

Induction Speech

**As Vice-Chancellor of the University of
Ghana, Legon**

By

Professor Ebenezer Owusu Oduro

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The Chancellor of the University of Ghana, H.E. Kofi Annan,

Chairman of the University Council, Professor Justice Kofi Date-Bah,

Members of the University Council,

Your Excellencies, Ambassadors and High Commissioners accredited
to the Republic of Ghana,

Ministers and Deputy Ministers of State,

Members of Parliament,

Traditional Rulers; Nananom, Niimeh and Naameh,

My immediate predecessor, Prof. Ernest Aryeetey and all former
Vice-Chancellors, Pro-Vice Chancellors & Registrars present,

Pro Vice Chancellors,

Registrar, Provosts, Deans, Directors, Heads of Departments, and
members of convocation,

Alumni of this great University,

Staff and students of the University,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Today marks another important milestone in the history of the University of Ghana as I take my turn to be inducted into office as the 12th Vice-Chancellor of the premier university of Ghana.

I want to express my sincere gratitude to the Council of the University of Ghana for the confidence reposed in me and my capacity to lead the University to greater heights over the next four years. I am particularly grateful to the highly respected search party, led by His Lordship Justice Dotse and comprising highly qualified and respected members of the University Council and Academic Board, for seeing the potential in me and recommending me for the position ahead of a host of equally brilliant, experienced, capable and qualified Professors after an extremely rigorous and grueling process. I will entreat anyone aspiring to succeed me as the 13th Vice Chancellor to start preparing.

It is only appropriate, at this point, that I salute the six other great and competent women and men who competed with me for the position of Vice Chancellor. The competition was, indeed, keen but

as great athletes, we all know too well that in the end, only one can breast the tape and receive the Gold medal. However, I recognize the truth and value of the congratulatory message that one of the competing colleagues sent to me on 9th January, 2016: ***“It is all the doings of the Lord and you must know that the Lord has called you to lead UG for a purpose”***. In recognition of your individual talents and potential, and of our collective desire and commitment to improve the fortunes of our University, I would like to invite each one of you to forward to the University Management team one key action plan proposed to the search committee for implementation. I would expect the cooperation of each proponent to lead implementation should the management team accept such submissions. Colleagues, let us work together for the good of this University.

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Mr. Chancellor, Chairman and Members of Council, ladies and gentlemen, as I take over the mantle of leadership of this great university from Professor Ernest Aryeetey, I do so with humility and the firmest conviction that, leadership of any institution is like a relay

race in which a runner runs his or her best and hands over the baton to another to continue. Each leader works hard and then hands over the mantle of leadership to a successor. Institutional Leadership is, therefore, a continuum. In this regard, I would like to pay tribute to all the past 11 former Vice Chancellors for their sterling contributions to the advancement of our great institution, The University of Ghana. Their collective efforts and leadership, backed by the commitment and hard work of all academic and non-academic staff as well as students, have contributed to the enviable reputation of our University as a beacon of excellence, leadership, direction and inspiration to the emerging universities in Africa. I would also like to salute all past and present faculty and staff of the University for their relentless efforts and commitment to the success of the mission and vision of this institution. I trust that I can count on the strong commitment of all towards the full attainment of the University's mission.

Expectations

Mr. Chancellor, Chairman and Members of Council, Nananom, Niimeɪ, Naameɪ, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, as I take up the mantle of leadership of the University of Ghana, I am mindful of the very high expectations for the University to march forward towards the achievement of greater recognition within the global academic community, guided by our collective vision and mission. In particular, there is the justified expectation that the University of Ghana earns a place of pride for high academic and research standards which contribute to national and world development.

Over the last couple of years, one of the major changes that has taken place in the University of Ghana has been the change of the governance structure to a new collegiate system, with the setting up of four colleges, namely: the College of Basic and Applied Sciences (CBAS); College of Humanities (CH); College of Education (CE); and the College of Health Sciences (CHS). The essence of this major

change was to do away with the bureaucratic bottlenecks/layers associated with the previous centralised governance system to ensure decentralisation for a much easier and faster decision-making process.

A major recommendation made towards ensuring a total functioning of the new collegiate governance system was that there should be a review after three years of its institutionalisation and implementation. The end of the first three years of the collegiate system falls exactly a year from today and I am committed to seeing this important assignment through. It is important that we learn lessons from how well or otherwise the collegiate system has performed in this University as compared to best practices at leading institutions in the world. We will, also, subject the university to yet another external review by a visitation panel whose main task will be to review the strengths and weaknesses of our current system and offer suggestions for improvement in order to ensure that the

University continues to remain internationally competitive and relevant to national and world development.

My Vision

Your Excellency, Chancellor of the University of Ghana, Chairman and Members of Council, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen, I would like to use this occasion to share the vision I submitted to the Search Committee.

First, commitment to positioning UG as a world class 'Go To University'.

