Press Statement Regarding the Expansion of the Faculty of Law
at the University of the West Indies
December 23, 2009

In response to recent Press Reports regarding the University of the West Indies Faculty of Law, the University issues the following statement to correct any misunderstanding that may have arisen because of those reports.

Over the past three months, a University of the West Indies Working Group convened by the Vice Chancellor and comprising Principals of the Cave Hill, Mona and St. Augustine campuses, the Dean of the Faculty of Law, University Registrar, Cave Hill Campus Registrar, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for the Board of Undergraduate Studies and Faculty of Law academics representing the three campuses, has been meeting to finalise a University Plan for the expansion of class size in the Faculty of Law. This Plan is to be presented to relevant University Committees for review prior to approval by University Council in April 2010.

The Working Group effort seeks to implement Recommendations of a Regional Task Force on the Expansion of the Faculty of Law which were presented in a Report issued in August 2009. In addition to members of the current University Working Group, the Regional Task Force included Principals of the three Regional Law Schools, the President of the Council of Legal Education and Law Student representatives. Central features of the Regional Task Force Report were:

- The Faculty of Law will expand access to 350 to 400 students per year
- The integrity of the Caribbean Law education system established by Treaty in 1970 will be retained
- A revised quota to enable access by a larger number of qualified students from all contributing countries will be recommended
- There should remain a single Faculty of Law with headquarters at Cave Hill
- Three year programmes will be introduced at Mona and St. Augustine in addition to Cave Hill, but the curriculum, standards and admission process should remain the same across the three campuses.
- Quality assurance and accreditation reviews should treat all 3 programmes as one as is presently the case with the UWI Faculties of Medical Sciences where, despite the fact that there are 3 Campus Deans, there is a Single University Dean and the programme is accredited as one by the Caribbean Accreditation Authority in Medicine and Health Programmes (CAAM-HP).

The University Working Group convened in October 2009, has been working in a generally collegial and collaborative way to construct and recommend for adoption by University Council, a Plan largely consistent with the above Recommendations. Early in its deliberations, the Working group made a decision that it would be untenable to introduce three year undergraduate and graduate programmes at Mona and St. Augustine under a single Faculty Dean at Cave Hill. Hence, there was a consensus position that Faculties of Law would be established on the Mona and St. Augustine campuses according to the model utilised by the Faculties of Medicine – three Deans with one being University Dean; the same curriculum and other programmatic standards, an admission process utilising common
admission criteria. There was consensus too, that Faculties at Mona and St. Augustine would evolve over a 2 to 3 year period to enable those campuses to acquire sufficient staff, facilities and library materials to ensure high educational standards across the 3 campuses. Decisions about readiness of the Mona and St. Augustine programmes for Faculty status will be based first on reviews by the Dean of the Faculty of Law at Cave Hill and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for the Board for Undergraduate Studies and final approval will be made by University Council. During the period of transition to Faculty status, programmes at the Mona and St. Augustine campuses will be led by a Deputy Dean appointed by the Vice Chancellor who will report both to the Campus Principal and the Dean of the Faculty of Law.

Other matters being resolved by the Working Group include:

- Construction of a new quota system to be recommended to the Council of Legal Education (which comprises representatives of Regional Governments). The proposed system will seek to reflect the relative numbers of qualified applicants from each contributing country. The Mona quota will include both Government-sponsored and full fee paying students.
- An admission process that will ensure common criteria for acceptance of qualified students including those paying fees. A proposal for admissions to be offered twice per year, first in February-March and then in August, is being considered.
- Specific efforts are to be made to promote a sense of regionality (e.g. streaming of lectures between campuses; sharing lecturers; movement of students between campuses, etc).
- There is general agreement that the campuses and the Vice Chancellery will work to ensure that a plan is devised to maintain the current numbers of students at Cave Hill.

The University Working Group Plan will be completed by early January and will be presented to the relevant University Committees for review and for final approval by University Council. The Working Group Plan will also be shared with the Council of Legal Education.

We emphasize that none of the Working Group’s recommendations, including formation of campus-based Faculties can be implemented without full approval by the University Council.

Office of the Vice Chancellor
December 23, 2009