



# UWI TODAY

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES • ST AUGUSTINE CAMPUS

SUNDAY 11 AUGUST 2019



## Renee in the MOSQUITO REALM

Renee Ali, PhD student and researcher with the Department of Life Sciences in the Faculty of Science and Technology at UWI St Augustine nets mosquitoes on a site visit in Chaguaramas. Renee is a member of UWI's "mosquito team" and is continuing the work of the late Professor Dave Chadee, the internationally renowned scholar whose work has been so impactful that he was known as "Mosquito Man". Focusing on the relatively unexplored mosquito-born Mayaro virus, Renee has already made several strides in unlocking the virus and its vector, the mysterious *Haemagogus janthinomys* mosquito. The work of Renee and her colleagues within Life Sciences is an example of the kind of high impact research taking place at the St Augustine Campus, research that may one day save lives.

PHOTO: VISHAL RANGERSAMMY



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- \* among 1200+ recognised universities in Latin America & Caribbean region.
- \*\* among 25,000+ recognised universities globally.

For more on The UWI's performance, see  
[https://www.timeshighereducation.com/  
world-university-rankings/university-west-indies](https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/university-west-indies)

## FROM THE PRINCIPAL

# Academia/industry partnerships and the path to 2034

On June 17, 2019, a memorandum of understanding was signed between The UWI and Shell. The agreement will allow the company to provide financial as well as research, training and other support to the University and its students. In his remarks, Pro Vice-Chancellor and UWI St Augustine Campus Principal **Professor Brian Copeland** spoke on the importance of university/industry partnerships for the benefit of society. His address is included below:

Many years ago, CARICOM echoed the sentiments expressed by generations of Caribbean leaders, even to this day, when it declared that an educated workforce is crucial to the development of this region.

However, the formal education of which they spoke can only be but one component of an effective strategy for developing the kind of citizen that will populate the envisioned highly productive workforce of the future. Those citizens must be capable of shouldering the responsibility of building a sustainably developed society, one that boasts of a buoyant and robust economy, a physically, mentally and spiritually resilient society that is more cultured, caring and emotionally mature, satisfying the needs of humanity without compromising the integrity of the ecology.

This future scenario is very much in keeping with the Mission of the UWI which, acknowledges the call *To advance learning*, but also speaks to sustainability through the stated mandate *to create knowledge and foster innovation for the positive transformation of the Caribbean and the wider world*.

It is in this vein that I place great significance on the academia/industry relationship that we solidify today. This, as detailed in this memorandum of understanding between Shell and The UWI, is a symbiotic one in which both parties will collaborate so as to practically deepen the socio-economic development of Trinidad and Tobago.

As many of you know, most recently The UWI was ranked the number one university in the Caribbean, one that the *Times Higher Education* world rankings has placed among the top five per cent of 25,000 recognised universities globally. We are also the only Caribbean university to be ranked among the best. To remain competitive, we have to continue to ensure that the work that The UWI does is felt outside our walls.

We are therefore grateful that Shell has undertaken to support us in our Mission, not just financially, but also in research in areas of relevance such as new energies/renewable energies, curriculum development, innovation, diversification, continuous improvement, student engagement, training partnerships and on-the-job opportunities involving new energies projects.

Over the past couple of years, I have been doing my best to motivate the staff and students at the St Augustine Campus to switch gears and change the age-old chalk-and-talk and publish-or-perish paradigms, so as to bring more relevance to and impact on society. In particular, I have stressed the need to drive a level of social, ecological, and economic entrepreneurship to ensure that, 15 years from now in the year 2034, it would be clear to all, that Trinidad and Tobago and our region is solidly located on a robust trajectory, headed towards that target of a sustainably developed society.

In this regard, the Campus is actively developing an entrepreneurship ecosystem, a strongly interconnected



*'I close by making a clarion call to other potential partners – those in industry; in governments; national, regional, and international communities – to follow Shell's example and partner with the St Augustine Campus in our mission to revitalise Caribbean society. Let us turn the vision of sustainable development for Trinidad and Tobago and the Region into a reality.'*

and well-coordinated network of strategically functional units that establishes an effective pipeline to transform potentially impactful ideas to realisation as product or process. This ecosystem will, in the first instance, promote and sustain economic entrepreneurship with a strong innovative component.

This new innovation and entrepreneurship drive is aligned to our Strategic Plan mandate to bring to bear the knowledge created at UWI to positively impact on

the Caribbean economic space and, at the same time, shift the Campus closer to financial self-sustainability and reduced dependence on Government funding. The associated activities that will then be characteristic of what is essentially a transformed university include the licencing of technology and the creation of start-up and spin-off companies that are net foreign exchange earners.

This is our goal, our contribution to the growth of the local and regional economy. However, it cannot be achieved without forging deep and meaningful partnerships with the private sector in the type of symbiotic relationship I made reference to a few seconds ago. This signing brings us one step closer to that empowering scenario.

For the promise it brings, I wish to assure you, our colleagues at Shell that the St Augustine team is very much looking forward to working with you in the years ahead.

I close by making a clarion call to other potential partners – those in Industry, in Governments, national, regional, and international communities – to follow Shell's example and partner with the St Augustine Campus in our mission to revitalise Caribbean society. Let us turn the vision of sustainable development for Trinidad and Tobago and the Region into a reality. 2034 is not far away.

*Thank you.*

*Brian Copeland*

**PROFESSOR BRIAN COPELAND**

*Campus Principal*

## EDITORIAL TEAM

### CAMPUS PRINCIPAL

**Professor Brian Copeland**

### AG. DIRECTOR OF MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

**Wynell Gregorio**

### AG. EDITOR

**Joel Henry**

email: joel.henry@sta.uwi.edu

### CONTACT US

**The UWI Marketing and Communications Office**

Tel: (868) 662-2002, exts. 82013 / 83997

or email: uwitoday@sta.uwi.edu

## SPORT

# For student athletes, for society

*2019 UWI SPEC Half-Marathon focuses on scholarships*

BY JOEL HENRY

In the early hours of Sunday, October 20, 2019, athletes, enthusiasts and conscientious people from Trinidad and Tobago and beyond will take part in The UWI Sport and Physical Education Centre's (SPEC) 16th International Half-Marathon. The 13.1 mile race has become a well-known and loved regional athletic event. Every year a major component of the half-marathon, an initiative of The UWI with 14 years of sponsorship from First Citizen's, is the raising of funds for a charitable cause. This year is no different.

"We are focusing on the development of youth through the offering of scholarships for talented sports persons to come to UWI," says Ms Grace Jackson, Director of SPEC.

Ms Jackson, herself an Olympic medal-winning track and field athlete, Jamaican sprint record-holder and Sportswoman of the Year, sees a double benefit to sports scholarships. Not only will they provide new opportunities for high-potential student athletes, they can also help lay the foundation for a new era of sporting achievement at the regional and international level for the society.

The aim, she says, is the "identification of talent, and carrying out an intervention that is going to give that talent wings to grow and represent Trinidad and Tobago and by extension the region."

The Half-Marathon sports scholarships initiative is the latest example of The UWI's goal of fostering sports people and the sport industry itself. In April of this year, UWI Today reported on the St Augustine Campus' provision of scholarships to ten student athletes ([https://sta.uwi.edu/uwitoday/archive/april\\_2019/article19.asp](https://sta.uwi.edu/uwitoday/archive/april_2019/article19.asp)). Among them are outstanding talents such as national table tennis player Brittany Joseph and up and coming young cricketer Sachin Seecharan.

