

**ADDRESS DELIVERED BY CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY, OTUMFUO OSEI TUTU II,
ASANTEHENE AT THE 54TH CONGREGATION CEREMONY (VIRTUAL) OF THE
UNIVERSITY HELD ON SATURDAY, 19TH SEPTEMBER, 2020, AT 3:00 P.M.**

SALUTATION

Chairman and members of the Governing Council
Immediate and Past Vice-Chancellors
Past Pro Vice-Chancellors
Registrar
Provosts
Deans and Directors
Heads of Departments
Staff of the University
Students
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen joining us via various online
platforms across the globe

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

I have the singular honour to warmly welcome you all to the 54th Congregation of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi.

Today's ceremony is unique and different from the usual congregation ceremonies. It is historic in that, for the first time the ceremony is being held without the physical presence of the celebrants, our cherished graduands. The usual fun fair that characterises graduation ceremonies; the presence of excited parents, guardians and loved ones who come to share in the joy of the occasion is all absent today. The saying is indeed true that tough times require tough measures. The restrictions placed on all of us as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic has compelled the whole world to innovate in our approach to undertaking our daily activities; thus, this online graduation.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ELECTRONIC EDUCATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Ladies and gentlemen, the tint we have had with the covid-19 pandemic has clearly taught us the importance of electronic education in the 21st Century. Online education has come to stay and it is envisaged that post- COVID-19 will create an increase demand for the use of online educational resources for higher educational institutions.

Ladies and Gentlemen, a number of institutions including our noble university-KNUST, completed the second semester of the 2019/2020 academic year using the online platform. I understand this was not without challenges. As we embrace on line teaching and learning as the new norm in Higher Education, the big question that must be answered is - how prepared are we, as a nation for this sudden shift in pedagogy delivery?

Resilient Online education comes with its own Infrastructure which requires substantial capital investment and training. A robust Learning Management System (LMS) that can support maximum number of concurrent users in an Institution is a basic prerequisite. This is critical to avert the denial of service to staff and students in the institution's online ecosystem. While the individual institutions may be tasked to develop their own learning management systems, it behoves on the Government to support the learning management systems with efficient and reliable cloud based infrastructure.

More importantly, access to affordable and uninterrupted internet connectivity is key to the success of online education. I am aware that at the initial stages of the pandemic, some Telecommunication Companies (Telcos) provided zero rating packages to students for selected educational contents. However, the cap on the ratings, am told, was woefully inadequate considering the use of live class sessions online. Under the present circumstance, the Government has a duty to engage the Telcos to provide better packages for tertiary students; arrange packages similar to what the Government is offering in the case of electricity and water, for educational institutions in order to facilitate internet access for all staff and students, particularly; needy students.

Even though the use of social media is pervasive in the Ghanaian society, and our students navigate the social media space with ease, online education requires a completely different skills set and competencies. Consequently, support for capacity building for both staff and students in the delivery of online pedagogy needs to be vigorously pursued.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the fundamental problems that stare us in the face with online education in Ghana, and which must be dealt with before any form of on line engagement can succeed are:

1. Access to internet connectivity in remote areas with poor or no network coverage. We cannot rule out the fact that quite a number of our students are found in such areas and if care is not taken they would be denied access to education through no fault of theirs.
2. It is again an undeniable fact that, a number of students do not have the basic device that supports online learning. By this I am referring to laptops, tablets or smart phones.

I am happy that on the part of KNUST, ensuring that every student has a laptop is one of the major visions of the new Vice Chancellor. It is my wish that Government and all stakeholders will support this vision and all such students in other tertiary institutions, so that online education does not become a mirage to needy students.

As a science and technology university, KNUST, on its part, will continue to set the pace in online education by investing in relevant infrastructure and training of its manpower. The Government, on its part, must come in to provide the needed support and make this 'new normal' a reality for all.

NEED TO RESPECT COVID-19 PROTOCOLS

Ladies and Gentlemen, another issue of great concern to me on the national front is the manner some of us have started treating the COVID-19 Pandemic, as if it is no longer dreadful. I believe the memories of what we all went through as a nation during the lock-down period is still fresh in our minds. This was the period when television and radio stations were eager to be the first station to announce the latest figures, nationwide and worldwide on the pandemic. 'Covid-19 Command centre' became the order of the day.

Radio and TV stations have virtually stopped the awareness creation campaigns and updates on infected persons. The only evidence that the deadly virus was ever present in Ghana is the empty hand-washing basins and buckets that still sit in front of public places.

I shudder to think of what is going to happen in the months ahead, as the nation moves into intensive political campaign towards the National Elections. It is evident that Ghanaians generally

do not respect the Covid- 19 protocols. But what is disregarded the most is the social distancing protocol which incidentally happens to be the most critical. I have been thinking of how as a nation we can prevent an upsurge in the face of the upcoming political campaigns. I still do not have an answer, but what I know for sure is that the Covid-19 is no respecter of persons. We are fortunate, thus far, not to have recorded deaths like some other nations, but as our elders say "*wohu se wo yonkoabodweserehye a nawasansuoasi wo dee ho.*" A word to the wise is enough.

WORDS OF APPRECIATION TO STAFF

Now let me turn my attention to my cherished staff and students. To my enviable staff of this noble institution, I want to personally thank you for all the sacrifices you have made. I am reliably informed that a lot of work had to be done to ensure the students completed the semester. Your tireless efforts have brought us this far. Accept my warmest appreciation.

CONGRATULATIONS AND A WORD TO GRADUANDS

To you dear students, I cannot but agree more with **Ralph Waldo Emerson** in his famous quote: "*Without ambition one starts nothing. Without work one finishes nothing. The prize will not be sent to you. You have to win it.*" I must say you have won the prize. Your toil, day and night as you studied the various courses has shaped your personal life and positioned you to contribute your quota to the Ghana Agenda.

Let perseverance, excellence, hard work, faithfulness and above all integrity, be your guiding principles. Keep in mind that KNUST is proud of you; and make KNUST proud wherever you find yourself.

I wish you all the very best as you go into the world as ambassadors of this great institution.

Enjoy your day to the fullest and may the good Lord be with you always.

Thank you and God bless us all.

**OTUMFUO OSEI TUTU 11, ASANTEHENE
CHANCELLOR, KNUST, KUMASI
19TH SEPTEMBER, 2020**

**ADDRESS DELIVERED BY PROFESSOR (MRS.) RITA AKOSUA DICKSON, VICE
CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY AT THE 54TH CONGREGATION
CEREMONY (VIRTUAL) HELD ON SATURDAY, 19TH SEPTEMBER, 2020 AT
3:00P.M.**

SALUTATION

The Chancellor of the University His Royal Majesty Otumfuo Osei Tutu II
Chairman and Members of Council
Past Vice-Chancellors and Pro Vice-Chancellors
Colleague Vice-Chancellors
Pro Vice-Chancellor and Pro Vice-Chancellors from Sister Institutions
Registrar
Provosts of Colleges
Deans and Directors
Heads of Department
Members of Convocation
Senior and Junior Staff of the University
Graduating Class of 2020
Parents and Guardians
Distinguished Invited Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen

INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

It is with an absolute gratitude to our God Almighty for how far He has brought us as a University, laced with an element of indescribable feelings, that I deliver the 54th Graduation address of this Great Institution, and the very first for me as the Vice-Chancellor. The reason is very simple. In as much as we would have wished to physically behold all our beautifully dressed confident graduands, beaming with smiles as they mounted the stage to receive their certificates; and as much as we would have loved to hear the shout of "*Gaudeamus*", the current situation of the pandemic has deprived us of this joy. This notwithstanding, we are extremely delighted that in spite of the difficult situation, we found innovative ways to be here today to crown the 2019/2020 academic year with the award of certificates to deserving graduands and to celebrate their achievements and hard work over the years.

An African proverb says that, "*in the moment of crisis, the wise build bridges and not dams*"; To wit, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, we could not afford to stand still in the face of this pandemic. We took the challenge boldly under the able leadership of Prof Obiri Danso. It is gratifying to note that in the spirit of making the most of the situation, regardless of the rude blow dealt us by the COVID-19 crisis, we have braced the storm as a Team and continue to forge ahead as we chalk more successes for our august Institution.

This is the time for building bridges so that we can make progress as a University.

It is for this reason that the University has, for the first time, moved from its conventional way of organizing graduation ceremonies to this virtual ceremony. As difficult as it may be, the present pandemic has taught us that we can no longer continue to do things in the same old ways we used to, and we cannot, but agree with Divad that: "*Innovation is progress in the face of tradition.*".

On this note, on behalf of Management, Teaching and Non-teaching staff, I would like to add my voice to that of His Royal Majesty Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, the Chancellor of the University, to warmly welcome all our graduands and cherished families and loved ones as well as our ever supportive stakeholders who have joined us all over the globe, through the virtual space, to participate and to witness this year's graduation ceremony and to share in our joy. You can be sure KNUST is very grateful indeed.

STATISTICS ON GRADUATING CLASS

Nana Chancellor, I would like to begin with the graduating statistics. We are graduating a total of **11,488** students for this 2019/2020 virtual graduation. This is made up of **10,581** undergraduates and **907** postgraduates. In terms of gender, we have 4,433 Females representing 38.59% and 7,055 Males representing 61.41 %.

Your Majesty, 1,140 out of our undergraduates, representing **10.77%** graduated with First Class, and I am extremely proud and elated to emphasise that out of this number, **407 (35.70%)** are ladies.

Ladies and Gentlemen, 31 (3.42%) of our postgraduates are graduating at this ceremony with PhDs, with **5 (16.13 %)** of them being women.

Highlighting the achievements of our ladies is not, in any way, to suggest that we are not proud of our gallant men. Of course not! We are equally extremely proud of the stellar achievements of our young men. This is only an attempt to dispel the ancient notion that science and technology education is the preserve of men and to encourage a lot more ladies to come to the field to complement the men.

I would also like to congratulate our hardworking and dedicated staff, some of whom are in the prime and others in the twilight of their careers, who still made it through thick and thin to obtain their terminal degrees, nonetheless. KNUST is indeed proud of you, Ayekoooo!

