

SAM JONAH LIBRARY



DIGEST

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“

...the dry one,
“nkyeewie”
so, corn
was our
breakfast.

”

The story of
**PROFESSOR JOSEPH
GHARTEY AMPIAH**

FORMER VICE-CHANCELLOR , 2016-2020 (UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST)

ALSO IN THIS EDITION:

- Motivational keynote on reading, the brain, memory, and self-confidence.
- Poems by Adam, Baako Hassan Suhiyin, - Story time: The Unbroken Stride
- UCC gambling chronicles: The high stakes of Student betting
- Learning how to learn: The role of the modern library ... and many more

EXTERNAL EDITORS: Prof. Kwabena Sarfo Sarfo-Kantanka and Mr Theophilus Nartey

FOREWORD BY

Mac-Anthony Cobblah (PhD)

The University Librarian, University of Cape Coast



It is with immense pleasure that I welcome you to the latest edition of the Sam Jonah Library Digest. As the heart of the University's academic and research enterprise, the Sam Jonah Library continuously strives to evolve alongside the dynamic landscape of higher education. This digest serves as a reflection of our recent milestones and a window into the future of information services we are building for our cherished users.

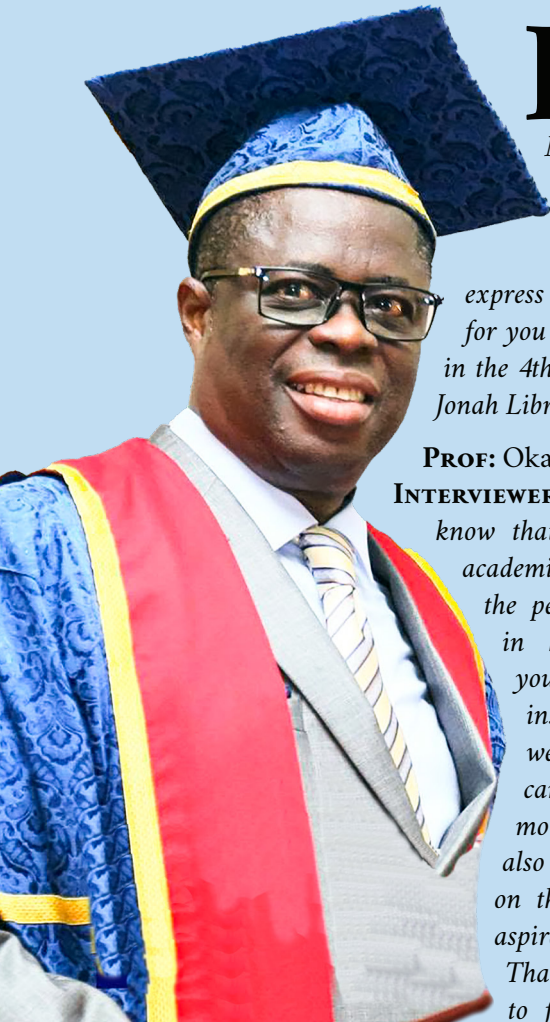
In an era defined by rapid technological advancement and an unprecedented influx of data, the role of an academic library extends far beyond the traditional stewardship of books. Today, we are curators of digital knowledge, facilitators of collaborative research, and champions of open access. Our focus remains steadfast on transforming our spaces both physical and virtual into vibrant hubs of innovation, critical thinking, and intellectual discourse.

This edition of the Digest highlights the ongoing commitment to enhancing the user experience. From the expansion of the digital repositories and electronic resource subscriptions to the implementation of innovative student-centered learning spaces, every initiative is driven by a singular goal: to empower our faculty, researchers, and students to achieve global excellence.

These achievements would not be possible without the dedication and exceptional support from University Management. Equally, I am profoundly grateful to library staff and you the patrons of the Library. I invite you to explore the diverse tapestry of resources, services, and stories that define the Sam Jonah Library today.

INTERVIEW WITH Prof. Joseph Ghartey Ampiah

Former Vice-Chancellor, University of Cape Coast ()



INTERVIEWER: On behalf of the Library Management and Editorial Board of the Sam Jonah Library Digest, we express our appreciation for you accepting to feature in the 4th Edition of the Sam Jonah Library Digest.

PROF: Okay

INTERVIEWER: Most of us know that when we talk of academia, you are one of the personalities we hold in high esteem. Also, your journey in life inspires many. Again, we believe that your career experiences will motivate many and will also have a great impact on the young ones who aspire to be in academia. That is why we chose to feature you in this edition.

PROF: Hmmm

INTERVIEWER: Prof, we can't say we know much about you, and we believe our readers will be interested in knowing who Prof. Joseph Ampiah Ghartey is. So, please tell us about yourself. From childhood, your education, your career, through to moments of your leadership roles and a bit about your family life and what motivated your movements in those stages.

PROF: Ok. So, everybody knows that Joseph Ghartey Ampiah is a teacher. [LAUGHTER FROM ALL]
My childhood days? I was born in Kumasi and lived in Kumasi for almost 20 years.

INTERVIEWER: Ok

PROF: My father was working in the University so we

stayed on the University campus, and there was a nearby school, so I went to the one which was a public school.

INTERVIEWER: Ok.

PROF: There was a university school and a public one, and both were close to our house. I could see the public school from my house, but that of the university was a bit far from my house. So my father put us in the school that was close by and anytime I mention the name of the school, people say it must be a village school. [LAUGHTER FROM ALL]

PROF: The School at that time was called Weweso L/A school

INTERVIEWER: Weweso. It does sound like a village school.

[LAUGHTER FROM ALL]

PROF: Yes. So, I stayed on campus and attended school at Weweso. Weweso shared a boundary with the University. The school was named after the River Wewe which passes through the school

INTERVIEWER: Oh Ok

PROF: Ahaa, the school was on top of the Wewe River. It was a little hilly, so I had to climb a little to school.

INTERVIEWER: Ok.

PROF: Actually, many people who had been in the University did not even know about the River Wewe. The school was very close to the Accra-Kumasi highway and the river passes through the school and goes through the University bungalows through the University botanical gardens through the road that goes to Ayeduse. The University has a stadium, so it passes by the stadium. Many people knew the river, but did not know it was called Wewe River

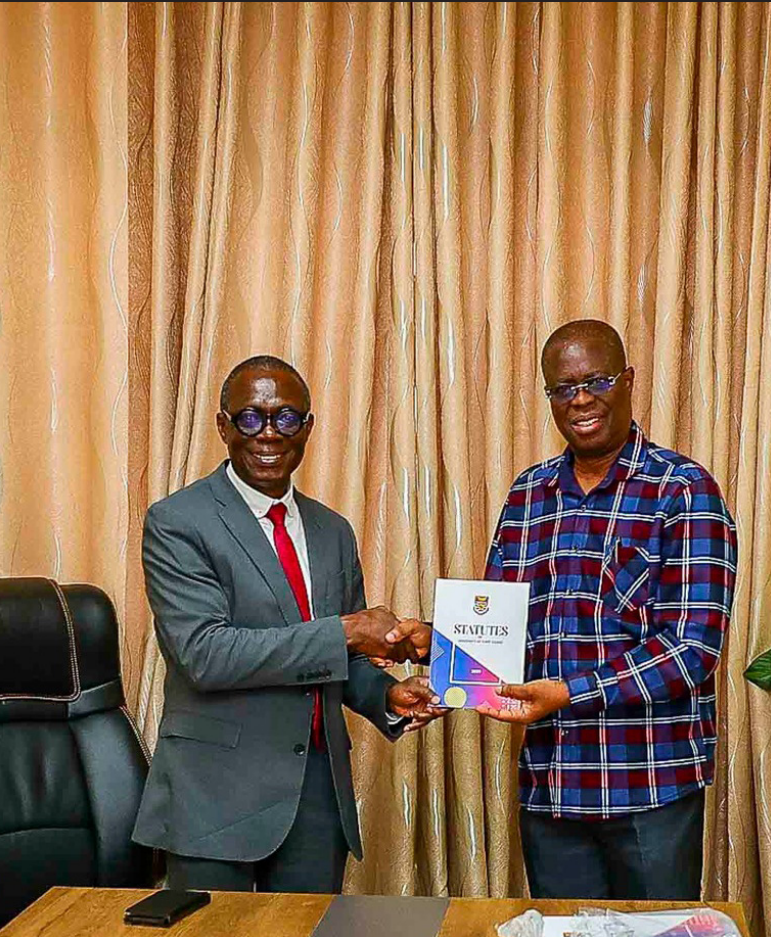
INTERVIEWER: I see.

PROF: So that's where I went to school and when I was in form one, I passed the Common Entrance Exams. So, my secondary school was Technology Secondary School, which was also on the University Campus.

INTERVIEWER: Ok.

PROF: Today, the school has been relocated to a place called Boadi. The school was not for the University. It was for the government, but it was on the University campus and we used the facilities of the University.

INTERVIEWER: That was an advantage to the students. Prof, so which year was this?



PROF: I entered Technology Secondary in 1973 but went to Weweso when I was 6 years old.

INTERVIEWER: *Ok. Probably, that's why they chose that school for you, because you were quite young.*

PROF: With laughter. I still had to cross the Accra-Kumasi highway, so it was still risky. But from my home, when you cross the road, we had the University Police Station and then you can see the road to the school, and in those days, nobody helped anybody to cross the road, so, it was still risky. *[LAUGHTER FROM ALL]*

PROF: There, I joined the Scripture Union (SU) because I was a Christian before I went to Secondary school.

INTERVIEWER: *Ok.*

PROF: When I finished secondary school, I went to Aggrey Memorial Zion Secondary School because our school did not have a sixth form. It was Form One to Form Five.

