

KWAME NKRUMAH UNIVERSITY OF
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, KUMASI



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**ADDRESSES DELIVERED AT THE
57TH SPECIAL CONGREGATION**

**ADDRESS BY THE CHANCELLOR OF KWAME NKRUMAH UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, KUMASI, HIS ROYAL MAJESTY
OTUMFUO OSEI TUTU II**

SALUTATION

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
Deans and Directors
Members of Convocation
Senior and Junior Staff
Nananom
Alumni of the University
Invited Guests
Members of the Press
Graduands
Ladies and Gentlemen

WELCOME

It is a great pleasure once again, for me to preside over another graduation ceremony to celebrate our gallant men and women for walking the academic journey. On behalf of the entire University Community and on my own behalf, I welcome you to the climax of the 57th Special Congregation ceremony. I also want to use this opportunity to thank all of you for your support during the commemoration of the one hundred and fifty (150) years of the Sagrenti War which was held in this Great Hall.

As we assemble here today to celebrate the accomplishments of our graduating class, we will also receive the Report of the Vice-Chancellor on the State of the University, and the progress made so far. Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, KNUST is renowned for its commitment to excellence in science, technology, and innovation, and having gathered to

receive your report, Madam Vice-Chancellor, we are all poised to listen to the collective dedication of staff and students to the academic rigour and research excellence that have characterised the University and continue to position the University on a pedestal, not only in Ghana but also on the global stage; a feat we hope to continually celebrate.

Let me take this opportunity to offer my appreciation to the University management, faculty, and staff for the unwavering support you continually provide in nurturing the academic and personal growth of our dear students. As we come together year after year, to celebrate the achievements of our graduates, it becomes increasingly clear that the success of our dear KNUST is dependent on your relentless efforts and enviable work ethics; and for this, I am grateful. You make me proud as the Chancellor of the best University in quality education, globally.

Once again, I extend my warmest appreciation to every one of you, parents and guardians and all other stakeholders for the various roles you have played towards shaping the future of our graduating students. To the graduating class of March 2024, I congratulate you for achieving this significant milestone in your academic journey. *Ayekooooo!*

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, permit me to briefly talk about some topical issues affecting the University and the nation at large.

STAFF CLEARANCE AND RECRUITMENT

Despite the successes that the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi proudly boasts of, unfavourable staff/students ratio has been a challenge to the University's aspiration of running to its full extent. With the implementation of the strategic objectives of the University, leading among others, to the establishment of the Obuasi Campus, the operation of distance learning programmes across the country, and the mentoring of over seventy (70) Nursing and Midwifery Training institutions, the current staff strength of one thousand, one hundred and ninety (1,190) Faculty with the corresponding student population of over eighty-five thousand (85,000) is woefully inadequate to support effectively, the academic business of the University. I am informed that Government has approved some quotas for recruitment for universities. It is my ardent wish that KNUST would be

placed in a special category and prioritised, considering the pivotal role the University plays in the developmental agenda of the nation.

While advocating for more quotas for staff recruitment, I would also want to remind the University of the recommendations made by the distinguished lecturer of the 12th R.P. Baffour Memorial Lectures, Mr. Joe Anokye in November, 2023. Mr. Anokye advocated for the establishment of a dedicated Data Centre in the University as a pivotal step towards harnessing the Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology for our advancement. I envision this Centre not only to embrace the advancement of Data Science but also to leverage it to preserve and promote our unique cultural heritage. Madam Vice-Chancellor I will be expecting a report on this matter at the next congregation.

‘HEAL KOMFO ANOKYE’

As most of you may be aware, on 11th November 2023, I launched a fundraising initiative dubbed “Heal Komfo Anokye”. The initiative seeks to mobilise about Ten Million Dollars (₵10,000,000.00) to renovate the Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital. As I indicated during the launch, the level of deterioration of the Hospital is way beyond the capability of Management of the Hospital alone. Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital (KATH) which is seventy (70) years old, continues to be the major referral hospital in the whole of the northern part of Ghana.

Aside being a major referral Health Centre, the Hospital doubles as the main teaching site for all the students of this noble institution pursuing programmes in the health profession. The cost of training our doctors, pharmacists, nurses, midwives, laboratory technicians, physiotherapists, and a host of other professions in an unhealthy environment would be too dear for us as a nation, if we do not confront and rectify the problem now.

I, therefore, call on parents, guardians, and all of us gathered here, and those who have joined us via the virtual space, to come to my aid to help ‘Heal Komfo Anokye’. As we ‘heal’ Komfo Anokye, we invariably, support KNUST’s efforts in training health professionals. No amount is too small.

