

**PRINCIPAL'S ADDRESS AT THE 12TH VIRTUAL CONGREGATION OF
ACCRA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION: MAY 8, 2021**

DR SAMUEL AWINKENE ATINTONO

COLLEGE AUDITORIUM

SALUTATION

The Chairman of the Governing Council, Rt. Rev. Dr. Daniel Sylvanus Mensah Torto

The Minister of Education, Honourable Dr. Yaw Osei Adutwum

The Member of Council of State, Hon. Prof. Margaret Amoakohene

**The Member of Parliament for Ayawaso West Wuogon,
Hon. Lydia Alhassan Syram**

The Member of Parliament for Madina, Hon, Francis-Xavier Kojo Sosu

Metropolitan and Municipal Chief Executive Officers

**The Director General of Ghana Tertiary Education Commission (GTEC),
Prof. Mohammed Salifu**

**Representative of the Vice-Chancellor, University of Cape-Coast, Prof. Cosmos
Cobbold**

The Provost of the College of Education, Prof. Michael Tagoe

Members of the College Governing Council

The Executive Director of T-TEL, Mr. Robin Todd

**The Director General of the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
(NaCCA), Mr. John Mensah Anan**

Principals from Sister Colleges of Education

Senior Management of the College

Members of the Academic Board

Niime, Naamei and Nananom

Members of Convocation

Staff of the College

Alumni President, Prof. Christopher Adjei Okpoti

Alumni of the College

Business Partners

Graduands and their Families

My Family Members present and online

My Good Friends and Colleagues from the Academia especially those from UPSA, UG,UEW & UCC

The Headmistress and Staff of our Demonstration School

Distinguished Invited Guests

All Virtual Participants on Youtube and Zoom

Friends from the Media

Students

Ladies and Gentlemen

Welcome

On behalf of the Governing Council of the College, College Management and the entire community, I welcome you to this special 12th Congregation of our noble College. It is special in the sense that this is the first time the College is holding its Congregation largely via virtual mode as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Only a few of our graduands were permitted to be here present with a large number and their families participating online due to the challenging times that we find ourselves today.

Mr. Chairman, as you are all aware, graduation is a significant milestone for graduands and their families, and I wish to thank you for your presence on this special day. Indeed, this is the second graduation event in the College since my assumption of office on November 1, 2018 as Principal. In fact, my third and the 12th Congregation which should have been held in May 2020 was postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. We are, therefore, combining the 2019 and 2020 cohorts of graduands for today's graduation.

The pandemic as we are all aware, brought us to a stand-still. The recent vaccinations have brought some relief to Ghanaians and thanks to the Government for this swift intervention. While we will continue to pray to God for his protection, I will appeal to everyone to strictly observe the safety protocols at all times and take advantage of the ongoing vaccination against the Covid-19.

Expression of Gratitude

Mr. Chairman, I wish to express my profound gratitude to the Governing Council, Government, the MP of Ayawaso West Wougou, Hon. Lydia Alhassan Syram, the Ghana Education Tertiary Commission (GTEC), and Management for their immense support. I am particularly grateful to the staff of the College for their support, loyalty and hard work in the past years since my assumption of office. Your hard work and commitment have made it possible for the graduands to complete their programmes successfully. This is very commendable and I believe we are on the right path to achieving our vision of academic excellence.

Academic Affairs

Distinguished guests, it is worth noting that today's graduands are the last batch of the Diploma in Basic Education programme. The current students on campus are now offering the Four-Year Bachelor of Education Degree programme which started

in all the 46 Colleges of Education in the 2018/2019 academic year. The Accra College of Education offers three of such programmes; Bachelor of Education in Early Childhood Education, Primary and Junior High Education.

Ladies and Gentleman, the Four-Year Bachelor of Basic Education Degree (B.Ed) programme is fully aligned with the expectations, principles and practices set out in the National Teacher Education Curriculum Framework (NTECF). Student teachers pursuing this degree programmes will be fully prepared to meet the National Teachers Standards (NTS) which they will be assessed on. The aim of this B.Ed curriculum is to transform initial teacher education (ITE) and through this secure the training of highly qualified, motivated new teachers who are able to inspire their learners to achieve better outcomes in basic education.