INTERVIEWER: *Ok*

PROF: I went to Aggrey Memorial because somebody said that, Aggrey needed somebody to help those who were in the Scripture Union, so when I heard that I said, oh this is a religious school.

INTERVIEWER: *Wow, Ok*

PROF: Yes, so that's how come I selected the school and went to Aggrey. At Aggrey, I was in the Scripture Union and I became the Scripture Union President and I became

the Chapel Prefect of the school.

INTERVIEWER: *Ok.*

PROF: When I completed, I came to the University and went through five years of university education.

INTERVIEWER: *Prof, why was it five years? because university is usually four years.*

PROF: You know, in those days there were several public demonstrations, and "Aluta" all the time. So, we said at that time that President J.J. Rawlings should leave the seat, otherwise we will not go to school. And Rawlings said he would not leave, so we stayed at home for 10 months, and then we ourselves decided to go back to school after ten months. *[LAUGHTER FROM ALL]*

So, then we came back. So instead of spending four years, we spent five years in the university.

INTERVIEWER: *Prof, please when was this?*

PROF: I completed in 1987, but I should have completed in 1986 So, a whole year was wasted.

INTERVIEWER: *And you couldn't achieve your aim too.*

PROF: Yes, but we came back and when we came back, life was more difficult than it had been. You see, that time when I came to the University, that was 1982, I taught a little at Aggrey Memorial Secondary School because that was my school. In those days you could teach when you finish sixth form, so, I taught. When I came to the University at that time, I had free breakfast, lunch and supper.

INTERVIEWER: *And with all that, you still wanted the government to leave? What was the major reason for that?*

PROF: It was purely political manipulation. Our leaders were very very political, so Yes, and they pulled us along that line. So, one of the people who really was a champion of all this, finally, had to run away from the school.

INTERVIEWER: *That's quite unfortunate*

PROF: And he was a medical student in the final year. He left for the US

INTERVIEWER: *Prof, please a little clarification. Which University was this?*

PROF: UCC, but this was a group, so this person was from Legon.

INTERVIEWER: *Oh Ok. So, it was a national issue then.*

PROF: Yes. So, they came around and incited everybody. And who are we, we thought that it was enough punishment for the government.

INTERVIEWER: *Hmmmm*

PROF: For some of us, whether Rawlings left or not we didn't really care. But the majority carries the vote. So, we left, and a whole lot happened. So, when we came back, then the government said that, "You are welcome", but you will

no longer take three meals a day; you will take two meals

[LAUGHTER FROM ALL]

PROF: We said *Ok*, No problem. See at that time, University education was virtually free.

INTERVIEWER: *Ok*

PROF: I was in Ogua Hall. Students were not supposed to pay for the halls. They just pay Hall dues. They didn't charge; they just gave you a room, and that was it

INTERVIEWER: *Ok*

PROF: So, we didn't pay fees for living in the room, but we paid for being affiliated to the Hall. And the amount was not any amount you could not pay, so it was easy. And then we didn't pay fees like today, *Ok*. Nothing like fees. So, when you come to school, you just come. And then you go for lectures. When it is exams time, we go and register for the exams. So, we were given Registration numbers.

INTERVIEWER: *Oh, Ok*

PROF: That was it. Those days there was nothing like, photocopier. You see, so university education was easy. And then we said, we don't like morning breakfast. Then they gave us supper, actually we said they should give us supper.

INTERVIEWER: *Ok.*

PROF: So, the government said, if you don't like this then take your money and then eat breakfast. But between lunch and supper, choose between the two. So, we all met and decided that it should be lunch because we can't cook. When we close lectures and have afternoon lectures. You have to eat, yes, but it's not now that we are going to cook. So, we wanted that one to be provided. And then it was a supper that we had to find our own means to cook or whatever. It was difficult.

INTERVIEWER: *You should have kept quiet.*

[LAUGHTER FROM ALL]

PROF: Oh, you see, I don't understand how that was, but that was the situation at that time. Remember, this was a military government.

INTERVIEWER: *Yes*

PROF: Yes. So, we just moved on like that. Then with time the government said that they won't even feed us again. So, they gave us the money to buy our own food. Then the governments said they will now give us money through the commercial banks. So, when we finish school, during the national service, then we pay back. This was to help us, because the money given to us couldn't buy things at that time.

INTERVIEWER: *Ok.*

PROF: So, it was difficult. And finally, we graduated but even then, it wasn't easy. In our last year, there was no light

in the University. There was lights out throughout, so we used lanterns to study. So, we were called the "lantern graduates".

INTERVIEWER: *This will be a very difficult situation. Prof, which year was that?*

PROF: This was 1987. Yes, we used lanterns to study, so everybody had a lantern and is it was given to you by the government to use. So finally, I left for national service. I didn't want to stay in Cape Coast again, so I selected Western. I thought that the Western region was Sekondi-Takoradi only. So, I knew I was going to Sekondi-Takoradi. Later when the postings came, I had been posted to Sehwi-Wiawso. My first question was, where is that?

[LAUGHTER FROM ALL]

PROF: Is this in the western region? So, I went to check the map, and I saw that it was in the west end of the western region. Wow.

So, I went to the Sekondi Placement Center for it to be changed for me, and they said I chose the Western Region and Sehwi-Wiawso is part of the western region. So, I decided to keep quiet. *Ok*, so I decided to go to Sewhi Wiaoso. Then I asked them how I could get there. So, they showed me how to get there. It was difficult. I took a car from Cape Coast to Takoradi. Then I had to take the night train at 8pm and the night train was always full. And every station, it will stop till we got to Kumasi. The night train



from Takoradi to Kumasi took twelve hours.

INTERVIEWER: *wow*

PROF: Because they said that I should try and get to Kumasi in the morning, so, that I can get to Sehwi-Wiawso before nighttime. Because at that time Kofi Twento had been murdered at Sehwi-Wiawso.

INTERVIEWER: *mmm, when I was a little boy, we were told that story repeatedly by all grownups.*

PROF: Aaaha, for reference. And so, they said the place was dangerous so I should get there before night. I was familiar with Kumasi, so I just said they should show me the station, and they did. At that time, the cars that were running to Sehwi-Wiawso were called “watonkyeni” It’s like a Tipper vehicle, but the back of it has been molded so that we could sit in.

INTERVIEWER: *Ok. Prof, is it similar to the “bone shaker” we had in secondary school?*

PROF: The “bone shaker” is made of wood, but this one is made of metal.

INTERVIEWER: *Oh Ok*

PROF: Ahaaaa. So, I sat in, and everybody was buying a shower cap that women put on their heads. The thing that is used to cover their hair. Not scarf. The plastic one. What do they call this today?

INTERVIEWER: *We used to call it a shower cap*

PROF: That’s right. I didn’t understand them.

INTERVIEWER: *With laughter, I understand to prevent dust*

PROF: So, after the vehicle started moving, it branched to an untarred road. It took us six hours to get there. Then finally, I got there. When I got down at Sehwi-Wiawso, I asked for the secondary school. That was Sehwi-Wiawso Secondary School.

So, they told me that I should go down the hill, and there were taxis. So, I went there. I had two pieces of luggage. And when I was going to put my luggage at the back of

the taxi, they said no, people sit there, so I couldn’t put my luggage there. I said wow. *[LAUGHTER FROM ALL]*

PROF: *Ok.* So, I was going to sit at the front and the man said No, you have a luggage, so go and sit at the back. We’ll take three at the back instead of four because of you. So one of my pieces of luggage was on my lap, the other one was on my shoulder and I’m sitting in a taxi. Three people went into the boot to sit there. Three at the back and four in front. The four had two on the right of the driver, and the driver sat with another passenger in his seat. So, for the driver to be able to change the gear, the other person had to sit near the door, the driver’s side. And the rest is history.

INTERVIEWER: *Interesting experience*

PROF: So, after one year, I run away and I came to teach at Wesley Girls. After teaching for six years at Wesley Girls, finally, I came to do my Masters at the University of Cape Coast

INTERVIEWER: *Ok. Prof, which year?*

PROF: That was 1992. *Ok, 1992.* But I was still teaching at Wesley Girls and doing the programme. So, I was doing the Master’s programme full time and still teaching. Then when I completed, I left Wesley Girls and came to the University as a Senior Research Assistant, and then became Assistant Lecturer.

INTERVIEWER: *Interesting story.*

PROF: Yeah. So, that was the challenge, but I enjoyed staying at Sehwi-Wiawso, because it was village life, except that there were restrictions. I stayed with the Head Master, who told us that because it was not safe, we should not go out at night, so every night I was indoors, my colleague from UST sometimes went to town.

INTERVIEWER: *So, meaning that story was real?*

PROF: Oh yeah, because the man himself came from Sehwi-Wiawso and he said that he doesn’t go out, so, we shouldn’t also go out. So, that has been my education, and my early



career. My early career was teaching and as for leadership roles, I've told you that I was a Chapel Prefect

INTERVIEWER: *Mm-hmm.*

PROF: I was the scripture union president; I became the scripture union patron there. So, these were the roles, yes.

INTERVIEWER: *Ok. Prof, can we say that your Christian background had an influence on your early life? Looks like you found Christ at an early stage of your life. Can we say that was the pivotal moments that shaped you to be the person you are today?.*

PROF: 100 percent. At UST, then it was called UST (University of Science and Technology). At UST, we had the students organizing Sunday school for children. So, I started Sunday school at age 3 years.

INTERVIEWER: *Oh, Ok.*

PROF: *Ok*, so we have to leave early for Sunday school. So, they organize the university bus to come and take us from our homes to the community. So, we go to the Community center and that's where they teach us. So that shaped my life. So, before I came to the middle school, I was already a Christian.

INTERVIEWER: *Ok. We thank God for that. Errrm Prof, I think we would be interested to know a bit about your family life as well.*

PROF: My family life. *Ok*, so, my father worked at the University, but my mother was a baker, and she baked and fried all sorts of things. But when I was nine years old, my father and mother separated, we stayed with our father.

