

Vice Chancellor's Address to the Graduating Class  
Cave Hill Campus  
October 27, 2007

- Chancellor of the University of the West Indies, Sir George Alleyne and Lady Alleyne
- Chairman of Campus Council, Sir Neville Nicholls and Lady Nicholls
- Principal of the Cave Hill Campus, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Professor Hilary Beckles
- Colleagues from the University of the West Indies
- Honorary Graduands,
- Families and Friends of our Graduates
- Graduates

My warmest congratulations are extended to each one of our graduates here today, and to those who are not able to attend this ceremony. You are at the centre, the core, the heart of what the University of the West Indies is all about, and we are delighted and proud that you have completed this part of your life's journey – this segment that began with your first day at this wonderful institution to which we all owe so much, and culminating in this ceremony when we recognise your achievements by welcoming you into the company of graduates.

To your families – the parents, spouses, children and other relatives who have made this journey with you – I also say congratulations. It has been a collective effort, a combination of resources and efforts with you supporting and pushing on one side and the UWI, employers and the promise of what you will bring to society providing the pull on the other side.

In this particular ceremony, graduates from undergraduate programmes in the Faculty of Humanities and Education, Pure and Applied Sciences, and

Medical Sciences, total 438, while graduates receiving higher degrees in all three faculties total 71. Among those receiving Bachelors Degrees, there are 40 First Class Honours, 134 Upper Second Class Honours and 173 Lower Second Class honours – representing 79% of that cohort.

This year, the last year of your sojourn with us, has been a truly eventful one for the region and for the UWI. The Caribbean hosted the World Cup Cricket 2007, and the 3Ws Oval here at the Cave Hill Campus was used as one of the practice grounds, as was the ground at the St. Augustine Campus in Trinidad and Tobago, thus putting us on the world stage of cricket. The Cave Hill cricket team has also been doing the Campus proud at the national level and I am delighted to report too, that Principal Beckles has been marvelous in his negotiations to bring a UWI cricket team into regional cricket competition – our first team was fielded in the KFC Series. We were not finalist in the sense but we acquitted ourselves creditably and with great promise and it is noteworthy too, that the final games are being played on the picturesque 3Ws Oval Grounds. Our warmest congratulations are extended to our student athletes, their coaches and their support network.

The region participated in an Historic Conference on the Caribbean held in Washington DC in June 2007 to establish more meaningful ties between the Caribbean Diaspora as well as to strengthen the presence of and contact between the Caribbean leadership and Congress and the executive hand of the US Government. The University was well represented by presenters in the various panel discussions that were convened and it was notable that our alumni were present in large numbers, as representatives of national, regional and international organizations, as well as members of the business professional and civic communities in the USA. This speaks again to the achievements of our graduates both in the Region, North America and the rest of the world. The conference demonstrated that the Caribbean Diaspora

if appropriately utilized can be a powerful political and advocacy group for the region. In addition it contains a pool of intellectual capital that can service the Caribbean and the University of the West Indies well.

The year 2007 also saw the Bicentennial Commemoration of the Abolition of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. The University of the West Indies has been integrally involved in conferences and other for a throughout the year to recognize this important moment in history. I am sure that some of you in this gathering would have participated in some of the events. I urge that you continue in your professional and broader lives to demonstrate what proud achievement a former enslaved people can attain.

In the past year, the Cave Hill Campus has continued on its trajectory of growth and expansion, led by Principal Professor Hilary Beckles, Deputy Principal Professor Leo Moseley and a dedicated team of academic and non-academic staff. The past year has seen the opening of the Errol Barrow Centre for Creative Imagination as well as a number of other new buildings designed for instruction of an exponentially growing student body, as well as to enhance graduate programmes and research, and to improve service delivery to students, staff and visitors.

