



UWI TODAY

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES • ST AUGUSTINE CAMPUS

SUNDAY 5 MAY 2019



Behold



Lacey Roberts (left) and Gladys Walter, graduate assistants from Texas A&M University's Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education, and Communications in the US, marvel at the Chaconia, national flower of Trinidad and Tobago while The UWI St Augustine Faculty of Food and Agriculture's (FFA's) Sir Frank Stockdale Building provides the backdrop. Lacey and Gladys were members of an international contingent of 120 people visiting the campus as part of the Association for International Agricultural and Extension Education's (AIAEE) 35th Annual Conference. Held from April 1 to 4 at the Hyatt Regency Trinidad in Port of Spain, the conference brought together educators, researchers and students under the theme "Linking, Innovating, Motivating, and Engaging for Resilient Agricultural Systems". Regionally and internationally, the FFA is widely considered a crucial institution for research, education and ideas in food and agriculture. The Faculty also recently held its **techAGRI Expo 2019** (see *centerspread*), an exhibition that showcases the advanced technologies and practices in food production, potential business opportunities available in the sector and the entrepreneurs making it happen, and the resources for sustainable and healthy farming. PHOTO: ANEEL KARIM.

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FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Farming Matters

Once upon a time, for a very long time, human civilisation centred on agriculture. It is estimated that the first farmers began planting grains more than 11,000 years ago. In doing so they were seeding a massive transformation in how people live. Farming led to a surplus in food, which in turn led to population growth, a diversity of roles and social development. Civilizations bloomed.

Yet even as humanity advanced, food production remained at the centre of almost every society. It was the major employer. It was the main source of wealth. Agricultural goods were the most important commodities and raw materials for finished goods. The farm was the platform for ingenuity and invention. Most importantly, and fundamentally, it ensured the society was food secure.

One of the consequences of industrial development and international trade is the tendency to take food for granted. Developed and emerging economies have supermarket shelves, stores, shops and restaurants bursting with food. We believe that because we have so much food, we are food secure. This is not always true. Food production is what ensures food security. Without agriculture our capacity to feed our society is extremely tenuous. And unfortunately, as societies develop, in many cases that crucial connection to the land withers.

Trinidad and Tobago has followed a similar trajectory. We were once an agricultural society with an abundance of small and family farms providing foods such as corn, rice, peas, beans and potatoes to feed the home market, and large-scale plantations producing sugar, cocoa and coffee. But we became an independent republic guided by an agenda of industrial development fueled by the energy sector. And it worked. Today the energy sector contributes almost 48 per cent of GDP (2017). But what of agriculture? Various reports show that in 2017 it contributed between 0.5 per cent and 0.4 per cent to GDP and employs an estimated four per cent of the population. Agriculture is not what it used to be.

“The contribution of agriculture to GDP in almost every CARICOM country has declined and continues to decline relatively, and there is a similar trend in the budget allocation to the agricultural sector in most of these countries,” said Mr Reuben Robertson, Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) Representative for T&T and Suriname at a recent event.

In that same gathering, Mr Robertson stated that, “our countries and region are faced with severe challenges to the extent where our region is a net importer of food, estimated at US\$4.7 billion annually, making the region food insecure.”

The “gathering” was *techAGRI Expo 2019*, the signature event of UWI St Augustine’s Faculty of Food and Agriculture (FFA). In its third year, *techAGRI* has become the Caribbean’s premier agricultural exhibition, exposing visitors to the creativity, commercial potential, future tools and splendid products originating on campus and in



But what of agriculture? Various reports show that in 2017 it contributed between 0.5 per cent and 0.4 per cent to GDP and employs an estimated four per cent of the population. Agriculture is not what it used to be.

society. It represents the outstanding work of Dr Wayne Ganpat, Dean of FFA and his entire team of faculty members, support staff and the students themselves. Even teams from other faculties played an important part at *techAGRI*, which is fitting because food security is a society-wide concern and every discipline has a role in its realisation.

In his opening address at the expo, Dr Ganpat explained its three objectives:

“To draw national attention to food and food production as an attractive, technology driven profession... to expose all the varied opportunities that exist in food beyond primary production, the wide range of exciting value-added products... and thirdly to draw national attention to the work that The UWI is doing as we contribute to agriculture in the region.”

All three objectives were achieved beyond expectation. I have attended every *techAGRI* and every year I marvel at the work that is being done by the scholars, business people, technologists, sector specific organisations and government agencies in food production. I am impressed by the multitude of creative and colourful products that have been developed in T&T and the region. I am heartened by the excitement of the school children as their world is opened up to the wonders of agricultural research

and technology. Among them may very well be a future generation of farmers and agricultural entrepreneurs.

TechAGRI is only one of the many initiatives from the FFA. In December 2018 the faculty launched its Technology Demonstration Park just outside the campus grounds. The park, built by our graduate students, displays climate smart technologies and hydroponic systems - tools to improve the viability of farming and agriculture-based commercial activity.

And the FFA remains a regional leader in research, teaching and ideas. In this issue of **UWI Today** we tell the story of Dr Rajendra Persaud, one of our PhD students, whose research into sustainable management strategies for diseases affecting rice led to him receiving the “Golden Arrow of Achievement” a national award from the Republic of Guyana. This is the kind of high value, impactful research of which the FFA and the entire university should be proud.

It is highly unlikely that we will ever return to an agrarian age, where food production dominates our societies. But we can inspire a rejuvenation of agriculture. We must. There are several examples of nations suffering the consequences of food insecurity, some close to home. A country insecure in its food supply is a country at risk of a national emergency. The danger is that great.

At The UWI we understand the stakes. We are doing the work. But we cannot do it alone. National and regional issues require a national and regional response. We therefore look forward to engaging with the wider society. I believe that working together we can not only feed our citizens for generations but also establish a vibrant and prosperous industry based on agriculture.

Brian Copeland

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Putting SEA to the Test

BY GILLIAN MOORE

Students wrote the Secondary Entrance Assessment (SEA) last month, as usual amid an atmosphere of hope, dread and destiny.

The standard Government test assigns pupils to secondary school places in a starkly inequitable system: “prestige” schools with a tradition of achievement, alumni support networks and (often) religious tradition, and State-run institutions that lack basic resources and at times seem to mirror society’s worst social ills.

The annual test, often the subject of contention, was the subject of discussion on March 29, “Among the SEA believers: The Price We Must Pay”, the professorial inaugural lecture of Jerome De Lisle, Professor of Education Leadership.

Parents and educators filled the School of Education Auditorium to capacity to hear Professor De Lisle’s findings on the SEA. Attendees looking for answers went away with enlightening data – and plenty to ponder.

De Lisle stressed the importance of good data, noting that international agencies often find “there isn’t enough information” on education in Trinidad and Tobago.

He painted a sobering picture of the SEA landscape: inherent systemic inequities. He said the passing criteria varies by district, with higher cut-off scores in rural districts; the problem of “false positives and negatives,” where scores do not reflect the true abilities of candidates; and, the “shadow education system” of extra lessons for those who are able to afford it.

He felt the exam was “a very weak tool” for assessing students, and asked “Can it tell you what you want it to tell you?”

He asked whether it was right to subject children to such existential pressure, facing a test with often life-changing consequences: “Why do that to an 11-year-old?”

He likened the exam to an obstacle, asking, “is this education, really? Putting up barriers for the children?”

Dr De Lisle earned his PhD (Education) from The UWI and has worked on several IDB-funded consultancies on testing and reform for the Ministry of Education. He has worked in measurement and evaluation at the Faculty of Medical Sciences, and is well regarded internationally for his research. He has also published several qualitative studies and received an award from the American Educational Research Association this past April.

