



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES

OPEN CAMPUS

NEWS RELEASE

THE CLASS OF 2009 CELEBRATE THE INAUGURAL UWI OPEN CAMPUS GRADUATION



The 2009 Open Campus Valedictorian, Ms. Denise Gordon from Montserrat, received a standing ovation for her inspiring address.

Castries, St. Lucia, October 17, 2009: The University of the West Indies (UWI) celebrated an historic first with the inaugural formal Graduation Ceremony of its newest campus, the Open Campus, at the Beausejour Indoor Sports Facility in St Lucia on Saturday, October 17, 2009. Almost 150 of the over 700 qualified graduands from all fifteen contributing Caribbean states to the UWI came to St. Lucia to be presented to the Chancellor of the University, Professor the Hon. Sir George Alleyne.

Also present to celebrate the occasion were four Caribbean Heads of State, including Her Excellency, Dame Pearlette Louisy, the Governor General of St. Lucia; His Excellency Sir Cuthbert Sebastian, Governor General of St. Kitts & Nevis; Her Excellency Dame Louise Lake-Tack, Governor General of Antigua & Barbuda; and His Excellency Sir Carlyle Glean, Governor General of Grenada. In attendance too were the Honourable Mr. Sam Condor, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education of St. Kitts & Nevis, the Honourable McNeil Rogers, Minister of Social Development from Anguilla and the Honourable Colin Riley, Minister of Education from Montserrat.

Speaking to a full audience, the Chancellor spoke to the graduates about leadership qualities and encouraged the graduating class to aim high for success. He mentioned that the UWI is looking to the future with the establishment of the Open Campus to offer higher quality service to the region. He said that, "The Open Campus has, in a short time, traversed a challenging but rewarding journey, and I am sure the future will unfold many more accomplishments." The Chancellor reiterated the importance of maintaining connectivity between individuals and institutions and urged the graduates to keep in touch with each other and the University.

The mood at the graduation ceremony was one of enthusiasm and joy. Honorary Graduate, the Hon. Dunstan St. Omer, distinguished artist of St. Lucia, addressed the gathering. Speaking on behalf of his fellow Honorary Graduate, Dr. Peggy Antrobus, he said, "To be honoured by (our) people at the highest intellectual level of our Caribbean nation is also to realize a dream, that no matter how small a nation, it could not survive without a university of some kind."

To the graduates, The Hon. St. Omer said that, "You have gained new knowledge, learnt important lessons for life, made lasting friends, and collected memories that will be with you for a lifetime." He called on the class of 2009 to strive towards the nobility of his own generation as it is their heritage and their responsibility and that there has never been a time in our common Caribbean history when nobility was in greater demand. "A country that does not grow is a country that's dying and you are fortunate to herald the new age, the new Renaissance. We in St. Lucia and the West Indies are depending on you to lead us into our Golden Age".

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This year's first Open Campus Valedictorian, Ms. Denise Gordon from Montserrat, spoke on behalf of her fellow graduates and her address earned her a standing ovation. She said that, "It is indeed an honour to be selected as the 2009 class Valedictorian for the Open Campus. It has been a life-changing experience as it provided us with an opportunity to expand our horizons even with all the challenges. We are proud to have been a part of this remarkable transition. We salute the vision of The UWI, which has facilitated the opportunity for us to further our studies with the high standards this institution is well-known for. As the first graduates of the Open Campus, we have left behind a legacy I trust will encourage the Open Campus team to continue the hard work."

A first class honours graduate in the Bachelor of Science in Management Studies, she spoke to the need for all in the region to come together in community and to leave fractiousness behind in order to build the region. She charged her fellow graduates to take this challenge forward with them with all they had experienced and learned in the Open Campus, by saying " This evening, I ask that we bid farewell to mistakes made, attitudes that continue to hinder our progress and mindsets that threaten to retard our future development."

The Chancellor shook the hand of each graduate who attended the ceremony resplendent in their gowns before receiving their canisters from the Open Campus Registrar, Ms. Simone Augier. Also witnessing the historic moment in the audience, were the eminent Open Campus Council members, members of the diplomatic corps in St. Lucia, other government ministers, faculty, parents, friends, and relatives of the graduates.

The Graduation ceremony concluded with the ceremonial recession of the Chancellor's and Academic Processions and then by the outgoing Class of 2009. Families and friends of the graduates from St. Lucia and all across the region were witness to this emotional and proud moment.

This inaugural Open Campus Graduation Ceremony was streamed online on Graduation Day so all Open Campus graduating students and their friends and family members who could not make it to Saint Lucia, were able to see the ceremony live.

About the Open Campus

The newest campus of the 60-year-old University of the West Indies (UWI) was formally launched in Antigua & Barbuda in June 2008. The UWI Open Campus is an amalgamation of three former departments of the UWI - the Office of the Board for Non-Campus Countries & Distance Education (BNNCDE), the School of Continuing Studies (SCS), the UWI Distance Education Centre (UWIDEC), and the Tertiary Level Institutions Unit (TLIU). The UWI Open Campus offers multi-mode teaching and learning services through virtual and physical site locations across the Caribbean region. There are currently 42 site locations of the Open Campus in the English-speaking Caribbean. The UWI Open Campus offers an open and flexible learning environment for pre-university, professional development, undergraduate and graduate courses and programmes and other services both online and in blended format. We offer a three-tiered registration structure to suit particular needs and educational backgrounds. The system allows our students to move and transfer within the entire University system to reach the required standard. All programmes and courses at the Open Campus have been designed in direct response to a need for high quality continuing and professional development in many key areas in the Caribbean and global markets.

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