



Education, Research, and the Development of a Region

# The UWI St Augustine Campus turns 65



Graduands at the first ever graduation ceremony at UWI St Augustine in 1964. PHOTO: COURTESY THE WEST INDIAN AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS DIVISION, ALMA JORDAN LIBRARY.



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## FROM THE PRINCIPAL

## RESEARCH AND LEGACY



Campus Principal, Professor Rose-Marie Belle Antoine, officially opens the Principal's Research Festival with a ribbon-cutting ceremony. Taking part are members of The UWI St Augustine leadership team and (from right of Principal) National Flour Mills CEO, Mr Ian Mitchell; Xtra Foods CEO, Mr Angelo Austin; and Unit Trust Corporation Head of Investment Management, Ms Karen Guyadeen-Gosine. PHOTO: KC MEDIA

**The final month of 2025 draws to a close**, capping a productive year for The UWI St Augustine campus. We ended November with two of the campus's most important events: the launch of the Artificial Intelligence Innovation Centre and the three-day Principal's Research Awards and Festival (see articles in this issue).

UWI St Augustine is working to ensure the Caribbean claims a space at the forefront of the global digital revolution. The AIIC—the region's first and largest hub dedicated to the transformative power of AI—is invaluable to this mission.

The AIIC is not merely a research facility; it is an engine for regional growth, focusing on research, capacity building, commercialisation, and policy. I am proud of the scale this initiative has already achieved. Today, the AIIC unites over 50 dedicated members and 20+ institutional partners. With more than 35 active projects currently underway, we are proving that through innovation and strategic partnership, UWI St Augustine is making a major contribution to the future of Caribbean intelligence.

The Principal's Research Awards and Festival are a celebration of one of the university's fundamental purposes—the seeking of knowledge to better understand and improve life.

Along with teaching, research is the imperative of any university. A strong research culture is an asset for the development of a nation and region. In fact, research and development are important indicators of the well-being of a society. The Awards and Festival recognises the praise-worthy work of our researchers and provides funds for the award winners to continue that work. This encouragement strengthens the enabling environment for the kind of groundbreaking work that can improve the world.

Apart from encouragement and support for our researchers, the other crucial aspect of a research culture is buy-in from the society. Internationally, the countries that derive the most benefit from research are those that treat it as a strategic asset and incorporate it into their development plans. Partnership and investment with government and the private sector are priorities for this campus's research agenda, and I am greatly encouraged by their participation in the Awards and Festival.

They generously sponsored prizes for our winners. They attended our meetings, sessions and exhibition. I was also very pleased to host a high-level meeting with leaders of the business community to discuss investment and partnership opportunities.

This type of discussion is extremely productive because to best serve society, a research agenda must be a two-way conversation. We share our work, but also listen to what they need. Through listening, we can tailor new research to find solutions for their needs.

However, buy-in means more than collaboration with industry and policymakers. We purposefully invited the public to be part of the Awards and Festival to show them the value that research can bring to their lives and communities, and perhaps encourage the next generation of young scholars to make their own contributions to UWI St Augustine's research legacy.

### Our 65th Year as a Campus

Speaking of legacy, the end of 2025 also brings to a close our 65th year as a campus. Our acknowledgment of this milestone continued all year, the highlight being the Staff Talent Showcase held on Founder's Day, October 12. It was an intimate celebration of the campus community and a fitting way to acknowledge the heart of the campus, its people.

In this issue of UWI TODAY, we commemorate the 65th anniversary, and people are the theme. Over the six and one half decades, we have seen phenomenal growth, had countless successes, and enormous positive impact on Trinidad and Tobago and the region, but it all comes back to people. The legacy of UWI St Augustine was established and grew from the blueprints of the founders, the governance of its leaders, the teaching of its educators, the discoveries of its researchers, the policies and advocacy of its public intellectuals, the services of its professional and support staff, and the thousands upon thousands of graduates that have gone forth and contributed to society.

We look to them with gratitude and for guidance to help us continue that great legacy, as UWI St Augustine works to serve our region and the world.

*Rose-Marie Belle Antoine*

**Professor Rose-Marie Belle Antoine**  
Campus Principal

### UWI St Augustine Launches Caribbean's Premier AI Hub to Drive Regional Innovation



**INNOVATION IN ACTION:** (From left) Faculty of Engineering Dean, Prof Bheshem Ramlal; Tertiary Education and Skills Training Minister, Senator Emeritus Prof Prakash Persad; Campus Principal Prof Rose-Marie Belle Antoine; CARICOM IMPACS Executive Director Lt Col Michael Jones; Development Bank of Resilient Prosperity Executive Director Dr Hyginus "Gene" Leon; and AIIC Executive Director Dr Craig Ramlal, at the launch of the Artificial Intelligence Innovation Centre.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** UWI TODAY will provide extensive coverage on the AIIC next issue.

## BEYOND 65 From the Caribbean to the World

BY VICE-CHANCELLOR,  
PROFESSOR  
SIR HILARY BECKLES



As we reflect on 65 years of stewardship from our St Augustine campus, it is with immense pride that I acknowledge the pivotal role the Campus has played in shaping The University of the West Indies into the distinguished and globally engaged institution it is today. Since inception, the Campus

has been steadfast in its commitment to excellence, activism, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that resonate deeply with our Caribbean ethos.

From its earliest days, St Augustine has stood as a beacon of pioneering thought and innovative solutions within our multi-campus system. Our scholars and graduates have not only tackled Caribbean-centric issues but have also addressed pressing global challenges—from climate resilience and public health to food security and justice—bringing a distinctly Caribbean perspective that honours its roots while reaching out to the world.

This extraordinary work has garnered recognition far and wide, celebrated at home through the Vice-Chancellor's Awards for Excellence and on numerous international platforms. With strong leadership steering the Campus, the advocacy, research, and educational initiatives emanating from St Augustine have fortified The UWI's reputation as a leading voice for Small Island Developing States and have made us a partner of choice in the international development arena. Its endeavours continue to enhance the global standing of our institution, contributing significantly to our world university rankings and overall impact.

As we gaze forward beyond 65, I have every confidence that St Augustine will remain an indispensable force within The UWI—rooted in our Caribbean heritage, engaged with the international community, and ready to shape the next chapter of our collective journey.

### Editorial Team

**Campus Principal**  
**Professor Rose-Marie Belle Antoine**

**Director of Marketing and Communications**  
**Wynell Gregorio**

**Ag. Editor**  
**Joel Henry**  
Email: joel.henry@sta.uwi.edu

**Editorial Assistant**  
**Amanda Lee**

**Contact Us**  
**The UWI Marketing and Communications Office**  
Tel: (868) 662-2002 | exts. 82013 / 83997  
Email: uwitoday@sta.uwi.edu

## ■ OUR CAMPUS



Professor Rohanie Maharaj (right), winner of the Principal's Award for Best Researcher, with Campus Principal Professor Rose-Marie Belle Antoine. PHOTOS: KC MEDIA.



Professor Michelle Mycoo, recipient of the Principal's Award for Best Researcher.

## ST AUGUSTINE RESEARCH, AND RESEARCHERS, SHINE

### Campus Principal Antoine announces return of Research and Development Impact Fund at Research Awards and Festival 2025

BY DIXIE-ANN BELLE

**Research is a major priority for UWI St Augustine**, and now the campus has intensified that commitment even more. Researchers at UWI have been invited to apply for up to TT\$1 million each for their projects through the university's Trinidad and Tobago Research and Development Impact Fund (RDI Fund). Campus Principal Professor Rose-Marie Belle Antoine made the announcement during her address at the third annual Principal's Research Awards and Festival 2025 on Wednesday, November 26.

Prof Antoine announced the re-opening of the RDI Fund which is designed to support research projects that address pressing developmental needs. She reminded the audience that last year the government committed TT\$10 million to research at the campus. "That promise was realised in this year's budget by the new government, so I want to thank both administrations. That is how we should be working."

One hundred and ninety-seven research abstracts were submitted for presentation under the festival's theme, "Research Innovation for Present and Future". Areas covered included agri-food technology and policy for food and nation security, biodiversity, climate change, disaster management, health and more.

The event kicked off three days of what has become a UWI tradition. Eight faculties participated in the showcase of research and development, highlighting the various projects' alignment with national, regional and United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. After the awards ceremony, Prof Antoine officially opened the festival and visited booths highlighting research projects. Oral presentations and poster presentation sessions based on the festival themes were held on November 27 and 28.

"The UWI Principal's Business Breakfast", a gathering to engage the private sector businesses to commercialise the campus's UWI MADE products, and a workshop on "University-Industry-Government Partnerships for Research Innovation" were also held. Senator Professor Prakash Persad, Minister of Tertiary Education and Skills Training, was one of the panellists at the workshop.

#### Catalyst for Transformation

"The work on our campus illustrates that research is not abstract. It is a catalyst for transformation, and our identity as small island developing states makes our position unique, our challenges certainly intricate, and our vulnerabilities complex," declared Prof Antoine during the research awards ceremony.

Michelle Mycoo, Professor of Urban and Regional Planning, was one of the winners of the Principal's Award for Best Researcher for her work in Caribbean urban development and climate change adaptation. The other recipient was Professor of Food Science and Technology Rohanie Maharaj for her research in food quality and safety, post-harvest technology, and development of sustainable materials.

For the second year, honourees were presented with the Hurricane and Earthquake Alleviation Research (HEAR) Award which was introduced by Prof Antoine to encourage research and innovation related to hurricanes and earthquakes. The HEAR award was the only category open to the public.



The 2025 awardees with senior members of The UWI St Augustine Campus community.

**'Research and innovation do not happen in isolation. We need collaboration and partnerships to be the fuel. We need to do more in this country and this region. We need to have a national and regional research agenda to guide and stimulate research and development.'**

CAMPUS PRINCIPAL, PROFESSOR ROSE-MARIE BELLE ANTOINE



FROM LEFT: President of the Barataria Community Council Ms June Rogers, Professor Antoine, and representatives of the Beyond The Waves Therapeutic Programme: Dr Sarah Subhan, Ms Dianne Brewster-Phillip, and Ms Karin Hatch, with the \$10,000 cheque for their joint Hurricane and Earthquake Alleviation Research (HEAR) award.

"Part of that award is to remind the public and our stakeholders of the dangers we face. Climate change concerns all of us," she said. "So, whether we are addressing pandemic preparedness through the One Health Laboratory or engaging in work on Caribbean jurisprudence and education, we know that research needs to be applied for it to be truly meaningful."

The joint HEAR award winners were the Barataria Climate Smart Hydroponic Edible Landscape Initiative, a community-led model for hurricane-resilient urban food security, and The Beyond the Waves Therapeutic Programme for Psychological Innovation for Health and Climate Resilience in Post-Hurricane Caribbean Communities created by Karen Hatch, a clinical psychologist.

## ■ OUR CAMPUS



Researcher Rakesh Bhukal, from the Faculty of Food and Agriculture, with a handful of black soldier fly larvae. Bhukal is researching the viability of the black soldier fly as a method of consuming organic waste and producing nutrient-rich animal feed.



Professor Bheshem Ramlal (right), Dean of the Faculty of Engineering, with members of his team displaying a drone at the Research Festival. The faculty uses drones in its Geomatics Engineering, Surveying and other programmes.



FROM LEFT: Principal Antoine with Co-founder and Managing Partner of Rise Guyana, Ms Kristine Thompson; Minister of Trade, Investment, and Tourism, Senator Satyakama "Kama" Maharaj; Director of Lifetime Solutions, Ms Franka Costelloe; and CEO of Lifetime Solutions, Ms Deborah Costelloe.



A representative at a Faculty of Food and Agriculture booth shows off Biophyt 1.0, an organic and sustainable pesticide developed by researchers on campus. Biophyt is one of several UWI MADE products that are being commercialised.



A display of cocoa beans and their shells from the Cocoa Research Centre (CRC). The CRC is undertaking a major thrust to develop the cocoa industry through research and innovation, including manufacturing its own brand of dark chocolate, Spiritt.

### Most Impactful Community Research and more

Among the many winners were Dr Benjamin Brathwaite, a senior lecturer at the Department of Modern Languages and Linguistics, and activist and interpreter Ian Dhanoolal were awarded for Most Impactful Community Research for their project Deaf Caribbean Academic Network Research.

Soil scientist and laboratory technician Dr Sunshine De Caires was one of the honorees for Most Outstanding Graduate Researcher. She has pioneered the use of electromagnetic induction and geostatistics to map soil properties efficiently. Her mentor, Dean of the Faculty of Food and Agriculture Dr Mark Wuddivira, was recognised as Most Outstanding Mentor.

Dr Kegan Jones, a lecturer at the School of Veterinary Medicine, was honoured as the Most Promising Early Career Researcher for his work with neotropical, non-domesticated animal production, neotropical, small and the use of animal products as functional food.

