

**THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES  
CAVE HILL CAMPUS**

**POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS' ORIENTATION  
TUESDAY, AUGUST 28, 2018  
LT1, ROY MARSHALL TEACHING COMPLEX**

**REMARKS**

Director, School for Graduate Studies and Research, Professor Winston Moore; Deans, Directors and Heads of Department; Senior Assistant Registrar (Graduate Studies and Research) Mr. Owen Ellis; Graduate Studies Programme Coordinators; faculty and staff – colleagues all; this year's incoming cohort of graduate students; members of the media; specially invited guests; ladies and gentlemen, a splendid good evening to everyone. I extend a very warm welcome to all graduate students, new and returning.

To all incoming students who are enrolling with us for the first time, especially those from our neighbouring Caribbean countries and further afield – welcome to the Cave Hill Community and our beautiful Campus by the sea. Your new academic home, offers an idyllic atmosphere that will provide you with a sense of calm to balance the excitement you should experience as a graduate student. The academic, administrative and other support staff of this campus, shares your excitement and anticipation of what lies ahead, and we readily commit ourselves to offering you our highest standard of academic excellence and professional service. We are here to advance your professional, intellectual and ethical growth, and as your Principal, I hold myself and my staff to that pledge. You are about to embark on an unforgettable

academic expedition at a remarkable campus – one that offers far more than breathtaking vistas of the ocean, the City capital and the rolling countryside. I urge you to immerse yourself in as much campus life and as many co-curricular activities as your studies will permit. Just develop that balance which enables you to optimize your Cave Hill experience. It does not matter what your disciplinary home is, whether you are completing taught masters degrees or research studies in linguistics, literature, economics, gender studies, sociology, history, film, botany, dance, computer engineering, theatre arts or cultural studies, I expect you to attend lectures, seminars, theatre productions, dance performances, film screenings, symposiums, across as many disciplines as possible. As graduate students your first responsibility is to sharpen your critical thinking and become knowledgeable on all aspects of Caribbean societies. You have to begin to seriously examine how the knowledge you will create, the expertise you will acquire, is relevant to this geographical, political and psychic location we call Caribbean and home. The Caribbean is rich with problems and possibilities, where will you enter?

If you are returning to Cave Hill, I especially wish to thank you for choosing to continue your academic growth with us – whether you are transitioning from the undergraduate level, embarking on further post graduate education and training to acquire a second or third masters’ degree, or you have decided to create knowledge by pursuing a doctor of philosophy degree, welcome, welcome back to Cave Hill and welcome to the realm of higher learning.

There is a distinct, qualitative difference between undergraduate training and post graduate studies. With an undergraduate degree, you cover the fundamentals of a discipline, you begin to acquire problem solving skills and a conceptual vocabulary. In some degree programmes, you gain practical experience and become comfortable with the literature and ideas in your disciplinary area. You can be forgiven for

thinking you know everything, because it is only with the beginning of the postgraduate phase, especially while pursuing a research degree, you realise that what your first degree did, was that it provided you with a licence to begin learning. When you start pursuing postgraduate studies, one of the first indications that you are on the right path, is that you become very aware of how much you do not know. This is both sobering and exhilarating. By the time you complete a master's or doctor of philosophy degree, you should have gained a quiet acceptance about how much more there is to be discovered, that is besides, of course, the excellent contribution your thesis brings to the body of knowledge.

I wish to commend the Government of Barbados for its decision to reintroduce paying for tuition for all Barbadians pursuing their first undergraduate degree and for those persons whose high academic achievement at the undergraduate level has earned for them, the privilege to pursue a second state-sponsored degree. The decision of government to reintroduce state support of undergraduate tuition is a recognition of the role of a university in the transformation of a society. A letter writer to the Print media (Daily Nation: August 13, p 9) states the reintroduction of tertiary education must be more than to satisfy the wishes of the Cave Hill Campus to attract sufficient students to make it a viable institution of higher learning. The letter writer misses the point entirely, on the existence and relevance of the University of the West Indies. **The University of the West Indies does not exist, nor has it ever existed to perpetuate itself. The University of the West Indies exists to create knowledge, to improve Barbadian and Caribbean societies, and to raise the quality of life and living within Caribbean countries. And yes, to do so in a financially sound and sustainable manner.**

So where I agree with the letter writer, that we do need to review the educational system, in that review, the role of a university cannot be conflated with the necessary

and complementary roles of other institutions within the educational system. Every dimension of our educational system is vital, and each aspect intersects with the other. I love to see and applaud excellence throughout the primary, secondary, vocational/technical and other tertiary educational institutions. However, a distinguishing feature of a university is the creation of knowledge and the dissemination of that knowledge. That ladies and gentlemen, is the core mandate of The University of the West Indies. In fact, The UWI's mission is **to advance learning, create knowledge and foster innovation for the positive transformation of the Caribbean and the world.**

As a graduate of the University of the West Indies, the Cave Hill Campus, I am very proud that in our 70<sup>th</sup> year, The University of the West Indies has laid the foundation for the modernization of the post independent Caribbean, and I dare any critic to dispute that. Just in Barbados alone, the health care system has been transformed by The University of the West Indies, and I invite a research student to write an analysis on the sociology of medical care in Barbados.

Post graduate education is an indispensable incubator for fostering a research culture at universities. It is **the** level of academic engagement where our distinguished faculty researchers give guidance to developing scholars in the interrogation of today's challenges, many of which hinder Caribbean social and economic advancement. I hope some of you here this evening would pursue academic careers and engage in ground-breaking research that redounds to the benefit of the region. The taught masters programmes constitute a critical component of our commitment to building expertise in areas of applied research and problem solving.

