

**SPEECH DEUVERED BY PROFESSOR KWASI KWAFO ADARKWA, VICE-
CHANCELLOR OF KNUST AT THE 2008 MATRICULATION CEREMONY
HELD ON SATURDAY, 20TH SEPTEMBER, 2008 AT THE GREAT HALL
QUADRANGLE**

SALUTATION

Members of the University Council
Pro Vice-Chancellor
Registrar
Provosts
Members of the Clergy
Members of Convocation
Headmasters and Headmistresses of selected Senior High Schools
Senior and Junior Staff
Invited Guests
Parents
Matriculants and Class of 2012
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

I take this opportunity to warmly welcome you to this morning's short ceremony, which is aimed at formally accepting you as new students into the KNUST fold. This way, you will become junior members in *statu popullari* in this University. I must say that I am highly impressed by your turnout this morning and trust that you will maintain this dress code for all major official functions during your stay here on campus as students.

All over the world, the administration of universities are characterised by traditions and ceremonies, amongst others, and as a people who cherish our tradition, events such as this morning's one are very relevant for our existence as a University. At any particular point in time in the conduct of the University's core affairs, either during the entry of new students or during the exit of students who have completed their courses of study, there are ceremonies to mark them.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology was established by a Government Ordinance on 6th October, 1961 with a mandate to "*provide higher education, to undertake research, to disseminate knowledge and to foster relationships with outside persons and bodies*". In the light of this mandate, we exist "*to be globally recognised as the premier Centre of Excellence in Africa for teaching, research and entrepreneurship training in science and technology for development, and for producing high calibre graduates with knowledge and expertise to support the industrial and socio-economic development of Ghana and Africa*". With emphasis now rightly shifting to the study and application of science and technology to ensure our nation's development, institutions such as ours have become the preferred destination of students who would want to make a maximum impact on the nation's development agenda.

In this respect, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, there have been calls from several quarters for a drastic increase in the intake of our students to ensure that, as many as possible scientists and technologists are produced to execute the country's development agenda. With a tradition of excellence, we at the helm of affairs at KNUST have over the years allowed only marginal increases in our student intake in order not to sacrifice quality for quantity and, thereby, compromise on the quality of our graduates. The above notwithstanding, we are also not oblivious of our social responsibility to provide adequate opportunities for Ghana and Africa's youth to attain high quality science and technology education.

To facilitate the foregoing, we are introducing new undergraduate programmes in Real Estate, Agribusiness, Agricultural Biotechnology, Landscape Design and Management, Dairy and Beef Science, Industrial Engineering and Biomedical Engineering as well as a postgraduate programme in Actuarial Science effective the 2009/ 2010 academic year. In response to the recent global climate crisis, a programme in Meteorology and Climate Science has been introduced at the College of Science this year to help provide the necessary support for several economic activities including agriculture.

ADMISSION STATISTICS

This year's admission exercise was not significantly different from that of last year and was guided by our unfavourable student: lecturer ratios as well as the recent embargo from the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, freezing fresh employment in all public funded agencies including the Universities. In all, there were 18,359 applicants out of which 12,218 (or 67%) were qualified to enter this University. However, as a result of the above factors, only 8,258 (or 68%) of the qualified applicants were offered admission into the University which represents only 45% of all applications received this year. This represents a marginal decrease of enrolment levels of about 1.6% over last year's admission figures. Out of the total admitted, our postgraduate students constitute a total of 1,611 (20%) and the rest, 6,647 (80%), are undergraduate students. This pattern reflects our desire to increase the proportion of graduate students in view of their potential role in national development. This year, our total undergraduate female applicants offered admission are 2,034 which constitutes 25% with the rest of 4,613 (56%) being males. This shows that, we still have a bit more to do in terms of our female enrolment levels to achieve the 30% threshold stipulated in our Strategic Plan (PLAN2K14).

As part of our social responsibility and consonance with our efforts to admit students from Less Endowed Schools, we were able to offer admission to a total of 239 students from such schools with the highest number of 37 students coming from the Volta and Brong Ahafo Regions and the least of 3 students coming from the Upper East Region. Let me also mention that, 7 students were offered admission from Schools such as Juaben Senior High School, Kanton Senior High School, Nsawam Senior High School and St. Mary's Seminary High School. As usual, majority of our students came from the traditionally well established schools but we are hopeful that the pattern will gradually change over the medium term.

