

**UNIVERSITY OF GHANA
NOVEMBER, 2017 CONGREGATION
VALEDICTORY SPEECH DELIVERED BY
DR. EBENEZER KOBBIIE ARYEE**

Madam Chairperson,

Vice Chancellor,

Pro-Vice Chancellors

Registrar

Deans and Directors,

College Secretaries

Distinguished Guest Speaker,

Members of convocation,

Colleague graduates,

Parents and Guardians

Ladies and gentlemen

I am humbled and greatly privileged to present the valedictory speech at this graduation ceremony. I wish to congratulate my fellow graduates for the hard work and sleepless nights that have culminated in this colourful ceremony we are all witnessing. Some years ago, we made frantic efforts to enroll in the premier University with the ultimate goal of acquiring knowledge and skills to improve health service delivery in Ghana. It was a dream come true when we were eventually offered admission to pursue various degree programmes at the, University of Ghana.

I remember vividly at the school level orientation to usher us into the university community, I stole a casual look at some of the yet-to-be known friends who had converged at the School of Public Health auditorium. I quickly judged from a few faces, that they had probably come to see their wards off. This assumption turned out to be false when these same faces were seen energetically struggling for seats at our first lectures. It then dawned on me how the desire for knowledge had motivated people from all walks of life back into school.

Our class was made up of the funny middle-aged and fairly more senior people who preferred to be seen as sweet sixteen's. They were armed with wise counsel yet humble enough to ask for help whenever necessary. There were the loud and opinionated young ones who assumed the mantle of modern-day Socrates and Plato with their winding explanations of dialogical pedagogies, and there were the seemingly shy and timid ones who hardly spoke up but proved their worth in all endeavors. I am certain that my colleagues still remember the herculean tasks of establishing the existence of ghosts in Research Methods I and making meaning out of an avalanche of figures and formulae in the Biostatistics class.

The strain from the academic demands was aggravated by the famous "*dumsor*" which in some cases thwarted our preparations for quizzes and examinations. During periods of power outage we experienced seismic reactions in our spines especially when assignments were due for submission or course materials needed to be retrieved from the e-learning platform popularly called sakai.

In view of this, we wish to bring to the attention of Management the erratic power supply and its effect on studies and request that academic units and hostels are provided with generator sets to facilitate effective teaching and learning. Again, lack of adequate accommodation on campus cannot go into oblivion. While Management takes steps to expand the hostel and lecture facilities, we request that they are designed to be baby-friendly for those who may have the dual responsibilities of studying and nursing babies.

Despite these challenges, we want to commend the University and especially the School of Public Health for the tremendous effort in utilizing the e-learning platform (sakai) for teaching and learning. The inherent advantages cannot be overemphasized.

The years spent within the walls of University of Ghana, have been a time of personal discovery and fulfillment without a modicum of regret. There are countless fond memories which never fade. We came onto the University of Ghana campus with different background and life experiences and we are leaving this campus after our respective study periods as a collective

unit; with the common goal of providing the needed professional support to strengthen the health delivery system. We recognize the fact that health system management requires collective efforts from all specialties and I am proudly quick to add, that the training programmes we have undergone in our colleges have imbibed in us skills, knowledge and virtues that are imperative for effective health service delivery. Our colleague post-graduates have attained in-depth knowledge and skills in their specialized areas and it is our prayer that as they join the upper echelons of management, they will bring their expertise to bear to propel the agenda of their organizations/institutions.

As we graduate today, we are armed to go and make an impact in the world, to uphold the values we have acquired and always practice our profession in truth and integrity. This University has transformed us and therefore expects us to strive to achieve the best in all that we do. I do not seek to scare you but there will be more daunting moments ahead when we start practicing but I will urge you to be strong and steadfast because hard work pays. Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, ***“Do not go where the path may lead; go instead where there is no path and leave a trail”***. We should make every effort to leave a trail that others will be proud to follow.

As health professionals and consumer scientists, our core duty is to save lives and promote healthy living of the citizenry for national development. This calls for continuous professional development to be abreast of emerging approaches to effective health care.

As we close this chapter and commence a new one, let us never forget the bridges crossed, networking and unique passions, let us also always remember the important role the University of Ghana has played in shaping our lives and contribute our widow's mite in the quest of becoming a world-class research intensive university.

At this time I would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who encouraged and supported us through this incredible educational journey, most especially to our spouses, parents and guardians, families, friends and mentors. We are equally most grateful to our

lecturers, administrators and support staff who played diverse roles in making us successful graduates in 2015.

Once again, congratulations to the class of 2015. Ayekoo!!!!