A special recognition for the Best Team Research Award went to Mr Stokeley Smart, a senior lecturer in actuarial science, and his team. They developed "Smart Tables", using actuarial knowledge to create complete mortality tables for CARICOM nations.

Dr Kenneth Charles, Senior Lecturer in Haematology at the Faculty of Medical Sciences, received the special recognition for Most Impactful Community Research for the project "Action Research to Introduce Community Voluntary Non-Remunerated Blood Donation in Trinidad and Tobago".

### Launch of STA Research Digest 2025

During the proceedings, Principal Antoine also launched the *STA Research Digest 2025*, which features the nearly 200 abstracts submitted by research students. She made a call for a national and regional research agenda to guide and stimulate research and development, and advocated for a clear pathway for research projects which incorporate national and regional needs as well as those of industry and government.

She noted that research and development is the core of UWI.

"I happen to believe it is our greatest gift to the region, to the country," she said, "and dare I say, in some respects, the world."

For the full list of winners and their work, view the award citation booklet here: <https://shorturl.at/SfO9j>

To view the Research Digest, please visit: <https://shorturl.at/M4mpN>

Dixie-Ann Belle is a freelance writer, editor and proofreader.

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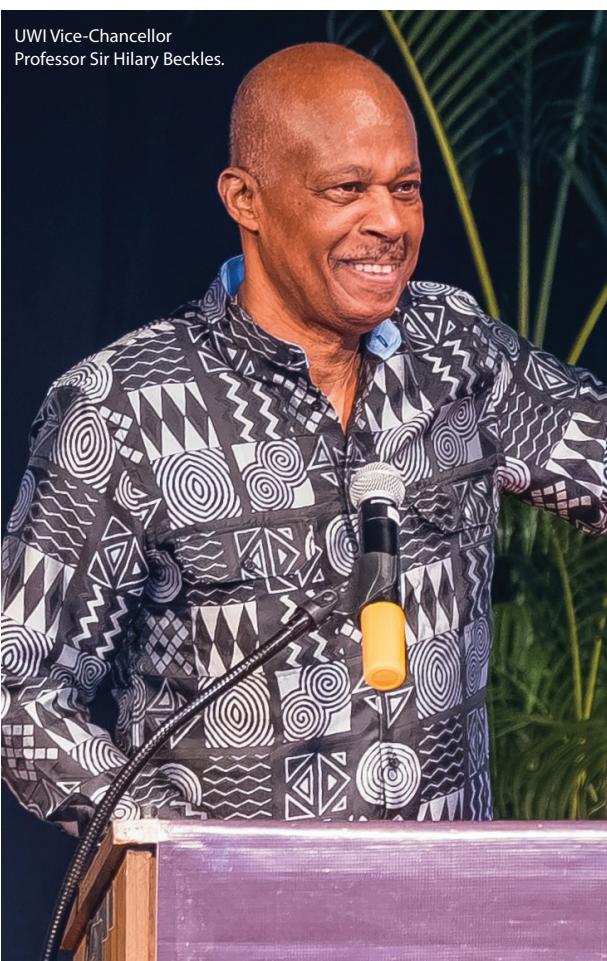
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## ■ BOOKS



UWI Vice-Chancellor  
Professor Sir Hilary Beckles.

## SIR HILARY BECKLES unveils Frank Worrell's Fight against Colonialism in Cricket

It has been called a “political history of Sir Frank”, and on October 21, the latest work by UWI Vice-Chancellor Professor Sir Hilary Beckles on the legacy of a Caribbean cricket legend was the topic of discussion at the St Augustine campus.

Titled *Cricket's First Revolutionary: Frank Worrell's Political War against Colonialism in the West Indies*, the new book, published by Ian Randle Publishers earlier this year, is described by the author as a contribution to West Indian politics and history.

“It is about black and brown people who fought and died for political federation and national independence. It is about the anti-colonial consciousness and strategies of ‘Worrell the Warrior’, who set out as a schoolboy and cricket protégé to criticise, discredit and destroy the white supremacy system in society and its cricket culture,” read a statement from the campus.

The book launch for Cricket's First Revolutionary featured three reviews from historian and editor Professor Selwyn Cudjoe, UWI Faculty of Sport Dean Dr Roy McCree, and UWI St Augustine Department of Political Science Head Dr Indira Rampersad.

According to Sir Hilary, Worrell was an activist comrade to the radical political leaders and intellectuals of the 1950s and 1960s, and was branded a “revolutionary” by the global media. He had a determination to turn the West Indian political world upside down, consolidate the social justice democracy movement, and create an irreversible new cricket world. These he achieved, hence the description “Cricket Revolutionary”.

The launch included a performance of Black Stalin’s classic song Bun Dem performed by Kevan Calliste (Stalin’s grandson) and accompanied by musician and bandleader Josiah Lewis. Chairman of the Tax Appeal Board of Trinidad and Tobago Justice Anthony Gafoor read three selected passages of *Cricket's First Revolutionary*. The evening closed with a dance interpretation of Bob Marley’s *One Love* by La Shaun Prescott.

■ *Cricket's First Revolutionary: Frank Worrell's Political War against Colonialism in the West Indies* is available locally from Metropolitan Book Suppliers Ltd and online via Ian Randle Publishers at [ianrandlepublishers.com/product/cricket-first-revolutionary](http://ianrandlepublishers.com/product/cricket-first-revolutionary)

**Sacha Cosmetics** is one of Trinidad and Tobago's biggest business success stories, a locally international brand recognised for its innovation. Now, the company's founder, Senator Satyakama “Kama” Maharaj is sharing the story of its rise in his new book, *Building a World Class Brand on a Shoestring Budget*. The launch was held on November 3 at UWI St Augustine's University Inn and Conference Centre.

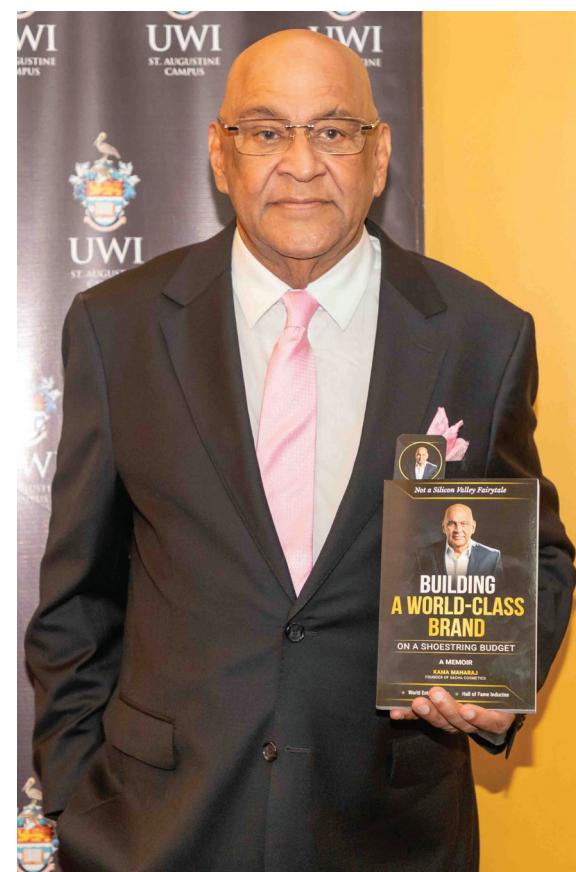
“More than a business success story,” a statement from The UWI read, “this publication provides a powerful and personal look into the vision, grit, and determination behind one of the Caribbean's most celebrated beauty brands. Kama Maharaj's journey stands as a shining example of what can be achieved when creativity, courage, and purpose unite to redefine the landscape of Caribbean entrepreneurship.”

Senator Maharaj, who is Trinidad and Tobago's Minister of Trade, Investment, and Tourism, told those in attendance that he wrote the book because there were few works of its kind for business people from the developing world.

*Building a World-Class Brand*, a promotional note read, tells the story of how he “went from mixing formulas on his kitchen table to developing Sacha Cosmetics into one of the world's longest-standing inclusive beauty brands, ultimately earning him a place in the World Entrepreneur Hall of Fame in Monte Carlo”.

■ *Building a World Class Brand on a Shoestring Budget* can be purchased at [Amazon](http://Amazon).

## The Story of Sacha Cosmetics Unveiled



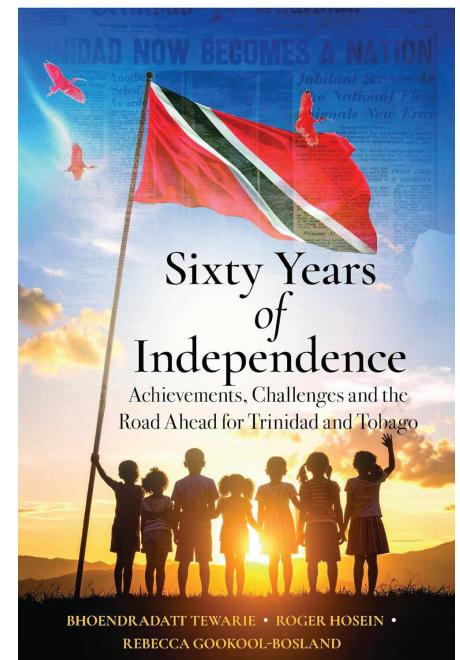
Senator Satyakama Maharaj, author and founder of Sacha Cosmetics.  
PHOTO: ATIBA CUDJOE

## 60 Years of Independence gets soft launch

A new book promising a “raw yet refined” examination of Trinidad and Tobago's “triumphs, persistent inequalities, and lingering legacies—inviting both pride and radical accountability” was recently launched at UWI St Augustine's faculty of Social Sciences. Titled *60 Years of Independence: Achievements, Challenges and the Road Ahead for Trinidad and Tobago*, is a compilation edited by former campus principal and government minister Dr Bhoendradatt Tewarie, and economists Professor Roger Hosein and Dr Rebecca Gookool-Bosland.

The launch, held on August 21 at the Faculty of Social Sciences Lounge, brought together distinguished academics, policy makers, civil society actors, cultural commentators and representatives of the media. Published by UWI Press, *60 Years* includes essays from scholars and experts in the energy sector, food and agriculture, health, education, the environment, crime, and more.

The book, a statement from The UWI reads, “examines Trinidad and Tobago's progress since independence in 1962... with the aim of identifying both genuine achievements and persistent flaws or gaps.”



■ For more information on *60 Years of Independence: Achievements, Challenges and the Road Ahead for Trinidad and Tobago*, visit UWI press at [www.uwipress.com/9789766580261/sixty-years-of-independence/](http://www.uwipress.com/9789766580261/sixty-years-of-independence/)

## ■ OUR GRADUATES

**UWI graduates are everywhere** – politics, business, the arts, and as public intellectuals. In the coming months, **UWI TODAY** will profile some of our high achieving alumni who have made or are making a positive impact on society.

# From St Augustine Campus to Leader at Coca-Cola

Trinidad-born executive and UWI graduate Muhammad Abdullah appointed to lead Mountain Arctic Pacific USA region at The Coca-Cola Company.

**“My time at UWI laid the foundation for how I think, lead, and collaborate,”** says Muhammad Abdullah.

That foundation has served him well. Abdullah, a graduate of UWI St Augustine’s Department of Management Studies within the Faculty of Social Sciences, has been appointed as Vice President and General Manager of the Mountain Arctic Pacific (MAP) USA territory at The Coca-Cola Company, one of the largest beverage brands in the world.

In his new role, he will oversee the company’s largest US region by geography, spanning territories over 19 states from Washington to Colorado to Utah, Hawaii and Alaska. His appointment marks not only a personal milestone but a regional one.

Mr Abdullah started his career as a research assistant at UWI, then enrolled in the Management Trainee



programme at Mittal Steel in Point Lisas before leaving to pursue an MBA in International Management at the Thunderbird School of Global Management in Arizona. Since then, he served for seven years at Johnson & Johnson, and the past 18 years at The Coca-Cola Company.

He has led teams in multiple countries, and most recently, was the head of the 24-country Caribbean region, where he attracted major investments to the region, led multiple community initiatives, and executed on a strategy that he dubbed “The Caribbean We Deserve”

Of his UWI experience, Abdullah says, “It wasn’t just about the academics. It was the environment—the diversity of thought, intellectual rigour, and shared sense of possibility—to leave things better than we found them.

“I’m proud to be a UWI alum,” he says. “It’s part of my DNA, and I carry that with me into every room I walk into.”

## ■ OUR CAMPUS

## WORLD CREOLE DAY

### *Reclaiming Language, Memory, and Cultural Power*

BY CHERISSE LAUREN BERKELEY

If language is a map of who we are, then World Creole Day 2025 at UWI St Augustine unfolded like a homecoming, drawing students, lecturers, artists, and cultural practitioners into the living heart of Patois and its Caribbean kin.

