Principal’s Welcome Remarks
Vice Chancellor’s Award for Excellence
Wednesday, October 16, 2019

PROTOCOL:

Good evening and welcome to our beautiful Campus overlooking the Caribbean Sea.

It is with tremendous pleasure that I welcome you this evening to celebrate the outstanding work and achievements of our dedicated faculty, administrative and professional staff from all our Campuses, who are being honoured here this evening with the Vice Chancellor’s Award for Excellence. Within The UWI’s overall federal structure, this highly coveted VC’s award, represents an apex of achievement, one that demonstrates the highest level of academic recognition; indeed, this award embodies the pinnacle of institutional acknowledgement to which our hardworking, high achieving faculty and staff aim every year.

It gives me a deep sense of satisfaction, therefore, to acknowledge that again this year, Cave Hill features among the honourees. This is a clear indication that this campus has established itself, as one where excellence is not just a standard to be reached, but is embedded within the fabric of this institution. And without divulging any secrets (since we already know who the honourees are), please
allow me to offer my heartiest congratulations to all of them, but especially the Cave Hill winners, and to say how thrilled I am, that a certain candidate is not only well-deserving, but has achieved a double recognition of scholastic honour this year.

This campus’s enduring commitment to excellence, is demonstrated in the quality of programmes offered by all of our faculties, our increased focus on student centredness, as well as the intensified efforts among our administrative, technical and support staff to raise the bar on the quality of service offered to our internal and external customers. This year, we made significant progress with our Smart Campus Initiative in our quest to remain fit for purpose, as a cutting-edge, 21\textsuperscript{st} century, learning institution. This initiative has accelerated improvements, in every area, including providing a more modern interface for students and staff, improving educational delivery and pedagogy, as well as improving the Campus’s level of student engagement in both academic and non-academic matters.

Earlier this year, Cave Hill was awarded the highest seal of approval after a rigorous round of evaluation by an international accreditation team on behalf of the Barbados Accreditation Council. We secured the maximum of seven years’
institutional accreditation, a resounding testimony to Cave Hill’s fitness for the purpose of delivering the best higher educational degrees. We were assessed on six standards: mission and objectives; governance and administration, teaching and learning; readiness for change; graduate studies, research and innovation and quality enhancement.

Of course, the Cave Hill Campus cannot contribute to realising the vision of The UWI, to be *An excellent global university rooted in the Caribbean*, dedicated to advancing the Triple A Goals of the Strategic Plan without the valuable input of its faculty and staff. This tradition of excellence, endemic in Cave Hill’s culture, will again be celebrated at the end of this year at our annual Staff Awards and Retirees Ceremony. Then, the outstanding achievements of our teaching and non-teaching staff will be recognised. Tomorrow evening, we hold our annual Evening of Scholarly Excellence where we joyously celebrate the outstanding members of the Graduating Class of 2019. These are the ones who attained the highest level of academic achievement at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

Ladies and gentlemen, I highly commend our faculties for their outstanding input into the academic achievements of our students. However, without downplaying the successes of any faculty, I wish particularly to mention the Faculty of Medical
Sciences which continues to produce some of the world’s finest young doctors who go on to make a global impact. The words of one of our graduates, John Ross-Clarke, who, in June this year, received the award, “Intern of the Year”, in the Department of Medicine at the Yale New Haven Health Bridgeport Hospital, aptly illustrate the views of many of our former and current graduates. I quote, “I think UWI, Cave Hill has always been a fantastic educational institution and I had no doubts that when the medical programme started, that [Cave Hill] would live up to those standards that were set. I didn’t have any apprehension about doing my medicine training at Cave Hill…and I think it was a fantastic choice.”

While Cave Hill representatives are being recognised this evening primarily for their work in the areas of research collaboration, public service and service to the university, as an institution, The UWI has ample reasons to be especially proud of its contribution in the area of teaching and learning.

On Saturday, of the nearly thirteen hundred students graduating from our undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes, I am very pleased to state that about 125 students achieved First Class Honours degrees and nearly 50 are graduating with distinction at the Master’s level. There are also several PhD students graduating with High Commendation.

Just as the recipients of this evening’s awards have demonstrated the highest standards of excellence in their individual or collective endeavours, we are
convinced that our graduands will perpetuate this culture of excellence as they join the many UWI graduates on all of our Campsues, who have served or are currently serving in diverse fields.

Tonight, we celebrate our UWI colleagues who have demonstrated The UWI highest standard of excellence. Congratulations and well done! Welcome to Cave Hill and welcome to this awards ceremony.

I thank you.