

**ADDRESS BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR, PROF. J.S.K. AYIM, AT THE 2000/2001
MATRICULATION CEREMONY HELD AT THE FORE COURT OF THE
LIBRARY ON SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2000, AT 9.00 A.M.**

Pro Vice-Chancellor
Registrar
Deans of Faculties
Heads of Departments
Hall Masters and Wardens
Members of Convocation
Members of the SRC
Distinguished Guests
Students

I am privileged to formally welcome all of you freshmen and women, both residents and non-residents, to pursue various academic programmes in this University. Indeed, the smiles on your faces and the hilarious manner in which you sang the “Gaudeamus” the matriculation song, portrays a sense of relief on your part for your success in gaining admission to this wonderful University, in spite of the keen competition that most of you have had to brace through to get here.

You should count yourselves lucky because this year’s admission exercise proved to be one of the keenest, for out of 8,644 qualified applicants only 4,217 representing 49% of the qualified applicants were offered admission while the rest are expected to seek their fortunes elsewhere. Of those admitted 3,096 representing 73% were males while 1,121 representing 27% were females.

The statistics reflect an increase of 35% of intake of freshmen over and above last years’ intake. It also exceeded the projected fresh intake of 3,000 by about 40% and raised the overall student enrolment in the university to 10,500.

This University, the only higher education institution which awards degrees in the technologies and the applied sciences and the applied arts, could certainly have admitted more if our lecture theatres, studios, laboratories, workshops and our financial and human resources, could allow sufficient spaces for more of the qualified applicants to obtain professional degrees and qualifications. As parents ourselves, nothing could be more painful than saying no to qualified young men and women, with good grades, who could have gained value-added education at KNUST to boost the labour market and the economy.

That is why we at KNUST have always pleaded with the Government, the private sector and industry to help improve the facilities at KNUST in order to enhance more access and the quality of our academic programmes. It is for this reason that both students and

parents, the prime users of the University's facilities, should concede to modest increases in the academic facilities and the residential facilities user fees from time to time to sustain the maintenance of these facilities for use by posterity.

At this juncture, let me congratulate the Ghana Universities Superannuation Scheme (GUSS) which has successfully completed a 240-bed hostel for hire to interested students on commercial basis this October, thereby helping to reduce the problem of residential accommodation facing students. Meanwhile, the construction of the SSNIT 700-room student hostel is also progressing very fast and surely it will be ready by the next academic year.

We wish to renew our invitation once again to estate developers and entrepreneurs to invest in the development of private student hostels on the campuses. Land is available and demand for accommodation is very high. 6,500 students out of 10,500 are non-resident with no suitable residential accommodation,

Now let me turn your attention to the matriculation oath that you have just taken so that its significance will never be lost on you. Although the university has offered you admission on paper, those individual letters of admission do not confer any full legal status on you as a bonafide student of this University. Literally, in effect, your status on the campus since October 3 could be compared to that of a guest of the University, enjoying the largesse and the mere hospitality of the University. It is this matriculation oath, the oath of obedience which is the official oath for freshmen that confers on you the full University status or recognition as junior members "in status pupillari" or junior members of student status, while your lecturers and other professional and administrative staff who look after you enjoy the status of Senior Members "in loco parentis", that is senior members who serve in place of your parents.

You are, therefore, required to show absolute obedience and respect to the Vice-Chancellor, the Pro Vice-Chancellor, the Registrar, the Deans of Faculties, Directors and Heads of Departments, Dean of Students; Hall Masters and Wardens, your Professors and Lecturers, your academic tutors and officials of the Central Administration as well as all those who have been placed in responsible positions to serve you in accordance with the University statutes as well as the rules and regulations which have just been distributed to you.

In this regard, we expect nothing less than the respect you normally give to your parents at home; so that you can reciprocally deserve the protection of the University authorities. You should therefore exhibit self-respect for it is only self-respecting students who respect their colleagues and those placed in authority over them. Indeed, it is those who are law-abiding who go through their academic programmes with flying colours, because such students have no time for hooliganism and acts of indiscipline which tend to detract you from the purpose for which you were admitted and for which your parents have sacrificed so much. Perhaps the book of Hebrews chapter 13, verse 17 sums up this advice I

have given you and, I quote: “Obey your leaders and follow their orders. They watch over your souls without resting, since they must give God an account of their service. If you obey them, they will do their work gladly; if not, they will do it with sadness and that will be of no help to you”.

As I have said earlier, this university has no place for hooligans and will therefore protect you from those who may want to bully you or "homo" you as if you were still in the secondary schools. Recently, I have received two complaints about attempts by some continuing students in some of the halls of residence to molest some freshmen.

I understand that even in the secondary schools “homoeing” is now illegal and I want to assure you that similarly, at KNUST, “ponding” was banned several years ago and is therefore illegal now. Those students who attempted to pond some freshmen have therefore been dismissed from their respective halls of residence to ensure that they don't remain there to intimidate other students in the future. Any freshman who experiences such intimidation again should not hesitate to bring it to the attention of the University authorities.

But while the University is prepared to protect you from your unruly colleagues, you should take a cue from the song Desiderata by ensuring your own line of self-defence by always trying to “avoid loud and aggressive persons for they are vexatious to the spirit”. The ancient Romans used to say “poma mala maculat bona; certe mali amici puerum bonum macularunt” meaning " a bad apple spoils the good, certainly, bad friends will spoil a good boy”.

You should remember that your primary responsibility for being here is to acquire good education, you should therefore, take advantage of the facilities placed at your disposal in the faculties and the libraries. Attend classes regularly and complete your assignments on time. When you do this, you will be earning your marks through the continuous assessment system and you will not have to strain yourself when the main end-of-semester examinations are approaching. If you require confirmation of what I am saying, then just go to Proverbs 4 vrs. 10-15 in the Good News Bible which says:

“Listen to me my son. Take seriously what I am telling you and you will live a long life. I have taught you wisdom and the right way to life. Nothing will stand in your way if you walk wisely. Always remember what you have learnt. Your education is your life- guard it well. Do not go where evil men go. Do not follow the example of the wicked. Don't do it. Keep away from evil! Refuse it and go on your way”. It is only when you do this that you can pass out as respectable teknokrats or alumni of this University.

May God Bless you and Guide You. Thank You

Prof J.S.K. Ayim
VICE-CHANCELLOR

STAFF CHANGES

DEANSHIP APPOINTMENTS - CORRIGENDUM

The following Senior Members have been appointed Deans of their various Faculties. They are:

NAME	FACULTY	EFFECTIVE DATE	DURATION YEAR (S)
Prof K.A. Andam	Engineering	1/10/00	2
Dr. Edward Badu	Distance Education	1/10/00	Unspecified

HEADSHIP APPOINTMENT

NAME	DEPARTMENT	EFFECTIVE DATE	DURATION YEAR (S)
Alhaji Dr N.S. Peligah	Art Education	1/1 0/00	1