Please permit me, at this point, to give the breakdown of the graduating figures in terms of Colleges.

- **752** from **Agriculture & Natural Resources**
- **1,330** from **Art and Built Environment**
- **1,372** from **Engineering**
- **1,312** from **Health Sciences**
- **2,567** from **Humanities & Social Sciences**
- **1,887** from **Science**
- **2,266** from **by Distance Learning**

Nana Chancellor, the tradition of the University has always been to honour the **OVERALL BEST GRADUATING** student. For the 2019/2020 graduation year, the overall best graduating student comes **from the College of Engineering; in the person of: Kumbong, Hermann Nyuykonge, BSc Computer Engineering with a CWA of 88.45**

KNUST OBUASI SATELLITE CAMPUS

Nana Chancellor, ladies and gentlemen, as we are aware, KNUST started the Obuasi Campus last academic year with selected programmes in Engineering, Environmental Science and Supply Chain Management. I am glad to announce that the University is preparing to introduce Nursing, Midwifery, Medical Laboratory and other Health related programmes. I wish to seize this opportunity to entreat Hospitals in Obuasi and its environs to grant us access for experiential training of students when the programmes are finally rolled out.

STAFFING

Your Royal Majesty, the University has completed an exercise for recruitment of staff, giving priority to our teaching staff. This was made possible based on the financial clearance granted by the government.

We would like to use this opportunity to express our profound gratitude to Government for this kind gesture of additional staff and also to kindly appeal for further assistance on clearance to recruit due to the anticipated increase in student numbers for the 2020/2021 academic year and subsequent years, coupled with the expansion in programmes at our Obuasi campus. Like Oliver Twist, we would continue to ask for more to improve our Student -Teacher-Ratios (STRs). Please do not get tired of us. We do welcome all our new staff to KNUST, the best University in Ghana and West Africa and assure you that you took the best decision.

COLLABORATIONS

- **Agri Impact Consult**

Your Royal Majesty, ladies and gentlemen, during last year's congregation, my predecessor, Prof. Kwasi Obiri-Danso reported that Agri Impact Consult had secured funding from the Ghana Exim Bank to establish ten (10) Greenhouses of 640 sqm each on the KNUST campus. I am glad to inform you that the project has taken off and duly commissioned by His Royal Majesty, Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, the Chancellor of the University. It is heart-warming to add that Exim Bank and Agri Impact Consult have generously decided to put up ten (10) more Greenhouses. A proposal has also been submitted to Exim Bank for consideration for the establishment of fish ponds near the Greenhouses. The fishponds are intended to make use of the rainwater which the Greenhouses collect when it rains to avoid erosion at the facility. While expressing our heartfelt appreciation to Exim Bank and Agri Impact Consult for their kindness, we wish to plead with the Management of Exim Bank to favourably consider our proposal and expedite action on the fish pond as well as all the other points of collaboration under consideration.

I also wish to entreat our students to take keen interest in this laudable project to sharpen their entrepreneurial skills to enable them create employment for themselves and employ others.

KNUST's IMPACT ON NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Your Royal Majesty, ladies and gentlemen, KNUST continues to impact society greatly; for instance, with the outbreak of the coronavirus, the Kumasi Centre for Collaborative Research (KCCR) was one of the pillar institutions leading the fight. The Centre at the initial stages started receiving suspected samples from 12 out of the 16 regions in Ghana. The Centre has so far received and processed over 100 thousand samples from across the country. The staff at KCCR and the School of Public Health also helped in setting up and building the capacities of Biomedical Scientists in the Northern sector to help perform **COVID-19** testing.

This was done in a number of testing sites when there was an upsurge of new cases across the country. Some of these new testing centres include; the Public Health Reference Laboratory in Tamale, the Veterinary Services Department Lab at Kpong Tamale and the Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital in Kumasi.

Our own KNUST Hospital was also the first port of call for over 150- thousand residents within the KNUST community, and Oforikrom Municipality.

Again, our staff from the College of Health Sciences were on radio and television, championing public education on the **COVID-19** pandemic and how the citizens could stay safe.

In terms of swift interventions, Your Majesty, ladies and gentlemen, I am happy to report that outbreak of the **COVID-19** pandemic evoked a new wave of proactivity in some sectors of our University. For example, the Faculty of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences, responded to the acute shortage of alcohol-based hand sanitizers required for COVID-19 preventive measures by quickly mobilising financial and technical resources to produce what has become one of the best brands of hand sanitizers on the market today (The PharmaClean Hand rub/gel sanitizers) as well as other quality home, office and floor care products. Since then, there has been huge demands for the products from Ghana and the whole of West Africa.

In addition, KCCR and the Department of Clinical Microbiology collaborated with Incas Diagnostics to develop a Rapid Diagnostic Test Kit for testing COVID-19. This product is currently undergoing evaluation for market authorization by the Food and Drugs Authority of Ghana.

The College of Engineering also developed a prototype home-made ventilator to support patients with breathing difficulties, and I am happy to report that the College has received support from KNUST Engineering Education Project (KEEP) to build three additional proto-types for hospital trials.

THE KNUST SUPPORT ONE NEEDY STUDENT WITH ONE LAPTOP PROJECT- (SONSOL PROJECT)

Your Royal Majesty, ladies and gentlemen, it has become absolutely clear that the **COVID-19** pandemic has altered and will continue to transform tertiary education for a longer time than we anticipated. We as a University are thus thinking on a daily basis of effective ways of delivering education to our teeming youth in a safer and most efficient manner. It is in the light of this that, when I presented the vision during the investiture on 1st August, 2020, I made mention of the “*Support One Needy Student with One Laptop*”- The SONSOL project. This is indeed a project which I am very passionate about, and I am glad to announce that we have started receiving positive responses from philanthropists, corporate and industry partners, including ABSA, Stanbic, SIC, Vodafone Ghana, AngloGold Ashanti, and Ecobank. We are indeed very grateful for these kind gestures. I wish to use this opportunity to reiterate my call to our other numerous partners, in Ghana and abroad, including the Alumni to come to our aid to support our needy but brilliant students with the requisite gadgets so that they are not left out in times like this.

ICT INFRASTRUCTURE

Your Royal Majesty, as I said during the investiture, as a Science and Technology institution, we have to set the pace in the use of digital technologies to prosecute our agenda of teaching and learning not only in this time of the pandemic but beyond. In view of this, we will be installing smart boards and video recording devices in our lecture halls and laboratories. These are intended to improve and enhance our delivery to students as lecturers, and also enable us preserve digital copies of lectures and laboratory sessions in order to provide further learning opportunities for our students. As we make strides towards blended approach to teaching and learning to avoid future interruptions in our service delivery imposed by similar unprecedented circumstance as COVID-19, deployment of virtual technologies will become the order of the day. Let me add that these facilities are not replacement for our face-to-face teaching but will augment teaching and learning.

Again, to strengthen the capacity of faculty in the utilization of ICT tools for teaching and learning, the University has rolled out a comprehensive programme for all its teaching staff in virtual teaching and learning to better place them for virtual academic engagement with students. Student and learner-specific version of this training programme would be extended to students as well, to provide the needed support based on the feedback we have received during engaging students via the e-space during this pandemic.

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Ladies and gentlemen, research is the backbone of every nation and as a research-intensive institution, our research findings must be impactful and positively affect our nation and the world at large. To this end, the KNUST Research Fund (KReF) will be increased to GHC 1,000,000.00 in the 2020/2021 academic year. It is our intention to increase the amount every year to encourage, especially, most of our young lecturers to embark on more research to provide innovative industry-ready solutions that impact positively the lives of society.

AWARDS

Nana Chancellor, ladies and gentlemen, the year in review saw a significant number of our staff winning grants to embark on impactful projects and I would like to mention a few:

- Prof. Nathaniel Boso, Dean of the Business School, won \$7,500,000.00 (\$7.5M) from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to work on the project, “Centre for Applied Research and Innovation in Supply Chain - Africa (CARISCA)”.
- Prof. Fred Stephen Sarfo of the Department of Medicine received \$563,142.00 from National Institute of Health (NIH) to research into, “The origins of Alzheimer Disease in Individuals of African Ancestry”.
- Prof. Peter Donkor, one of our own foremost experts in Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery won \$591,180.00 from Centre for Disease Control Foundation - CDC to work on, “KNUST - CDC Drowning Research”.

Your Royal Majesty, ladies and gentlemen, KNUST is the best, and our students and graduates keep on doing exploits and making us proud. I am pleased to inform you that at the October 2019 Call to the Ghana Bar, alumni from the KNUST's Faculty of Law, demonstrated academic excellence and won the following awards:

- The overall best student award went to Ms. Kezia Owusu-Ansah

- The award for the best student in Family Law and Practice again went to Ms. Kezia Owusu-Ansah.
- Ms. Afia Poku won the Best Student award in Criminal Procedure.

It is interesting to note that these awards were swept by females which hopefully should propel other ladies to chalk more successes in their various fields of study. We say AYEKOO to our ladies!

STUDENT FRONT

Ladies and gentlemen, following the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic and the subsequent closure of the University, the students could not elect the Executives of the Students Representative Council (SRC) for the 2020/2021 academic year. Consequently, the SRC Parliamentary Council in collaboration with the outgoing SRC Executives, constituted a five (5) member Interim Students Representative Committee (ISRC), chaired by Mr. Ether Abu Ayim, to oversee the affairs of the SRC pending election of new Executives. I am confident that once academic work commences for the 2020/2021 academic year, the ISRC will put in place the appropriate measures to ensure the elections are held.

VISITS

Nana Chancellor, ladies and gentlemen, the University was privileged to host the President of the Republic, H. E. Nana Addo Dankwa Akuffo- Addo at the Kumasi Centre for Collaborative Research in Tropical Medicine (KCCR). His Excellency, the President, visited the Centre to acquaint himself with the processes of the COVID 19 testing. We were also privileged and honoured to have His Excellency for gracing our investiture programme. We are very grateful indeed.