Ms Jackson believes that this year's charitable focus has the potential to make a big impact on the lives of elite student athletes. She points specifically to track and field and swimming, where individual athletes can make relatively fast progress:

"Within a year of getting good talent you can turn that talent into preliminary success that can drive other areas. That is without having a huge team."

Cricket is another area where, even though it is a team sport, individual talent can be easily recognised and cultivated. However, Ms Jackson is quick to point out that the aim is to encourage the development of high quality athletes no matter the sport and she would like to see more support for student sportspeople in under-recognised areas.

Scholarships will be provided to UWI student athletes for three purposes – funding of educational programmes (including the St Augustine Academy of Sport programmes), accommodation and meals.

An estimated 1600 runners are expected to take part in the 2019 Half-Marathon. Starting at 5am, the race goes from the Priority Bus Route in St Augustine to the La Resource Junction in D'Abadie and back to St Augustine. It will also include a 4 x 5k relay, an addition to the half-marathon first introduced in 2018 by Ms Jackson.

"If you don't want to do the whole half-marathon then put together a team. We think this is a great alternative for companies as well. They might have five half-marathoners but could also have 20 other people that can form four teams and each member runs a 5k," she says.

The aim is to get many people as involved as possible. "I have a target for how much we want to bring in that some people might find unrealistic," Jackson laughs. "But the only way you can work hard and reach your target is to set your target beyond easy. I'd like to reach out to every citizen of T&T, and even people from the region and



Student athletes from UWI St Augustine in Piarco airport after their return from the 2019 UWI Games in Mona, Jamaica. Sports scholarships will give students such as these a better opportunity to reach their highest level. PHOTOS: ANEEL KARIM



SPEC Director Grace Jackson speaking at the launch of the UWI SPEC International Half-Marathon.

beyond, to get involved. If you can't do the full marathon, do the relay. If you can't do the relay, donate."

The SPEC Director asks that people see the possibility of Trinidad and Tobago's young athletes and look back at the proud moments they experienced when past athletes represented them well in international competition such as the Olympics.

"Those athletes weren't just given medals," she says. "It started somewhere. It started with somebody having an interest in their futures and applying what was necessary to make that talent grow. That's what we are trying to do here."

■ To find out more about The UWI SPEC 16th International Half-Marathon (including registration) visit the website at <https://sta.uwi.edu/spec/marathon/>. For more information on UWI SPEC and contributing to the development of student athletes, please email [specinfo@sta.uwi.edu](mailto:specinfo@sta.uwi.edu).



# UWI, University of Glasgow sign £20 million CARIBBEAN REPARATIONS AGREEMENT

UWI and the University of Glasgow have signed the first ever agreement for slavery reparations since British Emancipation in 1838. The £20 million agreement was signed at the Regional Headquarters of The UWI in Kingston, Jamaica on July 31, 2019 by Vice-Chancellor, Professor Sir Hilary Beckles and Dr David Duncan, University of Glasgow's Chief Operating Officer, representing Vice-Chancellor, Professor Sir Anton Muscatelli.

The terms of the agreement call for the University of Glasgow to provide £20 million to fund research to promote development initiatives to be jointly undertaken with The UWI over the next two decades. The sum of £20 million was the amount paid to slave owners as reparations by the British government when it abolished slavery in 1834.

The agreement represents the first occasion on which a slavery-enriched British or European institution has apologised for its part in slavery and committed funds to facilitate a reparations programme. In this instance, the two universities have adopted a regional development approach to reparations.

The funds will facilitate the operations of a jointly-owned and managed institution to be called the Glasgow-Caribbean Centre for Development Research. The Centre will target and promote solutions to Caribbean development problems in areas such as medicine and public health, economics and economic growth, cultural identity and cultural industries, and other 21st Century orientations in Caribbean transformation.

The seminal agreement, the first of its kind in the West, brings to closure negotiations between the two institutions that began when the University of Glasgow published a report in 2018 revealing that between the 1780s and 1880s it received millions of pounds in grants and endowments from Scottish and English slave owners that served to enrich and physically expand the nearly 600-year-old university.

Professor Sir Hilary Beckles, who brokered the historic agreement, complimented Dr Duncan for his astute leadership of the Glasgow Reparatory Justice Task Force, and Vice-Chancellor, Professor Sir Anton Muscatelli for his visionary leadership.

Commenting on the globally anticipated moment in the long reparations struggle, Sir Hilary noted that the University of Glasgow acknowledged that a university cannot be excellent if it is not ethical, and that this agreement places the university on a high moral ground.



Vice-Chancellor, Professor Sir Hilary Beckles and Dr David Duncan, University of Glasgow's Chief Operating Officer, shake hands after the signing.

The £20 million will be invested in policy research in science, technology, society and economy, and education and advocacy that seek to repair the debilitating consequences of slavery and colonisation that continue to hold back Caribbean development. The Centre will therefore focus on joint efforts to clean up the "colonial mess" that continues to subvert efforts at Caribbean social and economic growth. It will be formally established on the two campuses in September 2019.



## 16<sup>TH</sup> UWI SPEC INTERNATIONAL HALF-MARATHON

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Over \$150,000 in prizes, trophies for winners & medals for all participants

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5:00AM**

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ST. AUGUSTINE**



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**PROCEEDS GO TO THE SPORTS SCHOLARSHIP FUND.**




 ■ FOOD

Hot peppers in vibrant green grown using Biophyt 1.0



# Growing together

*UWI researchers, farmers commune on new alternative to hazardous pesticides, old agricultural wisdom*

**Pesticides – the word conjures up notions** of contaminated crops and at-risk consumers: but what about the farmers themselves? What about those whose livelihood depends on using these sometimes hazardous agents to keep their produce free of disease? In the farming community here and globally, pesticides have caused acute illnesses like headaches and vomiting, and even chronic ailments that hinder farmers' health for long stretches.

For some time now researchers in UWI St Augustine's Faculty of Food and Agriculture (FFA) have not only been developing a non-hazardous biological (as opposed to chemical) agent to treat local farmers' crops; they have been actively in the field sharing the agent with farmers, monitoring their results, and working closely with them to improve their practices.

On July 24, 2019, this community of farmers and FFA personnel met for a workshop at UWI's Innovation Park in Orange Grove. The workshop's theme was "Alternatives to Hazardous Pesticides in Vegetable Disease Management". The "alternative", developed by FFA, is named Biophyt.

"Biophyt 1.0 is like Windows 98 computer software, there will be different versions and iterations as time goes by," Dr Duraisamy Saravanakumar, Senior Lecturer (Plant Pathology), told an audience of farmers, FFA staff and other stakeholders.

Farmers like 30-year-old Romona Branche, who was part of field testing done from November 2018 to June 2019 to examine its efficacy in the control of Phytophthora rot in hot peppers.



Dr Saravanakumar (white t-shirt) on a farm visit.

"The yield was really big, a hundred crocus bags per picking. Almost like sweet pepper."

She was happy that she had no major adjustments to make like buying new equipment, as all of her old gear could be used with the new treatment. Additionally, Romona noted that fungicides and pesticides are costly and Biophyt 1.0 was less per bottle so overall the cost for her was much lower.

Smiling, she said, "Even the stalks were healthier and fatter. The plants were taller and had a lot of flowers." Romona speculated that the pesticide might even be safer for the bees and increase pollination.

The control areas of hot pepper, where traditional pesticide was used for comparison, yielded less produce.