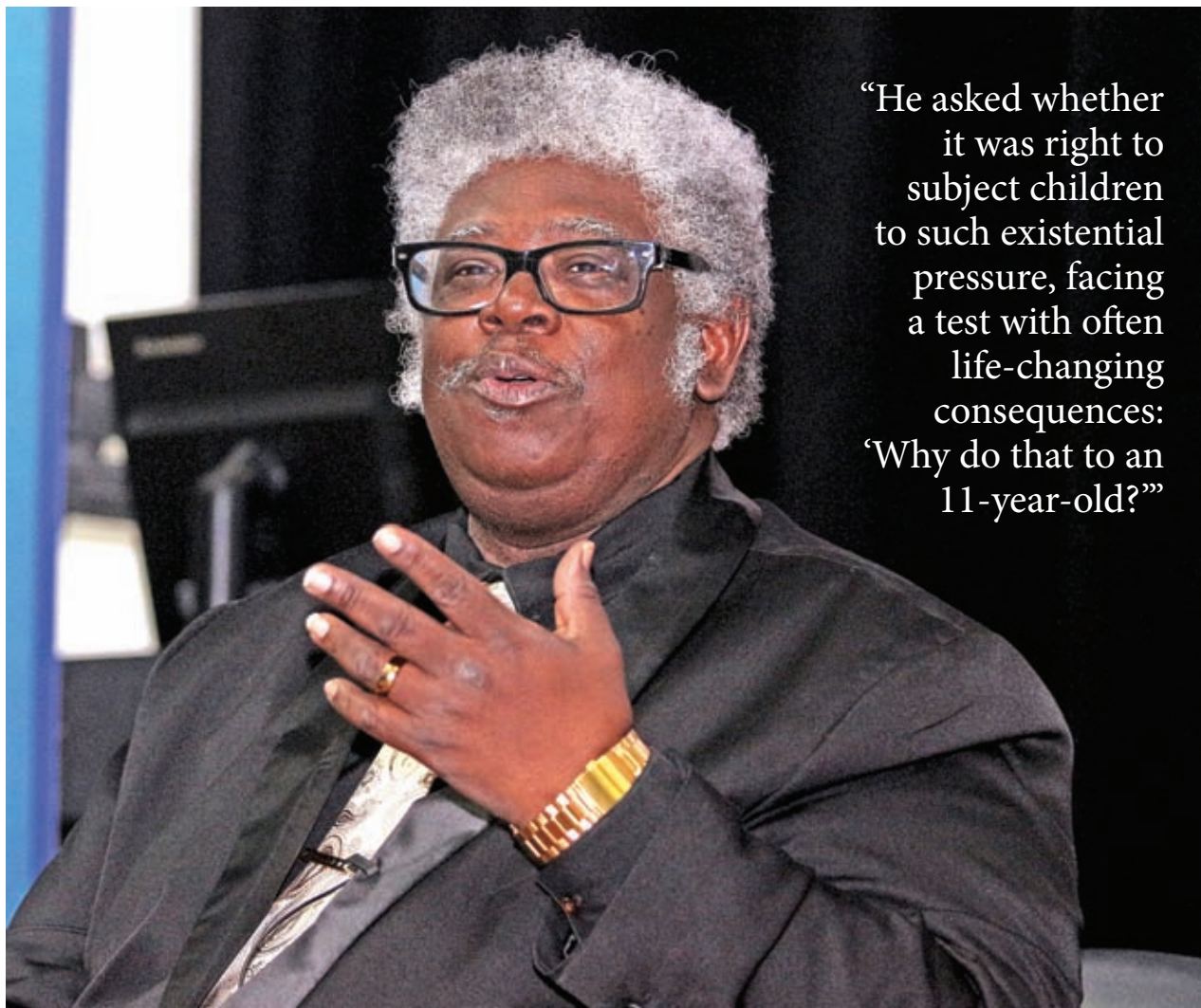
At the lecture, De Lisle gave a multimedia presentation with graphs and images illustrating his points.

One slide showed a child’s drawing, expressing their feelings on the test. In it, a humiliated pupil faces a teacher whose hand is a ruler (symbolising the threat of punishment). It was captioned: “I felt that SEA was killing, as there was nothing I can do to get out of it.” In the background, other children laughed or expressed a similar sense of fear and hopelessness.

De Lisle said students “experience stress but many do not communicate”. He encouraged parents to encourage them to “share their emotions” and suggested they keep journals.

He said there were many “myths” around the exam culture, and that these “myths become policy”.

He said we believe valorised schools are better, that prayer in these schools plays a role. We believe that certain students deserve to attend vilified schools: “What happens when teachers believe that if you pass for a ‘Junior Sec’ you are not bright?” he asked.



Professor Jerome De Lisle PHOTOS: ANEEL KARIM

“He asked whether it was right to subject children to such existential pressure, facing a test with often life-changing consequences: ‘Why do that to an 11-year-old?’”



The lecture was attended by a passionate and enthusiastic audience.

“Are we demonising students who go to these schools?” He described the “elitist worldview” that causes us to prize academic intelligence above other kinds of aptitudes: “Where is technical-vocational education?”

In one study cited, 6,000 candidates got the same passing mark, “but we don’t have 6,000 spaces” in better schools.

De Lisle’s research showed no correlation between socioeconomic status and academic performance, but a strong link between wealth and placement in valorised schools – with poverty concentrated in low achievement schools.

“Do we trust the system? Is the system blind?”

His suggested countermeasures included making the exam harder in order to spread out scores; more focus on developing “grit and resilience” in students; pumping resources into failing schools to make “every school a winner”; more classroom-based assessment; and, emphasising “authentic learning” rather than rote learning.

But De Lisle cautioned there is no quick fix. “Even if we tinker with the SEA, expectations, practices and beliefs may remain.” He cited Hong Kong, which removed 11-Plus in the 1970s. “People are still exam focused,” but now, classroom assessment is emphasised.

“People just love exams.”

■ CAMPUS NEWS

TONI-MARIE BOBART is second UWI graduate to become an associate of the Society of Actuaries

Toni-Marie Bobart, a 25-year-old graduate of The UWI's bachelor's programme in actuarial science, has become the second student from the campus to earn the designation of "Associate" with the Society of Actuaries (ASA). This is an achievement for Toni-Marie, who has overcome six extremely challenging exams and eight modules while working full-time. It is also an achievement for the Actuarial Sciences programme within the Department of Mathematics and Statistics (DMS) of the Faculty of Science and Technology, which has educated two associates since the programme's creation in 2011.

"It was quite a long journey, especially when you are working full time," says Toni-Marie. "It was quite a big challenge but through determination I made it."

Based in the US, the Society of Actuaries (SOA) is a global professional organisation of actuarial science, a field that combines business, math and finance to measure and manage risk for complex financial issues. The SOA exams are known for their great difficulty and many prospective associates need successive attempts to achieve the designation.

Toni-Marie's road was made even more challenging because the SOA introduced a new exam, predictive analytics, for the first time:

"They changed the syllabus mid last year and I fell under that group of students who had to sit the new exam," she says.

Apart from her own willpower and hardwork, she attributes her success to her family and employer, KR Services. She is also grateful to her lecturers in the DMS, particularly Senior Lecturer/Subject Leader Mr Stokeley Smart, who "went the extra mile for the students".

Smart says that "as director of the BSc actuarial science programme at UWI St Augustine, I am of the opinion that if the student does not succeed the master then both the master and the student have failed. Toni became an associate of the SOA in fewer years than I took to attain the designation. That is clear evidence that she has succeeded her master."

Speaking on UWI's actuarial programme, Mr Smart says it was designed to "raise the bar in terms of



what is expected from young professionals entering the wider financial services sector nationally, regionally and internationally. In fact, 72 per cent of the programme's entire graduate database is already employed."

"The degree," Smart says, "has a focus on developing the quantitative risk management skills of its graduates as well as preparing them to write the associate-level examinations of the Society of Actuaries if they so choose."

Toni-Marie believes The UWI provides an education in actuarial science on par with anything available internationally:

"You don't need to spend all this money to go abroad and study actuarial science when you can get the same quality of education right here."



Sir Alister, pioneering UWI Vice- Chancellor, passes at 87

Sir Meredith Alister McIntyre, a champion of Caribbean integration, celebrated intellectual and scholar, and Vice-Chancellor of The UWI from 1988 to 1998, passed away on April 20 in Jamaica. Born in Grenada, Sir Alister was renowned for his more than half century dedication to the development of the region and his almost lifelong relationship with The UWI. He was 87.

Chancellor of The UWI, Mr Robert Bermudez, expressed his condolences to Sir Alister's wife Marjorie, their children and grandchildren.