From the above interesting statistics on our 2008/2009 admission exercise, we can all see that, it is, indeed, a rare privilege for those of you who have gathered here this morning to be matriculated to have gained admission to KNUST. Congratulations to all of you for this important feat. You must remember that, KNUST is highly committed to attracting and developing excellent students to achieve the goals and targets of our very existence. This core

value, therefore, characterises the work and 'life of the University and are deeply rooted in all students-who pass through the walls of this University. It is on this note that I would like to caution all of you that, you all came to the University as individuals and, therefore, you take individual responsibility for any action or inaction on your part. The University you have chosen to study in is strictly guided and governed by regulations which limit everybody's freedom somewhat. Hiding under the umbrella of groups and misconducting yourself can surely cost you your certificate and ultimately, your cherished career dream. If you have any cause to complain, please follow the grievance procedures as stipulated in your "Students Guide". Any breach of University regulations can have unfavourable implications for you. Be guided by your conscience and remember that any breach of common sense could, indeed, be a breach of University regulations.

SOME ADVICE TO MATRICULANTS

As I mentioned to some of you at the first Joint Service, we have had, and continue to have, some difficulty with the maintenance of security on campus. Since the situation is somewhat a reflection of what is happening in, the general Ghanaian society, the University authorities and our security agencies have put in place certain measures aimed at improving upon security on our campus for us to conduct our affairs in peace. This has culminated in the introduction of several security measures such as snap checks and the introduction of several street lights. I urge all of you to be extremely security conscious in your endeavours. In as much as possible, board only the specially embossed taxis and shuttle buses, walk in groups, do not stay out deep into the night and do not openly display valuable items such as mobile phones, laptop computers, and calculators. Most importantly, walk along well lit streets at night.

As William James puts it, *"It is our attitude at the beginning of a difficult task which, more than anything else, will affect its successful outcome"*. As you begin your journey on this campus, develop the right attitudes right from today. You must not lose sight of the fact that, even though the University in comparative terms seems a free society, there are rules and regulations that govern your conduct. Such internal checks and balances seem on the surface, very remote but when the time comes for their application, you will know that you were not that free after all. I would, at this juncture, advise that you take time to read the Students' Handbook! Guide since most of the things you need to know as students have been clearly captured in this handbook. Additionally, a high sense of discipline and dedication to your studies would help you realise your dream. The least expected of you is to cause yourself to be withdrawn either for academic non-performance or indiscipline. Make a promise to your parents and guardians today that, they will be here a couple of years from now to witness your beautiful graduation ceremony.

CONCLUSION

I would advise you to get to know each of the members of your year group. You need to find time to know as many of those you are matriculating with today as possible. You will soon be attending each other's wedding, become godparents to each other's children and continue to share in all of life's major changes together. Your future best friends, business partners, spouses and life partners could be from this group and that is why you need to find out more about as many of your year group members as possible in the next four years.

Remember that you chose to come to KNUST so you could be challenged and grow intellectually. You will have a lot of time at your disposal but if you want to sleep in and skip lectures, no one will tell you not to do so. If your room mates do not object, you will never have to make your bed, clean your room or even wash your clothes. Even during examinations, you can decide not to write your papers. You are here partly to learn to make responsible choices and we believe you are capable of doing so. Make use of your Hall Masters, Tutors, Academic Advisors, Heads of Departments, Deans and Provosts as well as all Senior Members you come in touch with. Make excellent use of all the opportunities We are offering you to study here at the KNUST.

Members of the Class of 2012, your time has come and you have a wonderful opportunity to grow intellectually and to develop a career. God willing, the next time we all assemble like this in the Great Hall will be a time for your graduation or congregation. May the next four years bring you challenge, growth, excitement, friendship, passion, opportunity, fulfilment and wonderful time. I know I speak for your parents, relatives, friends, extended family and faculty. We all look forward to sharing this extraordinary journey with you. Good luck to you all and God bless you.

