

**MATRICULATION ADDRESS BY THE ACTING VICE-CHANCELLOR, PROF. A. K. TUAH AT THE 1998/99 MATRICULATION CEREMONY IN THE GREAT HALL, UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, ON SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24, 1998**

*The Chairman and member of the University Council,  
Registrar,  
Deans of Faculties/Schools/Colleges  
Directors of Institutes  
Hall Masters/Hall Wardens  
President and Executive of the Student Representative Council (SRC)  
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen  
Students*

This morning, we have gathered here to perform one of the most important academic rituals in the life of students. By this academic ritual which we observed a short while ago, the University has formally accepted the freshmen/women into this community of scholars. These freshmen/women have now taken their rightful place as Junior Members of this community, *in statu pupillari*. They have pledged to obey the rules and regulations of this University and the University has also accepted them officially and has assumed responsibility for them in *loco parentis*. This simple but solemn event is the normal procedure with which Universities worldwide usher their freshmen/women into the life-long academic career. It is therefore a pleasure and privilege for me to extend a warm welcome to all of them, and I wish them a happy stay on our serene campus. It is also my fervent prayer that none of these new faces is going to fall put as a casualty in the course of the three or four-year academic race.

Nana Chairman, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, last year the University decided to bring the fresh students a few days ahead of the continuing students. The University considered the experiment worth-while and that is why we have repeated it this year. The intention was, and still is, to provide sustained orientation to get our new students settle in as smoothly and quickly as possible. It is my sincere hope that most of the freshmen/women have taken the greatest advantage of the orientation programme to imbibe all the good and useful information they need to make their stay in the University successful and fruitful.

Young ladies and gentlemen, I suspect that a few of you have already begun to experience one or two disappointments. I exhort you to develop a solid coping mechanism to enable you face the setbacks you are bound to meet in your stay on this campus. You have entered into a new setting in your life and since life has its ups and downs you are most likely going to meet some situations which may run contrary to your expectations.

I whole-heartedly assure you that this University has put in place ample opportunities to make your stay here as enjoyable and profitable as possible. Adequate human and material resources have been put at your disposal for your development at considerable cost to the Ghanaian taxpayer and your individual sponsors. Both in and outside the lecture halls you have a host of devoted helpers to guide you to remain in the academic and personal development track. Your lecturers, the staff of the Academic and Student Affairs, the Student Counselling office, your

academic tutors and the office of the Dean of Students are all battle ready to assist you for a harmonious stay in this University.

Nana Chairman of the University Council, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is with great pleasure that I report on innovations we have just introduced into our student-staff relationship. In order for every student, fresh or continuing, resident or non-resident, to enjoy the full benefit of a warm staff-student relationship, the former Hall Tutorial system has been replaced with Faculty Tutorial system. An office of the Dean of Students has also been created with no mean personality like Rev. Professor Osei Safo-Kantanka as the head.

Nana Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, please permit me to sound a timely caution for the benefit of these celebrations. Perhaps, it is needless to inform them that the University is not only a place for academic pursuit. There is ample opportunity within this environment for meeting and making life-long friends, to foster your future partnerships for business and politics. For many of you this is the opportunity for you in choosing your future wives and husbands. Lest they flounder, such relationships should be under-pinned by your need to develop long-life visions and the commitment to realise them. Surely, you need to plan your life ahead of time and the opportunities available shall make it possible for you to fulfil your future dreams.

Nana Chairman of the University Council, distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, now permit me to reflect on the implications of the matriculation oath. The first implication is that our freshmen/women have been accepted to a common objective of learning, in the broader sense of developing the mind, searching for knowledge, disseminating knowledge and using knowledge to develop the society of which the University is a part.

