

**SPEECH DELIVERED BY PROF. KWAMENA KWANSAH-AIDOO,  
RECTOR, GHANA INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM, ON THE  
OCCASION OF THE 15<sup>TH</sup> CONGREGATION OF THE GHANA  
INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM, ACCRA (21<sup>ST</sup> AND 22<sup>ND</sup> APRIL 2022)**

Mr John Dadzie-Mensah, Director, Accreditation and Quality Assurance  
Directorate of GTEC, standing-in for the Director General of the Ghana Tertiary  
Education Commission

Guest Speaker, Dr Afua Asabea Asare

Vice-Chancellors, Rectors and officials from sister universities,

Rectors of NAFTI and GIL, who are part of the triumvirate that makes up UMAC

Deputy Rector,

Registrar,

Members of Convocation,

Staff of the Institute,

Graduands and their families here present,

Women and men from the media fraternity,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

As always, it is a distinct pleasure on my part to welcome you on behalf of GIJ,

the premier journalism and communication training institution in the West  
African sub-region, to our campus and to our 15<sup>th</sup> Congregation ceremony. This  
Congregation marks a significant milestone in our institutional history because it

is bound to be the last one for the Institute, as a single and independent tertiary education institution with its own charter. The UMAC Bill which sought to merge the Ghana Institute of Journalism, the Ghana Institute of Languages and the National Film and Television Institute into one university - the University of Media, Arts and Communication (UMAC) has received presidential assent and is now UMAC Act 1059.

Given the events of the past two years, I would like to start by reminding all of us here that we are blessed to be alive at a time like this. And being alive means for most of you graduands, you will have stories that you will tell your children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. Part of that story will be about how you survived the dreaded COVID-19, including how you navigated the murky waters of the then uncharted domains of online lectures and examinations. It will also include the collective sigh of relief that our nation breathed after Ghana's president lifted most of the restrictions put in place to fight the COVID-19 pandemic, and the joy of graduating after enduring the vicissitudes of the times. You survived not only COVID-19 but also quizzes, examinations, term papers, presentations, and your dissertation/project work. Some of your colleagues with whom you started this journey are not graduating with you at this congregation, so if you are here, give yourself a pat on the shoulder.

This 15th Congregation is witnessing the graduation of undergraduate and postgraduate students who completed their programmes of study in the Institute during the 2020/2021 academic year. Today's event is the second of two to be organised between yesterday and today.

A total of **1,457** students will be graduating in the two sessions. At yesterday's ceremony, we awarded certificates to a total 858 graduands in the BA Communications program, consisting of 417 in the Journalism Option, and 441 in the Public Relations Option.

Today's session session, we will award 599 certificates to graduating students, consisting of the following:

Diploma in Communication Studies	368
MA Journalism	6
MA Public Relations	123
MA Media Management	7
MA Development Communication	95

We are eternally grateful to your parents, guardians, sponsors and lecturers for guiding and supporting you in your quest for knowledge, your pursuit of a fulfilling career and your dreams for a better life.

## **STATE OF THE INSTITUTE**

### ***Admissions***

At the end of admission process for the 2021/2022 Academic Year, **1,180** undergraduate students enrolled, with the following breakdown:

Diploma in Communication Studies - 400

BA Communication Studies Degree (Level 100) - 402

BA Communication Studies Degree (Top-up) - 378

**The School of Graduate Studies and Research** admitted **210** graduate students for its four graduate programs with the following breakdown:

MA Journalism	-	5
MA Media Management	-	6
MA Public Relations	-	97
MA Development Communication	-	102

### ***Governance***

Our Institute has over the years grown, both in size and complexity. This campus became operational in March 2021 and now houses offices for all principal officers and some core administrative and academic staff. To stay in step with the needs of the Institute, we continue to empower our staff through capacity building programs in the areas of teaching and learning, research, and community outreach.

### ***UMAC***

Last year, the University of Media, Arts and Communication Bill 2020 was signed into law. This merged the Ghana Institute of Journalism, Ghana Institute of Languages and the National Film and Television Institute into one university. This means that legally, we are now part of the University of Media, Arts and Communication.

As we await the formation of the University Council which will enable the real work of integrating the component institutions to birth our new university, we are hopeful that this merger will provide significant opportunities to build on the synergies offered by the component institutes, while safeguarding the history and identity of each institution.

## ***Scholarships and Academic Recognition***

I want to take the opportunity to report on two management initiatives that, though falling outside the realms of the reporting period, need mentioning now, first, because of their significance and second, because they may be reported differently at the next opportunity/congregation, under UMAC. I am extremely proud to mention that in line with our quest to assist students who face financial challenges and to encourage academic excellence management instituted two schemes which have both been implemented to the full. These are: the GIJFund Scholarship and the Rector's List Awards.