If I get Ten Ghana Cedis (Gh¢10) from each of our over eighty-five thousand (85,000) students, that is a significant amount. If I get One Hundred Ghana Cedis (Gh¢100.00) from each of the parents/guardians of our over eighty-five thousand (85,000) students, that is equally a very significant amount.

ELECTION 2024

For over thirty-two (32) years since the inception of our 1992 Constitution, Ghana has exemplified resilience and maturity, showcasing peaceful transitions of power from one political party to another. This legacy has positioned Ghana as a pillar of tranquillity within the African continent and offers a beacon of inspiration to neighbouring nations.

This year, over fifty (50) countries across the globe (including Ghana) are poised to hold their national elections. This represents a momentous milestone globally, that transcends geographical and economic boundaries but also carries profound implications for various facets of society, including disruptions to economic structures, international relations, and the overarching quest for global harmony if the elections are not conducted in a peaceful, transparent manner, acceptable to all.

Ghana, our dear nation, should reaffirm its commitment to democratic principles as we prepare to navigate the electoral process once, more.

As the campaign temperature gains momentum, it is incumbent on all stakeholders particularly, the political parties and their teeming supporters to uphold the sanctity of discourse, and refrain from the propagation of divisive rhetoric and incendiary language. The Electoral Commission must also ensure fairness and be seen to be an impartial arbiter in the electoral process. Our collective aspiration must be to foster an environment of mutual respect and constructive dialogue.

In priding ourselves as a democratic nation, I urge all to unite in our resolve to safeguard the integrity of our established democratic institutions and uphold the noble ideals upon which our nation stands. Let us once again, show the world that we are, indeed, a democratic nation. It is my hope that for once, the political campaign will focus on how to productively, engage the youth to drive the economy.

A WORD TO GRADUANDS

My proud graduands, as you prepare to embark on a journey into the world of work and for some of you, seek better job prospects, I urge you to embrace entrepreneurship as the game changer in the 21st Century. Our nation needs innovators and job creators to complement the traditional white-collar jobs. The public sector alone cannot accommodate the increasing number of graduates entering the workforce, every year. In this respect, I entreat you to explore the diverse opportunities in our economy for the establishment of entrepreneurial ventures tailored specifically to support young graduates with promising and innovative ideas.

Today, you stand on the threshold of a new chapter in your lives, and I urge you to carry forward the values of integrity, innovation, and social responsibility that define the ethos of this noble institution. You are our ambassadors of knowledge and agents of change; and so, you have a crucial role to play in shaping the future of our society. Embrace the challenges that lie ahead with courage and determination.

CONSTITUTION OF ASSEMBLY

And now, by the powers conferred on me as the Chancellor of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, I, Otumfuo Osei Tutu II – Asantehene and Chancellor, declare this assembly, duly constituted.

Thank you.

**OTUMFUO OSEI TUTU II, ASANTEHENE
CHANCELLOR, KNUST, KUMASI
MARCH 23, 2024**

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

SALUTATION

The Chancellor of the University, Your 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 the University 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 2023
Parents and Guardians
Distinguished Audience
Our Friends from the Media
Ladies and Gentlemen

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

A very good morning to you all. It is a privilege and an honour for me to add my voice to that of the Chancellor, His Royal Majesty Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, in welcoming you to this year's Special Congregation. This morning, I present to you a report on the state of affairs of our Great University since the last congregation in November 2023.

The period under review began with a number of activities, including the admission of freshers. We enthusiastically welcomed our freshmen and women through the innovative Students-led "Safe Arrival Programme" during

the first week of January. Orientation and matriculation of fresh students were rolled out seamlessly.

In spite of the numerous national industrial actions from various unions that nearly disrupted academic work, I am happy to inform you that life on campus is back to normalcy.

This morning's session is to celebrate and reward our postgraduate students for what they have worked so hard for, over the years. As we do so, we challenge you to continue to hoist the flag of KNUST and the Nation very high at all times as great ambassadors. Let me, on behalf of all of us say a **BIG CONGRATULATIONS** to you all for how far you have come.

At this juncture, Nana Chancellor, please permit me to provide some updates to this august house on our University for the period under review.

2.0 ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

2.1 Graduation Statistics

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, this morning's session is the climax of this year's Special Congregation which commenced on Thursday, 21st March, 2024. Three sessions have already been held for both undergraduates and postgraduates. Today, I am delighted to announce that we will be graduating a total of eight hundred and eighty (880) postgraduate students who have worked diligently to satisfy all the requirements for the award of our prestigious degrees, bringing the total number of graduating students for this year's Special Congregation to five thousand, three hundred and ninety-four (5,394). This is made up of two thousand, four hundred and eighteen (2,418) (44.83%) undergraduates and two thousand, nine hundred and seventy-six (2,976) (55.17%) postgraduates.

