

**VALEDICTORY ADDRESS BY MR DAVID AGYEMAN-DUODU ON BEHALF OF**  
**THE GRADUATING CLASS OF 2017**

The Acting Chairperson and Members of the University Council; Vice-Chancellor; Pro-Vice-Chancellors; Registrar; Provosts of Colleges; Deans; Members of College of Humanities Advisory Board; Distinguished Guest Speaker; Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps; Members of Convocation; Niime, Naamei, Nananom; Parents and Guardians; Fellow Graduands; Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

Take a quick look at the person seated next to you. We were once strangers from our different worlds with one inspiration for which we gathered here **some 1,402 days ago**. However fuzzy the memory, we all had the same vision of this day, to be seated here and honoured as graduates. Day after day, it became clearer and gave us some verisimilitude. And today, we live this vision from 4 years ago and we sit no longer as strangers, but as a family and a network of interconnected worlds. We are leaving the school with loads of unique memories. Class of 2017, we have indeed come a long way. Congratulations! We are extremely grateful today; and I admit in humility that I am greatly honored and elated for this opportunity as the valedictorian, the voice of the inspiring class of 2017. It is my hope that we can all reflect on the memorable years thus far and be spurred by these words towards greatness.

No matter how success is understood, I believe everybody has the same potential for genuine success. It all hangs on what lies in our heads and within our hearts. Fellow graduands, we know of the exponential increase in our worth as underlying commodities in the future and as such, let us capitalize by taking the long position at an option premium of **these 3 units of truth**: The first is **Covenant responsibility towards our visions**: Every great operation requires

cooperation for there to be a manifestation; for confession without profession will cause confusion. Until we appreciate covenant responsibility, people, we shall continue to live as liabilities in the global statement of financial position (Bishop Dr David Oyedepo). When we raise our heads up high, let us see the reality of our estate as pacesetters, as front runners, as the people who mark a watershed which shall impact ours and many generations, and not only see.. No... but more integrally **commit wholeheartedly** to it.

The second unit of truth in taking our long position is **adequate preparation**. Luke 14:28, “For which of you intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he has sufficient to finish it?” Preparation causes us to embrace opportunity. Abraham Lincoln once said, “I will prepare and some day my chance will come. Give me six hours to chop down a tree and I will spend the first four sharpening the axe.” As we step into greatness, greater opportunities will be thrown at us, and many doors will be opened before us. We live in a world which is ever growing at an imperceptible rate, and in order to catch up, we must also be readily available.

Fellow colleagues, the pivot of this address which couples as the 3<sup>rd</sup> unit is **Continuous learning**. If there is one thing I learnt in life as an undergraduate, it is simply that, “Learning is a continuum” and this... is the highlight of what I want us to appreciate this day. 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 2:15, “Study to show thyself approved...” We just never stop learning and I know most of my colleagues here have a testimony to that. We all remember our exuberance at the beginning of our first year at the business school. The first thing we heard of the University of Ghana Business School was that it was easy to sail through. If there be anything, friends, which caused humility in most of us seated here today, it was the results of level 100 1<sup>st</sup> semester academic work. I do not know about you but personally I was humbled to appreciate learning. If we put aside the knowledge and grades acquired from our academic endeavors for a second, we immediately

acknowledge that we have acquired much more than we paid for; the Profitability Index which is the ratio of the benefits to cost of our 4 year journey here was far exceeding 1.0. We have learnt a lot. We have tolerance and patience from living with diverse people, teamwork from working with people, marketing skills from campaigning for people, leadership skills from taking up positions, organizational skills from organizing seminars, extracurricular programs, organizing leavers' dinners and suchlike... and we have established strong networks... very strong ones. One thing I took from the many stories our lecturers told us is that; in our many readings, it is not everything we come across that we may understand, but the beauty of it lies in desiring to know more, for which we shall read more, for knowledge is priceless. Therefore in all our getting, let us get understanding. Be it in academia, in our workplaces, as entrepreneurs, we are always going to study and learn something. The world outside of this hall plays by different set of rules. But guess what? That is not enough to stop us. Even the Simpson's rule and Decision Tree of Business Mathematics did not stop us; we still integrated our way through and made the right decision among alternatives. As we all know, entrepreneurs are the driving force of innovation in our world. Let us not sit back and wait for jobs; let us go out there and create enterprises. Let us embrace this freedom of failure, as a springboard for success. If somebody offers you an amazing opportunity but you are not sure you can do it, say yes – then learn how to do it later (Richard Branson). The road is not going to be easy but then who ever said there were two roads? On this note, I want us to acknowledge the University of Ghana Business School for the incubation program they are initiating towards harnessing and growing entrepreneurs and innovators in our generation.

World changers of 2017: Verily I voice out, we are the lighted ones; a land flooded with resources being and yet to be exploited. Amidst us shall be found exceptional student leaders at

various levels of leadership, poets, prolific writers, global contest winners, profound public speakers, entrepreneurs and ambassadors of this great university. Amidst us shall be found nothing... but greatness in progress.

At this moment, let us appreciate the stakeholders of our success. Ebenezer, thus far the Lord has brought us! Our parents and guardians have been the lifeblood of our journey. **Shall we kindly appreciate them with a resounding round of applause.** To our lecturers and administration, throughout the years you have become our parents, advisors and career counselors; we say a big thank you. To our friends and other stakeholders, thank you very much for being with us. But We will also not forget Larry Tesler, inventor of copy and paste, as well as Larry Page and Sergey Brin, founders of Google. Now to my colleagues, Take a good look again at the people seated all around you; it may be your last. I conclude by saying, Necessity is laid upon us my friends, my brothers and my sisters; even as we leave the place and go out there, to be an illumination, a UGBS class of 2017 over others. Lift off from among the many, and **be great!**

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