



1st December, 2013

From the Vice Chancellor, UWI

The Office of the Vice Chancellor of The University of the West Indies wishes to advise our students, staff, alumni and all our stakeholders, that the UWI has been reviewing the statements in the media this past week surrounding the recent award of a graduate degree to a student of the Executive MBA programme at the UWI-Arthur Lok Jack Graduate School of Business (ALJGSB), St Augustine Campus. This programme targets high level, very experienced and senior executives and officials in the private and public sectors. The programme requires students to complete 14 courses and a practicum.

From the review conducted, we have found that this student was in good academic standing and fully satisfied all the requirements to graduate from the programme. From time to time, and based on professional and personal circumstances, students can request considerations which will usually be granted once they are consistent with UWI regulations. Considerations are recommended by departments and approved by the UWI on a case by case basis. The UWI has always embraced a student-centered philosophy that recognizes the interest and wellbeing of its students, the diversity of the student population and our commitment to equity.

To meet the requirements of this degree, the student had one outstanding course. It should be noted that, with respect to this course, which is examined by both coursework and a written exam, the student had successfully completed the coursework component on two previous occasions. Based on this, the requirement to repeat the coursework component for a third time could have been waived by the UWI, but the student would still have been required to take and pass the final written exam. Despite the fact that the student had already passed the coursework on two previous occasions, the ALJGSB took the decision to assess the student's knowledge of the material further, by subjecting the student to an oral examination of coursework material, which he passed.

We wish to address two concerns raised in the media regarding the student writing the final examination. Firstly, there is the issue of the student writing the exam in a separate room. It is not unusual for students to sit examinations in rooms, separate from other registered students due to the individual and/or group circumstances, which may even include sitting the examinations in other countries. The request to sit the examination in a separate room was approved, subject to the usual condition that the examination would be supervised and invigilated by the UWI. This was done without incident. The second concern expressed in the media, was that the student was given a "special exam". This was not the case. The student was examined with the exact examination paper, at the same time as the other candidates, and by the same first and second examiners. The student passed the examination.

The UWI wishes to reaffirm our commitment to providing the highest standard of education and reconfirm that our degrees are conferred after rigorous validation. We wish to assure that steps are constantly taken to enhance the quality and accountability of all entities within the wide University system and close any gaps wherever they may exist, according to best international practices. It is to be noted that the UWI's quality management systems are continuously used and upgraded, and it is in this context that issues of this nature are and will be subject to review and continued assessment. Our programmes are also assessed by independent international, regional and local accreditation bodies.

I thank all our stakeholders who have shown concern in the past few days and have also demonstrated their support towards this regional institution.

Professor E. Nigel Harris
Vice Chancellor
The University of the West Indies