On another farm, Azir Hosein, 35-years-old, was engaged in field testing as well. His parents, Tasslina and Sookraj Popalie, own approximately five acres in different areas from Orange Grove to Aranguez. They tested Biophyt on tomatoes.

"It was great!" Azir stated. "The taste of the tomatoes is very sweet. Our customers say they purchase from other farmers but theirs is bland – our tomato is sweet."

Tasslina joined in, saying "this crop was a bumper crop. It lasted more than six months." The duration of the trials was three months. The bio-agent was tested on one acre of tomatoes. The farming family reported a yield of 100 crates in total over only two or three pickings. They admit that the control group was just as good, but perhaps weather was a factor.

## FOOD

Farmers like Azir, the Popalies and Romona deal with unpredictable risks all the time. Pathogen and pest management however, are factors they can manage and perhaps, Biophyt 1.0 can not only help increase their yields, but also be a healthier alternative in the long run.

## FARMER'S CHALLENGES

Apart from the UWI-developed bio-agent, the workshop also addressed several issues affecting farmers. Dr Saravanakumar noted that when surveyed, 34 per cent of farmers indicated that the high cost of inputs were an impediment. 20 per cent said that there was poor access to roads. 18 per cent indicated that production was challenged by pests and diseases. Other prohibitive factors included praedial larceny and market prices.

In his presentation, Dr Saravanakumar explained the proper use of pesticides. Instinctively, he said, we think that increasing pesticides will kill more pathogens. However, the pathogens develop resistance and more harmful pesticides go into the soil and into the water, leading to toxicity. The solution would be to ban registration of harmful pesticides and to develop alternatives.

The feasibility of using the healthier alternative Biophyt 1.0 was met with skepticism, “Monsanto just lost two billion-dollar lawsuits and we are still selling Roundup,” a farmer commented. Roundup is a popular herbicide used for decades which according to the Guardian UK, Bayer now produces since they acquired agrochemical company Monsanto. The company is facing more than 9,000 lawsuits across the US from mostly former gardeners and agricultural workers who believe that Roundup exposure caused their cancer.

Dr Saravanakumar's response was measured, stating that when we take national decisions we cannot take them based on a court action as some court actions are later overturned. We take national decisions based on scientific findings.



Biophyt 1.0, a biological alternative to hazardous pesticides developed by UWI's Faculty of Food and Agriculture (FFA).

He also noted that Small Island Developing States (SIDS) may not have the economic wherewithal to do all the scientific investigation for significant enough findings to declare pesticides as hazards. But while we cannot pull existing pesticides from shelves, we can reduce the reliance and dependence on pesticides by developing viable alternatives.

## BETTER PRACTICES

In engaging with the farmers and fielding their questions, Dr Saravanakumar attempted to counteract poor cultural practices while affirming some of the traditional

folk knowledge of the farming community. “It is important to not only get quality labour on a farm, but also to know why you do what you do,” he said.

He encouraged the planting of botanicals or flowering plants like marigolds alongside the crops as this attracts beneficial insects and helps to control pests. This resonated with the audience. A farmer shared that one should plant African and French marigolds in particular and “this is why some of the older generation plant ‘Stinking Suzie’ in their garden.”

He spoke of covering irrigated soil with a plastic sheet for six weeks to raise the temperature, trap the heat, and in so doing kill pathogens which would have been dormant under the soil but developing strong structures.

He also advised farmers to avoid sprinkler irrigation at night as the increased humidity will lead to leaf wetness and increased pathogens.

Some of the poor cultural practices of farmers were identified in the workshop as well by research assistant Augustus Thomas, another representative from the FFA. These included using dosages of pesticide beyond the stipulated levels, mixing more than one chemical together, applying the pesticide at closer intervals than recommended, and using tractors on multiple farms whereby pathogens can be transferred from infected fields.

Beyond one-on-one outreach, this initiative of the UWI is a part of a larger project spanning 18 countries and funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO). This integrated pest management project includes looking at the life cycle of pesticides, triple rinsing containers, removing and destroying obsolete pesticides from the region, training inspectors, generating funding and raising public awareness.

Initiatives like these protect farmers like Romona and Azir. They take us one step closer towards safer food for all.

Farmer Romona Branche speaks to workshop attendees.



Augustus Thomas addresses the audience.



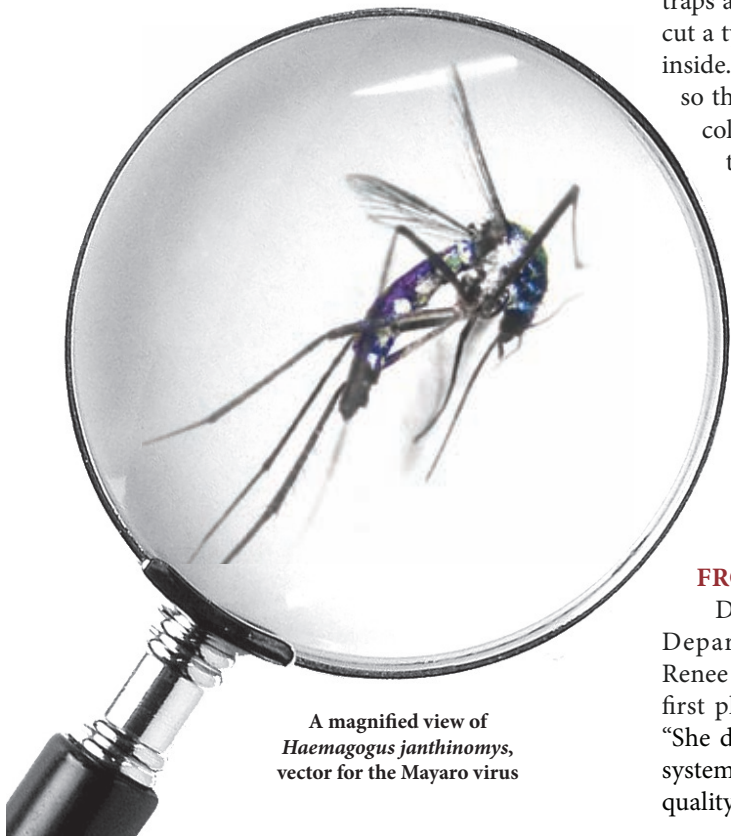
## RESEARCH

For many of us, mosquitoes are a daily annoyance, and one that we would happily stay far away from for the rest of our lives. But Renee Ali looks at these flying nuisances a little differently. A self-proclaimed “Mosquito Girl”, Renee is one of a devoted team of local researchers who are studying these tiny flying vampires to find out more about where they live, what they eat, and how we can better protect ourselves from the many diseases they carry.

Mosquito research in Trinidad has a rich legacy passed down by the late Professor Dave Chadee— known to many as the original “Mosquito Man”. Ever been on a plane and saw the flight attendants spraying the cabin before takeoff? You have Professor Chadee to thank for that, as he was responsible for implementing the spraying to cut down on the spread of mosquitoes across countries (by hitching a ride on planes). His contributions to mosquito research have helped people across the world to better understand dengue fever, yellow fever, malaria and Zika, and many of his students have gone on to make incredible discoveries in the field.

“When Professor Chadee died, I didn’t know what to do because I was his last student. I was basically like the baby. I had just applied to do my PhD and just got accepted when he passed away a few months later. I thought I was going to (research) water with him. But everybody but me knew he had this plan,” says Renee. She never expected to be working with mosquitoes— after all, her background is in molecular biology and she had originally expected to work with Professor Chadee. But fate and the professor had other plans.

