



**Palm Institute**

**Founder’s Address**

**Class of 2016 Commencement Ceremony**

**1<sup>st</sup> Graduation**

**&**

**4<sup>th</sup> Matriculation Ceremony**

**8<sup>th</sup> October, 2016**

**Protocol**

The Chairman of Board of Trustees, Prof. V.P.Y. Gadzekpo

Members of Palm Institute Board of Trustees

Members of NAPE Foundation Board of Trustees

Directors, Faculty and Staff of Palm Institute and NAPE Foundation

Distinguished Guest Speaker, Mr. Joe Mensah –Vice President – KOSMOS, Ghana

Invited Guests, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

Our Cherished Class of 2016

Our Dear Matriculants

Family, Parents, Friends and well wishers

### **Introduction**

I wish to welcome you all to the 1<sup>st</sup> Commencement Ceremony at Palm Institute. This is indeed a memorable day in the history of this great institution. This has been a long awaited moment and for some of us, we have been waiting for this moment since 2005 when the vision was conceived; precisely 11 years ago.

This gathering is also an opportunity for us to matriculate our freshmen/women into the Palm Family. They are elegantly dressed for the occasion.

**Class of 2016**, as first graduates of this great Institute, it is with great joy that we celebrate you on such a significant achievement on your academic journey. Your parents, family and friends can attest to the fact that you have worked extremely hard to get this far. I therefore congratulate you and also take the opportunity to thank your family, friends and members of the Palm Family who have stood by you and supported you through this amazing voyage.

### **Thank you!**

Before I get too far into my speech, I would like to take a moment to express my profound gratitude to a few individuals who have stood by me through this journey; many of whom are not here with us today but deserve appreciation. Without the constant support and encouragement of the following people, we would not be where we are today:

- ✚ My wife Beth Okantey
- ✚ Mr. Lee Nusich
- ✚ Mr. Mathew Essieh and his wife Ella
- ✚ Dr. Jay Barber and his wife Jan
- ✚ Dr. Richard White and his wife Donna
- ✚ Mr. Phil Rothrock and his wife Vickie
- ✚ Dr. Roger Martin and his wife Pauline
- ✚ Ms. Brenda McLaughlin
- ✚ Ms. Donna Dorsey
- ✚ Mr. Mathew Storer and his family
- ✚ Mr. Caleb Piling and his family
- ✚ All past members board members of NAPE Foundation, U.S. and
- ✚ The many families and individual donors who have supported us over the years.

I say thank you so much for your continued support.

Also, very special thanks to Prof. Gadzekpo, for his continued support, mentorship, and counsel. Prof., without your support and encouragement, this vision would have been an illusion.

Thank you:

Palm Institute Board of Trustees:

- ✚ Prof. Gadzekpo
- ✚ Mrs. Beth Okantey
- ✚ Dr. Justice Bawole
- ✚ Mrs. Suzan Adu-Ayree
- ✚ Mrs. Dorothy Tsidi
- ✚ Mr. Bright Addy
- ✚ Mr. Joshua Agbo

I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to the staff and faculty of Palm Institute who have painstakingly weathered the storms and difficulties we have encountered on this journey.

I say thank you to:

- ✚ Mr. Barnabas Omulokoli, currently in the United States for his hard-work
- ✚ Mr. Michael Lawer Tetteh, for his commitment and dedication,
- ✚ Mrs. Beth Okantey
- ✚ Mr. Joseph Okantey
- ✚ Mr. Kelvin Quansah,
- ✚ Mr. Emmanuel Agbenyegah,
- ✚ Ms. Linda Bortey and
- ✚ Ms. Paulina Ofeibea Ansah

For their devotion to carrying out the vision and mission of Palm Institute

I also thank all those present today who played a significant role in ensuring that these young men and women succeeded in pursuing a higher education. They could not have come this far without your dedication towards training a generation of ethical leaders. Thank you!

### **Class of 2016**

Class of 2016, today signifies the end of one phase of your academic journey. This day you have an awesome opportunity to step out into the world of work and entrepreneurship in Ghana and beyond. It is an awesome opportunity for you to model the kind of education and training you have received at Palm Institute:

- ✚ an education that is rooted in liberal arts; an education that has prepared you to think critically, analytically, question assumptions, models and theories;

- ✚ an education that enables you to transfer the skills and knowledge acquired from the classroom to the workplace; an education that has prepared you to conduct in-depth studies and analyses of a situation;
- ✚ an education that has equipped you with effective communication skills in speech and writing and yes, an education that has prepared you to appreciate the complexities and diversity of our world today and its constantly changing environments. This is indeed a promising and exciting day to experience because of the great opportunities that lay before you.

## **Palm Institute**

### **Brief Milestones over the Past Year at Palm**

Palm Institute continues to make strides in our quest to train generations of ethical and excellent strategic leaders. In 2012, the Institute was formally registered and was accredited by the National Board for Professional and Technical Examinations. Palm Institute began teaching and learning in 2014 with 11 students, 8 faculty members and three diploma programs in Business Administration, Computerized Accounting and Banking Technology and Accounting.

