Deputy Principal, Professor Winston Moore, Director, School for Graduate Studies and Research, Professor Kahiudi Mabana, Deans and Heads of Departments; Senior Assistant Registrar (Graduate Studies and Research) Mr. Owen Ellis; faculty and staff, this year’s incoming cohort of graduate students; members of the media; specially invited guests; ladies and gentlemen, a glorious good evening to all and a very warm welcome to The UWI, Cave Hill campus. I extend a special warm welcome to all students, new and returning. We give thanks for having weathered the storm Dorian and pray that our brothers and sisters throughout the Caribbean will be as fortunate as us.

I know that some of you have returned to the Cave Hill campus after having spent your undergraduate years here. Welcome back, great choice. We are very pleased to have you return to our beautiful Campus by the sea. I congratulate you on your undergraduate success and I am delighted that you have chosen Cave Hill to continue your academic journey of learning, exploration and discovery.
I also know that some of you are joining the Cave Hill community for the first time. Especially to those of you who are coming from our neighbouring Caribbean countries and internationally— a very special welcome to the Cave Hill Community and Barbados. I welcome you to this unique and wonderful community of scholars through which you will gain membership to an international network with widespread linkages and significant influence. With your full involvement, I assure you that your Cave Hill journey will be exceptional. It can fulfill your desire and determination to achieve higher levels of learning, but only with your full participation. As you become immersed in the academic and social life of the Campus, you will become better acquainted with the outstanding legacy of Cave Hill alumni, their incredible achievements and the remarkable contribution they continue to make at home and abroad. Many of them have undertaken a similar journey to that which you are now embarking upon, and I look forward to you joining them in making meaningful contributions to the well-being of Caribbean societies and beyond.

Personally, I feel very excited to have you here with us and I think it is because, at heart, I am a scholar who misses the sheer joy of research and teaching. I know the academic, administrative and other support staff of the campus share my excitement and anticipation of your intellectual maturity and research accomplishments, 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 can say confidently my staff and I are committed to that goal.

Even though as graduate students you will face criticism, we want you to experience a sense of pride and anticipation on becoming senior student members of this scholarly community. Those of you who pay attention to social and print media, (and I hope that is all of you, because you cannot be a successful graduate student without a healthy dose of curiosity), you will note that at times the University is criticised. I have read or heard that we produce graduates who are too theoretical, that our degrees are not relevant to contemporary societal challenges, and that our students appear aloof or removed from the practical demands of everyday life in Barbados and the Caribbean.

As leader of the Cave Hill Campus, when I hear these criticisms, I say why not? To whom much is given, much is expected. I welcome the feedback, opinions and perceptions of the public for three solid reasons. First what these comments immediately reveal is that our publics expect academic excellence, societal relevance and ethical leadership from the students and faculty of The UWI Cave Hill Campus. Second, I welcome this feedback because I am also confident that those are the values, services and societal leadership we provide. Third, and most importantly, the Cave Hill Campus daily demonstrates its relevance to revitalising Caribbean
development through the applicability of its research, the documented community engagement of its students and faculty, and the consistently high quality of its intellectual leadership. This is a Campus on the move in a globally ranked university.

All of you are about to complete postgraduate degrees, as such you represent an academic elite among higher education learners. What do I mean? Well, I ask each one of you reflect on your class composition when you were eleven years old, and note how many of your classmates have pursued or are pursuing post graduate degrees. Our publics have a right to demand high standards and I am quietly confident in the scholarship, expertise, pedagogical skills, intellectual rigour and professional networks that we will make available to you.

Many of you will complete your Master’s, MPhil and PhD degrees in 2020; 2021; 2022 and beyond. I mean just the time frame in which you will be completing your studies is exciting. The 21st century is ahead of you, rich with potential and promise. In whatever discipline you pursue your studies, 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 are relevant to this geographical, political and social location we call Caribbean and home. The Caribbean is rich with problems and possibilities, where will you enter?
Decolonising Scholarship/Curricula

We have the academic leaders, the degree programmes and the Caribbean always offers us the challenges. There is no graduate student or, for that matter, any faculty member who should struggle to carve an area for research. Like the rest of the world, the Caribbean faces complex challenges in the areas of health, energy, environment, food security, and social justice among many others. However, globally prescribed solutions are not always applicable to the region’s particular and unique realities. International research does not always provide the answers we seek. We need Caribbean responses to our challenges. We need to create solutions that produce the desired outcomes for our indigenous circumstances. This geographical, geopolitical and psychic space we call home is an incubator for research, and guess what? When we approach the Caribbean with respect for creating knowledge about us, we become the experts, we become the ones with the knowledge on our economies, societies, health, laws, marine, biological and scientific environments, gender systems, political institutions, music, dance, film, theatre arts, literature, education, governance and justice systems.

