

**SPEECH READ BY PROFESSOR KWASI KWAFO ADARKWA,  
VICE-CHANCELLOR, KWAME NKRUMAH UNIVERSITY OF  
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, KUMASI, ON THE OCCASION OF  
THE 42<sup>ND</sup> CONGREGATION HELD ON 27<sup>TH</sup> JUNE, 2008 AT THE  
GREAT HALL – MORNING SESSION FOR THE COLLEGE OF  
AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES AND COLLEGE  
OF ARCHITECTURE AND PLANNING**

**1.0 SALUTATION**

Your Excellency, President of the Republic of Ghana

Your Majesty, Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, Chancellor

Chairman of the University Council

Honourable Minister of Education, Science and Sports

Honourable Regional Minister

Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps

Nananom

Members of the Clergy

Colleague Vice-Chancellors

Past KNUST Vice-Chancellors and Pro Vice-Chancellors

Pro Vice-Chancellor and Pro Vice-Chancellors of Sister Universities

Registrar and Registrars of Sister Universities

Guest Speaker

Members of the University Council

Provosts

Deans and Directors

Heads of Department

Alumni of the University

Members of Convocation

Faculty Members

Senior and Junior Staff

Excited Parents and Guardians

Proud Graduands and KNUST Class of 2008

Members of the Media  
Distinguished Invited Guests  
Ladies and Gentlemen

## **2.0 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION**

In addition to our Chairman of Council's introductory remarks, I would also like to welcome you all to this graduation ceremony. For those of you who have travelled from out of town, I wish you Godspeed in your outward journeys. For those of you from our immediate environs, it is our hope that you will continue to patronize our future programmes and we also wish you well. It is our hope that you will all partner with us as we strive to develop a tradition of excellence in this University.

Congregations are very important events in every University. They are assemblies of the Senior Members of the academic units of a university organized primarily for the purposes of receiving reports on the universities' activities and also awarding degrees to deserving students. As a University, we have had several congregations but this 42<sup>nd</sup> Congregation is special in various ways. After 41 graduation ceremonies, the University is mature. Indeed, KNUST is matured but we still have a few challenges that we are gradually beginning to overcome.

In spite of our challenges, this last year was a particularly good one for the Colleges of Agriculture and Natural Resources and Architecture and Planning whose students we have met this morning to graduate. During the year, they were able to fulfill their core responsibilities of teaching, research and community engagement in various ways. Details of these activities are contained in the Vice-Chancellor's Report to Congregation; copies of which you should have in your package of materials for this occasion.

### **3.0 COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES**

This College is made up of three major faculties of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Forest Resources Technology at Sunyani. The College had 308 courses on offer during the year under review and had a total student population of 1,852 with 95 lecturers; implying a lecturer:student ratio of 1:19 which is one of the best ratios on campus. In spite of this, we have continued to employ more lecturers for the College; particularly for our Sunyani Campus. So far, we have attracted ten (10) new lecturers for the College with six of them specifically hired for our Sunyani Campus.

The College appears to be experiencing a gradual decrease, on a year-to-year basis, in the number of students enrolling in its programmes. Consequently, the cost per capita of training students in Agriculture, for example, is gradually increasing compared with similar costs in other Colleges. As a way of dealing with this challenge, a number of market and demand driven programmes have been designed and will soon be on offer. These programmes include:

- B.Sc. Dairy Science and Technology;
- B.Sc. Biotechnology; and
- B.Sc. Landscape Design and Management.

In the case of the Sunyani Campus, one major challenge relates to attracting students to enroll in the Diploma Programme in Natural Resources Management because it is of a three-year duration. The College has, therefore, been encouraged to review its duration to make it more attractive considering that there is a specific role for these professionals within the forestry sub sector. Conscious efforts are also being made to increase the number of students on the degree programme by pursuing an aggressive marketing strategy.

The above pattern is partly the result of the limited patronage of related programmes at the Senior High School level. It is rather ironical that at a time

when the world seems to be experiencing food deficits, we rather have fewer people enrolling on the very programme whose graduates will play a lead role in food production because of its labour intensive nature. We need to tackle this challenge from several angles. At the senior high school level, for example, the subject matter can be reviewed to give it some currency and at the tertiary level, students offering agriculture could be considered for special bursaries which will bind them to work within the sector for a specified period after graduation. Finally, at the national level, some innovative incentivisation scheme can be designed to attract and retain professionals within the sector.

