



UWI TODAY

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES • ST AUGUSTINE CAMPUS

SUNDAY 2 JUNE 2019



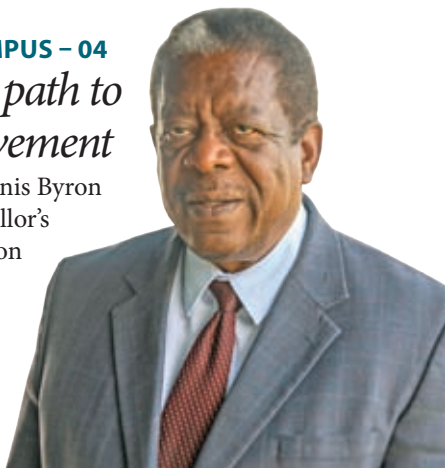
Real Science, Homegrown

This is not a stock image. This photo shows postgraduate researchers Reco Phillips and Luke Benjamin hard at work in the chemistry lab at The UWI St Augustine Campus' Teaching and Learning Complex (TLC). In addition to fully-equipped lecture theatres, TLC also houses state-of-the-art labs for chemistry and biotech research as well as teaching. Chemists such as Reco, Luke and others work in areas like liquid crystals (used in display screens for devices such as smartphones), solar cell technology, and synthetic polymers with potential uses in the medical industry. "We can do anything here that can be done anywhere else in the world," says researcher Imran Lourenço, speaking of the potential for scientific breakthroughs at the UWI labs. And breakthroughs can lead to new opportunities for entrepreneurship and innovation, one of the main goals of The UWI. This May, TLC also hosted the first **Science and Technology Week**, an initiative of the Faculty of Science and Technology (FST). Themed "Science in Communities", the event focused on the ideas and research coming out of FST, other faculties and the wider society, and the finding solutions to challenges faced by communities throughout the region and world. PHOTO: ATIBA CUDJOE

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FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Partnership is part of the solution

On Tuesday, May 21, there was a headline in one of our national newspapers that said, “Carmona calls on UWI to tackle water problem”. I was most pleased to see it.

The article was referring to an address given by Justice Anthony Carmona, former President of Trinidad and Tobago. He was speaking at the launch of our Faculty of Science and Technology’s “Science and Technology Week 2019”, and it was a fiery presentation indeed. Justice Carmona spoke passionately about the challenges our Republic and region face due to environmental degradation and climate change. He spoke about the difficulties citizens face finding employment. He painted a stark picture. But it was far from a hopeless picture.

Indeed, Justice Carmona spent almost as much time highlighting the good works of non-governmental organisations, schools, individuals and The UWI. Most importantly, he stressed the critical role of The UWI in solving these challenges. That is why I was grateful to see his call for The UWI to contribute to the alleviation of the current water shortage woes.

For several years now, the energy on both the St Augustine Campus and the regional University itself has been one of self-assessment and improvement. You can see two illustrations of this focus in this very issue of UWI Today, through the interview with Sir Dennis Byron, Chair of the Chancellor’s Commission on Governance and the report on the 2019 University Council Meeting.

This energy for continuous improvement emanates from the top of the UWI hierarchy, has motivated our current Triple-A Strategic Plan and is also the mindset embedded in the institution in every campus and outpost. And well it should be, since one pillar of effectiveness is to focus your efforts where they are most able to produce results

However, at the end, if we truly want to make the region better - economically, socially, politically and environmentally - it must be a collective effort. Even if collective action simply means accepting the support that the University can provide.

We have heard the criticism of The UWI that it can be an “ivory tower”, disconnected from the society and its needs. And there is some truth to the notion that we could be better in directly addressing the needs of society. This is one of our strategic imperatives and a personal goal of mine. But the question has to be asked, how receptive are the key influencers and policymakers to our interventions? When transformation is needed, when problems need to be solved, do they, like Justice Carmona, call on UWI? And when we approach them with solutions are they open to their implementation?

Truthfully, there have always been many scholars and students with the knowledge and ambition to



Part of improving the University therefore includes continued awareness of what we have accomplished and continue to accomplish. That is why activities such as Science and Technology Week are so important. The theme of this inaugural event is “Science in Communities”, emphasising the Faculty’s community-focused, impactful work.

make society better. Right now, in every department, unit and laboratory on this campus, there are many examples where workable solutions have been devised to a host of problems. The average citizen would be shocked at what has been developed but remains unknown to the wider society.

Part of improving the University therefore includes continued awareness of what we have accomplished and continue to accomplish. That is why activities such as Science and Technology Week are so important. The theme of this inaugural event is “Science in Communities”, emphasising the Faculty’s community-focused, impactful work.

FST Week exhibited our scientists’ and student scientists’ work in climate change, green technology, environmental protection, data application, information technology, health, wellness, and pharmaceuticals. So much amazing work by driven people, many of them still very young!

The week-long event is an outstanding revelation of the value UWI can bring to the society.

We at The UWI will continue to improve, honing our focus on finding ways to make a lasting and impactful contribution to the development of Caribbean society. We will continue to forge stronger links with governments and industries for the region’s benefit. We will tell our stories so that people better understand the work and taking place on campus. In return, when moments of difficulty or opportunity arise we ask that you call on us. Call our name.

Brian Copeland

PROFESSOR BRIAN COPELAND

Campus Principal

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Making UWI Better

BY JOEL HENRY

How can The UWI improve? It is a massive, region-spanning institution that has had an incredible impact on Caribbean society. But no institution is perfect - especially one of this scale and with such an influence on the lives of so many. In January 2019 UWI Chancellor Robert Bermudez announced a nine-member Commission on Governance to “examine the performance of The UWI, its management practices, features of transparency and accountability within the University system, and to make recommendations to the Chancellor.” The Commission, made up of respected citizens from throughout the region, was in Trinidad and Tobago at the St Augustine Campus during UWI’s University Council meeting in late April. While here, **UWI Today** had the chance to speak to Commission Chair, renowned jurist Sir Dennis Byron.

UT: Sir Dennis, you have had a long and noteworthy career. Why did you decide to take on this important but laborious task in your retirement?

DB: It was difficult to say no. The University of the West Indies is one of the most important institutions for Caribbean integration, which I fully believe in and support. It has made a tremendous impact on the growth and development of our region. It is one of the best functioning regional institutions that we have.

When I was asked to make some contribution to ensuring its sustainability and improving the way it operates - that’s not something one could say no to.

Were there facets of the University that you saw and thought this might need some change or restructuring?

I think that part of the reason I was selected, is that I, like many of the other commissioners, was not part of the university structure. So I did not come in with any preconceived notions based on intimate knowledge or experience. So it was very important for us to spend a fair amount of time getting as much information as we can both from the institution and also from the people who have been interacting with the University

We are spending the first part of our time trying to get as much feedback as we can from the key stakeholders of the University.

I believe you had your first town hall in Trinidad and Tobago recently.

Yes, this was the first.

Have there been any other mechanisms of communication?

We’ve been doing face to face meetings with several individuals and stakeholder groups. The initial work that we’ve done in this way has been at the (UWI) Mona Campus (in Jamaica). We’ve been there, speaking to many of the regional management figures, starting at the level of (UWI) Vice-Chancellor (Professor Sir Hilary Beckles). Then we met with the Pro Vice-Chancellors, campus principals, academic management, and others.

(UT: The Commission has carried out several stakeholder consultations through focus groups, public forums, interviews, and general surveys. They welcome submissions from all stakeholders within and beyond the academic community, emphasising the perspectives of students, alumni, governments as well as the private and social sectors.)

This trip to the St Augustine Campus gave us a special opportunity because of the University Council meeting (see story on page 5). Many of the governments were present through their ministries of education. So we were able to engage with a number of them. So we have had a broad spectrum of communication of information already.



Sir Dennis Byron
PHOTO: KEYON MITCHELL

How has that communication been?

It’s been good. Everybody we engaged came because they wanted to come. We extended invitations and persons who are interested in seeing the University work better have come forward. So we have had a number of fully free and open discussions.

So after this Trinidad trip, what happens next?

We will continue our investigative process. We haven’t gone to the (UWI) Cave Hill Campus (in Barbados) yet, and we have to make another trip to the Mona Campus. We will also be starting to organise the information that we have received. We have promised to issue a report in September (2019). So the writing process will be starting now.

Seems like a lot of work.

Yes it is (laughter).

What would you like to come out of this process? What do you hope will be the end product of the Commission’s work?

We want to make a contribution to the vision of the University as a premier educational and research institution. We also want to make certain that it is sustainable and competitive and that it will be of service to our young people and continue to prepare leaders of the highest standard for the future.

Hopefully, all of this will contribute to the quality of life throughout the region, and ensure that we develop socially and economically, and that individual persons excel at all levels of endeavour. The objective, really, is to have a positive impact on our society.

Is there anything you would like to add in conclusion?

We’ve tried to develop a sort of “feel” for this phase of our work. What we really want to do is hear the voices. We think there is a lot of information, a lot of good ideas, lots of people have concerns, and some have recommendations. We would like our report to be relevant to the needs that the people have expressed and we would like it to reflect the best ideas that emerge in our region.