INTERVIEWER: *How many siblings?*

PROF: I am the first born of my father and the second born of my mother, so and after me came five others.

INTERVIEWER: *Ok.*

PROF: I stayed with our father and we enjoyed life. We didn't face difficulties in those days, but difficulties came in the later part of my life. Yes. When my father died. My

father died after I completed Sixth Form. So, I had to fend for myself. So, I organized classes and charged fees, and that was how I went through the University. Even at the university I was teaching, because when you vacate and go, nobody feeds you. So, I taught at University Practice Secondary School.

INTERVIEWER: *Ok.*

PROF: The director of audit, Mr. Owusu, I taught him at the Sixth Form. I taught him mathematics. For me, when I was an undergraduate student at the university, I taught Sixth Form students,

INTERVIEWER: *So, you were a mathematics teacher.*

PROF: Yeah, I taught it. I taught physics also because I was a science student. So that was how I catered for myself.

INTERVIEWER: *Prof, it looks like you've always had a passion for teaching. So, was academia your childhood dream? Or you had other dreams?*

PROF: No, it wasn't my childhood dream. But I did not want to do any work that starts in the morning and closes in the evening. I wanted a work that that would allow me to move easily, and teaching came as one of them because I saw that when you teach, you finish, you go home, so you don't close at 4:30pm. That's why. When I was in the final year, my colleagues and I had lecturers who were from industries and they told us that if we wanted to come to industry, we should write our names. So Mmany of my colleagues wrote their names to go to industry, but I didn't write my name because I didn't want to work from morning till evening. So, I decided then and started teaching at the senior Secondary. It was just a matter of me wanting free time. Really, free time.

INTERVIEWER: *So, meaning you didn't really have a particular career in mind, but you wanted something that will give you some sort of free time.*

PROF: Yeah. That's it, and teaching came in, because I was





already teaching.

INTERVIEWER: *We are glad you took that path because it has really impacted a lot of lives.*

PROF: But it's interesting, and for me as a Christian, I feel it was God directing my path.

INTERVIEWER: *Ok. Prof, what were some of the biggest hurdles you faced while growing up? You've mentioned that you lost your father along the way. Is that the only major challenge you faced or were there others you would like to share with us?*

PROF: Well, losing my father was a challenge, because first, I had to look for money to feed myself and to buy clothes. Yes, like that. So, I had to teach, and it was during schooling time. So, it wasn't very easy even where to stay was a bit of a problem, because I really wanted to stay. The headmaster of Aggrey Memorial Zion Secondary School, gave me a place to stay in town, where nobody will see me. I stayed there for few months. And then my friends in the neighborhood also came to stay with me. So, we were boys boys enjoying life, until somebody reported us to the headmaster. Then, I went to Accra, and when I came back, they had sacked us from the place.

INTERVIEWER: *Aww, quite unfortunate*

PROF: So, I left and a friend of mine took me to his home. He was living alone, so he came to take my things and then I went to stay with him. And he was also at the lowest level in the workplace. He didn't have money and I also didn't have money, so, we really struggled. But we were able to get on. So those were challenging times, really challenging times for me. But what can we do? And I was also in the Assemblies of God Church, and I used to look after the church. So, even when I was a student, I was a lay pastor there. So those were challenging times for me. Yeah, but it was fine.

INTERVIEWER: I believe that moment shaped you in a way to be the man you grew up to be

PROF: Yes. So, I am tough. I'm very, very tough because I

was able to cater for myself.

INTERVIEWER: Prof, I believe you are still in touch with that friend of yours.

PROF: Oh Yes. He has also retired. He rose up to become the regional manager of SSNIT. Whiles we were together, he passed his "O" levels and then started "A" levels and passed and came to this university. At that time, I was in the university already. Yeah, and he rose through to the top. He's a very good friend. Very, very good. Yeah, very good.

INTERVIEWER: Waaow. That's very good to hear. I believe your life motivated him to also aspire to rise.

PROF: I believe so too and it is good. Sometimes you know, when you live with other people, they impact your life. Unfortunately, when I left Sixth Form that was when Rawlings came to power. You see Rawlings came, left and came back. So, the first time of Rawlings, life was difficult. Transportation was difficult, food difficult. You don't even get the food to eat. Those were essentials commodities. We called them "ESENCO" we were not getting them. So, when I was living with him, at that time we ate in the morning and then in the evening. But in the morning, all of us will eat roasted corn. The dry one, (nkyeewie) so, corn was our breakfast. Because you will not get food. So, we eat that with coconuts in the morning or in the afternoon, eat it in the morning and in the afternoon. Sometimes I didn't eat that one; I drank coffee and eat coconut because you can't get sugar. It's not even there for you to buy.

INTERVIEWER: I came to hear the story and I'm glad I wasn't part of the experience.

[LAUGHTER FROM ALL]

PROF: Oh my God, it was serious. Corn and coconut like this err, you go to Kotokuraba and see that people have lined up. You'll think they are waiting for a bus or taxi going to OLA. No, they are going to buy corn.

INTERVIEWER: oooooo, this is sad

PROF: Yeah, and that was their evening meal. Kenkey, you



can't get it. By the time you go, the Kenkey is finished. Because they don't even bring the kenkey to the roadside. It was sold at where they prepared it. That is where you go to buy it. Some times when the kenkey is finished we take our gallons for the liquid they use to cook the kenkey. So, you will have a long queue of gallons. Yes, a queue for kenkey water.

INTERVIEWER: Awwww

PROF: So, the trick that people used was that when they go, they don't wait for the kenkey to be boiled. They buy the kenkey that has been put together in the leaves and come and cook it themselves. Because if you wait for it to be cooked you won't get. It was hard times for us and there was curfew all the time. I remember I was going to Accra at one time; I couldn't get transportation. So, I had to climb an articulator truck. You couldn't get a car, so we struggled to get to Mankesim and then the truck came and we all climbed in not knowing it had gone to dump out sand. We had to stand in it from Mankesim to Accra, for that long, and by the time we got to Accra we were all dirty. In those days people walked to work, because there were no cars and people walked long distances. It was tough, but gradually, it passed.

INTERVIEWER: Wow. Difficult times indeed. Prof, Thanks for that.

So, Prof, looking through your profile, we've seen that you've been associated with the University of Cape Coast for long and we also see that you also have association with some reputable international institutions. So, the question is what really made you stay in UCC to work and even aspire you to lead UCC? Because you could have chosen to leave. There were opportunities for you to leave UCC.

PROF: You see, I attended UCC. When we completed school, the university took me as a national service person. My friend and I, Professor Kwame Akyempong. He lives in the UK and Ghana now. We were study friends. So, the

two of us were going to the national secretariate, but when the posting came, I had been posted to the western region and they said that they didn't send my documents early, so I should go and then work it out to come back to the university. I said I would not do it, but they should rather work on it for me and they didn't. So, when it came and I was sent to Sehwi-Wiawso, I just went. So, my friend was here when I came back. So, when I came back and I got the opportunity to do the Masters, I did.

INTERVIEWER: Ok.

PROF: The students of Wesley Girls, they pushed me out of the schools, that was part of the reason.

INTERVIEWER: Prof, why that?

PROF: The students of the school anytime they come they say all sorts of things and then, I wanted to do further studies, but not immediately, but because of what students did, I decided to leave.

INTERVIEWER: Prof, maybe you were hard on them

PROF: No, I wasn't, and they really liked me. In Wesley Girls, everybody was called by the surname. So, they will say, Mr Ghartey, are you still here? And I say Yes, they would say Mr. Ghartey you are too good to be here. You should leave the school. So, I left and then came to do the Masters. So, during the Masters programmes, I became a senior research assistant and then I became an Assistant lecturer

INTERVIEWER: Clearly, you have a great love for UCC

PROF: Err. It was a choice I had to make. I stayed in Kumasi all my life, so I wanted a change. And then I had done education, UST didn't do education. Legon wasn't doing education. Those days it was just Legon, UST and UCC. Winneba was still a college, and they were under UCC, so I actually had to stay and I choose to stay till today.

INTERVIEWER: Ok

PROF: I come from Cape Coast

INTERVIEWER: Oh Ok, so you are at home. I am sure a lot of people are glad you stayed, because you've given your all

to UCC

PROF: Something like that

INTERVIEWER: *Ok* Prof, so looking at your time as a student in UCC through to when you became the Vice- Chancellor. We all know that there have been remarkable changes. Can you comment briefly on these?

PROF: You see in the University; I have gone through all the ranks. So, as you said, I've been in the University for a long time. So, I've studied, and I've experienced it. Most of my friends after first degree, some of them did second degree, some of them did not do second degree in UCC. I am the only one who at that time had my first degree, second degree and 3rd degree in UCC. All my degrees in UCC, *Ok*. Then we had the Faculty of Education. I was the first person to do a PhD in the Faculty of Education. Before then, all those who had started before me couldn't complete.

INTERVIEWER: waaow

PROF: Yes, I was the first person to complete. *Ok*, so I've been here for a long time. When I became a lecturer and then became a senior lecturer, I was a coordinator. I used to work here (Institute of Education). That was when I was a research assistant. *Ok*, so I was here and there being evening classes programme, and I became the coordinator. Later on, I became the Coordinator of the Centre for the Research into Quality Primary Education in Ghana, a Centre called CRIPEG at the Faculty. Then I became the Head of Department for Science and Maths Education. Then after three years became a Dean.

INTERVIEWER: *Ok*.

PROF: I was an elected Dean and was there for three years. So, after my first term as Dean I had to come back so there was re-election to make it six years, but in my fourth year, I became a Pro-ovost for a short time and then I became the Pro-Vice Chancellor and then I became Vice- Chancellor

INTERVIEWER: *Ok*.

