



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES
ST. AUGUSTINE, TRINIDAD & TOBAGO, WEST INDIES
OFFICE OF THE CAMPUS PRINCIPAL

Pro Vice-Chancellor and Campus Principal

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Remarks by the Campus Principal

The UWI School of Nursing – Pinning Ceremony
*“Living the Legacy: Transforming Nursing Practice through Commitment
to Education and Sound Ethical Values”*

Upper El Dorado Community Centre, College Road, El Dorado
Wednesday 19th October, 2016 | 2:00pm

Salutations

- Minister of Education, the Honourable Anthony Garcia
- Dean of the Faculty of Medical Sciences, Professor Terence Seemungal
- Director of The UWI School of Nursing, Dr. Oscar Ocho
- Other Faculty and Staff from The UWI School of Nursing
- Specially Invited Guests
- Graduands
- Members of the Media

- Good afternoon all.
- Dr Ocho, as you know, I virtually grew up on Ward 8, the Eye and ENT Ward, at San Fernando General as my mother spent most of her years in the nursing profession there. It is in this regard, that I extend most sincere thanks for your invitation to bring remarks at this important occasion of the 10th anniversary of the Pinning Ceremony for School of Nursing graduands.
- Before I continue, allow me to recognize the Minister of Education, the Honourable Anthony Garcia. Mr Garcia, history shows that the government of Trinidad and Tobago has always had a strong commitment to nursing education, going as far back as the 19th century when it spearheaded the Cocorite Leprosarium to train nurses for the care of lepers. As such, we at The UWI St. Augustine Campus are proud of the fact that you have partnered with us in growing the nursing profession in Trinidad and Tobago to the level it is at today where nurses can now be qualified at the Bachelors and Masters levels. Significantly, Minister, today we have among our graduands, the very first cohort of students from the Master's programme.
- Let me now extend warmest congratulations to you, the graduates of the BSc and MSc in Nursing – well done. Today belongs to you. You have all worked diligently to reach this stage. Moreover, as this is the first time that I am appearing before you in my capacity as Pro Vice-Chancellor and

Campus Principal, I am doubly proud to note your dedication, commitment and resilience as leaders in the field of nursing.

- Ceremonies such as these are very important to The UWI St. Augustine Campus as they fulfil our commitment to academic excellence and our goal of providing service and support to our communities. The theme of this year's Pinning Ceremony is very powerful, and one which I would encourage you to adopt as you start your professional nursing career, it is *"Living the Legacy: Transforming Nursing Practice through Commitment to Education and Sound Ethical Values"*..... let me focus on the 'living the legacy' part –
- The nursing pinning ceremony is a rite of passage, a solemn occasion that dates as far back as the 12th century when the Knights Hospitallers were honored with a Maltese pin for caring for injured soldiers. In 1860 Florence Nightingale was honored with the Red Cross pin for the great nursing work she did in the war in Crimea. The practice really took off when in 1880, a class of nurses at the Bellevue Hospital School of Nursing in New York were the first ever to be pinned on graduation.

The history of nursing education in Trinidad and Tobago has not always been a celebrated one. It dates back to as early as 1885 when untrained nurses delivered care to mentally ill patients at a Lunatic Asylum in Belmont. We have made tremendous strides since then and Trinidad's nursing education has become renowned for its high quality and standards.

- SO now, Class of 2016, we use this symbolic rite of passage to declare with you your readiness for and passage into the world of the nursing profession. Every time you wear that pin, I hope that you remember its noble history and the legacy it carries. I also hope that you remember the faculty, the staff and your colleagues at The University of the West Indies nursing programme that were part of your journey and the start of your professional life story.
- You, better that anyone else can testify that being a nurse is not just about grades. No book can teach you how to cry with a patient, no class can teach you how to tell someone's family that their parents are dying or dead and no member of faculty can really teach you how to find dignity in giving a patient a bed bath. These qualities can only be nurtured and encouraged. Being a nurse is about being able to love and care for people when they are at their weakest moments. *To borrow an anonymous quote – When you're a nurse, you know that every day you will touch a life or a life will touch yours. Through this commitment you will begin to live the legacy of being the best nurse you can be.*
- As part of my vision for education and UWI, we are focusing on influencing an education agenda that, *inter alia*, emphasizes deep learning; that is seamless; that fosters creative and critical thinking, that is solution oriented and supports teamwork and the creation of strong networks. All these elements are inculcated in the life of a nurse and the values espoused in the nursing profession. The role of the nurse is constantly evolving in order to meet the changing needs of health service provision and the changing needs of patients, their families and carers – and I know that our

approach at UWI to educating nurses evolves to match these changing needs as we keep our hands on the pulse of new developments not only nationally, but regionally and internationally. In 2005, the Bachelor of Sciences degree in nursing was launched with just 30 undergraduate students. This year we have over 400 students in programmes including Bachelor of Sciences pre and post registration degrees, a Masters in advanced nursing and for the first time, a cohort of students from the new paediatric haematology Nursing Diploma programme.

- Your profession of nursing is one that is a noble discipline as thousands of persons will be counting on you to provide quality health care. Your role as a nurse is a privilege, and provides an opportunity to serve. Continue to live the legacy established by the “Lady of the Lamp”, Florence Nightingale and be brave like the Caribbean’s own Mary Seacole – a free black Jamaican, untrained nurse who provided nursing aide to British soldiers during the Crimean war despite being rejected at least 4 times because of her skin colour. She went on to establish a facility that provided caregivers, medical attention and great comfort to the sick and the wounded.
- Congratulations once again and I extend best wishes to you, as you create your legacy in nursing. Thank you.