

KWAME NKRUMAH UNIVERSITY OF
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, KUMASI



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**ADDRESS DELIVERED AT THE
58TH CONGREGATION**

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
Senior Presidential Advisor, Hon. Yaw Osafo-Maafa, Representative of the President
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
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 2024
Parents and Guardians
Distinguished Audience and Viewers
Our Friends from the Media
Ladies and Gentlemen

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

A very good morning to you all. I am indeed extremely delighted to add my voice to that of Nana Chancellor, His Royal Majesty Otumfuo Osei Tutu II in welcoming you all to today's Congregation, as I present to you the report on our Great University. In the spirit of continuity of our decentralisation

agenda, our Colleges have held their graduation ceremonies from the 20th to 29th November 2024.

Before I proceed, I would like to express my personal gratitude and deepest appreciation to Nana Chancellor and the University Council both past and present for the massive support I received during my first tenure in office, from August 2020 to July 2024 and for the opportunity of renewal for a further term of two years to serve our Great University, a University that I love so much, the University that trained and developed me to be who I am today. Nana Chancellor, I am truly and honestly grateful to you for this wonderful privilege to serve KNUST, Asanteman and our dear country.

Let me also use this platform to acknowledge our staff and students for the diverse roles they have played in working so hard to bring the academic year to a peaceful and successful end.

Indeed, your selfless commitment and dedication to our noble University is deeply appreciated.

Nana Chancellor, we feel proud and very honoured to congratulate and welcome colleagues who have taken up various positions in the service of our University.

We are happy to welcome on board;

The Pro-Vice Chancellor, Professor David Asamoah;

Professor Dadson Awunyo-Vitor, Provost, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

Professor Michael Poku-Boansi, Director, School of Graduate Studies;

Professor Godfred Darko, Deputy Director, School of Graduate Studies;

Professor Anthony Andrews, Director, Institute of Distance Learning;

Professor Christopher Antwi, Deputy Director, Institute of Distance Learning;

Professor Marian Asantewaah Nkansah, Director, Directorate of Students Affairs;

Professor Amos Abanyie, Deputy Director, Directorate of Student Affairs.

Congratulations to all of you and all other officers who have taken on various positions in the service of our dear University. Let us continue to put in our best to move our University forward.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, let me now take you through the activities of the University during the period under review.

2.0 STATISTICS ON GRADUATING CLASS

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, this morning's session climaxes the 58th Congregation which commenced on Wednesday, 20th November 2024. We have already held fifteen (15) sessions for the six (6) Colleges of the University and the Institute of Distance Learning (IDL). The total number of graduating students for the 58th Congregation is nineteen thousand, two hundred and fifty-four (19,254). Out of this number, seventeen thousand and twenty-nine (17,029) are undergraduates and two thousand, two hundred and twenty-eight (2,228) are postgraduates. This morning, we will be graduating five hundred and seventy-five (575) postgraduate students. One hundred and sixty-five (165) will be receiving PhD degrees out of which fifty-three (53) (33.1%) are females.

Nana Chancellor, I am also elated to announce the **OVERALL BEST GRADUATING STUDENT** and **BEST GRADUATING FEMALE** undergraduate student of the University for this 58th Congregation. They are, Isaac Oniti Jesutofunmi, Department of Computer Engineering, with a Cumulative Weighted Average (CWA) of 87.23, and Naa Akweley Marley, Department of Sociology and Social Work, with a CWA of 83.89. Ayekoo to both of them.

3.0 PUBLIC LECTURES

Nana Chancellor, for the period under review, three (3) Professorial Inaugural Lectures have been held.

Professor Atinuke Adebajji of the Department of Statistics and Actuarial Science delivered on the topic **"Facts from Artefacts: A Journey in Statistical Inquisition"**.

Prof. Kwabena Nyarko Biritwum, Provost, College of Engineering focused on **"Universal Access to water and Sanitation Services. A Myth or a Reality"**.

Prof. Alexander Yaw Debrah, Dean of the Faculty of Allied Health lectured on **“Eliminating Filarial Diseases: New Hope for an Old Battle”**.

