

**ADDRESS BY CAMPUS PRINCIPAL AT  
UWI LIFE FOR STUDENTS**

UWI Sport & Physical Education Centre (SPEC)  
Friday 5<sup>th</sup> September, 2008

Thank you Nikki.

Deputy Principal, Professor Rhoda Reddock,

Campus Registrar, Mr. Jeremy Callaghan,

Campus Bursar, Mrs. Lylla Bada,

Deans of Faculties

Acting Campus Librarian, Mrs. Jennifer Joseph

President and Executive Members of Guild of Students

Members of the Media

And all our new students,

Good morning.

I am delighted to welcome you new students to the St. Augustine Campus of the University of the West Indies. It is great to see so many of you here and I know you will have a great day enjoying the programme that we've put together for you. You are the centre of this enterprise and without you we will not be here. I don't intend to talk to you for long – there is a lot else on the agenda, and you are going to especially enjoy the feature speaker, Dr. Douglas--I just want to make a few quick points.

First, let me thank you for choosing UWI. You are all very bright people and you had lots of options. I think you made the right choice, the same choice that a high proportion of our high achievers at A-Levels and CAPE have made over the years.

By making this choice, you have become part of a unique, regional University, and this is my second point: UWI meets regional as well as national needs. It serves 15 different states and has four campuses (St. Augustine, Mona, Cave Hill and the new Open Campus which serve the whole region). As students you will benefit tremendously from UWI's regional character. You will meet students from all over the Caribbean and you can also get a chance to visit and spend time at another campus. In fact, 50 of you will be chosen to visit other campuses at the end of your first year, and there will also be opportunities to spend an entire semester at Mona or Cave Hill through our inter-campus exchange programme. I really hope that some of you will take advantage of these opportunities.

Third, UWI is expanding its international links and partnerships. You will meet students from outside the region and you are encouraged to participate in exchange and study abroad programmes with foreign Universities. You will also find that some of your teachers, the faculty, are international. We want you to be exposed to the global marketplace of ideas and education while being securely grounded in a unique Caribbean university.

Now naturally we want you to do very well in your academic programmes and we expect that you will. Your teachers include internationally and regionally recognized scholars who have published books and articles on their subjects. So my fourth point is to urge you to take your studies seriously but always to enjoy them – passion for a subject is a major reason for high achievement. You are all high achievers already, but we can help you to develop your study techniques and your time management skills, which will really be important to get the most out of your courses. And we want you to evolve into critical thinkers, analytical, with good communication skills – all of that will be part of your academic programmes.

If you are going to do well at the UWI, and we all want you to do very well, you must at all times remain focused on your primary goal – to get a good education and become a better person, trained for the “world of work” and to provide service to our community and our country. At the University, you will have to become self-learned. You will have to show a great deal of self motivation and discipline in your approach to your studies. Your course Lecturers will teach, instruct, direct and guide, but you must be willing learners. That is why you come here. While you excelled at primary and secondary schools, this is a new beginning. You are all starting from a level playing field here. For those of you who may not have shone brilliantly before, this is your time. As you prepare for this semester, classes/lectures, coursework, mid-term tests, exams, and yes

these come very quickly, first week of December, do not lose focus, your time management skills, notetaking skills, reading skills, speaking skills, writing skills for assignments like essays, short research papers, laboratory reports etc., examination preparation skills, test taking skills etc. you must reflect upon and if you need help here, you must ask for it. I urge you to pay attention to these important skills as these can make the difference between “shining brilliantly” or just being another average student. One sure way of doing well here to begin with, is simply going to your lectures and listening to your lecturers. These are nuggets of information and knowledge you would gather in a “classroom” that would not be captured in “second-hand notetaking”. So that if for whatever reason you are “missing classes”, the Principal is saying to you that you have set yourself up for a “downward slide”. To excel, go beyond the lectures and the notes. Read widely, including your textbooks, and make use of the library. That is a real depository of knowledge and when you really get to know its value, you can get “hooked on it”. That is another challenge! Get to know your subject librarian. Get to know your Dean, Deputy Dean, Head of Department, your Departmental secretary, your Tutor and engage your lecturers in these research – what is it that they do at UWI besides teaching. One day you will set your sights for a higher degree, if you have not done so already, a Masters or a Doctoral Degree for example. UWI and your lecturers can create this opportunity for you. Get to know them!

Fifth, always remember that learning isn't only confined to the classroom. We really want you to have a fully active student life. You've heard from your Guild President already. Do take advantage of all the activities going on. I know this is easier for the Hall residents, or for students living or lodging close to campus. But even if you're a commuting student, try to engage in at least one or two activities. Join a club or society; get involved in the Guild; take part in campus sports, drama, dance, and music. Learn a foreign language: the Centre for Language Learning offers a wide range of courses at different levels in several languages, and competence in a foreign language is something all University graduates should have. We have a system of co-curricular credits where you can earn the equivalent of a course through participation in these kinds of activities – but you should want to engage fully in campus life for greater benefits than simply credits.

So to sum up and make my sixth point – we really do want you to enjoy the total UWI Life experience. Most of you are full-time students, you do not have big family or financial responsibilities – this is a very special time in your life. Freedom, space, a chance to find yourself, to experiment, to make friends – to expand your mind and your horizons - all these pieces make up part of your University life. But you should always remember that responsibility goes with freedom, and we do expect you to live up to our code of ethics and to always behave in ways that do credit to the University as well as yourselves. Dr. Douglas, in her own special way, will talk to you about all of that, but we in

Campus Administration want you to have a positive and enriching experience here. Focus, balance and moderation should be watchwords. The only excess that I would encourage is “study hard”. Watch out for your safety and security, we will do our part, but don’t bring trouble to yourselves. UWI Life has so much to offer and it’s for you to seize it all, each in his or her own way. Enjoy!

Have a successful stay with us and may these years be your best years!

Professor Clement Sankat  
Pro Vice Chancellor & Campus Principal  
September 6<sup>th</sup>, 2008