

NEWS

UWI graduates underemployed

JULIEN NEAVES

NEW Principal of the University of the West Indies (UWI), St Augustine campus Professor Brian Copeland said there is unprecedented levels of underemployment of UWI graduates even in the high demand professions of medicine and law. He made the comments in his inaugural speech as the ninth principal of the campus during his induction ceremony held on Saturday night at the Daaga Auditorium, UWI, St Augustine.

Copeland said that he accepted the challenge to nurture their students to spot commercial opportunities and derive novel, ingenious and workable solutions to economic, societal and ecological challenges.

He said that two major initiatives of UWI's five year strategic plan is to reform the core education processes and increase access to a broader base of students and

secondly innovation where they move from concepts to commercial reality. On innovation Copeland explained that they want to create spin off companies, with the first before the end of the year and one new company every two years.

Copeland said that this country needs thousands of export oriented small and micro enterprise companies. Copeland, an engineer and academic by profession and the first winner of the Order of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago for being part of the G-Pan development team, succeeds previous St Augustine Principal Professor Clement Sankat.

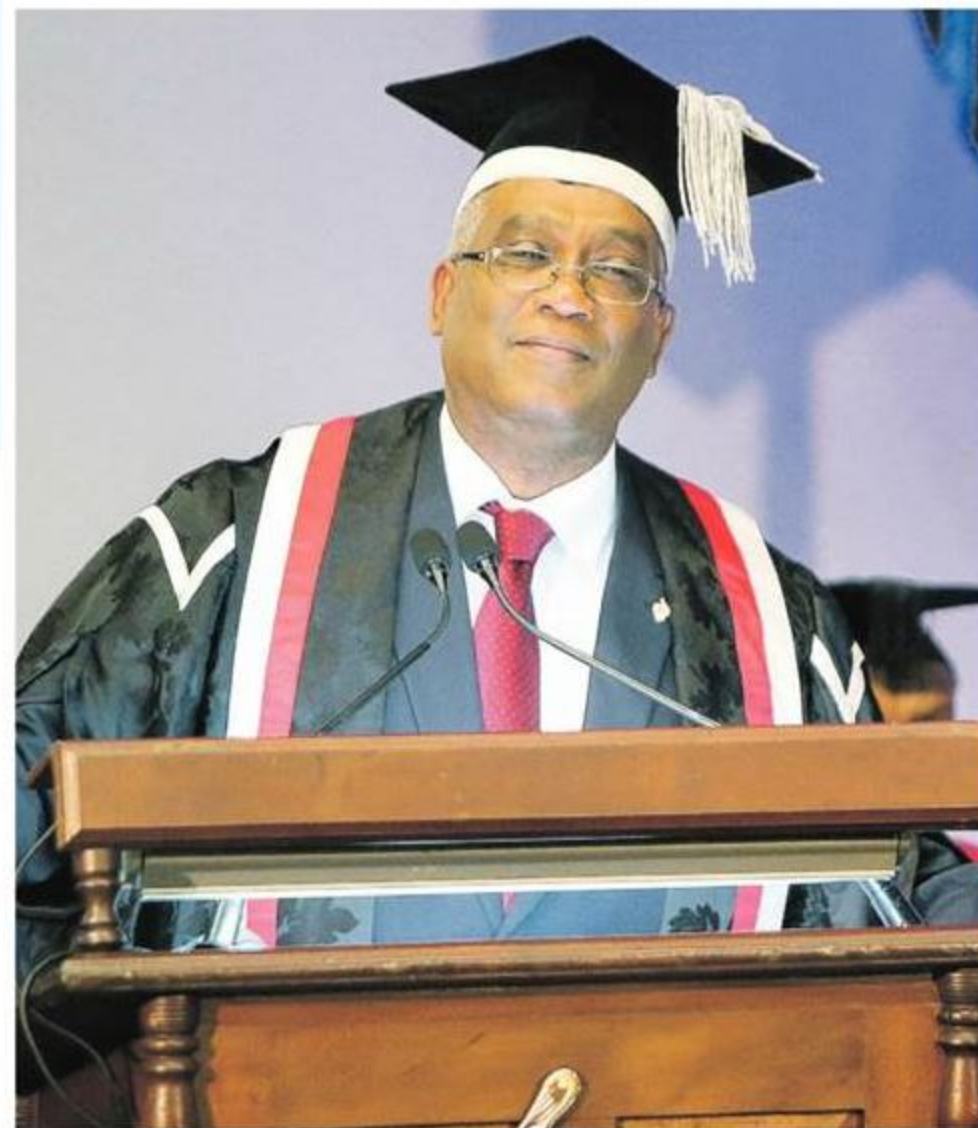
Copeland, also co-creator of the steelpan "synthesiser" called the percussive harmonic instrument (PHI), said that while Government's interest in the steelpan initiatives project was solely focused on the now decade old G-Pan he saw the project as part of a greater strategy to entrench

Trinidad and Tobago "as the unquestionable leader in the global steel pan industry through aggressive research, development and innovation of steelpan technology."

He explained that he the steelpan as the cornerstone of a new culture of innovation-led entrepreneurship.

He said that neither the steelpan nor the PHI had realised their full market potential. He expressed hope that with this Government's renewed focus on innovation as an element of the national development strategy "some consideration would be given to the steelpan industry as an opportunity for economic diversification."

On his appointment as principal Copeland thanked everyone who enabled him on his journey including his lecturers at UWI, his family and late former Prime Minister Patrick Manning for his encouragement.



New UWI, St Augustine Campus principal Prof Brian Copeland during his inaugural address at the Daaga Auditorium on campus over the weekend. **PHOTO BY AZLAN MOHAMMED**

Copeland, whose mother was Barbadian, said he always considered himself a Caribbean man born on Trinidad. He added that he is "fiercely Caribbean at heart" and he felt anguish at the collapse of the West Indian Federation. He expressed hope that "one day

Caribbean nations will unite under one flag" and he dubbed this one nation "Caribia."

Copeland said that as principal he looked forward to supporting Caribbean development which was the only reason he accepted the appointment.