So at this stage my real concern is to encourage persons who have interests, concerns and ideas to pass it on to us. So that they can assist in developing the recommendations we send to the Chancellor.

Sir Dennis, thank you for your time.

The UWI invites all regional citizens to join the conversations. Learn more about the work of the Commission at: www.uwi.edu/chancellorscommission and email your confidential contributions to: chancellorscommission@oecs.int

CHANCELLOR’S COMMISSION ON GOVERNANCE

Sir Charles Michael Dennis Byron (Chairman) – Former President of the Caribbean Court of Justice

Ms Judith Bowen – Attorney-at-Law

Mr Richard Byles – Chairman, Sagicor Group Jamaica

Ms Angela Hamel-Smith – Human Resources Practitioner

Professor Emeritus E Nigel Harris – Former Vice-Chancellor of The UWI

His Excellency Dr Didacus Jules – Director General, Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States

Sir Elliott Mottley – Attorney-at-Law

Mr Darrion Narine – President of The UWI St Augustine Guild of Students 2018-2019

Mrs Jacqueline Sharp – Director, Coffee Traders Ltd and President, The UWI Alumni Association, Jamaica Chapter

■ CAMPUS NEWS

New campus, appointment of Visitor and UWI Trust Fund discussed at University Council Meeting 2019

The annual business meeting of University Council convened on Friday, April 26 at the Teaching and Learning Complex, The UWI St Augustine Campus.

This meeting, chaired by Chancellor Robert Bermudez, was attended by representatives of all of the contributing governments, and dealt with a number of matters including reports on the feasibility of the proposal for a fourth landed campus in Antigua and Barbuda, the establishment of a UWI Trust Fund, the appointment of a new Visitor for The UWI and several new senior executive appointments, endorsement of recommendations for the award of honorary degrees and progress report on year one implementation of the University's Triple A Strategy (Strategic Plan 2017-2022).

The opening session was one of the major highpoints of this meeting of the University Council. It featured the comprehensive report by the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Sir Hilary Beckles. Entitled "Our Reputation Revolution: Promoting the Post IMF Caribbean Renaissance", the report highlighted some of the key successes and milestone achievements of the University in the reporting year 2017-2018.

Among these were the advancement of the University's global reputation and reach across five continents, and the hemispheric and international validation demonstrated in the recent World Rankings by the Times Higher Education. Vice-Chancellor Beckles also spent some time emphasising The UWI's next phase and its planning for posterity. He noted, "our stakeholders' expectation is that the University will intellectually craft the future in a fashion that will impact everyday life across the region. The call is for a precise and intense alignment of public and sectorial desires with our capacity to generate their actualisation."

In its closed session, the meeting of Council considered a diverse range of matters. Among them was the decision to replace the Crown as the Visitor. This follows the November 2018 approval by the Privy Council to have this position filled by an eminent jurist from within the Caribbean region. A key role of the Visitor is to settle UWI disputes with staff or students. The University Council accepted the proposal to appoint Justice Rolston Nelson to the position with effect from May 1, 2019.



Chancellor Robert Bermudez (right) addresses those in attendance while University Registrar C William Iton looks on. Iton's successor in the University Registrar post, Dr Maurice Smith, was appointed at the meeting.



Vice-Chancellor Professor Sir Hilary Beckles

PHOTOS: ANEEL KARIM

The Council also considered the recommendation from the University Finance and General Purposes Committee on the Report of the Technical Taskforce—presented by Co-Chairs, Pro Vice-Chancellors Alan Cogley and Densil Williams—on the proposal to establish a fourth landed campus of The UWI in Antigua and Barbuda. The governments of the campus countries were given time to consider the proposal, and their submissions will be heard at the next meeting of the University Finance and General Purposes Committee, scheduled for May 30, 2019 at Cave Hill, Barbados.

The possibility of a tuition fee increase for the St Augustine Campus will also be a topic of consideration at the meeting. Council also approved the establishment

of a UWI Trust Fund as a longer term solution to provide a source of revenue to reduce the existing funding gap of roughly US\$70 million annually. The intent, as articulated by the University Grants Committee Chair and Prime Minister of Barbados, the Honourable Mia Mottley, is "to use the interest from the Fund to help sustain aspects of its operations with a view of keeping fees at an affordable level for Caribbean students."

The University Council is the highest governing body of The UWI with powers as prescribed in the University's Statute 20. It is constituted in accordance with Statute 18 and consequently the decision-making authority on matters such as appointments, the management of the finances, and all business affairs of the University.



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Taking ownership of the environmental and commercial law legacy of T&T and the region



Professor Rajendra Ramlogan
PHOTO: ATIBA CUDJOE

A legal scholar in UWI St Augustine's Department of Management Studies in the Faculty of Social Sciences has published two books that "recognise the jurisprudential triumphs and travails of the Caribbean people in their own voices".

Rajendra Ramlogan, Professor of Commercial and Environmental Law, says he wrote the books in part to help citizens of Trinidad and Tobago as well as the region, "develop faith and confidence in our jurisprudence and what we are capable of doing."

Commercial Law: Cases and Materials from the Commonwealth Caribbean, tells the story of how the region's legal system developed to address commercial legal principles. The other book, *The Rise of Environmental Law in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago*, looks at the evolution of environmental law from 2001 to January 2019. They were launched in April at a gathering on the St Augustine Campus that was well attended by academics, legal luminaries, commercial and environmental specialists, and friends and family.

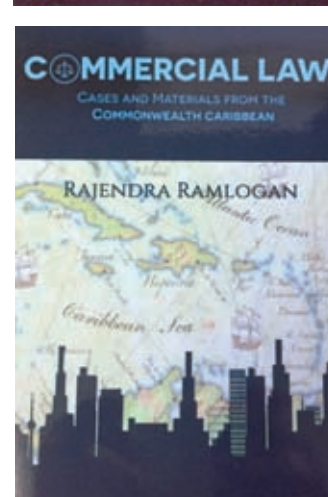
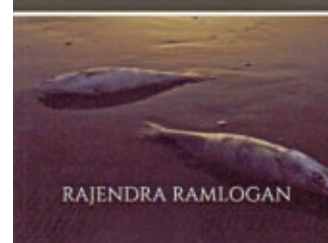
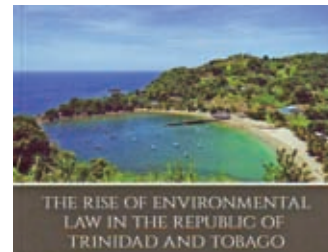
Speaking at the launch, Justice Winston Anderson of the Caribbean Court of Justice said *The Rise of Environmental Law*, "after nearly 60 years of organised legal education in the Caribbean, it remains the case that far too often our legal discourse has been conducted through the British writers of legal texts. These texts have served us well in constructing a solid foundation for a stable and sound Caribbean jurisprudence. But it is time we honour that past by recognising the jurisprudential triumphs and travails of the Caribbean people in their own voices."

The books, said Professor Ramlogan, were written in honour of the Management Society of The UWI at St Augustine Trinidad and Tobago and all proceeds go to the society. Monies generated from sales have already been allocated to provide partial funding for a week-long student study trip to the Stetson University School of Business Administration in Florida, USA.

"I see it as a way of giving back to the students," Ramlogan says.

He sees the recording of Caribbean jurisprudence, as was done in his books, as important not just for the legal profession, but for the society as a whole:

"The essence of society is our adherence to law, our willingness to follow rules. And rules must be defined. Rules must give us hope that our society is operating in a manner that we can feel confident in a given situation to predict what will happen based on the principles that have emerged. I feel strongly that very few societies have emerged successfully where we have not adhered to some sort of rule of law doctrine."



UWI CREATIVE WRITING STUDENTS SCORE TOP HONOURS AT BOCAS LIT FEST 2019

Alexandra Stewart, Rehannah Khan and Otancia Noel, three creative writing students in the Master's in Fine Arts (MFA) programme at UWI St Augustine's Faculty of Humanities and Education have shown the power of their pens (or key boards) in one of the Caribbean's most prestigious literary spaces, the NGC Bocas Lit Fest 2019.

Alexandra Stewart was crowned the first place champion of the biggest night in poetry, the First Citizens National Poetry Slam Final. She was also part of the "Inspired by the Archives" panel discussion. Rehannah Khan was shortlisted for the 6th and final edition of the CODE Burt Award for Caribbean Young Adult Literature. Otancia Noel was long-listed for the Johnson and Amoy Achong Caribbean Writers Prize.

The students join UWI St Augustine Lecturer in Literatures in English, Dr Kevin Browne, who made history as the first overall winner of the 2019 Bocas Prize for Caribbean Literature with a work of non-fiction with his book – *High Mas: Carnival and the Poetics of Caribbean Culture*.

The NGC Bocas Lit Fest, Trinidad and Tobago's annual literary festival, hosts several events and activities, as well as prizes in prose, poetry, non-fiction and spoken word in partnership with other organisations and individuals.



