The University of the West Indies

The Cave Hill Campus: The Academic Epicentre of Higher Education in the Eastern Caribbean

Matriculation Address

August 30th, 2019

Master of Ceremonies, Mr Timothy Arthur, the Honourable Donald Saunders, Deputy Speaker of the House of Assembly, Bahamas, our guest speaker and Cave Hill alumnus, Vice Chancellor of The University of the West Indies, Professor Sir Hilary Beckles, Chair of the Cave Hill Campus Council, Sir Paul Altman, Deputy Principal of the Cave Hill Campus, Professor Winston Moore, Campus Registrar, Mr Kenneth Walters, Campus Bursar, Ms. Lisa Alleyne, Director, School for Graduate Studies and Research, Professor Kahiudi Mabana, Deans, Directors and Deputy Deans, President of the Guild of Students, Ms Thacher Loutin and members of the Guild Council, President of the Barbados Chapter of Alumni, Mr Henderson Williams, members of the campus community, especially our new faculty and staff, members of the media, ladies and gentlemen, but
most of all our students, national, regional and international, a blessed good evening to all of you, and welcome to The University of the West Indies, to the Cave Hill Campus, and to Barbados, but especially, welcome to our 2019 matriculation ceremony. Most of you are the graduating class of 2022, hence a special welcome to our Medical students, the class of 2024.

We give thanks that we, and most of our Caribbean neighbours, have weathered Tropical Storm Dorian. As it continues on as a hurricane, we pray that the Bahamas, other Caribbean countries and Florida will be equally fortunate. We wish the Government and people of Trinidad and Tobago a happy 57th anniversary of Independence tomorrow. We also extend a very warm welcome into the UWI family to The UWI Five Islands Campus which will be launched in Antigua and Barbuda next week.

I am heartened by your presence this evening – an auditorium of students brimming with excitement, enthusiasm and anticipation. I commend you for taking this vital step to pursue a university education. I assure you, that you have every reason to be excited as you set out on this academic journey at the Cave Hill Campus. We
welcome all of you to our beautiful Campus, and thank you for your faith in us by agreeing to pursue your higher education at The UWI. I can confidently state that in being at Cave Hill, you are now within the academic epicenter of higher education in the Eastern Caribbean. Whether you are majoring in English Literature, Linguistics, History or Philosophy, the Campus knows that you are all digital natives who will be spending much of your time on this Smart Campus which is catering to your educational needs for the 21st century. We expect you to periodically put aside your books and other learning devices, take in some fetes, religious services and, of course, some sporting recreation to fully appreciate that you are now at the home of the indomitable, often all-conquering, UWI Blackbirds.

Our enrolment, to date, of new and returning students stands at 4,839 undergraduate and postgraduate students of which 440 are graduate students. The total enrollment represents a 10% increase for the comparative date last year. To date, the applicants for post graduate studies stand at 1498, the highest number of applicants for over five years. Last year’s comparative number of applicants was 1131. However, registration is ongoing, we lost a day and a half by
wisely suspending all student activities in preparation for the tropical storm Dorian, and so we anticipate final numbers by the second week of September. This year 39 Barbados Scholarship and exhibition winners applied and were accepted. Twenty accepted and 10 have registered to date.

Why do I state with such confidence that the Cave Hill Campus is the academic epicenter of higher education in the Eastern Caribbean? Simply because of the defining features of the Campus, the programming innovations we continuously introduce, the new initiatives we are undertaking and the quality and caliber of the faculty and staff we have employed. They are fully committed to supporting you to ensure your entire Cave Hill experience, especially your educational endeavours, will be fulfilling and unforgettable.

The first defining feature of the Cave Hill Campus is inclusivity. Cave Hill is an inclusive Campus that does not tolerate sexual, religious or any form of discrimination or sexual harassment of, or by students or staff. It is inclusive of persons with learning or physical disabilities and we are quite proud of all we have done in the face of financial scarcity to accommodate our students. In 2017, we
became the first UWI Campus to establish a student association dedicated to advancing the interests of students with disabilities. The UWI Cave Hill Association of Person with Disabilities, UWICAPD, continues to grow strong.

In my 2016 matriculation address, I stated the Cave Hill Campus is an inclusive University Space that welcomes all students and respects your sexual orientation including gender identities that exist outside of the male\female binary. In 2016, we welcomed Ms Dadrina Emmanuel, our first transgender student. I am very pleased to report that Ms Emmanuel is graduating in October with an Upper Second Class degree in Social Work. She thanked the campus for recognizing her humanity and stated she was made to feel welcome, especially by students and some key staff members. We stated then and we are reinforcing it again, being different must not be read as an invitation for any form of abuse. Once you meet our matriculation requirements, there is a place for you at The UWI, Cave Hill.

**Diversity:** Within the UWI family of campuses, we have a most diverse student body which includes hundreds of regional students and a vibrant body of international students. Our tentative
undergraduate enrolment data shows 33% men, 67% women, 83% Barbadian and 17% regional\international. Our student government led by President Ms Thacher Loutin shows 42% women councilors, 58 % men, and they come from 10 Caribbean countries. I wish to say to our international students, the only criterion for serving is being a Cave Hill student, so I look forward to an African, Asian or European guild councilor.