Do you want to create homegrown, software solutions to meet indigenous development needs? Then beat a path to the doorway of Drs Michelle and Curtis Gittens in the Faculty of Science and Technology. Tell them I sent you, because this dedicated academic couple and lecturers in computer science believe firmly in
creating indigenous software solutions. They recently produced a White Paper for the Government of Barbados in which they advised the Government to build locally, rather than purchase internationally, the needed software capabilities. More critically they outlined how indigenous software development can be done. They stated that the Government’s investment would pay greater dividends and save Barbados significant sums in foreign exchange. Hello students, Drs Curtis and Michelle Gittens have the academic and technological expertise to supervise your work and advise governments on how to do this. I am particularly struck by their statement, “so instead of Barbados buying software from other countries, Barbados is now in the position to sell software to other small island developing states or even larger states” [Chill September 2019].

And as if to underscore the relevance to the Caribbean of their valuable advice, Dr. Mukhisa Kituyi, Secretary General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development during a lecture here, organized by the Shridath Ramphal Centre for International Trade Law, Policy and Services, stated, “in spite of the challenges and the critical importance of our traditional economies, we must quickly look at how we can bridge the gap on the digital front on innovation.” In other words, we need indigenous software development to ensure innovation. So to graduate students in computer science, your research could be extremely relevant in providing Caribbean countries with a comparative advantage in trade. He goes on to state, if the Caribbean
is talking about regional integration, you cannot avoid the creation of a common payment platform for electronic transactions across borders [Chill September 2019].

But perhaps you are interested in feminist scholarship. Well the Nita Barrow Unit of the Institute for Gender and Development Studies is very concerned with a range of issues, including those of development as if equity matters. While pursuing a masters or PhD in the IGDS, you can investigate the intersections of the social relations of gender with inequalities embedded in sociology, economics, sexualities, politics, history or philosophy. In an IGDS lecture on “Growth and Development as if Equity Matters”, the honourable Marsha Caddle, Minister in the Ministry of Finance, reminded us, being “poor is not a human condition, it is a circumstance that can come and go in a lifetime or a next generation.” Why not research how poverty is mediated by gender or sexuality?

And are you an incoming student of politics or economics? How lucky can you be? Former Prime Minister of Barbados, Owen Arthur and Professor of Practice in the Economics of Development, will chair on behalf of the Government of Barbados a new global commission to examine some critical issues affecting small island developing states ahead of Barbados’ hosting of next year’s United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, UNCTAD XV [Nation August 25: 5A]. Because he is our resident Professor of Practice, you can attend lectures or seminars to be delivered by Professor Arthur. You may even get to work with him as a
Research Assistant on the global commission. Go and negotiate that with him, begin practicing your networking skills.

As you navigate a rapidly changing world driven by Artificial Intelligence and radical geopolitical occurrences, you will find the Cave Hill Campus is an epicenter for major national, regional and international events. We enjoy mutually beneficial relations with a host of universities in Europe, the United States, Africa and Asia. Our commitment to internationalization and becoming a Smart Campus for the 21st century, means that we have invested in building processes and relationships that will benefit you and equip you for work and life in twenty first century societies. We are witnessing profound and systemic change that is leading us to question what we have previously accepted and which is forcing us to rethink worn out approaches to solving our challenges. It is such an exciting time to be a post graduate student. Much like the 1960s civil rights and students’ movement that showcased university activism, academies have found themselves playing advocacy roles in recent social developments such as the Arab Spring and calls to decolonize education. You have not heard those concepts before? Well you know what you have to do.

As centres of intellectual leadership, universities are shaping conversations about societal change. As the next generation of scholars, many of you have to shoulder the responsibility to effect change.
As post graduate students of The UWI, you are now part of this vision to engage in research that will inform the region’s policies, and offer scientific prescriptions for the region. In keeping with the maxim that home drums beat first, some of these prescriptions and innovative practices are currently employed right here on campus. For example, a Cave Hill researcher making great strides in revolutionizing the teaching and learning of primary level English is Voghn-Everett Tatem. He is tapping into student’s gravitation to technology and entertainment by employing web comics and comic strip generators to enhance their written proficiency in standard English. PhD candidate Nikolai Holder whose search for greater energy efficiency and sustainability has resulted in the use of grass clippings to generate biofuel which is used to power a number of buildings here on campus. His innovation and ingenuity underscores our Smart Campus initiative which seeks to incorporate the use of ‘green’ technology, clean power generation, reduction of waste output and to reduce the Campus’ carbon footprint. It is now your turn to add your unique ingenuities to our research environment.
Ladies and gentlemen, I know that one day, my successor principal will be telling future post-grad students about the strides you would have made in conceptualizing solutions to the region’s challenges. This is your time.

So get to work! The region is looking forward to your research contribution shaping our collective futures. Dazzle us with your brilliance and continue to burnish The UWI’s seventy-one-year tradition of putting knowledge to the service of our people and region.”

Again, welcome to the Cave Hill campus and to your brilliant future that you will co-create.

I thank you.

Eudine Barritteau, PhD, GCM

Pro Vice Chancellor and Principal

August 28th, 2019