KWAME NKRUMAH UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, KUMASI



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ADDRESSES DELIVERED AT THE 2021 SPECIAL CONGREGATION HELD FROM 9TH TO 11TH JUNE, 2022

ADDRESS BY THE CHANCELLOR OF THE KWAME NKRUMAH UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (KNUST), KUMASI, HRM OTUMFUO OSEI TUTU II

Salutation

Honourable Minister of Education, Dr. Yaw Osei Adutwum
Ashanti Regional Minister, Hon. Simon Osei Mensah
Chairman and Members of the University Council
Vice-Chancellor and Vice-Chancellors from Sister Universities
Pro Vice-Chancellor and Pro Vice-Chancellors from Sister Universities
Registrar and Registrars from Sister Universities
Former Vice-Chancellors, Pro Vice-Chancellors, and Registrars present
Members of Parliament and MMDCEs present
Provosts of Colleges
Members of Convocation
Senior and Junior Staff
Nananom
Alumni of the University
Invited Guests

Welcome

Graduands

Members of the Press

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is such a great delight for all of us to meet again in this Great Hall after almost two years of having congregation ceremonies online. This is indeed a rejuvenating break. The COVID-19 Pandemic brought a lot of restrictions in all spheres of our lives and academia was not spared either. Although the restrictions have been relaxed, we still need to make our personal safety a priority.

On behalf of the University Council and on my own behalf, I warmly welcome you all to the climax of the 2021 Special Congregation of the University and to thank you for honouring our invitation to join us. I have always chosen a forum such as this, as the CHANCELLOR, to highlight some of the pertinent issues confronting both the University and the nation, and I would like to highlight a few issues at this juncture.

UTAG Strike

As we are aware, our lecturers laid down their tools earlier in the year, in protest against what they called 'their worsening conditions of service'. The strike lasted for almost two months leading to disruption of academic work in all public universities across the country. Thankfully, the matter has been resolved and I would like to highly commend the Government and the University

Teachers Association of Ghana (UTAG) for amicably resolving the impasse and restoring normalcy to the various campuses.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I am not here to apportion blame for this unfortunate incident, but as the Good Book says in Luke 10:7, the labourer deserves his wages, therefore, I urge the Government to continue to ensure that equity is manifestly done and the citizenry, fully assured and satisfied. In the same breadth, I call on UTAG, and for that matter, all other unions on campus, and civil society at large, to be measured in their expectations, particularly at this time that the global economy is battling the deleterious effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic and the Russian-Ukraine war. I am not a student of Economics but I know that 'resources are always limited' and, therefore, we cannot have what we want all the time. I hope and pray that dialogue, goodwill, and trust which are essential ingredients in resolving conflicts will be applied effectively in all future negotiations between labour unions and Government in order to avoid such prolonged strikes. The COVID-19 Pandemic has already created a dent in the academic calendar and we do not want to see labour unrests deepening this dent.

Road Works on Campus

I am informed that the Government has approved about 40 kilometres of roads on the University campus to be given asphalt overlays. Indeed, the campus is looking very befitting of the status of the University as the best in Ghana. My information is that the asphalt overlays would be extended to the Obuasi campus and the other teaching facilities of the University, including Kwabenya in Accra, Kansawrado in Takoradi, and Moree, near Cape Coast. This is a welcoming gesture by the Government and I must, once again, commend the Government for its immeasurable support for the University. We are indeed grateful.

The KNUST Teaching Hospital

Ladies and gentlemen, the KNUST Teaching Hospital project is so dear to me that I do not get tired talking about it.

As you may recollect, the Teaching Hospital Project got stalled for over a decade due to financial constraints. I pleaded with Government to come to the aid of the University to complete the project and the Government heeded my plea and made funds available for the first phase of the project. As I speak, I am informed by the managers of the project that the first phase will be completed by October this year. What is gratifying about this project is that it will not only provide health care services but will also serve as a teaching, research, and training facility for health and allied professionals required for efficient health service delivery in the country and beyond. Once again, I would want to sincerely thank the President, His Excellency, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, in particular, for graciously heeding to my call for support. I would also like to thank the President and his Government for making the necessary provisions for the second phase of the Project in this year's Budget.