A strong research culture within the University of the West Indies allows us to formulate research questions from a Caribbean perspective. Oftentimes we are able to advance regional solutions to challenges that may appear international in scope.

But as we know, one size does not fit all, and some globally prescribed solutions do not always produce the desired outcomes for our indigenous circumstances. **(Professor Moore, did I hear someone mention the IMF?)** Research at The UWI enables us to discover and evaluate new knowledge to shed light on our own environment. This is essential to driving the future of our region.

Already, the Cave Hill Campus is engaged in a wide range of research that has helped to shape social policy and scientific prescriptions for our region. Here are some examples, but as you listen to me, think of adding your research, your contributions to these examples. Senior lecturer in Economics, Dr. Prosper Bangwayo-Skeete, whose areas of critical enquiry are in tourism modelling, development economics, macroeconomics and environmental economics, has produced ground-breaking studies in applied economics. As a result of her work, policymakers and business practitioners in the Caribbean were encouraged to take advantage of the predictive modelling and forecasting capability of Google search data for their planning purposes. Dr. Bangwayo-Skeete's research introduced a new indicator for tourism demand forecasting using Google Trends and earned her a campus award for the "Most Internationally Successful Research".

Similarly, other colleagues in related fields have contributed significantly to the formulation of social policy in this region. They produced studies that examined "the gender gap in the Caribbean", "Skills for Green Jobs - Barbados Study", "The Impact of Contributions to Educational Services to Regional Development", the latter of which was conducted on behalf of the Caribbean Examinations Council. SALISES consistently produces very relevant research and is organizing the first regional symposium in the Caribbean, on China's singular foreign policy, The China Belt and Road Initiative for January 2019.

The work of our medical researchers and other scientists continues to have strong national and regional impact. Just yesterday, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Wellness and PAHO, Dr Kenneth Connell launched the National one-Standardized Hypertension Treatment Project. Known now as Global Hearts, it is being launched in seven countries around the world. The project aims to improve blood pressure control in primary care. Clinical studies by our world-renowned George Alleyne - Chronic Disease Research Centre (CDRC) has led to revolutionary results in the treatment of diabetes and other non-communicable diseases as well as eye studies and wound-healing. Our engagement in tackling outbreaks of Dengue, Chikungunya and Zika is equally laudatory. You may recall that within one week of the WHO declaring Zika a health emergency in 2016, a UWI task force was launched to help guide the Caribbean response. It was chaired by our own Deputy Principal, Professor Clive Landis who is also an outstanding, widely respected, international scholar on cardiovascular research.

Our response to the Sargassum invasion was just as swift and focused on research-oriented solutions. The Cave Hill campus hosted the region's inaugural conference in 2015 to formulate a Sargassum response strategy to the seaweed invasion. We offered a management brief with policy advice to all CARICOM Governments. As the seaweed continues to inundate regional shores, our centers are better able, with the help of satellite tracking, to monitor its arrival and help us prepare for it. My colleagues at the Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies expect me to remind you that the next Sargassum Conference is scheduled for October 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> here at Cave Hill. Attendance is by invitation but I am sure if you are interested in being present you can notify them early enough so that you will be invited.

The Institute for Gender and Development Studies: Nita Barrow Unit has just embarked on the Livity Project earning a grant from the European Union of Bds \$993, 000 to do so. The Livity Project is a four year, seven country collaboration led by the IGDS:NBU and involving the Barbados Council for the Disabled, and the Eastern Caribbean Alliance for Diversity and Equality (ECADE), which is an umbrella Lesbian, Gay Bisexual Transgender and Intersex civil society organization headquartered in St Lucia.

Only yesterday, one of our leading researchers on whistleblowing - Dr. Philmore Alleyne - was called to give expert testimony to a bi-cameral integrity committee in Barbados, as authorities here gather evidence-based data to introduce integrity legislation.

Just in case you think only faculty produce pathbreaking research, as a PhD student, Dr Elizabeth Watson produced a comprehensive and definitive study on Barbadian Jackie Opel/Dalton Bishop, a ska and spouge pioneer.

Ladies and gentlemen, what I have shared with you is just a snapshot of the ongoing UWI research that is having a significant impact, and I am already in trouble because I simply cannot mention all of the research in all of the Faculties that is being undertaken.

So in closing, let me reiterate, The University of the West Indies does not exist to perpetuate itself. Our governments and people cannot quantify what we offer to Barbados and Caribbean societies, and our contributions to national and regional wellbeing far exceed the costs of maintaining the Campus. I gave you these examples so that you could begin to think of where and when you and your research will enter this dynamic, knowledge-creation landscape. I also want to clearly depict for you the value of UWI research to the well-being of our Caribbean region and

how that research sets us apart from all other tertiary institutions operating in our domestic space. The UWI's current Strategic Plan is dedicated to "Revitalizing Caribbean Development". How will your studies do this?

Ladies and gentlemen, it is now your turn to shape the Caribbean's future through the discoveries or new knowledge in which you unearth your unique research undertakings. It is your time to dazzle us with your brilliance and continue to burnish The UWI's seventy-year tradition of putting knowledge to the service of our people and region.

Again, I thank all of you for choosing Cave Hill campus. I welcome you into the campus community and I wish you a stimulating and successful academic journey.

Thank you.

Professor V. Eudine Barriteau

August 28, 2018