

**SECOND CONGREGATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF HEALTH AND
ALLIED SCIENCES, HO
SATURDAY, JULY22nd , 2017**

ADDRESS BY PROFESSOR JOHN GYAPONG, VICE-CHANCELLOR

Chairman of the University Council, His Lordship Justice Jones Dotse

Honourable Regional Minister,

Members of Parliament,

Members of the University Council,

Togbewo, Mamawo,

All Heads of Institutions,

Vice-Chancellors Ghana,

Pro-Vice-Chancellor and other Pro-Vice-Chancellors present,

Registrar and other Registrars here present,

Members of Convocation,

Staff and students,

Graduands

Parents and Guardians of Graduands

Invited Guests, Members of the Press

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

WELCOME

I have the greatest pleasure to welcome you all to the Second (2nd) Congregation of the University of Health and Allied Sciences, Ho. This year's graduating class is the second cohort of students who enrolled in September 2013, into various undergraduate programmes offered by the University.

Congregations are very important and special occasions in the life of every University. It is a time when the University takes stock of various activities that took place during the academic year as well as confer degrees on the graduating students. The Vice Chancellor is therefore required to present a status report.

UNIVERSITY MANAGEMENT (GOVERNANCE)

Mr. Chairman, exactly a year ago on Saturday 23rd July 2016, I was introduced by former Chairman of Council Professor Kofi Anyidoho to former President John Mahama and to the first Congregation as the Second Vice Chancellor of the University of Health and Allied Sciences. I was subsequently inducted into office at a colourful ceremony on Monday, 3rd October 2016. On that day, I had mixed feelings of joy, hope and trepidation as I took office. I have just completed one academic year of my four year tenure at this nascent University and I wish to express my sincere gratitude to the almighty God for how far he has brought us together. I also wish to congratulate the newly inaugurated University Council and thank the Government for constituting the Council just in time to enable us hold this year's Congregation.

Mr. Chairman, UHAS is envisioned to be wholly dedicated to the training of health professionals and I promise that there will be no dilution effect under my watch! I took over the mantle of leadership of the university from Professor Fred Binka, I recognised his great leadership as founding Vice-Chancellor in bringing UHAS this far.

One of the first things we set out to do was to finalise the university's strategic

plan which had been in the works for some time. I want to thank the last Council and UHAS management for making themselves available at the two-day retreat to finalise the document which will be launched soon.

To improve upon the governance environment, we have started work on the University Statutes and this will be presented to the new Council for consideration soon. We are also working on several other policy documents to provide guidance in the management of our academic and research enterprise.

ACADEMIC ADMINISTRATION/BUSINESS

Schools

In the year under review, we established the School of Pharmacy, which currently runs a six-year Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD) programme. This brings to six (6), the number of schools we are mandated by law to operate. The first five (5) schools are The Schools of Basic and Biomedical Sciences, Nursing and Midwifery, Public Health, Allied Health Sciences, and Medicine. These Six (6) Schools all together run eighteen (18) academic programmes leading to the award of Bachelor degrees. The only outstanding schools are School of Dentistry and the Graduate School of Sports and Exercise Medicine.

Establishment of the Institute of Health Research

An Institute of Health Research (IHR) was established in November 2016 and became operational in January 2017 to focus on multidisciplinary research and provision of extension services. The institute which is headed by Professor Seth Owusu-Agyei plans to Conduct research into problems of Public Health importance in Ghana using multidisciplinary approaches as well as help develop

research capacity of staff through mentorship programmes and forge and expand research collaborations with national and international partners. The Institute currently has the four Centres:

- Centre for Malaria Research (CMR), headed by Professor Evelyn Ansah
- Centre for Neglected Tropical Diseases Research (CNTDR)
- Centre for Non-Communicable Diseases Research (CNCDR)
- Centre for Health Policy and Implementation Research (CHPIR), headed by Professor Margaret Gyapong
- Research Operations Office (ROO) which is responsible for the provision of research administrative support, headed by Mr. Fidelis Anumu.

The Institute of Traditional and Alternative Medicine and Institute of Medical Education are yet to be established.

HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

The University has been sponsoring 16 medical doctors from the School of Medicine, to the Ghana College of Physicians and Surgeons. Five of them were on **fellowship** with areas of specialization such as Urology, Gynaecological Oncology, Trauma & Orthopaedics and Obstetrics & Gynaecology. Eleven (11) other Doctors were on **membership** and they were spread in Emergency Medicine, Obstetrics & Gynaecology, Microbiology, Orthodontics, Maxillofacial surgery, Surgery, Radiology, Paediatrics and Anatomy.

Staff strength of the University

We are grateful to Government for granting the University financial clearance to enable us to recruit pertinent staff in 2016. Mr. Chairman, this came as a great

relief to the University and we managed to recruit both faculty and administrative staff who would help the University deliver on its mandate. The University started with an initial staff strength of ten (10) in June 2012. As of July 2017, this figure has risen to about 611. This consists of about 215 Academic Staff, 63 Senior Members professional and administrative staff, 149 Senior Staff and 184 Junior Staff.

Student Enrolment

The University started operating in September 2012 and admitted the first batch of 155 students. Currently there is a total student population of 3,727, made up of 1943 males and 1784 females.

Establishment of a Directorate of Academic Affairs

At my induction, I indicated the need to promote academic excellence using the highest standards of teaching, learning and leadership development. To facilitate this, an Academic Affairs Directorate has been established and a Director, Mrs. Lucy Ofori-Ayeh has since been appointed. Their charge is to develop and implement policies that are student centred, quality assured and improves academic and students' records.

THE VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMME

In line with our vision, mission, core values and institutional philosophy, we continue to emphasise community engagement by our students through the vocational training programme. The Programme provides a great avenue for students to acquire skills and competencies in the field. We are continually grateful

to the Chiefs, Municipal and District Assemblies, the Ghana Health Service and other stakeholders for embracing and supporting the program.

Transitioning from the placement of 155 students at the inception to over 3000 students today has become nightmarish. There is clearly the need for some re-engineering to improve upon the quality of the delivery. A committee has been put together to carry out this task but as a first step, beginning from the 2017/2018 academic year, only level 200 and 300 students would be obliged to undertake the Vocational training.

COLLABORATIONS

We continue to collaborate with both local and international universities and research institutions to promote academic and research excellence. We continue to work closely with:

1. Leeds Beckett University (UK),
2. University of Newcastle in Australia,
3. University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences,
4. Louisiana State University in Shreveport, and
5. New York University (NYU).

We have recently developed very strong bonds with Yonsei University in Seoul, South Korea. There has been exchange visits by university management from both sides. Next month we will send a 14-member UHAS delegation to Yonsei to work on improving our vocational training curriculum by learning from their rich experience.

We have also developed research partnerships with the following organisations

1. WHO/TDR for capacity building in Implementation Research
2. Novartis for Sickle cell disease research and setting up of a Demographic Surveillance system
3. DNDi collaboration on a drug trial for Onchocerciasis
4. National Malaria Control Programme for capacity building in malaria

All these collaborations are aimed at developing the human resource capacity of the University for effective teaching, learning and research.

PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

The UHAS masterplan has been carefully thought through and developed to help us achieve our mandate. To date, only one (School of Basic and Biomedical Sciences) out of our eight schools has been built. None of the three institutes has been built. Thus, all our academic facilities are currently in temporary structures which are woefully inadequate.

In recent times, there has been a lot of interest from the private sector to partner us to develop the university. Inasmuch as this is very welcome, I am of the opinion that Government needs to invest heavily in UHAS and the new universities in general for the sake of equity. When Legon, KNUST, Cape Coast and the rest were being built, some basic minimum infrastructure such as faculty buildings, Halls of Residence, Staff accommodation etc. was provided. I don't think it should be different for UHAS. Our students don't have a single Hall of residence so they have no experience of what a Joint Common Room (JCR) life is like.

Next September, the government's free SHS will begin. This will create an excellent opportunity for many who hitherto couldn't have access to SHS to do so. Thus, in the next three to four years, many more SHS graduates will be looking for access to tertiary education than today. We need to start planning expansion at the tertiary level NOW! Opportunities for expansion exist in places like UHAS and UENR in Sunyani.