Three years later, Renee is close to completing her PhD studying the little-known Mayaro virus and its main mosquito vector— a mysterious species called *Haemagogus janthinomys*. Unlike its famous relative *Aedes aegypti*, not much research has been done on *Haemagogus* and the virus it carries. Twenty years ago, Professor Chadee and the Insect Vector Control Division (IVCD) did some investigating — focusing on the capacity of the mosquito species to spread yellow fever and hunting for it in the wild anywhere there were howler monkey populations (as they thought that was its preferred food source). At the time, they didn’t know about its connection to the Mayaro virus, which had only been isolated in Trinidad in 1954 in some forest workers and not found here since, although there have been several reports across South America.



A magnified view of *Haemagogus janthinomys*, vector for the Mayaro virus

Dr Judith Gobin, Head, Dept of Life Sciences is extremely pleased that the seminal work that was accomplished by the late Prof Chadee continues to be expanded in the work of our postgraduate students such as Renee. She is convinced that Prof Chadee would also have been very pleased.

#### A LITTLE KNOWN SPECIES AND THE VIRUS IT CARRIES

The trouble with Mayaro virus is that its symptoms are strikingly close to dengue and the chikungunya virus, so it’s proven hard to diagnose. But Renee has had some luck in pulling back the shroud over this little-known disease and its vector species. For two years she was in the field, travelling across Trinidad to look for *Haemagogus*. “I did a map of Trinidad, divided it into four sections and I sampled North-East, South-East, North-West and South-West Trinidad.”

She found *Haemagogus* all over, especially in forested areas where she also managed to find Mayaro virus present in mosquitoes. They were abundant in secondary forests, but to her surprise, a lot were found in mangrove areas as well, which means they are adapting to new surroundings.

It was a learning process for Renee, who had never done that type of field work before. The UWI “mosquito team” had a hand in collecting the bugs and getting all the data together— Lester D James, Brent Daniel, Rachel Shui Feng, Nikhella Winter and Akilah Stewart were all crucial to making the project work.

“At first I didn’t know what I was looking for and we were figuring everything out on the go,” says Renee. “Insect Vector’s lab team also really helped me. It was a huge collective effort.... All the molecular biology work I was doing with the mosquitoes— the mosquito team didn’t know how to do that. But I needed to get the mosquitoes first.”

Now at the tail-end of her research, Renee doesn’t spend as much time in the field but she still makes sure to check all her traps regularly to monitor the mosquitoes living in the wild, as well as maintaining her lab-grown colony. She shows me a paper with what looks like small black pen marks all over it, but under a microscope they are revealed to be mosquito eggs.

“I collect the larvae and breed them to adulthood. I have over 1000 eggs here, so I now have to hatch them to start another colony. We use tyre traps out in the field for two weeks, and then we collect the water and the eggs.” Tyre traps are a low-budget solution to gathering specimens— cut a tyre in half and hang it from a tree with some water inside. The mosquitoes love the dark spaces and still water, so there’s always something to find when she goes in to collect samples. But when she started out, she had to do things a little differently.

“In the beginning I was using traps, but wasn’t getting much success, so I thought maybe I’m doing something wrong— or maybe they’re just not there,” she says. But one day, she was visited by Professor Chadee’s mentor, Dr. Elisha Tikasingh. “He said, *you’re going about it wrong... you have to actually sit there and let them come to you to bite you. Just look up into the sunlight around their biting hours, and they will come to you*”. And it worked. The tried and true method from the earliest days of mosquito research still stands— they love human bait.

#### FROM STUDENT TO SCIENTIST

Dr Adesh Ramsubhag, a senior lecturer in the Department of Life Sciences and the one who got Renee to come back to do research at The UWI in the first place, remembers her start as an OJT in the labs. “She demonstrated her potential as a scientist, working systematically and diligently to successfully extract high quality DNA from challenging materials including asphalt

# MOSQUITO Takes Up t

BY AMY I



Mosquito researcher Renee Ali checks a tyre trap for mosquito larvae.

Renee’s first article, titled “Characterization of the Mayaro Virus Vector *Haemagogus janthinomys* in the Northern Region of Trinidad and Tobago” was accepted for publication in *Journal of Insect Science and Technology* (in July 2019) found out that she had won the Young Investigator Award— International (granted by the American Society of Entomology and Natural History).



# TO GIRL the Mantle

L I B A K S H



Changing Patterns in the Distribution of *Haemagogus* Species in Trinidad, West Indies, published in *Acta Tropica*, and she has just won an award: The 2019 ACME International Student Travel Award (granted by the American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene).

and crude oil. She was then encouraged to pursue the PhD in the area of microbiology of water quality.”

But sometimes life has another plan, and she ended up with mosquitoes instead. “They’re really miserable... but I love them!” she laughs, remembering the endless bites the team suffered while collecting their data for the project.

Now that the research is mostly complete, people have started to take notice. Renee’s first article, titled “Changing Patterns in the Distribution of the Mayaro Virus Vector *Haemagogus* Species in Trinidad, West Indies” was accepted for publication in *Acta Tropica*, and she has just found out that she has won an award: The 2019 ACME Young Investigator Award— International Student Travel Award (granted by the American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene).

Hard work and many, many mosquito bites are coming to fruition. And just in time, too. With the spread of mosquito vector diseases across the tropics, it is more important than ever to monitor these insects and the diseases they carry— so if there ever is a local outbreak of the Mayaro virus, we will be ready.

As Dr Ramsubhag puts it, “The results so far have been very significant in terms of understanding the distribution, ecology and the range of viruses associated with *Haemagogus* mosquitoes. The data generated can now be used by the IVCD for risk assessment and development of management systems to mitigate any future outbreaks of these viruses.

This project can be a model for cooperation and collaboration between governmental agencies and academia where we can apply our advanced technological capabilities to help provide solutions to problems faced by the society.”

I don’t know about you, but I’m buzzing to see what they find next.

*Amy Li Baksh is a Trinidadian writer, artist and activist who makes art to uplift and amplify the unheard voices in our society.*



Discussing mosquitoes with Dr Ramsubhag.

She never expected to be working with mosquitoes— after all, her background is in molecular biology and she had originally expected to work with Professor (Dave) Chadee. But fate and the professor had other plans.



Renee and UWI “mosquito team” member Brent Daniel catching mosquitoes with their nets in the forest of Chaguaramas.

## *GIRI Group wins international acclaim for* **CAMPUS MAPPING PROJECT**

In 2014, a team of staff and students from the Department of Geomatics Engineering and Land Management within UWI St Augustine's Faculty of Engineering embarked upon an ambitious project to map the campus and develop a web-based platform for managing and disseminating the information.

Now, the ongoing work of that team, the Geospatial Information Research and Innovation (GIRI) Group, has been recognised for their achievement by the largest organisation in the field of geographic information systems/science (GIS).

On July 10, 2019, the US-based GIS firm Esri, awarded the group with the Special Achievement in GIS (SAG) Award at their 2019 Esri User Conference in San Diego, California, to recognise their outstanding work implementing GIS technology. Winning a SAG Award means the GIRI Group stood out in a field of more than 100,000 others globally.

Dr Earl Edwards, Lecturer in Geospatial Information Science at UWI and GIRI Group Team Lead, said he felt "elated and extremely pleased" by the award.

"The members of the GIRI Group, both staff and students, have been working hard, donating freely their time towards this noble cause," Dr Edwards said. "It gives some validation to the opinion that The UWI does not only impart theory, as some may believe, but we can also implement systems to address real world problems that are as good as those created by GIS practitioners in developed countries."