This year’s annual celebration transformed the Social Sciences Lounge into a site of learning, performance, and cultural exchange. The event was hosted by the Department of Modern Languages and Linguistics (DMLL) in collaboration with the Departments of Creative and Festival Arts (DCFA) and Behavioural Sciences (DBS), and the Alliance Française of Trinidad and Tobago.

The event opened with cultural showcases from the featured countries, highlighting their languages, food, music, dance, and histories. Presentations from Trinidad and Tobago, Haiti, Dominica, St Lucia, and Mauritius offered portraits of lived tradition, allowing visitors to hear greetings and expressions in different Creoles, observe movement styles, and witness performances that carry communal memory.

Music and movement established a steady pulse for the afternoon. Steelpan, djembe, and acoustic drumming were woven into the programme to underline the interconnected rhythms that shaped Creole worlds. A Bèlè performance emphasised the dialogic nature of drum and dancer, highlighting how cultural practices channel history through the body. Spoken word, storytelling, and traditional songs offered further moments of connection, reminding attendees that language and performance travel together.

The programme also offered perspectives on how Creole languages formed under different colonial, social, and demographic conditions. The sessions examined questions of language structure, transmission, stigma, and revival. Participants were invited to consider how Patois and



*The event opened with cultural showcases from the featured countries, highlighting their languages, food, music, dance, and histories.*

other Creoles continue to influence place and family names, everyday vocabulary, and the prosody of local English varieties. The discussions stressed that Creole languages are systematic and expressive systems, not degraded forms of other languages.

Film screenings provided vivid examples of Creole storytelling. The Trinidadian French Creole short film *Séptant Lanné Ansanm* from 2017 was shown alongside two films presented by the Alliance Française, *Kabri I Manz Salad* from Réunion Island and *Bonnarien* from French Guiana. These screenings opened space for comparative reflection on narrative strategies, humour, and the ways language shapes perspective.

Visual arts and craft broadened the conversation beyond words and sound. A display curated by the DCFA showcased mixed media, photography, and installation pieces that asked questions of ancestry, migration, and memory. The Creole Craft Market gathered local artisans whose work fused traditional technique with contemporary design. Textiles, beadwork, carved objects, and small sculptures offered tactile ways to engage with Creole heritage.

Beyond celebration, the event invited reflection on the future of Creole cultures. Attendees considered how innovation and respect for tradition might coexist, and how institutions such as The UWI can support community-led initiatives that centre linguistic justice.

The event also reaffirmed The UWI’s scholarly record on Creole studies. Past research and publications on Patois, including work from pioneers of Creole scholarship, provided context for the celebration and underscored the campus’s ongoing role in documenting and analysing Creole language and culture. Framed within that research tradition, World Creole Day functioned as both public outreach and a site for academic exchange.

## ■ OUR CAMPUS

# First Gen, First Steps

## First Gen STAR Mentorship Programme makes the transition easier for new students

BY CHERISSE LAUREN BERKELEY



**Thomas Williams:** "With my mentee, I tried to expand on some of the things my mentor did for me."



**Kerlyssa De Verteuil:** "I was excited to volunteer to be a mentor because helping others has always been a part of my nature."

**Stepping onto The UWI campus for the first time** can feel like entering a whole new world filled with lecture theatres, classrooms, labs, and of course, the Alma Jordan Library. For many "freshers", especially those who are the first in their family to pursue higher education, that excitement can be mixed with anxiety and self-doubt.

Recognising this, the Division of Student Services and Development (DSSD) launched the First Gen STAR Mentorship Programme, a guiding light designed to help first-generation students adjust to campus life and thrive. The initiative pairs freshers with student mentors who have already navigated the ups and downs of university life. From finding classrooms and managing coursework to discovering hidden campus perks and freebies, mentors provide practical help, emotional support and encouragement.

For third-year student Kerlyssa De Verteuil, becoming a mentor felt like a natural calling.

"When I was new on campus, things were very confusing. The campus is so large; I didn't really remember where all my classes were. I was excited to volunteer to be a mentor because helping others has always been a part of my nature. Just making life a tad bit easier for someone can go a long way," she said.

Kerlyssa remarked that she wished the initiative existed when she was in her first year, noting that it would have made adjusting to campus life much easier. This thought greatly influenced her decision to sign up as a mentor when she learned about the programme.

### Making friends isn't always easy

Mentee turned mentor, second-year student Thomas Williams, was equally eager to join the programme. Reminiscing on his first year, he recalled how his own mentor made the transition smoother.

"Often, students start their degree and know very few others on campus. Making friends isn't always easy, so it's nice to have company to attend events on campus or to give some guidance on how to achieve a school/life balance," he said.

"With my mentee, I tried to expand on some of the things my mentor did for me. I was pleased to take my mentee to a few events on campus to encourage him to

make full use of his benefits as a UWI student. We even went to the Fresher's Fete together, and he seemed to have really enjoyed himself. As he and I are in different degree programmes, one of the first things I told him was to make full use of his academic advisor in choosing his courses."

Stories like Thomas's and Kerlyssa's highlight the ripple effect of mentorship. Each connection forged creates a cycle of empowerment, one student lighting the path for another.

The First Gen STAR Mentorship Programme does not only help students find their way around campus, but also helps them find their footing in a community that believes in them. Mentors often serve as a bridge between uncertainty and confidence, showing first-generation students that they belong and have earned their place.

### Check-ins, group activities, one-on-one conversations

What makes the initiative so impactful is its focus on empathy and shared experience. Many mentors have faced similar challenges, including the pressure to succeed, homesickness, financial worries, or simply figuring out how to fit in. Through weekly check-ins, group activities, and one-on-one conversations, mentors help mentees build both academic resilience and a sense of belonging.

Beyond academics, the mentorship initiative also introduces students to the vibrant side of UWI life, including cultural showcases, student societies, volunteering opportunities, and campus traditions that make university more than just a place of study. It is about building community, celebrating identity, and helping each other rise.

As the DSSD continues to expand the programme, its vision remains clear: to ensure that no first-generation student feels lost, unseen, or unsupported. Every mentor-mentee relationship is a testament to the university's commitment to holistic student development, and a reminder that success is not only about grades.

In the end, the First Gen STAR Mentorship Programme offers more than guidance. It transforms the daunting path of higher education into a shared journey where every first step forward is a little less lonely, and every goal feels a little more possible.



Agronomist Evans Ramkhelawan poses with *The Mango Tree Encyclopedia* that includes his scholarship on mangoes in T&T at a ceremony held at the Alma Jordan Library.

### Local-born crop scientist donates six-volume international work *The Mango Tree Encyclopedia* to UWI's Alma Jordan Library

**Julie, starch, curry, chow**—the fruit of the tropical tree *Mangifera indica* is such an integral part of Trinidad and Tobago cuisine that it is part of our culture. A local crop agronomist and scholar has made a major contribution to a definitive text on this beloved fruit. Mr Evans Ramkhelawan is the principal author of the chapter on mangoes in Trinidad and Tobago and the section on varieties of mangoes in T&T in the massive, 11-book work titled *The Mango Tree Encyclopedia*. He donated the complete set to The UWI's Alma Jordan Library (AJL) at a handover ceremony.

*The Mango Tree Encyclopedia*, consisting of six volumes, is an in-depth survey of mango tree cultivation and varieties. It was commissioned and funded by the Government of Oman following a royal directive from the late ruler, Sultan Qaboos bin Said.

"We are very pleased to receive this generous donation from Mr Ramkhelawan," said Dr Shamin Renwick, the acting Campus Librarian at AJL. "This meticulous work of scholarship will now be stored in the Science and Agriculture section of the library where information can be accessed by scholars and readers from around the globe. It provides a wealth of information on every aspect of mangoes, and will be an invaluable resource for researchers, farmers and others."

Mr Ramkhelawan's contribution to the encyclopedia was the product of two years of intensive work, supported by staff from Trinidad and Tobago's Ministry of Agriculture (where he worked previously as a director). A graduate of UWI St Augustine, he received both his undergraduate and master's degree at the campus in General Agriculture and Crop Science, respectively.

He is a tree-crop agronomist, specialising in coconut production technology and pomology, which deals with the study and cultivation of fruits. He is also a weed scientist, crop valuator, and registered farmer.

The Government of Oman commissioned *The Mango Tree Encyclopedia* due to the country's great diversity in mango seeds, which has led to enormous variation in the colour and shape of the fruit, making them difficult to characterise and breed. In addition, severe genetic erosion due to salinity, drought, diseases and changes in land use necessitated the need for conservation. It was published in 2015.

■ For more information on *The Mango Tree Encyclopedia*, and on visiting the Alma Jordan Library, go to [libraries.sta.uwi.edu/ajl/](http://libraries.sta.uwi.edu/ajl/)

# What You Put In

## *Three friends from South East Port-of-Spain Secondary reflect on their journey to The UWI*

BY AMANDA LEE

There's a famous saying attributed to the late Bruce Lee: "The successful warrior is the average man with laser-like focus." Its central premise is that the only thing that separates regular people from truly extraordinary people is investment. And it's an excellent parallel for the experiences of Matthew Burke, Okeem Brathwaite, and Michael Straughn, a group of UWI students who attended South East Port-of-Spain Secondary School (SEPOSS).

Burke is a student of the BSc Accounting programme, while Brathwaite and Straughn are pursuing Engineering degrees—Mechanical, and Electrical and Computer respectively—at The UWI St Augustine.

For those unfamiliar with SEPOSS, it was opened in 1968 with an address from then Prime Minister Dr Eric Williams. His investment in the school was borne of his care for the south-east Port-of-Spain area, having been its Member of Parliament, as well as his profound belief in widening access to secondary education. In his address, he urged its students, "The future is yours—go forward and meet it boldly."

But the school, like many others, has had its share of upheaval and negative public attention. In November 2019, a shooting near the school caused a stray bullet to pierce the walls of a classroom. This halted teaching at the school as measures had to be taken to ensure the safety of its students and staff. The school resumed its operations in January 2020, but by March, the students were faced with another, more universal situation: the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **‘South East is a very nice place to be’**

In spite of this, Burke, Brathwaite and Straughn's stories overwhelmingly highlighted SEPOSS as a school that took what they were willing to put in and multiplied it.

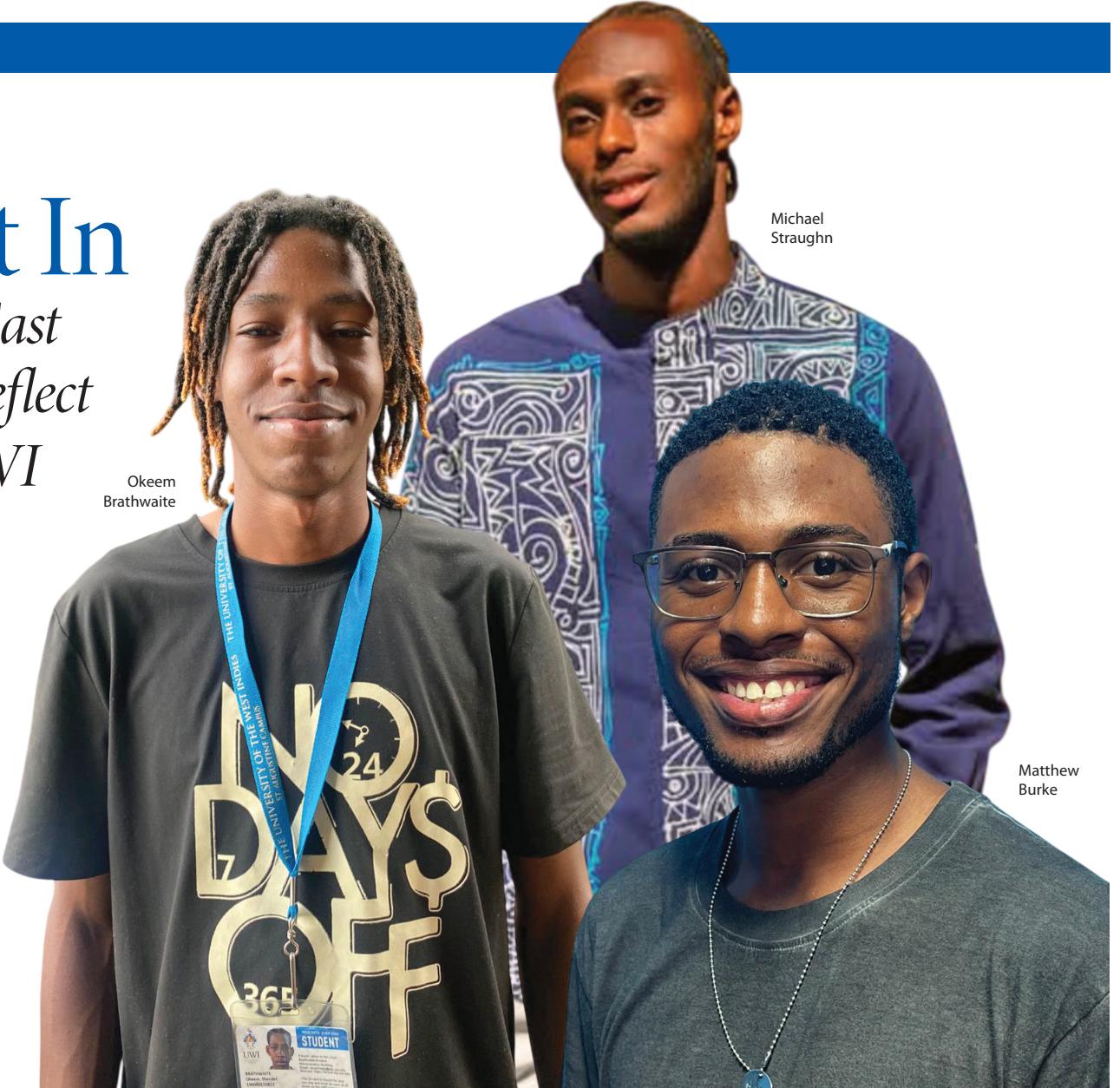
"South East is a very nice place to be," Burke remarked. "The teachers have a better chance to look out for you [because of the school's size], especially if you cooperate with them. The whole experience there is really up to you to decide what you're going to have."

