

Senator the Hon. Dorothy Lightbourne, Q.C.,
Attorney-General & Minister of Justice.

Subject: Greetings at the launch of UTech's Faculty of Law
and Open House for the LL.B. degree programme.

Date: 4.30 p.m., Thursday, Sept. 18, 2008.

Venue: Alfred Sangster Auditorium, UTech.

UTECH --- transforming the accessibility of legal education in Jamaica

**Most Honorable Edward Seaga,
President of the Senate, Oswald Harding,
President of the Court of Appeal
Judges of the Supreme Court
Resident Magistrates
Mr. Kent Pantry, Q.C
Ms. Paula Llewellyn, Q.C Director of Public Prosecutions
Professor Errol Morrison, President of UTECH
Distinguished members of the legal profession
Students and of course Principal of the Norman Manley Law
School, Professor Stephen Vascianne**

It is my great pleasure to bring greetings at this ceremony, the launch by the University of Technology of its Faculty of Law and Open House for the Bachelor of Laws (LL.B) degree.

The launch is fulfilling of a need that is timely and welcome, bearing in mind that the number of persons wishing to pursue law as a course of study or career has increased considerably and there are not enough places at the University of the West Indies to meet this demand. The data reveals that in July, 2003 1880 persons registered for the LL.B at the University of London from

the Caribbean. Of that number 588 were from Trinidad and Tobago and 408 from Jamaica.

The Faculty, and programmes will be particularly valued by Jamaican students who, instead of having to spend a year here in Jamaica and two years at Cave Hill in Barbados will now have the option of completing the LL.B degree in its entirety at the University of Technology in three years, full-time course, or in four years, part-time course.

The benefit will be tremendous savings in transportation costs, living expenses, tuition fees and the convenience of foreign exchange, as opposed to the sometimes problematic social dislocations, had they gone elsewhere to study.

I wish to congratulate the administration, headed by Professor the Hon. Errol Morrison, O.J., President, and the Board of the University of Technology, for acting so resolutely to expand and transform the provision and accessibility of legal education in Jamaica by seeing to the creation of this new Faculty of Law which, I am told, will welcome its first cohort of new students in just four months time, January, 2009.

Bearing in mind that the study and practice of Law are constantly evolving and given the University and Technology's reputation for high standard, I am sure that the Faculty will be committed to excellence and innovation in teaching, learning and research

This is reflected in its offering of a wide range of exciting modules such as entertainment law, sports law, and intellectual property law that are so much a part of the growth sectors of the Jamaican

economy and indeed, economies throughout the Caribbean region.

It will not be enough for the Faculty of Law to grow only in size and range of interests. It must simultaneously equip its students with the skills for the ethical professional practice. So that those going on to qualify as Attorneys-at-Law will recognize that the law is an essential element of justice, and social change.

In order to grow, this new Faculty of Law will need the generous support of benefactors to support study and the research its students and staff will undertake. It will also require the establishment of an excellent library and state of the art Information Technology facilities if it is to accomplish its vision and mission.

Today's law students have to be familiar with a variety of different legal issues ranging from human trafficking to cyber crime, identity theft, to legal and ethical questions raised by scientific research. With the globalization of law, they have to be able to address complex legal problems from several different perspectives.

As a fledging institution, UTECH's Faculty of Law will go through various stages of development as it responds to the challenges and changes that will affect the society, the region and the global practice of law.

At present only a small number of qualified applicants, who have completed the LL.B degree, or who have similar qualifications can be accommodated by the Norman Manley Law School each year,

to obtain the certificate of Legal Education to be able to practice law in Jamaica and the CARICOM member countries.

The graduates of this institution will add to the numbers who wish to qualify.

As I thought along those lines, I was glad to hear Professor Morrison say the vision is to expand this law school. It is timely. There was a motion tabled in the House by the Reverend Ronald Thwaites and in my capacity as Minister, he wrote to me and his concern is that the Norman Law School at present cannot accommodate the number of students who wish to attend school. He proposed the establishment of another institution. I am happy to hear Professor Morrison committing to work with the Norman Manley Law School and improve the opportunities for persons seeking to join the legal profession.

However an LL.B degree is a stepping stone to many other career opportunities in the Courts of Law other than Research, Company Lawyer, and Mediators working in Foreign Affairs.

Something tells me that whatever teething pains UTECH's faculty of Law will experience, and it will face a variety of challenges, the prerequisites for solving them are already in place and they are good. I am in no doubt that the faculty will be characterized by the highest academic standards, given the high quality of the academic and professional staff being recruited locally and internationally, and with our own Mr, Kent Pantry, Q.C a former Director of Public Prosecutions, serving as Interim Dean of Faculty.

The learning environment I think, will be stimulating, challenging and engaging, and I am sure that the students will have much to contribute to the day-to-day activities in the faculty, and to the general academic community and beyond. Their relevance to, and support I feel of, the local community and commitment to the rule of Law could I suggest even result in a strengthened relationship between “town and gown”, especially, given the need in these times for assistance in many areas of justice, particularly in some depressed communities. There are these communities surrounding the University.

My best wishes and I encourage the students to learn principles, ideas and justice, so that when they leave, they will not just have a law degree- **they will also have a sound legal education.**

May God Bless you

END.