UWI Today first covered the work of the GIRI Group in its August 2018 issue (see "Mapping the Campus Inside and Out" [https://sta.uwi.edu/uwitoday/archive/august\\_2018/article19.asp](https://sta.uwi.edu/uwitoday/archive/august_2018/article19.asp)). The system developed for UWI St Augustine by the group is referred to as an Enterprise GIS (EGIS). The inclusion of indoor data in the EGIS is extremely rare in the region and this implementation is quite possibly a first for the Caribbean.

"There is this belief that within Trinidad and Tobago we do not have the capacity to implement such geospatial technologies and there is always a reliance on foreign consultants," Dr Edwards says. "We can save much needed foreign exchange and help build capacity in the region by engaging The UWI to assist with some of these consultancies. This will surely provide an avenue for our students to have the opportunity to work on real world projects and gain valuable experience before entering the world of work."



Dr Earl Edwards, Team Lead of the GIRI Group



Jack Dangermond (left), President and Co-founder of Esri, presenting the SAG award to GIRI Group member Adam Thomas.

The EGIS consisted of four stages. The first was the mapping of the campus using traditional techniques such as field surveying complemented with modern techniques and technologies such as drones and satellite positioning systems. The second phase involved the measuring of internal spaces (rooms) to create floor plans for several campus buildings and a "data model" to store this digital information. Third was the creation of a comprehensive database combining both the buildings and their interiors using GIS software provided by Esri. The fourth phase of the project was to develop applications to, in the words of Dr Edwards, "capture, query, analyse and disseminate GIS data related to the campus".

One of the goals of the project was to give campus bodies such as the Division of Facilities Management a powerful information tool in planning for and maintaining the campus' buildings, equipment and other facilities.

"Our campus is a very complex place to manage and good data is crucial to make it work," Adam Thomas, a member of the GIRI Group and an engineering technician within the Geomatics Department said last year when discussing the project.

Apart from its work on the campus, the GIRI Group has embarked on the "Community of Professional Mappers Initiative", reaching out to Government agencies to explore innovative ways of creating fundamental GIS datasets. The aim is similar to the campus project - give Government organisations the ability to access the geographic data required to make informed decisions and manage its limited resources utilising GIS technologies.

"We are getting very good responses (from Government agencies)," says Dr Edwards, giving the example of the Penal-Debe Regional Corporation, which has expressed an interest in being the first local government entity to collaborate with the GIRI Group.

Founded in 1969, Esri, or Environmental Systems Research Institute, is the leading international GIS software provider with over 40 per cent of global market share. They supply most of the government and private sector organisations in the region through their distributor, Spatial Innovation Ltd. UWI is the Caribbean's number one institution for training in GIS and offer programmes at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels.



■ CAMPUS NEWS

## UWI students to receive over \$2 million for Scholarships and Bursaries from Caribbean Gas Chemical Ltd

**Eighty nationals of Trinidad and Tobago** attending The UWI St Augustine Campus will benefit from scholarships and bursaries over the next five years courtesy Caribbean Gas Chemical Limited (CGCL). This follows the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) for the establishment of a CGCL Scholarship and Bursaries Fund on Monday, July 29, 2019.

The MoA formalises a commitment between The UWI and CGCL, from 2019-2024, and includes the award of 50 bursaries valued at \$5,000 each. Thirty continuous scholarships valued at \$20,000 each will support programmes and research across eight faculties at The UWI for the same period. The awards will be based on academic merit, financial need and/or extra-curricular activities or any combination of two or three.

Prior to the signing of the MoA, CGCL funded ten bursaries totalling \$50,000.00 to undergraduate students of The UWI from La Brea and environs at the start of Academic Year 2018/2019.

These scholarships and bursaries will be offered to new and continuing undergraduate students respectively from CGCL's fence line communities such as La Brea, Sobo Village, Rousillac, Vance River, Vessigny Village and Union Village.

Signing on behalf of both parties were UWI St Augustine's Pro Vice-Chancellor and Campus Principal Professor Brian Copeland and Mr Hiroshi Kita, Chief Executive Officer of CGCL.

Professor Copeland expressed his sincerest gratitude to CGCL for their continued support to students of The UWI. Also present at the signing were UWI representatives such as Professor Indar Ramnarine – Deputy Campus Principal, Dr Deirdre Charles – Director, Division of Student Services and



Development, Ms Kristy Mannette-Smith – Manager (Ag) Financial Advisory Services, and Mrs Debra Coryat-Patton – Legal Officer. Representing CGCL were Mr Kahlil Comissiong – Community Engagement Coordinator, and Corporate Secretary Mrs. Donielle Charles-Rodriguez.

■ For more information on scholarships and bursaries available at UWI, please visit <https://sta.uwi.edu/scholarships/>

## UWI and UNDESA host Symposium on Research and Innovation for Climate Action at UN Meetings in New York

**Universities play a unique role in helping countries** achieve the United Nation's (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by serving as drivers of knowledge, innovation, development solutions and partnerships. It is in this context that the Global University Consortium on SDG13 met during the UN's High-Level Political Forum 2019 (HLPF) on Sustainable Development in New York in July 2019.

Following its strategic agenda and role as a global leader in the mobilisation of research and advocacy for the achievement of a climate-smart world during the forum on July 12, The UWI led a symposium themed "Research and Innovation 4 Climate Action" together with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA). The UWI's Director of Development, Dr Stacy Richards-Kennedy, served as moderator. Coordinator of the University's Institute for Sustainable Development (ISD) and Director of the Centre for Environmental Management (CEM) Dr David Smith presented at the symposium together with Vice-Chancellor of TERI School of Advanced Studies Dr Leena Srivastava, University of Bergen's Dr Helga Kleiven, and SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry representative Mr Justin Heavey.

This side-event at the High Level Political Forum demonstrated how higher education institutions (HEIs) under the Global University Consortium are making contributions to address climate change. Among the highlights were showcases of strides made in research in the fields of biomass energy, carbon sequestration, climate resilient design, and educational outreach and impact.



Coordinator of The UWI's Institute for Sustainable Development (ISD) and Director of the Centre for Environmental Management (CEM), Dr David Smith making his presentation.

The HEIs also showcased the cross-cutting approach of the consortium to SDGs 4, 13 and 17. However, more importantly, the symposium provided an opportunity for HEIs to share groundbreaking research and knowledge with a view to influencing new ways of thinking, policy debates and industry practice.

Some of the discussions focused on integrating the social sciences into the climate agenda in order to deliver maximum impact to society; leveraging the knowledge generated by HEIs to influence policy and government decision-making; and ensuring the most vulnerable countries and social groups are not left behind or forgotten in climate action planning.

Attendees included representatives from UN agencies such as UNDESA, the United Nations Economic Commission

for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNECLAC) and World Food Programme. Other participating HEIs and HEI associations included the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU), International Association of Universities (IAU) and the University of Bologna. Representatives from government organisations from the Parliament of Czech Republic, the Permanent Mission of Jamaica, the Government of Canada as well as the International Disability Alliance were also in attendance.

Stemming from the symposium, the attendees resolved to deepen existing partnerships and explore new collaboration models on research, education, and resource mobilisation for climate action.

**OUR PEOPLE**


Participants of the Arctic Ocean 2016 expedition at the North Pole.  
PHOTO: LARS LEHNERT

# From South Trinidad to the North Pole

BY MARC KANNEH

From growing up in rural Tortuga in Trinidad to sampling subsurface waters on the Swedish icebreaker *Oden* in the Arctic Basin, Dr La Daana Kanhai has left her mark on the world of marine science.

