

**A VALEDICTORY SPEECH DELIVERED BY MS. ABENA APRAKU
AT THE JULY 2018 CONGREGATION OF THE COLLEGE OF BASIC
AND APPLIED SCIENCES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA,
LEGON.**

Madam Chairperson; Vice-Chancellor; Pro Vice-Chancellors; Registrar;
Provosts of Colleges; Deans; Members of Convocation, Parents and Guardians;
Fellow Graduands; Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.

I am highly privileged and humbled to be selected amongst my able and eminent colleagues to deliver this speech on a memorable day that marks the end of a remarkable four years of determination and persistent hard work. Together, we share our success story with all and sundry.

Madam Chairperson, it is fitting and proper on a historic day like this to reflect on how it all began four years ago. We all came through the prestigious gates of the University of Ghana as individuals with different backgrounds full of hopes and aspirations. Most of us did not know our way around and were uncertain what our years in school would bring. We had a good journey with some bumps along the way but we are grateful that we are seated here this afternoon not as strangers but as a family.

2 Corinthians 3:5 says *“Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy comes from God”*. We are

thankful to God for how far he has brought us as individuals and as a class. “*Awurade ye da woase*”. To our lovely parents and guardians, you deserve a tap on the shoulders for a good work done, words are not enough to express how grateful we are for your support, care and invaluable advice. To our lecturers and all university staff, we say thumbs up for your hard work and dedication. We came as rough gems but thanks to your efforts, we are leaving refined and polished for the world of work. More grease to your elbows. Our lives as students would have been woefully incomplete without course mates, the friends and acquaintances we made along the way.

You brightened our journey and made it more memorable, we truly treasure you. To my fellow graduates, congratulations, you deserve a round of applause because we have made it.

Four years ago, we were tagged as freshers but here we are today ready to venture into the world and achieve new milestones in spite of the challenges, discomforts, sleepless nights and the fear of the unknown. We persisted because we believe that obstacles and trials are inevitable, however, once we overcome them, we only grow stronger and better. It is said that the purest ores are produced by the hottest furnace. I therefore believe that our time within the walls of this great university coupled with our individual experiences have adequately prepared us for the next chapter of our lives.

Fellow graduates, today, we are leaving this noble institution as better individuals not just because we possess certificates but because vital principles such as discipline, hard work, integrity and perseverance have been instilled in us. As we prepare to begin a new chapter in our lives, let us continue with diligence, integrity and humility. Irrespective of the hurdles we face, it should be our resolve never to relent or give up. These obstacles should rather encourage us to strive harder in order to attain our goals. I urge us all to strive for excellence in our various fields of endeavour because we each possess the potential to achieve greatness. The fear of failure should not prevent us from grabbing opportunities, instead we should view failure as a means to correct our mistakes, learn something new and reshape our aspirations and goals if need be.

Ed Macauley an NBA player once said *“You always have to give a hundred percent because if you do not someone somewhere will give hundred percent and beat you when you meet”*. I encourage us to always demonstrate commitment and give our best regardless of the compensation at hand. It should be our desire to leave a good mark wherever we go. We are capable of being world changers, entrepreneurs, job creators among others, thus let’s not wait to be handed opportunities rather we should aim at making a difference which would impact individuals, communities, countries and the world at large.

Though our journey has not been all rosy, we cannot help but look back with smiles. I remember on my first day here, I did not think four years would pass

so quickly. It felt like an eternity away but here we are today celebrating the end of an important part of our lives. I am sure most if not all of us will miss everything about our great school especially students passing funny comments in class, the shouts of joy when a lecturer closes before time, a course rep prompting a lecturer when it is time to close, the excitement when an IA or exam goes well, class dinners and so on. Indeed, our experience here has helped us grow into wiser ladies and gentlemen who are capable of taking relevant decisions for the future. Fellow graduates, I entreat us to value and maintain the relationships we have built with each other over the years because we may not have the opportunity to interact as we are accustomed to.

Madam Chairperson, I conclude by saying that we each have our unique strengths and abilities. If a fish was judged by its ability to fly or walk it would be considered a failure. Thus, we should not measure our success based on what others are able or unable to do, instead we should utilise our God given talents and set standards that will make us proud as alumni of the University of Ghana.

Congratulations to the class of 2018!

God bless the University of Ghana, God bless Ghana and God bless us all.
Thank you