"The region has lost a transformational leader; a giant among men whose contributions to our development shall continue to benefit this generation and generations into the future," he said.

Sir George Alleyne, Chancellor Emeritus, said "His legacy to our University of the West Indies is enduring and the many changes he introduced to improve its governance and management are withstanding the test of time."

Early in his career, Sir Alister became a lecturer in economics at The UWI Mona Campus. He would eventually reach the heights of his academic career, becoming Vice-Chancellor in 1988.

"He was also instrumental in ensuring that the Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) recognised the pivotal role played by The UWI in the human resource development of the region and enshrined The UWI in the 1989 Grand Anse Declaration, setting the Caribbean Single Market and economy (CSME) in motion, as a regional institution in perpetuity," Mr Bermudez said in his statement on his passing.

Among his numerous career highlights is his 1974 appointment to the post of Secretary General of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). His awards include the Order of the Caribbean Community (OCC), national honours from Jamaica and Guyana, and Knighthood from the Queen of England in 1992.

In a statement on the passing of Sir Alister, UWI Vice-Chancellor Professor Sir Hilary Beckles described what he called "The McIntyre Moment", a new era for the university:

"A generation of academics, leaders, and administrators was schooled in the McIntyre model and mentality. It is evident today, 21 years after his term, that our strategic planning cycle is still driven by the compelling imperative of economic development and social transformation. His vision, and his mission, remain robustly relevant."



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■ OUR STUDENTS

Little Abary is the epitome of a small, rural farming village. Forty three miles out from Georgetown, its near to the popular river, bridge and creek trail that share its name. *The Guyana Chronicle* calls it an “enchantingly quaint and impressive village”. The villagers, the *Chronicle* says, depend almost entirely on their rice farming and vegetable cultivation for existence”.

There is one member of the community of Little Abary that chose a different path:

“I come from a very poor family and my parents were doing cash crop farming for their livelihood,” says Dr Rajendra Persaud. “So I was a slow learner and very playful as a kid - and not doing very well in school. They threatened to take me out of school and make me join them on the farm. That was the turning point in my life. I got serious about school and academics.”

Serious is an understatement. At only 38 years of age, Persaud’s scholarly work in plant pathology (the scientific study of plant diseases) has earned him coveted positions in academia in the University of Guyana (UG), The UWI St Augustine and other institutions. It has earned him international recognition and key positions in state agencies with jurisdiction over his country’s agricultural destiny. In February of this year it even earned him the prestigious “Golden Arrow of Achievement Award”, a national award of Guyana.

Perhaps most importantly of all, Rajendra Persaud’s commitment to academics has allowed him to positively impact the lives of farmers like his parents, in agricultural communities like Little Abary, all over Guyana. How did he do it? Rice.

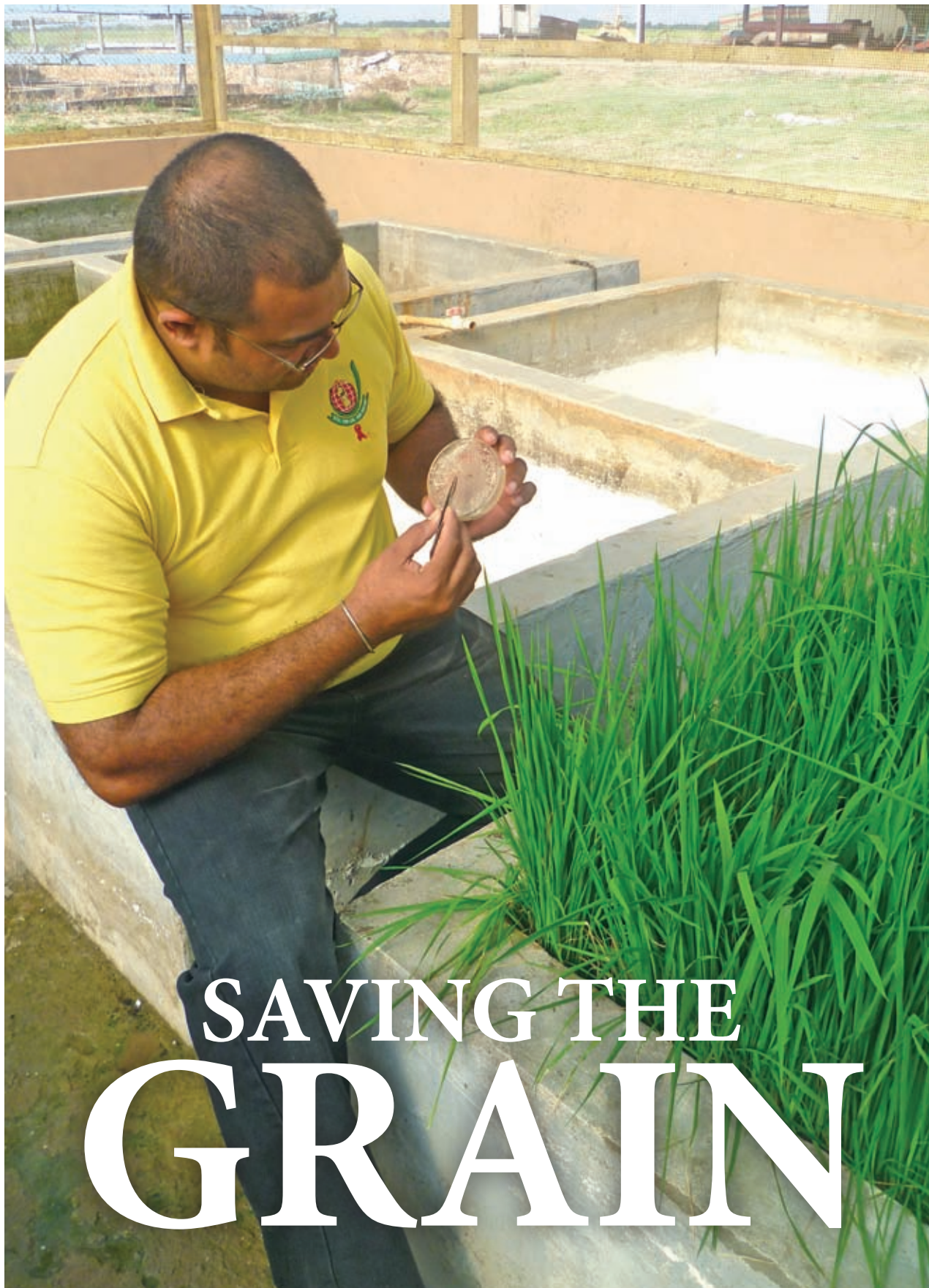
YIELDS UNDER THREAT

Their names are “blast” and “sheath blight” - together they are the most devastating diseases affecting rice crops worldwide. Blast, caused by a fungus called *Magnaporthe oryzae*, is the most important rice affecting disease worldwide because of its massive reach (85 countries) and devastating effects. Sheath blight, caused by the *Rhizoctonia solani* fungus, is almost as potent a threat. In countries such as Japan and the US it has caused losses in crop yields as high as 20 to 25 per cent.

“We have some very serious disease problems with sheath blight and blast,” says Dr Duraisamy Saravanakumar, Senior Lecturer in Plant Pathology at UWI St Augustine’s Faculty of Food and Agriculture (FFA). “They cover all stages of the plant, starting from the seedling to the harvest. This means they can lead to severe yield loss.”

When Dr Sara (as he is commonly known) says “we”, he is speaking about major rice producing countries. And Guyana is very much a rice producing country. Rice is one of the six major export commodities that comprise 60 per cent of GDP, and a major contributor to agriculture’s more than 15 per cent of GDP. In the words of a United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) document on the Guyana rice industry, “the industry has become one of the economic cornerstones of this country”.

This means threats like rice-affecting diseases can have a major negative impact on the economy. As a young academic from a rural background, Persaud found himself involved in the field of plant pathology right out of secondary school, becoming a trainee with the Guyana Rice Development Board (GRDB). He’s been on that path ever since, acquiring his diploma from the Guyana School of Agriculture, his degree from UG, and his master’s from the Indira Gandhi Agriculture University at Raipur, in India. Then came The UWI.