Current Student Statistics

Mr. Chairman, the College has a total population of 1,067 students from level 100-300 for the current academic year. This population is made up of 613 males and 454 females with 419 (39%) being first years, 351 (33%) being second years and 297(28%) being third years.

The breakdown by programmes is as follows: Early Grade Education (39), Primary Education (310), and Junior High Education (718). The pattern of distribution that appears to be in favour of the Junior High Education programme is partly because of the large number of applicants opting for the JHS option for the past three years. We are making efforts to ensure that many students opt for the Early Grade and Primary Education programmes.

Graduation Statistics

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, we are today graduating two batches of students from the Diploma in Basic Education Cohorts.

For the first batch, 2018/2019 year group, we have 305 graduands with 184 being males while 121 are females. Out of this number, 6 graduands representing 2% obtained First Class; 79 representing 26% obtained Second Class Upper; 118 representing 39% had Second Class Lower; 58 representing 19% had Third Class and 44 representing 14% had Pass.

For the second batch, 2019/2020 year group, we have 308 graduands. Out of this number, 194 are males and 114 are females. With respect to their performance, 24 graduands representing 8% obtained First Class; 145 representing 47% had Second Class Upper; 67 representing 22% obtained the Second Class Lower; 49 representing 16% had Third Class and 23 representing 7% had Pass.

Mr. Chairman, it is noted that the 2019/2020 academic year recorded an overall improvement in performance over the 2018/2019 academic year. An analysis of the students' performance reveal a 6% increase in first class and an impressive 21% increase in second class upper. This is the first time that the College had First Class with double digits and we are proud of the graduands for their hard work and the academic staff for their commitment towards teaching.

A direct consequence of these increases is the attainment of a 17% decrease in Second Class Lower, 3% decrease in Third Class and 7% decrease in students graduating with a Pass.

Staff Strength and Staff Development

The total number of full-time staff is 133 comprising 63 academic staff, and 70 non-academic staff. Senior Staff A are 76; Senior Staff B 26; and Junior Staff 31. The College currently has 2 part-time tutors. The number of casual workers are 19. Efforts are being made to add more staff to areas of need; subject to financial clearance.

It is important to mention that for the past two years, we received 7 and 12 financial clearance respectively from the Ministry of Finance through the Ghana Tertiary Education Commission (GTEC). We have used them to fill critical vacancies in academic and non-academic departments. We are grateful to the Government but will continue to appeal for more since there is still huge inadequacy of staff in the various departments. We will continue to adopt measures such as annual submission of technical and financial requests to GTEC to meet our human resource needs.

Hon Minister, it is rather on a sad note that I want to inform you that many of our academic staff are being porched by the universities as a result of the poor conditions of service in the Colleges of Education. I wish to appeal to you to take a critical look at our proposal to Fair Wages and Salaries Commission (FWSC) to hasten discussions on the proposals to ensure parity in the conditions of service for staff of the Colleges of Education with their counterparts in the Public and Technical Universities. This will help stem the mass movement of both the academic and non-academic staff from the Colleges of Education to the universities.

As part of the on-going efforts to promote staff development through continuing training of our staff, 8 staff from 5 Academic Departments are pursuing further studies to enhance their academic and professional capacities. Out of this number, 6 are pursuing PhD and 2 are pursuing M.Phil. For non-teaching staff, 5 are pursuing further studies with 2 MPhil, 2 first degree and 1 HND. Most of them are on part-time study leave with pay while others are on full time study leave-with pay.

I am happy to report that since assuming office in November 2018, I have taken steps to ensure that staff on study leave receive the GETfund annual staff development allocation to the College. Thus, all our staff on study leave receive funding to cover fees and accommodation.

The promotion of staff in the College has not been encouraging. Only one tutor from the Department of Social Science has been promoted to the rank of Senior Tutor in 2020. A few others have submitted their applications for promotions and we have submitted them to our affiliate university, University of Ghana for further processing and assessment. This is a worrying situation and I have taken steps to set up the College Seminar and Journal Committee with clear terms of reference to facilitate academic research and publications. To this end, there will be mandatory weekly seminars starting this second semester of the 2020/2021 where every tutor will be required to present a paper and obtain feedback.

The Committee will work with the various Heads of Department to come out with a schedule. Management is ready to support staff to attend academic conferences to present papers in their disciplines and ensure that they publish at least an article a year. This is something dear to my heart and I wish to appeal to all of you to step up your academic research in order to remain relevant in the College since research is critical to the advancement of knowledge and your professional growth. I will, however, caution that the College has zero tolerance for predatory publications and we encourage staff to be mindful of predatory publications.