Global Economy and the World of Work, Advice to Graduands

Ladies and Gentlemen, the global economy is going through turbulent times with COVID-19 antecedence lurking in the background and the Russian- Ukraine war still raging on. Ghana's economy is experiencing its fair share of the backlash. COVID-19 has caused worldwide trade to be disrupted and interrupted, resulting in general increase in the cost of living. Government-enforced lockdowns compounded the already grave situation that COVID brought upon us and the effects are obvious to all of us. We must, therefore, gear up to rebuild, and in re-building, the nation will need brilliant, hardworking, and dedicated young people who are innovative and are not deterred by challenges. I believe these are qualities the University has equipped our graduands with. As graduands from the best University in Ghana, you need to create a niche for yourselves in the professional environment; you should pay critical attention to your entrepreneurial skills. You must be proactive and self-motivated individuals with dexterity and the mindset to become leaders. You must think outside the box. Most organisations are awash in creative ideas that never get executed. Graduates can capitalise on these opportunities by bringing them to fruition. In essence, your entrepreneurial skills will help you function as an entrepreneur.

A Word to the Graduands

Now to my dear graduands. Let me congratulate you for successfully completing your various programmes of study and for deserving to graduate from the best University in Ghana. You have been trained by some of the finest academics in your various disciplines. You are one of several cohorts of graduates who are leaving the KNUST campus into the world of work at a time of great economic challenges. Go out there and make the desired difference. We are very proud of your achievement. Ayeekoo!

OTUMFUO OSEI-TUTU II, ASANTEHENE CHANCELLOR, KNUST, KUMASI JUNE 11TH, 2022

SPEECH DELIVERED BY PROFESSOR (MRS.) RITA AKOSUA DICKSON, VICE-CHANCELLOR OF KNUST

SALUTATION

The Chancellor of the University, His Royal Majesty Otumfuo Osei Tutu II

Honourable Minister of Education, Dr. Yaw Osei Adutwum

Ashanti Regional Minister, Hon. Simon Osei Mensah

Chairman and Members of Council

Colleague Vice-Chancellors from Sister Universities

Past Vice-Chancellors and Pro Vice-Chancellors

Pro Vice-Chancellor and Pro Vice-Chancellors from Sister Institutions

Registrar and Registrars from Sister Universities

Members of Parliament and MMDCEs Present

Provosts of Colleges

Deans and Directors

Heads of Department

Members of Convocation

Senior and Junior Staff of the University

Nananom

Alumni of the University

Graduating Class of 2021

Parents and Guardians

Distinguished Audience and Viewers

Our Friends from the Media

Ladies and Gentlemen

Introduction and Welcome

It is a little over two years since the whole world woke up to the deadly COVID-19 outbreak. In March 2020, Ghana recorded the first confirmed case of COVID-19. Due to the devastating nature of this infection, which had been declared by the WHO as a 'Public Health Emergency of International Concern, countries and institutions all over the world had to re-structure and adopt strategic infection prevention and control practices dubbed 'SAFETY PROTOCOLS'. As a result, the KNUST had to embrace the virtual space as another dimension of doing its business with respect to teaching and organisation of some official ceremonies of the University, including matriculation and congregation. Lectures were also largely moved online with lecturers conducting 70% in-person and 30% online.

We greatly acknowledge that the sudden shift in pedagogy and performance of other activities as part of our rapid response to contain the virus brought some inconveniences to you, our cherished students and staff. I am however happy to admit that your tenacity, endurance and hard work to comply with the safety measures of the pandemic have yielded great dividends. Fortunately, life

is gradually returning to normalcy as the national daily infections have reduced drastically. It is in the light of this that the President, His Excellency Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, in his 28th address to the nation on 27th March 2022, eased the restrictions and admonished citizens to live responsibly.