### **GIJFund Scholarship**

This was established to support and cover the tuition fees of undergraduate students who show excellent academic inclination and performance but are in the unfortunate situation of having to contend with severe financial challenges. In the 2020/21 Academic Year, the scheme awarded partial and full scholarships to a total of 19 students, to the tune of GHS 19,000. For the 2021/22 Academic Year, we have just awarded full tuition scholarships to 16 students at the total value of GHS44,060. For an institution our size, let me say it myself, that, we are punching above our collective weight, and so let's pat ourselves on the back. Afterall, Chinua Achebe says: The lizard which jumped down from the high Iroko tree said it would praise itself, if no one else did".

### **Rector's List Awards**

The Rector's List Awards is a management initiative that seeks to encourage academic excellence through acknowledging at various levels, students who distinguish themselves during an academic year by obtaining a CGPA of 3.0 and above. Just this week twenty-two (22) students received certificates of merit for their outstanding performances during the 2020/2021 Academic year. The list

was made up of six (6) Diploma students, seven (7) Level 100 students, one (1) Level 200 student and eight (8) Level 300 students. This was the maiden edition of this initiative, and I would like to congratulate the recipients once again; they should be proud of their achievement and be spurred on to obtain the ultimate – A First Class Honours.

### ***Research and Publications***

Since we have Graduate Students among the cohort graduating today, let me touch a bit on research. Over the past year plus, we have made giant strides in our efforts to improve both research output and the research culture of the Institute. Through the Directorate of Research, Innovation and Development (DRID), a vibrant research culture has been initiated which is driving the research agenda of the Institute. We are determined to create an enabling environment to facilitate our chances of producing research of national relevance and contribute to global knowledge creation.

We have joined the collaborative global research drive through our membership with the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU). Not only is this going to augment our local efforts, but it will also provide us with opportunity to access the wide range of research grants for our faculty members to engage in interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research.

I take this opportunity to congratulate all our staff who continue to publish their works and contribute to global knowledge. Our research output continues to improve significantly and recognized on the global scene. We are discussing partnerships in our quest to secure funding to meet our research budget.

## **Graduands**

My dear graduands, as you leave to enter the big wide world, I want to leave you with three things: (1) Remember that you are graduating during very unpredictable times, in which there are global crises of all sorts. This requires each one of you to adequately prepare to be: reasonable, flexible and adaptable. As you look for a job or seek greener pastures, endeavour to enhance your knowledge and skills for survival and progression in the world of work. If you ever get opportunities to upgrade, the doors of GIJ remain widely opened. Just as our vision states, we have done our best to mould you into world class professionals who should be at the forefront of the transformation that we seek in our society. Be determined to scale above your limits and move out of your comfort zones.

2. Always endeavour to challenge yourself, to do better than before. You were born wired for the task, armed with an array of abilities of which you will only ever use but a tiny fraction in your lifetime. The Institute has only sharpened some of that. It is up to you now to go boldly into the world and to do what needs doing, to take you to the heights that you were destined to reach. Wherever you find yourself, endeavour to give off your best and resist the temptation to complain about the missteps of your predecessors. Ensure that by dint of hard work, dedication, and conscientiousness', your successors find little with which to fault you. Be the custodians of the future and be sure to earn the praise of those who come after you, when you exit the scene, grateful for what you have bequeathed to them.

3. Finally, as fresh alumni of GIJ and worthy ambassadors of this great institution, you have a charge to uphold the institutional values that we have instilled in you. Do not do anything that will denigrate GIJ as an Institution and your certificates that you have so sweated to earn.

At this juncture, it will be remiss of me not to touch an incident that happened yesterday, that nearly marred the ceremony and left a sour taste in the mouths of many.

I implore you to eschew the sense of entitlement and indiscipline that is fast becoming us, as a people in this country.

I would like to conclude by making special mention of two students: **Rhonnah Nankunda from Uganda and Ebraima Bah from The Gambia**, both of whom are graduating with an MA in Development Communication. They arrived in the country during turbulent days of the pandemic in the later part 2020, stuck patiently with us as we dilly-dallied with the start of the 2020/2021 Academic Year, and have been waiting until now for this graduation ceremony. Better patience has no man, than that! I understand Rhonnah has her parents here too; can these two students and their parents please stand up for special acknowledgements. Shall we give them a round of applause, please!

Thank you for obliging me!

The representative of the Director General of GTEC, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, I thank you all for your attention.