

Karissa Lacaille - *The Faculties of Law and Engineering*

Karissa Lacaille is graduating with First Class Honours in Law. When asked how UWI changed her, her answer was thoughtful and might seem unexpected to some:

“UWI taught me to be comfortable with not knowing everything, to ask questions, to accept failure without allowing it to define me and to trust myself even when I am uncertain.”

That lesson is linked to one of her proudest achievements, which was also the most challenging. Heading into her second semester in year two, Karissa thought she had it all figured out. She knew how to study and manage her workload, and felt she finally had the hang of things. Then came the opportunity to represent the Campus at the Philip C. Jessup International Law Moot Court Competition in Washington D.C. in 2025. That’s when, two personality traits kicked in – one that requires her to give everything her all, and the other she describes as “a slightly concerning ability to convince myself that I can fit one more thing into an already impossible schedule.”

“Balancing Jessup with my classes made that the hardest part of my degree. There were times when I was overwhelmed and genuinely questioned whether I could keep everything together.”

The competition did not go as they had hoped, but Karissa learned a lot about perseverance.

“Sometimes resilience is not about feeling confident. It is about continuing even when your confidence disappears.”

Beyond the classroom, Karissa immersed herself in campus life through her involvement in the Law Society. She has a longstanding interest in public speaking, debate, and community service, all of which complemented her legal studies and helped shape her university experience. Her wider interests, unrelated to law, include dance, gymnastics, swimming, tennis, playing the piano, and steelpan.

As she looks ahead, she remains deeply grateful to her parents, whose sacrifices, encouragement, and unwavering support helped make her achievements possible. Her next step is to continue her legal education at the Hugh Wooding Law School before qualifying as an attorney-at-law. As she prepares to move forward, she says she is taking the time to savour this moment and encourages the Class of 2026 to do the same.

“I hope we do not measure these years only by the degrees we are taking away. Some of the most important things we gained were the people who stood beside us, the friendships we made, the lessons we learned from failure and the courage we found when we thought we had none left. There will always be another goal, another deadline and another mountain to climb. So, take a moment to be proud of this one.”

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