Out of the postgraduate graduands, ninety-one (91) are graduating with PhD degrees with twenty-three (23) (ie. 25.27%) of them being females. They deserve our applause.

2.2 Admission Statistics: 2023/2024 Academic Year

Nana Chancellor, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, for the 2023/2024 Academic Year, seventy-six thousand, one hundred and twenty-one (76,121) prospective applicants applied for admission into the various programmes on offer. Out of this number, thirty-eight thousand, three hundred and fifty-seven (38,357) were offered admission but twenty-five thousand, nine hundred and eighty-one (25,981) accepted the offer and registered for various programmes. This number comprises fourteen thousand, four hundred and seventy-nine (14,479) (55.73%) males and eleven thousand, five hundred and two (11,502) females (44.27%). With these figures, I am glad to report that KNUST is on course with regard to the STEM for girls initiative. KNUST continues to champion our all inclusive educational agenda (of not leaving anyone behind) as we provide opportunities and assistance to students from less privileged and less endowed second cycle institutions to enrol with us for a brighter future.

3.0 STAFF RELATED ACTIVITIES

3.1 Staff Appreciation Day

Nana Chancellor, according to Calvin Coolidge: *“The nation which forgets its defenders will itself be forgotten”*. The University Management, as part of its efforts to appreciate the staff of this noble University, has instituted a Staff Appreciation Day to celebrate creativity, innovation and long meritorious service. On 12th December 2023, one hundred and forty (140) retirees who have served the University for twenty (20) years and above were honoured and awarded with citations and a token for their dedication and selflessness to the good cause of KNUST. Additionally, eleven (11) staff were awarded for their creativity and innovation while seven (7) were also recognised and rewarded with Special Awards. I encourage all staff to continue to put in their very best for the good of the University as you have always done.

3.2 10th Summer School

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, as part of our continuous professional development, the University over the years, has been organising biannual Summer School for staff towards capacity building and skills development. The 10th Summer School was organised from 2nd to 5th October 2023 under

the theme: “**Academia-Industry Partnership for National Development**”. This was very well received.

3.3 Professorial Inaugural and Public Lectures

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, our professors continue to share their knowledge with us through the University’s Professorial Inaugural Lectures. Professor Atinuke Olusola Adebajji gave her professorial inaugural lecture on the topic: “**Facts from Artefacts: A Journey in Statistical Inquisition**”. This was very engaging and successful. We congratulate Professor Adebajji for this.

Additionally, the College of Engineering also held a public lecture under the theme: “**Harnessing the Transformative Power of Ghana’s Mineral Wealth for Human Capital Development and Sustainable Economic Growth**”. The lecture was delivered by Ing. Henry Antwi on February 15, 2024.

4.0 COLLABORATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Nana Chancellor, as a Higher Education Institution, our University continues to strive for constructive partnerships and collaborations to help achieve its mandate. During the period under review, the University made some strides in this regard. Kindly permit me to mention a few:

4.1 Integrated Centre for Applied Mechanical and Medical Engineering (KNUST & TUM)

I am happy to report that KNUST’s collaboration with her partners continue to yield fruits. One of such partnerships is between KNUST, Technical University of Munich (TUM), Adama Science and Technology, Ethiopia and the German Embassy in Ghana. Through this partnership, an Integrated Training Centre for Applied Mechanical and Medical Engineering has been inaugurated at the KNUST College of Engineering. The Centre will serve, among others, as a platform for academic and technical exchange between Ghana, Germany, and Ethiopia in the field of medical engineering. It will also focus on teaching and training in the usage of assistive devices and Circular Medical Plastic Engineering.

4.2 KNUST and United Nations Development Organisation (UNIDO)

The University has also signed an agreement with the United Nations Development Organisation (UNIDO), to provide technical assistance to the Government of São Tomé and Príncipe to develop a low carbon emissions plan for the country's Transport Sector. Our experts from the Brew Hammond Energy Centre would jointly implement the plan with pManifold Limited of India. The task includes characterisation of the current fleet in São Tomé and Príncipe, a review of current vehicle importation trends, fuel quality standards, electric mobility vehicle-related policies, and infrastructure.

Nana Chancellor, our experts at KNUST are not only providing technical assistance to our partners abroad but are also providing same to the Energy Commission of Ghana in the preparation of Ghana Electric Vehicle Baseline Survey Report.