DONATIONS

During the year in review, the following donations were received:

- Following the President's directive for final year students of Universities to resume academic work, the Ministry of Education donated COVID-19 protocol items to the University for distribution to staff and students. The items included 20 pieces of infrared thermometer; 57,166 re-usable facemasks; 25 gallons of liquid soap; 50 rolls of tissue paper; 19,055 alcohol-based hand sanitisers and 25 veronica buckets.
- His Royal Majesty Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, the Chancellor of the University donated PPEs and assorted products towards observation of the Covid-19 protocols at the University Hospital and KCCR.
- KNUST Global Alumni Association donated an amount of GHC50,000.00 to the Kumasi Centre for Collaborative Research in Tropical Medicine (KCCR) towards the fight against COVID-19.
- Mr. Lawrence Addo, a philanthropist, donated GHC140,000.00 towards the KNUST Foundation
- Finally, we were privileged to receive COVID-19 safety items Mr. Isaac Owusu, CEO of KNAPO Construction Limited; Dr. Yaw Adu-Gyamfi of the Liberty University, Dr. Anyani- Boadum Oheneba; and the Ghana Association of Bankers towards the fight against COVID-19.
- The Ministry of Energy donated 300 LED bulbs towards enhancing the lightening situation on campus. We are indeed very grateful to all our benefactors.

APPRECIATION

I wish to express Management's sincerest gratitude to our students, especially to you, our graduands, for bearing with us in these very challenging times of the coronavirus pandemic which compelled us to suddenly switch our mode of delivery from face-to-face to virtual delivery. Your resiliency and resolve to make the most out of the situation made the load lighter. Thank you for your co-operation.

We are very appreciative of our IT staff for their innovative and unflinching support in all this. We know some of us found it challenging adjusting in the heat of the moment, however, due to your dedication to duty, perseverance and hard work, we were able to transcend the obstacles. It is through your untiring efforts that we have come this far. We are proud of you. What indeed, could we have done without the sacrifices, selflessness and commitment of all our Teaching and Non-Teaching Staff? We salute you all. Ayekoo!

ADVICE TO GRADUANDS

My dear graduands, as we celebrate you today, know that you have been trained to flourish as independent thinkers, problem solvers and innovators. Remember that life never gets easier, but the harder you strive, the better you become. According to *Connie Loo*, ***“Education is an investment essential to empowering individuals to reach their full potential and make their own positive impact on the world”***.

KNUST has over the past years of your education empowered you to reach your full potentials, and today, you are being given the mandate to go and make a positive impact on your society and the world at large.

May you always live up to this expectation in all you do as you live up to the core values of KNUST by exhibiting the highest standards of professional ethics and integrity, efficient utilization of resources and a culture of accountability, responsibility and excellence in all your efforts.

We are extremely proud of you.

And now, may the God of hope, grace and favour, whom you have served always grant you His peace, protection and guidance as you navigate through the world of work and further development.

May His face continue to shine on you and grant you success in all your endeavours.
Once again Congratulations!

Thank you and God Bless Us All!

PROFESSOR (MRS.) RITA AKOSUA DICKSON
VICE-CHANCELLOR, KNUST, KUMASI
19TH SEPTEMBER, 2020

**ADDRESS DELIVERED BY PROF BEN BRANOH KWAKU BANFUL, PROVOST,
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES AT THE 54TH
CONGREGATION CEREMONY (VIRTUAL) OF THE UNIVERSITY HELD ON FRIDAY,
18TH SEPTEMBER, 2020 AT 09.00 A.M.**

SALUTATION

Chairman and Members of the University Council
Vice-Chancellor
Past Vice-Chancellors and Pro Vice-Chancellors
Pro Vice-Chancellor
Registrar
Provosts of Colleges
Deans and Directors
Heads of Department
Members of Convocation
Representatives from our Affiliate Institutions
Nananom
Alumni of the University
Senior and Junior Staff
Graduating Class of 2020
Parents and Guardians
Distinguished Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen

INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

On behalf of the Chairman and members of the Governing Council, the Vice-Chancellor, Management and the entire staff of this great institution, it is my pleasure to warmly welcome all our graduands and esteemed guests, who are with us this morning through the virtual platform to the first day of our 54th Congregation ceremony.

You will all agree with me that today's ceremony is extraordinary as it marks the first time in the history of the University that graduation ceremony is organised without the usual pomp and pageantry and notably without the physical presence of our cherished graduands. As we are aware, the Coronavirus pandemic has changed the whole world order in very significant ways and we all have to adapt to the 'new normal' and devise safe and innovative ways of moving on with life.

Ladies and gentlemen, we have gathered via the virtual platform this morning, to confer degrees on our deserving graduands of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources to celebrate them for the successful completion of their various programmes of study.

I wish to use this opportunity to congratulate you for achieving this milestone in your lives.

STATISTICS ON GRADUATING CLASS

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is a delight to inform you that the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources is presenting a total of 703 graduands this morning. This is made up of 450 males representing 64% and 253 females representing 36% of the 703 graduating this morning, 45 are graduating with First Class honours (6.4%); 349 with 2nd Class honours (Upper Division) (49.7%); 249 with 2nd Class honours (Lower Division) (41.8%) and 15 with Pass (2.1%)

This year, the **OVERALL BEST GRADUATING** student in the College comes from the Department of Crop and Soil Sciences, who also happens to be our valedictorian for this congregation.

He is Mr. Robert Anaab ATIIM B.Sc Agriculture with a CWA of 80.39

ENROLMENT IN THE COLLEGE

Ladies and gentlemen, with respect to student enrolment in the College, for the 2019/2020 academic year, undergraduate students' numbers increased from 1,353 to 1,816, an increment of 34.2% over that of the 2018/2019 academic year.

Another significant development was the appointment of 15 lecturers to the College in the same academic year. We are grateful to the government for these additional hands which will go a long way to ease the stress on our staff. However, with our incessant drive to expand and the coming of the first batch of the Free Senior High School students, we anticipate an increase in our enrolment for the 2020/2021 academic year and for this we would require more lecturers to continue with the effective teaching and educational development of the students. Further, such increasing student numbers must be complemented with teaching and learning facilities. In this regard, we will entreat GETFUND to assist us with additional teaching and learning facilities.

SOME INITIATIVES IN THE COLLEGE

In the year under review, the College began the rebranding of the programmes run by the Faculty of Renewable Natural Resource to make them more attractive and demand -driven. It is anticipated that these rebranded programmes will lead to significant increases in our student enrolment from the next Academic Year.

In addition to the rebranding, the Department of Wood Science in the Faculty of Renewable Natural Resource has completed the process of mounting a BSc Packaging Technology programme in the 2020/2021 Academic Year.

On development activities, the College in partnership with ENI-Ghana has rolled out an agribusiness entrepreneurship Project dubbed OKUAFO PA which aims at training the youth in agribusiness along the Agricultural Value Chains for Youth enterprise development and job creation in Ghana. Presently hundreds of youth with secondary and tertiary education have been provided with knowledge and skills to enable them start their own businesses as well as have the capacity to employ others. This laudable initiative is a collaboration between the Governments of Ghana and Italy.

Distinguished audience, during the previous 53rd Congregation, Mr. Dan Acquaye, an Alumni of our College and astute Agribusiness Expert, who was the Motivational Speaker, offered the College and University an opportunity for an Agribusiness entrepreneurial collaboration. I am happy to report that this collaboration has resulted in the installation of ten (10) huge greenhouses under the National Youth Greenhouse Enterprise Project (YuGEP) financed by Ghana EXIM Bank. The green houses are for production and marketing of quality and healthy vegetables as well as for research and training activities. An additional ten (10) greenhouses have been promised by Ghana EXIM Bank to give a further boost to the healthy vegetables production agenda.

APPRECIATION

Ladies and gentlemen, at this juncture, I wish to express our sincerest appreciation to our stakeholders who have been of immense support to the College. They include The Government of Ghana through her various Ministries and Agencies, DANIDA, DFID, USAID, ENI Ghana, to mention a few. We are very grateful.

I appreciate and thank all parents, guardians and benefactors of our graduands. If our graduands stand tall today, we know they are standing on your toils and sweat. Your unflinching support has propelled them to this great achievement and may your sacrifices be rewarded.

Again, I wish to thank our gallant graduands and all other students for their cooperation during the semester when as a result of the COVID 19 pandemic we suddenly had to switch from our traditional method of teaching to the virtual mode. It was unexpected, however, you proved your might, by adjusting to the circumstance.

To my abled staff of the College, I am truly grateful for your support. It was through your sacrifices and efforts that we were able to bring the semester to a successful end. Even though the virtual teaching was new to some of us, we adjusted and soldiered on to deliver on our mandate as an institution. I say Bravo.

WORD OF ADVICE TO GRADUANDS AND CONCLUSION

I would at this point want to say a word of advice to my proud graduands. I want to congratulate you once again, for the great success for which you are being celebrated today. We all share in your joy and achievements.

We on our part have done all within our limited resources to provide you with the needed knowledge and skills to be functional in society. It is now up to you to make maximum use of the acquired knowledge and skills for the betterment of society. As the world continues to change, please continue to build on your skills and knowledge so you can continuously remain relevant in the changing times. Make use of your skills in the identification of problems, proposal development, investigation, etc. to create value and efficiency in whichever sector you find yourself. Be reminded that in life, it never gets easier, but as you strive, you get better. I leave you with a quote from a biblical devotion which states *“Success isn't automatically given to us; it's pursued with all the energy and sweat we can muster. Obstacles and struggles are part of life. They make us appreciate success. If everything came easy we would never know how it feels to succeed. Obstacles were meant to be overcome, Fear was meant to be conquered and success was meant to be achieved”*.

I also wish to encourage you to register with the KNUST Alumni Association and entreat you to be active members of this global fraternity. It is a great platform networking and for the organisation and mobilisation of resources to support your Alma Mater, the KNUST.

Finally, I pray that the Good Lord establishes you and grants you abundant success in every endeavour of yours. May He open the heavens, the storehouse of his bountiful blessings and goodness for all the work of your hands.

