

## **UWI Vice-Chancellor Outlines Plan to Recreate the Activist University** *Imperative to driving Caribbean out of recession*

**The UWI Regional Headquarters, Jamaica. 22 June 2016.** Vice-Chancellor of The University of the West Indies (The UWI), Professor Sir Hilary Beckles sees the University as responsible for “rekindling the development revolution of the Caribbean”. He made the statement during the opening remarks of his report to the University Council—the governing body of the regional university—on 29 April, 2016. Members of Council along with guests gathered at the St. Augustine Campus in Trinidad and Tobago for what is considered its annual business meeting. Noting that the meeting was not just a presentation of the year-in-review, discussing the contents of the University’s [2014-2015 Vice-Chancellor’s report](#), Sir Hilary also outlined a vision for The UWI as the *Activist University*.

In detailing the concept, he explained the activist university as “A university that is constantly and actively engaged in all of the main issues facing this region”. He added, “Universities all over the world are established to serve communities and nations and a critical part of that service is in leadership...Our primary concern is the sluggishness of the Caribbean economy in recovering from recession. There’s a view of many social scientists that Caribbean development has ground to a halt. Our industries are not as competitive, sufficiently diversified and some of our mature and developed industries are in need of refurbishing. These challenges create an opportunity for The UWI to reinsert itself in those developments in the Caribbean in the search for competitiveness and greater diversification. The University has an important role in the development of the new Caribbean economy”.

Charting the way forward, Vice-Chancellor Beckles introduced The UWI’s *Triple-A-Vision* which focuses on **alignment** of industry and academia, expansion of **access** to tertiary education and **agility** to global opportunities. Vice-Chancellor Beckles noted that a great deal of energy went into rethinking the strategy of The UWI, focusing on the rebranding of its image and repositioning the University intellectually and conceptually in the region and across the world.

The April 29 meeting marked Professor Sir Hilary Beckles’ first report to the University Council in his capacity as Vice-Chancellor. It was streamed live to the public for the first time in a move by the Vice-Chancellor to facilitate more transparency and engagement with University stakeholders. Among the University’s advancements in the last academic year highlighted in his report:

- A proposed Colleges of The UWI (CUWI) System which will connect The UWI to all interested and qualified community colleges in the region, offering them support for and access to advanced teaching and learning. This is a vital step toward a more resilient, high-quality tertiary education system that brings the Caribbean together.
- Steps to become more unified at every level. To enable a coherent university system across all four campuses, the One UWI Task Force was established and is working toward increasing the efficiency and harmony of the University’s governance and administrative processes.
- Closer collaboration with contributing governments and other stakeholders, to contain costs and maximise revenue generation across the University.
- Greater connections with countries and other higher education institutions to propel the regionalisation and globalisation of the University.

- Continued research output with impact including for e.g. the work of the Chronic Disease Research Centre on Type 2 Diabetes and the work of the Mona and St. Augustine Campuses in food security.
  - Demonstrating the activist culture, through the volume and range of work and service undertaken by the University in the past academic year in response to Caribbean threats such as the Zika outbreak, Tropical storm Erika which devastated Dominica and the sargassum threat in the region.
- Full details of the Vice-Chancellor's report: [www.uwi.edu/vcreport](http://www.uwi.edu/vcreport)
  - Video recording of Vice-Chancellor Beckles' report to University Council: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rs7rXuAyESg>
  - A copy of his PowerPoint presentation: [http://www.slideshare.net/UWI\\_Markcomm/uwi-vicechancellors-report-to-university-council](http://www.slideshare.net/UWI_Markcomm/uwi-vicechancellors-report-to-university-council)
  - Photos from the University Council meeting: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/theuwi/albums/72157668579486022>

*Short Video Clips from Vice-Chancellor Beckles' report to University Council*

- Reintroducing the Activist University: <https://youtu.be/awgJ2jr5V8Q>
- UWI's Leadership Role: <https://youtu.be/3A1-FcNDbZ8>
- Beyond the Boundary - UWI and Sport: <https://youtu.be/zl8CyrL5T7g>
- Going Global: <https://youtu.be/gSlJZ5fmBTo>
- Saving Our Blue Economy: <https://youtu.be/h0iaTqPkl08>
- Growing Local: <https://youtu.be/Hl-MXMMIPoE>
- Colleges of The UWI System: <https://youtu.be/Sf9ySzH0bw4>
- Alignment of Industry and Academia: <https://youtu.be/Lv7E9t6EDZw>
- Activist University In Action - Responding to Zika and Erika: <https://youtu.be/zUDKdn7dYJk>