5.0 STUDENT RELATED ACTIVITIES

5.1 Team KNUST Wins the Qualifying Rounds of the Philip Jessup Moot Court Competition

Nana Chancellor, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, it is with great delight and joy that I inform you that Team KNUST from the Faculty of Law has won the Ghana National Rounds of the Philips Jessup Moot Court Competition. By winning this competition, Team KNUST has qualified to represent Ghana to compete at the World stage from 30th March to 6th April 2024 with competitors from other countries in Washington DC, USA. The competition, which was organised on 16th February 2024 at GIMPA, saw Team KNUST sweeping home the following seven (7) awards: the Best Applicant Memorial Award; Best Respondent Memorial Award; Overall Best Memorial Award; Best Finalist Oralists Award; Best Female Oralists Award; 2nd Best Oralists Award and 3rd Oralists Award. Our prayers and best wishes are with the Team to win the ultimate.

5.2 KNUST Debate Society Conquers Ghana, Africa and the World Again

Nana Chancellor, I am extremely proud to announce the victorious and proud display of intellectual prowess of the KNUST Debate Society during the Ghana Universities Debate Championship (GUDC) hosted by KNUST, the Pan-African Universities Debate Championship (PAUDC) held in Togo and the Vietnam World Universities Debate Championship (WUDC) 2024. On a host and win mission, in 2023, KNUST hosted the Ghana Universities Debate Championship and emerged winners by bringing home our 6th trophy. An outstanding feat by all standards.

Again, at the Pan-African Universities Debate Championship held in Togo in 2023, Team KNUST set the record for winning most of the Pan-African Universities Debate Championships by winning our fourth title. Team KNUST again exhibited its supremacy and impact at the world stage during the Vietnam World Universities Debate Championship 2024, after beating the likes of Harvard University, Cornell University, among many others, to reach the finals and subsequently, securing the 1st Runner Up position. This achievement makes KNUST the first African University to attain this remarkable feat of being the only University from the continent of Africa with two appearances in the World Finals and raising the flag of KNUST and Ghana so high. We are very proud of them. To the KNUST Debate Society led by the President, Mr. Desmond Dovlo, the patron, Prof. Kofi Ohene Owusu-Daaku and the Director of Sports, Mr. Timothy Kwabena Mensah and all staff, students and our stakeholders, who continue to work so hard to ensure that we stay on top in more ways than one, we say AYEKOOO and well done for your dedication, commitment and selflessness.

6.0 RESEARCH, GRANTS AND AWARDS

Nana Chancellor, as we deliberately and intentionally work on our research-intensive agenda, the University continually supports our staff and students to undertake impactful research through the KNUST Research Fund (KReF). To this end, the University has committed an amount of **One Million, Five Hundred Thousand Ghana Cedis (Gh¢1,500,000.00)** to support over forty (40) research projects after a rigorous competition. I wish to encourage our

young researchers to take advantage of the KReF whenever the application window is opened to boost their research endeavours.

Additionally, I am glad to report that, our Faculty continues to compete for external grants and as a result, the University since November 2023, has won a total grant of **Nine Hundred and Forty-Four Thousand and Twenty Dollars (\$944,020.00.)** We are indeed proud of the following distinguished faculty members for this great achievement in ensuring our research is supported financially.

- i. Dr. Eric Tchao of the Department of Computer Engineering won **Two Hundred and Forty-Eight Thousand, Four Hundred and Forty-Eight Pounds (£248,448.00)** from UK Research and Innovation/Global Challenges Research Fund to work on ***“African Agriculture Knowledge Transfer Partnership Grant with SESI Technologies, UKRI”***.
- ii. Professor Kweku Bedu Addo of the Department of Physiology, won **One Hundred and Thirty-Nine Thousand, Two Hundred and Six Pounds (£139,206.00)** from the University of Cape Town to work on the project titled; ***“Heat Adaptation Benefits for Vulnerable Groups in Africa”***.
- iii. A grant of **One Hundred and Seventy-four Thousand, Nine Hundred and Six Dollars (\$174,906.00)** was won by Dr. Anthony Enimil of the Department of Child Health from the National Institute of Health, USA, for the Project; ***“NKABOM: A Parenting and Social Capital Intervention to Improve HIV Treatment Outcomes among Adolescents in Ghana”***.
- iv. Dr. Cyril Boateng, Department of Physics, also won a grant of **Two Hundred and Seventy-Two Thousand, Eight Hundred and Forty-One Dollars (\$272,841.00)** from the Office of Naval Research, to work on the project ***“Protecting the Coast and Heritage of Keta Using Integrated Geophysical Methods”***.