4.0 20TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS OF THE INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMMES OFFICE

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, Our International Programmes Office (IPO) marked its 20th anniversary in August 2024 under the theme **“20 years of Internationalisation and Impact: The Next steps”**. The celebration was marked with focused discussions on improving our internationalisation agenda and enhancing support and opportunities for both our international staff and students.

5.0 KNUST E-LEARNING WEEK AND CONFERENCE

Nana Chancellor, the KNUST E-Learning Centre organised the 2nd edition of the E-Learning Week and International Conference from 8th to 12th July 2024 under the theme **“Fostering Excellence in E-Learning across Diverse Disciplines: Progress, Challenges and Prospects”**. The Conference featured thought-provoking keynote speeches, interactive workshops, and panel discussions addressing the challenges and opportunities of the evolving digital education landscape.

6.0 CELEBRATING FACULTY AT THE GLOBAL FRONT

Nana Chancellor, our staff are excelling on the national and international fronts. I am excited to report that;

Professor Reginald Adjetei Annan, Department of Biochemistry and Biotechnology is going down in history to be the first ever Principal Investigator in Africa to win the World Cancer Research Grant to work on breast cancer among sub-Saharan women.

Professor Philip Antwi-Agyei, Director, Office of Grants and Research has also been appointed to join the High-level United Nations Panel of Experts for the Resilient Food Systems Reports.

Professor Alexander Yaw Debrah and Dr. Linda Debrah represented Ghana at the 2024 United Nations General Assembly Science Summit, where they

made presentations on management of lymphatic filariasis and Conducting Clinical Research in Ghana.

Dr. Ralph Nyadu Addo, Department of Publishing Studies, and Dr. Yesuenyegbe Fiagbe, Department of Mechanical Engineering also picked up international awards in Germany for promoting Ghana-German cooperation through the African Centre for Career Enhancement and Skills Support (ACCESS) Project and an award for Kente Weaver prototype machine. We say Ayekoo to them and all other staff who continue to make us proud out there.

7.0 STUDENT ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND AWARDS

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, the entrepreneurship drive for our students to equip them to be employers remains paramount and our students continue to make us proud. At the 2024 Kosmos Innovation Centre Agritech Challenge, five KNUST Start-Ups swept a total of Ninety Thousand Dollars (\$90,000) as seed funds, when thirty-five (35) business start-ups from ten (10) public universities qualified for the final assessment. McHan Cosmetics won the ultimate prize of Thirty-Five Thousand United States Dollars (\$35,000) for recycling cocoa pods into premium potash and soaps.

Tekcycle Ghana Limited won Twenty Thousand United States Dollars (\$20,000), Freshline Post Harvest Solutions also won Fifteen Thousand United States Dollars (\$15,000), BunnyBite Ghana Limited won Ten Thousand United States Dollars (\$10,000), and GanaFert had Ten Thousand United States Dollars (\$10,000). Congratulations to our hardworking students for continuing to fly high the flag of KNUST.

Nana Chancellor, our three-member student team were adjudged the 2024 Overall Gold Winners of the International Packaging Design Student Competition and also picked up three other awards from the World Packaging Organisation in Bangkok, Thailand. We say Ayekoo to the team.

Distinguished Ladies and gentlemen, management continues to celebrate our students who have achieved not only academic success but also leadership, creativity, ingenuity, innovativeness and a high sense of commitment to

making a positive impact on society with their deep-seated curiosity, critical thinking skills and problem-solving acumen.

To this end, the second edition of the Vice-Chancellor's Students' Excellence Awards (VCSEA) that showcased our Students in Shining Armour was held under the theme: **"Celebrating Achievements Beyond Boundaries: Recognising Students' Excellence."**

The categories included Student Leadership, Academic Excellence, Innovation, Sports, Debate, Cadet, Peer Counselling, Entrepreneurship, Volunteering, Creative Arts and Outstanding Media Personality among others. Bringing the total award categories to fourteen (14). Out of the Two hundred and Twenty-Six (226) nominations received, fifty-two (52) students were recognised for outstanding achievements. Massive congratulations to all our students.

