

**SPEECH DELIVERED BY PROFESSOR W. O. ELLIS, VICE-CHANCELLOR OF
KNUST AT THE AWARDS CEREMONY FOR SECURITY GUARDS ON FRIDAY,
11TH FEBRUARY, 2011 AT THE ROYAL PARADE GROUNDS AT 10.00AM**

Pro Vice-Chancellor

Registrar

Regional Commanders of our Security Agencies

Provosts

Deans and Directors

Heads of Department

KNUST Security and Members of the Cadet Corps

Distinguished Invited Guests

Members of Staff

Ladies and Gentlemen

I have great pleasure in welcoming you all to this morning's short but impressive and historic ceremony. I thank you all for making time to share with us, the joy of this occasion. A special welcome goes to our friends from the state security agencies who have over the years, collaborated with us in the provision and maintenance of security on our campus.

I have been highly impressed with the conduct of the parade and the performance of our Basic School Band. As someone who grew up in the barracks, such parade ceremonies bring me fond memories and I heartily congratulate you for a very good show. I have always been impressed with the performance of our Basic School Band at various university functions and I congratulate the Basic School Band for a very wonderful performance this morning.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, as we all know, the challenges of tertiary education have over the years, become more alarming. With the expansion of academic programmes in our University over the years, student numbers have also increased exponentially, thereby, attracting a lot more patrons such as banks, food vendors, photocopy operators, saloon operators and laundries among others with a lot more security challenges. In addition to the above, the peculiar location of the University as being surrounded by a number of communities also presents a lot more security challenges for staff and

students and all those who do business with the University.

With our mission to “*provide a conducive environment for teaching, research and entrepreneurship training in science and technology for the industrial and socio-economic development of Ghana and Africa*”, the University has over the years taken matters of security with all the seriousness it deserves. In this respect, we have been beefing up the number of security staff and currently we have a staff strength of 281 with additional 92 National Youth Employment Interns with plans to recruit and train fifty additional staff. We have provided uniforms, reflectors, tyre clamps, torch-lights, vehicles, vests, and also recently completed and commissioned a new 16-flat staff barracks at the Hall Six Area for our Security Staff.

The above notwithstanding, we have had some security challenges such as break-ins, stealing of

valuables in the staff quarters and in students' Halls of residence and armed attacks or robberies among others. But by and large, I am happy to inform you that, the University's Security Services has, with the assistance of state security agencies, maintained a calm atmosphere, very conducive for academic work.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, it is evident that in the conduct of the affairs of our security agencies, they are faced with a lot of challenges but as a saying goes, "***the bravest are surely those who have the clearest vision of what is before them, glory and danger alike, and yet notwithstanding, go out to meet it***". It is in the light of this that on 9th November, 2010, a group of five security guards of the KNUST Security Services with the help of two civilians exhibited great bravery and dedication by arresting a very notorious armed robber who terrorised students and residents in the precincts of the Great

Hall, Senior Staff Club, Four Star Estates and the Biochemistry Laboratory.

The suspected arm robber was said to have been wearing a face mask and wielding a locally manufactured pistol, a live cartridge, a very sharp machete and some dried leaves suspected to be Indian hemp. In the struggle to disarm and arrest him, all the five security personnel as well as one other civilian who happens to be a national service person sustained various degrees of injuries and were, subsequently, hospitalised for a number of days. Thankfully, they were able to overpower the suspect, arrest him and the suspect is now in police custody for prosecution.

It is in appreciation of this gallant, bravery and exemplary conduct of these men that the University decided to honour them at this ceremony so that all other staff and, indeed, patrons of the University, would be motivated through this gesture to put up

their best for the interest of the University and mother Ghana. In this respect, we have decided to promote all the five security men unconditionally to the next grade. We are also presenting medals to them today in addition to a citation. As the Vice-Chancellor of the University, I have also personally decided to award each of them with a cash prize to serve as motivation to their compatriots. The other two gentlemen who helped them would also be awarded citations in appreciation of their support and civil service to the course of the University.

I would want to thank these awardees most sincerely for what they have done for the University in particular and humanity in general. It is my hope that, you will allow this award to spur you on to even greater heights so that others will learn from your exemplary conduct. I would also want to use this platform to assure all staff that, henceforth, promotion will not be based only on one's long service, but one would also be promoted based on one's outstanding performance. It is my hope that,

this gesture will spur a lot more staff on to give their best to advance the course of the University.

God bless you and thank you all for gracing this morning's historic ceremony.