The University of Ghana is recognized and respected nationally and internationally as a leading institution of higher learning. We would consolidate and build on the progress and achievements so far. Our strategies will be anchored in our collective determination to re-position the University of Ghana as a World class research and training institution. We want Legon to become a **'Go to University'** in Africa.

Second, making the University relevant to development needs.

We (the leadership and staff of colleges and schools of the University) would engage relevant actors in private and public sector to identify key areas of focus and emphasis to guide the alignment of our research and training programmes. This will help tailor the teaching and research in the University to the needs of industry, private sector, the public sector and development in general, and help us to prepare our students to easily acquire the skills-set needed to adapt quickly and fit the needs of these stakeholders. This is the minimum the University of Ghana must offer to realize the goal of making significant contributions to national development.

Third, beating the competition through world class effective virtual capacity.

There is increasing competition in the tertiary educational space both nationally and globally. Tertiary level training is increasingly

becoming virtual and one cannot compete on the basis of physical structures and administrative blocks alone. We need to take this into account in all we do; from admissions policy; through the development of our curricula; to teaching methodologies.

Fourth, priority setting to guide alignment of budgets.

For the University of Ghana to remain competitive globally, we need to ensure we do not slip in global and Africa-wide rankings. Indeed, we will work hard to improve upon them. The global rankings are based on the following indicators: teaching, research and research influence, quality of publication outputs, innovation, income and in-kind contributions from industry or private sector and in international outlook, among other factors. We will prioritize our research and teaching and align budgets to support effective implementation of priority actions that will enhance the University's rankings.

Finally, discipline, integrity, transparency and accountability as well as leadership by example at all levels within the University of Ghana

community will be important cornerstones of my tenure as Vice Chancellor. We (the management team under my leadership) would ensure that support systems at the University work proactively, effectively and efficiently; and that discipline and integrity are always our hallmark.

Since many leaders in private and public life are products of Universities, it is widely believed that traits of national leadership (whether good or bad) stem from our tertiary institutions. The University of Ghana will take the lead in fostering positive attitudinal change and character moulding. Specifically, my aim is that we inculcate in both students and staff, the sense of institutional ownership, where dedication to work, respect for one another, respect for processes and procedures, time management, and environmental cleanliness are upheld and jealously guarded as important core values of the University.

Addressing the funding challenge

In the face of insufficient government subventions and increasing financial needs of the University, Mr. Chancellor, there is the need to take a number of urgent steps.

- i. Redouble our efforts to diversify funding sources and increase our internally generated funds (IGF);
- ii. Manage well the financial resources (from government, donor support and grants; IGF);
- iii. Prudent debt utilisation and management.

Prudent financial management at the University is key to its growth. I will lead the University's management team and motivate a strategic team of achievers from various segments of the university and country to plan, raise resources, implement concrete actions and evaluate their contributions to the advancement of the University of Ghana as a "Go to" teaching, research and development-oriented University. In addition, each College, Institute, School, Centre and Department will be tasked to

examine, for implementation, concrete actions inspired by their strategic plans to improve research and training, and attract funding.

iv. Implement collaborative ventures in enterprise and innovation

Under my leadership, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, the University will establish an enterprise/innovation hub, as a collaborative venture between the University and private sector actors, managed and driven largely by the private sector. The innovation hub will deepen the relationship between academia and industry in a way that should unleash the entrepreneurial spirit in young talents and drive them to launch national and even international enterprises. A distinctive aspect of the innovation hub will be the institution of a donor or self-funded 'Entrepreneur-in-Residence' programme, under which very successful businesswomen and men in Ghana and globally will be brought into residence to deliver lectures and interact with students to help shape their innovative ideas, and translate their business plans into bankable

proposals. Indeed, efforts at creating employment in Ghana must focus on nurturing the entrepreneurial skills of our young people. Graduates and professionals of our universities must be capable of demonstrating entrepreneurship and innovation within good traditional values and modern democratic and business philosophies. The innovation hub will facilitate closer relationships between industry and the University, help create internship opportunities, inform curriculum development and manage students' smooth transition from academia to industry.

Chancellor, Chairman and Members of Council, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, it is a fact that financial stability remains a key factor and a challenge in the execution of any project. Currently, the University of Ghana is expected to raise, at least, 8 million dollars annually to service existing loans acquired under various arrangements. Given the palpable difficulty in undertaking any initiative without the necessary financial resources, an important priority for me as Vice-

Chancellor will be to lead a comprehensive, transparent process of financial planning and sourcing, aimed at making the University of Ghana financially viable over the next five years through vigorous engagements with private sector and industry leaders, Government and donor partners. A University of Ghana Foundation (through the office of Institutional Advancement and in association with the Alumni Council) will be set up and charged with the responsibility of raising funds through financial campaigns and solicitations from individuals, groups, corporate entities, foundations, and philanthropic organizations both within and outside Ghana. The Foundation is expected to raise at least 20 million dollars in 5 years.