Once again, I thank you all for making time to join us on the virtual space and for your audience.

PROFESSOR BEN BRANOH KWAKU BANFUL
PROVOST, COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES
KNUST, KUMASI
18TH SEPTEMBER, 2020

**ADDRESS DELIVERED BY PROF. LEONARD K. AMEKUDZI, PROVOST, COLLEGE OF
SCIENCE AT THE 54TH CONGREGATION CEREMONY (VIRTUAL) OF THE UNIVERSITY
HELD ON FRIDAY, 18TH SEPTEMBER, 2020 AT 11.00A.M.**

SALUTATION

Chairman and Members of the University Council
Vice-Chancellor
Past Vice-Chancellors and Pro Vice-Chancellors
Pro Vice-Chancellor
Registrar
Provosts of Colleges
Deans and Directors
Heads of Department
Members of Convocation
Alumni of the University
Senior and Junior Staff
Graduating Class of 2020
Parents and Guardians
Distinguished Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen

INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

On behalf of the Chairman and members of the Governing Council, the Vice-Chancellor, Management and the entire staff of this great institution, it is my pleasure to warmly welcome all our graduands and esteemed guests, who are with us this morning through the virtual platform of our 54th Congregation ceremony.

You will all agree with me that today's ceremony is extraordinary as it marks the first time in the history of the University that graduation ceremony is organised without the usual pomp and pageantry and notably without the physical presence of our cherished graduands. As we are aware, the Coronavirus pandemic has changed the whole world order in very significant ways and we all have to adapt to the 'new normal' and devise safe and innovative ways of moving on with life.

Ladies and gentlemen, we have gathered via the virtual platform to confer degrees on our deserving graduands of the College of Science and to celebrate them for the successful completion of their various programmes of study.

I wish to use this opportunity to congratulate you for achieving this milestone in your lives.

STATISTICS ON GRADUATING CLASS

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is a delight to inform you that the College of Science is presenting a total of 1730 graduands. This is made up of 1071 males representing 61.91% and 659 females representing 38.09%. of this number, 252 are graduating with First Class representing 14.57%; 859 representing 49.65% for 2nd Class (Upper Division); 582 representing 33.64% for 2nd Class (Lower Division); and 37 representing 2.14% for Pass. This year, the **OVERALL BEST GRADUATING** student in the College is from the Department of Statistics and Actuarial Science. He is **Master Benjamin Abakah Abijah, BSc. Statistics with a CWA of 83.17**

ENROLMENT IN THE COLLEGE

Ladies and gentlemen, with respect to student enrolment in the College, for the 2019/2020 academic year, 2,284 undergraduate students were admitted. The College is projecting a 15% increment in the 2020/2021 academic year.

We are grateful to the government for the additional hands that the College has received over the years. However, with our drive to expand and, the coming of the first batch of the Free Senior High School students, we anticipate an increase in our enrolment for the 2020/2021 academic year.

The increasing student numbers must be complemented with teaching and learning facilities. In this regard, we will entreat GETFUND to assist us with additional teaching and learning facilities.

SOME INITIATIVES IN THE COLLEGE

i. Setting up of Computer laboratories

One major aspect of training of students has to do with equipping students in all fields of study with the requisite computing skills. In that regard, the College is establishing two (2) computer laboratories. On completion, the College will be equipped with modern computer laboratories with a total of 216 desktop computer spaces as well as 216 personal laptop user spaces available to students.

ii. Donation

The Globally Challenged Research Fund- African Science for Weather Information and Forecasting Techniques (GCRF African-SWIFT) Project, as part of the core mandate and objectives to improve on Nowcasting and Weather Forecast in Sub-Saharan Africa, donated an NWCSAF satellite dish and 3 data receivers/processors worth £12,000 to the College for the Meteorology and Climate Science Programme. The satellite dish, which has been successfully installed by the Electronic Research Unit of the Physics Department is being used to monitor approaching storms in the sub region. This has proved generally helpful in monitoring of recent storm cases linked with floods in several parts of the country. The satellite facility also plays a crucial role in the research works of two SWIFT project-funded PhD students, who use NWCSAF data to assess various extreme rainfall case studies in the country. Besides, the facility will be used to improve Atmospheric Fieldwork and Nowcasting Courses for undergraduate and postgraduate students of the Meteorology and Climate Science Programme.

iii. Virtual Classroom Training

A three (3) member Committee was set to help facilitate the on line teaching. The Committee scheduled on line training sessions for each Department. This helped in assisting Lecturers who were having challenges with the V-Classroom. The training was actively participated by Staff in the various Departments.

Besides, the College has procured a zoom license to support eLearning. This has helped to augment the existing virtual platforms of the University used for teaching and learning and also several College meetings in the wake of the global pandemic. In addition, the College has successfully designed and fabricated Stand-alone Examination Timer system to help in teaching and learning.

College of Science Office of Grants and Research

The College has facilitated a capacity building opportunity for the staff of the College Office of Grants and Research at the Galilee Institute of Management in Israel. More capacity and expertise has been gained in project management and facilitation. The Office has increased its visibility through engagement of staff at the College of Science Quality Assurance Workshop. Currently, more proposals are being routed through the office which is the standardised world best practice and hope for it to become the norm.

It is gratifying to note that Fifteen (15) calls from different funding agencies have been routed through the Office of Grants and Research and they have been responded to. Four (4) new projects have been won. Two WASCAL projects in Green House Emission and Flood Monitoring are among the new grants that have been won worth 300,000 Euros. In addition, a FLAIR grant worth 284,000 Euros have been won by Prof. Philip Antwi-Agyei. Currently the College houses over twenty multi grants totalling millions of dollars and we have good prospects to win more.

iv. College of Science Seminar

Due to the COVID-19 challenge, College of Science organized seminar presentations via zoom and facilitated by the "Seminar and Conferences Committee" from 30th June to 1st July, 2020. The aim was to give staff and PhD students the opportunity to present their progress reports on their research. In all, seven (7) Staff PhD Researchers updated the College on their research. The Provost gave a presentation on both days. He elaborated on the present and future opportunities in the College and how to take advantage of opportunities during the Pandemic. Again he gave participants tips on how to write proposals for grants and publishing in credible journals.

The first ever Seminar via zoom was successful. In attendance were over 100 participants made up of both Staff and Postgraduate (MPhil/ PhD) Students. The seminar will be replicated every other month beginning from October, 2020 to ensure that all Staff and Postgraduate students within the College get the opportunity to present their work to enhance multidisciplinary research in the College.

APPRECIATION

Ladies and gentlemen, at this juncture, I wish to express our sincerest appreciation to our stakeholders who have been of immense support to the College:

- **DR. K. C. Whittaker**

The K.C. Whittaker Award Fund has been a yearly benefactor for female students of the Department of Physics since 1998. It has awarded 22 female students of the Department with cash prizes of Two Thousand Ghana Cedis (GH¢2,000.00) each for the academic year 2018/2019. As usual, more than 20 female students shall receive their award for the 2019/2020 academic year. The awardees are generally picked from the female students with the best Cumulative Weighted Averages (CWAs) for the various undergraduate and postgraduate year groups in the Department.

- **Prudential Life Insurance**

Prudential Life Insurance established the Prudential Life Insurance award in 2014. The Award scheme supports top five (5) BSc. Actuarial Science graduating students with an amount of \$500 each every year. They also sponsor them to write their professional exams for a period of two years. An opportunity is also given to the overall best student in BSc. Actuarial Science to work with the Company.

- **Prof. Victoria Pearl Dzugbefia**

Prof. Dzugbefia introduced the Prof. (Mrs) Victoria Pearl Dzugbefia award for best student in enzymology in the year 2010. Since then, the best student in enzymology every year is awarded with an amount of \$250

I appreciate and thank all parents, guardians and benefactors of our graduands. If our graduands stand tall today, we know they are standing on your toils and sweat. Your unflinching support has propelled them to this great achievement and may your sacrifices be rewarded.

Again, I wish to thank our gallant graduands and all other students for their cooperation during the semester when as a result of the COVID 19 pandemic we suddenly had to switch from our traditional method of teaching to the virtual mode. It was unexpected, however, you proved your might, by adjusting to the circumstance.

To my able staff of the College, I am truly grateful for your support. It was through your sacrifices and efforts that we were able to bring the semester to a successful end. Even though the virtual teaching was new to some of us, we adjusted and soldiered on to deliver our mandate as an institution. I say Bravo!

WORD OF ADVICE TO GRADUANDS AND CONCLUSION

I would at this point want to say a word of advice to my proud graduands. I want to congratulate you once again, for the great success for which you are being celebrated today. We all share in your joy and achievements.

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Be reminded that in life, it never gets easier, but as you strive, you get better. I leave you with a quote from a biblical devotion which states *“Success isn't automatically given to us, it's pursued with all the energy and sweat we can muster. Obstacles and struggles are part of life. They make us appreciate success. If everything came easy we would never know how it feels to succeed. Obstacles were meant to be overcome, Fear was meant to be conquered and success was meant to be achieved”*

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Finally, I pray that the Good Lord establishes you and grants you abundant success in every endeavour of yours. May He open the heavens, the storehouse of his bountiful blessings and goodness for all the work of your hands.

Once again, I thank you all for making time to join us on the virtual space and for your audience.

PROFESSOR LEONARD K. AMEKUDZI
PROVOST, COLLEGE OF SCIENCE
KNUST, KUMASI
18TH SEPTEMBER, 2020

ADDRESS DELIVERED BY PROFESSOR CHRISTIAN AGYARE, PROVOST, COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES, AT THE 54TH CONGREGATION CEREMONY (VIRTUAL) OF THE UNIVERSITY HELD ON FRIDAY, 18TH SEPTEMBER, 2020 AT 1:00P.M.

SALUTATION

Chairman and Members of Council
Vice-Chancellor
Acting Pro-Vice Chancellor
Registrar
Colleague Provosts
Deans and Directors
Heads of Department
Senior Members of the College of Health Sciences and Convocation of the University
Senior and Junior Staff
Representatives of Health care Professional Associations
Alumni of the University
Parents, Guardians and Invited Guests
2020 Graduating Class
Ladies and Gentlemen.

INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

The College of Health Sciences of KNUST is made up of **three (3)** schools and **two (2)** Faculties i.e. KNUST School of Medicine and Dentistry, School of Veterinary Medicine, School of Public Health, Faculty of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences, and Faculty of Allied Health Sciences. The Kumasi Centre for Collaborative Research in Tropical Medicine is our main Research Centre. We have the mandate from the University to train healthcare professionals and researchers for Ghana, Africa and other parts of the world. We support other health care initiatives and conduct relevant research in the health sector and other related areas. At the undergraduate level, our College trains Medical Doctors, Dentists, Pharmacists, Physician Assistants, Veterinary Doctors, Herbal Medicine Practitioners, Nurses, Midwives, Medical Laboratory Scientists, Imaging Practitioners, Disability and Rehabilitation Practitioners, Physiotherapists and Sports and Exercise Managers and Scientists. On behalf of the Chairman of Council, the Vice-Chancellor and the management and Staff of the College, I welcome you to the 54th Virtual Congregation ceremony of the University and graduation of our undergraduate students for the 2019/2020 Academic year.

STATISTICS ON GRADUATING CLASS

We present to you today a total of **1,178** undergraduate students who have satisfied all requirements for the award of degrees in this virtual Congregation. This includes **296** Pharmacy students, **411** Medicine students, **69** Dentistry, and **21** Veterinary Medicine students. Medicine, Pharmacy, Dentistry, and Veterinary Medicine students stay in the University for a minimum of 6 years before graduating.

We are also graduating students on our 3 and 4-year programmes. They include **78** General Nursing, **34** Emergency Nursing, **72** Midwifery, **68** Medical laboratory technology, **39** Sonography, **68** Disability and Rehabilitation Studies, **28** Sports and Exercise Science students and **39** students of Herbal Medicine. Two of the College's programmes, Human Biology Medicine and Human Biology Dentistry run for 3 years and we are today graduating **223** and **47** students,

respectively on these 2 programmes. These students will be in tutelage for a minimum of 3 years before graduating as Dentists and Doctors.

Chairman of Council, I would like to take this opportunity to thank and appreciate all the teaching and non-teaching staff in the College for their sacrifice and dedication towards the completion of 2019/2020 academic year in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic and the extra demands that came with the new normal life and ways we had to teach and conduct the end of second semester examinations and assessment. We appreciate the University management for their support and assistance in these difficult times.

During the year under review, specifically in January, we graduated **10,330** Nursing and Midwifery Diplomats who received their training from various Nursing and Midwifery Training Colleges across the country and are affiliated to KNUST. We successfully conducted the terminal examinations for **9,154** nursing, community and midwifery students of these health training Institutions across the country with the required COVID-19 safety protocols last month. We are happy in supporting the Ministry of Health to train these healthcare professionals.

Nana Chairman, there is a large number of would-be doctors the University is adding to the human resources for healthcare delivery especially with the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic in the country i.e. Doctors of Medicine, Dentistry, Pharmacy and Veterinary Medicine. By international convention, these programmes are not graded with classes and students complete with general degrees. Also graduating with general degrees are students on the Human Biology (Medicine) and Human Biology (Dentistry) programmes. Eight (8) of our 14 programmes are graded with classes. Out of the **413** students on these 8 programmes, **35** (representing 8.5%) are graduating with first class honours, **261** (representing 63.2%) with second class upper honours, **117** (representing 28.3%) with second class lower degrees. Nobody is graduating with a pass. Chairman of Council, this College attracts the best Science students from our Senior High Schools. It is not unusual that 72% of the above- mentioned students are graduating with 1st and 2nd class upper honours degrees.

Nana Chairman, most of the times final year graduating students in the School of Medicine and Dentistry are usually unable to attend or join graduation ceremonies within their graduating year as their peers on other programmes in the University due to the calendar year duration of the programmes run in the School being different from the normal University academic year. For the second successive year, Dean Ansong and his team have made it possible again, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic and its attendant challenges and safety protocols, for **161** students of Medicine and **18** Dental students who have met all requirements for the MBChB and BDS degrees, respectively who took part in the July exams this year are part of this virtual graduation ceremony.

This year, the **OVERALL BEST GRADUATING** student in the College comes from the **Faculty of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences**, who also happens to be our valedictorian for this virtual congregation. She is in the person of **Miss Afia Korkor Opare Yeboah**, a Doctor of Pharmacy student with Cumulative Weighed Average of **77.27**.

ENROLMENT IN THE COLLEGE

Nana Chairman, with respect to student enrolment in the College, for the 2019/2020 academic year under review, undergraduate students' numbers increased from **2,480 to 2,907** which is **17.2 %** increment relative to 2018/2019 academic year.

SOME INITIATIVES IN THE COLLEGE

Chairman of Council, the Academic Board of the University approved the introduction of Ghanaian Sign Language for Health Communication course to all our students in the College. This is important to the College so that all our trainees would be enabled to provide confidential care to all manner of clients including those who have hearing difficulties. Hence the presence of a third party or person, i.e. an interpreter during clinical care would not be necessary. This addresses a major issue in the UN Sustainable Development Goals where nobody is left behind in society. I am happy to report that all undergraduate students in the College are taking this course and it is our firm believe that in the coming few years, when anybody with hearing impairment attends a health facility for service and encounters a medical doctor, 'pharmacist, dentist, nurse, medical laboratory technologist, midwife and imaging practitioner trained in KNUST would not find it difficult communicating in sign language. This will improve the services KNUST trained healthcare professionals offer to their clients with hearing impairment. We must thank and appreciate the immediate past Provost, Professor Yaw Adu-Sarkodie, for his personal efforts on this initiative.

Nana Chairman, the Vice-Chancellor's report to Congregation recounts further developments that took place in the College in the 2019/2020 Academic year. We are feverishly preparing to receive the first batch of the free SHS programme this academic year. We anticipate an increase in our students' enrolment for the 2020/2021 academic year which would require more teaching and non-teaching staff so that we do not fall foul of the National Council for Tertiary Education's requirement for Student- Teacher ratio. The increasing student numbers must be complemented with teaching and learning facilities. In this regard, we will entreat GETFUND to assist us with additional teaching and learning facilities.

We are moving some of the teaching and learning facilities of some Faculties and Schools in the College to the Medical Village at Boadi site of the campus with the completion of the Faculty of Allied Health Sciences (FAHS) classroom complex and a classroom complex for the KNUST School of Medicine and Dentistry. These projects were funded with internally generated funds. Courtesy of the GetFund, the small Animal Teaching Hospital of the Veterinary school is currently operational. We are desperately waiting for the completion of the second phase of the Vet School complex, which will be the large Animal Teaching Hospital and other teaching facilities including an Animal Clinic so we can increase intake of students on that programme and also offer veterinary services to the public. The country needs more Veterinary doctors to improve its food safety and security and also promote the one health concept and agenda.

Nana Chairman, we are happy that President Nana Akufo-Addo gave a promise to provide governmental support for us to complete the University's Teaching Hospital complex during the investiture of our Vice- Chancellor some few weeks ago. We have the believe it will be completed in a record time to help us in the training of healthcare professionals and also complement Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital in delivering specialist care to people in the middle and northern sector of the country. Our current training strategy is to use more of health care facilities outside campus as training sites in addition to our traditional teaching site i.e. Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital. We desire to use these facilities in the Ashanti Region outside of Kumasi as our teaching sites but are limited by accommodation for our students and accompanying staff. This will help us to increase enrolment of students into the various flagship and highly sought-after programmes in the

College and hence we appeal to District and Municipal Assemblies in the region to support us in providing accommodation to our students in their healthcare facilities.

Chairman of Council, the College through the Faculty of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences and its Production Unit is helping in the management and control of the COVID-19 pandemic with the production of quality sanitizers and other disinfectants used in the prevention of the COVID-19 infection. The Production Unit needs support in terms of medium to large scale manufacturing equipment to enhance its operations. We also appeal to individuals, corporate organizations and bodies, and institutions to order and procure their sanitizers and other disinfectants from the Production Unit. Our Research Centre, Kumasi Centre for Collaborative Research (KCCR) is providing the necessary and needed support in the management of COVID-19 pandemic in the country by conducting COVID-19 testing for the middle and northern zones of the country and also facilitated the training and setting up of COVID-19 testing laboratories for several regions in Ghana. The Centre has so far conducted **99,588** COVID-19 tests with **14,681** positive COVID-19 tests as of 31st August 2020.

Nana Chairman, the College has an enviable record in the University on Research outputs that support health care in the country and also brings in some funds and grants to the University. The College through the hardworking Senior members was able to attract a total research grants of almost **US\$ 4,300,000** during the year under review.

We have reported these in the Vice-Chancellor's report to Congregation. Nana Chairman, the College continues to lead in the area of research outputs from the University with a total of **658 publications** which form **30% of the total publications** in the University as captured in the last edition (i.e. 17th Edition) of Quality Assurance Bulletin produced by the University.

Chairman of Council, we could not have achieved all these without the support of many benefactors who have provided the need research grants and funds, refurbished our libraries, equipped our ICT laboratories, presented us with Teaching and Learning Aids, supported the training of our students and research activities among other things. We are grateful to them. The Vice-Chancellor has acknowledged them in her report to congregation.

WORD OF ADVICE TO GRADUANDS

Now take-home message to all my 2020 graduating students. Congratulations!! Your hard work has brought you this far. Let no one take this achievement from you. This should be the beginning of a good future for you if it is well-managed. God has been good to you all. Your parents and guardians have provided all you needed to the best of their abilities during your studies. It is my hope that you will continue to thank and appreciate God for His goodness and mercies. On your behalf, the College appreciate and thank you parents and guardians for all the sacrifices and dedication through these difficult times.