**With the Smart Campus Initiative,** the campus is committed to harnessing the digital revolution to transform services and pedagogical strategies. Whether you are studying Caribbean literature or pursuing a degree in film, dance or the theatre arts, as part of the Smart Campus Initiative, you will be utilizing advances in the upgrading of our ICT infrastructure. Cave Hill is the only Campus within the UWI family to have its suite of Banner software programmes, Office 365 live and in the Cloud. It is an expensive but necessary investment in transforming pedagogical and operational platforms. During this academic year, we will no longer print examination cards. Instead you will use electronic check in for examinations. The benefits of this innovation are multiple. We reduce
the costs of high volume printing, ensure more efficient management of examinations and exam room allocation and critically provide data that may be used to identify students at risk. We have already conducted preliminary testing in the Summer examination period and we are looking forward to this latest application of our steady progress to becoming a Smart Campus.

We are introducing a digital payment platform through mMoney merchant solutions. We signed an MOU with Bitt Digital Inc. in which students, staff and members of the public will use digital payments at different campus and commercial vendors. The future is here and your Campus is part of it.

**Curriculum Renewal and Innovation**: We saw recent newspaper headlines calling for our education offerings to be refreshed, and immediately recognized that we have to do more to share information with our public. Cave Hill constantly renews its curriculum. In the last seven years we have introduced 31 new postgraduate and 34 undergraduate programmes. These include masters of science degrees in information technology, nursing, business analytics with specializations in finance and marketing and masters of education in
school counselling. Undergraduate programmes include bachelors of Science in; sports science, economics of planning and policy, health sciences, software engineering and early childhood care and education.

**Institutional Reaccreditation:** These innovations and ongoing curriculum renewal happened in a context in which the Campus was thoroughly assessed and reaccredited for seven years, the maximum period allowed for institutional reaccreditation. This means that our programmes, infrastructural development and operational procedures have received the highest stamp of approval. Students, this means that your degrees are internationally recognized, have educational currency and are transferable. They are granted by a University that is ranked globally by the Times Higher Education Survey in the top five percent of Universities in the world; 32nd in Latin America and as the no.1 University in the Caribbean.

**New Initiatives:** Our Vice Chancellor, Sir Hilary Beckles has appointed a task force under the leadership of Senator Lisa Cummins to fine tune a proposal for the establishment of a Faculty of Culture, Creative and Performing Arts at the Cave Hill Campus. If approved,
this Faculty would attract to the Cave Hill Campus regional and international students to pursue cultural studies, and the performing arts. You will definitely witness the construction of a new block of dormitory facilities as part of the Keith Hunte Hall Complex. In keeping with our inclusive philosophy the new facility will own the required features that indicate Cave Hill is a disability-friendly space. With the oversight expertise of the Caribbean Development Bank, we are examining private sector proposals interested in investing in making quality student housing available at affordable rates.

To tackle the issues of poor academic performance, deviance and forms of disruptive behavior in our schools, the School of Education will introduce a Unit for Clinical Assessment that will identify psychological and educational issues that may be impeding students’ progress. Identifying and tackling learning challenges early will enable the Unit to help students enhance their learning and experience greater academic and social success. The School will work with Ministries of Education and colleges nationally and regionally to create a referral system for students with special needs. The Unit will provide additional research and evaluation services by assisting with
investigations that are merited, based on student performance and behavior. It will undertake psychometric testing of adults for job placement.

The Vice Chancellor often reminds us of the reputation revolution in the UWI. I say to him and all of you, that the work of the Cave Hill Campus continuously burnishes the UWI’s reputation as a global University rooted in the Caribbean. We are dedicated to the mission to advance learning, create knowledge and foster innovation for the positive transformation of the Caribbean and the wider world. It is through this mission that we encourage the exploration and creation of knowledge.

In that regard, it gives me great pride to state publicly that the Cave Hill Campus has acquired the prime ministerial papers of the Right Excellent, Errol Walton Barrow, father of Independent Barbados. This represents an incredible addition to an already exceptional specialist collection. I cannot wait to explore those papers to discern gender formations in the public policies of the early independent Barbados State. The Campus now holds the papers of two of Barbados’ longest serving prime ministers (to date!). Along with His
Right Excellent, we have the papers of former Prime Minister and Professor of Practice, Owen Arthur; the first woman prime minister in the Commonwealth Caribbean, Dame Eugenia Charles; Barbados’ first female Governor General, Dame Nita Barrow; Professor George Lamming; the microfiche collection of the documents of Prime Minister Maurice Bishop and the People’s Revolutionary Government of Grenada; the Federal Archives; and so much more. I wish to again publicly appeal to the estates of former prime ministers to make their prime ministerial papers available to our special collection and enable researchers to study the evolution of the political, economic and social history and governance of Barbados.

My dear students, you are ideally placed to partner with Cave Hill in shaping the region’s future even as you enhance your academic, personal and professional growth. This is The UWI, Cave Hill Campus. Welcome!

Eudine Barriteau, PhD, GCM

Pro Vice Chancellor and Principal

August 29th, 2019