

**Professor Clement Sankat, Pro Vice Chancellor and Campus
Principal
Matriculation Ceremony
Thursday 18th September, 2008
5.00 p.m.
JFK Quadrangle**

PROTOCOL

- Vice Chancellor, Professor E. Nigel Harris,
- The Honourable Christine Kangaloo, Minister of Science, Technology & Tertiary Education,
- Pro Vice Chancellor, Dr. Bhoendradatt Tewarie
- Deputy Principal, Professor Rhoda Reddock,
- Campus Registrar, Mr Jeremy Callaghan,
- Campus Bursar, Mrs Lylla Bada
- Deputy Campus Librarian, Mrs Jennifer Joseph
- Esteemed colleagues,
- Presidents of the Guild of Students and the Alumni Association,
- Honoured Guests,
- Members of the media,
- And new students,

It is an honour to be able to address you as Campus Principal at this 2008 Matriculation Ceremony. I spoke to most of you less formally at the

Orientation sessions over the last two weeks and now have the opportunity to do so again in a formal ceremony of recognition and admission.

Let me congratulate you on your secondary school achievements and I know that you, as a body represent the best and brightest students from Trinidad and Tobago in particular, if not from the Caribbean Islands. I also wish to salute your parents and guardians gathered here today for the nurture and support they have provided to you to this time. You must be justifiably proud to have your sons and daughters here with us, continue to support and encourage them in their new journey, while giving them some space to develop their own identities. And let me extend a special welcome to all our new regional and international students.

I wish to extend a very warm welcome to the Honourable Minister of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education, The Honourable Christine Kangaloo and her Permanent Secretary, Ms. Margaret Richardson. We welcome the Honourable Minister to our Campus for her first official visit, and wish to let her know that all of us, students like you, parents and staff of this Campus are very grateful for her and our Government's continuing support of our Campus and University, including our students. Thanks Honourable Minister.

What an honour it is to have our Vice Chancellor, Professor E. Nigel Harris, here with us this evening. The Vice Chancellor is the Chief Executive Officer of the whole regional University. As some of you may already know, our University is the largest and most longstanding higher education provider in the English-speaking Caribbean, with main campuses in Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago, and our new Open Campus serving especially other islands and countries of the Caribbean. And so, Vice Chancellor Harris' presence here at the St. Augustine Matriculation Ceremony symbolizes the regional nature of the University and tells you that you have become part of a unique institution, much larger than this Campus, one which extends its reach from the Bahamas/Jamaica in the north to Trinidad and Tobago in the south. Please do take advantage of this regionality. It will serve you very well in the future as it has and is serving me at this time. Really get to know our regional students who study here, welcome them into our Campus and into our communities of Trinidad and Tobago. Build lifelong friendships across the Region. You must also take every opportunity offered to you to visit and spend time at one of our other campuses. Our Vice Chancellor is making special efforts to support you in this, and at St. Augustine we fully support this effort.

This year we are celebrating our 60th Anniversary at the UWI, having begun in humble circumstances at the Mona Campus in 1948. The UWI has grown and blossomed into an Institution the entire Region must be proud about. Just look at our graduates over the years and notice the positions of leadership they have assumed. You will also join this distinctive group.

You should know that you have become part of a large, expanding and increasingly diverse student population. We are serving over 40,000 local, regional and international students. Our University is a contemporary, regional tertiary education institution with faculty and students from over 40 countries and with collaborative links with over 60 universities around the world. Here at our St Augustine Campus, you are distributed among our six Faculties, and as of today we have taken on 1,030 New Postgraduate Students and 3,448 New Undergraduate Students, with 320 new undergraduates in the Faculty of Engineering, 568 new undergraduates in the Faculty of Humanities and Education, 56 new undergraduates in the Faculty of Law, 366 new undergraduates in the Faculty of Medical Sciences, 1,004 new undergraduates in the Faculty of Science and Agriculture, and 1,134 new undergraduates in the Faculty of Social Sciences. Here is a statistic that you've probably already guessed: most of you are women -

nearly 2/3 of you. (You'd think that once this news gets out, many more young men would want to sign up yes; we welcome you too!). A very special welcome to our 'mature', part-time, evening, working and distance students – you are an increasingly important part of our diverse student body. We salute you for making the effort to continue your education, for managing family and work and we will do all that we can to make this huge effort of yours worthwhile. Continuous learning is a recipe for success in today's world.

I think you will already have sensed this, you are joining a lively, exciting campus. St. Augustine is now the largest Campus in terms of student numbers. We're up to nearly 15,000 students. There are new buildings and facilities everywhere, some completed, some in progress. That's one of the very clear indications that we're always working hard, behind the scenes, to keep improving the quality of *our* teaching and *your* learning, and the environment of the Campus to facilitate this. Every time we expand a classroom, laboratory or office space, or a Hall of Residence, new students will benefit directly. So please bear with any inconveniences you may experience; it is the inevitable consequence of growth. We try hard here at St. Augustine to give deserving students like you a chance to enter the UWI. Wouldn't we be a poorer country and region if the student sitting next to you

was not admitted to the UWI? Be assured that during your time on campus, things will get much easier.

Finally, let me urge you to make the most of your years on Campus. Whether you are full-time, part-time or evening; whether you live in a Hall, in lodgings close to campus, or you commute from home – please try to take part in campus life outside the classroom, according to your interests: sports, the arts, clubs, student politics, community and religious organizations. Your Students' Guild is doing much for you in this direction. Of course we also expect you to succeed academically – you are all very bright people and you will be taught by a very well qualified, international faculty. But to succeed, and to do well, maintain your sense of purpose, bring balance to all that you do and show respect for all around you. It's never too early to give serious thought to becoming a post-graduate student in your chosen field. More and more, a first degree is only the first step on the road of tertiary education. Get to know what exciting research your professors here are doing and how you may engage in this. You must want to be a part of this exciting, knowledge driven world and become creative, problem solvers.

I am delighted to welcome you all as fully matriculated students of the University and I wish you nothing but the best in your life at Campus, both

inside and outside of the classroom. I went through this ceremony on the 6th October, 1969, and the St. Augustine Campus of The University of the West Indies and Canada Hall were some, if not my very best years. I have not left. Let these be your best years also.

Thank you.

Professor Clement K. Sankat
Pro Vice Chancellor & Campus Principal
Office of the Campus Principal
The University of the West Indies
St. Augustine
Trinidad W.I.

September 18, 2008