"The teaching level is high for the most part," Brathwaite stated. "Once you go to the classes, you get high-level teaching. And we also have Form 6, so it's a complete seven-year experience."

This impression crystallised for him when his favourite teacher, Ms Niles, devoted after-hours time to assist him with his studies.

The school also helped them to get into hockey, though how they got there was a bit of a happy accident.

"The reason Michael joined hockey in the first place [was because] he got in trouble in school and that was something they told him he had to do to deal with his problem," Brathwaite recalled.



*Despite the challenges of an environment where their learning is more self-directed than ever, Burke, Brathwaite and Straughn know that they're strong enough to make it; and that is in no small part because of the lessons they learned from their time at their alma mater, and the friends they made along the way.*

It was the linchpin event that opened the friends' eyes to sport. Burke joined soon after for unconventional reasons: to escape Drama class. When second term came, Brathwaite joined the sport as well.

That was nine years ago, and they've been playing ever since. Now, the three are members of UWI St Augustine's hockey team.

This was but one way that their school experiences helped to shape their current lives as university students. During his school days, Straughn encountered a teacher with whom he was seldom on the same page. Out of this, he learned the importance of strategy in handling difficult situations. This mindset, along with his preparation for managing workloads as a secondary school student, helps him handle the demands of his degree. While he sometimes wonders if his trajectory might have been different had he attended Queen's Royal College (his first-choice secondary school) for all or at least part of his education, he recognises that he was still able to make his school years productive and meaningful.

### **Invaluable experience**

Brathwaite's trajectory and his aspirations, by contrast, were supported through his access to science

subjects at the Form 6 level. With his passes, he was able to get into the Mechanical Engineering programme, a step towards his goal of increasing the engineering capacity of his father's construction company. He also discovered his desire to play for the national hockey team.

Burke's experience helped him overcome the anxiety that once caused him to skip drama classes at school. During his Form 6 years, he assisted onstage with school assemblies, which helped him get past his stage fright and overall shyness. Now, he aspires to become someone who can help others professionally and otherwise.

As university students, they find themselves scaling back their involvement in other activities to keep up with their studies. Despite the challenges of an environment where their learning is more self-directed than ever, Burke, Brathwaite and Straughn know that they're strong enough to make it; and that is in no small part because of the lessons they learned from their time at their alma mater, and the friends they made along the way.

We must imagine that Dr Williams would be proud to see them doing exactly as he asked: going forward to meet the future boldly.

## ■ OUR CAMPUS



# DSSD 10<sup>TH</sup> Anniversary 'We're developing human beings'

Eight Questions on the 10th Anniversary for **Dr Deirdre Charles**, Director of the Division of Student Services and Development

## What was the genesis of DSSD? What vision led to its establishment?

When I think back to 2015, student services at UWI looked completely different. We had all these separate units—Student Advisory Services, the Activity Centre, Health Services, Disabilities Support—all working independently, sometimes not even talking to each other. If you were a student struggling with both financial issues and mental health, you'd have to navigate multiple offices with no one connecting the dots for you.

A 2012 review finally said what many of us had been thinking: this wasn't working. Our student body was changing rapidly, more diverse in every way imaginable.

But there was something bigger happening too. Universities globally were realising that if you want to compete, you can't just focus on academics anymore. The whole student matters. UWI's strategic plan at the time talked about producing graduates who were critical thinkers, globally aware, entrepreneurial, ethically grounded—and we looked around and asked ourselves honestly: can a lecture hall alone create that kind of person? Of course not.

So the vision was simple, bring everything under one roof, stop working in silos, and support students as complete human beings. Not just their grades, but their wellbeing, their finances, their career readiness, their sense of belonging. Create an environment where every student could thrive, no matter their background.

## What was the process like to get it off the ground?

It was intense. We had approval in May 2015 and launched August 1, so we had barely two months to pull this together. We brought in a Change Facilitation Team because we knew this wasn't just about shuffling org charts. We were asking people who'd worked independently for years to suddenly collaborate, share resources, and align their goals.

Between June and July, we lived in meetings and workshops. We held over 25 engagement sessions with staff because we needed everyone on board. We had to identify what services were actually critical, figure out where the gaps were, build communication plans, and work with HR on realigning people.

There was a management retreat in July where we hammered out the strategic framework. I remember people were exhausted but also energised. There was this sense that we were building something genuinely important.

The groundwork had actually started back in 2012, but those final months in 2015 were a sprint. When we officially launched on August 1, we weren't perfect, but we had clarity about where we were going and a team committed to getting there.



**The DSSD management team** poses for a photograph. In the back row (from left) are Student Engagement Unit Manager Mr Jarell Alder; Dr Deirdre Charles; Guild Administrative Office Manager Ms Amanda Best-Noel; and Student Activities Centre Manager Mr Curtis Mike. In the front row (from left) are Careers, Co-curricular and Community Engagement Department Manager Ms Kathy-Ann Lewis; Counselling and Psychological Services Department Head Counsellor Dr Sarah Chin Yuen Kee; Financial Advisory Services Department Manager Ms Kristy Smith; and Student Accommodation Office Manager Mr Kevin Snaggs.



## What were those early years like?

Chaotic, exciting, frustrating, rewarding—often all in the same day.

We started with six departments and about 40 staff members. That sounds like a lot until you realise we were trying to serve thousands of students with very limited resources. People were wearing multiple hats, learning new systems, figuring out how to work together.

The staff really stepped up. Despite all the uncertainty and growing pains, there was genuine ownership of this new vision. People showed up to workshops, engaged in the planning, pushed through the challenges. That buy-in made all the difference.

We had some early wins that kept us motivated. Campus stakeholders took us seriously. Faculty members began referring students to us, awareness grew, foot traffic increased. Students were getting help. We expanded services for international students, mature students, and people with disabilities. We updated policies that had been frustrating people for years.

But let me be honest about the struggles too. Visibility was a huge problem—students simply didn't know we existed or what we could do for them. We were understaffed, so managers spent time firefighting instead of strategic planning. We had counsellors without

enough private space to see students. We had ideas for programmes, but no funding to execute them.

Infrastructure was a nightmare in some areas. Funding was always tight. We were trying to do more with less, which meant our existing staff were stretched.

Those early years taught us resilience, and the importance of celebrating small victories while staying focused on the bigger picture.

## How did DSSD grow and expand from there?

Once we stabilised, we could finally think bigger. We went from five planned departments to eight. We created a dedicated Student Engagement Unit because we realised orientation and transition support deserved focused attention. The Guild Administrative Office came under our umbrella, which made sense—student leaders needed structured support and training. Counselling and Psychological Services became its own department because mental health is central to student success.

Within departments, programmes exploded. Financial Advisory brought in more donors and expanded scholarship funding, and we're now distributing over \$2.3 million annually to more than 350 students.

The First Year Experience Programme evolved from information sessions to actual community-building as we added pre-semester mixers.

Our Careers department built relationships with dozens of companies. The World of Work Programme went from a modest initiative to a major recruitment and networking operation, and led to students getting job interviews and making real connections.

We professionalised. Staff received training in best practices, took on specialised roles, and built systems and processes.

Technology became our friend. We overhauled the website, expanded our social media presence and digitised applications and processes. During COVID, that digital infrastructure saved us, allowing us to pivot to virtual counselling, online orientation, and social media engagement.

And steadily, people started knowing who we were. We weren't the best-kept secret on campus anymore.

## What are some landmark accomplishments you're most proud of?

Getting that first accessible student shuttle is a major one. For years, students with mobility challenges struggled to get around campus, and we did something concrete about it.

The financial support we provide is life-changing. The \$2.3 million annually sounds like just a number until you meet the student who can finally eat properly or the single mother who can now afford childcare while finishing her degree. During the pandemic, we expanded beyond traditional scholarships to grocery assistance and hardship funds. Some students would've had to drop out otherwise.

Our employability programmes—the Career Advice Programme, Executive Transition Programme, World of Work—these aren't just resume workshops. We're connecting students with employers, teaching them how to navigate professional environments, and opening doors for them. Several of our students have won international leadership scholarships because we gave them the foundation to compete globally.

The digital transformation was massive. Online applications, appointment booking, virtual services—these seem basic now, but they revolutionised access. A commuting student doesn't have to spend two hours travelling to campus just to submit a form anymore.

What I'm proudest of is the culture shift. We moved from fragmented services to integrated support. A student can walk in with a complex problem like financial stress affecting their mental health and their grades, and we can provide coordinated, holistic care.

## What is DSSD like today?

We're a comprehensive ecosystem now. Eight departments, each with a clear mission, all working together.

Careers, Co-curricular and Community Engagement prepares students for life after graduation—career advising, skills workshops, and community service opportunities. Counselling and Psychological Services provides mental health support. Financial Advisory manages scholarships and teaches financial literacy. The Guild Administrative Office supports student leaders and governance. Student Accommodation handles all housing. Student Activities manages the Activity Centre and its amenities. Student Engagement runs orientation and transition programmes. Student Life and Development ensures our underrepresented group (students with disabilities, international students, mature students, postgrads) get the specialised support they need.

Students know we exist and what we can do for them. That's a huge change from 2015.

## How has your mission evolved?

Our core mission hasn't changed as we're still focused on student retention and success. But what that means has deepened significantly.

We've moved from reactive to proactive. Instead of

waiting for students to fail and then trying to save them, we're building support from day one. The First Year Experience Programme starts before students even arrive on campus. Career development starts in first year, not the final one.

We've shifted from treating everyone the same to recognising that equity isn't equality. A first-generation student from a rural area faces different challenges than someone whose parents both have PhDs. A student with a disability needs different accommodations.

Technology has transformed how we work. We're hybrid now. A student can book counselling online, apply for scholarships from their phone, engage with us on social media. Accessibility has improved dramatically. And we're data-driven. We track outcomes, measure impact, adjust based on feedback.

The biggest evolution is philosophical. We're developing human beings. That sounds grandiose, but it's true. We're building resilience, leadership, professional skills, emotional intelligence, and civic responsibility. The classroom teaches critical thinking; we teach students how to navigate the world.

## What's next for DSSD?

We're thinking bigger about inclusion. Beyond the groups we currently serve, we're looking at students from rural communities who face geographic and cultural barriers, and student parents juggling academics with



Students get informed about career opportunities at The UWI/RBL World of Work programme (WoW). WoW takes students from resume writing, to interview preparation, and even recruitment events with potential employers.

caregiving. These populations have largely been invisible.

We're formalising everything. We're developing comprehensive policies for international student support, housing management, freedom of expression, and financial aid administration. We're taking what we've learned and codifying it so there's consistency and accountability.

The Campus Food Pantry is a project I'm really excited about. We've done emergency food assistance, but we want something sustainable—a permanent resource for students facing food insecurity.

We're expanding our digital footprint. A student services podcast is in the works, as well as self-service kiosks for one-stop information access, and better software for scholarship processing so decisions happen faster and more transparently.

We're strengthening our brand with a Student Services Day, open houses, and better promotional materials. We want every student to know what we offer.

And partnerships. We're deepening relationships with donors through in-person engagement events. We're also hosting faculty sensitisation sessions each semester.

I want us to touch every UWI student at least once during their time here. Not in a bureaucratic way, but in a meaningful way: a conversation that matters, support that makes a difference, or a moment where they feel seen and helped.