In the past year, too, our University in its entirety, has been ---- the construction of a new Institution-wide Strategic Plan, for the period 2007-2012. Our vision is a transformative one, desired to create a University that will become entrenched as the Premier Institution of Learning in the Region and the central driver of integration, development and global positioning for our West Indian Communities. Central themes of this Plan will be the enhancement of Teaching and Learning; Graduate Programmes; Research and Innovation; and the creation of an Open Campus. Better Marketing and

Branding of the University; strengthening National and Regional engagement as well as fostering more robust International partnerships are some of the Plan's sub-themes. The budget for this endeavour will be at least US\$300 million for facilities and possibly a similar amount for other programmes. While we expect to use a number of diverse strategies to raise these funds, we shall need in many instances the backing of our governments and Private Sector. I am pleased to say that the Government of Barbados has proven to be the leaders both materially and inspirationally for this effort, and we thank them most sincerely for the support.

Even as we hail the achievements of our students today, we must also highlight some of the achievements of the members of faculty to whom we entrusted your training. They continue to add to knowledge through research and through their interactions with you. For their efforts and generating new knowledge, for their good teaching and public service, many of your lecturers have been honoured by the University, their countries and by various organizations. I will mention just a few and I am sure that you will join me in congratulating and commending them all. Professor Pranay Chadhuri of the Department of Computer Science and Professor Alvin Thompson of the Department of History and Philosophy, are two of this year's recipients of the Vice Chancellor's Award for Excellence. They join other awardees from the Cave Hill Campus including Professors Rose Marie Antoine and Ralph Carnegie of the Faculty of Law, Professor Henry Fraser of the Faculty of Medical Sciences, and our Principal, Professor Hilary Beckles.

I am particularly delighted to note that another member of the Cave Hill community, Dr. Leonard Nurse of the Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies has brought recognition to the University through his work with the Intergovernmental Panel Peace Prize with former Vice President of the United States, Mr. Al Gore Jr. Dr. Nurse and colleagues

Professor Anthony Chen from the Mona campus and Dr. John Agard from the St. Augustine Campus, are warmly congratulated on this signal achievement. As you know, our University is already associated with two previous Nobel Laureates. Derek Walcott, a graduate who won the Nobel Prize for Literature and Sir Arthur Lewis, a previous Vice Chancellor, who was the first person of color to win the Nobel Prize for Economics.

I hope that the knowledge and life skills acquired during your time with us will serve you well and hope you to succeed in your chosen field. In our new 2007-2012 Strategic Plan, we have articulated a profile of the UWI graduate as being not only technically competent in their discipline, but also able to communicate effectively, work in teams, be a critical thinker, a leader and an ethical person who is also aware of this and her national, regional and international responsibilities and obligations as world citizens. I have every confidence that each of you here today embodies all of these qualities and more.

Each of you has a responsibility to yourself, to your families, to your countries, your region and to the world at large. Use the knowledge that you have gained to the best advantage for everyone around you. You are world citizens, a status facilitated by the twin forces of globalization and economic liberalization. In an age characterized simultaneously by tolerance and intolerance, it is through education and an understanding and appreciation of a vision of human prosperity and the oneness of mankind, that we can make a difference. I urge each of you to make a difference.

Our honorary graduands are wonderful exemplars of service to country and region. Our Public Orator, Professor Henry Fraser will present citations prepared for them, and I urge each of you to take to heart the caliber of the contribution that each of these gentlemen has made to Barbados and to the

region, and strive to emulate the work that they have done and continue to do.

During 2008, the University of the West Indies will celebrate its 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Activities are planned throughout the year in all of the fifteen UWI countries as well as in locations where there are alumni chapters – London, New York, Toronto, Miami – to name just a few. Wherever you are, I am sure there will be an opportunity for you to join others in celebrating this exceptional institution. It is through your ongoing achievements that we shall retain our position as the premier institution of higher learning in the region and we look forward to celebrating your accomplishments in the future; even as we celebrate those thousands of stellar graduates of previous years.

Good luck in all that you do.