

Kamla: Donkey logic in GATE changes

LAS LOMAS

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WHY is The University of the West Indies (The UWI) being watered down?

This was the question asked by Opposition Leader Kamla Persad-Bissessar on Monday as she said reducing the entry qualifications for university courses was a retrograde step.

Persad-Bissessar said her administration had increased tertiary education participation from approximately eight per cent in 2002 to an estimated 65.23 per cent in 2015.

She promised that if they returned to office, her party would "open the GATE".

She was speaking at a United National Congress (UNC) meeting at Las Lomas Government Primary school on Monday.

The UWI has taken a decision to reduce the entry qualifications for its Certificate in Public Administration (CPA) programme.

The Grade Point Average (GPA) numbers have also been reduced for degree programmes in Political Science and Behavioural Science.

The UWI will also be discontinuing its evening university programmes.

"Today, I am appalled. I am incensed and I am angry. They are cutting the evening programmes for the BSc in Social Sciences. They are



ON THE ROAD: Opposition Leader Kamla Persad-Bissessar speaks to soca artiste Black during the UNC's Monday Night Forum at the Las Lomas Government Primary School. At left is Carol Central MP Dr Rhoe Towrie. —Photo: JERMANE CRICKSHANK

cutting it for the CPA—the Certificate in Public Administration. These are courses where people who were working could take these courses, but they are going to stop it," said Persad-Bissessar.

Quoting from a document, she said the enrolment rates from 2010 to 2015 were over 1,500-plus but offers for 2017 in the Social Sciences

Faculty were 186.

Persad-Bissessar said while The UWI in St Augustine was cutting its evening programmes to the disadvantage of people who needed to work and study, the campuses in Jamaica and Barbados continued their evening programmes.

"In two years they have been in government, they have managed

to destroy the years of hard work by our administration. We are seeing the reversal of the progress we made. We warned this Government that nothing good would come from closing the GATE," she said.

"I want to say you better put us back in government, I will guarantee that we will open the GATE for all the people of our country," she said.

Benefit the rich

Persad-Bissessar said reducing the qualification criteria would benefit the rich.

"Now they are saying you could come in with lesser qualifications. It means then that those who cannot afford to come, the numbers obviously will be less because they cannot afford it and their answer to that is to say people with lesser qualifications, 'we'll let you in' because maybe they can pass the means test? I don't know," she said.

"So if you rich but you not bright, you do not have the qualifications, don't worry we'll take care of the one per cent. You have the money, you can pay it, you can have lesser qualifications, you come we will take you," she added.

She said students who were qualified and not rich would not be able to afford university education as their parents would be burdened with expenses associated with the high cost of living.

"What kind of upside-down donkey logic is that? It is also showing that this Government is only concerned about the super elites and the one per cent," she said. "I call on the Rowley government to stop governing for the one per cent and govern for the whole of Trinidad and Tobago."