### **Growth**

We have increased our numbers keeping quality and the highest standards in mind. Between September 2014 and June 2016, Palm grew from 11 students to 42 students; Nineteen (19) of who are graduating today. Last month, we added 25 more students to our student population.

### **New Programs**

Palm Institute received approval to run two more diploma programs; a Diploma in Agribusiness and Finance and a Diploma in Procurement and Materials Management. Additionally, Palm Institute introduced a certificate course in Renewable Energy with Specializations in Solar, Biomass and Wind Power.

### **A New Teaching and Learning Space**

In September 2015, Palm Institute relocated to this current space from a considerably smaller and less spacious building just across the street. This new space as we like to say, has given Palm a "facelift" and a new image.

### **Chaplaincy**

We have added a Chaplaincy Unit to Palm Institute because we believe in our quest for academic and professional excellence and success, we must also strive to know God and seek His guidance in all that we do. Our students and faculty meet every Wednesday for a time of worship.

## **Our Vision for the Future**

We are a growing private institution with great promise. Our vision is to continue growing steadily keeping the needs of the Ghanaian and African industries in mind. We will strive to expand our facilities and strategically add more relevant programs at the degree level in order to diversify what we offer to our clients. Our short-term goal is to relocate to our permanent campus in the very near future to give our students the most convenient environment for teaching and learning.

## **Our Matriculants**

Ladies and Gentlemen, as we matriculate you today, your major challenge will be managing your time effectively as young adults with a lot of freedom at your disposal. I know some of you are working professionals which presupposes that you are old enough to take care of yourself.

In essence, what I am saying is that, your family members will not be here to tell you how to lead your life and as you may have noticed none of my colleagues come to your hostels/homes or walk around campus telling you how to behave or dress unless it is to the extreme and the situation calls for it. The reason has to do with the fact that you have transitioned from pre-university life to university life.

You are mature enough to make your own choices. Therefore, there is no need for us to tell you what to do and what not to do. I suggest you spend your time studying so you can realize the very purpose for which you enrolled at Palm Institute. You have a responsibility to keep yourself in school by taking your studies and your lecturers seriously.

There were students who started with the class of 2016 but are not here today for this graduation ceremony because they dropped out of school for several reasons. I therefore urge you to keep your eyes on the prize. Do not allow the issues and the circumstances of life rob you of the opportunity to graduate from this great Institution. I wish well. I wish you a best of the Palm Experience!

## **Class 2016 - The Journey Ahead**

Class of 2016, though this day marks the beginning of great joy and excitement for you, your family, friends and well wishers, it also paints a picture of uncertainty, doubt and fear. Many of you, if not all, are wondering if you are truly prepared to face the rigors of life out there.

I would like to take this opportunity to share my own similar experience around uncertainty, doubt and fear when I began the Palm journey 11 years ago. Just like me, you are starting this exciting journey with nothing except the knowledge, skills, experiences, passion and the relationships you have built over the past few years whilst studying at Palm Institute.

I founded the Naa Amerley Palm Education (NAPE) Foundation and Palm Institute with nothing. My wife Beth and I put down the initial investment to register the Foundation and a friend donated money towards the payment and development of the initial website.

Today, NAPE Foundation has awarded over \$400,000 worth of scholarships in cash and kind to Ghanaian students in various secondary schools and universities, as well as students of Palm Institute through the generous donations of individuals like Mr. Lee Nusich and Mr. Mathew & Ella Essieh, Mr. & Mrs Mike & Delk, Mr. & Mrs. Karen and Rob Howells, Mrs. Florence Hutchful, Mr. & Mrs. Rob and Susan Smith.

With extremely limited resources, we have been able to achieve great things. I therefore would like to encourage you that though the future and your success may seem bleak and uncertain, with great determination, persistence, consistency and an unwavering faith in the Almighty God you will succeed.

You will encounter various obstacles and challenges on this journey you are beginning today, but you can overcome them with fortitude and strength falling back on the education you have received at Palm.

Learn to appreciate the small and insignificant successes you experience on your journey. Speak the truth and nothing but the truth. Uphold the values of *leadership, sustainability and excellence*, the very core values of Palm Institute; everywhere you go. Uphold integrity which is the hallmark of every ethical leader, a value we work very hard to instill in every student who enrolls at Palm Institute.

And so as you graduate today, I pray that God Almighty will bestow on you a spirit of determination, persistence, consistency, leadership and excellence. I wish you all the courage you need to fight all odds and to stand tall with great confidence amongst your peers. I wish you a future filled with great hope and accomplishments, one that will honor you, your family, community, country, continent and Palm Institute.

Thank you for being part of the Palm Dream. Thank you for believing in us.

God Bless you! God Bless Ghana! God Bless Africa! God Bless Palm Institute!

Thank you!

Dr. Peter Carlos Okantey