PROF: So, I've gone through all the positions. And so, when I became the Vice-Chancellor, I clearly saw the challenges; even before I became a Vice-Chancellor because I really knew the system, I felt that we really needed a change in the University.

But you see, I wasn't interested in becoming a Vice-Chancellor. You see, I had attended all those meetings before and when I became Pro-VC too, I

saw how the work was. So, when they opened the door for us to go in, I said no.

I asked talked to one of my colleagues and he asked me, are you going? I said No, and I asked him are you going? He said yes. And that he was coming to tell me that he wants to go for Vice- Chancellor. I said that I will support you. And then he asked why am I not going? So, I said finally *Ok* 20% Yes, 80% No. I didn't want to be the Vice Chancellor at that time, but one of my mentors, Professor Anamoah Mensah motivated me.

Some people went and reported to Professor Anamoah Mensah that there was an avenue for me to become the VC, and I said No. So, he called me. You see, Prof Anamoah Mensah, he taught me when I was a student in the University for first degree; he taught me education. We did diploma in Education alongside our regular degree.

INTERVIEWER: *Ok*.

PROF: So, that's where I came to know him. He also taught me when I was doing the Masters and he was also my supervisor for my Master's thesis. He was my supervisor and my lecturer. And so, we became friends. Very good friends. And so, because of that, I was closely associated with him. So, he really talked to me, he said, go, get the letter to them that you have applied and let's see what happens.

So, I told him that, I was coming to think about it. After many, many many thoughts I decided, *Ok* let me give it a try, and then I called my friends who came to me and I said,

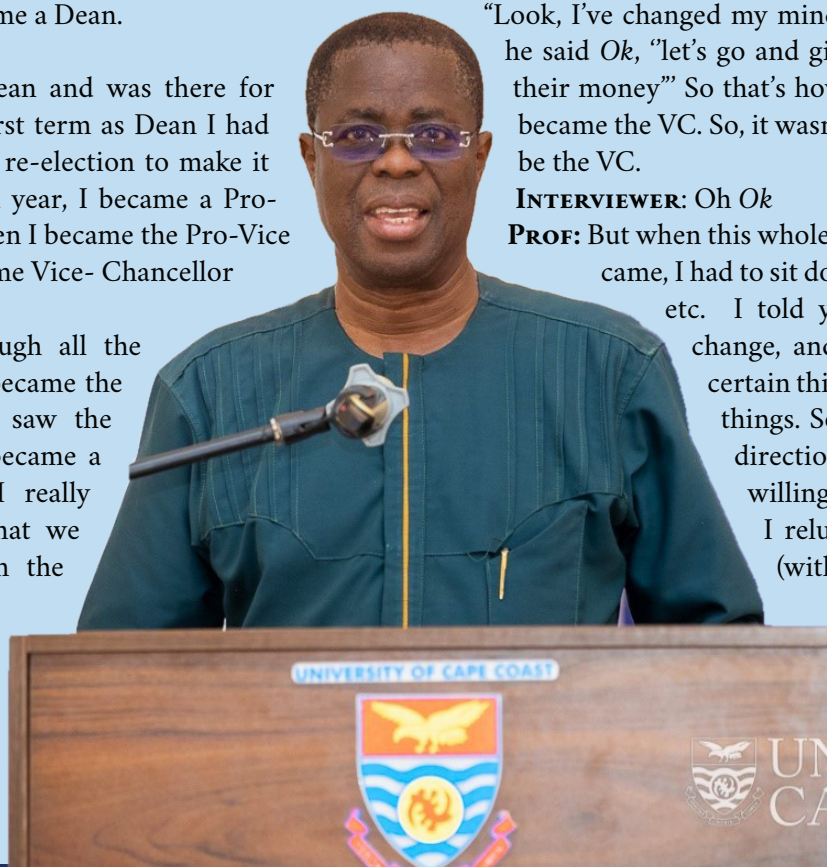
"Look, I've changed my mind, I want to contest, and he said *Ok*, "let's go and give the people a run for their money"" So that's how come I contested and became the VC. So, it wasn't like I really wanted to be the VC.

INTERVIEWER: Oh *Ok*

PROF: But when this whole idea of Vice Chancellor came, I had to sit down and draft my vision, etc. I told you I felt we needed a change, and I felt that there were certain things I could do to change things. So, my vision was in this direction, yes. So, I did not willingly become the VC, but I reluctantly became the VC (with laughter)

INTERVIEWER: But if you ask me. I think you did well. You did.

PROF: Everybody says so. But I thought that we could do our



best for the University. So, I said, let's give it a try and we did.

INTERVIEWER: And you did well

PROF: Something like that. Something like that. (with laughter)

INTERVIEWER: *Ok* Prof. so, as a Vice-Chancellor, there were a lot of projects that you initiated. I mean, I can count a number of them. So, which one do you believe had the greatest impact on UCC and for that matter, Ghana's education landscape.

PROF: You know, some of the things I wanted to do, visibility of the university was a key; the university wasn't visible. Prof Jane Opoku Agyemang who was the VC sometimes she would send me a mail that she has seen the ranking and she didn't see UCC. So, I said yes, we will work on it. So, I thought that we should be visible, so visibility was one of the things that I was looking at. And to be visible, there were a number of things we needed to look at. Help the lecturers to write and to attend conferences, and so on and so forth. And then I wanted to digitize and digitalize the University. I saw that if we wanted to be visible, we should be visible also in that area. And that was how the library came in.

Before I became Vice-Chancellor, I had travelled a lot, to many, many places and had seen libraries in some places. So, when I compared the libraries there with the libraries I see in Ghana here, I said that, nooooo. Once, I went to a university in the US and they took us to their library and we looked at their library and saw that most of their books were not visible. So, I asked them, where are your books? They said, "We've hidden them; if you need them, we'll bring them", and I said, *Ok*, so they took us round, and showed us. Actually, they had a lot of books in the library, but they have placed those books, on shelves underground. Most of the books were hidden. They showed us how they got them. They said that a company built a system that helps them to get the books they want. So those books were all very old, but people still read them. And so, the title of the books can be accessed on the computer and something like a robot would go and look for the book you requested for, take it, and bring it to you.

You see. So, they opened a space for us to see, but the thing was mechanical. And then I went to the University of Helsinki, and I saw the arrangement there. Students were sitting on the floor in the library because every time people go to University of Helsinki, they will say come and see our Library. And the library is in town, not in the university, their library was in town. Even underneath the library where shops, and that was the story.

INTERVIEWER: Impressive

PROF: So, I saw people sitting and they were having discussions, people sitting in circles and were discussing. So many things were very different from those of my university. When I came back, we appointed Dr. Mac-Anthony Cobblah. When we interviewed him, we saw that he had also visited several university libraries, so I said that I want us to change our library. So, go and write something. Let me see how you will change this library. I told him that you've gone to other libraries, I've also gone to other libraries, so the things we see there, we must change things here. So, he went, and I believe he did well. Sometimes people want to credit me, but he should take it.

So, he brought the proposal for innovations to be done in the library and the cost was huge. I said, you know what? I'll talk to the Chancellor then we will see. So, I called Dr. Sir Sam Jonah and told him that we want to modernise the library and these are the documents, so, he should study the documents, and I will call him. I called him again and he said he had looked at it. So, I said, I want my librarian to come and see you so should I give him your number, he said yes. So, I gave his number to the librarian. The librarian showed him everything and he said *Ok*, so I can help. So, they gave us 50,000 Dollars to start with and the University also provided GH¢ 700,000 Ghana cedis to start with.

INTERVIEWER: *Ok*

PROF: And then gradually he showed more interest. And



then one day he told me that, when they are finished he wants to put his bust in front of the library, so, I told him the outside of the library is dirty so when we put the bust there it will not be nice (with laughter) So help us paint the library so he said *Ok*, he will send his people to come and see how the library looks like. They came and gave estimates, then we also asked (DEPDEM) development to also bring estimates. Then, when he saw the estimates, he said that he could find his people to come and do it. So, he brought his people to do the painting. So, I had good relationship with the Chancellor. We started with the Research commons and he came to see what we started. He then promised that he would help us further. And so, he said that he wants wanted a place in the library where he can put some of his things. *Ok*. Right. And we said that is *Ok*, if you want to do that, then we want you to help us build the knowledge commons and he said, *Ok*. So, he helped us to do that and I don't know whether his things are there or taken to another place.

INTERVIEWER: Actually, we are working on an electronic one for him. We've built a website and then his team took over. So, we have now shifted everything to his team.

PROF: Oh *Ok*. You see before then, we were not seeking his help that much. I have a friend who attended Adisadal College, and he also attended Adisadel, and he came to build the whole dormitory for them. So that was in my mind and

my friend became a house master. Then I thought, since he is here with us, He should also be able to come and help us, and he is really helping us

INTERVIEWER: oh yes.

PROF: So that's how we did something at the library, because I felt that other libraries looked better. You see, it's not always that we should sit in a library where it's always full of old books. We could sit in the library in different ways. So I was always on the Librarian, and he did well. He did well. He also wanted to put us up and I supported him.

INTERVIEWER: I think you both did great with that. And so, we look at the visibility of UCC and now we can confidently say that UCC is visible.

PROF: Oh yes, it's visible and our library is better than many other libraries

INTERVIEWER: Yes. So, can we say that these are the achievement you are proudest of?

PROF: I'm very proud of that. As for that, yeah. When I go to Legon and visit their library I tell them my library is nicer (with laughter). But I was very happy about that and the visibility also. Then finally, when I left office, we became first university. All these things I needed to push people because people did not want change and that is how emotional it is.

INTERVIEWER: Yea. Especially if they don't believe in your vision.