SAVING THE GRAIN

How Rajendra Persaud used plant science to protect Guyana’s vital rice industry

BY JOEL HENRY

“I was on a visit to Guyana in 2015 with Dr (Lynda) Wickham (Senior Lecturer, Crop Science/Post-Production Technology at FFA),” said Dr Wayne Ganpat, Dean of the UWI St Augustine FFA, recounting how he first met and recruited Dr Persaud to do his PhD in Trinidad and Tobago.

At the time, Persaud was working for the GRDB at their Rice Research Station in the village of Burma in Mahaicony.

“He was doing amazing work,” says Ganpat. “We saw the potential in him, and the zeal. We recruited him right there on the spot.”

Because Dr Persaud is a committed family man (he is married and has three children) the FFA designed a special programme for him where he would come to the St Augustine Campus for his courses and then go back to Guyana to do his research. Through this process he completed his PhD, an experience he looks back on happily.

“My experience was wonderful,” he says, describing the “professional, dedicated and experienced” staff he met with at The UWI and the FFA’s Department of Food Production in particular. Persaud speaks highly of Dr Ganpat “who was always there to help” and Dr Sara, his supervisor, who gave him “support and expert guidance.”

“Studying at UWI was a life-changing experience,” he says.

NATIONAL IMPACT

Through his groundbreaking work in Caribbean rice pathology, Dr Persaud has changed lives himself, particularly those of Guyanese rice farmers. It’s important to remember that his work was not about scientific inquiry removed from the general concerns of society. He had a very specific problem to solve - how to protect the country’s rice crops from blast and sheath blight.

He came up with a two-pronged “sustainable disease management strategy”. The first was a screening programme to find varieties of rice genotypes that are more resistant to the diseases.

Dr Sara says, “he screened 103 genotypes and identified the resistant types. He also did molecular work on genotypes



Dr Persaud and his wife Rajmattie at his graduation ceremony at UWI St Augustine.

specifically for blast to determine what proteins are responsible for resistance.”

This allowed Dr Persaud and the GRDB to recommend these more resistant varieties to farmers. “These varieties were widely cultivated and have resulted in higher yields and profits to the rice farmers and the country itself,” Persaud says.

The second part of the strategy was the development of disease-fightings extracts of plants such as thyme leaf, marigold and clove; bio-pesticides; and new generation fungicides. Persaud says, “these new products not only aid in the effective management of rice diseases in Guyana but also resulted in better quality paddy grains, leading to higher yields.”

The successful disease management strategy and the benefit it has brought to Guyanese society has not gone unnoticed. On February 23, 2019, Persaud was among 77 nationals honoured by the Government of Guyana at its 49th anniversary as a republic. He received the “Golden Arrow of Achievement”, the fourth highest honour in the Order of Service of Guyana.

The Golden Arrow can be awarded to “any citizen of Guyana who has performed an outstanding and specific act of service or achievement of an exceptional nature”, a statement on Guyana’s orders and medals states.

It’s an enormous accomplishment, especially for such a young man.

“It’s a wonderful feeling to see the Government and people of Guyana recognise your contribution to service, science, research and development,” he says. “It gives you the motivation to continue and do better.”

And he’s not planning on slowing down anytime soon. Dr Persaud is intent on continuing his research and doing a post-doctoral fellowship. He even has his eyes on returning to UWI. “Afterwards I may come join the FFA team and share some of my knowledge and experience.”

Whatever path he follows, Rajendra Persaud will remain guided by the same commitment to community and passion for the science of agriculture that took him out of the rice farm and brought him right back.



Passion fruit, cassava, pineapples and chive, on Thursdays the campus community enjoys a bounty of fresh produce at the Faculty of Food and Agriculture’s (FFA’s) Farm Sale. “I want everyone at UWI St Augustine to see the benefits of the healthy foods that we produce on our farms. I want them to benefit from more nutritious foods,” says Dr Wayne Ganpat, Dean of the FFA. The fruits and vegetables come from UWI’s 200-acre farm in Orange Grove, headquarters of their Agricultural Innovation Park. The Park uses intensive technologies and methods that reduce the need for labour and land, minimise the use of pesticides and increase yields. Apart from producing and selling meats, milk and produce, UWI farms are teaching farms, educating the next generation of food and food production professionals.

techAGRI 2019

On the western field behind the Old Administration Building of the St Augustine Campus of The University of the West Indies, the Faculty of Food and Agriculture (FFA) hosted the third installment of its *techAGRI Expo 2019* under the theme “Technology. Innovation. Entrepreneurship” on March 29 to 31. Adults and teens wandered between the booths, pausing to learn more about whatever captured their interests while in the background, children screamed joyfully from the interior of a bouncy castle.

There was a full schedule of events and activities over the three days, including a mini market, wildlife zoo, workshops, food village and agricultural displays. This, the largest technology and agriculture show in the country, can be considered a sample of the potential for growth and innovation taking place in these industries. *TechAGRI*, if nothing else, is an ambitious tool in attempting to influence people’s attitude towards climate change, food security and their responsibility as key stakeholders in a rapidly changing world. These issues are the elephant in every room in every home across the world.

Recent initiatives by Government ministries to mitigate the risks involved in climate change have been highlighted in local media reports over the last few months. Severe weather patterns have affected the populace in significant ways – increased water shortages, rising temperatures and impromptu flooding. Internationally, abnormal weather conditions have affected every continent and countries have been forced to take drastic measures. In South Africa, there are talks about towing an iceberg from Antarctica, 2,000 kilometres over, to combat Cape Town’s growing water crisis. We’re not yet in need of an iceberg but water security is just the tip of larger environmental problems we must all face. Locally, discussions are ongoing about water conservation and security, such as limiting the excessive or unnecessary use of water in private and public consumption.

At *techAGRI*, a number of different vendors showcased hydroponics systems for both the home gardener and the commercial farmer. The booth operated by FFA drew a crowd, with patrons signing up for the agri business training and development series. The Landscape Management course highlighted plants that grow well with minimum water and the Hydroponics course’s tagline stated boldly “Grow Plants without Soil!”. These aren’t untapped resources, as the sign-up list showed, people of all ages are sitting up and taking notice. Perhaps change is coming.

Over at the Trinidad and Tobago Beekeepers’ Association’s tent, there was a literal buzz; patrons exclaimed over the honey on offer while bees swarmed around an enclosed comb, indifferent to the curious stares. Their honey was a marvel, with different flavours and colours on display from both islands. The Association offered samples of over five types of honey, demonstrated the equipment used at apiaries and explained how they collaborate with local government to assist in the safe removal of hives from public spaces and the proposed implementation of pollinator corridors using bee friendly trees. One of the most alarming indicators of our environmental crisis is the sharp decline in wild honey bees. Without these hard workers pollinating our trees, food security cannot be guaranteed.

Farmers from as far as Rio Claro attended the expo, offering a glimpse at adaptive agricultural methods. Fruits which were previously relegated to colder climes, now flourish in our warmer temperatures. Strawberries, nectarines and peaches were amongst those on offer, the farmers patiently explained proper techniques to care and harvest these foreign goods. Nestled between them were familiar plants, a pommecythere tree with young fruits and citrus trees, the smooth green leaves of a lime tree easily



“We are battling a national and regional inertia around agriculture. And we are trying to change that around. It is in that vein that we have the *techAGRI Expo* every year. We want to bring people on campus and show them what agriculture has to offer. That’s one way we can try to change their outlook and sensitise them, as well as show them the work The University of the West Indies is doing. We want them to know this is not an ivory tower. They can and should come here.” Dr Wayne Ganpat, Dean of the Faculty of Food and Agriculture, UWI St Augustine. PHOTO: GUYTIN OTTLEY



A young visitor to *techAGRI* is captivated by a rabbit at the Wildlife Zoo. PHOTO: KEYON MITCHELL

A Climate of

BY AVA H



Senator Avinash Singh, Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries, reaches out to touch “Coco” the rabbit, mascot of the expo, while UWI St Augustine Campus Principal Professor Brian Copeland (centre) looks on. Taking in the proceedings from behind Professor Copeland are Campus Librarian Mr Frank Sooden (left) and Deputy Principal Professor Indar Ramnarine (right). PHOTO: GUYTIN OTTLEY



An exhibitor from the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries' Extension Training and Information Services Division (ETISD) gives a demonstration to an interested onlooker. The ETISD booth exhibited agro-processing techniques such as fruit wine making, fruit drying, and the making of cassava flour. PHOTO: GUYTN OTTLEY

recognisable. No need for acres of land to harvest these fruits, they've been adapted for medium-sized pots and even indoor living in some cases.