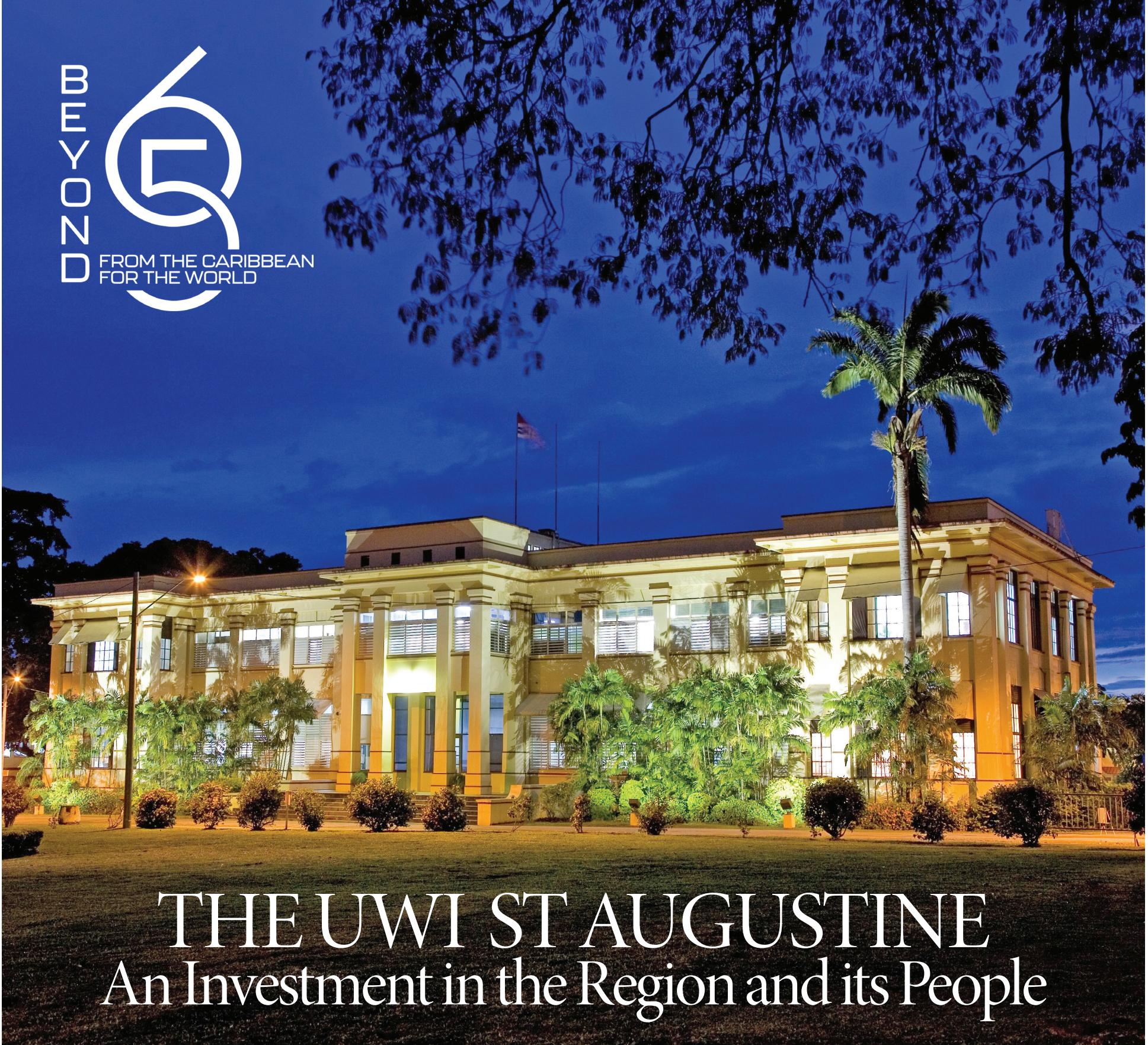
We've come so far in ten years. The next ten? I think we can be transformative.



A representative from Habitat for Humanity tells a student about their activities at Volunteer Open Day, a DSSD initiative that lets students and staff learn about and take part in the world of community engagement.



"Freshers" having a blast during a First Year Experience (FYE) event. FYE is a massive orientation programme for new students.



# THE UWI ST AUGUSTINE

## An Investment in the Region and its People

In 2010, the St Augustine campus marked its 50th anniversary with a thorough publication. The book, *From Imperial College to University of the West Indies*, was written by historian Professor Emerita Bridget Brereton.

It begins at the beginning: when the 490-acre site known as the St Augustine Estate was purchased for sugar production. The Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture (ICTA), established to develop and study tropical agriculture for the British Empire, was founded during 1921–22.

The book explores the circumstances leading to the formal merger of the University College of the West Indies and ICTA on October 12, 1960—

the beginning of the St Augustine campus. This took place during the short-lived West Indies Federation which collapsed during 1961–62.

Professor Brereton wrote that the handing-over ceremony at the new Queen's Hall in Port of Spain was attended by the region's elite:

“the Governor-General and Prime Minister of the West Indies Federation; the Governor and Premier of Trinidad and Tobago; ministers of both the Federal and the local governments; and, of course, the top officials of UCWI and ICTA.

“The speech of the day was by Arthur Lewis, Principal of UCWI, the future first Vice-Chancellor of UWI (1962) and Nobel Prize winner.”

ICTA, she noted, “formed the core of the first faculty at the new UCWI campus, the Faculty of Agriculture (1960), followed in 1961 by the Faculty of Engineering. Under the leadership of Philip Sherlock and Dudley Huggins in the 1960s, the fledgling campus was transformed as part of the regional university, which gained its ‘independence’ as UWI in 1962. In 1963, undergraduate teaching in the arts, social sciences, and natural sciences began under the umbrella of a ‘College of Arts and Sciences’. From a total student body of 67 in 1960, all in the Faculty of Agriculture, the campus had 1,270 students in 1969, studying many different subjects and courses.”

## West Indian Identity

Often overlooked because of the prodigious output of its faculties and staff, The UWI has had a formidable presence in the shaping of West Indian identity. At the inception, Mona in Jamaica was the first campus, St Augustine became the second, and Cave Hill in Barbados joined in 1963. With degree programmes at the different campuses, it meant that students had to converge wherever their specific selections were available. This proved to be a powerful element of developing a sense of being West Indian, so that despite the failure of the Federation, as nations sought independence, there remained a bond—even amidst regional political disagreements.

## From Meeting needs to Facing Threats

UWI St Augustine, as part of the regional UWI, has always been an asset for the development of the Caribbean. It started as a centre for the study and research of agriculture and plant science in a regional society dependent on farming, rapidly moving into engineering to meet needs for modernisation and industrial development, and for education, inquiry, information services, and policy support in the arts and sciences soon after that.

For decades, the university and its Trinidad and Tobago-based campus served this role to the benefit of this young, post-independence community of islands. More recently, The UWI has adapted to face the increasingly urgent challenges affecting the region and the world. Food security, climate change, global pandemics, international conflict, disruptive technologies such as AI, international economic uncertainty, and a host of other threats beset us—and UWI St Augustine has confronted them.

Faculties such as Food and Agriculture (FFA), Engineering, Science and Technology, and Medical Sciences (through the School of Veterinary Medicine) have addressed food security in numerous ways. These include the introduction of advanced technology farming methods, the creation of a seed bank for local seeds, the development of alternate crops and livestock such as breadfruit and agouti, the development of organic and sustainable crop foods and pesticides, and advocacy and policy support for the growth of the farming and food production sector.

The UWI, and many scholars from the St Augustine Campus in particular, have been international leaders in climate research and policy development, particularly on its impact on Small Island Developing States (SIDS). Researchers from several faculties work with international agencies at the highest level, including the United Nations, in recording the effects of climate change, coastal change, and the degradation of living species and ecosystems. UWI St Augustine's scholars are lead authors of, and contributors to, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) documents.

The campus's social scientists measure and report on the impact of climate change-related trade policy on Trinidad and Tobago's economy, which is heavily dependent on carbon-intensive exports. Its scientists work with T&T-based companies to develop and measure activities designed to positively impact the environment, such as reforestation programmes. Governments also work with UWI St Augustine to develop sustainability initiatives.

In these and many other areas, UWI St Augustine has been vital in understanding the issues the region faces and influencing the solutions.

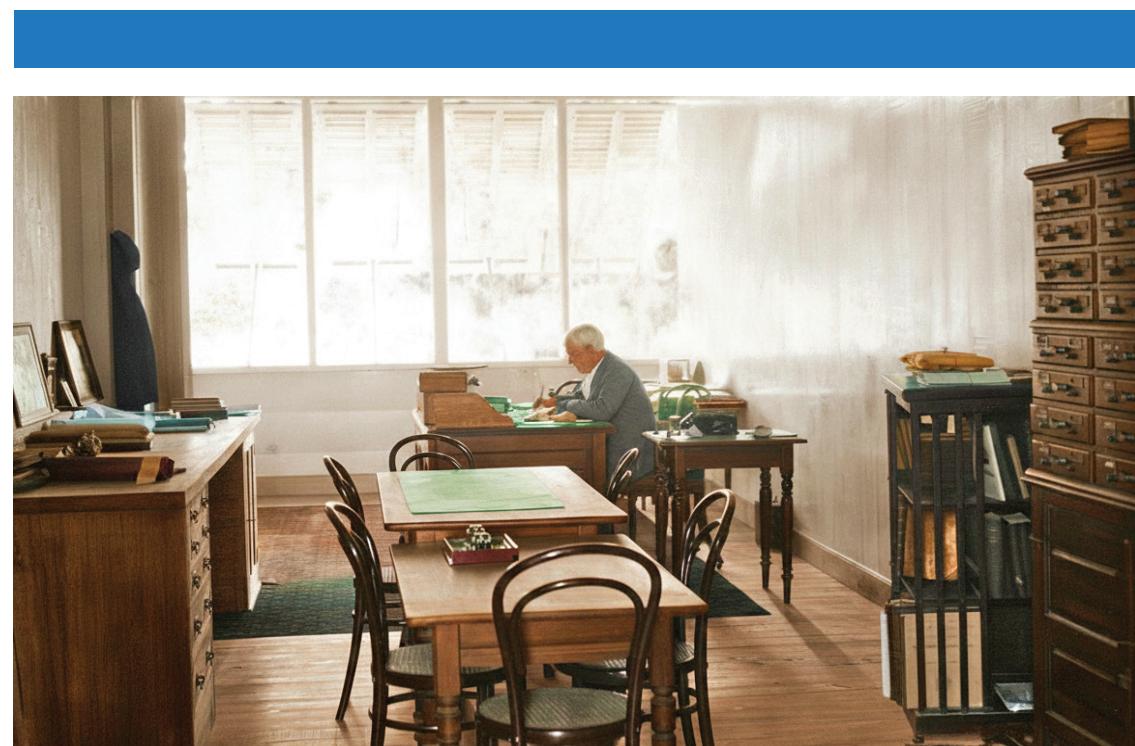
## A University Town

From a campus with fewer than 100 students, dominated by the Main Administration Building and vast open space, UWI St Augustine has grown into a community of well over 14,000 students (the exact figure was 14,731 in Academic Year 2023/2024) rich with landmarks that sit alongside its many green spaces. Faculty buildings and specialised facilities—such as the Student Administration Building, the Sport and Physical Education Centre, the Daaga Auditorium, and the Teaching and Learning Complex—add purpose, character, and beauty to the campus.

The facilities spill far beyond the main campus to Mt Hope, home of the Faculty of Medical Sciences, and greater St Augustine, where the Institute for Gender and Development Studies, the UWI Seismic Research Centre, the HEU Centre for Health Economics, and the Department of Creative and Festival Arts reside at the North Campus.

One of the most imposing—and important—structures on the main campus is the Alma Jordan Library. The descendant of ICTA's library (known as the Registry and Library until 1968), AJL has a collection that dates back to 1898. The current library was formally opened in 1970, and since then has grown to become what former Campus Librarian Mr Frank Soodeen describes as being “globally recognised as the premier repository and provider of Caribbean information resources and services and to advance learning and knowledge creation.”

AJL also houses the West Indiana and Special Collections Division. The mission of this internationally recognised repository, as stated by its own materials, is to “acquire, preserve and provide access to material emanating from the West Indies, produced by West Indians, and on the



A shot of the principal's office from 1922.



ICTA's graduating class of 1922.



From left: Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh and husband of Queen Elizabeth II; St Augustine Campus Principal Dr Dudley Huggins; and Prime Minister Dr Eric Williams.



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West Indies as well as on the West Indian diaspora.”

AJL is not just for students; it is a source of knowledge available to the world. In 2008, AJL launched its digital repository service, UWISpace, making it much easier to access library materials.

## Student Life

University life is about more than studying. From almost the beginning, student sports, recreational activities, and representation have been integral to campus life. UWI St Augustine supports students in all these areas primarily through its Division of Student Services and Development (see article in this issue). The students themselves, with assistance from the campus, represent their constituency through the Guild of Students.

At the start of every academic year, the campus comes to life with activities such as Guild Fest, where students meet, mingle, and become part of the campus community. This is an incredibly important experience for new and regional/international students to orient them and let them feel a sense of belonging.