Speaking on her nomination, Otancia Noel noted that she wouldn't have entered the Writers Prize competition if it wasn't for her supervisor, Dr Muli Amaye's (lecturer in the Department of Literary, Cultural and Communication Studies and coordinator of the MFA in Creative Writing programme) encouragement. "She pushed my limits to tell a story that needed to be told."

Rehannah Khan noted that being shortlisted for the

CODE Burt Award gave her a great sense of validation, but "it's just the beginning for me and my writing career. There is a long way to go, and I look forward to seeing where my writing takes me next. UWI has given me more confidence, allowing me to explore things from multiple perspectives."

Being an MFA student at UWI St Augustine, says Alexandra Stewart, gave her the opportunity to have her first reading at the "Inspired by the Archives" event during Bocas. "I applied to submit a pitch about a story based on the research I conducted about the women in the Michael Goldberg Collection and my story was selected to be read at Bocas. This would not have been possible without the unrelenting support from my professors and my family."

Dr Amaye was overjoyed at the success of her students: "Our MFA students come to us with their talent and we are able to help them to shape what they do and push them to find their best work. However, it has to be recognised that the talent is theirs alone and we are both proud and humbled to have the chance to work with all our students."

Applications are open for UWI's Master's in Fine Arts (MFA) programme and other postgraduate programmes.

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Transportation Frustration

Civil Engineering hosts national conversation about the woes and way forward on the roads of T&T

BY GILLIAN MOORE

What is the way forward for transportation in Trinidad and Tobago? A recent conference on the subject presented research, theory, various perspectives – and lots of good intentions.

Engineers, researchers, students and policymakers came together to discuss the issue at the Faculty of Engineering on May 15, as UWI's Civil and Environmental Engineering Department hosted its "Transportation Symposium 2019: Breaking Boundaries, Creating Allies and Uniting Disciplines".

First to present was Transportation Engineering consultant Dr Rae Furlonge on land-use planning and the economic impacts of transportation in times of financial constraint.

He said the "national interest" when it came to transport issues should not be decided in a cloistered cabinet without reliable information and collaboration between agencies, developers, land owners, etc. He bemoaned a lack of research on the topic and said more consideration should be given to related issues like social interaction and access despite economic situations or mobility.

He said commuters faced a lack of options with transport hubs at times turning into drug dens in the night, putting them at a risk:

"Who does a woman call when she's standing under the flyover in Chaguanas at 9pm?"

Planning Consultant Ryan Darmanie's focus was on urban form and how the design of the environment affects society. He discussed factors such as the location of public housing, the issue of fuel subsidies, and the media-propagated image of the ideal home.

He said planning regulations were of the utmost importance in creating urban form, ultimately affecting convenience, safety, and social connection for commuters.

Linus Phillip, President of the Route 2 Maxi Taxi Association said, "public transportation is like a bastard child in T&T, but it is the heartbeat of the country. If you don't take proper care of it, we will pay dearly."

"We lose many hours in productivity every day because we don't have a proper transportation system."

He discussed a lack of infrastructure in residential developments, neglect of rural areas, fuel subsidies as a disincentive to public transport use, and the need to regulate "PH" taxis – illegal private cars being used for hire in underserved areas.

Traffic Engineer Adande Piggott made a presentation for the Ministry of Works and Transport, which described past Government plans and a vision for the future.

He said the development of a National Transportation Plan (NTP), with an 18-month projected timeline, was in the works, but noted that the new initiative was partially based on



"We have to stop guessing. We must apply science and engineering to transport issues, and not apply short-term solutions to long-term problems."

DR TREVOR TOWNSEND

Head of the Department of Civil Engineering at The UWI St Augustine



"Public transportation is like a bastard child in T&T, but it is the heartbeat of the country. If you don't take proper care of it, we will pay dearly."

LINUS PHILLIP

President of the Route 2 Maxi Taxi Association

unrealised goals from transportation plans created since 1967, including a Toco-Scarborough ferry, a new Caroni road, and a fully realised east-west expressway from Port-of-Spain to Valencia.

Several audience members expressed concern that hundreds of millions of dollars were to be invested based on 50-year-old plans that were unlikely to fit today's needs.

Civil Engineering PhD candidate Leah Wright presented research that revealed a reluctance for car owners to use public transport, finding that comfort and access were significant deciding issues, more so than cost.

SALISES Research Fellow Dr Godfrey St Bernard spoke on the sociology of ground transportation, looking at why people commute, the effects of temporal events, and demographic trends. He said more data should be considered at the planning stage: "We are too reactive."

He said our "sociological imagination" should be engaged "to prepare for outcomes that may manifest in the future," such as the effects of artificial intelligence.

Lacey Williams, Managing Director of Caritrans Ltd showed real-life examples illustrating how multifaceted data was needed to solve transport problems. He cautioned against quick fixes: "we can't solve problems based on anecdotal information, or based on what we think the problem is."

In summing up, Civil Engineering Head of Department Dr Trevor Townsend expressed concern about the Ministry's NTP.

He said he had lived through the various incarnations of plans for the sector, but had seen none of them come to fruition. He cautioned against trying to "do too many things at the same time without first addressing policy questions".

Townsend asked what the official Government position was regarding issues such as: access for people with disabilities, the role of taxes vs subsidies, the inter-island link, alternative fuels and hybrid cars.

"We have to stop guessing. We must apply science and engineering to transport issues, and not apply short-term solutions to long-term problems."

At the same time, he felt there was existing data to support immediate alleviation measures like a "rudimentary bus rapid transport system".

He advocated for transportation network companies like Uber, which he felt should utilise legitimate taxis.

Townsend urged audience members to reach out and give feedback on transportation issues, noting that his department was in the process of formulating questions for a newly-approved National Household Travel Survey that would shed light on the subject.





Are the giant, international pharmaceutical companies trying to colonise Caribbean cannabis production? Should we focus on more research for the medicinal potential of cannabis or is now the time to start manufacturing and selling products? How do we heal the divide between traditional marijuana users such as Rastafarians, and the scientific community? And just what exactly is “kush”?

These and other questions were the source for lively debate at the panel discussion “Cannabis, Science and the Issues”, held on the final day of the Faculty of Science and Technology’s (FST’s) Science and Technology Week 2019 on May 24 at UWI St Augustine’s Teaching and Learning Complex.

“This forum has been assembled to discuss mainly the scientific and medical issues related to cannabis. It is not primarily concerned with legal, social and religious issues,” explained Dr Brian Cockburn, Dean of FST and moderator of the event, to a packed and animated crowd of scientists, students, cannabis enthusiasts, members of the Rastafarian community and UWI faculty.

It went as promised, delving deep into the science of cannabis and the many issues surrounding its use for medicinal purposes. The panel even called into question some of the widely accepted beliefs about marijuana, particularly its safety.

Starting from the basics, Cockburn asked the panellists for a definition of cannabis, which was supplied by Dr Nigel Jalsa, a UWI lecturer in biological chemistry. Cannabis, he said, was the name for a genus of plant that includes strains such as hemp and marijuana. Marijuana is often referred to as cannabis. Hemp is of course very different from marijuana in its effects and use. That is because of the presence of different chemical compounds in different quantities in the respective plants. These compounds are known as “cannabinoids”.

“There are over 100 cannabinoids in cannabis,” says Dr Cliff Riley, Executive Director of the Science Research Council of Jamaica.

The most popular cannabinoid is “tetrahydrocannabinol” (THC), the primary psychoactive compound. In other words, the agent of elevation. Another well known cannabinoid is “cannabidiol” (CBD), which does not have the same psychoactive effects and has several medical uses.

With the brief explanation of cannabis and its components the panel then moved into the differences between natural products and products based on the chemical synthesis of cannabinoids.

“Why synthesise in the first place?” asked a member

of the audience from the Rastafarian community. “Can’t we just breed it for its use?”

Dr Riley, who has intimate knowledge of Jamaica’s medical cannabis industry (Jamaica is a regional leader in legalisation and a producer of cannabis products), explained that “scientists try to find solutions.” The vast majority of pharmaceuticals come from plants but the concern is that they will run out of crops, whether through crop damage or destruction or because the drug requires too much of the crop to be produced in a sustainable way.

Dr Jalsa agreed and gave the example of Taxol, a chemotherapy medication. “A single dose requires this harvesting of several trees. Synthesis is how you make the drug available at an amount and cost for those who need it.”

They stressed however that cannabis is an abundant plant and in recent years the shift has been made to natural products. “

Most scientists were not aware of the abundance and varieties of cannabis plants. What they recognise now is that the authentic versions are better so they have started investing more heavily into plant breeding programmes. More and more producers are shying away from synthetics because they are not as effective as the natural cannabinoids.”

Professor Rose-Marie Belle Antoine, Dean of the Faculty of Law at St Augustine, who was acting in her role as Head of the CARICOM Regional Commission of Marijuana, was not so trusting of the motives of drug producers:

“Could it also be that it’s not just control of the plant and its sustainability but control of the regions where the plant grows naturally? Could it be big firms coming to the Caribbean to get the genotype (genetic make-up)?”