PROF: Yes, but now they are seeing the change. The visibility I thought that there was more we could do to be visible. So, I told DRIC that they should give me a paper or document, and they did. And then I saw the counterparts of DRIC their document in Legon. So, I took it. I gave it to DRIC and said let's fashion within this. So, we made a lot of changes together with DRIC also. I asked them, what will it take for us to be visible? You know what it means. So, you put it down on paper, for me to see, let me enforce it. They went and got me a document. According to them, every lecturer must be on google scholar, So I said fine, every lecturer must be. So, I wrote, then DRIC told me that some of the Heads of Departments were not complying, so, I wrote to them that you either go on Google Scholar and be an example to your colleagues in the department or at the end of academic year, you leave your office for another person. So, I was really hard on them. If you bring documents and your e-mail address is not UCC, I will send them back to you; I will not look at it. So, we squeezed the people, we used these means to squeeze them, yes. And gradually, we put all our things together and I left office. The current VC also continued, and then we sent to them then and then finally, the people accepted our things and here we are. We



were ranked by Times, and they said we are the Number One in West Africa, and Number One in Ghana, and even for the first time that we went, we were number one of the First Timers.

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

PROF: And I think we were fourth also in Africa; it was some Universities in South Africa that beat us. South African universities are more visible, and they've run those Universities for long. So, I can understand that. And then for visibility impact, we were Number One in the world.

INTERVIEWER: Wow

PROF: Yeah. In the first one, we're Number One, I know that from there we dropped.

INTERVIEWER: Probably the other universities have also sat up

PROF: Yes, they sat up, but we're still Number One in Ghana. You see, it means that we've done well and since then, we've been doing well, *Ok*, but it wasn't easy for us to get to where we are because people were not prepared. And they said all sorts of things against their VC and all that. But if we don't do the right things, and then we expanded the problems, the problems will look at us.

I looked at what Legon was doing in their booklet and I realised that, in Legon it is not the VC who determines who travels, but UCC, everything comes to the VC. So, I told DRIC that they should take it. They should determine who travels and not me. But when they have approved the one who should travel, I want to see them and the reasons for their approval and mark them and say go ahead. Then we increased the amount of money for travelling to \$1500 per person, so that more people could go, attend conferences and seminars, give presentation and papers, etc. So that's how we also made the university visible. So, we got here and to be visible we needed to have Internet. Our Network computing center (NOC), which was the actual computing center was just small so we built a new one. I don't know whether you've gone there to see.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, I have. Curiosity made me follow our IT team there

PROF: Aaahaaa. So, we built that, but we've built it. Except that, one of the things I'm not happy about is the fact that we no longer have good internet here.

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

PROF: The people providing us with Internet, when I left, UCC cancelled the contract and the people took all their things and went to KNUST.

INTERVIEWER: Could it be that we couldn't our parts fulfil of the contract?

PROF: It's Politics, politics, university politics. They're



pushing the students to reject this solution and then the students will go to the mobile networks. Now they are on mobile networks, a few people go on the internet and then it jams up.

INTERVIEWER: That's true

PROF: But for me that is the only thing that I thought was a negative. Otherwise for me, in the totality of it I think it's *Ok*.

INTERVIEWER: Yes. I think we can all testify to that. I think Prof, you've already answered our next question; so, we'll move straight to the next one. So, beyond academia, you've mentioned right from the beginning of the interview that, you've been involved in community service. In church, in counselling. I believe you're also involved in other professional activities. We would like to know how these roles complemented your role as the VC of UCC.

PROF: You see. Is It's plus and minus. But before that one, let me add this. Professor Anamoah Mensah and Professor Naana Opoku Agyeman. They helped me a lot while I was coming up. Now, Naana when I was Dean saw in me that I had the potential, *Ok* to give the best. So, she gave me certain opportunities.

INTERVIEWER: So, can we say these are your mentors?

Prof. Yes, those two people, they helped me. Yes. You see, beyond academics is it is challenging. When I was a VC, I was still in charge of a church, and I could not be in church always. Today, you travel, tomorrow you are there, sometimes we close at 9 or 10 in the evening. So sometimes

I tell those in the office, today I have teaching at church so let's all close at 6pm. Because they shouldn't go home while I was at work or in the office. It's a rule, they can't leave me alone.

INTERVIEWER: Oh *Ok*, a rule at the VC's office?

PROF: Yes, So, they must stay on till I leave. Because if you leave, it will be left with only the VC, and if the VC wants something, where are the people?

INTERVIEWER: I agree, even security wise, I think it's not advisable.

PROF: Yeah, yeah. So, combining the two was difficult and for me I like my Christianity. If I look at academia and Christian work, It's 60 percent Christian work and 40 percent academic work. I'm an academic. I've done lots of academic things, but my focus is on the entire thing and it is more of church. That's it, so when I finished and I came home, I really didn't want to do any university administrative work. I wanted to go to church. I want to teach at church. I want to preach at church. I want to pray at church. That's what makes me happy.

INTERVIEWER: Wow. Very passionate about it. *Ok*. So let me ask this question though it's outside our main questions. So, I know you have a family. You have children, you've raised them well. At church too you are very much involved and your career too, how were you able to balance them all?

PROF: You must find a way of balancing. So, before I became Vice -Chancellor, I could balance them easily. But VC's work demands a lot more. So, in that case, what happens is that you have to pay attention to the work you are doing. So other people will have to come in so that they can assist. So, support system is key.

So many things I could do, I couldn't do them anymore. So, when I retire, I don't want any setbacks. So that I can have

more time. So now I teach some courses. I supervise more than ten students now.

INTERVIEWER: Even in retirement?

PROF: Yes, even on retirement. When I was Vice-Chancellor for four years, I still taught my course and supervised PhD students. Within the four-year period as VC, I graduated six PhD students. Yes, So, not only was I a VC, but I was also supervising students. I am not supposed to do that. I'm not supposed to teach students as the VC, but I did. Because we didn't have people to teach the course, I said. I'll teach it. And I supervised the students. My counterpart in Legon, Professor Owusu, was supervising. It means that I've been teaching and so teaching has become part of me, *Ok*? And I teach the Bible in a church as a gift. So that also helps me to do my work as a teacher. So, that is about retirement and it is good. I am enjoying retirement.

INTERVIEWER: I can see that, because you look relaxed.

PROF: Yes, because the work was too stressful. Now I have retired. I have made other things I do which are less stressful, yes, and I love it. I love it. *Ok*, yes. So now I'm not looking for money now and so I don't need to struggle again to fend for myself and the family. I don't need to. It also means that all of you have to plan for your retirement now.

INTERVIEWER: That's true

PROF: Yes, properly. So, when you retire. *Ok*, then you don't have to stress yourself. Yes, now when I'm working, this is because I think that I could help. I think that if I leave academic work abruptly like that, I would grow older very soon. You see, I don't want that. (with laughter). Sometimes I tell the people in my department that I won't teach extra courses. So now I've limited the number of courses I teach. The students that I supervise, I supervise them online. We have a platform, they bring them online and then we look at them, then communicate with them so it's google classroom. So that is where they put all their things, and I give them feedback. It works nice.

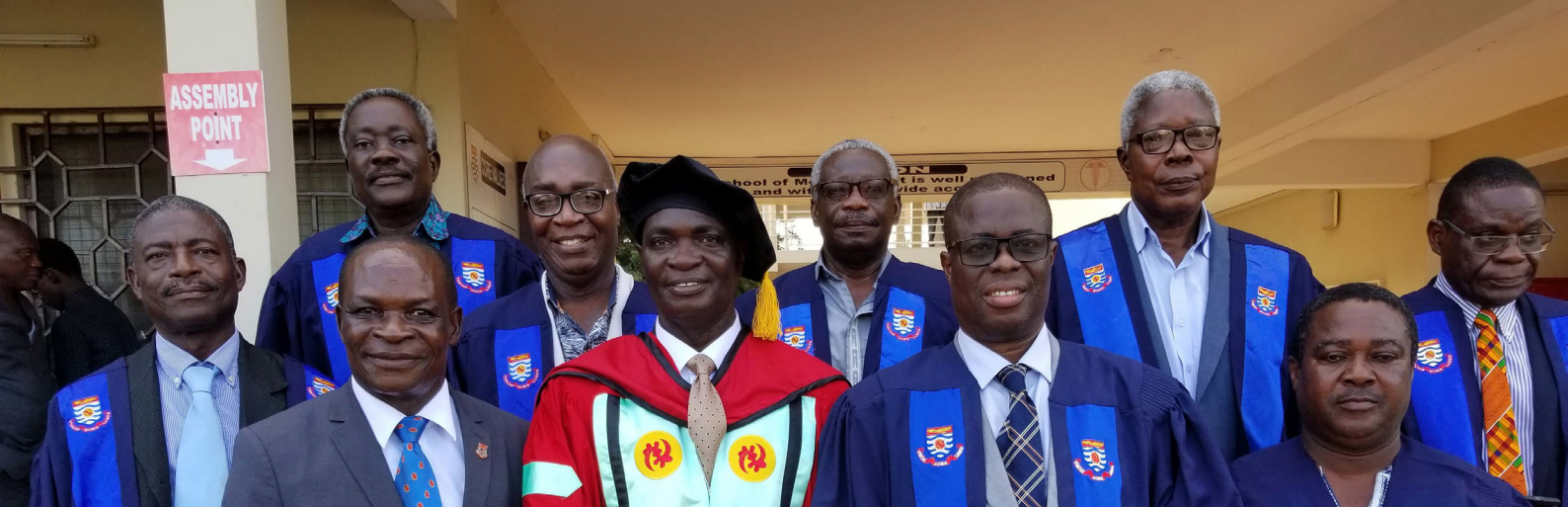
INTERVIEWER: *Ok*. I believe they also prefer it that way

PROF: Oh yes. It goes well and I like that; it keeps me occupied a lot. Which is good for me.

