

**Address Delivered by Professor John Gyapong, Vice Chancellor of the University of Health and Allied Sciences at the 2016/2017 Academic Year Matriculation Ceremony Held on Saturday, October 15, 2016.**

The Pro-Vice Chancellor;

Registrar;

Deans of the various Schools;

Directors;

Faculty and Staff;

Students;

Matriculants of the 2016/2017 Academic year;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to the fifth matriculation ceremony of the University of Health and Allied Sciences (UHAS). Today also marks my first matriculation ceremony as the 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chancellor of UHAS and I am delighted to perform this function.

The University of Health and Allied Sciences is a young publicly funded university established by an Act of Parliament (Act 828) in December 2011 with a vision of being a pre-eminent research and practically oriented health educational institution. Our objective is to

provide quality educational opportunities to students and healthcare professionals, advance knowledge through scholarship and research and provide patient care and services that improve health and quality of life. It is the first public university dedicated solely to training health professionals to enable them tackle the diverse health issues in the country and beyond. In addition, it is uniquely devoted to research and community service, which forms a fundamental component in the development of our programmes.

In line with the University's vision of community service, we run a trimester system where students, in their third trimester of study are assigned to health facilities across all the 25 districts in the Volta Region for eight weeks, to acquire the necessary competencies and practical skills in their various fields of expertise. The vocational training programme which is the hallmark and pride of this institution. It is a major element that differentiates UHAS from other tertiary institutions.

The main campus of the University is located here at Sokode Lokoe in Ho and houses the Central Administration, Library and the School of Basic and Biomedical Sciences. The Schools of Medicine, Nursing and Midwifery, and Allied Health Sciences are on the premises of the Volta Regional Hospital while some of our hostels and laboratories are

situated at the Southern site of the Campus popularly known as Dave. The second main campus is located in Hohoe which accommodates only the School of Public Health. The School of Pharmacy will eventually move to our third campus in Keta when adequate infrastructure and other resources are in place.

Our programmes are competitive and well sought after. Currently, we run seventeen programmes in various fields of medical and allied health sciences. These include our newly mounted programmes, namely: the Doctor of Pharmacy, Bachelor of Science in Medical Biochemistry and Molecular Biology and the Top-Up in the Bachelor of Medical Laboratory Sciences. We have also created an avenue for nurses and midwives of certificate holding status to upgrade their qualification through our Access and Sandwich programmes. This upgrading programme is highly sought after and we have individuals from all parts of the country enrolling. We are glad to inform you that UHAS has recently received approval from the National Accreditation Board to run a postgraduate programme in Public Health which will commence this academic year. We are also awaiting approval to start a Master of Philosophy programme in Applied Epidemiology. I am certain I would see some of you enrolling into our postgraduate programmes in the near future.

In just four years, the University has made significant progress and one can envision the heights this institution would reach in the years ahead. The infrastructural facilities you see around may not compare to structures in the well-established public universities. As you know, this is our humble beginning and the University authorities and partners are taking steps to enhance the existing facilities as well as develop new ones, especially hostel facilities at all campuses to provide a healthy environment for teaching and learning.

We are happy to inform you that the University is currently constructing a 1200 capacity multi-purpose auditorium with funding from the Bank of Ghana. The Ghana Education Trust Fund (GETFund) has also provided adequate funds for the construction of a modern laboratory complex and this project has also commenced. We hope they will be completed within the shortest possible time to enhance teaching and learning.

We are aware of the challenges you are facing regarding the transportation situation. With a multi-sited campus, the problem of transportation is unavoidable. Currently, our greatest challenge is transporting students from the old to the new site for lectures. This is because the university is bearing the full cost of the service and it is

evident that this practice cannot continue forever. At some point students will have to pay to support the activity.

Management has had discussions with the Student Body on how students can contribute to sustain the service being provided. We have proposed a minimal amount of 70p for the students to pay towards the effective running of the shuttle system which we hope to start at beginning of the second semester. We are also holding discussions with Metro Mass Transit Services to provide a specialized service for the University by routing some of its vehicles from the township to this campus for the benefit of staff and students of this institution. We understand your concerns and we assure you that we are working seriously to ensure that you have a comfortable and conducive environment to pursue your academic work.

Let me use this medium to invite all interested parties, stakeholders as well as local entrepreneurs to invest in the transportation business to assist management to resolve this pressing issue. This could be your contribution to the development of UHAS.

Back to our newly admitted students: You are most welcome to the University of Health and Allied Sciences. Out of five thousand three and fifty-five (5355) applications the University received this academic

year, you are one of the eight hundred and thirty-five (835) fortunate students to join us and gain the UHAS experience. This is a great opportunity so I encourage you to embrace it wholeheartedly to achieve your goals during your stay on campus. Strive to achieve excellence by developing critical thinking skills and have the right balance between your academic and social life.

For many of you, this is your first exposure to independent living. You therefore need to manage your newly gained freedom wisely. Remember that you were admitted as an individual and you will graduate as an individual. You are therefore solely responsible for all your actions. You are adults now, and we will want to treat you as such. You need self-discipline and effective time management. As you would have notice already, here in the university there is no rising bell nor lights out; No prep time nor siesta; and no one marks the register in the lecture hall, BUT there will certainly be a day of reckoning.

We have assembled competent and experienced professors, lecturers, administrators and other professionals to provide you with the training you require and ensure that your stay in UHAS is a productive one.

The University is a place where you build relationships which can be very long lasting so I urge you to come out of your closets and build

such relationships with colleagues. I also encourage you to cultivate the spirit of discipline. No human endeavour attains the desired success without discipline. Sacrifice your human desires for a better tomorrow. Do not allow the investments of your parents and guardians to go down the drain.

Let me remind you of the Matriculation Oath that you have just sworn. I encourage you to go by the tenets of the Oath and be guided by the rules and regulations contained in your students' handbook. This is a university with extraordinary visions and goals. It is uniquely placed and is comparable to none. We assure you that you are in the right place at the right time. I wish you a happy learning and a productive time on the campus of UHAS.

On behalf of the Council of the University, Members of Convocation and on my own behalf, I would like to congratulate you on your admission and welcome you as Junior Members of the University of Health and Allied Sciences.

May God bless us all. Thank you.