

**ADDRESS BY CAMPUS PRINCIPAL AT
UWI LIFE SUPPORT NETWORK**

**WEDNESDAY 3RD SEPTEMBER 2008
6.10 P.M. – SPEC**

Deputy Principal, Professor Rhoda Reddock,
Campus Registrar, Mr. Jeremy Callaghan,
Campus Bursar, Mrs. Lylla Bada,
Acting Campus Librarian, Mrs. Jennifer Joseph
Deans, Director of Security – Mr. Richardson
Director of Student Services – Ms. Deirdre Charles
Director of Marketing, Mrs. Dawn-Marie De Four-Gill
Assistant Registrar (Student Admissions) – Mrs. Pat Brown
Senior Accountant – Students : Ms. Elawatee Dookeran
Dr. Neil Singh / Mrs. Betty McComie

I am delighted to be here to welcome you all, parents, spouses, other supporters of our new students, to this year's UWI Life programme. I'm very happy with the programme that we have in store for you. It promises to be very helpful for you, in terms of understanding the experience that your new students will be enjoying here at UWI, St. Augustine Campus.

Sending a son or daughter off to University can be an exciting and stressful experience all at once. So many emotions wrapped up in your most valuable creation leaves many questions to be answered:

- *Is someone watching out for him/her?*
- *I hope s/he is going to eat well...*
- *Is s/he going to call every day and keep me updated?*
- *What happens if s/he doesn't like their roommate?*
- *Who do I contact if I have a question?*
- *What happens if s/he gets sick while away at school?*
- *Will someone call and update me on how s/he is adjusting to living away from home?*
- *Is the staff there well-trained?*
- *My son or daughter has a medical condition...will his/her medical care continue while at school?*

The list could go on forever, right? These are questions that reflect genuine parental concern and love and I do hope that all of us at the UWI can support you here. I urge you to get to know our Director of Student Services and her staff.

You also need to know that we at UWI recognize your tremendous contribution to creating our students, who are at the very core of the whole University enterprise. You have been with them all along, and 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.

Let me also say how pleased we are that your children or spouses have chosen to come to UWI. People who are as bright as they are have 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 2008 to come here. We are determined to ensure that none of them ever regrets it.

In choosing UWI, your new students 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 our newly launched 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 new students can mix and mingle with their counterparts from Trinidad & Tobago, of course, but also from the wider region and beyond. Our faculty, some of whom are also international, will enhance their experience.

The St. Augustine Campus is the largest campus in terms of student numbers, and we want all of our new students to have a great time here. We want them to be successful. 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 new students will be exposed to

internationally recognised scholars in their field, who have published books and scholarly 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 master the content which every discipline requires.

Top Ten Reasons to Stay on Campus or Live Nearby

I urge you to lend support to your son's or daughter's request to stay on Campus or live nearby. While it is not possible for us to accommodate all our students on Campus, there are nevertheless many advantages if they study on or around

Campus, viz:

1. ***Less time on the Road***
2. ***Possibility of netter grades*** - Studies have shown that students who live on-campus get better grades, and are more likely to graduate in a timely manner. And with the number of courses requiring group projects at the University, being on-campus or nearby will allow your student to meet with other classmates and work together.
3. ***Making new friends*** - There is no easier way for your son or daughter to meet friends that they will keep for a lifetime than living on-campus.
4. ***The Library and Internet*** – All available on the Campus.

5. ***Better time management*** - One of the biggest challenges of being a student today is never having enough time to do ALL the things they want. Well, living on-campus or nearby may make those time-dependent decisions easier. By only being across the street from the heart of campus, students will find it much easier and more likely that they will become involved in campus organizations and sporting teams, and get assignments done ahead of time by accessing the resources of the University.
6. ***Enhanced security*** - We strive to make the Campus a secure environment.
7. ***Participation in Student Activities*** – More time for engagement in Campus cultural life.

We also want our students' 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 very strategic employment opportunities in various industries, 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 new student 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. 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 room - to grow, change, develop and discover themselves. That's what happens in any University experience worth its name. University students should feel a sense of **independence**: 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 new behaviour. 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. Encourage communication, find out how they are doing and continue to show love. But students must also be **responsible** – to you, the community, the country and the Campus. They must show respect for the laws of the land, rules of the Campus, our rich religious and cultural diversity and all that we have and cherish in Trinidad & Tobago and the Region.

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. I wish your children every success at the UWI and may your dreams come through.

Before I go, I want to thank the team led by Mrs. Dawn-Marie De Four-Gill.

Thank you.

Professor Clement Sankat
Pro Vice Chancellor & Campus Principal
September 3rd, 2008