

**ADDRESS BY PROF. KWAMENA KWANSAH-AIDOO, RECTOR,
GHANA INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM DURING THE
MATRICULATION CEREMONY FOR THE 2021/2022 ACADEMIC
YEAR.**

The Deputy Rector,

Registrar,

Deans of Faculties and Schools,

Dean of Students,

Other officials of the Institute present,

The Media,

My dear Freshmen and women.

INTRODUCTION

On behalf of the Ghana Tertiary Education Commission, with oversight responsibility in the absence of Council, Management and students of the Ghana Institute of Journalism, it is my pleasure to welcome you all to the 21st Matriculation Ceremony of the Institute. The main objective of this Matriculation exercise is to acquaint you with the fundamental principles, norms and culture of our Institute. These core values have projected the image of the Ghana Institute of Journalism as the preferred centre for communication training and character development within our national borders and even beyond.

This ceremony represents a major milestone in the lives of all of you who will be inducted here today and bears a large measure of significance for your families, because it marks the beginning of a life-changing experience. It is the beginning of a journey that should open new doors and lead to better opportunities in your lives after successfully competing against thousands of others for a chance to get access to higher education.

Freshmen and women, through your hard work and perseverance you have gained admission to the leading communication training university in West Africa. As you begin the next phase of your educational journey, kindly note that the beautiful future you have always dreamt of can only be achieved if you safely navigate your way through the salvos academic life will throw at you here.

ADMISSIONS

At the end of the admission process for the 2021/2022 Academic Year, we have a total of **1,196** undergraduate students enrolled, with the following breakdown:

Diploma in Communication Studies - 403

BA Communication Studies Degree (Journalism) - 359

BA Communication Studies Degree (Public Relations) - 434

The total of consists of 1,196 undergraduate students consists of 76.1% females and 23.9% males.

The School of Graduate Studies and Research admitted **176** students for its four graduate programmes with the following breakdown:

MA Journalism	-	4
MA Media Management	-	6
MA Public Relations	-	88
MA Development Communication	-	78

The total of 176 graduate students consists of 65.3% females and 34.7% males.

A BLENDED APPROACH TO TEACHING AND LEARNING

The challenge of COVID-19 has meant that we continue to do things a little bit differently from how we used to do it before. The consequence is that, even though life is gradually returning to normal, we must continue to be cautious and wary of the virus and its spread. As a result, the Academic Board has decided rightly that, we shall adopt a blended approach to learning and teaching for this academic year. In effect some weeks will be spent in face-to-face classes, and some will be spent on online studies. This means that we will make good use of the Institute's robust Learning Management System deployed at the peak of the pandemic, to ensure that teaching and learning continues in this COVID-era as

we strive to prevent any outbreaks on our campuses. I entreat you all to observe the protocols, as have been communicated ever since the pandemic broke out.

WHAT GIJ OFFERS YOU

The Institute has a fully functional ICT laboratory equipped with wireless internet access for use by staff and students. The Richard McMillan Library, situated on both the Ringway and Dzorwulu Campuses, is equipped to meet the information needs of students and staff and provides services that facilitate academic and research work. Collections at the Library are carefully selected to reflect the core programmes of the Institute, i.e. Journalism, Public Relations, Marketing, Advertising, Communication Studies and related course areas.

In designing our programmes, we have taken time to blend theory and practice in such a way as to produce not just professionals, but good citizens. Be rest assured that the certificates you will obtain from GIJ are internationally recognised and will be your passport to a bright future.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

My dear Freshmen and women, this Campus of the Institute, here at North Dzorwulu, was commissioned in the latter part of 2020, over two decades after

construction began. I am happy to inform you that, plans are underway to develop this campus into a fully-fledged ultramodern university campus. On our own, we are seeking to partner private investors to build hostel facilities and a lecture hall complex. We also plan to construct a Digital Media Hub that will be the technological heartbeat of the Institute and the training ground for the 21st Century fully equipped and well-rounded digital graduate and the global citizen that we want to train our students to become. There are also other works we are planning – an administrative block; a specific building to house our growing academic faculties, secretariats and staff, a multi-purpose building that will house a Students' Centre, a commercial hub, clinic, alumni offices, religious space and many more. I am hopeful that at the very least, the lecture hall complex will be completed well before most of you complete your studies here.

SPORTS

Sports is an important part of university life. Scientifically, physical exercise helps the mental and emotional development of the body. The Institute is a member of the Ghana Universities Sports Association (GUSA) and so participates in the GUSA Games. This year, the GUSA games will be held at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, (KNUST) and we will be sending teams to participate. I implore all of you who are sportsmen and women to enroll in the sports teams that you're skilled in and help fly high the GIJ flag.

Management will do its best to provide the necessary support to our sporting teams and support staff to participate fully in sporting events and compete effectively during all GUSA events.

I appeal to those of you who are good in sports to identify with the Sports Unit of the Institute. We are working hard towards providing facilities that will help in developing sports and recreational activities on campus to ensure that our students can compete well during competitions.

MERGER

In December 2020, the University of Media, Arts and Communication Bill was signed into law. This merges the Ghana Institute of Journalism (GIJ), Ghana Institute of Languages (GIL) and the National Film and Television Institute (NAFTI) into one university. This means that legally, you will become students of the University of Media, Arts and Communication (UMAC) after swearing the matriculation oath and signing the matricula.

We await the formation of the University Council which will see to the transition into our newly birthed university.

MESSAGE TO FRESHMEN AND WOMEN

My dear Freshmen and Women, I want to appeal to you to make a conscious effort to be part of the process of building a community of people who love each other, support each other, work together and, above all, stay away from, and protect each other against patterns of behaviour and social practices that are not consistent with the values of the GIJ, UMAC and the wider Ghanaian society.

In the quest to realise your academic and other dreams, bear in mind that one of the hallmarks of academia worldwide, is honesty and the pursuit of truth through honourable means. Kindly note that, cheating to achieve your goals goes completely against that culture. I say this at this very early stage, so that you are aware that dishonest behaviour such as plagiarism (taking other people's work and trying to pass it off as your own) and cheating in examinations is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. How can you really be proud of your achievements if, deep down, you know that this is not genuine output of your own?

I pray that the Almighty God will watch over you, guide your steps, prosper you and make you all a source of joy and pride to your families, friends, the Institute, UMAC, the nation, and humanity at large.

Thank you and God bless us all.

