



The UWI Triple A Strategy 2017-2022

Revitalizing Caribbean Development



Triple A Strategy
2017-2022

ACCESS

ALIGNMENT

AGILITY

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Preface

Fine universities are not established and funded to serve themselves but to commit to engage the challenges facing their host communities. In this regard the primary mandate of The University of the West Indies (The UWI) is to serve in the advancement of the Caribbean community and sustain its development.

The UWI's strategic plan for the period 2017-2022, emerges from such an understanding of the role of the University within its national, regional and global environments. But the quality of its survival as the premiere regional academy is a prerequisite to its effective service. Keeping its house in good operational order is necessary to empower the community and the world beyond. The plan, therefore, captures the multilayered meaning of the University's mission.

Academic and entrepreneurial empowerment through teaching and learning, and rekindling the agenda of applied research and professional training are critical to building the region's resilience and promoting the praxis of relentlessly pursuing sustainable development. The urgency of this is evident from a clear reading of the regional context which shows the slow and sluggish economic recovery from the global financial recession.

Deemed the **Triple A Strategy**, this plan rests upon three primary pillars: **Access**, **Alignment**, and **Agility**. Wealth creation and reduction of social inequality through greater and more affordable **access**, efficient and effective **alignment** with society and economy, and enhanced **agility** in pursuit of opportunities are the strategic goals residing at the plan's core. The greater relevance and persistent pedagogical dignity of the University

depend upon the strengthening of these pillars of service and survival.

No plan can stand without a culture of accountability that holds each in an effective orbit to all. Mentoring, monitoring and measuring are the frames that hold each pillar upright. Community engagement for development therefore results from the practice of personal passion and performance progress. The collective outcome will rekindle the activist academy that addresses the regional agenda in the context of each national community that constitutes the Caribbean world.

This **Triple A Strategy**, then, is a plan perfectly suited to the period imagined and engaged. It is conceived within the continuing context of sustained public service and persistent institutional excellence and endurance. To propel the people of the region along a progressive and prosperous path is both the University's intention and its salvation.

Professor Sir Hilary Beckles

Vice-Chancellor

The University of the West Indies

1.0 Introduction

The University of the West Indies (The UWI) **Triple A Strategy** 2017-2022 marks the fifth iteration of the institution's formal involvement in strategic planning exercises, with its first strategic plan authored in 1997. Since then, the external environment within which The UWI operates has changed drastically, especially with the implementation of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) by the World Trade Organization (WTO)¹. Using Porterian analysis (Five Forces Model of Industry Competition) as the lens through which to view the operating environment in which The UWI now conducts its affairs, the model shows that the barriers to entry into the higher education sector have reduced significantly, mainly due to liberalization of the sector. Students, the main buyers of The UWI's services, now have more tertiary education choices. Similarly, faculty and staff, the main suppliers of The UWI's core business offerings—Teaching, Learning and Research—have also become more mobile. Further, the level of substitutes as proxied by the modalities students use to participate in higher education, has grown exponentially (e.g. an increase in online versus face to face offerings). With all these forces working together, the logical conclusion is that the environment for higher education has become hyper-competitive at the national, regional and international level.

Indeed, an environmental scan of the number of players in the tertiary education sub-sector of the higher education industry across the Caribbean shows that there are over 50 institutions offering tertiary educational opportunities to the population². Coupled with this intense competition in the market is the increasing number of national institutions that are also competing with The UWI for funding from their national governments. All these

changes are happening at a time when the fiscal situation in almost all the countries of the region make for uncomfortable reading. The twin problem of high debt and anaemic growth in national output (Gross Domestic Product (GDP)) narrows the fiscal space from which national governments can fund higher educational institutions.

Within the context of the above described environment, The UWI has formulated its strategic plan for the period 2017-2022. Like all forward-thinking institutions, The UWI read the environment and from its best thinking and collective thoughts, fashioned the **Triple A Strategy** that not only seeks to ensure its own survival but one geared towards assisting Caribbean nations to move to higher levels of economic growth and development. The plan is based on the fundamental assumption that without strong Caribbean economies, The UWI will not be strong and similarly, without a strong UWI, Caribbean economies will find it more challenging to achieve significantly higher levels of economic growth and transformation. Put differently, this plan recognizes the symbiotic relationship between The UWI and Caribbean economies, and the need for both to work closely together to strengthen the competitive position of regional economies. This assumption is central to the formulation of the **Triple A Strategy**.

¹ For a detailed account of how the GATS agreement will impact the higher education landscape, see Beckles, H. McD (2004): UWI at Risk: GATS/ WTO and Higher Education Liberalization in the Caribbean. University Council, April 19, 2004.

² While the number of players in the higher education market has increased, it must be noted that all the players are not of the same quality and as such, the need for strong quality assurance systems is paramount. Already, the key players such as regional academic institutions and national governments are paying attention to this issue and have established national accreditation bodies to oversee quality issues.

1.1 — The Planning Process

In May 2015, the newly elected Vice-Chancellor, Professor, Sir Hilary Beckles provided a broad conceptual vision of where The UWI should focus its attention. Dubbed the “Triple A”, this vision was workshopped among the various key stakeholder groups—including governments, private sector, regional and multilateral institutions, international academic partners, The UWI Executive Management Team (EMT), student bodies and alumni, among others.

