

George A. O. Alleyne
Chancellor
University of the West Indies
October 22, 2011

**Supporting national and regional development
Cave Hill, Barbados***

Greetings,

My first words must be ones of welcome to this graduation ceremony of the Cave Hill Campus of the University of the West Indies. Some of you have come here to join with your loved ones in the celebration of their achievements, but I wish to believe that all of you are here because you have some stake in the Institution and wish it well. This ceremony or analogous ones have marked universities for centuries, although they may be called by different names. In some places they are called commencement exercises, but they all signify an occasion for granting of a diploma and the marking of a passage from one stage to another-the commencement of a new phase of life. There is passage from the stage of organized, institutionally directed accumulation of information to form knowledge, to the stage in which the balance is towards self-directed learning. There is passage from the stage of student to that of alumnus, and I trust that the latter will involve a deepening of your relationship with the University.

The durability of the tradition and ritual of graduation is in keeping with the durability of the institution itself. The famous educator and former President of the University of California, Clarke Kerr is credited with the following comment.

“Taking as a starting point 1530 when the Lutheran Church was founded, some 66 institutions that existed then still exist today in the Western world in some recognizable form; the Catholic Church, the Lutheran Church, the Parliaments of Iceland and the Isle of Man and 62 universities. They have experienced wars, revolutions, depressions and industrial transformations, and have come out less changed than almost any other segment of society”

Of course history is no guarantee of the future, but it is salutary for us all; students, faculty and the general public, to reflect from time to time on the reasons for our survival and why we must commit to the continuation and perfecting of the institution. Universities like ours survive and flourish because of their critical importance to society as transformational institutions and indeed they are among the most important of the social institutions with the capacity to transform societies. This is so globally, it is so locally. They are transformational through fulfillment of their three essential and core functions that represent a trampoline for the

* Presented at the UWI Graduation Ceremony, Cave Hill Campus, October 22, 2011

full development of modern societies. They are the most important centers for the creation of knowledge, they represent critical loci for the preservation of our cultural heritage and the two are linked inextricably to the third, which is the preparation of students and the inculcation of the habit of learning.

Even in the face of the evidence of the validity of the above, I have been struck forcibly recently by the queries as to the importance of their roles, whether they are fulfilling them adequately and having an impact on society. I am intrigued by how often there is criticism that we are not acceding to student needs and demands; that tertiary education is too costly and we do not deliver the graduates the employers' need; that we are not responsive in our research to the imperatives of national need and circumstance.

In the case of the University in general, and the Cave Hill Campus in particular, there must be no doubt as to the extent to which those roles are being fulfilled. There have been major strides in the preparation of students. Total enrolment at Cave Hill stands at 8,634 with 7,652 undergraduates and 982 postgraduates, and I note that the Campus had shown a pleasing increase in relation to male enrolment. This year the trend has continued with the Faculty of Pure and Applied Sciences having the highest percentage in terms of individual faculties. This increase comes as the Campus has become more involved in targeting males, having launched the Males at Cave Hill (MATCH) project, an outreach effort to boys in high school geared at addressing the issue of low male enrolment at the tertiary level.

This year some 1,254 students will graduate from the five Faculties at the Cave Hill Campus including 258 at the postgraduate level. There are 80 First Class Honors and 17 of the postgraduate degrees are research ones. We must congratulate both the students as well as the Faculty on these achievements,

During the academic year 2010/2011 the process of curriculum enhancement continued with a number of new programs and courses introduced, while others were revised to assure relevance. Within the Faculty of Social Sciences new Minors were approved, including the BSc. Sociology with Cultural Studies and the BSc. Sociology with Criminology. The Cave Hill School of Business revised its diploma in Banking and Financial Services and gained approval for the diploma and MBA in Entrepreneurship.