By virtue of the easing of the COVID-19 restrictions, the Governing Council of the University has graciously approved an in-person ceremony for this 2021 Special Congregation to afford you the long awaited moment of real time interaction, networking and responsible celebration of your achievements. If you have been following the news and the current developments, you would agree with me that we cannot emphasise enough the need to collectively continue to remain vigilant. As a University, we highly encourage our community and visitors to continue to observe the COVID-19 safety protocols. As Ed Young would say "We long to return to normal, but normal led to this". Nana Chancellor, at this point in time, I wish to add my voice to yours, in warmly welcoming all our privileged graduands who are smartly dressed and poised to impact society with their knowledge and skills, and all our distinguished personalities who have joined us for this Special Congregation Ceremony which was divided into 5 sessions. Four sessions were held between Thursday and Friday and today's session is the final one.

On this note, Nana Chancellor, I have the singular honour and pleasure to present the 2021 Special Congregation address.

Statistics on Graduating Class

Nana Chancellor, I would like to begin with the statistics of the graduating class. We are graduating a total of four thousand, seven hundred and twelve (4,712) students made up of one thousand four hundred and fifty-five (1455) Undergraduates and three thousand, two hundred and fifty-seven (3,257) postgraduates. In terms of gender, the University is graduating One thousand, six hundred and fifty-two (1,652) females representing 35.06%.

Ladies and Gentlemen, 69 graduands among our postgraduates will be receiving Ph.D. awards.

I would also want to congratulate and commend all staff who are part of our graduands and to let you know that KNUST is indeed very proud of you.

Please permit me, at this stage, to give the breakdown of the graduating figures in terms of Colleges. We are graduating:

- » **184** from the College of Agriculture & Natural Resources;
- » **494** from the College of Art and Built Environment;
- » **262** from the College of Engineering;
- » 125 from the College of Health Sciences;
- » 1322 from the College of Humanities & Social Sciences;

- » 298 from the College of Science; and,
- » 2027 from the Institute of Distance Learning.

Nana Chancellor, ladies and gentlemen, as I am enjoined to do on such occasions, I would like to highlight some policies and programmes we have initiated as a University over the past year, and I would want to begin with the newly introduced research programmes and the admission statistics, for the year under review.

New Programmes

Ladies and gentlemen, as a research-intensive institution, KNUST continues to introduce new research degree programmes that would impact the development of our dear nation and the lives of the citizenry. In the year under review, the following research programmes were approved:

- i. MPH Global Health
- ii. MPhil/PhD in One Health
- iii. MPhil/PhD Medical Imaging
- iv. PhD Haematology
- v. PhD Veterinary Anatomy
- vi. Master of Veterinary Science in Anatomy
- vii. MPhil Comparative Anatomy
- viii. MPhil Clinical Rehabilitation and Exercise Therapy
- ix. MSc/MPhil/PhD Petroleum Engineering
- x. MSc/MPhil Petroleum Geoscience

I am delighted to inform you that these research degree programmes have been advertised for prospective applicants to enrol. As a premier Science and Technology University, there is no gainsaying that we offer only the best.

Admission Statistics

Nana Chancellor, as the best University in the country, KNUST continues to attract many prospective students from Ghana and other countries. During the 2021/2022 admissions, 72,751 prospective students applied for admission into KNUST. Out of this number, 41,390 students were admitted and 28,641 students have been registered. Out of the total registered students, 17,349 are males representing 60.57% while 11,292 are females representing 39.43%. Per the statistics presented, we are on course, as a University, to exceeding our strategic mandate of increasing our enrolment of females in science and technology programmes to 40% by 2025.

Collaborations

Your Royal Majesty, a University of our standing thrives on collaborations. In spite of the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 Pandemic, the year under review saw some significant collaborations. The following are a few of them:

i. African Regional Intellectual Property Office (ARIPO)

As part of the implementation of the resolution adopted by the Administrative Council of the African Regional Intellectual Property Office (ARIPO), at its 35th Session held in Accra in November 2011, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), in collaboration with ARIPO and the National Intellectual Property Office, Accra agreed to establish an MPhil degree programme in Intellectual Property at KNUST. The programme is designed with a unique structure and model that enables candidates with diverse training and professional backgrounds to study intellectual property rights systems.