UWI St Augustine Professor of Pharmacology and Coordinator of the Pharmacology Unit was also skeptical:

“There are many medicines that people can use and are shown to work as the plant itself. Once you start extracting and making it a pure compound, it now becomes a drug. It is now regulated, and it can cost the person who is using it 100 times more than when it came from nature.”

Both Dr Riley and Dr Jalsa however, were of the opinion that pharmaceutical companies performed a role that the region could not because of the cost. “We are not going to make pharmaceuticals from cannabis. It is too expensive. So we have to work with what exists and guide the process. Let us not over think it,” Riley said.

“The truth is we are behind the curve - not only for developed country but for the region,” said Jalsa. “We have a natural advantage. If we can develop chemical formations from the plant that cannot be obtained anywhere else, we

Cann COMPRE

BY JOEL



Marcus Ramkissoon, certified cannabis expert and director of the Caribbean Cannabis Institute, makes a point while Professor Rose-Marie Belle Antoine, Dean of the Faculty of Law and Head of the CARICOM Regional Commission on Marijuana, and Dr Nigel Jalsa, lecturer in biological chemistry, look on.



Cannabis COMPREHENSIVE

HENRY



can get a patent. Then any country in the world who wishes to utilise those compounds and formations is going to have to pay Trinidad and Tobago, pay the owners of the patent.”

The panel (and audience) jostled over the effects of cannabis as well, and the importance of research in determining those effects. When asked if cannabis was as harmful as smoking, Mr Marcus Ramkissoon, certified cannabis expert and director of the Caribbean Cannabis Institute, said “there’s been a huge gold standard study done in New Zealand, long term with over 3500 participants for over 10 years, and it has shown conclusively that smoking cannabis is 19 times more carcinogenic than smoking a cigarette.”

Ramkissoon said, “burning of any green plant material is going to produce more tar than a brown dry material (such as cigarettes). Cannabis is usually smoked in green form.”

He went on to say smoking in any form is harmful. “We do not advocate for smoking of cannabis. Smoking is not healthy and not medicinal.”

Professor Belle Antoine, although stressing that no one should be in jail for marijuana, said the science had shown that young people under age 25 should not use the plant. “We have accepted that it does have a debilitating effect on young minds.”

Another potential negative effect discussed by the panel was the lowering of testosterone in men by up to 35 per cent.

On the positive side, the panellists said cannabis was being used for pain management, asthma, epilepsy, nausea from chemotherapy, and even to improve the appetite of people infected with HIV.

However, Professor Clement, “we need to do clinical trials to determine whether the benefits outweigh the risk. There are many studies out there but not all of them are of good quality. They don’t have large enough numbers. They are not randomised. There are just a few studies that have evidence to prove that they work for things like neuromatic pain, chemotherapy induced nausea and vomiting, and increasing appetite in people with AIDS.”

He called for UWI and the Government to “put money into proper studies”.

Professor Belle Antoine pointed out that one of the major problems with conducting research is that cannabis is still illegal. However, the process towards decriminalisation is well underway.

Dr Riley believed greater emphasis should be placed on commercialisation, not research. In Jamaica, he said, they were selling cannabis products and paying careful attention to the THC content. THC over one per cent required regulation, prescriptions and even clinical trials. “Let us not over study or over think it too much, he said. “Let us work with the evidence we have, seek out new evidence, and weigh the benefits.”

But perhaps the most heated moment during the discussion came when a member of the audience questioned why more was not being said about the spiritual aspect of cannabis, its cultivation and use. He pointed out the disagreements taking place among the panel.

“Disagreement is part of the scientific process,” Dean Coburn said.

The panellists were in unanimous agreement that the “holders of the knowledge” (meaning Rastafarians and other long time cannabis users, represented an asset in understanding the plants benefits and negative effects and more needed to be done to include them in the conversation.)

“One of the challenges we face in Jamaica is that the holders of the knowledge are not so receptive to sharing information,” Dr Riley said. “We need better interaction between the scientists and the knowledge holders.”

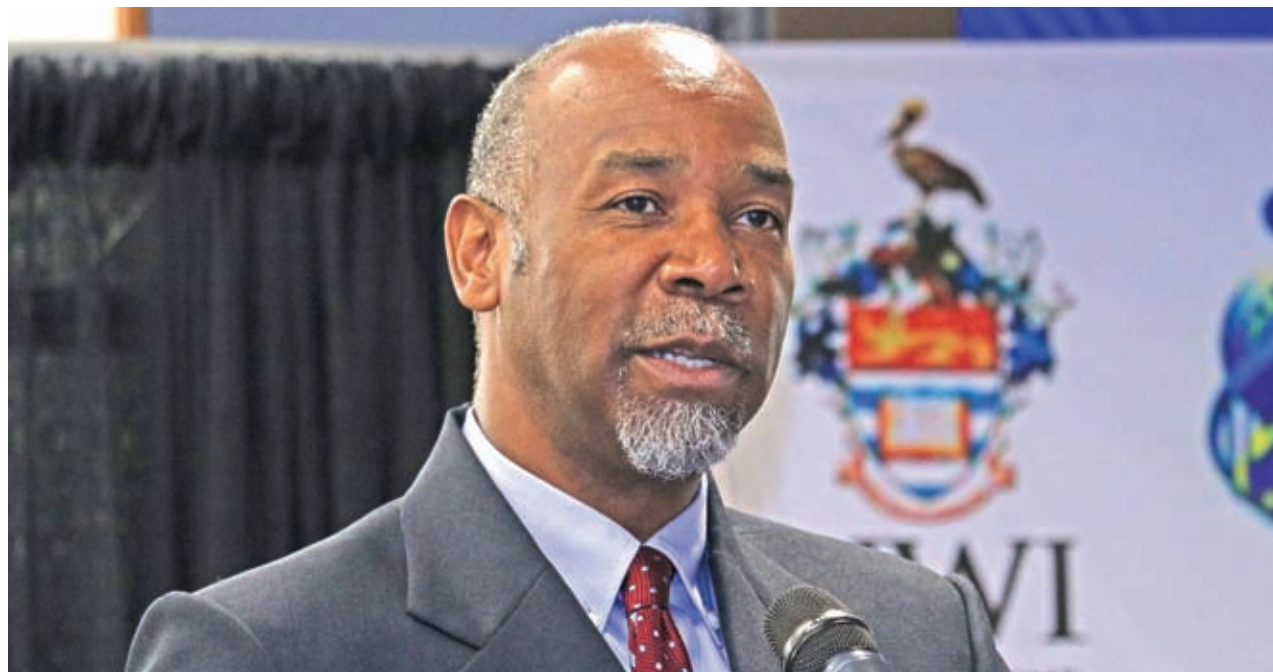
Professor Clement called the Rastafarians a “catchment group of people” with many decades of experience and if researchers could “build trust” and show they deserve that trust then they would be able to do good research.

The most outspoken member of the panel for traditional cannabis practices was Jayaraj Jayaraman, Professor of Biotechnology and Plant Microbiology. Calling cannabis a “heavenly plant” he disagreed with both the development of synthetics and breeding programmes to increase the amount of THC. “(Cannabis) has been highly domesticated,” he said.

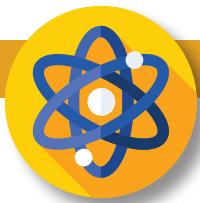
“We need to go back to what cannabis used to be,” said the professor.

The discussion, “Cannabis, Science and the Issues”, ended with loud applause and was the last event before the closing ceremony of Science and Technology Week 2019. As to the question of what is “Kush”, Ramkissoon explained that it was a strain of cannabis originating in the Hindu Kush Mountain range.

“Because of its popularity the name has taken off to describe all forms of cannabis.”



Dr Brian Cockburn, Dean of the Faculty of Science and Technology and moderator of the panel discussion. PHOTOS: ANEEL KARIM



Embracing Innovation

Sci-Tech Week shows off modern solutions

BY GILLIAN MOORE

“Science in Communities”, FST’s week-long exhibition showcased innovative products and services, including alternative energy, industrial and laboratory equipment, computer equipment, medical supplies and more.

Each day of Science and Technology Week was filled with presentations on a wide range of research areas. Various departments, as well as partners and sponsors, showed their stuff at informative and interactive booths, with visiting secondary school students especially in mind. All sessions were free and open to the public.

At the opening ceremony, chaired by Dr Ricardo Clarke, Deputy Dean of Graduate Studies, Research and Innovation in FST, participants were told about the aims of the expo.

Focusing on the “Science in Communities” theme, FST Dean Dr Brian Cockburn said the Science and Technology Week was all about “embracing innovation”, while encouraging the idea of “learning science outside the classroom or the lab... through community engagement”.

He made reference to American writer and futurist Alvin Toffler’s famous quote: “The illiterate of the 21st Century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn,” stressing the need for a more relevant mode of research and study.

He said his faculty was in the business of “training students for jobs that have not yet been invented,” because modern living was creating new and unforeseen needs. But he assured: “A science education is a portable toolkit,” allowing for adaptability.

“With a solid scientific foundation,” he said, “our graduates will be ready.”

UWI Deputy Principal Professor Indar Ramnarine congratulated FST team on its Science and Technology Week initiative, expressing his hope that it would be the first of many annual events.

