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UTECH welcomes Pro-Chancellor Seaga

At 78, his gait is not as strong as it used to be when he was a fixture at the pocomania yards in Kingston's inner cities, but make no mistake, his mind has never been idle and is as sharp as ever and his witty retorts are still the stuff of which legends are made.

The University of Technology (UTECH) has sought to utilise The Most Hon. Edward Seaga's academic and analytical brilliance and welcomed him with open arms at an official ceremony held on Tuesday October 28, at the Alfred Sangster Auditorium.

A former Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition, Edward Phillip George Seaga is a noted historian, musicologist and lover of the arts. Having led a long and distinguished political career, the recommendation for him to be Pro-Chancellor of the University of Technology was made by the Council of the University. On his agreement, the Minister of Education was advised and the recommendation taken to Cabinet for approval.

The Pro-Chancellor is required to preside over the meetings of the



Jessica Yap entertained with her violin



Opposition Leader Portia Simpson Miller (left) with the Most Hon. Edward Seaga and his wife, Carla Seaga.

University's Council in the absence of the Chancellor or during a vacancy in the office of the Chancellor. As such, he can exercise and perform all the functions of the Chancellor except the conferring of degrees and other academic distinctions.

Pomp and pageantry

The afternoon ceremony was one filled with pomp and pageantry and brought out the who's who in academia, business and politics. Those in academia at UTECH were outfitted in their black ceremonial robes while others including Opposition Leader Portia Simpson Miller, Mr. Seaga's wife Carla and his sister Jean relaxed in less formal wear.

Following the academic procession and the arrival of the Governor-General Sir Kenneth Hall, the UTECH vocal

ensemble rendered the University Song 'Building a Future Together' written and composed by Noel Dexter.

Joan Francis, president of the UTECH Administrative and Support Staff Association (UTASSA) who spoke on behalf of the staff union said someone with the expertise and passion of Mr. Seaga for sports, education and the arts is well suited for his newest role and dubbed him the '5-Star General'.

Minister of Education Andrew Holness in his remarks, said he had long believed that Edward Seaga was well suited for academia.

"He has an analytical mind, is a reservoir of knowledge and more importantly, he is a visionary. He is also a builder of institutions so I believe UTECH has the chance to benefit from his vision and building skills.

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Ryan Peralto (left) converses with the Most Hon. Edward Seaga with wife Carla Seaga and Dr Casbert Morrison.

UTECH Welcomes

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"UTECH is in growth mode and your president intends to take it to a higher place. As it expands, it will face the challenge to maintain its standards. With Mr. Seaga being on the board of governors I am sure you can effectively balance expansion and quality education, which of course will make my job much easier."

Inaugural address

Delivering his inaugural address titled 'Higher Education At A Crossroads?' Mr. Seaga said there is a continuing argument that education is an end in itself.

"But education should never be so one dimensional. It services both the need to know and the need to grow. It provides the society with knowledgeable people as well as those with capabilities to ensure growth. It is the larger number which fulfills these needs over and above the requirement of the state, which raises the question of where the future of higher education lies."

The local economy, he said, has done poorly in assimilating those skills in the wider economic development process. Jamaican universities have contributed to a resource pool of specialized surplus labour that has been left in the wilderness of an economic situation marked by a stagnant economy, experiencing little or no growth for the past dozen years.

"So why education? The returns are not particularly quick but if the course of training is followed, the outcome, finding employment is a certainty.

"Look at it this way, tertiary education creates employment. Extending that argument and bearing in mind the huge potential of the international market, higher education has more potential in quantity and quality for the creation of employment in any other sector. It is a prime area for investment returns to the individual in growth and to the state in remittances.

"At every step of the way education makes a significant contribution to development. The larger number of educated people, the greater the understanding of the society, the more competent the leadership and the more prosperous the people.

"There is no educated country that is poor and no poor country that is educated. If prosperity is the goal higher skills are the tools and knowledge is the way."



Robert Finzi Smith (left), director, Safety and Security, UTECH converses with former DPP Kent Pantry, dean of the Faculty of Law, UTECH and Justice Seymour Panton, president of Court of Appeal.



Minister of State in the Ministry in Industry & Commerce Michael Stern (left) with president of the Senate, Dr. Oswald Harding and Shahine Robinson, Member of Parliament for North East St Ann.

B/N Seaga, Edward P. G. (Hon.)

Obes

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Governor-General Sir Kenneth Hall speaks with Justice Seymour Panton (centre), president, Court of Appeal and Professor Errol Morrison (right), president of UTECH.