Since the establishment of the MIP programme in 2019, ARIPO has ensured its smooth take-off by providing sponsorship for some students to the tune of \$90,000, \$65,080, and \$54,277 as tuition and accommodation fees for the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Cohorts, respectively. Twenty-five (25) students both Ghanaian and foreign, in the 1st three cohorts, have benefitted from the ARIPO sponsorship.

I am glad to inform you that ARIPO has awarded a fresh scholarship to five (5) students this academic year. I am also reliably informed ARIPO is liaising with the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) to release some of their experts to deliver distance lectures on selected modules and also to provide a Smartboard for the easy delivery of these online courses.

The programme is so far, progressing steadily, and I am happy to inform you that 11 out of the 12 students for the 1st Cohort successfully graduated in November 2021. It is our hope that the successive cohorts will emulate this good example and complete their studies on time. May I take this opportunity to thank the Director-General of ARIPO and his staff for the cordial working relationship KNUST shares with them in running the programme.

ii. German-West African Centre for Global Health and Pandemic Prevention (G-WAC)

Nana Chancellor, the devastating nature of pandemics and the havoc they can cause to the world and humanity are still very fresh on our minds from the COVID-19 experience. It is in this regard that I am delighted to report that KNUST has been selected as one of the sites in Africa to host the German-West African Centre for Global Health and Pandemic Prevention (G-WAC) through a collaboration with the Berlin School of Public Health and the Medical Faculty of the University of Bonn. The project is worth 2.7 million euros. Given what COVID-19 has taken us through, you will all agree with me that the establishment of this Centre is timely as it would help detect, respond, and prevent outbreaks of emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases in Africa. This Centre will go a long way towards helping Africa realise the goals enshrined in SDGs 3 and 4, as besides helping to prevent the outbreak of infectious diseases, it will also enable us to achieve good health, well-being and quality education.

iii. Faculty of Agriculture/ENI Ghana Project

Nana Chancellor, ladies and gentlemen, in 2019, during the special congregation, my predecessor, Professor Kwasi Obiri-Danso, announced our collaboration with ENI Ghana dubbed "OKUAFO PA". Per the initial agreement, KNUST was to train 800 youth in Agribusiness Enterprise Development at ENI Ghana's state-of-the-art training facility at Kyeremasu in the Dormaa East District. I am glad to announce that due to the effective and efficient management of the resources put at our disposal, KNUST has been able to train 1600 youth with secondary and tertiary education backgrounds. The beneficiary youth have been provided with knowledge and skills which have empowered them to establish their own business enterprises along the agricultural value chain as well as being equipped with the capacity to employ others. The Faculty of Agriculture and the Provost of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, we salute you on this feat.

iv. Responsible Artificial Intelligence Lab (RAIL)

Nana Chancellor, KNUST, through Prof. J. J. Kponyo, the Principal Investigator and his team of researchers have won a One Million Canadian Dollar (CAN\$1,000,000) grant for the establishment of a Responsible Artificial Intelligence Laboratory, (RAIL) under the Artificial Intelligence for Development of (AI4D) Africa Multidisciplinary Laboratories project, initiated by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC). The project is aimed at deepening the understanding of how to develop and apply responsible Artificial Intelligence tools for the advancement of computer, biomedical, agricultural, and ecological sciences; strengthening the national and international collaboration of public universities with the private sector; and strengthening capacities in the responsible utilisation of Artificial Intelligence in support of most vulnerable communities in Ghana, Senegal, Cape Verde, Gambia, and the sub-region.

v. UNESCO Category II Centre

Nana Chancellor, I am elated to announce that KNUST has signed a tripartite agreement with the Government of Ghana and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) to host the first Centre of Excellence in Engineering, Innovation, Manufacturing and Technology in Africa. This agreement makes KNUST the first University in Africa to host this important centre of Innovation in Engineering and Technology, to train the new generation of African engineers and technology researchers, with particular emphasis on women. The UNESCO Category II Centre will be housed in the KNUST's Technology Consultancy Centre (TCC) to champion the regional main concerns and the priorities of the African Union Agenda, Vision 2063; and the framework for Sustainable Development, based on the SDGs Agenda 2030 by making available knowledge and information on scientific research and linking it to the policy on engineering Innovations, Manufacturing, and Technology Transfer.

