculty in the College. The first awards were presented at the conference.

- The Department of Archaeology and Heritage Studies facilitated and sponsored a Young Film Makers Festival from June 4 and 5 2015.
- The Institute of African Studies in collaboration with the New York University, Accra hosted a conference on the theme "*The Humanities and a 21<sup>st</sup> century Africa: Towards Alternative Modes of Human Development*" on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> April, 2015.

### ***College of Education***

This is the first time since the introduction of the Distance Education programme in the 2007/2008 academic year that students on the programme have been able to graduate in the same year; and indeed just a few months after they complete their final examinations. This has been possible as a direct result of the decentralization that has come with the introduction of the collegiate system, and I take this opportunity to applaud the administration of the College of Education, and all the academic and administrative staff who have worked hard to achieve this feat.

### **Establishment of Academic Awards**

The College has taken steps toward instituting academic awards, as well as sourcing for sponsors for the awards. In line with this, Departments have been requested to submit lists of prospective prizes, and members of the Advisory Board have committed to assisting with the identification of sponsors.

### **Security at Regional Learning Centres**

The College is in the process of acquiring additional security services at the Regional Learning Centres to ensure the safety of the new ICT equipment that have been installed for the distance learning programme. With the embargo on employment, this has been a challenge for the college.

### Double Intake of Distance Education Students

The College started the double intake of students in September 2015. Students have been admitted to all the Regional Centres. Diploma to Degree and B.Sc. in Nursing students will, however, start in January 2016. The College had also suggested the adoption of the blended approach to course delivery which involves 50% face-to-face lecturing and 50% electronic teaching.

In the long term, the University envisages the development of regional campuses.

### ***College of Health Sciences***

The School of Biomedical and Allied Health Sciences (SBAHS) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Northumbria Healthcare Trust for a Students Exchange Programme. Flowing from this, six students from the Department of Occupational Therapy visited Northumbria University.

The College Advisory Board is working closely with Management to attracting funding support for the College. The collaboration has yielded an amount of GH¢350,970 so far to be used for urgent projects at the College. The donation will be used for the building, rehabilitation and equipping of laboratories in the School of Biomedical and Allied Health Sciences and the re-roofing of the School of Pharmacy Building.

### **Rankings**

Mr Chairman, Ladies and gentlemen, evidence of the fact that the state of University is very good may be found in the fact that in all major global rankings of universities, this university is the only one in West Africa that has shown consistent improvement over the last 5 years. It is one of only 16 universities in the whole of Africa ranked among the world's top 800 universities and the ninth in Africa by Times Higher Education in its recent global rankings published in September. Our high placement is largely attributable to our growing international image.

## **Well Wishes to Graduands**

Now to our graduating students:

Seeing you all here, at the threshold of starting the next phase of your lives, brings back memories of my own graduation ceremonies from various educational institutions, many years ago, and reminds me of the excitement, the trepidation about what the future might hold, and the zeal I had to go out and change the world. No doubt, most of you gathered here are going through similar feelings and thoughts. Today's world offers young graduates so many opportunities, yet so many challenges; so many potential positive outcomes yet so many pitfalls along the way. I challenge you all to go out into the world, and do the very best you can wherever you find yourself. Work hard, dream big, plan ahead and be ethical and honest in all your dealings, and you will be well on the way towards success. The future may not be given, but you have a clean slate. Go out there, write on your slate in bold characters and make your mark! I wish you all the very best.

Thank you and God bless you.

**Professor Ernest Aryeetey**

**November, 2015**