



## **7th Matriculation**

**7th November 2018**

**President's Address**

### **Protocol**

- **Board Members of NAPE Foundation**
- **Board Members of Palm Institute**
- **The Director of Finance and Administration**
- **Faculty and Staff of Palm Institute**
- **Students of Palm Institute**
- **Matriculants, Parents, Guardians, Family and Friends**
- **Distinguished Invited Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen**

### **Introduction**

I would like to warmly and sincere welcome you all to Palm Institute.

In fact, I have the singular honor of welcoming you to our new campus here at Manya Jorpanya.

I am very pleased to be part to be part of this matriculation rite, where Palm welcomes to its fold, new students who have taken a firm decision to join us to be educated in a dynamic liberal arts environment.

This happens to be our first matriculation on this campus and for that matter a very special one. We must all therefore take note of the fact that this matriculation ceremony will go down in history as the first matriculation ceremony on this campus.

The journey to this place as you see it today has not been easy at all. But through it all God has been faithful. One day I believe I will have the pleasure of narrating the details of our journey on another platform.

Regardless of the difficulties and challenges encountered on our journey to this place, today, we have a place we can call our own. A place to educate the kind of leaders I envisioned when I first dreamt of Palm.

All our matriculants arrived several weeks ago on campus, have registered for courses, have been taken through orientation and have started attending lectures. I believe they have found their rhythm as far the Palm culture is concerned. But the honest truth is they have not been made bona fide students of Palm. They formally become bona fide members of this noble Institute after they have signed the matriculation register and have sworn the matriculation oath administered by a designated officer of this Institution.

Truth be told, we have all been waiting for this moment which should publicly transition them into Palm.

Colleagues, distinguished guests, and friends, there are not many students on this campus yet, so it is very obvious for one to distinguish between freshmen and continuing students.

Over the past few weeks I have seen these new faces in our lecture halls and in the hall ways excited to be studying at the tertiary level and yet with overwhelming levels of anxiety because of all the new things they are introduced to everyday.

However, these young men and women have built their confidence up to the desired levels over the past several weeks. They have blended in with the continuing students very well. In fact, some of them have taken up leadership roles in various aspects of our Community.

In a similar vein, I must express my appreciation for the anxiety levels of parents and guardians, both present and absent who have released their children into our care. I know most of you are keen to determine whether the choice of Palm Institute holds the promise of a bright future or whether the journey to Palm will be a misstep. As parent I know how important it is to make the right choices for your children. It is my hope and prayer that I will make the right choices for my children as they advance towards higher levels of education.

Thankfully, amongst us today is a team of distinguished and dedicated faculty and staff to welcome you and to assure you that you made the right choice for your child. With these academics and professionals behind Palm, I can only assure you that your children are in the hands of some of the best and finest you can find in any reputable institution in Ghana and around the world. They are here not just as part of the people welcoming you, but also to assure you that the choice of Palm at this material moment of your lives, is not a leap in the dark, but a strategic choice of a College.

Riding on the back of that assurance, I am very thankful to say today that the Palm University vision is still alive and well.

It all started with a dream as a result of personal struggles and experiences accessing higher education in Ghana and going through the higher education system in Ghana and being exposed to work and higher education in the United States.

I recall travelling the length and breadth of this country seeking admission into one of the then three public universities after my secondary school education.

After training as a teacher, I remember gaining admission to the University of Ghana and sleeping on the floors of Akuafo Hall, Mensah Sabbah Hall and eventually ending up in my official hall of residence, the Commonwealth Hall.

I recall there were days I did not have money to buy food nor pay my fees. I remember fighting for a chair to sit on for lectures and I recall sometimes standing through lectures at the School of Business at the University of Ghana because I could not secure a chair to sit on.

Thankfully, I had a pleasant and a different experience in the United States.

The differences between my experiences in Ghana and the United States and the differences between the two worlds birthed the Naa Amerley Palm Education (NAPE) Foundation and Palm Institute.

The Foundation and the College are both named after my mother Evelyn Naa Amerley Palm of blessed memory. May her soul rest in perfect peace. Amen!

Ladies and gentlemen, the above experiences birthed the following three foundational values that birthed NAPE and Palm:

1. **Sacrificial Leadership**
2. **A Spirit of Investment and**
3. **Investment in Higher Education**

**Sacrificial Leadership** because it felt as though Western leaders were able to sacrifice their personal and national resources for the betterment of humanity and society while African leaders over the years appeared to have sought to amass wealth for themselves at the expense of their people and society. Sadly, the situation is still the same after 13 years of pursuing this vision.

A Spirit of Investment because in almost every sector (be it human resource, finance, real estate, education etc.), I saw evidence of growth and investment. The people were consciously investing in other people and chosen sectors for a better future.

But what caught my attention the most was an investment in higher education.