Awards

Nana Chancellor, ladies and gentlemen, the year under review saw a number of our staff winning grants to embark on impactful projects. The following grants were won by the University:

- Three Million Six Hundred and Twenty-One Thousand, and Eighty- Four Dollars, Seventy-Four Cents (\$3,621,084.74);
- ➤ One Million, Three Hundred and Fifty-Seven Thousand, Seven Hundred and Forty-Nine Euros (€1,357,749.00);
- Nine Hundred and Thirty Thousand Norwegian Kroner (**NOK 930,000.00**);

I would like to mention a few of the individual grants that were won:

- i. Prof. K. B. Nyarko of the Department of Civil Engineering, won One Million, One Hundred and Thirty-Three Thousand, Six Hundred Dollars (\$1,133,600.00) from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to work on the Project, "Rural Water Research & Learning."
- ii. Prof. Fred Stephen Sarfo of the Department of Medicine, won Nine Hundred and Thirty-Eight Thousand, Eight Hundred and Fifty-One Dollars (\$938,851.00) from the National Institute of Health to work on the Project "Ghana-SPARCO: Ghana Sickle Pan-African Research Consortium."
- iii. Prof. Michael Poku-Boansi, Deputy Director, School of Graduate Studies, Department of Planning, won Seven Hundred and Thirty- Four Thousand Euros (€734,000.00) from BMBF, Germany to work on the Project: "Migration and Trans locality in West Africa."
- iv. Prof. Nathaniel Boso, Dean, KNUST School of Business was named one of the Chairs in 10 African Universities to host the O.R Tambo Africa Research Chairs Initiative (ORTACHI). In view of that, he won One Million, One Hundred and Thirty-Two Thousand, Seven Hundred and Seventy-Six Dollars, Seventy-Four Cents (\$1,132,776.74) from the Oliver & Adelaide Tambo Foundation.
- v. Dr. Samuel Asamoah Sakyi of the Department of Molecular Medicine, won Five Hundred and Fifty-Three Thousand, Seven Hundred and Forty-Nine Euros (€553,749.00) from the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) for a project titled: "Development and production of COVID-19 RNA rapid tests and strengthening of local laboratory capacities."

To our gallant researchers, we are tremendously proud of you for lifting the banner of KNUST higher.

Your Royal Majesty, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, I am delighted to also announce further that Prof. George M. Bob-Milliar of the Department of History and Political Studies, has been appointed by the London based Royal African Society (RAS) as the new Editor for the most

prestigious and oldest African Studies Journal. He becomes the second African/Ghanaian to edit the 120-year old mainstream international journal published by Oxford University Press.

Again, it is gratifying to mention that Dr. Kofi Agyekum from the Department of Construction Technology and Management has won the 2021 Emerald Literati Award.

Nana Chancellor, permit me to celebrate two of our women professors this morning for their achievements. They are:

- ➤ Prof. Marian Asantewah Nkansah of the Department of Chemistry who was adjudged as the 2021 Organisation for Women in Science for the Developing World (OWSD)-Elsevier Foundation Awardee for Early Career Women Scientists in the Developing World for her significant contributions to the advancement of scientific knowledge.
- And Prof. (Mrs.) Cynthia Amaning Danquah of the Department of Pharmacology, for winning the "Tertiary Education and Scientific Research" category of the 7th Ghana Women of Excellence Awards in recognition of her outstanding contribution to Social and Economic Development.

Ladies and gentlemen, our valiant students were not left out in the award- winning spree. They keep making us proud by winning highly contested competitions both at the local and international levels. It is my singular honour to announce that Students from our Faculty of Law won the 2022 Baffour Osei Akoto Memorial Moot Court Competition. The finals of the competition was keenly contested between KNUST and the University of Ghana and was won by our able and strong team. Additionally, Mr. Mathias Charles Yabe, a final year student of the Department of Communication Design, received the first prize of the 2022 Young Global Changers Recoupling Award at the inaugural award ceremony of the Global Solutions Summit in Berlin. Again, I am delighted to announce that Mr. Mathias Charles Yabe and Miss Adriana Appiagyei Nsiah Nimo of the Department of Optometry and Visual Sciences have won Total Energies' awards for the best Startupper Under 3 Years and Business Creation, respectively, for the year 2022. These awards were very competitive and our students excelled.

