

ACCRA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

PRINCIPAL'S ADDRESS AT THE 3RD MATRICULATION OF THE 4-YEAR B.ED STUDENTS

DR. SAMUEL AWINKENE ATINTONO

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2021

SALUTATION

Chairman of the Governing Council

Members of the Governing Council

Vice Principal of the College

College Secretary

Senior Management Team

Heads of Department

Heads of Units

Members of Convocation

Staff of the College

Freshmen and Women;

SRC Executives

Distinguished Invited Guests

Friends from the Media

Students

Ladies and Gentlemen:

INTRODUCTION

On behalf of the Management of Accra College of Education, it is my pleasure to welcome you all to this year's special matriculation ceremony, as we begin yet another academic year. This matriculation ceremony is our third one since the College started admitting students for the Four-Year Bachelor of Education in 2018/2019. It is worthy of note that this is the second batch of students that we are matriculating with our affiliation with the Premier University, University of Ghana, Legon.

Interestingly, this is the third matriculation ceremony that I am presiding over since I assumed office as Principal of Accra College of Education on November 1, 2018. This academic year delayed due to the uncertainties caused by global health crises, the Covid-19 Pandemic.

May I take this opportunity to congratulate you for being among the few privileged to gain admission into the only College of excellence in the national capital of Ghana with our vigorous and competitive admission selection process.

Matriculation is one of the important ceremonies in the College calendar. It provides an opportunity for freshmen and women who have gained admission into various programmes to be officially inducted as Junior Members of the Gye Nyame family into the College community. The ceremony is also significant for the fact that it provides the opportunity for you, to pledge your allegiance to the authority of the College through the administration of the Matriculation Oath, and you will in due course, be expected to sign a bond to be disciplined and of good behaviour throughout your stay in the College. You are also expected to contribute your quota to enhancing the College's image, wherever you find yourself and ensure that you do not bring the name of the College into disrepute.

Every student who is admitted into the College is required to take the matriculation oath. I am confident that by taking this oath this morning, you will demonstrate your full commitment to conduct yourselves according to the rules, regulations and policies governing the College while you undertake your studies. The College requires the support

of both the students and the staff to be successful in its strides to achieve its vision to become the center of excellence in teacher education in Ghana and beyond.

Your choice to be part of this College community here this morning is a clear indication that you aspire to achieve academic and professional excellence that Accra College of Education stands for and you are ready to work hard to be successful in the College. I will, therefore, like to take the opportunity to advise you to take your studies seriously in order to become successful teachers and citizens. Let me now talk briefly about various developments at the College that might interest you.

ADMISSIONS

Mr. Chairman, the admission processes for the 2020/2021 academic year was completed in December 2020. I am happy to state that a window of opportunity was given for students who completed their WASSCE very late last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic to apply and were admitted for this academic year.

For the 2020/2021 academic year, the College received 1,842 applicants as first choice applicants. Out of this number, 1,498 applicants qualified. For the second choice applicants, we had 1,613 with 1,321 as qualified applicants, and for the third choice applicants we received 1,643 applicants and 1,318 qualified. In all, 5,098 applicants expressed interest to be admitted into the College but 4,137 were qualified. We were, however, able to admit a total of 420 qualified applicants, as a result of our limited infrastructure. Out of this number, 225 are males constituting 54% while 195 are females constituting 46%.

I am happy to announce that this year we have again deliberately increased our female admission number by 22% in order to gradually meet our gender parity target of 50:50. We have over the years attained 72:28, last year ratio was 58:42 but this year we achieved 54:46. We are on course to achieving our gender parity target of 50:50 by 2024 as per our strategic plan.

It is also gratifying to know that this year's overall intake is an increase of 20% of last year's admission of 350 applicants. This is our modest contribution to accommodate the first batch of the Free SHS graduates.

Though we wished we could have admitted more we were guided by the limited availability of space in our hostel facilities. Council has given Management the support to explore possible funding sources for the construction of hostel facility and we are working hard to ensure the construction of additional hostel facility to be able to increase our intake.

For the first time, among the students admitted include 40 students admitted to pursue 4-Year Bachelor of Education in Early Childhood Education. This is in addition to the existing two programmes: 4-Year Bachelor of Education in Primary Education and 4-Year Bachelor of Education in JHS. The admission statistics for the Primary Education option is 115 while 265 are for the Junior High School Education option.

This year's admission process has been one of the most competitive as far as I can remember. Due to inadequate hostel facilities we were obliged to turn down many otherwise qualified applicants. There were indeed many eligible candidates that we could not offer admission for many different reasons. When students have excellent grades but cannot gain admission to College, it should be a matter of great concern to all of us. I have been personally pained by the large number of students with excellent grades that we could not admit into any of our programmes. We have had to transfer quite a number of our students to sister colleges of education for admission to help mitigate the problem.

AFFILIATIONS

The College is one of the six Colleges of Education that has been affiliated to University of Ghana, Legon. We signed the affiliation agreement in October 2019. By this agreement, the University of Ghana will provide oversight academic mentorship to the College to ensure that we adhere strictly to the quality standards in the preparation of the teacher trainees on the National Teacher Education Curriculum Framework (NTECF) and the National Teaching Standards (NTS). This is the second batch of students that we have

admitted under the Legon affiliation. They will graduate with certificates awarded by the University of Ghana in four years to come. We are excited to be affiliated to the University of Ghana mainly because our vision of being the center of excellence and our programmes aligned perfectly with the University and we are poised to achieve excellence.