“My mother gave me a very important piece of advice,” Kanhai said, “she said to me, ‘don’t do something because you think you’ll make a lot of money or because you think you’ll be famous. Do something that you really love, that you’re passionate about. I think that’s the point when I decided I wanted to be an environmental scientist.’”

Kanhai’s passion for the environment began in her childhood. “I’m a country girl,” Kanhai said, “I grew up in this village called Tortuga, it is in the middle of the country but we are located on the Central Range and so even though we were in the countryside we had a lovely view of the Gulf of Paria.”

At home, Kanhai would often spend time in the garden and marvel at nature, igniting her passion for the natural world. She said, “Anything you could think about used to come into the garden. Being outdoors was just an adventure for my sister and me.”

Her love for the natural world drove her to pick subjects like biology, chemistry and geography in her secondary school, Naparima Girl’s High School. At the end of secondary school, she decided to follow her passions and pursued a double major in chemistry and environmental and natural resource management at The UWI.

Kanhai said, “even though you’re pursuing something that you are passionate about, it’s a hard journey because they’re going to be times that are tough and there are going to be setbacks.”

She then completed her MPhil in environmental biology. Kanhai praised some of her supervisors Dr Judith Gobin and Dr Denise Beckles for being strong female role models inspiring her to do more and go further.

“Dr Kanhai is a very keen researcher and a highly motivated young woman who has already begun to make scientific strides for Trinidad and Tobago,” says Dr Gobin, who is also Head of the Department of Life Sciences. “I have no doubt that she will continue to be successful in her research and will herself be an inspiration to many of our young UWI and TT researchers.”

During this time she gained great experience in publishing her work and presenting at conferences. “UWI does offer you that solid foundation as a research student to have these opportunities. So that is what prepared me very well for when I went on to do my PhD,” Kanhai said.



Dr La Daana Kanhai

Kanhai’s first expedition was the Floating Summer School, North-South Atlantic Transect Training on a German ice breaker for five weeks in 2015.

The vessel travelled from Germany to South Africa. The expedition selected 32 students from all over the world from hundreds of applications. On the voyage, the students were taught about biological oceanography and how to use the tools and systems on the ship for their research. Specifically, Kanhai was sent by her supervisors to conduct a portion of her research collecting samples of subsurface water to study.

Kanhai applied her experience in a second expedition on the *Oden* to the Arctic Basin.

She applied to the six-week expedition after finding out that there was a lack of research with regards to plastic in polar regions. This expedition came with new challenges such as having to take samples through the ice.

On August 21, 2016, Kanhai and the rest of the expedition team reached the North Pole aboard the *Oden*.

She completed her PhD in 2018 in marine ecosystem health and conservation. Her dissertation was titled, “Microplastic abundance, distribution and composition in the Atlantic and Arctic oceans.”

Microplastics are plastics that are less than 5mm in diameter. Kanhai said, “every environmental compartment that we’ve sampled in, be it surface waters, subsurface waters, sediments, sea ice, we’ve found these particles.” She added that already, experiments have shown that microplastics are a threat to marine life.

Kanhai said that stopping plastic pollution has to be done using a multi-pronged approach involving the government, businesses and everyday citizens. She acknowledged that locally, businesses like Massy Stores and PriceSmart have adopted policies that reduce the number of single use plastics generated by their operations.

Kanhai called on young people to make a difference and be knowledgeable about what is going on in the world around them, “Trinidad and Tobago needs change-makers, people that are not self-absorbed. We are facing so many issues in Trinidad and Tobago. How are you going to make a difference if you don’t know what the issues are?”

Kanhai, an instructor in the Department of Life Sciences in the Faculty of Science and Technology, stressed how important it is for researchers and professionals to realise that they are in a position to influence young people. Kanhai thinks that young girls should be informed and knowledgeable about the work that women are doing in STEM fields and in turn be inspired to do their own work.

When asked what she was going to do next, Kanhai said, “For me, it is always about dealing with issues that I’m passionate about. I came back to Trinidad and I knew that I came back here for a purpose and to utilise the skills that I have learnt along the way to address local issues. It’s not only about fulfilling my dream but enabling the dreams of others as well. That’s why teaching is important.”

**To share her work and experiences**, Kanhai launched her website [www.ladaanakanhai.com](http://www.ladaanakanhai.com) and also posts on Twitter and Instagram under the handle [@ladaanakanhai](https://twitter.com/ladaanakanhai)

# ST AUGUSTINE APPOINTS NEW *Campus Registrar, Social Sciences Dean*

The UWI St Augustine Campus has announced the appointment of its new Campus Registrar, **Dr Dawn Marie De Four-Gill** and new Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, **Dr Acolla Lewis-Cameron**. Dr De Four-Gill is the first woman to be appointed Campus Registrar at the campus.

The Campus Registrar is the most senior administrator on campus, serving as Chief Administrative Officer, Chief Operating Officer and as Secretary to all campus committees. The Registrar's Office has oversight for Student Affairs, Human Resources, OSHE, Records and Archives; and the delivery of services through Facilities Management and Security Services.

Dr De Four-Gill, who served as Acting Deputy Campus Registrar for the past year, has 20 years' experience in the higher education sector. She has held leadership positions at both the campus and regional level at The UWI. Her other appointments at the regional level include Director of One-UWI Strategy and University Director of Marketing and Communications. She led the Campus' Marketing and Communications function for 16 years and is the founding member of the Public Relations and Marketing Steering Committee of the Association of Commonwealth Universities (UK).

Her academic achievements include a Doctor of Education (EdD) in Higher Education Management from the University of Pennsylvania, an MBA (Marketing) from CASS Business School, City University London, and a BSc Management Studies (First Class Honours) from The UWI St Augustine. She is also a former Chevening Scholar. She holds memberships in numerous local, regional and international professional bodies. Under her leadership the Marketing and Communications Office won several prestigious international awards.



Dr Dawn-Marie De Four-Gill, Campus Registrar



Dr Acolla Lewis-Cameron, Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences

The Faculty of Social Sciences (FSS) is the largest of the campus' eight faculties and Dr Lewis-Cameron will have oversight for the faculty's administration and its four departments: Behavioural Sciences, Economics, Management Studies and Political Science. She succeeds Professor Ann Marie Bissessar, who held the portfolio of Dean of the FSS over the past four years.

The former Head of the Department of Management Studies has also served the Campus as Coordinator of the BSc International Tourism Management programme, coordinator for the MSc Tourism Development and Management programme, Coordinator for the PhD Business Administration programme and former Chair of the Board of Advisors of the Campus' Centre for Export Entrepreneurship and Innovation.

Dr Lewis-Cameron has written several papers and reports on the topic of tourism and is the lead editor of the publication, *Marketing Island Destinations: Concepts and Cases* and co-author of *Caribbean Tourism: Concepts and Cases*. She is actively engaged in research for both the private and public sectors in Trinidad and Tobago and the wider Caribbean. Her academic achievements include an MSc in Hospitality and Tourism Education from the University of Surrey, UK and a PhD in Tourism from Brunel University in the UK.

Currently, she serves as Vice Chairman of the Tobago Tourism Agency Limited and has held leadership positions in numerous national organisations, including the Standing Committee for the Strategic and Sustainable Development of Tourism in Trinidad in the Ministry of Tourism, the Chaguaramas Development Authority (CDA), the Tunapuna Government Secondary School and the Tobago Hospitality and Tourism Institute. She is passionate about empowering young people to develop to their full potential.

