

VALEDICTORY SPEECH DELIVERED AT CONGREGATION:
NOVEMBER 5, 2015

Chairman and Members of the University Council,
Vice-Chancellor,
Pro-Vice-Chancellors,
Registrar,
Provosts of Colleges,
Distinguished Guest Speaker,
Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps,
Members of Convocation,
Nii mei, Naa mei, Nananom,
Parents and Guardians,
Fellow Graduates,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen;

I am humbled by my selection as the person to deliver the valedictory speech on behalf of the November 2015 graduating class at this session of Congregation. It seems like only yesterday that we had our first tutorials as newly enrolled undergraduate students of this noble institution. I vividly recall how we struggled to locate our lecture halls and to get settled for our first class. Four years down the line here we are, gathered to close a great chapter in our lives.

For the Distance Education students, many are those among us who were disappointed by the fact that they were denied the opportunity to pursue a degree as regular students. Part of the reason was that distance students were perceived to be less capable academically. Tears welled up in my eyes when my dad insisted that I take up the offer as a distance student and prove myself. I am sure most of us had similar experiences when we were offered admission into the distance education program to read various courses. Initially, I was angered by the fact that my dad could not use his influence as a former lecturer to help me gain

admission into the mainstream but after many nights' reflection, I decided to grab the opportunity and make the best out of it.

I settled on this because I realized that it is not always that one gets what one wants in life. However, with the right attitude you can succeed in accomplishing what you want if you set your mind to your target. As John Wooden said, "things work out for those who make the best of how things work out."

It is my hope that all who harboured any thoughts about being "second class students" have long since put such thoughts behind them. Today we are here to celebrate the accomplishment of our dream of academic success; the nights we stayed up late to study for interim assessments or end of semester exams or to meet deadlines for the submission of assignments have paid dividends.

To my fellow graduates I say congratulations for succeeding in the face of the difficulties we encountered in our studies. We give thanks to the Almighty God for bringing us this far. We also say thank you to all our lecturers, parents and all others who contributed to the successful completion of our courses.

Our time here has taught us a lot. Where we expected limitless freedom, we were given the chance to grow up, mature and take responsibility for ourselves and our actions. Suffice it to say, the University of Ghana has not only met our academic expectations but our experiences here have molded us into responsible and discerning adults and I daresay we have been equipped to compete wherever our careers take us; at the national or international level.

As we step out of this University and into the world, I would like us to make it a priority to contribute to bring about the change in integrity, good citizenship and hard work that our ailing society needs. Wherever

we find ourselves let our conduct reflect the motto of this great University which urges us to “proceed in integrity.” Let us respect experience and give honor to whom honor is due. I challenge us to shun the craze of making quick money by all means fair or foul.

Developments in this nation and indeed on the international stage, require that those of us who have had the privilege of being educated, lead the way in championing change that will lead to improvements in society. As graduates, it is our duty to at least try to introduce change in our society, in our communities and in our homes. I pledge today to be an agent of positive change wherever I find myself, and I pray you will all do the same.

The world may not always present us with favorable situations but with God, an appreciation of the benefits of hard work, determination and perseverance, we are bound to succeed.

Thank you, and God bless us all.

Kwesi A. Addo-Fening
November 15, 2015