

Speech of
Hon. Mrs. L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun
Minister of Education & Human Resources,
Tertiary Education & Scientific Research

Launching of the BA (Hons) in Film and Video Production
6 April 2017

Good evening to you all

At the very outset, let me state that I am deeply pleased to be present here this evening so as to officially launch this new and, I am sure, avant-gardist ***BA (Hons) in Film and Video Production*** program.

My congratulations go to the Board of Governors and, especially, to the Department of Creative Arts, Film and Media Technologies at the UTM for offering a program of high relevance to our national development.

This is one step I have been emphasizing over the last few years. Our Public Universities have to be strongly contributory to our national metamorphosis while helping our human resources guard against any national backslide or regression.

Of course, purists will always talk of universities as the fountainhead of knowledge, as learning institutions that counter intellectual inertia. But the reality remains that Universities can no longer operate in an ivory tower; rather, they are expected to create an educated citizenry capable of transforming institutional cultures.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Let's face it. The University of Technology Mauritius was set up with a specific mandate and a focused mission. It is meant to be a technology-focused University having to increase its number of technology-based programs. And this is in line with Government's Vision to provide human capacity for emerging growth poles and industries that will help promote wealth creation and economic growth.

And the film industry is most certainly one of them.

I remember reading, some time ago, a report from "Deloitte", the brand global consultation firm. The Report is entitled "**Making the Grade 2015: The key issues facing the UK in 2015 and beyond**".

As the title indicates, it was about the challenges facing the UK higher education sector. But the message holds good for Mauritius as well.

Deloitte identified 5 key challenges,

One, when you are **competing in a global market**, there is no one-size-fits-all approach: Universities have to determine individually how best to deal with the new international context.

Two, it is how profitable a use Universities can make of **new technologies**.

Three, the challenge lies in **attracting and retaining the best talents**, whether these are students or faculty members, whether the latter are from the groves of academy or, even better, from the corporate sector or Industry.

The next one is obviously **making research sustainable** through the generation of new funding that inevitably underpins all research.

And finally, the fifth challenge resides in meeting **rising student expectations**.

And we all know that, when students pay on the nail for their studies, they expect a return on their investments.

Employability has thus become the new name of the game.

Our students expect their degrees and qualifications secured to pave the way to meaningful employment.

Hence the new roles of universities.—the new reality that the UTM has to contend with.

Mr. Chairman, Madam Director General,

I am pleased to note that, by initiating action on this degree program, you are addressing one major concern of Government: graduate unemployment resulting principally from lack of work readiness. It is therefore praiseworthy that all programs offered by your new Department of Creative Arts, Film and Media Technologies will have work placement, professional placement and industry projects, which will enable the students to gain an insight into the world of work.

As importantly, this Department is the first of its kind in a public University in Mauritius. I am very confident that it will fulfil to the hilt its role in providing the trained resources for the exponential growth in the advertising and media industry.

Also, Film making is one domain we are keen on encouraging in Mauritius. Efforts to make it take off have been rather timid so far-- primarily because of a paucity of local skills in the field. Hopefully, this program will address this issue headlong. It will simultaneously reduce production costs and promote investment in the film industry while also catering to the need for skilled crew members by local and international film producers.

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is also salutary to note that the UTM, through this program, is stressing creativity. Film and Video production points out one fundamental truth: all creative arts engage learners across all domains—cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and physical. However, while the intention to create remains an emanation of the

human mind, the actual act of creating is now greatly facilitated by technology.

Hence, by providing access to a wealth and diversity of ideas and creative tools, technology increases our potential to engage in the types of experiences that lead to greater creativity and innovation. This Program, with its heavy focus on technology, will certainly go a long way towards bearing this out.

Obviously, it will have to be a collaborative venture—and collaboration has the virtue of resource sharing which itself enriches program delivery. It is accordingly pleasant to note the BA(Hons) in Film and Video Production will be offered in collaboration with the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, the Mauritius Film Development Corporation and the Board of Investment that will provide opportunities for work placement and hands-on training for students.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Before I end, there are just two important messages I need to convey to you.

The first message is that the effectiveness of any program offered by a University is gauged by some basic factors:

- the quality and relevance of the program itself,
- the quality of programme delivery, and
- a smoothly enabling transition to the world of work.

But while this exit point is important, it is equally important that we start thinking about setting some **eligibility threshold for university entrance**. *The quality at the entry point is as important as the exit point.* This is a credibility factor: if we want to transform Mauritius into a Knowledge Hub, we must recognize that an upgrading of the academic

level will lead to an enhanced international recognition of our tertiary level institutions.

And the second message is no less important.

A University is a meeting ground of fine intellect. I insist on this idea of a meeting ground. It implies that synergies are possible. It also implies that we have to subordinate our personal interests to the larger interests of the institutions. Institutions are larger and more important than our individual persons.

As William James, the American philosopher and psychologist once put it,

“ The great use of life is to spend it for something that will outlast it.”

So, it behooves all of you, Board, Management, Staff, Students, to work collaboratively together so as to enable the University of Technology Mauritius to reach the pinnacle of success that is its just deserve.

Ladies and gentlemen, I now have the great pleasure of declaring the **BA (Hons) in Film and Video Production programme** officially launched.

I thank you for your kind attention.