Home gardening is one of the free courses on offer at the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries, giving everyone a chance to develop a green thumb. Another exhibitor was WHYFarm, a local NGO with a mandate to promote food security using agricultural education and entertainment. AGRIman and his trusty sidekicks, farming superhero characters, greeted visitors at their booth and the accompanying comic book drew a young crowd. We Help You-th Farm (WHYFarm) is aptly named for their efforts to create a sustainable, self-sufficient mindset in younger children regarding the challenges of food security in local communities.

Nearby, at the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations booth, "zero hunger by 2030" was prominently displayed as well as ways to achieve that goal. It is second on their list of sustainable development targets, just after poverty reduction.

Artisans and entrepreneurs were scattered amongst the exhibitors, each showcasing their best goods or services, from handcrafted jewelry, ceramics, cosmetics and crafts to local sweets, fresh produce, flowering plants and homemade soaps. Vendors proudly detailed their efforts to reduce, reuse or recycle. Beyond the good-natured jokes about buying reusable shopping bags at local supermarkets, local craft markets promoted a "green" policy, asking patrons to bring their own utensils and eliminate the use of Styrofoam, which is in the process of being banned for food and beverage use.

Both vendors and customers are now expected to contribute to larger national efforts to reduce pollution in the seas and on land. It's these small but significant attempts to protect and conserve our environment that lead to larger changes in public policy and frameworks. This is one way to address the elephant in the room – with minor adjustments that may seem as inconsequential as a mouse.

Opportunity techAGRI Expo

ATHERTON



PHOTO: KEYON MITCHELL



PHOTO: KEYON MITCHELL

A student from the College Appel du 18 Juin in Lamentin, Guadeloupe inspects a hydroponically grown plant at the Technology Demonstration Park. Through technology such as hydroponics farmers are able to produce crops with much less land and higher yields. PHOTO: ANEEL KARIM

Avah Atherton is a writer and aspiring cultural archivist.



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CAMPUS NEWS

How do we continue to provide energy to the world while reducing our carbon footprint?”

This is the challenge facing energy producing countries such as Trinidad and Tobago, and the companies that provide their energy services. From March 27 to 29, The UWI Faculty of Law (FoL) brought together local and international academics, policymakers, and state and private sector players in the energy industry to grapple with this urgent topic at the 3rd Biennial UWI Oil and Gas Law Conference and Just Transition Initiative 2019. The theme for this year's conference was “The Relevance of Renewable Energy in the Caribbean”.

During the opening ceremony of the conference (held at the Hilton Hotel and Conference Centre) Ms Alicia Elias-Roberts, Deputy Dean of the FoL at UWI St Augustine and Conference Chair, said the theme for this year's conference was in line with the mission of The UWI to support the development of the region and beyond through education and ideas. She also remarked that adding “Just Transition” to the conference was based on an awareness that the Caribbean must find creative ways to transition to renewable forms of energy.

In her remarks at the opening ceremony, Ms Wendy Fae Thompson, Vice President and Managing Counsel, BPTT said:

“At BP we believe that hydrocarbons will continue to play a major role in energy consumption into the future, yet energy companies must find ways to enable a lower carbon future.”

This is especially true for Trinidad and Tobago, a country surrounded by hydrocarbons to the North, South, East and West. We have been able to use these abundant resources to become one of the largest exporters of LNG, methanol and ammonia in the world. As a result, our economy is inextricably tied to these exports. However, these achievements have not come without consequences. As a nation we are the 2nd highest emitter of CO₂ per capita

Renewable energy the main theme at OIL AND GAS CONFERENCE 2019

BY ALICIA ELIAS-ROBERTS



Professor Raphael Heffron from the Centre for Energy, Petroleum, Mineral Law and Policy, at the University of Dundee, giving his keynote address.

and the 3rd most energy intensive country on earth.

All of the keynote speakers gave sterling presentations which were very much appreciated by those in attendance. Keynote speakers included Vonda Brunsting of Harvard University, US; Professor Raphael Heffron from the Centre for Energy, Petroleum, Mineral Law and Policy, at University of Dundee; Kevin Ramnarine, Former Minister of Energy; Anthony Paul, Energy and Strategy Adviser, Aces, Caribbean Energy Specialists Ltd; Mrs. Indira Rampaul-Cheddie, Senior State Counsel, Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries; and Shane Grimes, Lecturer, University of Coventry, UK.

The timely and relevant topics included oil and gas law contract re-negotiation, taxation, environmental justice and energy issues in transitioning to a greener economy. Several major oil companies, including BPTT, Shell and Atlantic LNG; several universities; and the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries collaborated with the UWI to sponsor the conference. Ms Elias-Roberts noted that the UWI is keen to develop oil and gas law because it addresses an area that is critical to the developmental needs of the region, and Trinidad and Tobago in particular.

The conference received many accolades from attendees: that they found it “relevant, informative, and instructive” and the Faculty of Law was congratulated for creating an important forum for energy specialists to share in their knowledge and experience which can lead towards important legal changes.

Ms Alicia Elias-Roberts is the Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Law at The UWI St Augustine Campus and Chair of the Oil and Gas Conference and Just Transition Initiative 2019.

Chemistry Conference to focus on INNOVATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

BY DR RICHARD A TAYLOR



Chemistry is often considered the “central science” because it permeates every aspect of our lives. This is because chemistry investigates molecules, the building blocks of all matter, and how they interact.

Since research is constantly deepening our understanding of chemistry and leading to new discoveries, the 21st Century will continue to see it as crucial in finding sustainable solutions to far-reaching challenges, including energy provision, environmental protection, food and water safety and

global healthcare. The global chemical industry is uniquely positioned to help deliver an integrated approach to sustainable development through the creation of products that improve people's lives.

Considering global advances in the chemical sector the imperative is for the Caribbean to direct greater focus towards its development in the region. The UWI must be at the forefront of this thrust and has articulated its mission “to advance learning, create knowledge and foster innovation for the positive transformation of the Caribbean and the wider world.” To that end the Department of Chemistry of The UWI St Augustine Campus will hold the first “Biennial Regional Conference and Expo on Chemical Science, Technology and Industry” at the UWI Teaching and Learning Complex from May 22 to 24, as part of the Faculty of Science and Technology Week 2019. The theme of the conference is “*Chemistry and Chemical Technology for a Sustainable Development of the Caribbean*”.

The conference will include noted regional and

international researchers, technologists, chemical/biomedical engineers, policy makers and students. The programme will feature distinguished plenary speakers, and oral and poster presentations from researchers, graduate and undergraduate students. Topics include industrial and green chemistry, sustainable energy science/technology, drug discovery, food toxicity, materials science, the innovation process and chemistry education.

The Expo will provide a platform for a range of exhibitors of products, technologies, and research with demonstrations highlighting how chemistry is applied across sectors and in everyday life. The conference welcomes registration and attendance from practitioners in the field, including industry, scientific agencies and academia, and the expo is free to the public.

Details about the conference and expo can be found at the conference website: <http://conferences.sta.uwi.edu/brcce/>

Kalu's Kaleidoscopic Life

BY JEANNETTE GAWAI

Things scribbled in margins. The spilled fruit-seed of gardeners, linguists, carvers, in their crossings, hauntings, meridian measurements; a constant shifting of the phantom cargo of memory, interweavings, trailings, pathways. I pause at the crossroads, as Eshu arrives...

A Moko Jumbie Incantation. Does that help you understand? No, it was truly a you-had-to-be-there moment at the 21st annual Campus Literature Week Gala Reading and Closing Ceremony on March 29, 2019. Under the theme, *Creating Lasting Words*, MFA students from the Department of Literary, Creative and Cultural Studies (DLCCS), Faculty of Humanities and Education (FHE) and MFA programme coordinator, Dr Muli Amaye hosted the final event in a week-long celebration of literature.