This year, we will be graduating a total of 4,951 students out of which 363 will be from the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. The latter figure is only a marginal increase over last year's figure of 269. Of this year's graduates, 25 obtained First Class Honours degrees out of which 9 were females. Apart from 103 students who secured Second Class Honours (Lower degrees), 196 students had Second Class Honours (Upper Division) degrees and 5 had Pass degrees. As I mentioned earlier on, it is a real challenge for all of us as a nation to ensure that these graduates are attracted to, and retained in the sector to be engaged in activities that would directly or indirectly impact food production. On the whole, our students have excelled in their chosen disciplines and it is our hope that they will carry this attitude into their professional lives.

This graduation ceremony coming exactly twenty eight days after our final examinations has been made possible by our hard working lecturers and this shows their dedication. It is my hope that the class of 2008 will forever be grateful to their hardworking and dedicated lecturers. If you agree with me, can I suggest we give your lecturers a standing ovation. We are proud of them.

Research output from the College was also commendable and it is worthy of note that selected Departments within the College placed very high in the first recently completed ranking of academic Departments. The College has successfully

collaborated with the University of Guelph and Malaspina University College to execute two research projects with CIDA funding aimed at poverty reduction within the immediate environs of Sunyani.

The College also held its first scientific research retreat from 19<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> September, 2007 at Sunyani under the theme “Enhancing Staff Progression through Research Output Appraisals”. This retreat offered senior members an opportunity to present findings of their research and to benefit from colleagues’ constructive suggestions. A total of 45 papers were read at the retreat.

The Centre for Biodiversity Utilization and Development is also collaborating with Michigan State University to study and characterize forty local leafy vegetables in Southern Ghana.

The College’s Strategic Plan was launched on February 22, 2008 and at the same ceremony, a 56-seater Tata Bus procured through the joint efforts of the students and the Faculty of Agriculture was outdoored. The bus will help enhance students’ access to undertake field work which was hitherto severely hampered by the lack of reliable transportation.

The community engagement efforts by the College over the period under review were commendable. The College continued to collaborate with all the communities within the proximity of our Sunyani Campus and Brosanko. Partly as a result of the College’s active community engagement, the Finatrade Group of Companies has agreed to provide funding up to the tune of GH¢ 54,000 to be used in establishing a model farm on campus. While this will greatly enhance teaching, it will also be used as a laboratory for the field testing of our research efforts in an integrated manner. In addition, Finatrade has also provided twenty academic scholarships worth GH¢ 10,000 to students of the College. Under a special NUFFIC funding, the Netherlands Government also provided €1.6 million for Phase II of the construction of a state-of-the-art office block and training

centre which will enhance the Bureau of Integrated Rural Development's capacity to run short and tailor-made courses to a variety of clientele.

I am also happy to announce that the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Environment has made available GH¢ 120,000 for the construction of two residential flats to ease accommodation on the Sunyani Campus. In a similar vein, the Ministry of Food and Agriculture has also donated one Nissan Hardbody Pick-Up truck under its Roots and Tubers Improvement Programme. Finally, the National Agribusiness Development Programme has made available to the College, two scholarships worth nearly GH¢ 10,000 for students within the College. We are, indeed, extremely grateful to all our benefactors and very much appreciate what they have done for the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

#### **4.0 COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE AND PLANNING**

This College will be presenting 437 students in Architecture, Building Technology, Planning and Land Economy for graduation this morning. This shows an increase of 19.7 percent over last year's figure. This increase reflects an overall university-wide increase in student enrollment during the 2003/2004 academic year. However, we will not be able to sustain such increases even though they may not be substantial because of the current state of infrastructural facilities. In spite of the completion of the major teaching block in the College, students still experience congestion in lecture rooms and studios and some staff are even without offices.

Of the number graduating this morning 28 or 6.4 per cent earned First Class Honours degrees out of which 5 are females. As many as 248 or 56.8 percent earned Second Class Honours (Upper Division) degrees. The proportion of females in this category is 85 or 19.5%. This cohort of graduands shows a lot of promise because only 9 or 2.1 per cent secured Pass degrees. It is observable that all the programmes in the College are registering First Class degrees

probably as a result of the good quality of student intake, their hard work and the good work done by faculty members. I would like to use this medium to congratulate all faculty members in the College and also kindly request our graduating class of 2008 to give their lecturers a standing ovation..... You may resume your seats.

