



**PALM INSTITUTE MAIDEN GRADUATION CEREMONY
8TH OCTOBER, 2016**

SPEECH BY – JOE MENSAH - VP AND COUNTRY MANAGER, KOSMOS ENERGY

Mr. Chairman, Vice Chancellor, Pro Vice Chancellor, Advisory Board, Members of the Academic board, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen. It gives me great honor to be invited to deliver a speech to the maiden graduating class of the Palm Institute of Strategic Leadership.

I would like to reiterate the vision of this noble institution, “...to educate a generation of excellent and ethical African leaders who are committed to the application of knowledge for the transformation of the African society”. Today, the first graduating class of Leaders from Palm Institute would be walking out with their heads shoulders high up, to champion a good cause for Mother Ghana and Africa, through Strategic leadership, ethical consideration in all aspects of life, service to country and continent, innovation, creativity and excellence. Ayekoo! You are indeed a privileged few. With that privilege, come responsibilities:

Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other (John F. Kennedy). To be taught academic excellence coupled with leadership and ethical consideration makes you a graduate with integrity. And that is rare in today’s generation where professionals want everything fast paced without a moment of consideration for the ethical implication of their actions on stakeholders. Indeed a Liberal Arts discipline may slow you initially, if you find yourself amongst people who do not share in your values. But hold on; just hold on for they would remember you for your integrity and courage. And you would be greatly rewarded.[STORY of my re-entry](#)

As you advance in courage out there in the world, remember you are surrounded by a crowd of spectators; some are there to cheer you on, others as mentors, coaches, critics, peers and some are indifferent about you. The path may not be smooth but advance in your strides; do not look back for it would draw you back. See yourselves as runners; **with a baton to pass on. Running with the head turned backwards; what do you think would happen to such a runner?** Do not look to the side either, you would be distracted. Follow the learning you have received from this institution. Apply them and make a difference. Never settle for the least and do not be part of the statistics but rather be part of the change makers. By all means there would be down and up moments. Learn from each experience and celebrate each moment. In retrospect, you can lament over your struggles and costly mistakes but do not brood over them for long because time is not static, and you cannot turn back the hands of time.

As you go out, do not expect and wait to be employed by an existing company; if that comes your way, grab it. If not, create your own path. Take risks! Start your personal business by looking for needs and creatively initiating solutions to meet those needs. Realistically price the solution to the need and make money, employ people and establish your business. Work with integrity, precision, deliver on timelines, keep accurate records of your budget; spending and savings, manage change, and handle uncertainties with maturity. Grab leadership roles and opportunities that come your way. Develop a mentoring

relationship with an entrepreneur and, take yourself seriously because if you fail at that, do not expect anyone to take you seriously.

Remember your Alma Marta; that is where you got your foundation. [STORY on Giving](#). Develop an attitude of gratitude; it comes with bountiful blessings. Embrace discipline and hard work; that will make you successful. Advance forward and make yourself proud, make your family proud, make your peers proud, make your Alma Marta proud, Make Ghana proud, make Africa... and ultimately mankind would be proud of you.

Go out there into the world! Fly like the bird with most beautiful feathers and let your stars shine.

Congratulations to the maiden graduation class of 2016!