Physical Developments

Mr. Chairman, for the past two years, the College has adopted a holistic approach to both academic and infrastructural development of the College. This approach has translated into the birth of the several projects which were initiated and completed during the 2019/2020 academic year while others are in progress. Prominent achievements include,

1. Procurement of the five hundred (500) classroom furniture for various Lecture Blocks.

2. Acquisition and installation of five hundred (500) metal bunk beds to replace the old, bedbug infested-wooden beds.
3. Acquisition and installation of public address systems, projectors and projector screens at the various lecture halls, ICT Lab, Auditorium, Cafeteria and Conference Halls.
4. Renovation and Establishment of the Teaching and Learning Resource Centre (TLRC) to suit modern education and training aid for both tutors and student-teachers (learners).
5. Renovation works at the main administration block, Principal's Office, Principal's bungalow, College Secretary office, washrooms at Lecture halls, and washrooms at the male and female halls of residence.
6. The construction of ultramodern washrooms in both male and female halls of residence.
7. The extension of the new office and lecture hall complex from a three to four-storey building, which is about 98% complete).

Most of these projects have been undertaken with GETfund support and we are most grateful to Government. In addition to the GETFund projects, we also use our internally generated funds to improve the academic facilities. This year, we started applying our internally generated funds to provide a facelift to our old Lecture Halls, Auditorium, Dining Hall, and the Administration block.

Management will continue to take measures geared towards improving teaching and learning on Campus.

The College is soliciting support from Government, Alumni 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
- Improving security

Among the above projects, the most critical need is the construction of the hostel facility which is urgently required to help accommodate our students. It will further assist us to increase enrolment in the College to meet the Government's vision of increasing tertiary education from the current 18.8% to 40%. While we will continue to appeal to Government for support, I have in my annual report to Council, made some proposals to address some of these issues and the College Council will soon be submitting these proposals to the Honourable Minister through the Director General of GTEC for your kind consideration.

We have started exploring some of our strategic investment projects on which we are collaborating with private sector investors. In connection with this, I would like to inform you that we are still looking for investors interested to Build Operate and Transfer (BOT) on favourable terms or enter into partnership with us. Our discussions with potential investors have so far not yielded any substantial results but some progress is being slowly made with respect to the Hostel facilities and Guest House projects.

Teaching, Research, Innovation and Professional Development

In response to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the College introduced the emergency remote teaching and learning. During the implementation of this online teaching and learning, we identified some challenges including some students who had challenges with either not having a smart phones, data or internet connectivity.

To ensure we have at least 80% participation we collaborated with T-TEL to support with about 80 smart phones and pre-loaded SD cards which were given to the students in need at a subsidized price. This approach enabled students participate successfully in the online lectures. We are most grateful to T-TEL for their support.

Additionally, a number of workshops on online teaching and learning were organized to equip the teaching staff in their delivery of lessons online. One of such interventions is, a four-week online capacity building of our academic staff to equip them with skills in online lesson preparation and teaching. This was a T-TEL supported programme which was organized in collaboration with the University of Amsterdam, Netherlands. This was a successful programme.

To promote the culture of research and innovation and enhance professional development, the College aims to institute measures to create a conducive and stimulating academic environment. In line with this, the College management is working hard to institute the office of Research, Innovation and Professional Development to support research; encourage publications, special projects and professional development. This office is also designed to promote grantsmanship, encourage peer review research, explore internal and external collaboration on research for staff and provide in-service training for teachers.

External Grants/Support

The Transforming Teacher Education and Learning (T-TEL) through Ghana Tertiary Education Commission (GTEC) is a partner in supporting teacher education in Ghana especially the Colleges of Education. T-TEL rolled out a number of projects and programmes to support the development of Colleges of Education. The College submitted a proposal for a competitive grant call by T-TEL and was among the few Colleges of Education to win a GH¢30,000.00 grant for the establishment of

the Teaching and Learning Resource Centre. With the help of this grant, the College has renovated an existing classroom, set up the Teaching and Learning Resource Center and appointed a staff to coordinate the activities.

