

## **Nations are Built with Brains Not with Dollar Remittance**

Matriculation Address by the Vice-Chancellor Professor Kwesi Andam at the Great Hall

On Saturday, 2<sup>nd</sup> November, 2002

- Pro Vice-Chancellor
- Registrar
- Provost
- Deans and Directors
- Heads of Departments
- Senior Members
- Senior & Junior Staff of the University
- Junior Members In Statu Pupullari
- Ladies and Gentlemen

Every year the University administers the solemn matriculation ceremony during which new students are required to take the MATRICULATION oath.

I must explain the significance of this matriculation ceremony. Before formal universities began, in the days of Plato and Aristotle, students simply went to sit at the feet of the professor and listened to whatever they had to tell them. When they had learnt enough, they simply left. In other words, there was no matriculation ceremony and there was no graduation ceremony either.

However, with the coming into existence of modern universities some eight hundred years ago, it became necessary to mark the two most important days in the life of the University Student: the day he/ she begins the studies and the day he/ she completes the studies. So our University holds the matriculation ceremony in November and the congregation in March every year.

Matriculation day is therefore historic for both the student and the University. For the University, it is a day that the student is required to take an oath that you must not breach during your period of stay in the University. For the student, it is the day you tell the whole world that you have left the secondary school and become mature in your thinking and attitude. We would encourage you to take a photograph this day of yourself to see how pretty Dr handsome you are at your matriculation.

### **YOUR VISION AND MISSION**

As you begin your maturity journey through academic life you must, as a routine, always define your vision, mission at every signpost in life as well as the strategy you must adopt to achieve your mission.

For each of you, today your vision in the next four to six years will be to emerge as a successful graduate. Do not allow any other issue to deviate your attention from this goal.

**UNIVERSITY RULES AND REGULATIONS** Rules and regulations are found in any community of the world. They are made to bring order to the community. Imagine for a minute what would happen at a traffic junction where six roads meet and traffic is heavy. If traffic lights are not installed or a traffic orderly is not present, there would be chaos and accidents.

Since there are 13,100 students sharing various facilities, if rules are not introduced in the University there would be chaos and conflict. All regulations that you must obey are contained in the "Freshers' Guide". You must take time to read them. More than that you **MUST** obey the rules. If you come into conflict with any of the rules, you may find yourself permanently sacked from the University.

When you are in a crowd you tend to behave boldly to satisfy your peers that you are some kind of a champion. But if you are removed from that crowd, then you realise how frail you are. In the last two weeks alone, I have received five letters from students who have been rusticated or sacked from the University pleading for clemency. I have also received five delegations including Ministers of State, a Minister of ECOWAS Parliament, Paramount Chiefs et cetera pleading for clemency on behalf of students who have been disciplined. In all the cases I say NO!

Especially, you must respect your teachers and you must not cheat at examinations. I repeat you must not cheat at examinations. Of all the crimes, this particular crime is the one that can bring you the sack and shame very quickly.

### **UNIVERSITY RESIDENTIAL POLICY**

All the residential halls in the University were built in the 1950s and 1960s. For forty years, governments of Ghana have not added even one hall of residence to our facilities. Meanwhile, the population of Ghana has multiplied six-fold. The result is that there are only 5684 beds for 13,100 students.

The best policy that the University has come out with is to ensure that the 5684 beds are made available to EACH Ghanaian student passing through the University. The most vulnerable student is the fresh student who arrives here on campus and does not know any relative to lodge with. So the policy will, as from October 2003, make it possible for all fresh students to have accommodation. This year only some of you got accommodation. Next year, the remaining will have their turn.

If you have received your turn, then next year make arrangements to move out of the hall to make room for the new students who will be enrolling.

### **GHANA AND AFRICA LOOKS UP TO YOU**

Ghana and Africa have invested so much in you. So the nation has every right to look up to you for exemplary lives.

## **Sports**

In the field of sports, this University has produced great athletes in the past. We would like to see talented athletes emerging from the University again to become world famous athletes.

Every student of this University must begin to have interest in one game or another. If you do not have a sport, start by next week. These include:

- Athletics
- Volley
- Basketball
- Football
- Tennis
- Swimming

There are plans to introduce in 2003/2004 courses in individual sports like swimming and tennis, and subjects like music and law in which you can earn credit and add to your CWA (Cumulative Weighted Average).

## **Religion**

This University is the birth of evangelical Christianity in Ghana. It has helped the University to achieve an extraordinarily high moral standard in this community. You will be out of place if you intend to live an immoral life here, or dress indecently, or cheat at examinations. Of course, religion is private, and the constitution of Ghana allows freedom of worship so that every faith is allowed on campus.

## **A TRUE UNIVERSITY STUDENT OF KNUST**

This is a four star university, the leading technical university in Africa. Among our graduates is His Excellency Dr. Kofi Annan, the Secretary General of the United Nations.

Because this is a prestigious University, when you become a graduate in four to six years from now, the whole world will be watching you. You must keep up the high standards set by your predecessors by reading broadly. In your own free time, whether you are a student of Engineering or Medicine, you must read widely, basic literary works like The African Writers' Series. You must read Chinua Achebe, Ayi Kwei Armah, Wole Soyinka, Ali Mazrui et cetera. You must read Charles Dickens, Shakespeare, Solzenitshin, etc etc.

## **YOU ARE SOURCE OF PRIDE FOR GHANA AND AFRICA**

This year, there were 13,224 applications to come to this University. Out of this number 11,650 qualified but we were only able to give admission to 4,515, due to unavailability of faculty and residential facilities. That is we were only able to offer admission to 39% of all those who qualified. This means on the average only students with aggregate 12 were admitted into this University.

To be precise, the students we admitted into BSc Human Biology were required to obtain aggregate 6, 7 or 8. We were unable to offer admission to all applicants with aggregate 8. In the BSc Electrical & Electronic Engineering also, the applicants we selected were those with aggregates 6,7 and 8.

Considering the extremely high entry requirements, if we compare the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology to other universities in the world, we rank about SEVEN after Oxford, Harvard, Cambridge, Yale, MIT, Berlin and Imperial College.

That is there are only six universities the world over whose entry requirements are higher than ours.

### **NATIONS ARE BUILT. WITH BRAINS, NOT WITH DOLLAR REMITTANCE.**

The extraordinary high calibre of our students and graduates should be a source of pride for Ghana and Africa. Since almost all of you are either Ghanaians or Africans, this achievement should be a beacon of hope for Ghana and Africa.

At present, Ghana has a GDP of just over 300 dollars whilst America, the wealthiest nation of the world has a GDP of over 20,000 dollars. From the statistics that I have just given, Ghana has the brainpower to make it into the middle-income level. We, your teachers, poorly remunerated, have chosen to live in Ghana so that we can train you for Ghana and Africa, NOT for America.

If all of you here in four or six years from now, will aim to live and work in Ghana, together, we can transform our nation into a paradise. But if your generation continues to flee into America immediately after graduation, then know that eradication of poverty and disease will continue to elude Ghana and Africa.

It is not sufficient to flee from Ghana into USA and remit a few dollars occasionally to parents in Ghana. Nations are built with active resident brains and not with absentee technocrats.

### **GOD BLESS YOU**

Finally, all your professors, senior lecturers, lecturers, administrators, technicians and all join me to congratulate you for becoming a successful matriculant of KNUST and may God bless you to become a true TEKNOKRAT.

May God Richly Bless you all.