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Mr. Chairman, the College like any of the 46 Colleges of Education have the mission of training teachers to become professionally competent and as such, self-discipline and hard work are the core values of our training. As you have been admitted to the College you must strive for academic excellence. I wish to entreat you to take inspiration from your colleagues in the second and third years who are pioneers of the 4-Year Bachelor of Education Degree Programme. They have encountered problems, made mistakes, gained insight into the programme, identified strategies for successful learning, discovered solutions and also understood the assessment protocols that can lead to success. Therefore, learn from them and be successful in your academic pursuit.

My dear freshmen and women, the College have taken steps to strengthen the academic counselling unit and have appointed a professional counselling and guidance Coordinator to assist students who might have difficulty in adapting to learning strategies and especially independent studies in the College. I urge you to take advantage of these interventions and also have a positive mindset that you are here to complete your studies successfully and make a good class (1st, 2nd Upper & 2nd Lower) at the end of the four years.

SOME NEW INITIATIVES

At this point, I would like to highlight some initiatives being pursued by management and other external stakeholders. Management has acquired modern equipment for the various lecture halls aimed at enhancing teaching and learning. They include PA systems, projectors and screens. Management will continue to take measures geared towards improving teaching and learning on Campus. Towards the modernization and improved

efficiency in service delivery at the College, management proposes to undertake a number of projects and business ventures aimed primarily at providing improved services to its community and at generating significant income for the College.

Though internet connectivity has been extended to almost all facilities on campus, Management is seriously working on improving efficient internet connectivity on campus. The College is soliciting support from Government and private investors to undertake various projects which include:

- Furnishing of a modern ICT center
- Construction of Hostel and staff Housing facilities
- Establishment of College Clinic
- Rehabilitation of College buildings

All these and other projects are underway to improve the teaching and learning environment for both students and staff on campus.

For the past ten years, teacher education have witnessed a number of transformations and the critical component of these reforms is the implementation of the National Teacher Education Curriculum Framework (NTECT) of which a 4-Year B.Ed curriculum is anchored to and assessed against the National Teaching Standards (NTS). The Four-Year B.Ed Programme is designed to prepare new teachers to become effective, engaging and inspirational, and fully prepared to teach the basic school curriculum in order to improve the learning outcomes and life chances of all learners as set out in the National Teacher's Standard (NTS). The aims are: integrity, creativity, and responsible citizenship and to achieve inclusive, equitable, high quality education for all learners in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development (SDG) goal Four (4).

One key component of the 4-Year B.Ed programme is the Supported Teaching in Schools (STS) which used to be known as 'teaching practice' now starts from year one through year four with different level of emphasis. Indeed, STS constitute 30% of your entire training. I

encourage you to take advantage of these innovations in the teacher education reforms and become good teachers to help contribute to quality education.

EXCELLENCE AND DISCIPLINE

As I end my address, I want to touch on how you can enjoy your stay in this College and leave here fulfilled. As you have started your professional teaching journey at Accra College of Education, I want to encourage you to strive for excellence.

Your coming to this College has given you a lot of opportunities to make new friends, shake off regrets and missed chances, build new professional networks, a chance to truly reflect on your personal career philosophy about teaching. Above all, see in the horizon the type of teacher and citizen you will want to be after your four years journey on your teaching career. I urge you to take advantage of our supportive academic and non-academic staff and remain focus on your studies.

In an Institution like ours, students achieve excellence by having the right balance of life. The amount of time you spend on your books has to be balanced with social engagements and other forms of social learning. You must know how to develop critical thinking and be analytical, not simply repeating what others have said. While you must question received wisdom, this must be done in a refined way. There is nothing wrong with being religious, and we all are. But do not let religion become an excuse for not engaging your minds intellectually. I will encourage you to be more open-minded and less fundamentalist about religion.

The College is ready to support you succeed despite a number of challenges that we are faced with. As you would have noticed, quite recently we have committed some efforts to ensure that, internet access is active in all corners of the College's campus to enable you access electronic materials to support your learning. I encourage you to use it purposely for studies rather than chatting on social media such as Whatsapp, Instagram, Twitter and Facebook.

CONCLUSION

I will like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to Government for its continuous support to the College to fully achieve its tertiary status. Our staff continue to receive the needed support from GETFund for staff development and also receive book and research allowances to support them undertake research. This is a step in the right direction as research is a critical component of tertiary institutions and particularly in teacher education.

I wish to conclude my address by reminding you that your main goal of coming to the College is to study hard and graduate as successful professional teachers. You must therefore, study diligently and direct all your energies into your academic and professional work. Also, remember that you are to take full responsibility of your actions and know when to play and when to engage in your studies, as you take on your academic pursuit. Let me emphasize again that discipline is expected of you and you must abide by all the College rules and regulations. Do enjoy your freedom but do so responsibly.

Remember that you were admitted to the College as an individual and you will graduate as an individual. You are, therefore, solely responsible for all your actions.

In the course of time, you will encounter new experiences. New relationships are going to be formed, some of which may be life-long. By all means enjoy them but remain focused.

On behalf of the College Council, Members of Convocation and my own behalf, I would wish to congratulate you again on your admission to Accra College of Education and extend a warm welcome to you once again. We will do our best to make your stay here pleasant and memorable one as much as possible.

Do enjoy your stay on our natural conducive environment and take advantage of every available facility to support your studies and prepare for your future professional careers.

Lift high the banner of Accra College of Education and imbibe **Gye Nyame** in all that you do.

I wish you well in your studies and success in your career.

Thank you and God bless you all.

Dr. Samuel Awinkene Atintono

Principal