The College has also won the Transition Support Fund (TSF) twice through the efforts of our hard working academic staff. The grant is to support the Colleges of Education in their transition to tertiary institution status. Each of the 46 Colleges of Education were assessed with respect to the level of achievement in the implementation of the 4-year B.Ed programme focusing on teaching, supported teaching in schools, professional development and partnership with schools.

The College was assessed twice in 2019 and 2020, and qualified after a vigorous assessment by a panel of experts. Consequently, the College received a total award of GH¢100,000.00 to support staff development and capacity building. In order to ensure equity and fairness, the College has developed a policy document to guide the disbursement of the fund. A number of staff have applied for the fund and we are working to disburse it based on the approved formula.

Another grant that we won from GTEC within the last year was the Wifi Extension Support grant in the Colleges of Education. The grant was GHS20,000.00 but GHS10,000.00 was awarded due to the exhaustion of the fund. This grant allowed us to extend Wifi coverage to many facilities on campus.

Expansion and Application of ICT

Today, the use of ICT in the teaching and learning process is a necessity and not a choice. Thus, for the College to run effectively and efficiently, it absolutely depends on reliable and highly equipped ICT infrastructure. Management prioritizes the improvement of ICT and has supported the Management Information System (MIS) unit to establish a Local Area Network (LAN). This will enable the College to

manage its own LAN. The MIS Unit has also begun extension of Wi-Fi connectivity to all facilities in the College. In addition, the Ministry of Education has provided internet for the Colleges of Education with Busy Internet being the Internet Service Provider (ISP). This support has been helpful to the College and we are most grateful to Government.

The College has a temporal agreement with Blue Cloud Network (Ozone), an internet provider to support the College's network/internet accessibility. Other service providers who are also supporting are K-net and Plan Ghana.

The College has also purchased two servers for the Unit. One of the servers is currently being used to run the Colleges of Education Management Information System (CEMIS). The other server is being used as a DNS/DHCP server to assign and resolve IP addresses to client computers. Our future plan is to establish a very strong internet connectivity on campus. In line with this, we have made provisions for an ICT Centre, a server room and an office in the new Lecture and office block. We are in the process of getting NIITA to connect our ICT infrastructure to the fiber optic which runs through the campus to improve the capacity and speed of the internet. The cost has already been assessed and we have made budget for it. Hopefully, this should be fixed soon.

Alumni Affairs

The College has identified the Alumni as a key stakeholder. Consequently, the College is working together with the Alumni groups to reach more Alumni of the College, to energize and galvanize them to support the College. Since my assumption of office, the alumni have supported us in diverse ways. Some of the Alumni groups have as recently as October 9, 2020 donated a projector, projector screen, laptop computer and footballs to the College. We have assigned a desk

officer to coordinate Alumni activities and promote their visibility among the College community. Management will soon provide the Alumni with an office to further strengthen our relationship. We will continue to work with them to ensure that we develop the College into a Centre of academic excellence.

Well Wishes to Graduands

Now to our graduating students:

Seeing you all here, at the threshold of starting the next phase of your lives, brings back memories of my own graduation ceremonies from various educational institutions, many years ago, and reminds me of the excitement, the apprehension about what the future might hold, and the zeal I had to go out and change the world. No doubt, most of you gathered here are going through similar feelings and thoughts. Today's world offers young graduates so many opportunities, yet so many challenges; so many potential positive outcomes yet so many pitfalls along the way. I challenge you all to go out into the world, and be worthy ambassadors of this College. You must ensure that you are change agents and teachers with passion to bring out the best out of your learners. Be innovative and creative in your teaching, for today's learners in the classroom are technologically advanced and requires your facilitation but not teaching. Aim at doing the very best you can wherever you find yourself.

Work hard, dream big, plan ahead, be ethical and honest in all your dealings, and you will be well on the way towards success. The future may not be given, but you have a clean slate. Go out there, write on your slate in bold characters and make your mark!

Mr. Chairman, permit me to conclude my speech with a special appreciation to the Honourable Minister of Education, Honourable Dr. Yaw Osei Adutwum who warmly granted us a warm reception in his office when we sent him our letter of invitation. He gladly accepted to join us virtually and present his speech. We are truly grateful to him for this honour. It is on the same token that I also wish to thank the MP for Ayawaso West, Honourable Lydia Alhassan Syram for her continuous support to the College.

I wish all the graduands and every one all the very best.

Thank you

God bless us all.