Mr. Chairman, our campus roads are still in a terrible state. The roads were awarded on contract in 2014 but progress has been extremely slow. Consequently, commercial vehicles are reluctant to service our community because of excessive maintenance cost. We wish to commend the Metro Mass Transport Service for agreeing to extend services to our campus. We wish to request the government to facilitate an expedited execution of these contracts.

Finally, I wish to thank the Bank of Ghana for sponsoring this beautiful auditorium. We are very grateful for the support but which to ask that they provide us with the remaining funds to complete the remaining works, particularly since it is called the CEDI auditorium.

HO TEACHING HOSPITAL

We thank Government for declaring the Volta Regional Hospital (VRH) as a Teaching Hospital whilst we await our own teaching hospital. The facilities at VHR are expected to be upgraded and the appropriate management and governance structures put in place to enhance quality training of health professionals at UHAS and improve healthcare delivery in the Region and the country at large. We thank His Excellency the President of the Republic of Ghana for taking this up personally

with the Minister for Health after his recent visit to the Volta Region and we look forward to an expedited completion of the processes.

THE JEA MILLS MEMORIAL LECTURES (UHAS LEADERSHIP LECTURES)

In appreciation of the late President JEA Mills' vision to build a public university in the Volta Region, the University of Health and Allied Sciences instituted an annual memorial and leadership lecture series in his honour. The second (2nd) lecture came off successfully on Thursday and Friday 20th and 21st July 2017. We express our profound gratitude to Dr Delanyo Dovlo for his thought provoking lectures and the subsequent discussions on the theme "The people who work for our health-Finding a fit for purpose workforce for the sustainable development goals".

Today, we will be honouring him and two other distinguished Ghanaians for their tremendous contribution to education and health in the country with Honorary Doctoral degrees. These individuals are:

1. Dr. Delanyo Yao Tsidi Dovlo, our distinguished JEAM lecturer;
2. Dr. Christina Amoako-Nuama, for her role in the establishment of UHAS;
3. Professor Fred Newton Binka, the Founding Vice-Chancellor of UHAS.

It is good to recognise hard work and excellence and UHAS is just following that tradition

Talking about hard work and recognition, many of our faculty have achieved significant laurels in the year under review. I would like to mention two significant ones. Professor Binka recently received the national award of the Officer of the Order of Volta. We congratulate him sincerely. The second one is the GE Healthcare and Women in Global Health Heroine of Health awards that were

announced as part of the 70th World Health Assembly held in Geneva in May this year. Professor Margaret Gyapong, the Director of our Centre for Health Policy and Implementation Research was one of 12 recipients from across the world. We congratulate her for making UHAS and Ghana proud.

MESSAGE TO THE GRADUATING CLASS

You have moved through thick and thin to come this far. Most of you have maintained a high level of discipline in your studies and have proved worthy of being awarded the degrees you deserve. To those receiving special prizes, I congratulate you and may this be the beginning of greater things to come.

I encourage you to go out into the world and be agents of positive change! Let the 'motto' of UHAS, "Health for Development" guide you in your quest for success in your field of work. Success is a vehicle that moves on the wheels called "HARD WORK" but the journey would be difficult without the fuel called "SELF-CONFIDENCE". **Be so good that no one can ignore you!** Go out there and make UHAS proud.

I wish to entreat you to always remember the time you spent here. Keep in touch with your colleagues, the faculty, the staff and above all the University. Join the Alumni Association and do not forget to give back to your Alma Mata by making very meaningful inputs to the development and growth of the University.

On behalf of Management, Faculty and Staff, I extend to you our sincere heartfelt congratulations on your achievement! I will urge you all not to rest on your laurels. Take advantage of the numerous opportunities that abound the world

over and develop yourselves. UHAS will mount postgraduate programmes next academic year and I expect you to take advantage of them after your national service and internships.

To the management, Academic and non-Academic staff of this great University and all our stakeholders who contributed in diverse ways for a successful academic year, thank you and God bless you.

To the proud parents, family members, friends and other benefactors of our graduands, I say congratulations and thank you for your support in training your wards and being with them along the entire journey.

May the Good Lord Bless and Keep you.

May His Face Shine upon you and be Gracious unto you.

May He lift the light of His Countenance upon you and grant you His Peace and travel mercies to your respective destinations.

Thank you!

Akpe na mi loo!

God bless us all!