INTERVIEWER: Prof, I know you've talked more about the library but let me take you back to this question. In your opinion, how do we position the library and the satellite libraries, for example to deliver on the mandate of the university's collegiate system?

PROF: You have a collegiate system; it means that the college itself is a mini university within the University. So, everything that we are doing as a university broadly has also to be done at the level of a college. So, the university has a big library, but the college must also have a library. The





college is a mini university, so it must also have a library. The College of Education has a library. I don't know how big the other libraries are because some of the libraries I have seen are small. And I don't know whether there's any help the colleges also have their libraries.

Even some of the Halls have libraries, isn't it? but they may be small spaces, so the whole idea is that, the library is not just for books, it is for them to go and study, instead of being lying down on your bed to learn, or go to the library and learn.

So, the campuses you have now, now we have campuses at different places. Papafio has a campus, and there is one near Swedru

INTERVIEWER: That's Agona Nyaakrom

PROF: Yes. Well, now I'm happy. Then there are students at Nyaakrom, that's like a college. So, they must have a library and a library staff there, you see. Otherwise, you say everybody should go on the net. Yes, going to the net is fine. But why the students? Don't they come to the library? Don't they come and study there? Yes.

INTERVIEWER: They do

PROF: Yes, so those people at the other places too, they should also have that. Look, there are buildings that you see there.

You can take a whole block, *Ok*. If you take the building at Adjiringanor for example. It's the same building we have as Sandwich Lecture Theater (SWL) thus; "Shatawale" and the one near CODE, It's the same plan. Those buildings the classroom can take 200 students. So, we can take one whole block and make it a library. I think that that has not clicked. Probably the University Library must push that, if we have a mini university there, then they must have similar facilities. The students there should also be able to go on the net and access facilities, *Ok*, books and other things, journals, etc. but all that has to be championed by someone. So, this is something that is at the discretion of the University Librarian and the Vice Chancellor. So that

is something that, maybe the librarians can say *Ok*, let's expand the satellite libraries. And I think If we do that, then, we also set the pace for others to follow. If anybody comes to your library, the person is happy with it and say, oh, I wish our library is like that, that means they also want to work on their library.

INTERVIEWER: *Ok*. Thank you for that. Prof, personally I remember you for a lot of things. For example, the former VC of UCC, and I know a lot of people also remember you for different things. But, personally, what do you want the university community to remember you for?

PROF: Ohh to remember me. (with a smile) You want to remember me? It's the things that I have done in this University. I think that you and I can see them. The things that we have done; they are many, but if I am to single some of them out, I will say that it is the digitisation and digitalization, *Ok* and that's includes everything we see now. And, the visibility of the university and the modernization of UCC Library.

INTERVIEWER: It all comes back to the fact that this means you are really proud of them (with a smile)

PROF: Yes. I'm happy that we've modernized the library. I'm proud of the library as it is now. Except that the last time I came there to see the University Librarian, I saw that, the Lift was not working, and this is a minus (with laughter)

[LAUGHTER FROM ALL]

PROF: The lift must work, 24/7

INTERVIEWER: *Ok*, so Prof, we are wrapping up, but since we are from the library let's ask you this question. If you are to write an autobiography, how would you title it and what message would that convey?

PROF: Auto? Hahahaha. Mmmmmmm. *Ok*, in the first place, I will not write an autobiography with laughter.

[LAUGHTER FROM ALL]

PROF: Maybe we will say "A transformative Journey"

INTERVIEWER: *Ok*. Interesting title

PROF: Yes, and will say Professor Joseph Ghateny Ampiah's

leadership in education, science and ministry.

INTERVIEWER: Woaow. Prof, I think I'll encourage you to write that and we would love to read it.

PROF: Maybe I have to add the administration, so administration, education, science, and ministry. My first degree was chemistry, so I am a chemist.

INTERVIEWER: *Ok, Ok.*

PROF: Many of my friends went to work in industries, but I wanted to teach.

INTERVIEWER: Prof, maybe you should consider that. I know writing will not be an issue at all for you.

PROF: Well maybe the things I talk about in church I should put them down. And I told somebody that I'll write a book on my sermons. But about autobiography, I don't think so.

INTERVIEWER: Prof, you said you will never be the VC (with a smile). So, we will not rule that one out.

[LAUGHTER FROM ALL]

PROF: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: *Ok, so Prof before we wrap up, I believe you've mentored countless individuals and you are still mentoring. So, what advice would you give to aspiring leaders, especially those who look at you?*

PROF: Hmm. That is difficult, but you know what? They must be focused. Many people are not focused on anything. They are just there, and the system chooses it. So that is one thing. All the people I work with; I push them to their limit. So even though I was ahead of them, I pulled them along all the time. So, all the people that I have become associated with are people I have pushed.

Sometimes they say they are going for "galamsey". So, I tell them, please don't go for "galamsey" now. There's something that you should do which can even fetch you more money. Focus on those things. As for the galamsey, it is always going to be there. All the time, so now focus on doing something.

So maybe I'm supervising. They will not be bringing their work. So, I push them. So, becoming focused is something that will tell them. And then compete for positions. One of the Provosts came to me and complained that he wanted to be a provost and somebody also wanted to be, so, he came to him that he should give him his support. I said, why do you want to do that? It is a contest, isn't it? Go and contest. So, I keep pushing them so that they can become focused and then they should compete. And then also they should help people. And for that, they should also always respect people. Sometimes you get into certain positions, everybody who comes to you, you ignore them. I want to be at the same level with those who come to me, they say no, no, you cannot say that. I say, I can. You see, this is just a position. Tomorrow you will not be in the same

position again. *Ok.* The people that you see when you are climbing, they are the same people you see when you are getting down. So, if you see them and you will not greet them, when you are descending, you can't face them. Then you see that you are lost, and you can't talk to them. It is bad. And I think that when people do this and they are fair to everyone. So that's what I encourage them to do. I am very proud that there are many people I have trained.

If you go to my department, most of the people there who have PhDs, I supervised them and most of the people there who have Masters too. So, when I go to the Department my head calls me my head. But I still see him as my head of department. And sometimes when they call me for meetings, I don't go. You know why? I tell them when you have issues and you cannot resolve them, I will help you resolve them, but your normal meetings, I don't want to come. There are many things they are doing that I think they should do it differently, but I don't want to tell them. Because I promised the VC that I will not undermine his administration in any way, and I have stuck with that. You've left the office. Somebody has occupied it, so allow that person to do his work when he also finishes, he will go. Otherwise, you will be there, undermining the person. And these are things that I keep stressing to all those people whom I've worked with.

INTERVIEWER: Thank you Prof. I believe this has been a very fruitful interaction. I'm glad I had the opportunity to do this. On behalf of the team, once again we want to say thank you very much for your time and accepting our invitation to be featured in the next edition of Sam Jonah Library Digest. I believe our readers will be very much inspired by your story.

PROF: Thank you. Except that I didn't come on time

[LAUGHTER FROM ALL]

INTERVIEWER: *That's Ok. We know it's not intentional. I think it will not be a bad idea to take a picture with Prof. And Prof, your shirt is very beautiful, honestly retirement look good on you*

[LAUGHTER FROM ALL]

PROF: Is that, so? Well, many people say so,

MOTIVATIONAL KEYNOTE ON READING, THE BRAIN, MEMORY, AND SELF-CONFIDENCE

By Dr Gloria Tachie-Donkor

This is a reflection on something so simple, yet so powerful, the act of reading and how it influences our brains, our memories, and even our sense of self. In our world today, many adults feel constantly pulled in different directions. We scroll endlessly through our phones, skim headlines, and multitask between work, family, and social demands. Yet, in all of this noise, one quiet activity, reading continues to offer profound benefits for the mind and the soul.

When we talk about reading and brain functionality, we are talking about something truly remarkable. Reading is not a natural human ability like walking or talking; it is a learned skill that reshapes the brain. Each time you read, multiple regions of your brain light up; thus, the visual areas decode letters, the language centres interpret meaning, and the memory regions make connections with what you already know. Over time, this complex process strengthens your neural pathways, improving focus, problem-solving, and creativity. It's almost like giving your brain a gentle workout every day, one that keeps it strong, flexible, and alert. Think about the last time you got lost in a good story or a thought-provoking article. You were not just reading; your brain was imagining, analysing, and feeling. You became part of the narrative. That's the beauty of reading. It doesn't only feed the intellect, it also nourishes the heart.

MEMORY FUNCTION

Many of us, as adults, worry about forgetfulness, forgetting names, misplacing things, or struggling to recall information. The truth is, the brain is like a muscle, it weakens when it's not used. Reading, however, keeps it active. When we read, we remember characters, ideas, timelines, and lessons. We hold multiple pieces of information in our minds at once and make sense of them. That's a powerful memory exercise. Reading introduces new knowledge. Every new concept you understand or word you learn gives your brain a new connection, a new mental pathway. The more connections you have, the stronger your memory becomes.

So if you ever feel your memory fading, one of the kindest things you can do for yourself is to read; regularly, attentively, and with curiosity.

SELF-CONFIDENCE

Confidence is not about being loud or forceful; it is about being sure of what you know and who you are. Reading plays a quiet but profound role in building that inner

assurance.

When you read widely, you gain perspective. You learn how others think, live, and overcome challenges. You find reflections of your own experiences in the lives of others. You also discover new ways to express your thoughts with words that help you communicate more clearly, and ideas that help you stand taller in your convictions.

Confidence grows when the mind is fed, and reading is one of the best meals you can give it. Many adults stop reading after school because they feel they are "too busy." But reading isn't only for students, it is for anyone who wants to keep growing. Whether it's a novel, a biography, a poem, or even a well-written article, reading reconnects us to our curiosity. It keeps us learning, and learning keeps us alive to be lifelong learners. The big question is how can we integrate reading into our daily lives, even with busy schedules?