v. Professor Jacob Hamidu, Department of Animal Science, won a grant of **Three Million, Seven Hundred and Seventy-Two Thousand and Twenty-Five Ghana Cedis (Gh¢3,772,025.00)** from the Ghana Skills Development Fund for the project; ***“Development of Reference Guide for Poultry Husbandry Practises in Local Text: Curriculum to Enhance Sustainable Human Skills Development and Resources Capacity in the Poultry Value Chain in Ghana for Increase Productivity and risk Reduction.”***

Nana Chancellor, in addition to the above grant awardees, some staff also won awards in their fields of endeavour:

- i. Professor Eric Appau Asante, the Director of the KNUST E-Learning Centre, has been named the **Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) Star Ambassador** of 2023 for his significant contributions to the partnership between ACU and the KNUST.
- ii. The Department of Painting and Sculpture, Faculty of Art, which serves as the hub for blaxTARLINES, a platform for artists, curators and teachers, has clinched the 98th position in the Power 100 (i.e Most influential people in 2023 in the corridors of contemporary artworld).

7.0 25TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF THE REIGN OF HIS ROYAL MAJESTY OTUMFUO OSEI TUTU II, THE CHANCELLOR OF KNUST

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen; this year we are celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the accension of His Royal Majesty Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, our Chancellor for the past nineteen (19) years to the Golden Stool. The 25th Anniversary, as you are aware, also coincides with the 150th Anniversary of the Sagrenti War. The University has rolled out an elaborate programme working closely with the Asanteman Planning Committee, ably chaired by Nana Otuo Siriboe II, Nana Juabenhene and Chairman of the Council of State, Republic of Ghana to celebrate this momentous occasion. On the 6th of February 2024, KNUST was fortunate to play host to Asanteman when we marked the 150th Anniversary of the Sagrenti War with a grand Symposium and the launch of a book on Asante History at the Great Hall of KNUST. This was a very successful and beautiful programme. KNUST is working feverishly to celebrate the Chancellors Week from the 6th to 10th of May

2024 to mark the Silver Jubilee celebrations. Very interesting and educative programmes have been lined up and I urge all to consciously save the date and make it a point to join this celebration of a lifetime. Nana, on behalf of the entire University Community, we congratulate you, Your Royal Majesty for a lifetime of dedicated, impactful and inspiring leadership and service to KNUST, Asanteman, Ghana, the Continent of Africa and the World. We are super proud of what you have accomplished within these 25 years and we celebrate you. ***Nana mo ne y!***

7.0 THE SONSOL PROJECT

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, during the 57th Congregation, I reported that the Support One Needy Student with One Laptop (SONSOL) Project, on 23rd June 2023 was able to distribute five hundred and seventy-four (574) laptops to brilliant but needy students of KNUST. Since then, the University has received additional laptops from our benevolent sponsors and philanthropists. This has brought the total number of laptops received for the year 2023 to six hundred and forty-five (645).

Nana Chancellor, permit me to acknowledge some of our sponsors who have donated towards this noble cause. We are indeed very grateful to the Nexan Kabelmetal Ghana Ltd., Douglas Arthur Company Ltd, K. Agyeman Company Ltd., G7 Bussy Ltd., Mat-Bans Company Ltd., Perfect Home, Synbiz Technology and Ing. Nana Poku Agyeman, Engineer, Urban Roads, KMA, an Alumnus for always supporting the University.

Thank you so much for being a warm shoulder of support to this Great University and for supporting these brilliant but needy students. How I wish I could stop bothering you. Unfortunately, I cannot because we have received yet another batch of first years and it looks to me their need for assistance may exceed that of last years.

We continue to count on you, our ever-supportive corporate bodies, Alumni, individuals and all other stakeholders. Please come to Macedonia and help. No contribution is small. Your donation of one laptop will bring tremendous relief to a student in need. Thank you very much for heeding to this noble cause!

8.0 ADVICE TO GRADUANDS

Distinguished Ladies and gentlemen, at this juncture, permit me to offer some words of advice to our graduands.

There is no doubt how very proud we are of you for coming this far.

I wish to entreat you to continue to be leaders in innovation and technology and positive change wherever you find yourself. Remember you are a lifelong learner, and that tomorrow's progress starts with today's practice, so always look for opportunities to add value to yourself to enrich your problem-solving abilities.

May the Good Lord continue to order your steps as you devotedly hon your skills to serve humanity. May He be your guide and stay in all you do and bless all your endeavours.

Once again, Congratulations!!!

Thank you very much and God bless us all.

PROFESSOR (MRS.) RITA AKOSUA DICKSON
VICE-CHANCELLOR, KNUST, KUMASI
MARCH 23, 2024