

Kerlyssa De Verteuil - *The Faculties of Science and Technology & Food and Agriculture*

"To define is to limit," is one of Kerlyssa De Verteuil's favourite quotes from Oscar Wilde's 1890 novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Those words seem fitting for Kerlyssa, whose UWI experience was shaped by a determination to challenge expectations and push beyond self-doubt.

Kerlyssa grew up in Sangre Grande and, while choosing UWI St Augustine allowed her to remain close to family, that was only part of the appeal.

"I also felt that UWI has a rich sense of culture, history and a high educational standard that a lot of people underestimate."

After studying sciences at St Joseph's Convent, St Joseph, Kerlyssa was excited to enter UWI's Computer Science programme, but from her first week, there were some who questioned whether she was in the right field. Their words shook her confidence but also strengthened her resolve. By her third year, she had achieved one of her biggest academic goals: earning a place on the Dean's List. She says she made it through thanks to family, friends, and faith.

"They pushed and encouraged me when I doubted myself. Also, my faith in God and prayer... was a pillar of strength and a reminder that God was with me."

Outside the classroom, Kerlyssa threw herself into campus life. She served as Team Lead for the Division of Student Services and Development's Student Champions, worked as a peer mentor with the First-Year Experience programme, and co-created *Candid Over Coffee*, a YouTube podcast exploring issues affecting women and UWI students.

A spoken word artist, she uses her Instagram platform, [@echoes_of_kc](#), as a space for advocacy and self-expression. She is also a mentor with the 2 Cents Movement's Future Authors' Club, a confirmation catechist, and Head Altar Server at the Good Shepherd R.C. Church, St Francis of Assisi Parish, and somehow still finds time for baking, photography, reading, and spending time with family and friends who tease her about her unrelenting schedule.

"My friends tell me that I have a talent for overcommitting and making time for so many different things while still showing up and giving 100%."

Kerlyssa has continued to build her technical skills through additional study in artificial intelligence, cloud computing, and web development. Her projects include applications focused on preserving Carnival culture and providing real-time flood-level information to help people make informed decisions during emergencies.

After graduation, she hopes to pursue postgraduate study in a field that bridges technology and healthcare. Looking back, she says UWI helped her find her voice, a community, and a deeper understanding of who she could become.

"I learned to walk into rooms I once thought were meant for other people, only to realise that I belonged there too."

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