To our indefatigable Faculty members and students, we say AYEKOO!!!

Donations

Nana Chancellor, our stakeholders, and benefactors continue to support the vision of the University. During the period under review, generous donations were made by the following stakeholders:

- ➤ DBS Industries Limited donated roofing materials, at an estimated cost of GHC238,000.00, to the KNUST Obuasi Campus for the roofing of a warehouse structure that has been renovated to provide lecture space.
- ➤ During the period under review, the University also received 364 Laptop computers from some individual and corporate institutions in support of the 'Support One Needy Student with One Laptop' (SONSOL) project. These were Newmont Ghana, Stanbic Bank, Consolidated Bank Ghana (KNUST Branch), Vesterline Company, Andysarp, Multinec, KNUST Student Representative Council (SRC), Graduate Students Association of Ghana (GRASAG) KNUST and Mrs. Bernice Asamoah. We are extremely grateful to all our benefactors. Students have already applied for these laptops and over 750 laptops would be given to students next semester.

KNUST at 70

Nana Chancellor, distinguished ladies, and gentlemen, KNUST has indeed come a long way. I am glad to announce that the University successfully launched its 70th Anniversary celebrations on 27th October, 2021, to usher in a series of activities over the past one year. As an institution, we have every cause to celebrate and recount the successes chalked within these threescore and ten years of the University's existence.

As you graduate today, I wish to implore you to fully participate in the activities for the celebrations to make it a success.

Nana Chancellor, as part of the programmes for the 70th Anniversary celebrations, the University held a Science and Technology Exhibition from Tuesday, 10th to Friday, 13th May, 2022. On the first day of the exhibitions, academia engaged some captains of industry who are proud Alumni of KNUST to discuss the theme for the 70th Anniversary: "KNUST, 70 Years of Global Impact: A New Age for a Renewed Focus."

All our stakeholders, especially KNUST Global Alumni and corporate bodies are invited to join us to celebrate this remarkable milestone.

Global Recognition on Quality Education

Nana Chancellor, as the saying goes, the best things are reserved till last. Your University, my University, and our University, KNUST, continues to make giant strides in our collective efforts to achieve our vision and mission as a University. I am extremely happy to announce to you that the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings which are the only global performance tables that assess universities against the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SGDs), under Goal 4, which focuses on Quality Education, has ranked the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), 1st in Africa and 14th best in the World among 1,180 universities which were considered in the ranking. To all of us, I say congratulations and

AYEKOO for the good work that we are doing. I wish to take this opportunity to encourage us to keep the fire burning by improving on our quality delivery and I believe that beyond the skies will be our limit.

Advice to Graduands

My dear graduands, always bear in mind that you have been offered the greatest opportunity in life through your education at KNUST and you have to leverage on this to achieve your goals in life. Know that there is no elevator to success, you only have to use the stairways by taking one step at a time to climb to the top. Also remember what Winston Churchill said, that "success consists of going from failure to failure without loss of enthusiasm". You may encounter failures as you climb the stairs but never be disheartened, follow your passion and be focused on the end goal.

Always remember that KNUST has very well prepared you for your tomorrow. Grasp all the opportunities that come your way and be encouraged that hard work never kills, neither does it break any bones, but it rather pays.

Now may the mercies and the blessings from our Good Lord be with you always. May you be counted among the favoured now and forevermore.

The Lord bless you and keep you,

The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord lift up the light of His Countenance upon you and give you His peace.

I wish you very well in all your endeavours, once again Congratulations.

Thank you very much and God Bless Us All!!

PROFESSOR (MRS.) RITA AKOSUA DICKSON VICE-CHANCELLOR, KNUST, KUMASI 11TH JUNE, 2022