Graduands, you are entering the world of work at a time of extreme challenges but there exist many opportunities. We have been doing too many things in the same way in this country over the years and expect different results. Nature does not operate that way. Having been trained in the health sector, you have no reason or excuse to be unemployed. Have a positive outlook and attitude to life and let God guide you in all your decision-making. Be discipline and exhibit professionalism

and integrity in all your dealings. A good name is better than riches. Build your name with integrity.

APPRECIATION

Chairman of Council, I take this opportunity to thank and appreciate the entire Faculty and staff of the College for their dedication and service to duty especially in this COVID-19 era. Apart from teaching, supervision and mentoring, their financial contributions and support to needy students in the College needs commendation. Senior members in the College contributed a total of **GHC 263,000.00** to the students' support fund we have named “**So me so**” during the last academic year and the previous year. This fund has so far supported over **360** students in payment of fees and feeding grants since the last two years.

I take this opportunity to thank and appreciate the immediate past Provost of the College, Professor Yaw Adu-Sarkodie, for his exemplary leadership, stewardship, excellent works and achievements during the past three years.

Finally, Nana Chairman, I leave my graduating students with God's blessings as espoused in Numbers Chapter 6, Verse 24 of the Holy Bible and I quote: “The Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you, the Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace now and forever”.

I wish you well in your practice and endeavours.
Thank you.

PROFESSOR CHRISTIAN AGYARE
PROVOST, COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES
KNUST, KUMASI
18TH SEPTEMBER, 2020

ADDRESS DELIVERED BY PROFESSOR CHARLES OFOSU MARFO, PROVOST, COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES AT THE 54TH CONGREGATION CEREMONY (VIRTUAL) OF THE UNIVERSITY HELD ON FRIDAY, 18TH SEPTEMBER, 2020 AT 3:00 P.M.

SALUTATION

Chairman and Members of the University
Council
Vice-Chancellor
Past Vice-Chancellors and Pro Vice-Chancellors
Colleague Vice-Chancellors
Pro Vice-Chancellor
Registrar
Provosts of Colleges
Deans and Directors
Heads of Department
Members of
Convocation
Representatives from our Affiliate Institutions
Nananom
Alumni of the University
Senior and Junior Staff
Graduating Class of 2020
Parents and Guardians
Distinguished Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen

INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

On behalf of the Chairman and members of the Governing Council, the Vice-Chancellor, Management and the entire staff of this great institution, it is my pleasure to warmly welcome all our graduands and esteemed guests, who are with us this afternoon through the virtual platform to the first day of our 54th Congregation ceremony.

You will all agree with me that today's ceremony is extraordinary as it marks the first time in the history of the University that graduation ceremony is organised without the usual pomp and pageantry and notably without the physical presence of our cherished graduands. As we are aware, the Coronavirus pandemic has changed the whole world order in very significant ways and we all have to adapt to the 'new normal' and devise safe and innovative ways of moving on with life.

Ladies and gentlemen, we have gathered via the virtual platform this afternoon, to confer degrees on our deserving graduands of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences and to celebrate them for the successful completion of their various programmes of study. I wish to use this opportunity to congratulate you for achieving this milestone in your lives.

STATISTICS ON GRADUATING CLASS

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is a delight to inform you that the College of Humanities and Social Sciences is presenting a total of 2,286 undergraduate graduands this afternoon. This is made up of 1,138 males representing 49.8% and 1,148 females representing 50.20%. Of this number, 325 are

graduating with First Class honours, representing 15.4%; 1,137(50.0%) 2nd Class honours (Upper Division); 762 (33.0%) 2nd Class honours (Lower Division); and 25 (1.09%) Pass.

This year, the **OVERALL BEST GRADUATING** student in the College comes from the Department of History and Political Studies, who also happens to be our valedictorian for this congregation. **He is Master Andam Sylvester Atta and he is graduating with a CWA of 81.36**

ENROLMENT IN THE COLLEGE

Ladies and gentlemen, with respect to student enrolment in the College, for the 2019/2020 Academic Year under review, undergraduate students' numbers increased from 9,933 to 12,366, which is 25.5 % increment, relative to 2018/2019 Academic Year.

During the year under review, the "Department of Modern Languages" was rechristened as "Department of Language and Communication Sciences" and the underlisted programmes were introduced in line with current global trends; i.e. BA Communication Studies and BA Linguistics.

Furthermore, the BA Akan and BA French programmes were reviewed and renamed BA Akan Language and Culture and BA French and Francophone Studies, respectively.

In preparation to receive the expected increase in admissions in the coming year the College is working hard to complete the ongoing Faculty of Social Sciences block to provide additional space for teaching and learning.

We are grateful to the government for the additional hands that the College has received. This will go a long way to ease the stress on our staff. However, with our incessant drive to expand and the coming of the first batch of the Free Senior High School students, we anticipate an increase in our enrolment for the 2020/2021 academic year which would require more lecturers so that we do not fall foul of the National Council for Tertiary Education's requirement for Student/Lecturer ratio. The increasing student numbers must be complemented with teaching and learning facilities. In this regard, we will entreat GETFUND to assist us with additional teaching and learning facilities.

SOME INITIATIVES IN THE COLLEGE

In line with the Human Resources Development objective of the College and the requirements of the National Accreditation Board as well as the NTCE for all Faculty members to have terminal degrees, the College is supporting some members of staff to up-grade in both local and International institutions.

The Faculty of Law admitted three candidates for its 1st Batch of Students to commence its Doctor of Philosophy in Law (PhD) Programme, The PhD in Law is primarily designed to support staff development and contribution towards the production of domestically trained legal academics and practitioners.

The Department of Accounting and Finance of the KNUST Business School, headed by Prof. Nathaniel Boso won a USAID grant of Fifteen Million United States dollars (\$15,000,000.00) with the Arizona State University. Out this amount, Seven Million, Five Hundred Thousand United States dollars (\$7,500,000.00) was for the KNUST.

The Department of Marketing and Corporate Strategy at KSB, in collaboration with other higher education institutions in Africa and the University of Groningen (EU technical Partner), submitted an application for mobility funding in INTRA-AFRICA ACADEMIC MOBILITY SCHEME, 2020, a joint initiative of the African Union and the European Union. The project is titled **“Capacity Enhancement of Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Higher Education Institutions: Bridging the Gap between Academia and Industry”** and aims at utilizing the mobility scheme in building the capacity on innovation and entrepreneurship among participating universities to:

- i. Produce employable graduates.
- ii. Improve the quality of higher education.
- iii. Strengthen the modernization and internationalisation of African higher education institutions, and
- iv. Promote the development of an African higher education and research space.

The Department of Geography and Rural Development organised a staff development workshop for its staff on capacity-building. Further, in collaboration with Prof. Samuel Adu-Prah of the Department of Geography and Geology of the Sam Houston State University of Texas, USA, they won the Canegie African Diaspora Fellowship Programme for the 2019/2020 academic year. Under the Programme, Prof. Samuel Adu-Prah was to be hosted by the Department to support in teaching and research, including capacity training for staff and students in GIS. It is however sad to note that his coming did not happen because of the Covid- 19.

The Department of Economics also won an institutional grant of Twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000) from the African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) to purchase ICT equipment in support of postgraduate teaching and research. In collaboration with the Rural Enterprises Project (REP), Ministry of Trade, Ghana, the Department of Economics again won a grant to support research in economics on value chain study of Kente in the Ejisu and Kwabre Districts of the Ashanti Region.

APPRECIATION

Ladies and gentlemen, at this juncture, I wish to express our sincerest appreciation to our stakeholders who have been of immense support to the College. These include the Bank of Ghana, USAID, Arizona State University, Sam Houston State University of Texas, USA, The French in Ghana, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Ghana, to mention but a few.

I appreciate and thank all parents, guardians and benefactors of our graduands. If our graduands stand tall today, we know they are standing on your toils and sweat. Your unflinching support has propelled them to this great achievement and may your sacrifices be rewarded.

Again, I wish to thank our gallant graduands and all other students for their cooperation during the semester when as a result of the COVID 19 pandemic we suddenly had to switch from our traditional method of teaching and learning to the virtual mode. It was unexpected, however, you proved your might, by adjusting to the circumstance.

To my abled staff of the College, I am truly grateful for your support. It was through your sacrifices and efforts that we were able to bring the semester to a successful end. Even though the virtual

teaching was new to some of us, we adjusted and soldiered on to deliver on our mandate as an institution. I say Bravo.

WORD OF ADVICE TO GRADUANDS AND CONCLUSION

I would at this point want to say a word of advice to my proud graduands. I want to congratulate you once again, for the great success for which you are being celebrated today. We all share in your joy and achievements.

We on our part have done all within our limited resources to provide you with the needed knowledge and skills to be functional in society. It is now up to you to make maximum use of the acquired knowledge and skills for the betterment of society. As the world continuous to change, please continue to build on your skills and knowledge so you can continuously remain relevant in the changing times. Make use of your skills in the identification of problems, proposal development, investigation, etc. to create value and efficiency in whichever sector you find yourself.

Be reminded that in life, it never gets easier, but as you strive, you get better. I leave you with a quote from a biblical devotion which states *“Success isn't automatically given to us, it's pursued with all the energy and sweat we can muster. Obstacles and struggles are part of life. They make us appreciate success. If everything came easy we would never know how it feels to succeed. Obstacles were meant to be overcome, Fear was meant to be conquered and success was meant to be achieved”*

I also wish to encourage you to register with the KNUST Alumni Association and entreat you to be active members of this global fraternity. It is a great platform networking and for the organisation and mobilisation of resources to support your Alma Mater, the KNUST.

Finally, I pray that the Good Lord establishes you and grants you abundant success in every endeavour of yours. May He open the heavens, the storehouse of his bountiful blessings and goodness for all the work of your hands.

Once again, I thank you all for making time to join us on the virtual space and for your audience. God richly bless

**PROFESSOR CHARLES OFOSU MARFO
PROVOST, COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL
SCIENCES
KNUST, KUMASI**

ADDRESS DELIVERED BY PROFESSOR MARK ADOM- ASAMOAH, PROVOST, COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING AT THE 54TH CONGREGATION CEREMONY (VIRTUAL) OF THE UNIVERSITY HELD ON 19TH SEPTEMBER, 2020 AT 09:00 A.M.