He said there was a need to align the University’s educational programmes with the needs of society, such as green technologies, climate change amelioration and, most importantly, more sustainable agricultural production. He said the issue of increased crop productivity was crucial, and he was proud to note that some of the Faculty’s work was in the food production field.

He said the Science and Technology Week would “make the case to secondary school students,” and infuse them with the same passion for innovation.

Dr Patricia Mohammed, Director of Graduate Studies and Research, praised the community focus of the exposition, remarking that there was a lingering perception that the University was an “ivory tower”, “disconnected from the real problems of society”.

But she said UWI was evolving to ensure that subject matter for research came “directly from the community”, and that methods of data collection and the process of communicating findings were more integrated with the public.

Former President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, Justice Anthony Carmona advocated for climate change amelioration as a focus of development.

He said “a role should be played by the University in helping to meet with the United Nations’ sustainability goals, especially as “these outcomes have huge potential to change people’s lives in the foreseeable future.

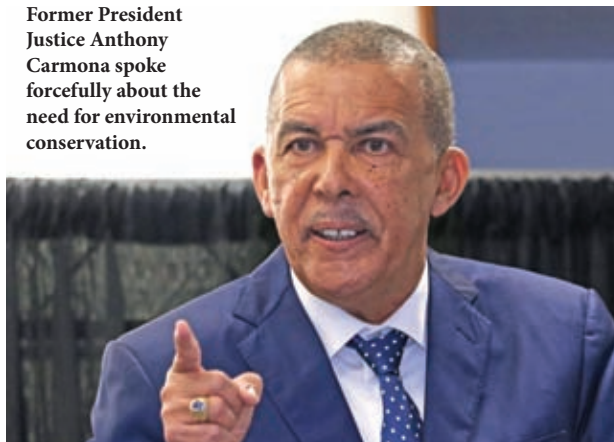
He focused on the need to ensure a reliable supply of potable water as a pillar of industrial development and as a basic human right.

Terry Mohammed, FST Deputy Dean of Outreach, described the week’s schedule where each day covered a different theme. The focus on the first day was on Climate Change, Disaster Preparedness and Management,



A solar-powered bicycle or “e-bike” on display along with solar panels. The e-bikes were shown by the firm ECT Solutions Ltd, headed by Haroon Ali Soobrattee, a UWI engineering graduate. PHOTOS: ANEEL KARIM

Former President Justice Anthony Carmona spoke forcefully about the need for environmental conservation.



Environmental and Earth Sciences; Tuesday, Data Application and its Management and Security, and Information Technology. The spotlight fell on Energy, Fuels, Green Technology, and Renewables on Wednesday; and on Health, Safety, Medicine and Medical Technology, Pharmaceuticals, and Wellness on Thursday. Highlight of Friday’s presentations was a panel discussion on “Cannabis – the Science and the Issues”, culminating in a closing ceremony.

Participants were encouraged to visit the display booths mounted by different departments and sponsors.

The Department of Mathematics and Statistics had their area set up with logic and pattern games and a maze to engage visiting students, along with information on different career paths available to the Mathematics graduate.

VH Marketing Ltd’s booth showed some of the medical equipment they supply, “from latex gloves to CT scan machines”, as well as equipment for industry, science and school labs, along with a line of wellness products.

Owner Keegan Harricharran said partnering with the event was an “opportunity to invest in T&T by investing in



UWI’s graduating students”, as well as to offer internship possibilities with a chance “for graduating students to find a job in their field”.

In-Corr-Tech Ltd showcased their construction services, including a Scanning Electron Microscope and metallurgy lab in San Fernando.

The Seismic Research Centre’s spin-the-wheel game gave visitors a chance to answer questions and win prizes, while the Department of Physics displayed a solar energy-powered circuit to show how clean energy can power the future.

The Department of Life Sciences’ National Herbarium of Trinidad and Tobago showed a selection of native flora with some rare fruit like “fat pork” and pois doux, along with information about their free school tours at their Sir Frank Stockdale Building.

They shared a space with the UWI Zoological Museum, whose display included taxidermy models of indigenous animals like bats, squirrels, spiders and birds.

Over the period, student and staff researchers showed over 40 multimedia presentations of their studies and findings.



■ SCIENCE & SOCIETY

Bravery and breakthroughs

Two young Caribbean chemists show resilience and very promising research

BY AVAH ATHERTON

Marie Curie once said “nothing in life is to be feared, it is only to be understood”. She was the only person to have been twice awarded a Nobel Prize; one in Chemistry and another in Physics. Almost 100 years after her death, her work manipulating chemical compounds and investigating carcinogens is being carried on, fearlessly, by two young students at The University of the West Indies: Reco Phillips and Dahryn Augustine.

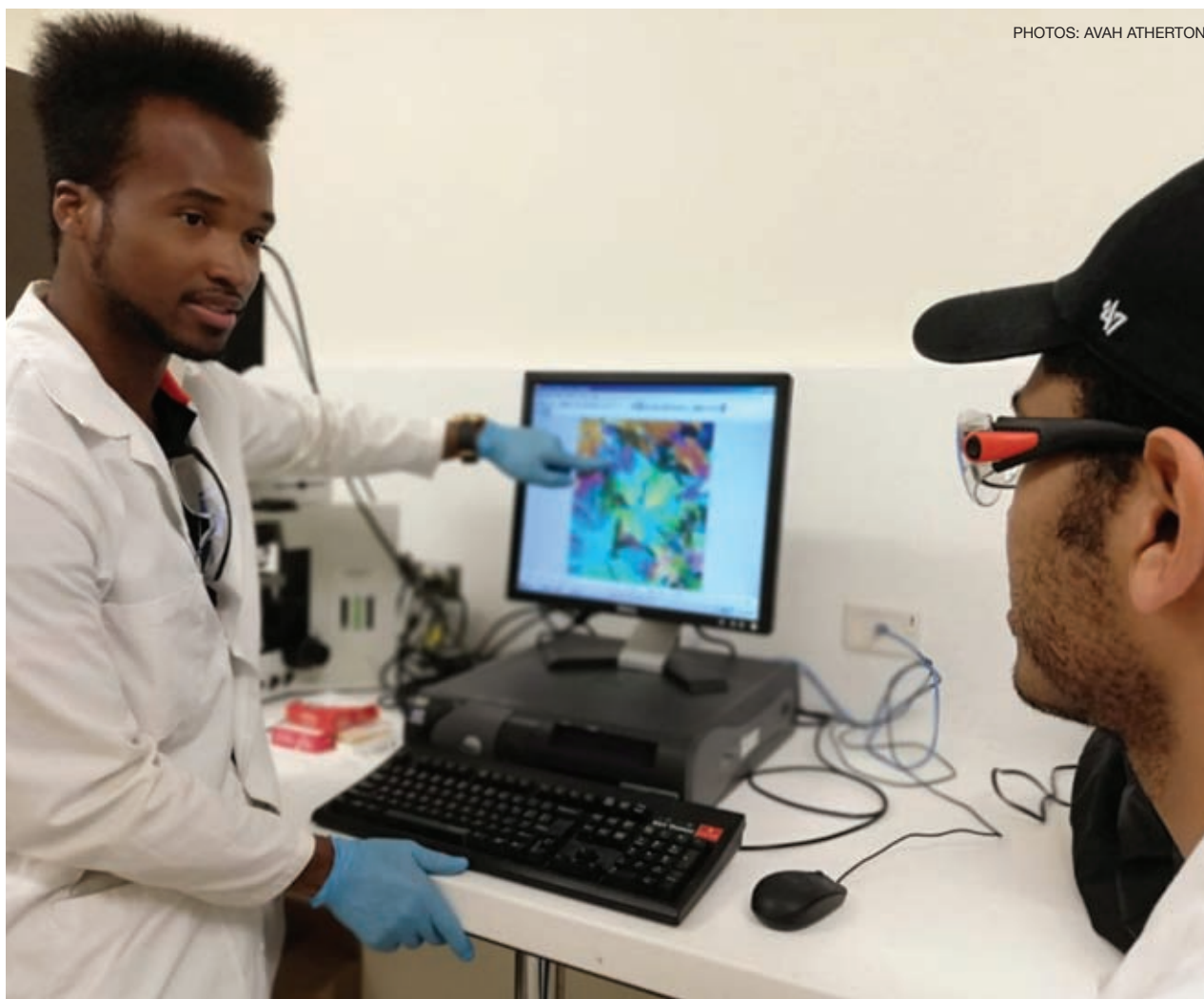
From May 22 to 24, UWI’s Department of Chemistry hosted its first Biennial Regional Conference and Expo on Chemical Science, Technology and Industry. The theme “Chemistry and Chemical Technology for a Sustainable Development of the Caribbean” highlighted the use of chemical sciences as catalysts for innovation and technological development in the region. Phillips, 28 and Augustine, 25 have both authored groundbreaking work in Materials Chemistry and Food Chemistry respectively which were presented during the conference.