The 2019 Writer-in-Residence Peter Kalu took to the stage to read excerpts from books throughout his career – the signature reading component of the evening's event. But, the gala ceremony was anything but traditional, and neither is Peter or Pete or Carl Peters (more on that later).

Williams who fired anger in my youthful heart." This resulted in his first sci-fi novel, *Black Star Rising* an attempt to include black people in a future which erased their presence. Similarly in the autobiographical Children and Young Adult (CYA) novel, *The Silent Striker*, by Pete Kalu (a shortened name to appeal to his younger audience), his aim was to create a story with a deaf protagonist that wasn't a tragic one. "I never read a character in which we are the hero. I wanted to show the character's passion for football while dealing with the black experience in Britain."

Trinidad continued to be an inspirational touchstone for Kalu throughout his career, particularly when he started a *moko jumbie* band at Leeds Carnival, long before it was popular to do so: "When I told people, we're all going to walk on stilts, at the time in

off of murk, mud, pushing through jetsam, in this way, newness shakes its holy dusted head and leaps into the world: hybridising, creolising...

Kalu remembers sound. "I started going deaf, hearing at lower registers at 16 or 17. Before that I loved language, I learned French and Spanish and I ended up by some bizarre route singing opera in German for the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester. Now, I combine a memory of earlier sounds with what I hear and feel now."

"The incantation, I spoke it myself first, to give an idea of its intended rhythms. Dr Muli Amaye recorded it and we sent it to Roger, but I had no inkling that Terrenaissance would transform it so skilfully. I thought it was a beautiful leap they made. They reinterpreted those rhythms to reflect their Caribbean



Peter Kalu PHOTOS: ANEEL KARIM

Hear me now: écoutez bon, digame lo que pasaba—stories from the perfumeries of Sevilla, of los negros del rio Guadalquivir, los conquistadores buscando el oro, los barcos dolorosas, the stenching folly of the Oyibo – tell me everything.

"We have to thank Roger and the band!" Peter sits excitedly across from me explaining how the performance of the Moko Jumbie Incantation came to be, thanks to Roger McFarlane, staff member of DLCCS and his band, *Terrenaissance*, who took on the task of bringing a multilingual piece to life using poetry, dance and music. To tell that story, we must first learn about a man that criss-crosses languages, forms and easy categorisation.

Born to a Danish mother and a Nigerian, Igbo-speaking father in overwhelmingly white Manchester UK, Kalu has been focused on hybridity through his identity from the start. "Before I wrote, I was radicalised by the work of Trinidadians like CLR James and Eric

England, people looked at me and said, 'Pete, are you feeling ok?' And I said, 'I don't care, I'm going to do it!' I've always tried to follow my passion and whatever difficulties arise, I'll overcome them in doing the thing. Just as in writing, you have to write what you're passionate about."

Funny enough, his best-selling book, *Diary of a Househusband*, written under the pseudonym Carl Peters, was the result of a genre limitation. "In my crime fiction, they took out all the jokes and those jokes got put into *Househusband*." The MFA students he met during the programme, he noted, are also dealing with writing for genres, "There's a lot of YA writing and a lot of experimentation... it's promising and fluid. The students I've met are very assiduous, focused and ambitious and my role is to show how it may crystallise and what the result would be if they follow certain energies in their work."

From under this hash and hex, by the throwing

experience. They brought their own artistic chops to the piece and brought it alive as perhaps no other band could."

...Yes, newness comes swirling into the sweep of archipelago, sliding across the chopping stilts of moko jumbie: Eshu is alive...

A Moko Jumbie Incantation came to life in Trinidad, but it took Kalu back to Nigeria during the time of his late father's funeral: "You come to one place and see an influence from another place and everything is in motion in a multiplicity and that's the spirit that informs everything I do."

To read the Moko Jumbie Incantation in full, please visit Peter's website: <http://www.peterkalu.com/>.

Applications are still open for the MFA programme in Creative Writing until **May 31**. Visit <https://sta.uwi.edu/apply> for details.

■ SOCIAL WORK

SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS REDISCOVER THEIR POTENTIAL AND PASSION IN LANDMARK STUDY TRIP TO THE US

BY JOEL HENRY

“**Social work**”, a statement from the University of Missouri’s School of Social Work says, “is the heart and soul of the helping profession”. In almost every sphere of social vulnerability - child welfare, the elderly, criminal justice, domestic violence, family services and on and on - social workers provide invaluable support for individuals and communities. But who helps the helpers?

The Social Work Unit within the Department of Behavioural Sciences of the Faculty of Social Sciences at UWI St Augustine has embarked on a unique initiative for just such a purpose. This past March, three masters-level social work students took part in a week-long student exchange at Quinnipiac University (QU) in Connecticut, USA. And they have returned revitalised, re-energised and ready to contribute to the development of social work in T&T.

“I came back a different person,” says Mrs Rae Anne Sammy, a senior social worker with the South West Regional Health Authority (SWRHA) and one of the pioneers of the profession. “Doing what I have done for the past 25 years I was almost brought to tears at some points. Every day was anticipating the unknown, not knowing what I was going to see but excited.”

She adds, “Coming back home I know I have so much to do (for the profession) and not much time left to do it.”

In general, social workers tend to be underpaid and overworked. Speaking specifically about conditions in the UK but mirroring conditions worldwide, Professor Ray Jones of Kingston University was recently reported as saying “working conditions for social workers (have) deteriorated, with bigger caseloads, less support and inadequate pay”. The same could be said for Trinidad and Tobago.

“Sometimes you feel like your ‘spinning top in mud,’” says Aleisha Udit, a school social worker and one of the three students who took part in the exchange. “It is one social worker for six or seven schools. How does one of me deal with 98 cases a week?”

She is much more positive now: “At my church we have a theme every year. This year’s was ‘thoroughly astounded and completely overwhelmed by God’. That’s how this trip made me feel. It gives me hope for social work in Trinidad and Tobago.”

The student exchange was an initiative of Dr Camille Huggins, Lecturer in the Social Work Unit of the Department



Pausing their packed daily schedule to enjoy a meal are (from left) Professor Doyle, Beverly Ann Ottley Mclean, Rae Anne Sammy, Aleisha Udit, Dr Gomes and Dr Huggins.

of Behavioural Sciences, working with Maya Doyle, Assistant Professor of Social Work at QU. In February 2018, Professor Doyle spent a week in Trinidad and toured the local welfare agencies. The following March Dr Huggins and Dr Emmanuel Janagan Johnson, Lecturer and Coordinator of the Social Work Unit, did the same in Connecticut. March 2019 is the first time social work students have taken part in the exchange, making it the first time an initiative of this type - developing to developed world social work student experience - has taken place.

The students, along with Dr Huggins and fellow lecturer Dr Maria Gomes, had their air travel paid for through the exchange initiative and were very warmly accommodated in the homes of Quinnipiac social work faculty members. Their activities included attending postgraduate-level classes at QU, visiting private and public social welfare organisations and institutions, and interacting with the society.

They observed up close the work of “Restoring Promise”, a young adult reform initiative created by Alex Frank under the Vera Institute of Justice (a prison reform organisation). Through Restoring Promise they spoke with a prisoner who is benefitting from the institute’s work. They visited Rushford, a major mental health care institution, and observed a group therapy session.

One of the major highlights of the student exchange was

the trip to the Department of Children and Families (DCF), Connecticut’s state agency for family services. While there they were able to sit down with the newly appointed commissioner of the DCF, Vanessa Dorantes, herself a social worker.

Seeing a social worker in such a position of prominence and responsibility gave the students a deeper understanding of the potential of the profession.

“When I came to Trinidad to teach I realised that the social workers here had an identity problem,” says Dr Huggins, who is from New York City in the US. “They didn’t understand their capabilities. I wanted to bring them to the US to get a different sense of what the profession could be.”

That goal has most certainly been achieved.