Even, more importantly the freshmen/women have promised to obey the rules and regulations of the University, which implies a recognition that academic pursuit is done efficiently only in the atmosphere of peace and orderliness. Indeed, it cannot be over-emphasised that academic activities such as are carried out in the University, requires a peaceful and harmonious environment. This is why the University is deeply disturbed by the recent "baptism of fire". We are concerned that this year the "baptism of fire" was bestowed on us earlier than we had expected, and at the time all efforts were being made to make your stay as comfortable as possible. It is my-fervent prayer that our students would spare us the trauma of "aluta" by being open minded and subjecting themselves to mutual dialogue with the University Administration through their own elected representatives. May I take this opportunity to inform those who do not know, that students are represented on all decision-making committees and boards, including the University Council.

Ladies and Gentlemen, besides obedience to the rules and regulations of the University, these matriculants have promised to obey those to whom their obedience is required. We do not intend to subject our students to discipline which is founded on the alter of coercion and fear. Rather, we expect students to operate from internally motivated discipline of self control. The discipline I want you to cultivate is the respect for order without force. The freshmen/women have promised also to seek truth and promote the good name of the University. At every matriculation ceremony we have stressed the importance the University attaches to truth in our

pursuit of knowledge. Students need to appreciate that intellectual truth is the cardinal pillar on which the degrees and certificates of the University earn their international recognition and respectability. Our concept of intellectual truth hinges on hitch-free examinations and due acknowledgement of other people's ideas and opinions when one uses them. The courage to acknowledge the use of other people's ideas as well as fair presentation of ourselves for assessment are two important hallmarks of scholarly behaviour. This is the most appropriate place to cultivate this invaluable trait. Please, allow the University to pass through you and do not just pass through it without a disciplined personality with which you are going to live your life when you are out of the walls of the University.

Nana Chairman, Distinguished Students, Ladies and Gentlemen, the matriculation ceremony brings to a close the hectic admission process. This year just as it had been the case in recent past, admission pressures have been a major source of concern to the University Administration, the Government and headache for parents. Every year, demands for places increase while the available resources, especially infrastructural facilities, to the University are limited. Through no fault of anybody the expectations from many bright candidates remain unfulfilled.

Since UST is basically a Science and Technology institution, it has always been the goal of the University to admit about ninety per cent (90%) of our students into the Science and Technology related programmes, although we consider all programmes equally relevant. This year we processed applications for 7,798 qualified applicants. The distribution, was as follows:

Qualified Senior Secondary School (SSS) candidates	- 3,180
Qualified 'A' Level candidates	- 4,618

Out of the total number of qualified applicants, the University was only able to give admission to about **2,100** candidates. Among those admitted for the year one thousand five hundred and sixty-two (1,562) were for the Science related programme while five hundred and seventy were admitted for non-science programmes. In terms of accommodation the University provided resident accommodation for about five hundred and seventy (570) of the freshmen/women. The implication is that the University was unable to provide resident accommodation for as many as about one thousand five hundred and thirty (1,530) of them.

In as much as the University may wish to detach itself from student accommodation, Ladies and Gentlemen, we cannot ignore the current socio-economic realities in the country. There are fewer suitable accommodation to be rented by students within reasonable distances from the University. On this note, once again, the University would wish to reiterate its appeal to business houses, financial institutions, benevolent organisations and individuals to rescue the University by providing affordable hostels for our struggling students. It is my pleasure to announce that plans are far advanced to have Private Developers to build hostels. The invitation is extended to all and sundry. It may interest everybody that the University Council has already approved the guidelines to make land available for would-be developers.

I will also at this juncture appeal to our students to make judicious use of the facilities placed at their disposal. Please avoid wanton waste of water, electricity and other resources. Treat the University property as you do to your personal belongings.

Finally, study hard to achieve your goals, but find time to socialise. Take the advantage of all the opportunities in the University.

I wish you, the matriculants, successful accomplishment of your stay. You are also congratulated for surviving the hectic selection process. I am confident that with God on our side, you will achieve your life goals.

May the Good God bless and keep all of you.