SALUTATION

Chairman and Members of Council
Vice Chancellor .
Pro Vice Chancellor
Past Vice-Chancellors and Pro Vice-Chancellors
Registrar
Colleague Provosts of Colleges
Deans, Directors and Heads of Department
Members of Convocation
Senior and Junior Staff
Parents and Guardians
Proud Members of the Graduating Class of 2020
Industrial Partners and Distinguished Special Guests
Members of the Media
Ladies and Gentlemen

INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

I count it a special privilege for me to address you this morning on behalf of the Vice Chancellor at the 54th Congregation of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology via the virtual platform. As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic which has now become the new normal, we host our first ever virtual congregation ceremony without physically present graduands and convocation. Ladies and gentlemen, we have gathered via the virtual platform this morning, to confer degrees on our deserving graduands of the College of Engineering and to celebrate them for the successful completion of their various programmes of study.

I wish to use this opportunity to congratulate you all for achieving this milestone in your lives.

ABOUT THE COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING

Ladies and gentlemen, the College of Engineering, established in 1951, comprises of three faculties, eleven (11) academic departments and five (5) research centres. With respect to student enrolment in the College, for the 2019/2020 academic year under review, undergraduate students' numbers increased from 6,206 to 7,387 which is 19% increment relative to 2018/2019 academic year.

We are grateful to the government for the additional hands that the College has received. This will go a long way to ease the stress on our staff. However, with our incessant drive to expand and the coming of the first batch of the Free Senior High School students, we anticipate an increase in our enrolment for the 2020/2021 academic year which would require more lecturers so that we do not fall foul of the National Council for Tertiary Education's requirement for Student/Lecturer ratio.

The increasing student numbers must be complemented with teaching and learning facilities. In this regard, we commend GETFUND for awarding a contract for the construction of additional teaching and learning facilities for the College of Engineering.

GRADUATING STATISTICS

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, I am happy to announce that, this year, we are presenting a total of **1,349** fresh student engineers from 15 different undergraduate programmes made up of 82% males and 18% females for graduation. As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, there are only 17 postgraduates (including 4 PhDs) graduating from the College of Engineering this year compared to 56 last year. The breakdown for the undergraduate students is as follows:

First Class 261 (19%) students
Second Class upper 693 (51%) students
Second Class lower 385 (29%) students
Pass 10 (1 %) students

This year the overall best student of the College who also happens to be the overall best student of the University is from the Department of Computer Engineering in the person of **Hermann NyuykongeKumbong with a CWA of 88.45.**

SOME KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN THE COLLEGE

Chairman of Council, in the area of research and development, a Tripartite MOU was signed between KNUST, Maersk Drilling and Maersk Training. The MOU is to help KNUST set up a state of the art well control centre in the sub-region to train drilling staff in the oil and gas sector. The Iowa State University and KNUST College of Engineering are currently collaborating under the Engineers without Borders programme to undertake rural development projects in the Upper West Region. The Department of Computer Engineering won a grant of 96,000 Euros with Ernst Mach Fellowship which allowed 4 postgraduate students to undertake part of their studies at the Carinthia University of Applied Sciences in Austria.

The Brew-Hammond Energy Centre (TBHEC), KNUST together with five (5) other partners from African Higher Education Institutions is implementing a project titled “*Fostering Research and Intra-African Knowledge Transfer through Mobility and Education (FRAME)*”. The total grant sum is Eur 1,398,150 of which the KNUST component is Eur 344,537. The project is offering scholarships to qualified candidates to undertake both Masters and PhD programmes in various disciplines in any of the partner institutions which include: Namibia University of Science and Technology (lead partner), Namibia, University of Buea, Cameroon, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Ghana, Hawassa University, Ethiopia and University of the Free State, South Africa.

The Technology Consultancy Centre is implementing a 200,000 pounds sterling project grant from the Royal Academy of Sciences, UK. The project which involves 4 Technical Universities in Ghana, 5 Industry partners and 2 UK Universities supports student capstone projects.

APPRECIATION

- The teaching function that we are celebrating today was made possible by many people and organizations. First we want to thank the government and people of Ghana for providing you with the opportunity to be educated.
- Secondly, we thank our Industrial Partners for providing financial support, vacation training placements and industrial presentations.

- To my abled staff of the College, I am truly grateful for your support. It was through your sacrifices and efforts that we were able to bring the semester to a successful end. Even though the virtual teaching was new to some of us, we adjusted and soldiered on to deliver on our mandate as an institution. I say Bravo!
- To the parents and guardians, we are aware of the sacrifices you have made to provide your wards with the top engineering education that many of you could not have yourselves. We say well done.

ADVICE TO GRADUANDS

I would want to say a word to my proud graduands:

You came in as the best and received training from the best and today we graduate you as one of the best. Therefore, be confident and courageous knowing that you have the potential to lead the industrial revolution for the transformation of our world. Be mindful of the fact that your certificate does not guarantee you success. Be humble and learn from the experienced technicians and foremen you will meet on the job. Shun laziness, mediocrity and truancy at work.

Align yourselves internally with universal principles such as honesty, perseverance, integrity, hard work and fellow feeling.

Finally, I pray that; *“The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace.”*

Chairman of the University Council, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, I thank you all for making time to join us on the virtual space and for your audience.

PROFESSOR MARK ADOM-ASAMOAH
PROVOST, COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING
KNUST, KUMASI
19TH SEPTEMBER, 2020

ADDRESS DELIVERED BY PROFESSOR JOHN TIAH BUGRI, PROVOST, COLLEGE OF ART AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT AT THE 54TH CONGREGATION CEREMONY (VIRTUAL) OF THE UNIVERSITY HELD ON 19TH SEPTEMBER, 2020 AT 11:00 A.M.

SALUTATION

Chairman and Members of the University Council
Vice-Chancellor
Past Vice-Chancellors and Pro Vice-Chancellors
Colleague Vice-Chancellors
Pro Vice-Chancellor
Registrar
Provosts of Colleges
Deans and Directors
Heads of Department
Members of Convocation
Representatives from our Affiliate Institutions
Nananom
Alumni of the University
Senior and Junior Staff
Graduating Class of 2020
Parents and Guardians
Distinguished Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen

INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

On behalf of the Chairman and members of the Governing Council, the Vice-Chancellor, Management and the entire staff of this great institution, it is my pleasure to warmly welcome all our graduands and esteemed guests, who are with us this morning through the virtual platform to the first day of our 54th Congregation ceremony.

You will all agree with me that today's ceremony is extraordinary as it marks the first time in the history of the University that graduation ceremony is organised without the usual pomp and pageantry and notably without the physical presence of our cherished graduands. As we are aware, the Coronavirus pandemic has changed the whole world order in very significant ways and we all have to adapt to the 'new normal' and devise safe and innovative ways of moving on with life.

Ladies and gentlemen, we have gathered via the virtual platform this morning, to confer degrees on our deserving graduands of the College of Art and Built Environment and to celebrate them for the successful completion of their various programmes of study.

I wish to use this opportunity to congratulate you for achieving this milestone in your lives.

STATISTICS ON GRADUATING CLASS

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is a delight to inform you that the College of Art and Built Environment is presenting a total of 1343 graduands this morning. This is made up of 831 males representing 61.87% and 512 females representing 38.13%. Of this number, 150 are graduating with first Class honours, representing 11.17%; 825 (61.43%) 2nd Class honours (Upper Division); 356 (26.51 %) 2nd Class honours (Lower Division); and 12 (0.89%) Pass.

This year, the **OVERALL BEST GRADUATING** student in the College comes from the Department of Publishing Studies, who also happens to be our valedictorian for this congregation. He is in the person of Rexford Boateng who read a four-year programme leading to a B.A. Publishing Studies degree with a cumulative weighted average of 79:06.

ENROLMENT IN THE COLLEGE

Ladies and gentlemen, with respect to student enrolment in the College, for the 2019/2020 academic year under review, undergraduate students' numbers increased from 6,0 IS to 6,395, which is 6.32% increment relative to 2018/2019 academic year.

NEW PROGRAMMES TO BE INTRODUCED OR INITIATIVES TO BOOST ENROLMENT

- i. **The Department of Communication Design** is in the final stage of introducing a Doctor of Philosophy in Visual Communication Design programme. The Department is also ready to roll out a Certificate Diploma for adult learners in the Creative Media Industry for the Northern sector of Ghana as an all-inclusive approach to design education.
- ii At the Department of Land Economy, new programmes to be introduced in the 2021/2022 academic year are:
 - MSc Real Estate
 - PhD in Land Management and Governance

An MBA programme in Real Estate Finance and Investment has also been developed in partnership with the Department of Finance and Accounting, KNUST Business School and is currently receiving stakeholder inputs.

The Department has also initiated steps to develop a new undergraduate programme in Facilities Management.

- iii The Centre for Settlement Studies in collaboration with the Department of Civil Engineering has developed an MPhil/PhD programme in Disaster and Prevention Management which is receiving attention at the Planning and Resources Committee of the KNUST. This programme should have started in 2019/2020 academic year but is currently being delayed because administrative challenges encountered in the extraordinary era of Covid-19 pandemic.
- iv. The Department of Architecture is in the process of introducing the following programmes of study:
 - Master in Landscape Architecture (MLA). This is in response to the need for qualified experts in landscape design in the country
 - BSc. & MSc. Interior Design
 - MSc. in Building Performance
 - BSc. Architectural Technology

These initiatives are designed to provide options at the intake level at year one, and to feed the professional programmes at the graduate level. The Department has also received approval to run

its MSc. and MPhil programmes aside the regular stream, on week-end basis to make it easier for interested personnel to enrol and progress in their fields.

We are grateful to the government for the additional hands that the College has received. This will go a long way to ease the stress on our staff. However, with our incessant drive to expand and the coming of the first batch of the free Senior High School students, we anticipate an increase in our enrolment for the 2020/2021 academic year which would require more lecturers so that we do not fall foul of the National Council for Tertiary Education's requirement for Student/Lecturer ratio.