In view of on-going changes in the planning, construction and real estate industry; the College has made proposals for the introduction of undergraduate programmes in Building Economics and Quantity Surveying, Construction Technology and Management as well as Real Estate effective August, 2008. The first two programmes will replace the current Building Technology programme but the Real Estate programme will run concurrently with the Land Economy programme. These changes have been occasioned by the need for our programmes to remain relevant by responding to changing market trends.

Research appears to be gaining a lot more prominence than it did during the 2006/2007 academic year in all Departments of the College. What is also observable is that a lot of the research results are presented at national conferences and workshops and subsequently published in professional journals of the various disciplines. Faculty members may also find it useful to channel some of these presentations to international peer reviewed journals and I have no doubt in my mind that they are up to the task. In this regard, I am happy to inform Congregation that Professor Edward Badu and Dr. Bernard Baiden of the Department of Building Technology won an Emerald Literati Network 2008 Award of Excellence for their paper on "Assessment and Enforcement of Liquidated Damages in Construction Contracts in Ghana". Professor Edward Badu and Dr. Bernard Baiden, well done and congratulations!

The College organized an International Workshop on Transparency in Land Administration funded by the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements. Participants came from Ghana, Sierra Leone and Liberia. The Department of

Land Economy and the Centre for Land Studies won a contract to undertake a study on Vested Lands in Ghana under the Land Administration Project. The Department of Planning obtained a Research Grant worth 8,000 Euros from Tropenbors.

All four Departments in the College secured favourable positions on the first ranking of academic Departments here at KNUST, but clearly, they have a lot more potential to excel and we all expect this to be adequately reflected in next year's ranking of academic Departments. Almost all the Departments in this College have rather unfavourable student:teacher ratios and this tended to affect their rankings unfavourably. This year, we were able to employ only five (5) more faculty members for the College in spite of all the strenuous efforts we made. Luckily, the College graduated the first doctoral student under the Vice Chancellor's Special Initiative for Staff Development.

The scope and extent of the College's community engagement appears to have diminished somewhat during the course of the year. The College maintained its collaborations with the Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly and the Techiman Traditional Authority even though fewer activities were carried out during the year under review. The latter one is a joint effort with the College of Architecture and Planning at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor whose President, Dr. Mary Sue Coleman and a delegation of twelve persons paid a day's working visit to KNUST. The College's collaboration with the Institute of Urban and Regional Studies continued with their joint research activities and during the next academic year, there will be an exchange of faculty members between these partners with each partner spending a whole year teaching and researching at the other university.

## **5.0 APPRECIATION TO PARENTS AND GUARDIANS**

Apart from our faculty members, parents and guardians have also contributed immensely to our ability to present these young men and women for graduation



this morning. Needless to say, without their assistance, our preparation of the students would not have been complete. We are therefore extremely grateful to parents and guardians of our graduands for their tremendous assistance to these young ones during the course of their studies. Once again, can I suggest that we show our appreciation to them in the usual way by clapping for them.

As parents and guardians, you may be relieved, but indeed, your work is not completed. You need to continue to guide them as they either step into the world of work or move on to Graduate School. Without your continued assistance, these young ones may be totally lost in the world out there. And now, a few words of advice to our graduands.

## **6.0 ADVICE TO GRADUANDS AND CONCLUSION**

In the past four years or so, we have taught you how you can make a living for the rest of your lives as agricultural scientists, specialists in natural resource management, architects, building technologists, planners and land economists. What you need to do now is to quickly apply your knowledge to real life situations. Your education was so broad and flexible enough to allow you to adapt to a wide range of real life situations. You need to quickly realize that the real life is very different from campus life where you have been sheltered from all the harsh realities of life. You will now be paying for your utilities and your employers will demand so much from you for which their compensation is unlikely to ever satisfy you.

On the other hand, life can be a lot more easier if you approach it with hard work, integrity, humility and diligence. These are the qualities and attributes expected from all of us if we are to meaningfully tackle our food problems, rapidly vanishing natural resources, as well as the poorly managed human settlements with limited access to land for various productive ventures.

You must learn to be accountable and a major source of encouragement for our less fortunate brethren. Do not let any opportunity slip by because you cannot ever recover it. Make the maximum use of your time and learn not to procrastinate on any issue. Remember that you need to help us continue to improve on our circumstances as a University. You are therefore encouraged to join the KNUST Alumni Association from which you can begin to mobilize resources for the eventual development of the University. Each of you should go out into the world as either a proud Alumnus or Alumna of KNUST.

Once again, congratulations and Godspeed to all of you.

Thank you.