

# ▼ New UWI Chancellor: University embracing change by picking a businessman

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ROBERT BERMUDEZ, newly-installed Chancellor of The University of the West Indies, acknowledged that the institution was recalibrating itself to the demands of the future by having him, a businessman, at its head.

Amid much pomp and ceremony, Bermudez was presented with his instrument of appointment on Saturday at the University's Daaga Auditorium, St Augustine.

Present were President Anthony Carmona, Prime Minister Dr Keith Rowley and Education Minister Anthony Garcia.

In his maiden speech, Bermudez said: "Standing here before you as Chancellor makes me marvel yet again at the vagaries of life that (UWI) entrusting its leadership to someone outside of academia, the university has made a clear statement

that as it enters its 70th year it is recalibrating itself to the demands of the future in its newly-adopted strategic plan."

He said that The UWI was born prior to the country's independence in 1962 and described it as a time of great excitement and expectation, as well as change and uncertainty.

Bermudez said that questions of independence working and Trinidad and Tobago governing itself arose, "and as to be expected, in the last 50

years we have faced many challenges and weathered many

storms, some of our own making and others outside of our control but, however, today we can celebrate a successful outcome".

"We have grown into a functioning and noisy democracy and free speech, free people, with a system of government which is not perfect but the envy of many," he continued.

He also acknowledged The UWI's role in the formation of not just Trinidad and Tobago's democracy but Anglophone Caribbean democracy, adding that we have made a success of ourselves.

"We may be materially poor but not backward and we often forget that we are five million souls but we have made our mark through Bob Marley (Jamaica), Rihanna (Barbados) and Usain Bolt (also Jamaica) who are known by millions," he said.

## Changing world

"The world around is changing and every indication that this change will continue to accelerate and every aspect of our lives will be touched by this and how we deal with will define our future and as citizens become more connected," said the new Chancellor.

"Technology will drive everything in the future and will displace traditional jobs and our (UWI's) challenge will be to navigate through this to avoid social chaos," he said.

He added: "UWI has a pivotal role to play to prepare young people to face a changing world and UWI does not have a moment to waste as change is upon us and the needs for the undergraduate are morphing as we speak."

He said that days of standing on shore and wondering what the outside world is like are long gone and now everyone can see everything for themselves and created levels of expectation from youth that must be satisfied.

"If I suggest now and to the end of my term, artificial intelligence would have rendered obsolete many professions that exist since the Romans and either we join the revolution to accept a state of constant change and use this technology to bridge the divide," said Bermudez.

He added that he would not consider the other option of not embracing change as it was not even worth considering as it involved failure, disorder and poverty.



**NEW CHANCELLOR:**  
Robert Bermudez

