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GUEST SPEAKER'S NOTES

JOINT CONGREGATION CEREMONY OF THE COLLEGE OF HEALTH  
SCIENCES AND COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

GREAT HALL, UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

SATURDAY, 21ST JULY, 2018

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Chairman and Members of Council

Vice-Chancellor

Pro-Vice-Chancellors

Provosts

Registrar

Members of Convocation

Graduating Students

Parents and Guardians

Nii Mei, Naa Mei, Nananom

Members of the Press

Distinguished Invited Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

I count it a very special honour to spend this memorable day with you for the congregation ceremony of the 2018 graduating class of students from the College of Health Sciences and College of Education of this remarkable Institution.

I wish to express my heartiest congratulations to the families, loved ones and friends of this graduating class, for cheering them on, helping them and providing all they needed to get to

this point. They could not have come this far without your support.

I also wish to commend the Faculty and Staff of the two Colleges for their input and support in the training of these professionals. I congratulate the class of 2018 for your determination and resolve to excel despite all the challenges. Congratulations!

Ladies and Gentlemen, when I was contacted to serve as the Guest Speaker for this occasion, I gladly accepted it because of my affiliation with Ghana's Health sector. It may interest you to know that I trained as a Pharmacist at KNUST and worked as such for some years before branching into my current career as a Banker.

Congregation ceremonies are very important dates on University calendars when members and friends of the University gather to witness and celebrate the conferment of degrees on deserving grandaunds. Yours is a unique one! You have finished a degree, completed practical experience and about to be 'sent forth' into the world to make an impact, affect lives and contribute towards national development and the development of humankind in general. It is my firm belief that the training you have received has equipped you sufficiently to positively impact lives. However, I would like to share with you some thoughts that may help you navigate and make the necessary impact in your respective careers.

### **Keeping a Positive Attitude**

My dear Graduands, you must count yourself blessed to graduate from a University that has prepared you exceptionally well. You need to combine all the training

received with a positive attitude in order to succeed, work with passion. You are to eschew laziness, indiscipline, selfishness and perform at your best. Treat whatever job you find yourself in as yours, by forging healthy relations with your supervisors, colleagues and clients. A smile, a touch and a show of empathy while attending to your duty will help your patients to find the healing they most desire. These will also affect your job performance, increase your productivity and generally foster a positive client experience.

As Martin Luther King Junior famously said, “If a man is called to be a street sweeper, he should sweep streets even as Michelangelo painted, or Beethoven composed music or Shakespeare wrote poetry. He should sweep streets so well that all the hosts of heaven and earth will pause to say, “Here lived a great street sweeper who did his job well.”

### **Life Has No Entitlements**

As you enter the real world of work, I would like you to know from the very onset that life has no entitlements. Do not go out with your Degree, holding unreasonable high expectations about what you are entitled to. In real life, everything is earned; nothing would be given to you for free or on a silver platter. You do not demand respect, but rather earn it. It is my expectation that you would put all the knowledge, skills and experience you have acquired to optimal use to earn the entitlements you deserve.

### **Life is Not a Sprint**

One trait that has helped me in my career advancement is my view of life as a marathon rather than a sprint. Whereas sprinters run at top speed to reach their finish line, running a marathon requires discipline, perseverance, endurance and training to complete the given task over a long period. You

have to study your operating terrain, understand the setbacks, fears, disappointments, work cultures and embrace all of them in creating and adopting your survival strategies. In order to succeed, you would need to set milestones and develop strategies to achieve your targets. Take one step at a time but be focused on your set goal, and with dedication and patience you would get to the top. Do not look for short cuts, go through the mill and come out wholly baked.

### **Invest in Yourself for Future Opportunities**

Dear graduands, life abounds with so many opportunities and it behoves on us to attain the necessary requirements to help capitalize on the opportunities, as they occur. You have, over the past few years, been given the skill set and knowledge necessary to function in your respective professions, however to stay relevant and progress in your respective careers, you must continue learning in order to be abreast with changes and new developments in your professions. The more you learn, the greater your value to your clients, employers, colleagues and most importantly yourself. Knowledge is one thing no one can take away from you.

Look out for the skills that will be relevant in the future and seek to prepare yourselves for the future. Take full advantage of online programmes and gain the knowledge and skills needed for progression in your career and the delivery of high quality service to your clients and humanity.

The most successful people we have known in life are those who have been very good at re-inventing themselves, they learn, unlearn and relearn. The reality now is we live in a dynamic world; with an ever changing job landscape. 25 years ago no one thought you could have a career in

blockchain engineering, cyber security, or telesurgery but technology has changed the world. With the advent of robotics and increased use of technology a lot of jobs as we know them today, may become extinct. Research by Oxford University indicates that 47% of jobs will disappear in the next 25 years. Not only will computers be able to perform tasks more cheaply than people, they'll be more efficient as well.

In addition to investing in yourself, I urge you to extend your curiosity beyond the field of your professions. You must have a strong desire to know or learn something new not just about your profession but outside it as well. Expand your learning endeavours into new areas. To do this, you must strive to break the normal routines so as to be able to see things differently, do things differently and think about things differently.

As I said in my introduction, I trained as a Pharmacist but out of curiosity, I decided to get a Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree from Manchester Business School, hoping to come back and work in a leadership position in the pharmaceutical industry. I ended up in Banking because at the time, Ghana had very limited opportunities for Pharmacists.

Today, there are so many opportunities for progression in your career. You can go on to pursue postgraduate studies in your profession, take a degree in Law, Business, International Relations or learn an International language like Spanish, Chinese, French, Arabic, Japanese or German. It may take time, effort and some money, but I want to assure you that it would put you ahead of your contemporaries.

## **Keep a Global Mindset**

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, as you may be fully aware, we live in a digital age where geographical borders are not clearly defined. You, therefore, need to maintain a global mindset. Do things not in the typical Ghanaian way but have the ability to adapt to a culture and influence individuals and groups whose ways of doing things are different from yours.

To succeed and to make an impact, you would have to be interested in and make it a habit of continuously staying abreast with global news trends. The refugee crisis, elections, wars, disasters, climate change, change in foreign policies, activities of ISIS and Boko Haram, the outbreak of diseases, etc., do not occur in a vacuum. They have consequences for all of us. It is incumbent on us to know the current trends and their implications for our contribution and progression, because we live and work in the global space in a global era.

Over the next couple of months before you begin your House Jobs you would have a lot of free time on your hands. My advice is to use this period to step back and figure out who you really are and what impact you want to have. Dig deep into your life and your values. From time to time, you may fall and even fail at something you were so sure of. Life can happen and may happen but your ability to draw on your inner values will make a real difference so find time, put your phones away, step away from social media and spend some time thinking, reflecting and strategizing. Though the path ahead may not look so clear, looking at my life journey I know that you will turn out okay. That will however require that you pay attention to what we have discussed coupled with your faith and abilities.

Above all, do not forget your God, as the Good Book says, “Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come and the years approach when you will say, “I find no pleasure in them”—***Ecclesiastics 12:1. After all, it is by grace that we are what we are!***

## **Conclusion**

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, our country is blessed. God has endowed us with natural resources and well-equipped human capital for our development and well-being. We do not need to travel abroad to be able to realize our dreams. I dare say that we have all it takes to make it here in Ghana! Let us use all the knowledge and skills we have acquired during our time in this noble institution, to make our nation great and strong. It is my fervent expectation that you will resolve to work hard, improve on your skills and provide the best service to your clients for the development of our homeland Ghana.

I wish you well as you step into the world of work.

Ayekoo!!!