

**VICE-CHANCELLOR'S ADDRESS AT MATRICULATION:  
SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 23, 2017**

**SALUTATION**

Chairman and members of the University Council;

Pro-Vice-Chancellors;

Registrar;

Provosts, Deans and Directors;

University Librarian;

Heads of Department;

Heads of Halls;

Senior Tutors;

Members of Convocation;

Freshmen and Women;

Parents and Guardians;

Distinguished Invited Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen:

**INTRODUCTION**

On behalf of the University of Ghana, as we begin yet another academic year, it is my pleasure to welcome you all to this year's matriculation ceremony. Matriculation marks a special milestone as new faces and new blood are injected into the University. Here at the University of Ghana, matriculation provides an opportunity for freshmen and women who have gained admission into various programmes to be officially inducted as Junior Members into this academically stimulating and socially exciting community.

The ceremony is also significant because it provides the opportunity for you, young men and women, to pledge your allegiance to the authority of the University through the administration of the **Matriculation Oath**, and you will in due course, be expected to sign a bond to be of good behaviour and to subject yourself to the authority of all in whom authority has been vested in this University. You will also, by the same token, be expected to contribute your quota to enhancing the University's image wherever you find yourself and to ensure that you do not bring the name of the University into disrepute.

Freshmen and women; to arrive here today, you have accomplished a great deal; through your hard work, drive and perseverance you have gained admission to the greatest university in Ghana, and indeed in the West African sub-region. Today, as you officially start the next stage of your educational career, I want you to focus, and realize that in front of you, like a winding road, lie tremendous opportunities and experiences that will define your university experience and set you on the path of your professional and personal life. Indeed, to a large extent, these opportunities and experiences will determine the direction of the rest of your life. Seeing you here today reminds me of the beginning of my own academic journey, and the many twists and turns that have brought me this far. As you embark on your own individual journeys, I hope you will take inspiration from myself and the other persons here, and work hard to achieve your dreams.

## **ADMISSIONS**

The admissions process for the 2017/2018 academic year has just been completed and is indeed the reason why we are here today.

For the seventh year running, the University of Ghana has made it possible for students who completed their WASSCE in May, to enter the University in the same year of writing the examinations. For the 2017/2018 academic year, the University's re-opening schedule for fresh undergraduate students, which would normally have been in the middle of September, was shifted slightly to start in the last week of August, to enable fresh undergraduate students complete their lectures and write their end of semester examination before the Christmas break. I salute the various teams who worked hard to make this a reality.

We continue to work to make our admissions systems as stress-free as possible for students and parents. Large numbers of prospective students apply to this University yearly and each time, we are faced with the painful decision of having to turn down the applications of many otherwise well qualified applicants due to limitations of our staff and facilities. Our four Colleges have been charged to submit proposals on creative ways to be able to offer quality education to many more qualified applicants at all levels.

## **UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSIONS**

For the 2017/2018 academic year, the University received a total of 41,447 undergraduate applications. For this academic year, the University admitted students into programmes on the Main Campus, the Korle Bu Campus, the Accra City Campus and Distance Learning and was able to offer admission to 23,041 applicants. Out of the number of undergraduate applicants offered admission, 10,289 have registered, as against 7,611 who had registered by this time last academic year.

The University continued with its policies of giving the opportunity of university education to women through the Affirmative Action Policy, as well as applicants from Less Endowed Schools on concessionary basis. Following the introduction of the policy on the Admission of Student Athletes a few years ago, the University, for the fourth year running, offered admission to talented sportsmen and women based on their sporting abilities. Students admitted under the policy must first satisfy the general entry requirements of the University, and also show proof of athletic ability. The first three batches of students admitted under this programme are excelling both academically and in their sporting activities. We welcome the fourth batch of students admitted under this policy, and trust that you will work hard to effectively combine your participation in sports with your academic work.

## **GRADUATE ADMISSIONS**

For the 2017/2018 academic year, the University received a total of 7,281 graduate applications and was able to offer admission to 4,198 graduate applicants. Out of the number offered admission, 3,107 have registered as against 2,940 who had registered by matriculation last academic year.