Prof. Kwasi Kwafu Adarkwa
Vice-Chancellor, KNUST

**SPEECH DELIVERED BY PROFESSOR KWASI KWAFO ADARKWA, VICE-
CHANCELLOR OF KNUST AT THE 2008 MATRICULATION CEREMONY
FOR THE KNUST SUNYANI CAMPUS ON SATURDAY,
27TH SEPTEMBER, 2008 AT 10.00AM**

SALUTATION

Pro Vice-Chancellor
Registrar
Honourable Regional Minister
Honourable Municipal Chief Executive
Host Provost
Host Dean
Nananom
Members of Convocation
Senior and Junior Staff
GRAS SAG President
SRC President
Invited Guests
Parents and Guardians
Matriculants and Class of 2012
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

I take this opportunity to warmly welcome you to this morning's short ceremony, which is aimed at formally accepting these students into the KNUST fold. This way, they will become junior members in *statu popullari* of our University. As you may be aware, we conducted a similar ceremony for your colleagues at the main campus in Kumasi last week Saturday.

All over the world, the administration of universities are characterised by traditions and ceremonies, and as a people who cherish our tradition, events such as this morning's one are very relevant for our existence as a University. At any particular point in time in the conduct of the University's core affairs, such as during the entry of new students or during the exit of students who have completed their courses of study, there are ceremonies to mark them.

THE BIRTH OF THE SUNYANI CAMPUS

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, as some of you may be aware, the former School of Forestry here in Sunyani was upgraded to a Diploma awarding institution in 1999, affiliated with the Institute of Renewable Natural Resources of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) and was renamed the "College of Renewable Natural Resources". However, following the decision to realign the former College of Renewable Natural Resources of the Forestry Commission into the public educational system, coupled with the Forestry Commission's Corporate Strategic Plan (2001-2005), the KNUST with a very good track record of sound science and technology tertiary education, was identified and approved as the best option for the Forestry Commission and the Management Board of the College of Renewable Natural Resources to take over the College.

With the above arrangement, KNUST took over the former School of Forestry at a formal ceremony almost two years ago on 26th September, 2006 with the signing of a Memorandum

of Understanding. It may interest you to know that, currently, the Faculty is the only institution in the country for the training of middle level manpower for the forestry sector and it is part of our vision that, this Faculty in our College of Agriculture and Natural Resources will be nurtured into a-University College, and eventually, into a full fledged University in the near future. The Faculty is currently, in addition to the Diploma programmes, offering a Bachelor of Science degree programme in Forestry (BSc Forestry) with emphasis on field operations, business and entrepreneurial aspects of natural resources management, with the view of developing the appropriate expertise to address the human resource needs of the country.

ADMISSION STATISTICS

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, the vision of Ghana to attain a middle income country status within the shortest possible time implies a high demand for higher education in science and technology based professional programmes. On the other hand, the weak technological base of the nation's economy presents great opportunities as well as several challenges for KNUST in our attempt to address the developmental challenges of the nation. Considering that agriculture is one of the major wheels of our national economy, KNUST has continually trained personnel in the fields of Animal Science, Crop and Soil Sciences, Horticulture, Agroforestry, Wood Science and Technology, Land Reclamation and Rehabilitation, Wood Processing and Marketing, Eco-Tourism and Forest Recreation, Wildlife and Range Management, as well as Agricultural Economics, Agribusiness and Extension, amongst others.

The above notwithstanding, I am unhappy to say that the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources has continuously remained one of the small Colleges in terms of student intake at the KNUST. In view of the above challenges and opportunities, we have put in place conscious efforts to attract as many as possible of the country's youth into the noble field of agriculture such as the option of allowing students on the three-year Diploma programme at the Sunyani campus to do a two-year top-up at the Kumasi Campus for a BSc Degree. However, despite the massive resources in terms of personnel and infrastructure at the Faculty of Forest Resources Technology, the basic problem has continuously been the low levels of enthusiasm in programmes on offer at the Faculty. During the 2008 admission exercise, we admitted a total of 167 students for the BSc Forestry programme out of which 109 turned up or have registered as at now. In the Diploma in Natural Resources programme, 32 applicants were offered admission and only 14 students have registered or turned up.

On the whole, the level of patronage of programmes on offer here in Sunyani is a little below 70% but we all need to work hard to enhance this threshold. In order to reverse this unfortunate trend, I have tasked the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources to find out why applicants are not interested in the various programmes run by our Sunyani Campus in particular and put in place measures to address them with the active involvement of all stakeholders.

With this, we hope to tell you a better story next year.

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