

**ADDRESS BY CAMPUS PRINCIPAL AT  
UWI LIFE 2007 – AUGUST 28<sup>TH</sup>, 2007 – 5.00 P.M. AT SPEC**

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I am delighted to be able to welcome you all, parents, spouses, other relatives of our new students, to this UWI Life Forum. It is our attempt to help you to understand the experience that your young people will be enjoying here at UWI, St. Augustine Campus. You are and will continue to be their most important supporters. In fact, they would not be about to enter the University without your constant support, care and love. You have been with them all along and you need to know that we at UWI recognize your tremendous contribution to creating our students – the centre of the whole University enterprise.

Let me also say how pleased we are that your children or spouses have chosen to come to UWI. They are very bright people and they had lots of options; we are proud that UWI was their first choice. We do indeed receive a very high proportion of the nation's high achievers, in terms of C-SEC and 'A' Level or CAPE results. Thank you for encouraging the cohort of 2007 to come here. We are determined to ensure that none of them ever regret it.

In choosing UWI, your young people are entering a unique University which serves both regional and national needs. UWI serves 15 states of the English-speaking Caribbean, and it has four (4) campuses (St. Augustine, Mona, Cave Hill, and The Open Campus which serves the whole region). Students benefit

from the regional nature of UWI. They meet people from the other Caribbean territories and they have the opportunity to visit and spend semesters at one of the other campuses – please encourage your new students to take up these opportunities. There are also several exchange programmes with Universities abroad, including in the USA, Canada and the United Kingdom, which students can participate in. So your young people can mix and mingle with their counterparts from Trinidad & Tobago, of course, but also from the wider region and beyond. Our faculty who will teach them are also international.

We at St. Augustine – now the largest campus in terms of student numbers – want our new students to have a great experience here. Of course we want them to take their education seriously, to study hard, and to do well in their academic courses and programmes. We have a very well qualified teaching staff, and your young people will be exposed to recognized scholars in their field, who have published books and articles on their subjects. We hope they will enjoy their classes, deepen their critical and analytical skills, and become articulate and thoughtful persons, as well as mastering the content which every discipline requires.

We also want their time at St. Augustine to be personally and culturally enriching. The campus is a very lively place with lots going on outside the classroom. Encourage them to participate – in the work of the Students' Guild, in the many student societies and clubs, in sports, in the arts, and I could go on; to attend

some of the many after-work lectures, cultural performances and discussions which take place on campus. They can learn a new language at the Centre for Language Learning, they can get involved in dance, drama, music. Learning and personal development take place both inside and outside the classroom and feed on each other.

Let me say something especially to the parents of our new students: University life is a time for growth and experimentation. This can be an anxious time for you, especially if your child is young and perhaps has always lived a sheltered life. Your task is the difficult one of balancing between the need to give **support** and the need to give **space** to your child, now an adult. Last year former Principal, Dr. Tewarie spoke about the need to “*let go*”, he was making the same point. Your child will always need your support and love and care and you will remain his or her primary support network, as before. But you must also give your child **space** - to grow, change, develop, experiment. That’s what happens in any University experience worth its name. University students should feel a sense of **freedom**: most are young, not yet burdened with full-time jobs, mortgages, family responsibilities. They must be allowed to find themselves – even if that seems to involve all kinds of weird behaviour. And yes, some of them will fall in love here, and no, you won’t always approve of the boyfriend or girlfriend (that’s if you even know anything about it). Please give them their space while always being there for them when they need and want it.

We want to do everything possible to ensure that our new students enjoy their experience here at UWI, that they are safe, and that they learn and grow. You have a vital role in this as their primary supporters. Thank you for encouraging them to come to UWI, and let us work together to make their University life deeply rewarding.

August 28<sup>th</sup>, 2007