



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

OFFICE OF THE CAMPUS PRINCIPAL

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“Inspire, Innovate, Go Global”

**Welcome and Opening Remarks by UWI Principal and Pro Vice-Chancellor,
Professor Brian Copeland**

Good Morning!

Welcome to the 2017 Distinguished Leadership and Innovation Conference. For those of you who have come to Trinidad and Tobago specifically for this conference, I do hope you have time to enjoy your brief stay here.

I extend a very special welcome to our three featured ‘Masters’: **Pankaj Ghemawat** - Leading Economist & Global Strategist, named the youngest “guru” included in the “*Guide to the Greatest Management Thinkers of All Time*” - published by The Economist.

Sir Ken Robinson, whose 25 years of research on the subject have made him an acclaimed expert on Creativity and Innovation; and **Jim Collins**, author of the best-sellers ‘Good to Great’, ‘How the Mighty Fall’, ‘Great by Choice’, and ‘Built to Last’.

The presentations by Sir Ken Robinson and Mr Jim Collins will be beamed to us via live interactive satellite, vividly demonstrating – if anyone in the 21st century needs proof – of the critical importance of appropriately used technology to share information and increase knowledge.

Over the last 15 years or so, the Distinguished Leadership and Innovation Conference (DLIC for short) has established a reputation for being a premier Caribbean leadership conference, inspiring thought-provoking concepts in an environment made for creative thought and finding business solutions among peers.

Indeed, the Lok Jack GSB's motto: *Innovatus Ars Ducendi* – Innovating the Art of Leadership – is crystallised in today's theme – **Inspire, Innovate, Go Global**. You, who are among the 20,000 plus trained by the Lok Jack GSB locally, regionally, and internationally, are the ones to fulfil the vision of the individuals and corporations who joined with The University of the West Indies to set up this Business School.

The Lok Jack GSB is pursuing its goal to become the first Caribbean educational institution to hold the 'triple crown' of business school accreditation. They are well on the way in achieving that endeavour and this naturally leads us to the subject of things in threes.

In the March 2007 issue of *Harvard Business Review*, Pankaj Ghemawat points out that the main goal of any international strategy should be to manage the large differences that arise at the borders of markets. He offers what he calls the 'AAA Triangle' with each 'A' - *Adaptation, Aggregation, Arbitrage* - referring to a generic approach to global value creation. Each company must exercise strategic choice and, necessarily, some degree of prioritization.

The University of the West Indies has also developed its own Triple A strategy for survival and growth moving forward. Our plan is grounded in the vision that The UWI needs to facilitate

an **Access** revolution in higher education in the Caribbean, given the low level of enrolment at the tertiary level, regionally, and among the Caribbean diaspora. Low enrolment is not a phenomenon limited to this region; it is certainly affecting universities worldwide.

While Access is critical, we at The UWI also see **Alignment** with industry and regional governments as an important element of our mandate since this will strengthen the innovation capacity and capabilities of regional economies and lead to higher levels of growth.

Interestingly enough, just yesterday I opened a *Conference on Science, Technology and Innovation in the Caribbean*. That conference is considering ways in which we could strengthen regional co-operation for mutual success and sustained development. Achieving this developed country mode requires cutting edge scientific enquiry; product and process creation; product development; production, and services. It means having a mind set to turn all of these into commercial activity and, therefore, into revenue.

All of which can only become possible by consciously adopting a more aggressively innovative culture to strengthen the ability of companies to compete internationally and allow SMEs to develop for international markets. Such a cultural shift is perhaps our greatest challenge.

Unquestionably, too, it speaks directly to economic diversification and has implications for education at all levels but none more so than at the tertiary level.

And now for a promotional plug. *(pause)*

Local and regional businesses have not sufficiently taken advantage of the capabilities existing within our regional university to allow for the establishment of an innovation-generating relationship. We are willing and ready to use our resources to push boundaries in research; and to use that research to push products and processes on a total operational basis. Relevant, directed research will inevitably be in step with the current and future critical needs of Caribbean societies. It's a symbiotic relationship and business must want this too. In that way, Academia/Business can together generate wealth for the material benefit of all.

You will agree with me that the current economic situation in the Caribbean makes such an approach even more of an imperative. This economic quandary leads to the final ‘A’ in The UWI Triangle, a recognition of the anaemic growth of Caribbean economies. We see many, sometimes missed, opportunities in the international marketplace and, as such, have identified a need to be more **Agile** so as to take advantage of these opportunities.

These three concepts - **Access**, **Alignment**, **Agility** - have grounded The UWI strategic response to the challenges and opportunities in our operating environment.

Here comes the Call to Action. *(pause)*

You are among the brightest minds in the region and all in one room today. Engage with us so that, together, we can break the cycle of dependence. It is time to turn vision into belief; belief into concrete solutions.

I wish you a productive day of challenging our current realities. Let us blow out the past, find release from our social and economic suffering, and actively set out ways to achieve a Caribbean rebirth – our Nirvana. I thank you.