## UWI EXPANDS CADRE OF PROFESSORS, FOUR FOR ST AUGUSTINE

Four new professors have been appointed at the St Augustine Campus as part of a group of ten that includes five at the Mona Campus in Jamaica and one at the Cave Hill Campus in Barbados. The four are:



**DR. WAYNE GANPAT**  
promoted to Prof. of  
Agricultural Extension,  
Faculty of Food  
and Agriculture (FFA)



**DR. ROHAN MAHARAJ**  
promoted in the  
Faculty of Medical Sciences



**DR. MICHELLE MYCOO**  
promoted to Prof. of Urban  
and Regional Planning,  
Faculty of Engineering



**DR. LAURA  
ROBERTS-NKRUMAH**  
promoted to Prof.  
of Crop Science  
and Production, FFA

These appointments have been approved by the University Appointments Committee after a rigorous process including evaluations by internal and external assessors. Prof. Mycoo and Roberts-Nkrumah's appointments became effective in February 2019 and Prof. Ganpat and Prof. Maharaj's appointments became effective in May 2019.

# Training educators to be better teachers for deaf students

BY DR PAULSON SKERRIT



Teachers, interpreters and Ministry of Education staff taking part in the workshop. PHOTO: COURTESY SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

**English is not an easy language to learn.** Imagine having to learn it if you are deaf or hard of hearing (DHH). It's a challenge for DHH students and for the educators with the job to teach them.

In July 2019, The UWI School of Education (SoE) Outreach Unit, partnering with the Counselling Department of Gallaudet University in the US, held the 2019 Professional Development Workshop for teachers, interpreters and Student Support Staff of Trinidad and Tobago's Ministry of Education. The workshop trained them in the Bedrock Bilingual Literacy Programme for DHH learners, as well as strategies for their social and emotional needs. It was held at SoE on the St Augustine Campus.

SoE lecturer Dr Paulson Skerrit and Ms Shannon

Winters, a teacher at the Arkansas School for the Deaf, facilitated the sessions on using the Bedrock curriculum. Dr Danielle Thompson-Ochoa, professor at Gallaudet University, held sessions on the socio-emotional needs of DHH students.

Apart from the lectures, discussions and demonstrations, the workshop included presentations by qualified local DHH teachers.

The Ministry staff benefitted from insights into the unique approaches needed to teach DHH students and the specific considerations when it comes to assessment and concessions if equity is to be achieved. Participants willingly gave up part of their lunch breaks and even stayed on after the scheduled closing time each day to ask

questions and discuss implementing the approaches that were introduced. They rated the workshop as "practical", "high quality", "intensive" and worth the sacrifices needed to participate. What made the workshop especially appealing for participants was that the information was rooted in evidence-based research.

The Trinidad and Tobago Association for the Hearing Impaired (TTAHI) funded the cost of providing high quality interpreting (sign to voice and voice to sign) during the workshop and the interpreting service was outsourced to Caribbean Sign Language Centre (CSLC).

The 2019 Professional Development Workshop was coordinated through the SoE Outreach Unit managed by Mr Cipriani Davis with support from Ms D'Izrael Billy.

*Dr. Paulson Skerrit is Lecturer in Reading Education at The UWI St Augustine School of Education.*

## LAND SETTLEMENT AGENCY AND UWI VETERINARY SCHOOL FOCUS ON RURAL PETS IN COLLABORATIVE SURVEY

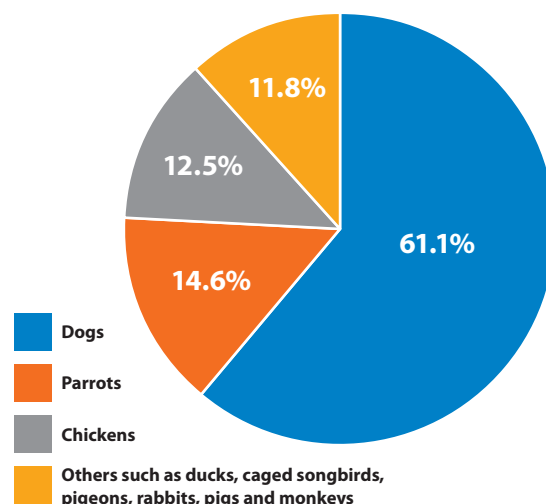
When it comes to rural and marginalised communities we tend to think about the welfare of the people – but what about their pets? Just as community members have to deal with the challenges and risks of country life, so do their animal companions.

The Land Settlement Agency (LSA) under Trinidad and Tobago's Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, has collaborated with the School of Veterinary Medicine in the Faculty of Medical Sciences at UWI St Augustine to focus on animals in these areas.

These communities, often located in remote and forested locations, are typically in close contact with the environment and more importantly with wildlife, many of which are carriers of infectious pathogens.

The Marabella Trainline/Bayshore community was selected as a pilot study area to study the "One Health" through community engagement principle (One Health is a multidisciplinary, internationalist approach to health for people, animals and the environment. See UWI Today

Percentages of Pets Kept by the Residents of the Marabella Trainline/Bayshore District



March 2014 [https://sta.uwi.edu/uwitoday/archive/march\\_2014/article17.asp](https://sta.uwi.edu/uwitoday/archive/march_2014/article17.asp)). This community is located on the coastline adjacent to and within the mangrove. It is also located next to a middle income community at Marabella.

Findings generated from the survey of 413 households at the Marabella Trainline/Bayshore area revealed that 35 per cent of participants (approximately one in three households) kept pets. These pets included dogs, parrots, chickens and others such as ducks, caged songbirds, pigeons, rabbits, pigs, fishes and monkeys.

Persons from these communities often have limited access to health services, a scenario which has implications for vector-control, public health measures, immunisation and zoonotic disease (diseases spread between humans and animals) control. Such communities are ideal for exploring the human-animal interface.

Future research conducted in health-related fields through community engagement can provide insightful information which can support the implementation of national health policies.

## RESEARCH

# LESSONS IN HUMILITY

*UWI researchers' profound approach to the teaching of ethics receives international recognition*

BY JOEL HENRY

Ethics are “moral principles that govern behaviour”, says the *Oxford Dictionary*. It's a weighty subject matter, some might even say outdated in this age of loud personalities and low character.

“It's not something I would have ordinarily gravitated to,” says 23-year-old Zakiyah Rocke, an Applied Psychology student going into her second year at UWI St Augustine. Then, last year she attended the seminar course “Caribbean Ethics and Professional Practice”. The teacher was Professor Surendra Arjoon.

“To me it was a breath of fresh air, not only because of his personality but his approach to teaching,” Zakiyah said. “It wasn't the traditional classroom setting where you come prepared to take notes and you feel anxious to contribute. You come, you learn, you share. Professor Arjoon is open to learning our different perspectives.”

That “approach to teaching” is no accident. Arjoon, a Professor of Business and Professional Ethics in the Department of Management Studies at the St Augustine Campus, has worked for years with colleagues to develop and refine a truly innovative approach to teaching and learning ethics. The key to that approach is humility.

“Although it is not considered the most important virtue, from both a theoretical and practical perspective, without humility, one cannot acquire and practice the other virtues,” he says.

“In other words, humility ‘serves’ and can be considered the ‘light-switch’ for the other virtues. One cannot acquire and practice compassion, forgiveness, effective leadership or even faith without this foundational virtue of humility.”

And these virtues matter enormously when learning ethics and applying them to our lives.