1. **Start small:** Fifteen minutes a day is enough. It's not about how long you read, but how regularly.
2. **Choose variety:** Read things that make you think and things that make you learn. Balance fiction with non-fiction, serious with light-hearted.
3. **Reflect on what you read:** Talk about it. Write about it. Apply it to your life. Reading becomes more meaningful when we internalize it.
4. **Create a reading culture at home or work:** Let your children, friends, or colleagues see you reading.

The issue is that as we grow older, reading also offers something deeply personal that brings comfort. It gives us moments of peace in a restless world. It reminds us that we can always begin again; a new book, a new idea, a new chapter of life. This means that practically ideas and strategies we get from books can be applied to life provided they fit into the context of realities in our life's.

CONCLUSION

Reading is not just a mental activity; it is an act of self-care and empowerment. It strengthens the brain, sharpens memory, and nourishes confidence. It reminds us that no matter our age, we can continue to learn, imagine, and grow. I encourage each of us to pick up that book that has been gathering dust on your shelf. Let it open a window in your mind. Read not just to pass time, but to enrich time, to expand your mind, heal your memory, and rekindle your confidence in who you are and what you can still become.

UCC GAMBLING CHRONICLES: THE HIGH STAKES OF STUDENT BETTING

By Pious Jojo Adu-Akoh (Mr.)
B.Ed. (Soc. Sci.) & MPhil. (Ed. Psychology)

Gambling among university students in Ghana is no new phenomenon, and the University of Cape Coast (UCC) is no exception. Recent studies (Adjei & Mensah, 2023; Adu-Akoh, 2022; Kwarteng-Nantwi et al., 2022) reveal that gambling is prevalent among students, with motivations largely tied to financial gain and the hope of financial freedom. However, the reality is often starkly different, with many students losing vast sums of money, including tuition and hostel fees, to sports betting.

Did You Know?

- The global sports betting market is worth over \$200 billion, and a significant portion of this comes from young adults, including university students.
- In Ghana, online sports betting platforms have witnessed a 300% increase in student participation over the past five years.
- Research shows that over 60% of student gamblers believe betting is not "immoral," reinforcing the normalization of gambling culture.

THE REALITY OF STUDENT GAMBLING

Research has found that gambling is widespread across various age groups and genders, with financial gain being the primary motivator. Many student gamblers do not perceive gambling as "immoral" and maintain a positive attitude toward it.

The issue extends beyond UCC. In 2019, the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) attempted to curb student gambling by banning access to betting sites on on-campus Wi-Fi. However, students found ways around this restriction. Similarly, Sunyani Technical University (STU) students have been observed visiting betting centres near campus, with an estimated 70+ students visiting betting shops daily.

One of the most shocking revelations came from the University of Ghana, Legon where an alumnus admitted to losing Gh¢10,000 (\$1,102) in betting, only recovering Gh¢200 (\$22). The financial toll on students is devastating, leading to academic withdrawals and serious financial distress.



THE UCC GAMBLING DILEMMA

A study I conducted in 2021 at the University of Cape Coast uncovered alarming trends:

- Many student gamblers exhibit signs of including stress, depression, substance abuse, and suicidal thoughts.
- Time allocated to studying is significantly compromised, leading to poor study habits.
- Some students resort to borrowing money or even engaging in dishonest means to fund their betting habits.

Is there a Need for Urgent Action?

Well! In our part of the world where action is reactive rather than proactive, most people in the university society do not see the need for any radical measure. "It's one of those trends of the new age", they say, "what can we do?" My question and worry are, should we experience multiple suicidal tendencies or death before we react? These reports and studies underscore the urgent need to address gambling among students in Ghanaian universities. Gambling has reached levels where it should be classified as problem gambling, necessitating the implementation of effective policies and interventions.

CALL TO ACTION

If universities outside the country could regulate students' gambling activities, UCC ranked as one of the best in Ghana and Africa could take a radical step forward! Thus, there is a pressing need for:

Student Support & and Counselling

- Establish a Gaming Research Unit under the Department of Psychology & Education (in the case of UCC) to screen students at risk of gambling addiction and also conduct research in this area to track its growth.
- University counselling centres (Study Habit Unit - UCC) should assist students in developing better study habits and time management strategies.
- Students' Support Office (StuFSO) (particularly in UCC) which provides support to brilliant but needy students, should also widen its scope

in amassing resources to also provide average students the opportunity to apply for a semester bursary which will cater for the student's basic needs within a semester.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND RESTRICTIONS

- Stricter policies on gambling and Wi-Fi restrictions on betting sites should be enforced.
- Awareness campaigns should educate students on gambling risks and promote responsible gaming.
- Collaboration and Intervention
- Universities should collaborate with the Ghana Education Service and policy-makers to regulate student gambling.
- Periodic open forums should be held to help students assess and improve their study habits and their financial needs.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Gambling, when left unchecked, can have devastating consequences on students' academic, financial, and mental well-being. As UCC and other universities in Ghana navigate this growing crisis, the call for responsible gambling, proper financial education, and strict regulatory measures has never been more urgent.

Will the University of Cape Coast take a bold step to curb student gambling? Or will the high stakes continue to grow? Time will tell!



LEARNING HOW TO LEARN: THE ROLE OF THE MODERN LIBRARY

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In this modern era, teaching and learning have become more complex, diverse, differentiated, and flexible with no clear-cut strategies and procedures defining how it should occur. Learners also come to the teaching and learning process with different entry behaviours rendering the process more complex and cumbersome. Learning which can best be described as the knowledge gained from an experience, study, or being taught is a process through which students of the University of Cape Coast are expected to go during the required years of study in the University. Learning outcomes of learners differ depending on the learning style adopted by each learner. These outcomes are influenced by the kind of pedagogies deployed in teaching. Therefore, to promote effective teaching and learning, educators should seek innovative pedagogies to curtail the complexities the educational sector is facing.

These complexities have dire consequences on students' learning outcomes. As a result, students nowadays struggle to surmount these complexities and challenges by adopting the right learning styles. Moreover, most students struggle because of inappropriate learning styles. These learning styles range from simple to more complex ones based on the needs and intelligence of the learner. The difficulty here is the inability of the learner to identify the particular learning style that suits him or her depending on the present need. The modern library can therefore shape students' learning styles, and not only the provision of information.

Previously, libraries were repositories of books, journals, and other materials. Today, they have advanced to meet the needs of a diverse society. Again, today, classrooms have transitioned from theoretical and boring to more lively and practical ones. Therefore, there is a need to provide some resources to meet the needs of the 21st-century learner.



The 21st-century learner is a complex one. They make learning easy through the use of technology. The modern library, therefore, needs to be upgraded to a blended one to meet international standards. Again, the provision of certain services including counselling and mentoring, provides the necessary assistance in shaping learning outcomes. To this extent, e-library and resource-sharing services as well as audio-visual and other technological aids are necessary motivational tools that support learning in today's library.

SOME RECOMMENDED MODERN DIGITAL TOOLS FOR LEARNING

- **Smart Classrooms:** Digital classrooms where students can interactively learn by themselves.
- **Quizlet:** Quizlet is a study aid or tool that lets students master their concepts through gamified flashcards.
- **Wolfram Alpha:** Wolfram Alpha is a computational

engine designed by Wolfram Research to provide answers to factual questions from externally sourced data.

- **Coursera:** Coursera is an online course provider that offers self-paced guided projects, courses, and specializations
- **Nearpod:** Nearpod is an interactive educational software that enhances teaching and learning by integrating technology into the classroom. It allows educators to create engaging lessons incorporating quizzes, polls, and interactive questions, helping assess student comprehension in real time.
- **Classcraft:** It brings up a gamified classroom based on role-playing game themes.
- **Pickcel:** Pickcel is a renowned and flexible digital signage software that helps you manage content and communication across various screens within the campus. With remote management, you can

control what content your students see across the screens.

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Therefore, it is recommended that:

1. The University should train or make good use of experts in learning styles to help these students develop such self-paced learning skills
2. The University should provide some resources to augment students' learning.
3. "Learning how to Learn" should be integrated into the teaching of Communicative Skills to prepare the students for their four-year Bachelor's journey.
4. The Library should create a technologically conducive learning atmosphere for students.
5. The Library and the Counselling Centre can collaborate to organise study skills seminars to enhance students' study skills.

A NAP

a poem by Adam, Baako Hassan Suhiyini

I pass by Balma as I have a nap
I try to snore to her at her own map
But there was a gap

I feel like pouring this moment of joy on a chat of snap
I began to jubilate less knowing it was a trap
I feel so pompous being with her even if my dream is
kidnap
I think within my heart she is my strap
I wouldn't mind watching her over and over even if it is
accompanied with a slap

If I'm given a cap
I will fill it with her love in my heart from a tap
I will definitely get something to say about her even if
I'm handicap
My joy in this nap is like my first day in a club
My heart needs to be distilled in the lab
Until then, I won't get a sweet sap

Until I was tapped
Excitement was my habitat in the nap
When I finally realise it was a nap
It was then that I was now in the mood of crap.

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MPhil Early Childhood Education



THE UNBROKEN STRIDE

by Lyna



The sun blazed over Sabon as Adwoa Akyre tightened her grip on her tattered backpack, its seams straining under the weight of her textbooks. Though tired she has had to hurry because, soon the red dust of Sabon will be clung to Adwoa's sandals as she trudged past the yam mounds towards her parents' vegetable farms. At 28, she had already lived a lifetime of battles; some fought in the quiet corners of her heart, others in the glaring scrutiny of society but her spirit unbroken by the weight of expectation.