And during the quiet and rigorous months filled with lectures, coursework, and exams, the students can access help for their academic, financial, and emotional needs.

## Beyond Academics: Protest and Activism

The UWI has a history of student protest and activism dating back to the 1960s. As the world was being roiled by anti-colonial and racial justice movements, that energy naturally took root in the Caribbean. In 1970, the campus became the epicentre of the Black Power Movement in Trinidad, led by the Guild of Students under then Guild President Makandal Daaga (born Geddes Granger).

That instinct for social activism has not only continued but has been institutionalised at The UWI through the Institute for Gender and Development Studies (IGDS), which remains a constant voice in Trinidad and Tobago and the wider region, advocating for gender justice and equality. Daaga's contribution to the campus and society has been formally recognised through the naming of the Daaga Auditorium (one of UWI St Augustine's preeminent venues) and the Makandal Daaga Scholarship at the Faculty of Law.

## UWI St Augustine Today

The UWI St Augustine has an outstanding legacy of sport. Indeed, cricket legend Sir Frank Worrell was Dean of Students at the campus starting in 1965. In an editorial in

the 1966 *Pelican Annual* (the student publication), Sir Frank described the landscape: “the University Games Committee comprises the ten recognised West Indian sports... football, tennis, cricket, rugby, athletics, hockey, volleyball, netball, billiards, and table tennis.”

However, over the years, that strong balance of academics and sports became weighted on one side. In recent decades, that has been changing, most notably with the launch of the Faculty of Sport in 2017. It is a single faculty that covers the four campuses at Cave Hill, Mona, Global and St Augustine. Each campus has an Academy of Sport. Now, UWI St Augustine has eight faculties: Engineering, Food and Agriculture, Humanities and Education, Medical Sciences, Social Sciences, Science and Technology, Law, and Sport.

In 2022, Professor Rose-Marie Belle Antoine assumed the position of Campus Principal. Professor Antoine—a scholar, educator, and attorney-at-law with a deep commitment to human rights and regional development—leads UWI St Augustine during one of its most pivotal eras as the university seeks to develop new sources of income, adapt to changes in education and technology, and meet the previously mentioned regional and global challenges.

There have been great successes so far. One of the most exciting has been the development of The UWI MADE brand of products and services.

Principal Belle Antoine reported that “In the area of innovation and entrepreneurship, we made major progress in several of our commercial projects under the UWI Made brand. These include UWI Seal-It, a line of asphalt-based sealants for tropical climates, developed by members of the Department of Chemistry in the Faculty of Science and Technology; UWI Fine Cocoa Ltd, a manufacturing centre for cocoa-based products established by the Cocoa Research Centre; Biophyt, an eco-friendly pesticide and plant stimulant developed by the Faculty of Food and Agriculture; and Humankind Studios, a multimedia production house created by the Faculty of Humanities and Education.”

Most recently, the campus launched an Artificial Intelligence Innovation Centre (AIIC). The AIIC, according to the organisation itself, “is the Caribbean's first and largest centre dedicated to advancing research, capacity building, commercialisation, and policy and governance in the field of artificial intelligence. Established at UWI St Augustine, the AIIC currently partners with 20+ institutions, houses 50+ members, and hosts 35+ projects.”

From agriculture to AI, that is quite an evolution over 65 years. And the journey continues.



Campus Principal Professor Rose-Marie Belle Antoine, in her role as an advocate and human rights lawyer. A Professor of Labour Law and Offshore Financial Law, she also served as President of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons of African Descent and Against Racial Discrimination, and Rapporteur for Indigenous Peoples.

## SOME OF THE MANY HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE HISTORY OF UWI ST AUGUSTINE

### ■ The Foundations (1920s – 1950s)

1921–1922

The **Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture (ICTA)** is established on the estate, becoming a global hub for tropical agricultural research.

1959

The **Volcanological Research Department** moves to its new headquarters on Gordon St in St Augustine as part of ICTA. It would eventually become The **UWI Seismic Research Centre**.

### ■ The Birth of the Campus (1960s)

12 October 1960

The official merger between the University College of the West Indies (UCWI) and ICTA occurs, marking the **formal beginning of the St Augustine campus**.

1960

The **Faculty of Agriculture** is established as the first faculty.

1961

The **Faculty of Engineering** is launched.

1962

UWI gains its independence from the University of London; **Sir Arthur Lewis** becomes the first Vice-Chancellor.

1962

The **St Augustine Guild of Students** is formally constituted.

1963

The **College of Arts and Sciences** is established (the precursor to the Humanities, Social Sciences, and Natural Sciences faculties).

1963

**Canada Hall**, the first hall of residence for the campus, is opened.

1966

**Queen Elizabeth II** visits the campus, highlighting its prestige within the Commonwealth.

1966

The **Institute of International Relations** is founded.

### ■ Expansion and Modernisation (1970s – 1990s)

(1970s – 1990s)

1970

The **Main Library** (now the Alma Jordan Library) is formally opened.

1986

A major expansion of the **Faculty of Engineering** is completed to support the region's industrialisation.

1989

The **Eric Williams Medical Sciences Complex** is established (Faculty of Medical Sciences).

1993

The **Centre for Gender and Development Studies (CGDS)** is established at The UWI. In 2008, the University Council gave permission for it to be upgraded from centre to institute, **the IGDS**.

1996

The Faculty of Arts and General Studies and the Faculty of Education merge to become the **Faculty of Humanities and Education**.

1999

The **Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies (SALISES)** is founded.

### ■ The 21st Century & Innovation (2000s – Present)

2006

The **Creative Arts Centre** is established for teaching and research in the creative and performing arts. It would become the **Department of Creative and Festival Arts (DCFA)**.

2011

The campus becomes the first in The UWI system to achieve full Institutional Accreditation from the ACTT. This milestone served as a catalyst for a campus-wide drive toward specialised international accreditations.

2012

The **Faculty of Law** is established as a full, independent faculty at St Augustine.

2012

Construction of the **South Campus in Penal-Debe** begins.

2014

The **Diplomatic Academy of the Caribbean** is established to train modern diplomats in the region.

2017

The **Faculty of Sport** is launched across all campuses.

2020

The campus engages in a massive, coordinated COVID-19 response, working with national and regional governments.

2024

**UWI MADE** branded products and services are displayed at the Trade and Investment Convention (TIC), announcing these campus-born commercial innovations.

2025

Launch of the **Artificial Intelligence Innovation Centre (AIIC)**.


**Ms Rachel D'Arceuil**

Administrative Assistant  
Department of Behavioural Sciences  
Faculty of Social Sciences

UWI St Augustine means family, growth and pride. In my 32 years here, I have seen the campus evolve and the impact it has had on many lives, including mine. It is a place where knowledge and purpose come together, and staff and students alike contribute to the future of the Caribbean. It is a true honour to have been a part of half of UWI St. Augustine's 65-year history.


**Ms Monique Joseph**

Department Secretary  
Department of Geomatics  
Engineering and Land Management  
Faculty of Engineering

It has very much been my home away from home for the past almost 40 years. For me, the best part has been that we have been able to co-exist like a family in my (small) Department of Geomatics Engineering and Land Management, where I have been the Secretary to various Heads of Department since 1998.



# ‘Growth, Opportunity, Belonging, and Impact’

UWI St Augustine staff share what campus means to them


**Mr Kevin Awai**

Administrative Assistant  
Marketing and Communications Office

For me, UWI St Augustine gives growth, opportunity, and belonging. As both staff and student, I have experienced the campus as a place that not only challenges me to learn, but also encourages me to discover my best self. It's a community that celebrates diversity, nurtures potential, and inspires purpose. Every interaction reminds me that UWI is more than an institution; it's a living system that empowers me to make a meaningful impact in the world.


**Mrs Anita Ali**

Administrative Officer  
Faculty of Law

To me, UWI St Augustine is more than a workplace, it is a pillar of national and regional development that embodies opportunity and empowerment. Since joining the UWI (STA), over the past 26 years I have witnessed its transformative impact on students, staff, and society, and it has profoundly shaped my own professional and academic journey. It symbolises commitment, resilience, and pride in contributing to something greater than oneself, and after all these years, it truly feels like home.

*The university's mission to educate, innovate, and serve resonates deeply with me, and I feel proud to be a part of this vibrant community.*


**Mr Roger John**

Chief Laboratory Technician  
School of Veterinary Medicine  
Faculty of Medical Sciences

The UWI St Augustine has been my second home for the past 35 years, and I am deeply grateful for the many opportunities it has provided me to grow and contribute to the Faculty of Medical Sciences' School of Veterinary Medicine—as a laboratory technician, senior research technician, and now Chief Laboratory Technician. I have had the privilege of working alongside talented individuals and witnessing the growth of countless students into successful professionals. Beyond my role, my involvement in sports and serving The UWI Credit Union has allowed me to make a broader impact on campus life and support the well-being of the St Augustine community. The university's mission to educate, innovate, and serve resonates deeply with me, and I feel proud to be a part of this vibrant community.



**Flow like water:** Students follow the movements of a Tai Chi instructor at Confucius Institute Day activities in 2014. UWI students enjoy the developmental benefits of exposure to new cultures, both through student exchange programmes and events and activities on campus.

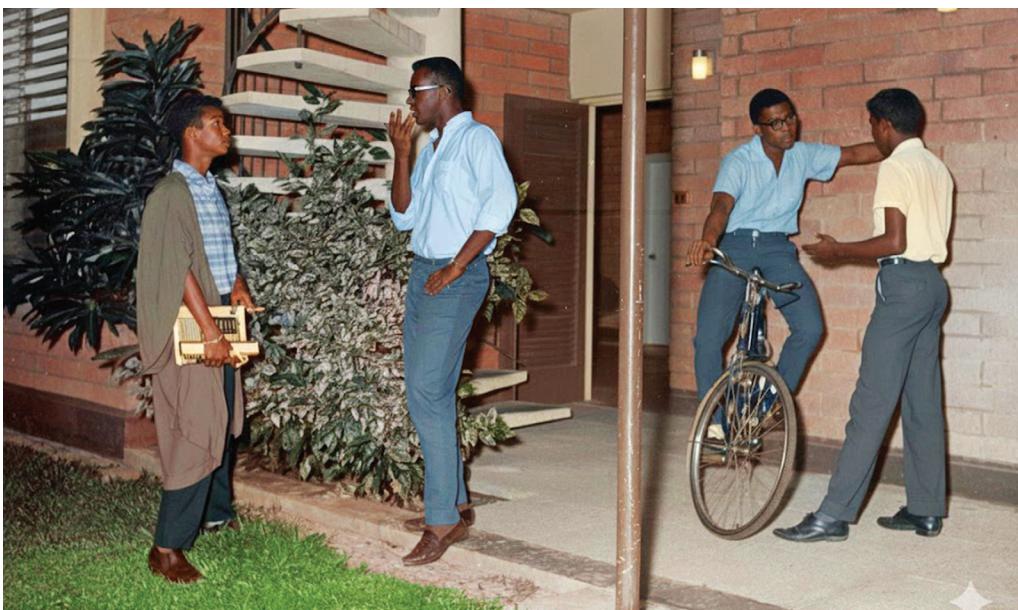


**Top Matriculant:** Matriculation, the official welcome of new students to campus, has been one of the university's longstanding traditions. In this shot from 2007, top matriculant Masud Madar Mohammed signs the register on behalf of the incoming students.



## CAMPUS DAYS AND NIGHTS

Over the decades, UWI St Augustine has become more than a centre for knowledge. For thousands of students it is a second home, a place where relationships and experiences have been engraved as positive memories from a pivotal time in their lives. For other members of the campus community, St Augustine is a place of work, professional growth, and opportunity to contribute to society.



### CLOCKWISE:

**King David holds court:** Legend of calypso and soca David Rudder performs with the people at UWI Fete. Over the years, some of the greatest performers in the region, across all genres, have graced the campus.

**The dapper young gents of Canada Hall:** stylish from the beginning. Opened in 1963 and named after its donor government, Canada Hall is one of several halls of residence for students (local and international), giving them the ability to appreciate campus life at its fullest.

**Fresh fruits and vegetables:** The University Field Station, a 55-acre block of farm land is well-known as a resource for teaching, research, and popular products like fresh milk. But members of the campus community also get to enjoy its produce at great prices.

**Faith and festivals:** A student makes a vibrant rangoli design on the JFK Quadrangle for Divali. Students and staff enhance the beauty and community of campus through the practice of their faiths, one of the many benefits of T&T's cosmopolitan society.