The course offered by the Faculty of Pure and Applied Sciences in Coral Reef Ecology is of direct and immediate relevance locally and globally. The practical importance of the courses offered in medical electronics and medical instrumentation is immediately obvious to those who have seen the graveyards of unused or unusable instruments in our health facilities. Our Faculty of Humanities and Education will be offering a minor in Communications Studies which will include courses in areas such as advanced technical writing and writing for the mass media. The Faculty of Medical Sciences introduced graduate training for the Master's degree in Public Health and the MPhil/PHD in Epidemiology. Co-curricular courses were offered in such areas as Dance as civic expression and alcohol and other drug abuse.

The research enterprise at Cave Hill is active and vibrant. The Campus Research Week was held February 21-26 2011 under the theme 'Research at Cave Hill: Working Together for

National and Regional Development'. The program featured the output of individual faculties on different days and included ten research symposia, five lunchtime panel discussions, five public lectures and a range of other events.

Given the global emphasis on the environment, I was pleased to note that the Green Economy Scoping Study was officially launched at Cave Hill in March 2011 by the Prime Minister of Barbados. This study by the UWI comes within the context of a partnership between the Government of Barbados and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) for a resource efficient green economy in Barbados. The study will analyze several crucial lateral linkages between sectors such as transportation, tourism, housing, agriculture and fisheries. In addition to these sectoral approaches, it also seeks to consider the implications for the inter-linked issues of water, energy, land and waste management. The findings will assist Barbados in transitioning to a green economy.

I must mention the research in the Faculty of Medical Sciences in the area of the noncommunicable diseases. Through the Chronic Disease research Center-the brainchild of Professor Henry Fraser, Barbados now has the first multi-disease registry for these diseases in the Caribbean and is able to report on the prevalence of stroke, heart attack and cancer. The Barbados Salt Intake study in collaboration with the Ministry of Health is of critical importance. It is clear that if one had to choose two of the most cost effective methods for reducing the prevalence of NCDS it would be to raise the taxes on tobacco and reduce the population's intake of salt. There is global interest in the results of this research here. The Center for Resource Management and Environmental Studies (CERMES) continues to play an important role in research on sustainable development in the Caribbean as a whole and has attracted just over \$US 2 million for projects in environmental research, climate change and capacity building, fisheries and the green economy initiatives.

The Science Park Initiative, an inter-disciplinary venture including the involvement of the Faculty of Pure and Applied Sciences, the Medical Sciences and the International Office, saw the development of exciting modern course offerings and international collaborations. A series of programmes and lectures supporting the development of science across the country have also been carried out.

Every good university must seek to move and influence beyond its walls, and I am pleased to note the thrust towards internationalization involving all Faculties that has been accentuated in the past year. This process is driven by the International Office which has significantly expanded the range of destinations to which UWI students can go and participate in study abroad exchanges. There has been a significant expansion in exchanges with Scandinavian countries.

The Faculty of Social Sciences, in addition to such existing programs as the University of California Student exchange; and the study abroad programs at Disney through Central Michigan University has also implemented a Brazilian initiative which has brought two new Taught Masters on Stream - work has also been conducted towards establishment of a Financial Risk Management Unit. The Ministry of Industry and Business Development has signed an agreement with the EU for a program in financial management which will help to develop the

skills necessary to better support and protect the future of the off-shore financial sector and is working with the Frankfurt School of Finance (IIFRR) to build an international institute/regional financial center at Cave Hill.

The Faculty of Humanities and Education is now also in the fifth year of its program of Teaching English to senior executives of the Venezuelan National Oil Company, which now brings returns of \$1 million annually and is collaborating with the Government of China to establish a Confucius Institute whose offerings will include the teaching of Mandarin and Chinese studies.

The Faculty of Pure and Applied Sciences is also collaborating with the University of Middlesex and the University of Ontario in new programs and has launched an international renewable energy project in partnership with St. Augustine and universities from Germany, Fiji, and Mauritius.