This “humility-embedded” approach received international recognition earlier this year in the *International Journal of Ethics Education*. Professor Arjoon and his colleague Dr Meena Rambocus (Lecturer in the Management Studies Department) wrote an article that was published in the journal entitled “Exploring the relationship between humility and the virtues: toward improving the effectiveness of ethics education”.

“There have been several recent innovations on improving the effectiveness of ethics education in business schools, most of these efforts lack measurable learning outcomes,” the researchers said. “As such, it is challenging to assess the effectiveness of such teaching and learning interventions and whether they are achieving their desired outcomes.”

In the early 2000s, US-based energy company Enron was exposed in a massive scandal that even today is pointed to as the case-study for ethical failure in business. However, even as institutions developed scholarship and training in ethics following the scandal, since then there have been numerous examples of unethical practices in the corporate world and beyond.

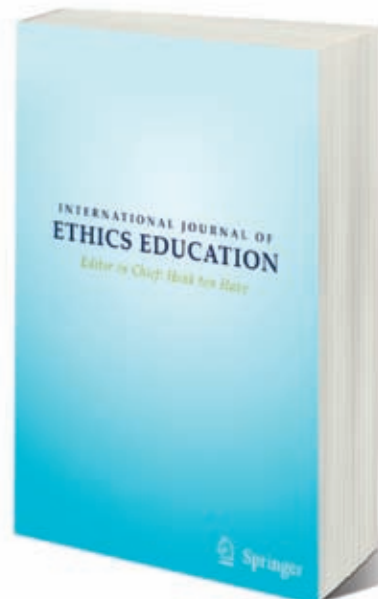
“In a 2014 *Bloomberg* report, author and educator Deborah Himsel noted that business schools have made efforts to teach students to carry out ethical lessons from their MBA programme into the working world and to behave ethically as professionals, however, such programmes often fail to contribute to an ethical business climate because the teachings of the classroom are no match for the harsh realities of the global workplace,” Professor Arjoon states.

The feedback from Professor Arjoon's students about his approach has been very positive.

“Many educators are afraid to love and care and as a consequence, cannot bring themselves to the same level as their students. Professor Arjoon is an amazing teacher because he genuinely cares and loves and mostly because he still sees himself as a student,” says Patrice Augustine.



Professor Surendra Arjoon. PHOTO: ATIBA CUDJOE



International Journal of Ethics Education

“Professor Arjoon has been an inspiration with his teaching on ethics and his outlook on life,” says Shenelle Rambhajan. “He emphasised the importance of being ethical and understanding of individuals; not judging them but looking at the situation holistically.”

Most pointedly, Shenelle says, he is “respected not only for his academic achievements but for his humility.”

“There is certainly no disagreement about the role and importance of humility, which has now been emerging as a critical research topic for effective leadership and building an effective organisational culture,” the Professor says.

He gives the definition of humility as the ability to realistically assess and operate within one's own limitations and strengths (physical, moral and psychological). Achieving it however, is easier said than done.

“Unlike the other moral virtues, humility is distinctly difficult to acquire. To develop humility requires the continuous practice of acquiring self-knowledge, sincerity, openness to new ideas and feedback,” Professor Arjoon says, pointing to actions like “putting the needs of others first, appreciating the strengths and contributions of others, admitting mistakes and correcting one's behaviour, avoiding speaking unnecessarily about oneself, not judging others, not seeking to be the centre of attention or not thinking yourself better than others.”

In modern life these are rare attributes indeed. At the top of our social hierarchies they are rarer still. When asked about the modern condition of moral and ethical decline, Professor Arjoon pointed to his students, who have embraced his teachings with an incredible level of enthusiasm:

“Students from various departments and disciplines (mathematics, physics, life sciences, sociology, communications, psychology, law, environmental studies, and economics) throughout the University participate in this oversubscribed Professional Ethics course.”

Talia Hassanali, a final year law student says, “This has been the most enlightening, mind and life changing course I have ever taken during my degree. It allowed me to engage in deep self-reflection and learn about my moral strengths and weaknesses in order to become a more morally-competent person. I have not only become a more responsible and forgiving person, but most notably, the course has taught me the importance of embracing the only true purpose in life, that is, to love. Only by living a life filled with love – loving who I am and loving others despite how they have treated me – can I be internally free and at peace with myself and be fulfilled.”

If young people like this are one day making decisions for our society, maybe we can look forward to an ethical tomorrow.

# UWI Calendar of Events

## AUGUST – OCTOBER 2019

### Learn about the Regionally Relevant Cocoa Project (RRCEP) August 15 UWI St Augustine

The Department of Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering hosts the Regionally Relevant Cocoa Project (RRCEP) Symposium and Exhibition. The goal of the project is to develop an affordable and efficient line of processing equipment which will be used in the harvesting, fermenting, pre-processing, processing and finishing of cocoa and cocoa products. At the Symposium and Exhibition the project machines developed by the project team, as well as the student projects, will be on display for the first time. Witness history from 9am to 2pm at the Teaching and Learning Complex (TLC). Admission is free, however RSVP is required.

**To RSVP and for more info, please call Dr Renique Murray at 662-2002 ext. 83173 or email [renique.murray@sta.uwi.edu](mailto:renique.murray@sta.uwi.edu).**

### Dare to Be at UWI Life 2019 New Student Orientation Programme August 28 UWI SPEC

Did you get your acceptance letter from The UWI St Augustine Campus for the academic year 2019-2020? Then look out for your invitation to UWI Life 2019 under the theme, "Dare to Be". This is the campus orientation programme for all new students and their supporters as part of the year-long First Year Experience (FYE) programme.

#### **Dare to Be includes:**

- **UWI Life Student Orientation** – For new undergraduate and postgraduate students to meet Campus Management, Faculty Deans and support staff to guide and answer questions. Also look out for special guest artists, giveaways and more. | 9am to noon at The UWI Sport and Physical Education Centre (SPEC).
- **UWI Life Support Orientation** – For parents, spouses and loved ones to meet and interact with Campus Management to address concerns and understand their role in supporting their UWI student. | 6 to 8pm at The UWI SPEC.

**For more information, please check the email address you used to apply to UWI St Augustine.**



### Diversification in the Era of the Non-Normal

The Latin American and Caribbean Chapter of the Academy of International Business (AIB-LAC) invites you to submit your research for its 10th Annual Conference under the theme, "Diversification in the Era of Non-Normal", which will be hosted by The UWI St Augustine's Department of Management Studies. The conference takes place from March 11 to 14, 2020. Full paper submissions are due on September 15, 2019.

**For more information, please visit the Campus Notices and Announcements page at <https://sta.uwi.edu/news/notices/> or email [qef.obus@uwimona.edu.jm](mailto:qef.obus@uwimona.edu.jm).**



### Call for Papers on Academic Literacies

Share your thoughts on why academic literacy/literacies is essential for their success. The UWI Quality Education Forum (QEF) has issued a Call for Papers on Academic Literacies in Higher Education for the 24th issue of their annual peer-reviewed journal published by The UWI's Office of the Board for Undergraduate Studies (OBUS). The deadline for abstracts is August 25.

**For more information, please visit <http://www.lac.aib.world/>.**

### The UWI SPEC International Half-Marathon October 20 UWI SPEC

Registration is open for the 16th Annual UWI SPEC International Half-Marathon under the theme, "A Sound Mind in a Healthy Body". This year's marathon will highlight and support sport scholarships. The race begins from UWI SPEC at 5am. Individual and relay teams are invited to participate.

**For more details, please visit: <https://sta.uwi.edu/spec/marathon/>.**

**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](mailto:uwitoday@sta.uwi.edu)