Not just higher education as people call it in Ghana before and now but quality higher education where students have ample space to study and be taught, books to read at a library, good internet connectivity and computers for study and research. Where students are taught to think critically and analytically; questioning assumptions, theories, models and making informed choices, decisions and giving relevant feedback when the need arises. The kind of education that prepares the individual for personal and professional success; an education that prepares the educated person to identify and solve society's problems.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the above things drove me to establish the NAPE Foundation and Palm Institute because I became convinced that the way forward for Ghana and the rest of Africa was quality higher education.

## **NAPE Foundation**

The Naa Amerley Palm Education (NAPE) Foundation was founded in March of 2005.

NAPE Foundation is run by a board of trustees and advisers from the business community and academia in Ghana and the United States.

NAPE Foundation has been awarding scholarships to Ghanaian students at the high school and university levels since 2009.

NAPE Foundation awards scholarships through the following scholarship funds:

- **The Lee Nusich & Lane Powell Scholarship Fund**
- **The Matthew S. Essieh & Family Scholarship Fund**
- **The Florence M. Hutchful & Family Scholarship Fund**
- **The Nathan Howells Scholarship Fund and**
- **The Susan & Robert Smith Scholarship Fund**

The Foundation used to award scholarships to students in other schools, colleges and universities. However, the Foundation is currently focused on supporting only students who enroll at Palm Institute who need financial assistance.

## **Palm Institute**

Palm Institute was founded in September 2012. Our goal as a college has been to train and launch generations of ethical and excellent leaders for Ghana and Africa.

We have been determined for the past 6 years to ensure our graduates are properly educated to function locally and internationally. We are committed to teaching our students how to think critically and analytically. Our faculty are dedicated towards teaching our students to read effectively, write properly, speak and present their thoughts logically and confidently on any platform they find themselves. Our programs have in-built compulsory internships designed to facilitate our quest to bridge the gap between theory and practice; a missing ingredient in most higher educational institutions in Ghana and Africa.

It is our vision and mission to educate ethical and values-based leaders for Ghana and Africa. We do this in this conducive liberal arts environment where students are encouraged to take courses in psychology, sociology, writing, African studies, critical thinking, leadership and ethics as they pursue a chosen major.

Palm Institute is affiliation to the National Board for Professional and Technician Examinations (NABPTEX).

We run the following Diploma programs:

- **Business Administration**
- **Computerized Accounting**
- **Banking Technology and Accounting**
- **Agribusiness and Finance**
- **Procurement and Materials Management**
- **HND Programs & Degree Courses**

I am excited to announce that the National Accreditation Board (NAB) has approved in writing our new campus for tertiary education. This means we have been set on the path to pursue Institutional and Program Accreditation for Palm to be approved to run degree, master and even Ph.D programs. It is our hope and prayer that God will grant us favor during this process of going through the Institutional and Program Accreditation with the NAB.

This also means that we are at the verge of getting the required approval to run our 3 Higher National Diploma (HND) Programs in:

- **Business Administration**
- **Marketing and**

## ▪ Banking and Finance

### **Our New Campus**

As most of you know, Palm started in a very small building in East Legon and later moved into a relatively larger building in the same area – just across from the previous building.

Today we have a building of our own. This building houses 5 lecture halls, a computer lab, library, faculty offices, two senior faculty offices, four administrative offices, a sick bay, a cafeteria, a kitchen, and a merchandise store.

It is obvious that we have more work to do but it is also appropriate that we pause and express our utmost appreciation for how far the Lord has brought. As I like to say, we started with nothing, but today we have this to show. God has been good to us. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to express my profound gratitude to my beautiful wife, Beth Okantey. When everyone gets tired of me and leaves, Beth always stands with me.

I also want to thank all our donors in the United States

– particularly our NAPE Foundation U.S.A Board Members for their contributions towards the building of this project.

We are also very grateful for our Ghanaian financial contributors and supporters.

I thank all my employees who held the fort and stood with me during the building project and are still here with me today.

We thank you all for your support.

### **University Life and Time Management**

At this moment I would like to turn my attention to our Matriculants.

Ladies and Gentlemen, as we matriculate you today, your most significant challenge will be effectively managing your time as young adults with a lot of freedom at your disposal. Your parents will not be here to tell you what to do and as you may have noticed your lecturers do not come to your hostels or walk around campus telling you how to behave.

The reason has to do with the fact that you have transitioned from pre-university life to university life. The assumption here is that you are mature enough to make your own choices. Therefore, there is no need for us to come telling you what to do and what not to do. I suggest you spend your time enthusiastically devoted to your textbooks and study materials, so you can achieve the very purpose for which you enrolled at Palm. You have a responsibility to keep yourself in school by taking your studies and your lecturers seriously.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, I would like to thank all faculty, staff and continuing students who are here today for your hard work, thoughts and prayers. Thank you to the staff that assisted with planning and hosting our 7th Matriculation.

On this note, I officially welcome all our new students to our new campus and to one of the emerging liberal arts colleges in Ghana today - Palm Institute. Welcome!

Thank you!

Dr. Peter Carlos Okantey

Founder & President  
Palm Institute