Phillips, a Materials Chemist from Jamaica, believes that “economic development is never independent of scientific advancement”. He researches the optimisation of liquid crystals to improve its application in portable displays and gadgets such as phones, monitors and laptops. His fearlessness is clearly demonstrated in his work; when faced with inadequate funding and analytical instruments to complete his research, he searched for grants to address that shortfall.

Not long after, he was mounting samples for an X-ray powder diffraction experiment at a Brookhaven National Laboratory in New York. These multi-billion dollar labs offer limited-time access so Phillips and his team worked through the night to maximise their opportunity there. Liquid crystals are what tech giants like Apple and Samsung build their fortunes on. The liquid crystalline properties help create devices with crisp images and long battery life. With the heavy dependence on displays and screens across industries, the demand for liquid crystalline application is expected to soar dramatically over the next few years.

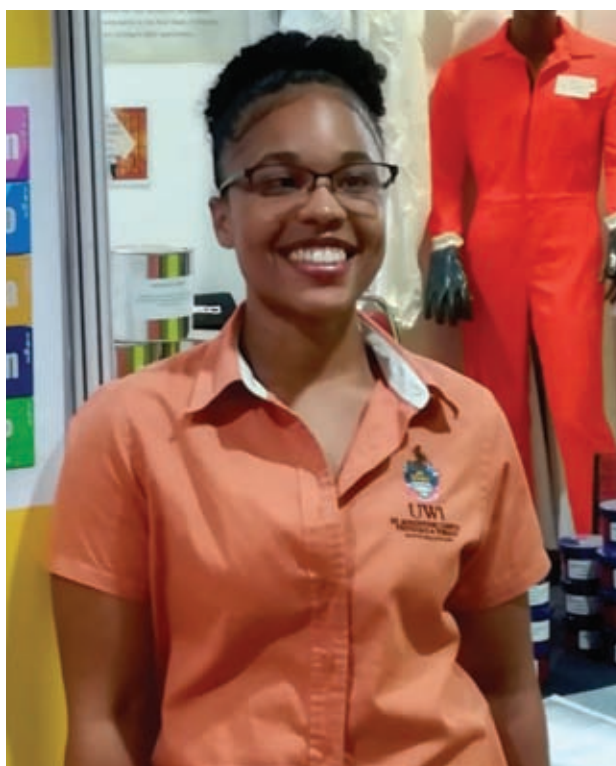
Phillips’ career prospects will surely rise with them; he is expecting to complete his PhD and graduate by 2020. He gives due credit to his supervisor, Dr Richard Taylor, Lecturer in Inorganic Chemistry at the Chemistry Department and a well-published chemist, for his tutelage and mentorship in both his academic and personal development. Liquid crystals were first studied locally by Dr Wilson Sue Chee Ming, who focused on copper concentrates of liquid crystalline compounds in low temperatures. Phillips’ work expands on that research by changing the metals used to that of nickel and palladium to examine the resulting structural properties. His conclusions could have a major impact on the quality of display screens being used in the future and position the Caribbean as a key contributor to scientific technology and innovation.

25-year-old Augustine, an aspiring food scientist from Dominica, is also on track to complete a PhD by 2020 with her research in nutrition and food toxicology. She studies the high presence of a chemical compound, acrylamide (a food toxin), and the effect of sulfur-based additives which may help limit its carcinogenic effects. Acrylamide is highly concentrated in processed foods such as breads,



PHOTOS: AVAH ATHERTON

Reco Phillips explains liquid crystals to his junior, Luke Benjamin.



Dahryn Augustine is an aspiring food scientist from Dominica.

cereals, potato chips, baked good and even our local fried bake. When ingested, this toxin can metabolise and result in genetic mutations.

Augustine’s work on the application of sulfur-based additives for the reduction of the risks associated with such food toxins has huge implications for the Caribbean region. With a diet high in processed foods and low in raw, organic fruits and vegetables, we are susceptible to the harmful effects of acrylamide both from local and imported products. With little to no pre-existing data regarding our dietary habits and the possible presence of food toxins locally, Augustine hopes that “through this research, the right knowledge and methods of food production can be implemented both regionally and globally”.

Contributing to the economic advancement of the Caribbean region is an underlying goal of both these young researchers. Augustine expects to improve the data surrounding food security and toxicity in the Caribbean while Phillips is determined to make significant strides in technological advancement via chemical substances such as liquid crystals. These millennials are inspired rather than overwhelmed by the challenges facing our countries, adamant rather than apathetic. In the face of all the global issues buffeting the Caribbean, here are two scientists who epitomise Marie Curie’s words, “now is the time to understand more, so that we may fear less.”



We are in the Zoology Museum at UWI St Augustine's Department of Life Sciences (DLS), and curator Ryan Mohammed is explaining just how "giant" was the now extinct giant armadillo known as glyptodont.

Mohammed says, "we are talking about an animal the size of a Mini Cooper."

Yes, once upon a time giant animals roamed Trinidad: armadillos the size of cars, ground sloths 20 feet tall. How long ago? Estimates range from hundreds of thousands to millions of years, long enough for time and weather to erase them from history. But Trinidad is blessed with a powerful preserving agent - tar.

"The value of tar pit or asphaltic fossils in the Neotropics is immense because fossils do not preserve in this environment typically," says Aisling Farrell, Collections Manager at the La Brea Tar Pits Museum in Los Angeles, California. "So having them beautifully preserved in asphalt is exquisite."

Aisling and her colleague, Dr Alexis Mychajliw (postdoctoral fellow at the Tar Pits Museum) know a great deal about tar pits, fossils, and the natural world of the prehistoric past. And, thanks to their efforts, UWI St Augustine now knows a great deal more about Trinidad and Tobago's. They have used their international network of paleontologists to recover fossils unearthed in Trinidad and taken abroad from as far back as the 1920s, returning fragments of a historic legacy that may go as far back as the Ice Age.

They also came to teach.

FROM LA BREA TO LA BREA

"In the scientific literature, when they talk about tar pits they focus on Los Angeles, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela, but there is always at least one sentence in the paper on Trinidad. There's always been this general awareness that Trinidad had material but nobody went out and investigated," says Mychajliw.

Her moment came in July 2018 when the Latin America and Caribbean Congress for Conservation Biology (LACCCB) was held in Trinidad at the St Augustine Campus.

They met with then DLS Head Dr Adesh Ramsubhag to discuss Trinidad's asphaltic fossils and visited local sites. After their return to the US they reached out to their community of paleontologists and museums and found a host of materials that were unearthed through oil exploration work in the 1920s, 30s, 50s, 80s and 2001. The initial plan was to have them shipped directly to UWI.

"Then it changed to 'why just send it?'" says Mohammed. "We asked them to come and help us build capacity here to do research."

So in April 2019 they returned to Trinidad, bringing crates of asphaltic materials taken from sites such as the Forest Reserve and Pitch Lake.

Mohammed says, "they have really done yeoman service for the University and the country by being able to track these things down and bringing them home."

On our visit to the Zoology Museum we saw a number of fossils separated into three different boxes based on how much information was known about them. Apart from the glyptodont remains there was a massive tip from the claw of a ground sloth. The size of a tablet computer, its owner must have been truly gigantic. There was also a row of near-perfectly preserved teeth and part of a jaw that is believed to have belonged to a llama. Yes, llamas in Trinidad. Mychajliw says: "The thing about Trinidad is its biodiversity. It used to be part of South America until recently so it is this really interesting experiment of when you turn a continent into an island. And on top of that Trinidad is that gateway between South America and the Caribbean."

Asphalt Giants

Paleontologists bring home Trinidad's tar pit fossil legacy

BY JOEL HENRY

Dr Alexis Mychajliw

She describes the very different world of the prehistoric past: "People moved through here and animals moved through here. This is a great window to understand how the Caribbean came to be. You have giant armadillo specimens that evolved in South America in isolation for millions of years. Then if we had something like a llama or carnivore, this would have had to come from North America with the land bridge."

MORE MUSEUM, MORE PALEONTOLOGY

The tar pit fossils are an exciting discovery at an exciting time for the University. And the DLS understands the significance.

"We've gone into the deep sea," says DLS Head of Department Dr Judith Gobin, referencing her work in underwater exploration. "Through Dr (Shirin) Haque's (Senior Lecturer in Astronomy in the Department of Physics) work we've gone to the stars. And now this extraordinary find takes us deep into the core of ecological time."

Gobin sees the tar pit fossils as a "gold mine" that UWI must recognise. Her vision is an expansion of the Zoology Museum to better showcase its extraordinary collection of animals and insects.

"My approach, which I voiced to the Deputy Principal (Professor Indar Ramnarine), is that I would like him to consider locating space for us. Or if we could, extend our existing space. If they will allow me to extend the museum I will seek out external funding to enhance it," she says.

Gobin adds, "We want to let the general public know this exists and that it is an incredibly valuable part of our heritage."

But housing and displaying the items are only part of the agenda. During their visit to Trinidad the team from La Brea Los Angeles also taught a three-day short course to a group of over 40 that included students and members of the public. It involved class work, a field trip and excavation exercise, and finally laboratory work.

"Almost 50 people came on a Saturday at 9am," says Mychajliw of the field trip. "People volunteering their time was really amazing."