“We are prepared to do what we have to do to make a difference,” says Beverly Ann Ottley Mclean, a human resource professional with the T&T Police Service. With a background in theatre and dance, she was particularly impressed with the use of art, colour and motivational messages at Connecticut’s social welfare agencies. She was also impressed with the social worker “mindset”.

She says, “they have a lot of obstacles, like us, but they persevere. We have to put that mindset into play. We have learned a lot through this scholarship and we are eager to go out there and make a difference.”

INTIMATE LABOURS: Women’s Experiences of Transnational Caregiving

BY MARIA GOMES AND SHELENE GOMES

The Sociology and Social Work Units of the Department of Behavioural Sciences, Faculty of Social Sciences have collaborated to host a roundtable discussion, “Intimate Labours: Women’s Experiences of Transnational Caregiving,” on February 1, with “skilled” and “highly skilled” returnees to Trinidad and Tobago who have chosen to fill the caregiving needs of ageing parents. In telling their stories, participants brought to life the intimate labours of care work, noting the reproduction of systematic inequalities.

Globally, women continue to do disproportionately more care work than men, which is persistently under-valued economically and socially. Commonalities articulated include: challenges of decision making with regards to livelihood opportunities; securing care with its financial and emotional implications; the gendered division of care work; complexities of navigating public and private health care options; managing and negotiating roles as daughter, worker, and returnee; coping and time for personal care.



From left: Jo-Anne Frederick, insurance consultant; Priya Gomes, occupational therapist; Dr Maria Gomes, lecturer in the Social Work Unit and event chair; Josephine Learmond-Criqui, event manager; and Cynthia Carrington, Director of the J&C Recreation Centre.

Participants and organisers agreed that conversations around the power dynamics of the “private” sphere of the home and such intimate labours need to be further explored with the aim of providing support for caregivers as well as addressing institutional failures. For instance, all speakers emphasised the importance of family networks in successfully caring for parents in the absence of a robust institutional framework and reliable public health care facilities.

Members of the audience expressed interest by asking questions and contributing to the discussion, demonstrating the salience of this topic to many persons in Trinidad, across class, place of residence, and ethnicity. The organisers are embarking on a project with returning citizens to examine the gendered dimensions of care work for ageing parents in Trinidad and Tobago, and would like to deepen collaborations with staff and students with overlapping interests.

INTERNATIONALISATION



Magic and Memory in SOUTH AFRICA

BY CAROL-ANNE AGARD

Providing “immersion in the culture, history, politics, architecture and people” – that is how the **International Office** describes its **UWI Discover Series**. Started in 2012, the series has carried students and staff to countries such as Brazil, China, Cuba and India. At the end of 2018 a group embarked on the **UWI Discovers Study Tour** to South Africa. **Ms Carol-Anne Agard** was one of them.

The study tour was a life-changing experience that is etched in my mind and vivid in every photograph or video from the tour.

After a 14-hour flight we arrived at the Oliver Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg on December 27, 2018. We hit the ground with no time to rest. Our first tour was to the Walter Sisulu Botanical Gardens, where we were greeted by South African writer and activist, Elinor Sisulu, daughter-in-law of prominent anti-apartheid activists, Walter and Albertina Sisulu. The Gardens is a lush park with undulating grounds that rose gently to an escarpment from which cascaded a river and beautiful waterfall. I noted the multicultural mix of visitors Gardens, indeed to South Africa.

One of the highlights of the trip was the Soweto Township tour. We drove through Johannesburg, to the city with a skyline of skyscrapers, luxurious homes, and tree-lined boulevards, juxtaposed with weathered government housing and hovels with galvanised roofs.

The tour was led by Soweto-born, professional storyteller Bongani Godide. Bongani took us on the same route that the oppressed black students took in protest of the Bantu Education Act during the Soweto uprising on June 16, 1967.

The protests spread all over South Africa because of brutal gun attacks on unarmed students by the white police. We visited the Hector Pieterse Museum which recounts the tragedy and death of its namesake, a 13-year-old boy who was shot and killed during the uprising.

Our visits to the Hector Pieterse Museum, the Apartheid Museum and the Old Fort Prison on Constitutional Hill, linked the past to the present, giving a vision of hope for the future. However, the scars remain, making the society’s efforts to move on difficult.

Afterwards we made our way to a game park and lodge situated in the transition zone of the Kalahari and the Lowveld in Pilanesberg. This area is home to the “Big Five” – the African elephant, black rhinoceros, Cape buffalo, African lion and African leopard. Our guides assured us that we would see all five as well as other animals at the reserve.

In the game park, animals co-exist and are allowed free movement: from the hardy oryx to the shaggy-coated waterbuck; the sable antelope and the kudu with its spiral-shaped horns; and springbok, impala and wildebeest, important prey species.

Ringed in the New Year surrounded by nature and enjoying a sumptuous meal (which included springbok in wine) was truly memorable.

Our historical, anthropological and cultural perspectives on South Africa expanded during discussions and reading materials provided to us before our departure. These prepared the group for seven days through Cape Town.



The group met with Trinidad and Tobago High Commissioner Roger Gopaul (centre) at the High Commission in Pretoria.

The protests spread all over South Africa because of brutal gun attacks on unarmed students by the white police. We visited the Hector Pieterse Museum which recounts the tragedy and death of its namesake, a 13-year-old boy who was shot and killed during the uprising.



Keiba Mottley on a helicopter ride over Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe.

CAPE TOWN

Several of Cape Town’s prominent members of the Anti-Apartheid Movement hosted us during our time in the city, the oldest in South Africa. Human rights activist and former Member of Parliament, Professor Gertrude Fester took us on a township tour of Bonteheuwel. We were hosted by the Bonteheuwel Walking Ladies, a 100-member women’s empowerment group. The group told stories of being forcefully removed from their homes during Apartheid, giving us a further understanding of the suffering of South Africans. The group shared a traditional Cape Malay meal with us and chatted about their plans for the future before presenting us with certificates of recognition and insisting we take a group photo for their community newspaper.

The visit to Robben Island, a ferry ride away from the Victoria and Alfred Waterfront, was profound. Nelson Mandela was held in Robben Island from 1967 to 1990. Today the prison is a museum. In Cape Town we also took the cable car (an engineering feat) to Table Mountain and across to Stellenbosch Winelands.

Our trip ended with us flying to one of South Africa’s neighbours, Zimbabwe, and making our way across to Botswana to visit the Chobe Game Reserve. Apart from the beautiful Victoria Falls, what was fascinating was how freely elephants, warthogs and baboons roamed the streets of Zimbabwe and Botswana. While in Botswana, we spent our time on a river cruise and land safari. The most notable meal in Zimbabwe was the sumptuous barbeque and show at The Boma – Dinner and Drum Show. Antelope, crocodile, buffalo and impala were grilled to perfection and served as part of traditional Zimbabwean dishes.

These are my reflections of UWI Discovers South Africa. It was a life-changing experience. I would like to thank the International Office and their Study Tour Coordinator Ms Afiya Francis, who planned the trip, listened to our needs and concerns, and provided a time management policy that worked.

JOHN JACOB THOMAS Pioneer in Patois

BY JO-ANNE S FERREIRA

Nineteenth-century Trinidadian teacher, linguist, writer and public intellectual, John Jacob Thomas, was famous for *Froudacity* (1889), his published rebuttal to a colonial racist rant.

But two decades prior, Thomas was a pioneer in Patois (French Creole). Not a native speaker of Patois, Thomas was exposed to it at a time when the majority in Trinidad were speakers of the language. He began his analysis and research into Patois in 1866 (when it was not even recognised as a “language”), culminating in his groundbreaking *The Theory and Practice of Creole Grammar*. The grammar was published in 1869 in Port of Spain (Chronicle Publishing Office), 150 years ago.