# Working for Communities, Country, and Region

As we celebrate 65 years since the establishment of The UWI St Augustine campus, we are celebrating not only the institution itself, but the reverberations of its impact across Trinidad and Tobago and the Caribbean. Political, social, cultural, and economic spaces have all been touched by the intellectual endeavours of the minds emerging from the halls of this campus. Reflecting on the past 65 years, it is clear to see how The UWI has not simply been a witness to the emergence of a post-Independence Trinidad and Tobago, but has been an agent of change and development in altering the trajectory of our region. From powering economies to navigating worldwide medical crises, from facing natural disasters to challenging the foundations of societal violence, the campus and those who have walked through its corridors have enacted a myriad of transformative changes through their work.



Emeritus Professor Kenneth Julien speaking with Prince Philip during a royal visit to the campus in 1964. Not only was Prof Julien the first T&T-born engineering lecturer with a PhD at UWI St Augustine, he was one of the youngest deans in the Commonwealth. Apart from his massive contribution to the development of the Faculty of Engineering, Prof Julien was also the chair of the Energy Co-ordinating Task Force that managed the nation's rise as a global player in natural gas, power generation, and heavy industry.

## The Engine Room

The modern economic landscape of Trinidad and Tobago would be drastically different without the influence of the oil and gas sector. In 1976, The UWI's Petroleum Engineering Unit was established at the St Augustine campus. At the time, the industry was dominated by a shallow pool of specialised labour, often from geoscientists from other parts of the world.

A 2012 article in the *West Indian Journal of Engineering* (a publication of the UWI St Augustine's Faculty of Engineering) states that at that time, "Some 429 students have graduated from the various Petroleum Studies programmes. The impact on the Caribbean, and Trinidad and Tobago (T&T) in particular, has been significant, for example the percentage of local petroleum engineers in the industry has increased from approximately 10 percent in the early 1970's to 85 percent in 2011."

Throughout the fluctuations within the field of energy, the Faculty of Engineering and its Petroleum Geoscience Unit have been instrumental in training and producing graduates who would be leaders and key players in a sector that has shaped the country.

However, as T&T has benefitted from enormous economic growth from the sector, it has also had effects on the region's ecology, economic diversification and steps towards achieving sustainability. Now, as the Caribbean and the world must look to alternative energy as a way forward in the age of climate crisis, UWI St Augustine's petroleum studies are evolving to reflect this new imperative.

In a 2021 interview with UWI TODAY, then Coordinator of the Petroleum Studies Unit, Prof Andrew Jupiter, acknowledged this: "Moving forward, the programme will be amended to reflect the energy transition that is taking place in the world and definitely in Trinidad and Tobago. A graduate should reflect entrepreneurship and innovation in all disciplines of geology."

In October of this year, representatives of UWI St Augustine, including Dean of the Faculty of Engineering Professor Bheshem Ramlal, signed an agreement with Niterra Co, Ltd of Japan and Kenesjay Green Ltd, firms in the alternative energy business, for a pioneering green hydrogen project In T&T. The agreement was part of the campus's initiative to "strengthen collaboration between academia and industry in developing a viable hydrogen economy for Trinidad and Tobago and the wider Caribbean", a statement from The UWI read.

The engine room of the nation's energy sector is on the path to green.

## Facing Down a Pandemic

As the world came to a standstill in 2020, at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the university was forced to upend its functions to adapt to what was then known as "the new normal". But in addition to managing the impacts of a global pandemic on the campus itself, UWI St Augustine was on the frontlines of the national response finding to the host of problems that arose during the height of the virus' spread. They served both within the medical community, and throughout the rest of society.

The UWI's COVID-19 Task Force brought together experts from across faculties to assist the Caribbean in its response to the outbreak. A team spanning from cardiovascular researchers, to emergency paediatric medical practitioners, to virologists, headed up the medical response group, while others from the fields of hotel and tourism management, international relations, economics, and social development helped to map out solutions for the ripple effects of the pandemic on sectors across society.

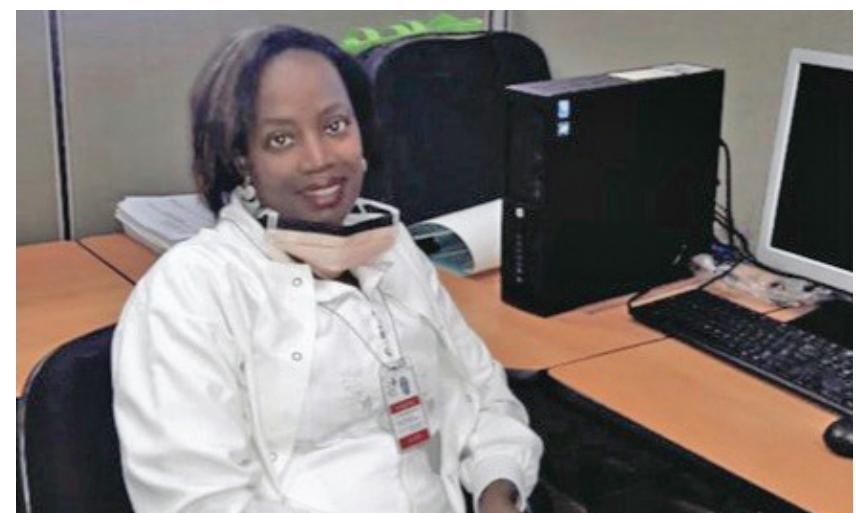
Campus figures such as then Dean of the Faculty of Medical Sciences Professor Terence Seemungal and virologist Professor Christine Carrington were reassuring voices that spoke directly to the nation, providing their expert knowledge on television and in the print media. In 2022, Prof Carrington was named an Anthony N Sabga Caribbean Excellence Laureate for her role "in developing the human and infrastructural capacity of Trinidad and Tobago and the region to deal with the threat of viruses to public health" the announcement from the ANSA McAl Foundation stated.

Coming out of the campus, staff and students were both frontline workers as well as providing essential support behind the scenes. At the early stages of the pandemic, a campus team was mobilised to produce face masks and other PPE to be used by medical first responders.

In a 2020 article, Senior Engineering Technician in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, and team lead of the manufacturing project Jeevan Persad, said, "All of this is happening because we have unprecedented cooperation and willingness to work together. Partnering with governmental and private bodies to produce the PPE and distribute it to where it was needed most, the manufacturing team worked "Sunday to Sunday" ensuring that they could do their part to help protect the medical community and the nation from the spread of COVID-19.



A staffer from the Faculty of Food and Agriculture (FFA) explains the benefits of hydroponic cultivation systems to a visiting secondary school student at the FFA Technology Demonstration Park. The descendant of ICTA, FFA has a lineage of education, research, and national and regional policy support that goes back over 100 years. That legacy continues today with the addition of innovative services and products.



Ms Alisha Roberts Belcon takes a moment of rest during one of the most intense periods in T&T's history. She was one of 50 nurses from UWI St Augustine that conducted contact tracing during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, doing crucial and dangerous work as part of the national response.



Young visitors to the campus show keen interest in science at UWI St Augustine's Math Fair. An initiative of the Department of Mathematics and Statistics, Math Fair invites thousands of secondary school students from all over T&T to learn and enjoy the subject in a fun and entertaining environment.

## A Seismic Response to La Soufrière

In the last month of 2020, St. Vincent's volcanic giant, La Soufrière, woke from its 40-year slumber with a series of effusive eruptions before an explosive event that led to the evacuation of approximately 22,000 people, activation of 88 shelters, and a host of clean-up operations.

As the region rallied to support the island through this natural disaster, The UWI Seismic Research Centre (SRC) was pivotal in the coordinated response to the 2020/2021 eruptions. Although it is most well-known to the public through its earthquake monitoring, the SRC began its life as the Volcanological Research Department in 1953, and moved through several restructurings before the current iteration was formed in 2008. Throughout that time, their mission has remained the same—to provide services which protect Caribbean lives and livelihoods from the hazards associated with extreme natural phenomena such as earthquakes, volcanoes, and tsunamis.

"What some people may not know is that the centre was first established as a volcanology unit to respond to volcanic activity, and then expanded to include seismological services," said volcanologist and Director of UWI SRC Dr Erouscilla Joseph in a 2023 interview. "We do everything including volcano seismology, earthquake seismology, geology, petrology, geophysics, technical services associated with geothermal energy, ground deformation monitoring, and education and outreach services."

Dr Joseph was involved in managing the SRC's response to La Soufrière's eruptions, where a team of scientists on the ground were able to assist with monitoring, documenting and clean-up, while the university itself conducted relief efforts to assist healthcare, education, and displaced students left vulnerable in the wake of the disaster. This event remains one of the most successful disaster risk management actions in Caribbean history, showing how the region can come together as a community in times of great need.

## No More Silence

One of the long-standing initiatives coming out of The UWI has been focused on creating safer spaces for children, working collaboratively with agencies and organisations across Trinidad and Tobago. This initiative is the Break the Silence project from the Institute for Gender and Development Studies (IGDS) St Augustine.

The project, and the campaign which followed, has been in existence since 2008, when the UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women (managed by UNIFEM), UNICEF, and the then Centre for Gender and Development Studies (CGDS) at UWI St Augustine signed a joint partnership to advance the action-research project Breaking the Silence: A Multisectoral Approach to Preventing and Addressing Child Sexual Abuse in Trinidad and Tobago.



A photo from the archives of The UWI Seismic Research Centre.



Emerita Professor Rhoda Reddock with some children during a Break the Silence activity.

Its goal has been to break the silence on child sexual abuse (CSA)/incest and explore its implications for HIV throughout Trinidad and Tobago by empowering girls and boys, parents, communities, policymakers, and service providers who work in child protection, HIV/AIDS, and women's rights. The core project team, Emerita Professor Rhoda Reddock, Prof Sandra Reid, and Tisha Nickenig collaborated with the Coalition against Domestic Violence (CADV) and other organisations in its implementation and follow up. While the project officially ended in 2012, its campaign continued.

This project developed a new, community-based action research methodology, established national protocols for reporting, investigating, and responding to child sexual abuse, and generated fresh, gender-informed knowledge on the complexities of CSA. Most importantly, the project was accompanied by the Break the Silence campaign, visible through the Blue Teddy symbol, which expanded locally with marches in various parts of Trinidad and Tobago and regionally through the UNICEF UNITE campaign.

In a 2023 article, Prof Reddock, one of the region's most accomplished scholars and activists, reflected on its impact: "... the whole climate related to child sexual abuse has changed. The numbers of reports to the police have increased. When we first started, there were very few reports. Now, we have more, and convictions as well.

"Media reporting has also improved. That doesn't mean [CSA] has ended, but we did generate awareness, and empowered young people to report to their parents or teachers, and parents to seek help."

Their work called for changing the way we research and advocate for children. It also facilitated the development of research methodologies where communities benefit directly, and researchers simultaneously learn directly from them. This project, through its campaign, empowered a generation of activists and helped to shape national legislation and policy, all while giving a voice to survivors of sexual violence.

In 2014, project team leaders Prof Reddock and Prof Reid received the award for Most Impacting Research Project at The UWI-NGC Research Awards on behalf of the Break the Silence project and campaign.

## Looking Back, Look Forward

As UWI St Augustine marks its 65 years and looks to how it might imagine the next 65, its legacy is one of an ongoing, committed engagement with the wider Caribbean community. This campus has been a space where students and teachers from across the region can come together and find ways to solve the problems facing us as a collective. As we face the challenges ahead, we must remember that we have been capable of enacting great change, and in order to envision a stronger, more sustainable Caribbean future, we must truly believe that we are capable of even more.

## A Legacy of Justice from a Young Faculty

**Professor Rose-Marie Belle Antoine** (centre) with the Faculty of Law's **International Human Rights Clinic (IHRC)** team on a 2019 prison visit. Since its 2012 establishment as a full faculty, UWI St Augustine's Faculty of Law has become a powerhouse for social advocacy. Under Professor Antoine's leadership as first Dean—and now under current Dean Dr Alicia Elias-Roberts, who this year launched a pre-law programme to widen access to legal education—the faculty continues to move beyond the classroom to directly impact Caribbean jurisprudence.

A crowning achievement is the IHRC, an innovative initiative merging academia, practitioners, and students to address the concerns of marginalised groups, including the **First Peoples**, migrants, and those seeking disability justice. Historically, the faculty became the first UWI delegation to present before the **Inter-American Commission on Human Rights** in 2019, where they championed justice for prisoners by addressing remand delays.

The IHRC's impact was further solidified in 2020 through landmark constitutional litigation challenging the remand system. Faculty researchers also lead global conversations in **Intellectual Property (IP) Law** and AI, helping shape national policy. Through these achievements, the Faculty of Law remains a vital steward of regional progress, fulfilling its mission to "save the world through law."





# RESEARCH

## An Enduring Tradition

BY VANEISA BAKSH

**This past November, several researchers from UWI St Augustine** were ranked in the top two percent of their disciplines in the world. The list, compiled by authors from Stanford University and Elsevier, ranked researchers in the top 100,000 within 22 scientific disciplines and 174 subfields. The selected scientists were Dr Mandreker Bahall, Professor Christopher Oura, Dr Sephra Rampersad, Professor Hazi Azamathulla, Dr Srikanth Umakanthan, and Dr Vinod Kumar.