8.0 KNUST RESEARCH FUND (KReF) AWARDS

Distinguished Ladies and gentlemen, our strategic mandate enjoins us as a University to undertake relevant and impactful research. This year, we have committed One Million, Five Hundred Thousand Ghana Cedis (GH¢1,500,000.00) to support Research for thirty-two (32) Staff. To enhance interdisciplinary and collaborative research, twenty-seven (27) of the awards were given under the multi-disciplinary category. We Congratulate all awardees and look forward to the impactful outcomes of their research.

9.0 GRADUATE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION OF GHANA (GRASAG-KNUST) RESEARCH FUND (GReF)

Nana Chancellor, in the same spirit of supporting research and graduate studies, the Graduate Research Fund (GReF) has been established by the Graduate Students Association of KNUST. Fifty-one (51) postgraduate students have been awarded seed funds to support their research. Please join me to applaud Mr. Felix Kofi Adusei, the immediate past GRASAG-KNUST president, and his team for working so hard in making this vision a reality. Well done!

10.0 GRANTS

Nana Chancellor, our faculty also competed for and won external grants. During the period under review, the University won a total grant of Ten Million, Six Hundred and Fifty-Two Thousand, Three Hundred and Ninety-Seven United States Dollars, Ten Cents (\$10,652,397.10.)

1. Professor Robert Clement Abaidoo of the Department of Theoretical and Applied Biology won Four Million, Two Hundred and Thirty-One Thousand, Four Hundred and Sixteen Euros (€4,231,416.00) for the African Centre for Career Enhancement and Skills Support (ACCESS).
2. Professor Jerry John Kponyo won One Million, Four Hundred Thousand Canadian Dollars (\$ 1,400,000.00) to continue with the Responsible Artificial Intelligence Laboratory Project.

We extend our deepest congratulations to all our grant awardees.

11.0 THE SUPPORT ONE NEEDY STUDENT WITH ONE LAPTOP (SONSOL) PROJECT

Nana Chancellor, KNUST remains committed to the all-inclusive education agenda of not leaving any student behind through the Support One Needy Student with One Laptop (SONSOL) Project. This year, through the benevolence of our sponsors, the University has been able to distribute Five Hundred and Three (503) laptops to students. This brings the total number of laptops distributed over the period to Two Thousand, Three Hundred and Two (2,302) with a monetary value of Twenty-Three Million Ghana Cedis (GH¢23,000,000.00). Nana Chancellor, I would like to recognise and express our profound appreciation to our sponsors who continue to support this great project.

We are extremely grateful to The Vice-President of the Republic of Ghana, Consolidated Bank Ghana (CBG), Stanbic Bank, Ecobank Ghana, Isaac Books and Stationary, OmniBSIC Bank, ASIB Construction Ltd, Mrs. Bernice Asamoah of OmniBSIC Bank, Zenith Bank, Fapim Company Ltd, Mat Bans Company Ltd., Andysap Furniture, Multinec, Papnoble Ventures Gh. Ltd, Labchem Ltd, G7 Bussy Ltd, With God Tailoring, K. Agyemang Company

Ltd, Mt. Sinai Enterprise, Unijay Fashions and Wolfenberg Safety & Power Tools, GRASAG, NUGS and Distance Learning Students Association (DLSA) of KNUST. We are deeply touched by the impact of your benevolence on our students. Thank you.

12.0 KNUST RECEIVES ACCREDITATION FROM THE QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCY FOR HIGHER EDUCATION (QAA), UK

Nana Chancellor, in the spirit of saving the best for the last, I am delighted to report that KNUST has been granted International Institutional Accreditation by QAA, UK. This was after a successful completion of the International Quality Review and meeting the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area.

KNUST becomes one of three institutions in Africa to achieve this great feat. Well done to the Big KNUST Family and all our stakeholders for making this possible.

13.0 ADVICE TO GRADUANDS

My dear graduands, you have indeed fought the good fight and today we are here to celebrate your achievements over the past years. Please be reminded that you are a life long learner and your success today marks the beginning of a new chapter in your lives and a testament to the fact that you are capable and able to do whatever you determine to accomplish. Let nothing stop you. Not even yourself. Remember opportunities more often than not, come dressed as challenges, so take them boldly and decisively to unravel your fullest potential.

May the Good Lord be your guide and stay, every step of the way. And may the Almighty God make His face shine upon you and be gracious onto you and give you, His peace now and always.

Thank you very much.