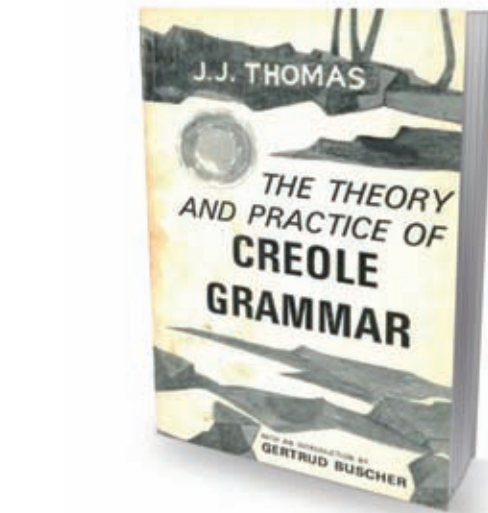
Not only is this the first grammar of any French Creole variety anywhere in the world, but in modern contemporary terms, this single volume fits into Creole linguistics, historical linguistics, morphology and syntax, translation studies (including Bible translation), folklore studies, and language documentation. Thomas continued writing, producing an essay comparing French Creole with English Creole, and discussing the influence of African languages on Creoles. He had plans to produce an even more in-depth and comparative grammar before he died at just 48 years old in 1889.

Thomas, a ward school teacher, noted in his introduction the discrimination particularly faced by monolingual Patois speakers in the legal and educational systems, problems that still confront predominantly Patois speakers in the Caribbean today:

“In the administration of Justice in this Colony, the interpreting of Creole occurs as a daily necessity. Yet it is notorious that, in spite of constant practice, our best interpreters, though generally persons of good education, commonly fail in their renderings, especially from Creole into English.”

Thomas wrote that this was no doubt partly due to the inherent difficulty of interpreting consecutively and accurately. He noted that interpreting was also very difficult “because our interpreters, like everybody else, neglect to study” the structure and usage of the Creole language. The lack of study was partly due to “the prevalence of opinion that Creole is only mispronounced French, and partly by the want of some such manual as the present.”

Thomas’ grammar recognised the inherent linguistic equality of the language, vis-à-vis any other language, while confronting the social inequality besetting the speakers of Patois. In 1870, an American contemporary, Addison van Name, described the



Thomas, a ward school teacher, noted in his introduction the discrimination particularly faced by monolingual Patois speakers in the legal and educational systems, problems that still confront predominantly Patois speakers in the Caribbean today.

text as “the most extended and valuable work on the grammar of the language”, and it remains the foundation for all studies of Trinidadian French Creole, and indeed all Lesser Antillean varieties. An 1872 review describes it as “the first detailed grammar of a French Creole dialect. Useful, thorough, and detailed, but suffers from etymological spelling and reliance on French grammar to describe Creole.”

In 1969, New Beacon Books in London published the 100th Anniversary edition of Thomas’ grammar, with an introduction, biographical sketch and appreciation of Thomas by Gertrud Aub-Buscher, now compiling a Trinidadian Patois dictionary. New Beacon was founded by Trinidadian John La Rose and

Sarah White. La Rose, a visionary and activist not to be forgotten, is the subject of the 2003 documentary: *Dream to Change the World: The Life and Legacy of John La Rose*, directed by Horace Ové. Writing as Anthony La Rose, he penned the poem *Song to an Imperishable Sunlight* (*Foundations*, 1966), paying tribute to Thomas and his genius:

**Our Jacob was not coatless;
our Jacob Thomas wrote a grammar in
patois to remove the scales from justice’s eyes
for peasants who spoke no word of English
in milord’s court.**

**And Jacob answered proud England’s Froude
for his ‘froudacity’ in challenging our right
to revolt to rule our land.**

**Still each generation lives its present,
in huge hiatus, unaware.**

Creole Linguistics has advanced considerably in the last 150 years, including a standardised orthography for Lesser Antillean French Creole pioneered by Lawrence D Carrington (UWI), and Jean Bernabé of the Université des Antilles. This new orthography moved away from Thomas’ “etymological spelling and reliance on French grammar”, and the many other individualised and inconsistent spelling systems used up to the 1970s. The one system increases the potential to share literature (including traditional oratures now being put in writing).

In spite of advances in Creole Linguistics and in spite of increasing recognition of the language’s validity, Trinidadian Patois (and also the related Grenadian and Venezuelan varieties of French Creole) is facing extinction. As a heritage language, Trinidadian Patois is recognised as particularly contributing to the language of flora, fauna, folklore, and festivals. Efforts are afoot to document remaining fluent and less fluent speakers of all three varieties, for the present and future generations, “in huge hiatus, unaware”.

The main avenues to access information about Trinidadian Patois are provided on UWI Space, the UWI-T&T Research and Development Impact (RDI) Fund website for Trinidad and Tobago Endangered Languages (TTEL): Digital Documentation of National Heritage Languages, and via Facebook (Trinidadian Patois Speakers) and YouTube playlists.

Our Jacob’s work continues, and remains a solid foundation on which we build and build awareness.

UWI Calendar of Events

MAY – JULY 2019

Meet the new artists + more May

You'll want to remember the name of the artists at the Department of Creative and Festival Arts' (DCFA) 2019 Visual Arts Degree Exhibition.

The exhibit features the final year projects of students of the Fine Arts and Design disciplines and takes place from May 11 to 31 from 10am to 6pm at the National Museum and Art Gallery of Trinidad and Tobago. All are invited. Save the date for the Artist Talk happening on Friday May 24 from 6.30 to 8.30pm.

Wait there's more! This afternoon, May 5 at 2 and 4pm is the final showing of DCFA's Annual Children's Theatre Production. Head down to DCFA Cheesman Building, Gordon Street to see Baba Yaga and the Black Sunflower. Cost: Adults \$40 | Children \$20. Tickets available at the door.

For more information, please visit DCFA's Facebook Page:
<https://www.facebook.com/UWI.DCFA/> or email dcfa@sta.uwi.edu.



Chemical Science, Technology and Industry May 22 to 24 The UWI St Augustine

The Department of Chemistry, Faculty of Science and Technology (FST) hosts their Biennial Regional Conference and Expo on Chemical Science, Technology and Industry – Chemistry and Chemical Technology for a Sustainable Development of the Caribbean.

Local, regional and international technologists, researchers, chemical/biomedical engineers, technocrats, policymakers and students are invited to experience the latest research, innovation and applications of the chemical-related sciences conducted regionally within the global context.

For more information, please visit the conference's website:
<http://conferences.sta.uwi.edu/brcce/>.



UWI Short Courses May to July



There are so many great short courses happening at The UWI St Augustine. Check out some below:

- Register now for the Institute for Gender and Development Studies' (IGDS) short courses including: Gender, Feminism and Religion: Contemporary Questions: May 8 and 9; Women, Men, Gender and Law: June 3, 6, 8, 10, 13 and 15 (six afternoons) and Human Resources Management and Gender Equity in the Workplace: July 9 and 10 (two-day course). **Visit the IGDS short course page at <https://sta.uwi.edu/igds/shortcourses.asp>.**
- The Faculty of Food and Agriculture (FFA) hosts Business Development Unit short courses for agri-entrepreneurs, farmers, home food producers and people who love plants. Look out for courses on Aquaponics: May 6 to 10 (five sessions); Small Gas Engine Repair: May 19 to 23 (five sessions); Landscape Management for Entrepreneurs: May 13 to 18 (six sessions); Hydroponics II: June 8 and June 10 to 12 (five sessions). **Visit <https://sta.uwi.edu/ffa/bdushortcourses> for information on other courses and more.**
- The Department of Mathematics and Statistics presents Introduction to R and SPSS (Beginner and Intermediate Levels) short courses: SPSS Beginner: August 5 to 9; SPSS Intermediate: August 12 to 16; R Beginner: August 19 to 23; R Intermediate: August 26 to 30. Courses cost \$1,500 and run for 15 contact hours. Special discount: \$2,500 for persons registered for two courses. **For more information, please email kevin.awai@sta.uwi.edu or trisha.prince@sta.uwi.edu.**

Science in Communities May 20 to 24 The UWI St Augustine

The Faculty of Science and Technology (FST) hosts the FST Week Conference – A week highlighting work done in Science, Technology and Innovation under the theme, Science in Communities.

Look out for presentations on sub-themes including: Climate Change; Data Application; Energy, Fuels and Green Tech; and Health, Safety and Medicine; among others.

For more information, please call Laura Rambaran-Seepersad at 662-2002 ext. 84508 or email FSTweek@sta.uwi.edu.



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