

**SPEECH DELIVERED BY PROFESSOR KWASI KWAFO ADARKWA, VICE-
CHANCELLOR OF KNUST ON THE OCCASION OF THE 41ST UNIVERSITY
CONGREGATION HELD ON 9TH JUNE, 2007 (AFTERNOON SESSION –
COLLEGE OF ART AND SOCIAL SCIENCES) IN THE GREAT HALL**

1. SALUTATION

Your Excellency, President of the Republic of Ghana

Chancellor of the University

Chairman of University Council

Honourable Minister of Education, Science and Sports

Honourable Regional Minister

Honourable Ministers of State

Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps

Nananom

Colleague Vice-Chancellors

Past KNUST Vice-Chancellors and Pro Vice-Chancellors

Pro Vice-Chancellor and Pro Vice-Chancellors from sister Universities

Registrar and Registrars from sister Universities

Members of the University Council

Provosts, Deans and Heads of Department

Guest Speaker

Alumni of the University

Members of Convocation and hardworking Faculty Members

Senior and Junior Staff

Proud and relieved Parents

Distinguished Jubilee Year 2007 graduating Class

Members of the Media

Distinguished Invited Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

2. WELCOME

I believe that some of you have attended all the four graduation ceremonies we have had since yesterday morning; this being the fourth and last one. As you are aware, this ceremony is specifically for the College of Art and Social Sciences which comprises the Faculty of Social Sciences, Faculty of Law, the KNUST Business School, Faculty of Industrial Art, Faculty of Fine Art and the Centre for Cultural and African Studies. On behalf of our governing Council, teaching and non teaching staff as well as the entire University community, I would like to welcome you to this ceremony. Being the last ceremony, it promises to be a very short, interesting and memorable one. On my part, I will endeavour to make my speech relatively short because I appreciate what William Shakespeare meant when he said in *Hamlet* that, “brevity is the soul of wit”.

In addition, my report to Congregation is also supplemented with a detailed 314-page report from every Department, Faculty and College in the University. It is understood that the Congregation Planning Committee is requesting that you make a small contribution in exchange for this report so we can defray the huge printing cost. As stakeholders of KNUST, I hope that you do not mind such a cost-sharing arrangement. We are very much encouraged that at this day and time of the week, you all found time to be with us for this graduation ceremony. Once again, you are all welcome to this afternoon’s graduation ceremony.

Congregation is derived from the Latin verb “congrego” which means to assemble or meet in a crowd. In the North American context, it is known as Commencement or simply as a graduation ceremony. We have, therefore, assembled here this afternoon to award University degrees to those who have followed a prescribed course of study and have also satisfied the requirements for the award of various degrees. This afternoon’s function is being held primarily to graduate deserving students from the College of Art and Social Sciences.

This afternoon, we are privileged to have an alumnus of the College to address and motivate our graduands. Mr. Nii Okai Nunoo graduated from your College with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Social Science in 1991 and he is currently the Head of Corporate Affairs for the West African Sub-region of Standard Chartered Bank. Mr. Nunoo, welcome back to your alma mater. I am sure that you have been impressed about the quality of students that we are presenting for graduation this afternoon. I am also sure that our graduates will learn a lot from you and be motivated to get on to successful careers.

3. THE COLLEGE OF ART AND SOCIAL SCIENCES AND ITS GRADUATES

As you may have noticed by now, the College of Art and Social Sciences is the largest of all the six Colleges at KNUST. The sheer size of this College is partly on account of its composition. The College has a current student population of 8,633 with about 170 faculty members which implies a lecturer : student ratio of 1:51 instead of the approved norm of 1:27. Efforts are still underway to attract qualified persons to join the teaching staff in the College of Art and Social Sciences. However, given that our core business is in science and technology, we will endeavour to control the numbers in this College with a view to enhancing the quality of our programmes.