I wish to thank our many partners, local and international for their support. There is an active programme of partnerships with the private sector and Memoranda of Understanding have been undertaken with a number of partners including First Caribbean International Bank. Our international partners include agencies such as USAID, AUSAID, the EU, the British High Commission and UN agencies such as FAO, UNFPA and UNEP.

The International Office has also negotiated an agreement with Bio Jet, a global biofuels distributor which has agreed to fund the Bio Jet Biofuels Research Institute at Cave Hill as well as support internships and graduate scholarships in logistics and supply chain management.

Significant progress had been made in the delivery of services to students including healthcare. A full time Medical Officer has been appointed to the Students Health Clinic and other management efficiencies have been achieved with the student records computerized. A Campus pharmacy has also been established.

These are but a few of the areas in which the University is creating new knowledge and developing new programs that are of immediate relevance to many aspects of the lives and livelihoods of the Barbadian and Caribbean public. I congratulate the Principal and his staff warmly for these initiatives, and must also congratulate him and others of his staff for the honors and recognition they have received.

Sir Hilary received the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Letters from the University of Glasgow; Prof. Eudine Barriteau, Deputy Principal received the 10th Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Triennial Award for Women; Prof. Rose-Marie Antoine,; and Ms. Tracy Robinson, from the Faculty of Law were elected as members of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) for a four-year term commencing January 1, 2012. We must also congratulate our Vice-Chancellor who has been awarded the Cacique Crown of Honor by the Government of Guyana-the third highest national honor.

My congratulations are even warmer because of the stresses which the Campus faced in the past year. The academic year 2010/2011 saw the Cave Hill Campus continue to operate in an

environment of severe financial constraint occasioned by the protracted global economic recession. While acknowledging the unavoidably dampening effect of this reality in some critical areas of growth, the Campus continued to mount innovative and creative responses and to redouble efforts to ensure Cave Hill's continued viability and increased relevance to the regional development agenda.

In spite of the stresses, this Campus is generating new information or interpreting the old and not only disseminating it, but inculcating it into the young and in addition preparing them to be able to absorb the new information that will surely come and apply it to the solution of current problems. Tertiary education in Universities is necessary for the creation, dissemination and application of knowledge and providing the milieu for innovation. Countries that do not have and use this capacity are destined for the dustbins of history. That is the reason why the state has a vested interest in tertiary education in Universities like ours. As the World Bank could demonstrate fairly recently, tertiary education *"is necessary for the effective creation, dissemination and application of knowledge and for building the technical and professional capacity"*.

Government support is essential and critical for three reasons; first, because tertiary education creates externalities in the sense of external benefits. One of these relates to technological innovation as a result of research. The increased skill in the labor force that for example comes from the graduates of this Campus is another such external benefit. Tertiary education as has been seen here in Barbados promotes equity in the society. It levels the playing field and allows the ones who are intellectually gifted but financially challenged to play on the same field. The third reason is that the tertiary level produces the human and informational resources for the educational system as a whole.

The question is often put, how should the state support the university and there have been and will continue to be debate about the extent to which government should support University education and how it should do so. One of the points often ignored in this discussion is that the answer to that question is not solely a technical issue, but one that is highly political. In the current context of the support by the Government of Barbados, I am cheered by the fact that time after time in other spheres Barbados has not hewed to what has been considered established dogma, but has determined that its way should be context specific. I therefore have every confidence in the sagacity of the political directorate in Barbados and we continue to be grateful for the Government's support to this Campus and the University and its several other expressions of trust in us.

Let me now congratulate you graduands and wish you well. I expect you to be good alumni and contribute to your University and your Campus to which you owe so much. May you continue to do us University proud, and I hope that from time to time you will return to this Campus and refresh the memories you have of the place.

To your relatives and loved ones, I say thank you for having faith in the Cave Hill Campus of the University of the West Indies. I hope you are pleased with the result of the time your loved ones spent here and continue to have an interest in what is done here to enhance the development of Barbados and the Caribbean.

I thank you.