Mychajliw and Farrell volunteered their time as well. Apart from everything else they did during the trip, Mychajliw also gave a public lecture at the campus, titled "Tar Pit Time Capsule: Unearthing Trinidad's Ice Age Giants".

"I really want to see a community of paleontologists develop here," she says. "I think Trinidad could be a place on the cutting edge of this type of research. The museum here is absolutely wonderful. It has the right facilities to do that type of work. It has the right people here to support the students. So my ultimate goal is to see students take ownership of the material and run with it."

It's a sentiment shared by DLS, not just to establish a teaching and research agenda for these near-magical creatures from the distant past, but to create a national understanding of their significance to our society.

"Now the work begins," says Dr Gobin.



Aisling Farrell indicating the level of detail on the teeth and jaw of what is believed to have been a llama.
PHOTOS: ANEEL KARIM

■ CAMPUS NEWS

Student engineers show their machines

A machine that lifts automobile engines and transmissions, a cocoa butter press, and a weaving machine, were some of the creative projects on display at the Department of Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering (DMME) Conference and Exhibition 2019. The two-part event, taking place on May 22 at the St Augustine Campus, showcased the department's Capstone Projects and selected postgraduate research projects and presentations with the aim of finding new ways to solve everyday farming problems.

With the theme "Engineering Innovative Solutions" the exhibition attracted a crowd of primary and secondary school students, representatives from government and industry, and members of the campus community. There were agriculture and agro-processing projects on display at the JFK Auditorium, such as a cocoa bean grinder, cocoa pod splitter, and a fruit pulp extractor.

A contest was held for student Capstone Projects and the first place went to Elisse Anjolie Ramsubir who designed and built an electric-powered tricycle for the beach. Second place went to Samantha Mohammed, whose project looked at alternative cooling methods for solar modules. Joshua Ramdeen took third place with an accelerated weight drop for seismic testing.

The DMME Conference and Exhibition was created to expose the wider society to the innovation taking place in the department, which can potentially lead to partnerships with Government and the private sector to develop new products and services for entrepreneurial and other purposes.

The conference portion of the event took place at the Engineering Lecture Theatre.



Elisse Anjolie Ramsubir, winner of the Capstone Project Contest, on her electric-powered tricycle.



Samantha Mohammed discussing her project with Professor John Agard, Director of the St Augustine Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship.



Joshua Ramdeen explains his project "The Design, Build and Test of an Accelerated Weight Drop for Seismic Testing" to the contest judges.

FIRST EVER YOUTH ECONOMIC FORUM FOCUSES ON POVERTY, HUNGER

A new initiative has been created to harness the energy, imagination and knowledge of young economists from the region. The Youth Economic Forum, held at the end of March, brought together students from UWI St Augustine's economics programme to discuss two pressing global issues - poverty and hunger.

The Forum, titled "Bridging the Gap to 2030: The Future we want, No Poverty No Hunger", was a collaborative effort of the Department of Economics; the HEU, Centre for Health Economics; and the Economics Society of The UWI, St Augustine. It was attended by more than an estimated 95 people – largely comprising economics students. The panellists were undergraduate and postgraduate economics students.



From left: Dr Daren Conrad – Lecturer, Department of Economics and Youth Economic Forum Moderator, PhD student Benjamin Ramkissoon, MSc student Najay Parke, and BSc students Rocyn Vitalis and Ryhan Chand. PHOTO: COURTESY HEU, CENTRE FOR HEALTH ECONOMICS

The primary aim of the event was to create a platform for dialogue among young Caribbean economists on regional issues and progress towards the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations (UN). This first forum focused on two of the SDGs - No Poverty and Zero Hunger. The organisers hope the forum will also strengthen youth involvement in the dialogue on policy and bridge the gap with current perspectives on the SDGs.

The inaugural Youth Economic Forum was attended by current and past students of the Department of Economics, economics lectures, personnel from the Ministry of Social Development, NGO representatives, and other interested persons. It took place on March 28 at the Faculty of Social Sciences Lounge.

■ OUR PEOPLE

LEAVING A FOOTPRINT TO FOLLOW

Patricia Mohammed, academic giant and Caribbean feminist, retires

BY SABRINA VAILLOO

Dancing women holding flowers. Placard slogans for peace. Fists flying high in protest. The imagery of the Flower Power era and the local Black Power Movement had a seminal effect on a generation. And one teenaged girl from south Trinidad watched with eyes wide open.

By the time Patricia Mohammed graduated from Naparima Girls' High School in 1971, seeds of activism had already been planted. "My generation was optimistic, as well as visionary. We had a sense that we could change the world for the better."

After over four decades of teaching and research at The University of the West Indies, Professor Patricia Mohammed is reflective as she prepares for her retirement on July 31. She has led a distinguished and prolific career of pioneering feminist scholarship in the Caribbean-wide movement.

"A renaissance thinker", Mohammed has had a "catholic approach to education", seeing all subjects as interconnected. She has a practical sensibility for the differences in disciplinary methodologies and theoretical positions, a trait essential to her strong performance in her decade-long role as Campus Coordinator and Director of Graduate Studies and Research at The UWI's St. Augustine Campus.

But before a career in academia was even a thought, a 17-year-old Mohammed had a revolutionary experience as a hospital worker. An old woman offered Mohammed money in exchange for medical attention, but she declined assuring her that it was her job to help. Mohammed earned a new sense of custodianship through encounters with the poor, and viewed the palpable lack of agency and imbalance of power they suffered as due for remedy. "I want to make the link between that and how I still treat students today," she says.

At this, I confessed how she had left her imprint on me while supervising my undergrad Women's Studies thesis two decades earlier. One day I showed up at Professor Mohammed's office for our appointment. Let's go outside, she said. She'd chosen a sunny spot on the concrete steps somewhere behind the engineering block, and thumbed through the document.

I was touched by her empathetic response to the neatly bound mayhem disguised as academic prose. Kindly, she said that what I had was okay, but that I needed to "sharpen thought" and to think of the writing process as continually sharpening a pencil as one's points became dulled with overwriting.

It's this pursuit of perfection that has led to some eminent feminist discourse where she would unravel inequalities faced by two women in her life. That they endured an abusive, alcoholic husband, or "old-style attitudes to Indian women", and yet remained, was a tragic contradiction.

"I was always confused about how both things could coexist. It shaped in me an understanding how the nuances of gender and gender relations couldn't be just cut through with slogans or with divisions like 'masculinity' and 'femininity.'" Compelled "to make sense of how Indians negotiated their gender relations", Mohammed would produce two academic breakthroughs, an MSc in Sociology in 1987 with a demographic study of women in education in Trinidad and Tobago, and later on, a PhD thesis, titled *Gender Negotiations Among Indians in Trinidad 1917-1947* (2002).

This was in 1975 "when the ideas had filtered in" from the global women's movement and the UN First World Women's Conference. Mohammed found a connection with the activism of Hazel Brown, who had started The Housewives' Association of Trinidad and Tobago (HATT), and with Diana Mahabir, then a senator, and very vocal in women's issues.



This was the turning point. "I got involved in the People's Popular Movement that created the Concerned Women for Progress as its women's arm and the first second-wave feminist group in Trinidad; I became de facto one of its leaders. So I was very much an activist as well while doing a Master's thesis on women — there was always the combination of the political and the social, and education."

As a Master's student, Mohammed's academic roadmap steered her towards receiving a Commonwealth Fellowship to work with Professor Kate Young at the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex. Young had just established the first Women, Men and Development Study course, requiring Mohammed to work as a research assistant for a year. During this time in the UK, she worked shoulder to shoulder with some 30 international scholars. "This was a very rich period of movement, so my feminism and my outlook which was always regional, went international," she says.

Mohammed inevitably crossed paths with people who would become deeply influential, personally and intellectually. A 15-year partnership that counts as a major intellectual influence on Mohammed did not emerge out of academia, she notes with some irony. She praises the friendship as a training ground for critical thinking and debate, and for how it led to new pathways of learning. Similarly, her marriage of over 25 years to British-Caribbean artist Rex Dixon has been the second most learning experience of her life, surrounded every day by his knowledge and practice of painting.

Among a list of inspiring academic colleagues,



Campus Principal Professor Brian Copeland, Professor Mohammed, UWI St Augustine Professor of Practice Dr Sterling Frost and Ms Chelsea Seetahal, Research Assistant at the School for Graduate Studies and Research.

OUR PEOPLE



Professor Mohammed with Rhoda Reddock, Professor of Gender and Development; Dr Leith Dunn, Head of the IGDS Mona Campus Unit; and Professor Eudine Barriteau, Campus Principal of The UWI Cave Hill Campus, at a gender conference in Mona, Jamaica in 2003.

Mohammed names Professor of English Literature Gordon Rohlehr, for his “capacity to engage in the subject matter and to travel with it”, and Professor of History Bridget Brereton, whose “detailed, methodical approach and economy of words” she admires.