This should not be misconstrued to mean that we are relegating the Social Sciences to the background. Instead, we are keen to ensure that the College is repositioned to offer enhanced programmes and better service to the other Colleges. As a result of this, we have been able to employ 19 lecturers and research fellows for the College since the beginning of the academic year. In addition, we have also appointed 23 highly qualified people as visiting lecturers to the School of Business. This is a clear indication of our resolve to enhance academic work in the College.

The College of Art and Social Sciences has trained several graduates who are currently in either positions of authority or occupy very sensitive positions in various sectors of the

economy. Our conservative estimates indicate that thus far, the University has trained nearly 10,000 graduates from the College of Art and Social Sciences. This year, we are presenting another batch of almost 911 for graduation from all the 18 programmes on offer at both the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Out of this number 7% will be graduating with first class degrees, 67% with second class upper degrees, 18% with second class lower degrees and the balance of 8% with pass degrees.

What is unique about this Jubilee year 2007 class is that the first batch of post Senior Secondary School Bachelor of Law students will be graduating this afternoon. We have taken judicial notice of their achievement and congratulate them. At this point, I would like to invite these students to rise for a bowThank you, you may resume your seats.

It is also refreshing to note that the College of Art and Social Sciences has made some modest gains in its conduct of postgraduate studies and virtually all the programmes on offer in the College have postgraduate components which provide further opportunities for our students to improve on their capacity. The most well patronised programmes include Business Administration, Art Education, Comparative Literature and Fine Art.

This year, it was extremely painful to turn away qualified candidates because of the keen competition for admission. Consequently, in our bid to enhance student intake into the College without necessarily encumbering any on-campus residential facilities, plans are very advanced to mount parallel undergraduate programmes in Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Fine Art in Painting and Sculpture and Bachelor of Art in Integrated Rural Art and Industry during next academic year.

In spite of the rather heavy teaching load on our lecturers, it is worth reporting that one of them has received international recognition. Mr. Samuel Akomea was listed in the latest Academy of International Business (AIB) Newsletter (US Academy) as an AIB Foundation

Area Scholar who participated in an AIB Annual Conference in Beijing, China. He was the sole participant from Ghana and has put KNUST on the world map. Mr. Samuel Akomea, congratulations. You have made us proud.

In addition, the KNUST was officially notified about the results of the 2006 International Packaging Competition only a few weeks ago and I am happy to announce that, Messrs Godfrey Grant and John Defor won the World Packaging Organisation Student World Star International Design Competition held in Istanbul. Congratulations, you have also made KNUST proud.

4. KNUST – WHERE TECHNOLOGY AND ENGINEERING KNOW-HOW MEETS BUSINESS AND THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, I believe that KNUST offers the best opportunity for an interface between technology and engineering know-how, on one hand, and business and the social sciences on the other hand. We are fully convinced that this opportunity does not exist in any tertiary institution in the country and, therefore, we will leverage this comparative advantage to the benefit of Ghana. We are proud about this potential and will also ensure that this becomes a reality and I am happy to inform Congregation that strenuous efforts have commenced in earnest in this direction. Eventually, we may have to consider the introduction of dual majors in our undergraduate programmes to give practical meaning to this potential interface.

The College has also signed Memoranda of Understanding with the Ghana Tourist Board, National Board for Small Scale Industries, Institute of Packaging and the Management, Development and Productivity Institute; amongst others. The main objective of these Memoranda of Understanding is to bring the College closer to industry and industry closer to the University. It is within this framework that negotiations are far advanced for the College to commence the production of insulators for the Electricity Company of Ghana. It is our

hope that through such initiatives, substantial benefits would inure to the benefit of both parties and Ghana as a whole. In addition, such an arrangement will facilitate the placement of students on industrial attachment.

In virtually all our science and technology-based programmes, the technological inputs or requirements of various actions may be understood but it is also important that their economic, business and sociological dimensions are also well understood and appreciated before they are implemented. As the country develops technologically, we ought to be mindful of the various unintended but negative impacts which are likely to arise and need to be considered and dealt with promptly.

One implication of the above is that as social science graduates from KNUST, you should be prepared to work in multidisciplinary groups to solve societal problems. If you can achieve this in your working life, you would have learnt a lot from KNUST and Ghana will be better off.