Research has always been at the forefront of UWI's agenda, going back to its forerunner at St Augustine, the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture (ICTA). Well known for its pioneering work with cocoa (the world's largest repository, the International Gene Bank for Cocoa, is kept in St Augustine's custody), the Cocoa Research Centre (CRC) has made famous advances in protecting the crop from various diseases, like Witches' Broom and Black Pod. It was at ICTA also that the conditions for ripening and storing bananas were developed, which led to them being able to be transported globally.

Professor Pathmanathan Umaharan, an expert in plant genetic resources management, genetic analysis, and crop improvement, is head of the CRC. In 2009, he discussed the need for regional food security and how we can use our genetic resources to create economic opportunities.

Dark chocolates had been found to contain healthy antioxidant and nutritive properties: neutraceuticals. The Department of Chemistry was working to chemically characterise the flavour and neutraceutical content of local cocoa beans and to correlate their respective sensory qualities.

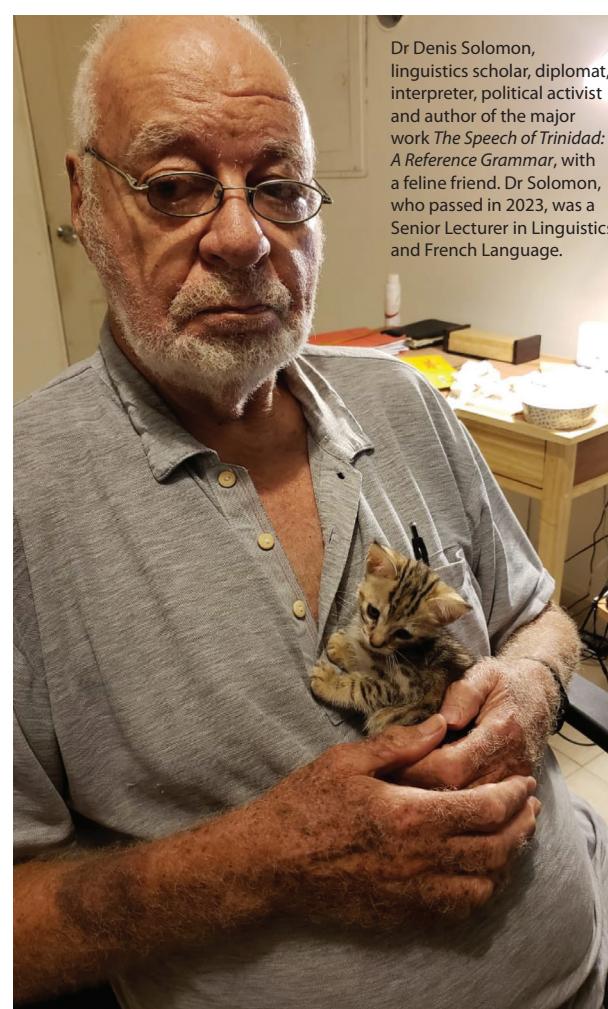
"We have developed new anthurium varieties which are resistant to bacterial blight. These are universal diseases in the tropics, so it has widespread application. Mozambique, South Africa, South China, and Hawaii have requested varieties. We can either licence them and earn royalties, or sell them to them," he said.

These economic opportunities identified by Prof Umaharan are reflected in the latest thrust of the UWI. Campus Principal, Professor Rose-Marie Belle Antoine, informed the Campus Council that the focus was on generating income under the banner UWI MADE. Years of reduced funding from regional governments has led the university to find ways to take its research to market. It had not previously been such an imperative.

In 2012, a Research and Development Impact Fund (RDI) was set up to address "pressing developmental challenges". The range of categories encouraged multi-disciplinary research—climate change, crime and security, economic diversification and competitiveness, entrepreneurship, public health and technology, and society. In its first two years, TT\$14 million was awarded for 22 projects. "They ranged from looking at the impact of climate change on the Caroni Swamp, to the analysis of counselling programmes for at-risk youth, to understanding the heritage of East Port-of-Spain, to finding new methods of detecting and preventing the spread of dengue fever and the development of an agri-knowledge digital portal," reported UWI TODAY.



Prof Pathmanathan Umaharan, Director of the Cocoa Research Centre (CRC), in the field.



Dr Denis Solomon, linguistics scholar, diplomat, interpreter, political activist and author of the major work *The Speech of Trinidad: A Reference Grammar*, with a feline friend. Dr Solomon, who passed in 2023, was a Senior Lecturer in Linguistics and French Language.



Professor Christine Carrington in an archived shot of a lecture from the files. A professor of Molecular Genetics and Virology, she is not only one of the foremost regional authorities in her field, but has been instrumental in developing the capacity of the Caribbean in facing the threat of viruses. Her expertise, and that of her team at the Faculty of Medical Sciences, was essential in the national response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Among the various RDI projects in 2020 were the following:

- COVID-19 IMPACT: Infectious disease molecular epidemiology for pathogen control and tracking, researched by Prof Christine Carrington. Over 5000 SARS-CoV-2 sequences contributed to the global database, GISAID.
- Studies on commercialisation of novel phyto-biostimulants derived from seaweeds for sustainable agriculture, researched by Prof Jayaraj Jayaraman.
- Crime Victimisation and Fear of Crime Stakeholder Consultation, researched by Professor Derek Chadee.
- Understanding Built and Cultural Heritage in East Port-of-Spain, researched by Dr Asad Mohammed.
- An investigation into the Trajectory of Neurobehavioural Development of Primary School Children in Trinidad and Tobago, researched by Dr Farid Youssef.

The full list is available at  
<https://sta.uwi.edu/rdifund/project-list>



THE UWI-TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT IMPACT FUND

President and Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago Mr ANR Robinson with Emeritus Professor Selwyn Ryan at a campus event. Prof Ryan is one of T&T's most important public intellectuals, with a focus on politics and history. He was a prolific writer and is credited as establishing scientific polling in T&T through the St Augustine Research Associates.



Internationally renowned and St Augustine-based marine scientist Professor Judith Gobin poses with the deep sea tube worm named after her: *Lamellibrachia judigobini*. Prof Gobin is the former Head of the Department of Life Sciences, one of the Faculty of Science and Technology's departments with a powerful research culture.



**HEALTHY PEOPLE, HEALTHY PLANET:** Emeritus Professor John Agard (left), a world-renowned climate scientist, speaks as Emeritus Professor Terence Seemungal, whose research greatly advanced the study of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, listens. Both men have made an enormous impact in their fields and raised UWI St Augustine's profile as a hub for world-class work.



**THE NATION'S HISTORIANS:** Emeritus Professor Brinsley Samaroo with Emerita Professor Bridget Brereton at a campus event from the archives. Both scholars have had an enormous impact on the study of history and the understanding of society in T&T, through their lectures, writing, research, and support for national initiatives.



Professor Laura Roberts-Nkrumah, one of the world's foremost scholars on breadfruit and its potential to feed societies in a food insecure world, stands with research icon Professor Edgar Julian Duncan. Prof Duncan began lecturing at UWI St Augustine in 1963 and would go on to have a major impact on plant science at The UWI and in the Caribbean.



Youths experiment with the Phi, an innovative electronic steel pan developed by The UWI Steel Pan Research Laboratory in the Faculty of Engineering (FoE). FoE is a major hub of campus research and innovation.

Several innovations have come over the years, for instance, PHI, the percussive harmonic instrument, and the G-Pan in 2007. Under the leadership of the then Engineering Dean, Professor Brian Copeland, a team designed and constructed these instruments, based on a prototype developed by Keith Maynard in the 1980s.

In an entirely different discipline, the pioneering training in bariatric and laparoscopic surgery came from Professor Dilip Dan, who introduced and developed UWI's doctorate in medicine in surgery programme. Bariatric surgery has not only been used in cases of obesity, but has been effective in diabetes control. Laparoscopy is a method using small incisions, with guided cameras for internal vision. It is now very common.

In July 2025, UWI TODAY announced that the latest major release of the largest biodiversity time-series database, BioTIME, was co-authored by scholars and naturalists from the campus. The open access database has monitored 150 years of changes in biodiversity on the planet from 553,000 locations.

The records now include data from T&T supplied by the Department of Life Sciences. The team of Dr Amy Deacon, Professor Indar Ramnarine, Mr Raj Mahabir and Mr Kharran Deonarinesingh collected data on freshwater biodiversity from the Northern Range.

As it shifts its trajectory toward self-sustainability, the campus has not lost its rootedness in research, which continues to be its lifeblood.



# A Holistic Education and Experience

As the needs of society have evolved, so has the university. Over the years, UWI St Augustine has developed institutions, centres, units, and other facilities and resources to make the campus more effective in its work. They have become some of the greatest assets of The UWI.



Dr Iva Gloudon, former Director of Sport and Physical Education at UWI St Augustine, speaking at a campus event. Dr Gloudon is one of the leaders of the university's sporting renaissance, helping to reintegrate sport and athletics as part of campus life. She was a driving force behind the creation of the Sport and Physical Education Centre (SPEC), a state-of-the-art multi-sport facility that also serves as the venue for many of the campus's biggest events, including the graduation ceremonies.



FROM LEFT: Dr Alma Jordan, UWI St Augustine's first Campus Librarian (starting in 1960) and eventually University Librarian, with Deputy Campus Librarian (1963-1989) Ms Barbara Commissiong, and Deputy Campus Librarian (1997-2000) Mrs Annette Knight. The Alma Jordan Library is a Caribbean information resource and a trove of precious texts and other artifacts.



Personnel, including foreign lecturers, from the Institute of International Relations (IIR) in a shot from the 1970s. Founded in 1966, IIR is a regional, autonomous institution based at UWI St Augustine, and a centre for teaching and research on regional and international issues.



Nurses in training from The UWI School of Nursing give a thumbs up. The school, part of the Faculty of Medical Sciences, was established in 2015 to meet the needs for specialist nursing personnel including administrators and educators.



Professor Beverly-Anne Carter, former Director of the Centre for Language Learning (CLL) speaks at a CLL cultural event. Prof Carter, a French language expert who was awarded the prestigious Chevalier des Palmes Académiques, helped lead CLL to become an internationally recognised centre for foreign language education by multiple countries, and a beloved campus space for cultural exchange.



Veteran calypsonian Llewellyn MacIntosh, better known as Short Pants, strums his guitar while playwright, author and educator Mr Rawle Gibbons listens. Mr Gibbons was the founding coordinator of UWI St Augustine's Creative Arts Centre, the predecessor of the Department of Creative and Festival Arts, a premier space in the Caribbean for advanced education in theatre arts, music, dance, visual arts, and Carnival studies.



# 65 Years in Society

UWI St Augustine has always been deeply embedded in T&T, whether through its close relationship and support for the nation's leaders, the impact that its thousands of graduates have made on society, or its contribution to culture, science, business, and national development.



**TOP (LEFT TO RIGHT)**  
An academic procession from UWI St Augustine's early years. Princess Alice, Countess of Athlone and the first Chancellor of The UWI, walks behind the mace-bearer. Prime Minister Dr Eric Williams is fourth from right.

The class of 1993 at their outdoor graduation ceremony on the JFK Quadrangle. Once upon a time, graduation ceremonies were an open-air event.

**MIDDLE (LEFT TO RIGHT)**  
**A Sparrow and a Scholar:** The Mighty Sparrow himself, Slinger Francisco, Calypso King of the World, with the king of calypso scholars, Emeritus Professor Gordon Rohlehr. Professor Rohlehr began his career at UWI St Augustine in 1968 and would spend four decades on campus as a scholar of Caribbean literature, music, and culture.

Two very famous UWI St Augustine alumni greet each other at a campus event: Brother Resistance, poet and one of the founding voices of rapsody music; and retired RBTT President and CEO of the T&T Chamber of Commerce Ms Catherine Kumar.

**BOTTOM (LEFT TO RIGHT)**  
Ms Sandra Marchack, surrounded by family, holds her Distinguished Alumni Award at the 50th anniversary of the campus celebrations some 15 years ago. Ms Marchack is an icon of the Trinidad and Tobago public service whose decades-long career encompassed the tenures of several prime ministers. She served as both Permanent Secretary in the Office of the Prime Minister and Head of the Public Service.

**Campus Carnival Queen:** Ms Judy Nandlal, a student from Milner Hall (now Freedom Hall), represents her hall of residence at a UWI St Augustine Carnival competition in the 1960s.

# An Enduring Invitation



PHOTO: SHEREEN ALI

An inviting bench resides beneath the shade on the campus greens. UWI St Augustine has many quiet spots for communing with friends or nature, and over the decades, generations of students and staff have enjoyed their use. That invitation, for a comfortable spot on a busy campus, is still open and will remain so, 65 years later and counting.