Furthermore, Mr. Chancellor, my administration will strive to increase the University's income by engaging investors in Public Private Partnership (PPP) arrangements. Such an arrangement will ensure, for instance, that our three Agricultural Research Centres (ARCs) will be able to discharge expected responsibilities as

academic and research units. This will require separating the academic and research functions of the ARCs under the School of Agriculture from the newly-established Commercial Incubation Units involving PPP arrangements and external business management.

There are some uncompleted projects and plans on campus which could be potential sources of IGF. These include the stadium and a list of other academic units' projects which should benefit from PPPs. These projects, together with the University of Ghana Medical Centre and the prospective Legon city project should witness completion during my tenure as Vice-Chancellor.

VC Green Project

Your Excellency, Chancellor of the University of Ghana, Chairman and Members of Council, Excellencies, Nananom, Niime, Naamei, colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen, let me take this opportunity to announce to all of you, the VC's Green Project. Given the devastating reality of climate change, the University of Ghana must lead in climate adaptation and mitigation by building low-carbon and

climate-sensitive infrastructure on its campuses. The “VC Green Project” seeks to increase the greening of the campus through the planting of grasses and trees, as well as implementing environmental sanitization such as cleanliness and good waste disposal practices led by students and their leaders. The University of Ghana’s internal stakeholders especially the Students Representative Council (SRC), academic departments, the Institute of Environmental and Sanitation Studies (IESS) and the Plant and Environmental Studies, for example, could ‘green’ the University, and manage waste by separating garbage along recyclable systems.

My Pledge

Mr. Chancellor, Chairman of Council, Ladies and Gentlemen, as Vice-Chancellor, I commit myself to providing strategic leadership and guidance to the Management Team, staff and students to ensure that the University of Ghana maintains its academic excellence, improves its Africa and world rankings in all categories, and contributes

immensely towards shaping the nation's development effort. I also commit myself to working with the Management Team of the University to achieve financial viability, stability and sustainability through effective financial management and resource mobilization for targeted improvements. I further commit myself to fairness, firmness and dedication to the promotion of high academic and moral standards through judicious application of the statutes and other relevant regulations and policies, while providing a conducive environment for world-class teaching, research, learning, and service delivery. I will also work assiduously to see to the rapid resolution of outstanding issues with the Government and related parties. These include an early resolution of matters relating to loans contracted from a consortium of banks and recent developments regarding students' payment of utilities. I would want to use this occasion to humbly appeal to the Government of Ghana to, as a matter of urgency, engage relevant stakeholders and bring finality to such

matters in order to preserve the academic environment and avoid disruptions to the University's academic calendar.

In summary, Mr. Chancellor, ladies and gentlemen, as Vice-Chancellor I solemnly commit myself to ensuring that my vision of transformational agenda align with the current University of Ghana strategic plan.

The pillars of my transformational agenda will no doubt become game-changers on a grand scale and help to further move the University of Ghana forward in all assessment categories. They are anchored in what I have codenamed "RINER", an acronym for Relevance, Innovation, Excellence, and Resource mobilization. What we do as a university must have relevance to the development agenda of Ghana and the global community; it must show innovation, excellence, resource mobilization and its judicious deployment for effective development and growth.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Your Excellency, Chancellor of the University of Ghana, Chairman and Members of Council, Excellencies, Nananom, Niime, Naamei, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen, building institutionally-shared cultural values and a motivation platform to ensure a sense of institutional ownership by all stakeholders of the University is imperative. This should be anchored in the core values of: a) respect for the University's governance system and for one another; b) predictability of the application of the University's overall governance architecture; and c) identification with the University's mission and vision which will guide our actions and inactions in making the University of Ghana a top-notch "Go to" University.

Mr. Chancellor, earlier I used the analogy of a relay race to describe institutional leadership. Every leader, like a runner in a relay race, has his style for achieving the common goal. In this regard, a new era is dawning on the University of Ghana. It is an era that includes and

involves all stakeholders as players rather than spectators. It is an era that demands hard work, accountability, and a renewed repositioning of the University of Ghana on the African and world map of successful universities. This calls for a rethink, changed mind-sets and new ways of doing things in this University, as staff and students. My plea is that, we renounce scepticism and embrace the conviction of positive change. I intend to create an atmosphere in which the true meaning of “Academic Freedom” will flourish; where staff and students will be encouraged to express their views freely and with mutual “RESPECT”.

Mr. Chancellor, Chairman and members of Council, Excellencies, Nananom, Niimej, Naamej, Colleagues, Students, Ladies and Gentlemen, I would like to leave in our collective consciousness the fact that, as a university and under my leadership, we are going to be guided by two important values, the 2 Rs, that is RESPECT and my coined word, “RINER” - Relevance, Innovation, Excellence and Resource mobilisation.

On this note, I would like to thank you all, most sincerely for your presence and attention. God bless the University of Ghana and God bless our dear homeland Ghana!

Thank you!