It is also our expectation that the above perspective would be incorporated into the various curricula in the College. It is important that in each programme on offer in the College, some time is spent to study science and technology from various specialised perspectives. At the same time, we expect that our colleagues in industry will also begin to appreciate our circumstances and help us mentor students who come on industrial attachment.

5. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF PARENTS

Dear parents, I can see from your smart turnout and excitement that you feel rather relieved simply because your sons and daughters are graduating today. We share in your joy and would like to congratulate you on the achievement of your wards. Your efforts and investments have yielded fruits today. We are most grateful to all parents and at this

juncture, I suggest that we give them a standing ovation Thank you. It is my hope that our fresh graduates will never forget their parents, guardians and all those who have contributed to their success as social scientists. Thomas Hood sums up such joint efforts most appropriately when he says in *The Last Man* that “For when was honey ever made with one bee in the hive”. The success of your wards is indeed, a collaborative effort.

6. BENEFACTORS

The College of Art and Social and Sciences has come a very long way. During the last academic year, the College did extremely well by forging vital linkages with industry, business and financial communities. Largely as a result of this, several benefactors came to the aid of the College by providing assistance in various forms. We are particularly grateful to the Ghana Commercial Bank, the Home Finance Company, Merchant Bank, Zenith Bank and other financial institutions which contributed in various forms during the launching of the College’s Strategic Plan. Other benefactors during the last academic year include the Valco Trust and Mrs Adelaide Ahwireng of Fio Enterprise Ltd.

We are extremely grateful to all these organisations and look forward to maintaining our close relationships with them in the near future.

7. ADVICE TO THE CLASS OF 2007

As you leave the walls of this University with either an undergraduate or postgraduate degree, remember that we have now accepted you into the fold of alumni members of your College and the University. We are saying to the whole world that you have met some minimum requirements and that you are capable of performing at a certain level. This means that wherever you find yourself, you need to put in your optimum performance and because

society expects so much from you, you need to be aware of this and excel in all your endeavours. Be good ambassadors of the University.

Today should not mark the end of your education. Continue to read because we all believe that the book is still the greatest man-made machine of all times; not the car, not the television and not the computer. Remember to serve your country in whatever capacity you find yourself and the fact that your education has been made possible by the sweat and toil of those who graduated before you and many others. In the same way, you also need to serve your country and contribute your quota to ensure that others can graduate after you. This way, you would have all contributed to the development of Ghana.

Insist on heroes and, by all standards, try and become one. Replace cynicism with optimism. Keep up your enthusiasm but remember that it will not be easy. When you have done these things, leave the rest to God because He has promised that He will direct your steps. Once He delights in your way, He will make your steps firm and even though you stumble, you will not fall for He will uphold you with His right hand.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF SUPPORT TO 41ST CONGREGATION

I would like to acknowledge with immense gratitude, the support offered by some organisations to make this Congregation, a success. These organisations offered some financial support to this year's Congregation by way of advertising in the Congregation Brochure.

These organisations are:

- CAL Bank;
- Sambus Company Limited;
- KEK Insurance Brokers Ltd; and
- University Press, Kumasi (UPK).

We believe that this cordial relationship will flourish and develop from strength to strength for our mutual benefit. We thank you most sincerely for your support.

9. CONCLUSION

Distinguished invited guests, ladies and gentlemen, once again, thank you for attending our graduation ceremony for the College of Art and Social Sciences. Collectively, we have a responsibility towards the social, economic and professional development of these young graduates. As parents, your responsibility is not yet over. You may have a brief relief with the graduation of your wards but let us all continue to mentor these young ones so Ghana will become better off.

At this point, it is time for us to wish our graduates the best of luck and God's blessing in the future ahead of them. Remember that the future can be either bright or dull depending on your perspective to life. As social scientists, you have no choice than to expect a bright future. Indeed, the future is so bright that you may have to put on sunshades to face it.

Once again, congratulations and Godspeed to all of you.