A CHILDHOOD SHATTERED

Adwoa's earliest memories were golden. Her father, Kwame Mensah, was a farmer who worshipped two things aside his God: the land and the written word. While other girls in Sabon learned to knead fufu, Kwame sat Adwoa under the mango tree with tattered primers. "Words are seeds, my child," he'd say, calloused fingers tracing the pages. "Plant them well, and they'll grow into wings." But the skies darkened when Kwame collapsed in his cassava field one harmattan morning. The clinic was too far; the funeral came too soon. Overnight, Adwoa's mother, Ama Adedzewaa, became a shadow, her laughter buried with her husband. The uncles arrived like vultures; "The farm is ours now," declared Uncle Esson, snapping Kwame's precious books shut. "A girl needs dowry skills, not fairy tales." Adwoa's father's death left the family stranded in a storm of debt and whispers: "A woman

without a husband is a boat without paddles."

Adwoa fought back the only way she knew. She took comfort in her father's books, reading by kerosene lamp as the village slept. At Sabon D/A Primary, she outshone the boys, until the day her uncle Esson pulled her aside "stop showing off. No man wants a wife who's smarter than him" but her mother, Ama Adedzewaa would whisper into the darkness: "Read, my child. Books will be your escape."

When Adwoa gained admission to St. Theresa's Secondary in Kumasi, Uncle Esson laughed. "You'll end up like Ekua, pregnant and penniless!" (Ekua, her cousin, had been married off at 16 to a taxi driver.) But Ama Adedzewaa though broken, sold her last cloth to buy Adwoa's uniform and books. "Go," she whispered. "Harvest what your father sowed."

THE FIRE WITHIN

Adwoa clung to those words. While her cousins were married off at 18, she buried herself in schoolwork. The taunts followed her: "Booklong legs! Do you think a PhD will cook your husband's dinner?" Even Ama Adedzewaa, weary from years of struggle, began hinting: "Adwoa, Papa Atta's son is asking about you." But Adwoa had seen what happened to women who married too soon, her best friend Efua, brilliant but now a mother of three in a cramped compound, her dreams folded away like old cloths.



BREAKING BARRIERS

University of Cape Coast was Adwoa's promised land, until the whispers began. "See her, acting like a big obaa professor! Who'll marry her now?" Even her course mates, hinted: "A pretty girl like you should focus on networking, perhaps with some males" At the University of Cape Coast, Adwoa thrived. She joined the debate team, her voice sharp as a machete against patriarchy. When she won a scholarship to pursue her master's, Uncle Esson scoffed: "You'll return with nothing but wrinkles and a useless degree."

Then came the ultimate betrayal. At her thesis defense, a rumor spread, "She slept with her supervisor for grades." The whispers slithered through lecture halls like snakes. Adwoa wanted to vanish. Instead, she stood taller. When Adwoa published groundbreaking research on "the menace of galamsey in Sabon", the community elders scoffed. "She insults our ancestors with her 'book knowledge'!" Uncle Esson spread rumors: "She's cursed, that's why no man claims her."

THE PRESSURE COOKER

Now, as a PhD candidate, Adwoa faces her fiercest foe: time. Society's clock ticks louder each day. "Even your junior sister is married!" her aunt's lament. Maame Ama's prayers have shifted from "God help her pass" to "God

send her a husband." But Adwoa's resolve is unshaken. She mentors young girls at her alma mater, teaching them to wield ambition like a shield. Some nights, she cries, not from weakness, but from the weight of carrying generations of expectations on her shoulders.

THE FINAL STAND

One evening, as the harmattan wind howled, Uncle Esson ambushed her: "You're a disgrace! No man wants an overeducated 'obaa basabasa'!" Adwoa, for the first time, fired back: "Then let them fear me." The room fell silent. Maame Ama Serwaa stared, then slowly nodded.

EPILOGUE

Adwoa's story isn't finished. She knows the road ahead is jagged with tradition and progress, but her stride is unbroken. As she leaned on her library's walls lined with her father's saved books and shelves of new ones, she smiles. Some nights, when the pressure feels like a millstone (her mother still sighs at weddings), she touches Kwame's faded photo. "They said I'd lose myself," she whispers. "But you taught me how to be found." Some victories aren't marked with weddings they're etched in the spines of books, the roar of a lecture hall, and the quiet defiance of a woman who refuses to be small.

MY HEART BEAT (Duet)

a poem by Adam, Baako Hassan Suhiyini



Baby girl,

If I was a poet I would've Shakespeare rhymes on u in every hour,

Every minute and every second

To signify how glorious I am to have you.

Baby girl,

If I was a carpenter,

I would've crafted a well-designed, decorated and furnished wardrobe

To parcel all the sweet words of love

To you in every hour, every minute and every second

Baby girl,

If I was a pilot,

I would've flown immediately to the queen of England

To get all the words of the queen herself

To usher on you in every hour, every minute and every second

Baby girl,

If I was a magician,

I would've made a charm of bringing back Shakespeare

To lend me some of his poetic devices

To rain on you in every hour, every minute and every second.

Baby girl

You have departed from my sight and entered in my thoughts

Travel from eyes into my heart

Your love in my heart is like water in the ocean

It is factually unmeasurable

If you want baby girl...

Call me a philosopher or a poet

I will still won't mind poeting for your pot

Because...

If I should start to ink your love in my heart

The ink will ink out all my blood in my veins

Like a dehydration of droplets of water under a sun rays

You can feel like running away from my heart

But before that my baby Yumzaa...

Just drop me two verse to link up my lines

In the parchment of passion, Our love unfolds

Ink of desire, A tale yet untold.

Veins run dry, A sacrifice profound,

Under the sun's gaze, Love's heat is found.

That is why I am 'Yumzaa'

To wit Love all

You get all the love in my heart

And I share it all.

Hmmm baby Yumzaa

With all this talent

You still don't see the need for me to fall for your love

I will continue to fall for your love

Even if your heart is tall

The height of your heart will never be a barrier to love you at all.

Darling...

I am tired

Hmmm baby Yumzaa

Don't be tired

I'm yet to tire my tie for your love from my heart.

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MPhil Early Childhood Education

DONATIONS

On Wednesday 5th. November, 2025 a delegation from Saints Kitts and Nervis (SKN) in the Caribbean led by Dr. Ama Edwards, a Special Envoy to the Prime Minister of Caribbean donated some books to the Sam Jonah Library. Receiving the books, Dr Christopher Kwame Filson, The Deputy University Librarian, assured the delegation that the books will be processed and made available at the Caribbean Corner of the University Gallery of UCC in order to promote cross-cultural understanding and foster academic collaboration between the two countries. Others present (from Right) were Miss Doris Ankomah, Dr Justice Agyenim Boateng, Prof. Adams Anokye, Mr. Kwame Boohene, Mr Theophilus Ocran and Mss Miriam Borketey.



On Thursday, October 8, 2025, 1200 assorted books were donated to the Sam Jonah Library by Mrs Alice Marie Agyemeng, the wife of the late Prof. D. K. Agyeman, former Professor of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, UCC. The books were the bequeath of the late Husband, Prof. D.K. Agyemeng. The donor was accompanied by, Prof. A. G. Britwum, Rev. Fr. Mark Kwenin, Prof. P. K. Acheampong and, Prof. and Mrs. N.N. Kwofie. Presenting the books, Prof. Britwum said that the event was a moment of sadness due to the memories of the late Prof. D.K. Agyemang and also a moment of joy because the late professor appreciated the support of the library that was why he willed all his books to be donated to the Library. Receiving the books, Dr. Christopher Kwame Filson, The Deputy University Librarian, UCC, stated that the Library was grateful for the donation because books are costly these days and that those who donate books to the libraries must be commended. He continued by saying that the books will be processed and made available to the users of the Library. Others present at the ceremony included Dr Gloria Tachie-Donkor, HOD, Department of Client Services, Mr. Kweku Arhin, Senior Assistant Registrar, and Dr. Eugene Baah Yeboah, Junior Assistant Librarian, Head, Cataloguing Section and Mr Franklin Fiagbe, Principal Library Assistant.

Auntie Esi's *Corner*

*Dear Auntie Esi,
There is a lot of pressure on me from home to perform well academically, but I am struggling to understand my courses no matter how hard I study. I feel anxious all the time and I'm beginning to lose confidence in myself.*

What should I do?

Concerned student



RESPONSE FROM AUNTIE ESI

Dear concerned student,

First, remember that struggling in school does not mean you are incapable of succeeding. Anxiety and pressure can make learning more difficult, but there are practical steps you can take:

- Create a simple study timetable and study in shorter, focused sessions.
- Ask questions in class and seek help from lecturers, or course mates when you do not understand a topic.
- Study in a quiet environment and reduce distractions from your phone or social media.
- Take care of yourself by sleeping well, eating properly, and taking short breaks while studying.
- Avoid comparing yourself to others, focus on improving little by little each day.
- Talk to someone you trust about the pressure you are facing instead of carrying it alone.

Remember, growth takes time and every small effort counts. Believe in yourself and keep going.

You are stronger than you think.

*With Love from
Auntie Esi*

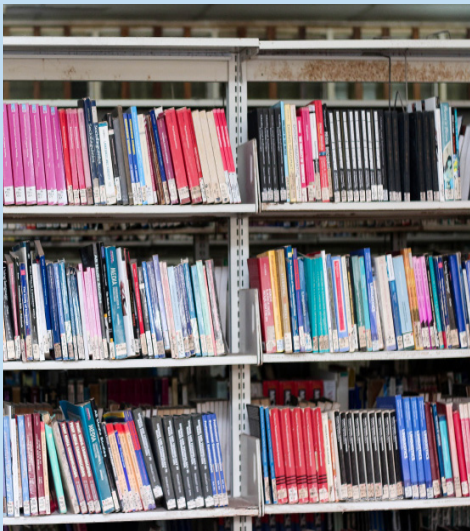
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