The increasing student numbers must be complemented with teaching and learning facilities. In this regard, we will entreat GETFUND to assist us with additional teaching and learning facilities.

SOME INITIATIVES IN THE COLLEGE

- As part of an agreement between the **Department of Publishing Studies** and EPP Books Services, a four-storey bookshop facility and office complex are to be constructed and operated in the University as part of the MOU with the University.

- **The Department of Communication Design**, negotiated the signing of memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the KNUST and Media 7 (a satellite platform provider). to facilitate the live transmission and broadcast of the Faculty of Art's flagship project, TEK TV, on a free-to-air platform.

TEK TV has started operations and has been pivotal in the use of new educational technologies for teaching Senior High School students during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- **The Centre for Settlements Studies** has developed a Burglar Proof Window with a means of escape in the event of emergencies especially fire. The development of this window system is very crucial in the housing sector in especially aligning with provisions of the National Building Regulations, LI 1630 (1996).

APPRECIATION

Ladies and gentlemen, at this juncture, I wish to express our sincerest appreciation to our stakeholders who have been of immense support to the College: GIZ, EPP Books Services Limited and GHACEM just to mention a few.

I appreciate and thank all parents, guardians and benefactors of our graduands. If our graduands stand tall today, we know they are standing on your toils and sweat. Your unflinching support has propelled them to this great achievement and may your sacrifices be rewarded.

Again, I wish to thank our gallant graduands and all other students for their cooperation during the semester when as a result of the COVID 19 pandemic we suddenly had to switch from our traditional method of teaching to the virtual mode. It was unexpected, however, you proved your might, by adjusting to the circumstance.

To my abled staff of the College, I am truly grateful for your support. It was through your sacrifices and efforts that we were able to bring the semester to a successful end. Even though the virtual

teaching was new to some of us, we adjusted and soldiered on to deliver on our mandate as an institution. I say Bravo.

WORD OF ADVICE TO GRADUANDS AND CONCLUSION

I would at this point want to say a word of advice to my proud graduands. I want to congratulate you once again, for the great success for which you are being celebrated today. We all share in your joy and achievements.

We on our part have done all within our limited resources to provide you with the needed knowledge and skills to be functional in society. It is now up to you to make maximum use of the acquired knowledge and skills for the betterment of society. As the world continuous to change, please continue to build on your skills and knowledge so you can continuously remain relevant in the changing times. Make use of your skills in the identification of problems, proposal development, investigation, etc. to create value and efficiency in whichever sector you find yourself.

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I also wish to encourage you to register with the KNUST Alumni Association and entreat you to be active members of this global fraternity. It is a great platform networking and for the organisation and mobilisation of resources to support your Alma Mater, the KNUST.

Finally, I pray that the Good Lord establishes you and grants you abundant success in every endeavour of yours. May He open the heavens, the- storehouse of his bountiful blessings and goodness for all the work of your hands.

Once again, I thank you all for making time to join us on the virtual space and for your audience.

PROF. JOHN TIAH BUGRI
PROVOST, COLLEGE OF ART AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT
KNUST, KUMASI
19TH SEPTEMBER, 2020

ADDRESS DELIVERED BY PROFESSOR KWAME OSEI BOATENG, DIRECTOR, INSTITUTE OF DISTANCE LEARNING, AT THE 54TH CONGREGATION CEREMONY (VIRTUAL) OF THE UNIVERSITY HELD ON 19TH SEPTEMBER, 2020 AT 1:00 P. M.

SALUTATION

The Chancellor, Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, the Asantehene
Chairman and Members of the University Council
Vice-Chancellor
Past Vice-Chancellors
Pro Vice-Chancellor
Past Pro Vice-Chancellors
Registrar
Colleague Provosts
Deans and Directors
Heads of Department
Members of Convocation
Representatives from our Affiliate Institutions
Nananom
Alumni of the University
Senior and Junior Staff
Graduating Class of 2020
Parents and Guardians
Distinguished Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen

INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

On behalf of the Vice-Chancellor, I have the pleasure to warmly welcome all our graduands and esteemed guests, who are with us this afternoon on the virtual platform, to the *T* Session of our 54th Congregation ceremony.

You will all agree with me that today's ceremony is extraordinary as it marks the first time in the history of the University that graduation ceremony is being organised without the physical presence of our cherished graduands and the associated pomp and pageantry. As we are aware, the Corona Virus Pandemic has changed the whole world order in very significant ways and we all have to adapt to the “new normal” and devise safe and innovative ways of moving on with life.

Ladies and gentlemen, we have gathered via the virtual platform this afternoon, to confer degrees on deserving graduands of the Institute of Distance Learning and to celebrate them for the successful completion of their various programmes of study. I use this opportunity to congratulate all of you graduands for achieving this milestone in your lives.

STATISTICS ON GRADUATING CLASS

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, it is a delight to inform you that the Institute of Distance Learning is presenting a total of **2,357** graduands this afternoon. This is made up of 1,918 undergraduate students and 439 postgraduate students. It is expected that majority of our postgraduate students would complete their thesis and join the November Congregation of the University, which is likely to take place in February next year.

THE INSTITUTE AND ENROLMENT

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, as you may know, the Institute of Distance Learning (IDL) exists to provide a viable complement to the traditional face-to-face mode of university education provided by the other Colleges of KNUST. The Institute provides this alternative in a flexible distance learning mode through a virtual classroom platform, other state-of-the-art e-learning facilities, and occasional face-to-face sessions that allow our students the needed flexibility in their studies. The level of flexibility we provide has occasioned patronage of our programmes by professionals and practitioners seeking executive, management, promotional or transitional opportunities in their places of work.

In view of this, the Institute continued to expand the number of programmes on offer at the postgraduate level, and to a lesser extent, at the undergraduate level of the education system. For the year under review, the Institute put on offer six Diploma programmes, 21 undergraduate programmes and 46 postgraduate programmes on the platform of the Institute. There are plans to introduce more undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in the near future in Communication Systems and Network Engineering, Electrical Power Systems Engineering and Architectural Technology, among others. Additionally, the Institute continued to organise the Nursing Access Programme for health professionals who want to further their education but have some deficiencies in some of their subjects. The Institute operates in collaboration with the Department of Nursing of KNUST in this endeavour.

With respect to our student numbers, the Institute in the 2019/2020 academic year had a total student population of 10,858 (7,122 Males (66%) and 3,736 Females (34%)). This was made up of 6,844 undergraduate and Diploma students (63%) and 4,014 postgraduate students (37%) across the various programmes on offer on the Institute's platform. This is an improvement over the previous academic year's student population of 9,901 (5,547 undergraduate and Diploma students (56%) and 4,354 postgraduate students (44%)).

SOME INITIATIVES IN THE INSTITUTE

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, it cannot be overemphasized that the dreaded COVID-19 Pandemic has resulted in an unprecedented need for several reforms to the conduct of human affairs. It has thus, created significant challenges for the global higher education community including KNUST. The flip side of this challenge is that technology has, and continues to influence all facets of human life, including the provision of education. In this direction, the entirety of the conduct of development and delivery of content for our programmes and other activities is moving to the virtual space. This year's graduation is a vivid example of this.

At KNUST the Institute led the crusade to completely migrate all teaching and learning activities onto our virtual classroom (V-Class) for the latter part of the second semester of the 2019/2020 academic year in view of restrictions imposed as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic. IDL has successfully conducted an online orientation programme for freshly admitted students - recording about 30,000 views of the orientation videos. This shows that there is much prospect in the future of higher education on the virtual platform and the Institute is seriously leveraging its human and material resources to take full advantage of this new order.

In the year under review KNUST commissioned the second phase of a beautiful facility sited on the coast near Moree in the Central Region. The Institute has been given the responsibility to put

the facility to good use. The Institute is planning to run demand-driven short courses and executive programmes in various disciplines as well as hospitality services. A facility of the Institute is about 95% completed in Tamale. It is hoped that the facility would be operational in the 2020/2021 academic year. Again, work has also commenced on the Phase II of the Institute's Accra Campus project. In this phase, a facility is to be constructed at Adenta to provide additional space for our ever-increasing population in the Greater Accra Region.

APPRECIATION

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, the period under review has been most challenging but all the same, exciting. I would want to commend our graduands and all other students of the Institute for their co-operation during the semester when as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic, we had to switch completely to the virtual mode. I also want to highly commend all staff of the Institute and our various facilitators across the Colleges of the University for their sacrifice and immense support during the period. It was through these sacrificial efforts that we were able to bring the semester to a successful end. We also appreciate the Management of the University for the renewed interest in the affairs of the Institute--God is smiling at all of us as you support our efforts towards a seamless virtual academic environment.

WORD OF ADVICE TO GRADUANDS AND CONCLUSION

And now to my proud graduands - congratulations, once again, for the great success for which you are being celebrated today. We all share in your joy and achievements. Thus far you have responded very well to our efforts at spending limited resources to provide you with the needed knowledge and skills in order to be functional in society. It is now up to you to make maximum use of the acquired knowledge and skills for the betterment of society. As the world continues to change, please continue to build on your skills and knowledge so you can continuously remain relevant in the changing times. To succeed situate yourselves in environments that challenges you to do more, register with the KNUST Alumni Association to become active members of this global fraternity, the hallmark of which is driving members to success. It is a great platform for networking and also for organising and mobilising resources to empower your alma mater, KNUST, to support you.

Finally, blessings for all graduands of IDL:

May the Good Lord establish you

And grant you abundant success in every endeavour of yours

May He open the storehouse in the heavens And pour out His bountiful blessings and goodness onto all the work of your hands.

Go well, the future is very bright-just stay the course.

I would like to thank you all for making time to join us on the virtual space and for the audience given me. God bless you.

PROFESSOR KWAME OSEI BOATENG
DIRECTOR, INSTITUTE OF DISTANCE LEARNING
KNUST, KUMASI
19TH SEPTEMBER, 2020