In the Netherlands, the five-year PhD research period was a “very intensive and lonely experience”. At the same time, Mohammed wanted to transcend from left-brained logic to right-brained creativity. Reaching out for balance, she found it in art, a perennial passion. After attending her exhibition, Mohammed attached herself to a Dutch artist who paid her a small stipend. By the time she left the International Institute of Social Studies, she was able to put on her own full exhibition.

Broadening the imaginative capacity was a conduit to seeing beyond academic arguments and to sifting through and surfacing with new ideas. She said that this process was an intuitive one, necessary to provide balance, perspective and feeling. Her movement to film-making in which she has made, among others, two award-winning films “Coolie Pink and Green” (2009) and “City on a Hill” (2015) and book *Imaging the Caribbean: Culture and Visual Translation* (2009) were products of a similar aesthetic sensibility of history.

And for her final research role at The UWI, Professor Mohammed would also return to that instinctive process of combining logic with creative storytelling. She conceptualised The UWI Visual Heritage Exhibition,

researched and developed over eight months with the skilled hand of Research Assistant Chelsea Seetahal. Mohammed undertook the task as “a gift for the university” and as an “attempt to leave a footprint both for the heritage (of The UWI) and the growth of Graduate Studies”.

The exhibition, launched on May 24, is a celebratory nexus of The UWI’s architectural heritage, colonial and post-colonial history, student life in evolution, and many other transformative events that have shaped the institution from 1922 to present day.

The photographic exhibition was presented in two sections, located in the main corridor of the Lloyd Braithwaite Student Administration Building, and the offices of Graduate Studies and Research, respectively.

Professor Mohammed offered parting words for The UWI’s continued success as a repository for artistic and historical record and scholastic identity: “I would like the university to be conscious of the feeling of awe it must create for its students, staff and visitors and to ensure that its beauty is maintained and to build on that. For example, create a design for our main sidewalks with our own imprint of tiles that tell this story, so when you walk in the university, you walk into a compound that already has a signature of the space; it brings a whole different feel to that journey.”

Look out for Mohammed’s forthcoming publications: *Connecting the Dots: Work Life Balance and Ageing*, (Ian Randle), and *Gender and Cultural Studies Caribbean Reader* (Hansib).



Prof Mohammed at the Women and Development Studies (WAND) Group Interdisciplinary seminar with Sandra Edwards of WAND in 1987. PHOTO: COURTESY PROFESSOR PATRICIA MOHAMMED

Makandal Daaga Scholarship

creating lawyers who are change agents



In response to issues such as corruption and structural inequality, the Faculty of Law at UWI’s St Augustine Campus is seeking to create lawyers who will be meaningful change agents within the Caribbean. It is doing so through the Makandal

Daaga Scholarship in Law.

Professor Rose-Marie Belle Antoine, Dean of the Faculty of Law, is passionate about the Makandal Daaga scholarship and the “tremendous opportunity for the scholars who are given the tools of law to further their important work in activism and social development. It also furthers the goal of the Faculty of Law and The UWI to create greater access to the Law programme based on more broad-based, relevant criteria. Both lead to building better, more socially centred lawyers who will strive to reconstruct our societies for the greater good, promoting ideals of egalitarianism and justice.”

The Makandal Daaga scholarship is an equal opportunity scholarship where applicants may be of any age, gender, race, or CARICOM nationality. It targets candidates who would not normally qualify for entry into the Bachelor of Laws (LLB) programme based only on academic qualifications. Applicants must be persons with a discernible record of advocating for positive social change in their communities through concrete work on issues of justice, equality, or democracy, whether in an NGO, governmental, regional, or individual capacity and must also satisfy at least the minimum matriculation requirements of The UWI.

Kareem Marcelle, the first recipient of the Makandal Daaga Scholarship in Law (2017), urges anyone involved in activism in the Caribbean to apply for the scholarship, “Even if you feel disheartened that law may be too hard, I am telling you that this Faculty will help you achieve your goal. If you work with them, they will work with you. If you know that you have been working hard continuously for your community (it does not have to be a physical community. It could be a community of so many different persons and groups) a law degree can definitely help you achieve that”.

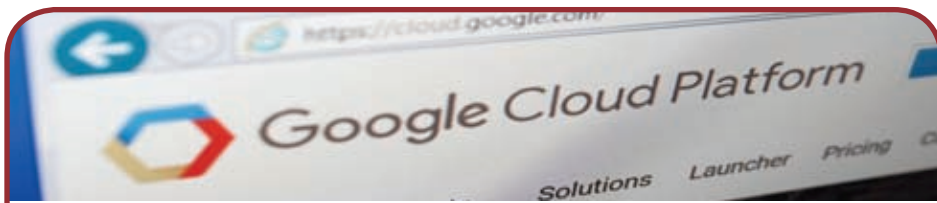
To apply for the Scholarship please visit <https://sta.uwi.edu/scholarships>

To apply to the Faculty of Law please visit <https://sta.uwi.edu/apply>

The deadline for applications: **June 30, 2019.**

UWI Calendar of Events

JUNE – AUGUST 2019



AI Solutions in the Cloud

June 6
The UWI St Augustine

The Faculty of Engineering, in collaboration with Google, hosts the Google Cloud's Artificial Intelligence Solutions workshop. This workshop which takes place on June 6 from 9.30am to 12.30pm at Lecture Theatre 1, Ground Floor, Block 13, Max Richards Building, Faculty of Engineering. Hear from Google's engineers about Google's Firebase as well as an intro to how Google does Machine Learning with an emphasis on Google Cloud. There will also be three sessions about life and jobs at Google, as well as a recruiter and the Global Practice Lead for Machine Learning.

For more information, please visit the Campus Notices and Announcements page at <https://sta.uwi.edu/news/notices/>.

Food Safety Public Forum

June 7
The UWI St Augustine

The Department of Food Production, Faculty of Food and Agriculture (FFA) joins the international community in commemoration of World Food Safety Day with a Public Forum on Food Safety Awareness with featured speaker, Dr Lisa Harrynanan, National Agricultural Health and Food Safety Specialist. Find out how to reduce the spread of food-borne illnesses and how we can improve our food safety on June 7 from 5.30 to 7pm at the Sir Frank Stockdale Building.

For more information, please contact Arlette Antoine or Dr. Mark Wuddivira at 662-2002 exts. 82267 or 82089.

Entrepreneurship 101

June 15
The UWI St Augustine

The Faculty of Social Sciences (FSS), Department of Management Studies, Entrepreneurship Unit invites new and developing entrepreneurs to participate in the Entrepreneurship 101 workshop. This one-day workshop will be held on June 15 from 9am to 3pm at the Institute of Critical Thinking. The workshop will focus on the fundamentals of entrepreneurship. Participants will gain understanding about the entrepreneurship process, improve their business planning skills and develop strategies to successfully take an idea to the market.

The registration fee is \$150. All participants will be able to:

- Access one free hour of one-on-one business start-up mentorship from the Entrepreneurship Unit.
- Receive a Certificate of Training in Entrepreneurship from the Department of Management Studies.

For more information, please email julian.henry@sta.uwi.edu.

Towards Sustainable Manufacturing in Trinidad

June 27
The UWI St Augustine

The UWI Open Lectures Committee invites you to attend the Professorial Inaugural Lecture by Professor Boppana Chowdary on the topic, Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Manufacturing Engineering: Towards Sustainable Manufacturing in Trinidad. The lecture takes place at 6pm at Lecture Theatre 1, Ground Floor, Block 13, Max Richards Building, Faculty of Engineering.

To RSVP please email uwistaevents@sta.uwi.edu or call 662-2002 ext. 83996/85012.



DCIT Boot Camp

July 8 to 12
The UWI St Augustine

Secondary school students from Form 4 to 6 and undergraduate students are invited to check out the 5th Annual Department of Computing and Information Technology's (DCIT) Boot Camp. Learn about robot car and python programming, web design and much more from faculty and student experts. Applications are open for interested students to apply for the camp taking place from July 8 to 12 from 9am to 4pm at DCIT, Computer Science Lab. The cost is \$1,299. The application deadline is June 18.

For more information, please visit their website: <https://sta.uwi.edu/fst/dcit/bootcamp/2019/>

Intro to R and SPSS Short Courses

August
The UWI St Augustine

The Department of Mathematics and Statistics, Faculty of Science and Technology (FST) will be offering Short Courses on Introduction to R and SPSS (Beginner and Intermediate Levels) throughout August.

- SPSS Beginner | August 5 to 9 | 5 to 8pm
- SPSS Intermediate | August 12 to 15 | 5 to 8pm
- R Beginner | August 19 to 23 | 5 to 8pm
- R Intermediate | August 26 to 30 | 5 to 8pm

A certificate of participation will be awarded upon completion of course/s. Each course costs \$1,500. Enjoy the special price of two courses for \$2,500.

For more information, please call 662-2002 ext. 83553, 83641 or email: kevin.awai@sta.uwi.edu or trisha.prince@sta.uwi.edu.

**UWI TODAY WANTS
TO HEAR FROM YOU**

UWI TODAY welcomes submissions by staff and students for publication in the paper. Please send your suggestions, comments or articles for consideration to uwitoday@sta.uwi.edu