## **INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

International students in any university add to the cultural enrichment of the social as well as the academic setting. It is also our firm belief that any world-class university should have a vibrant multi-national student population. In our drive to attract more international students to this University, we have, since the 2014/2015 academic year, offered admission to international students who wrote their final secondary school examinations in May/June.

A total of 745 international students of various nationalities have been admitted into various programmes, made up of 530 undergraduate students and 215 graduate students.

Out of the numbers admitted, a total of 285 international students have registered, made up of 216 undergraduate and 69 graduate students have registered. We would like to extend a warm welcome to all our international students and urge them to enjoy their stay in Ghana, feel at home, and make use of the services offered by the International Programmes Office.

## **FINANCIAL AID**

In 2005, the University instituted a process to assist students to significantly reduce or eliminate financial barriers that might limit their access to education here. Through the Students Financial Aid Office, financial assistance is provided to qualified students who, without such assistance, may not be able to meet their educational expenses.

This aid is available in the form of partial and full scholarships, with an average of 120 students sponsored each year through the benevolence of individuals and corporate bodies. I would like to salute all donors and encourage other corporate bodies and individuals to assist us to fund the education of students who would otherwise have to interrupt or terminate their studies. Students facing financial challenges are encouraged to apply for consideration for the various support schemes when they are advertised. The Students Financial Aid Office is located at Bungalow Number 11, East Legon (adjacent to Akafo Hall Annex A).

Financial assistance is also available to undergraduate students who need it from the Students' Loan Trust Fund (SLTF). You can contact the Students Loan Trust Fund to initiate the process of applying for the Students' Loan. Their contact details can be found in your admission letters.

Being sensitive to the plight of students, the University has made provision for students to pay 50% of their fees at the beginning of the first semester, and the remaining, before the beginning of the second semester.

## **EXCELLENCE AND DISCIPLINE**

Dear matriculants, as I bring my address to an end, I want to touch on ways in which you can make your stay in this University more enjoyable, and leave here fulfilled. As you begin your studies, I encourage you to strive for excellence. Excellence does not come from spending 24 hours a day in the library; nor does it come from spending 12 hours a day on religious activities. Spending all your time on entertainment, devoting all your energies to organising hall week and other events will not lead to excellence.

As students, you will be well on the way to achieving excellence if you are able to strike the right balance between your academic, extra curricula and social life. You should carefully apportion the amount of time you spend on your books, on social engagements and on social media. You must develop skills in critical thinking and be analytical, and learn how to question received wisdom in a refined manner. There is nothing wrong with being religious, and we all are. But do not let religion become

an excuse for not engaging your minds intellectually. I will encourage you to be more open-minded and less fundamentalist about religion.

Education comes with responsibility. Those of you, who are fortunate enough to have been admitted to study at the University of Ghana, have an obligation to use your education for the benefit of others. We believe that each of you must become an active citizen of this community and every community that you will be part of in future.

## **CONCLUSION**

Your primary aim for coming here is to study and I urge you to channel your energies in that direction.

Remember that you were admitted to the University as an individual and you will graduate as an individual. You are therefore solely responsible for all your actions.

In the course of time, you will encounter new experiences. Some of you will enter new relationships, some of which may be life-long. By all means enjoy them but remain focused.

We as your teachers, hall tutors and advisors shall be available to guide you, so long as you are willing to be guided. We will give you all the necessary support, but only if you use the legitimate means to seek such support. Remember to make time to read official notices and pay attention to University rules and regulations. These will guide you and help you make the right decisions regarding your time here.

On behalf of the Council and management of the University, members of Convocation and on my own behalf, I would like to welcome you once again to the

University of Ghana. We pledge that we will do all we can to make your stay here as pleasant as possible.

Enjoy your stay here; take advantage of every facility that is offered to develop yourself and to prepare you for your future careers and lives. I pray that the good Lord will crown all your efforts with success. I wish you well.

Thank you and God bless you all.

Professor Ebenezer Owusu Oduro  
Vice-Chancellor