In September 2016, the Vice-Chancellor formally launched the strategic planning process with a “sense-making” retreat of the EMT along with the external members of The UWI Strategy Committee, at the St. Augustine Campus. This retreat was aimed at providing critical analysis of the “Triple A” vision, and to draft preliminary ideas on the way forward. The retreat was facilitated by an accomplished strategy facilitator, with regional and international experience.

The University Office of Planning (UOP) in preparation for the sense-making retreat, provided outputs from an extensive amount of preparatory work which focused on the critical trends in higher education, the headwinds that The UWI has to bear in mind in the planning process and also, SWOT and TOWS analyses of The UWI operations derived from a survey of University staff and faculty across the region.

Following the September 2016 retreat, the UOP engaged in an analysis of the sense-making exercise to pull together the output from this retreat. This produced the draft one-page strategic plan.

During the period October to December 2016, the UOP organized wider consultation with all campuses and the University’s Regional Headquarters (RHQ) to derive the collective thoughts from all faculty and staff, specifically on the one-page plan that emanated from the EMT retreat. This resulted in the establishment of campus planning teams, led by senior academics and planning officers.

The teams were asked to host campus-wide consultations with all levels of staff and faculty to interrogate the draft one-page plan, with the intent to deliver the following:

1. agreement on The UWI:
 - Vision
 - Mission
 - Core values
 - Objectives
 - Expected outcomes, and,
2. identification of impactful initiatives that The UWI should undertake over the next five years to transform the institution in light of the changing environment in which it operates.

Weekly meetings were held with the teams’ leads and the UOP to ensure that consultations as wide as possible were taking place with all staff, students and faculty at the campuses and the RHQ.

The process of consultation between October and December 2016 culminated with an all-inclusive retreat on December 8-9, 2016 at the Cave Hill Campus where 115 members of staff at all levels within The UWI system, and students represented by their guild presidents, participated in two full days of discussions and deliberations based on the output from each campus and the RHQ. Again, this December retreat was facilitated by an accomplished strategy facilitator.

Subsequent to the December retreat, the UOP conducted a weeklong Work Activity Room (WAR) session to analyze the huge volume of information gathered from the retreat and the various submissions from the campuses/RHQ. This led to a significant revision of the draft one-page plan and the attendant strategy map.

The output from the UOP WAR engagement was presented to the EMT on January 15, 2017. The Campus Principals, Pro Vice-Chancellors, Bursar, Registrar, Directors and other owners of the key initiatives were asked to share the draft plan with their

various stakeholders in order to receive feedback for its refinement. A formal presentation was made to the EMT on February 3, 2017. Subsequent to this formal presentation, the draft plan was presented to all the Boards at the University meetings from February 6-10, 2017. The draft strategic plan was also sent to the external members of the Strategy Committee for comments and feedback.

Over the period March 9-29, 2017, the UOP also engaged in a series of meetings with all campuses and the RHQ to seek their feedback on the draft plan and to provide clarification on the way forward.

This wide consultation with all stakeholders, their collective thinking and feedback are reflected in this document, which embodies **The UWI Triple A Strategy** for implementation effective August, 2017.

1.2 – The Strategic Plan

This strategic plan embodies the choices that The UWI has decided on for the next five years in order to fulfill its mission and vision as agreed on by all stakeholders. It shows how the University will utilize its resources and capabilities in order to achieve maximum outcome in the quest to **revitalize Caribbean development** and to ensure its own long-term survival. The tremendous opportunities that lie ahead for the University and the Caribbean region, despite the challenges and threats in the operating environment, have forced the institution to use its strengths to overcome weaknesses in its operation so that it can fulfill its mission, create value for the society it serves and, not only survive but prosper in an increasingly, inhospitable global environment. The UWI's strategic response therefore, is captured in this **Triple A Strategy: Revitalizing Caribbean Development**. The **UWI Triple A Strategy Framework** and the **Strategy Map** are presented in **Figures 1** and **2**.

1.3 – The UWI Triple A Strategy

The plan is grounded in the vision that The UWI needs to facilitate an **access** revolution in higher

education in the Caribbean region given the low level of enrolment at the tertiary level, regionally and also among members of the Caribbean diaspora. Similarly, while **access** is critical, The UWI also sees the **alignment** with industry as an important element of its mandate, to help to strengthen the innovation capacity and capabilities of regional economies and lead to higher levels of growth. Further, while The UWI recognizes the anaemic growth of Caribbean economies, it sees potential opportunities in the international marketplace and as such, has to become more **agile** in order to take advantage of these opportunities. It is these three concepts (**Access, Alignment, Agility**) which ground The UWI's strategic response to the challenges and opportunities in its operating environment.

1.4 – Our Vision

In order to effectively execute its **Triple A Strategy**, The UWI has settled on the vision to be: **An excellent global university rooted in the Caribbean**.

1.5 – Our Mission

Similarly, a strong mission is linked to The UWI's overall vision of excellence: **To advance learning, create knowledge and foster innovation for the positive transformation of the Caribbean and the wider world**.

1.6 – Our Core Values

Indeed, to make The UWI's vision and mission a reality, the University must live the core values of:

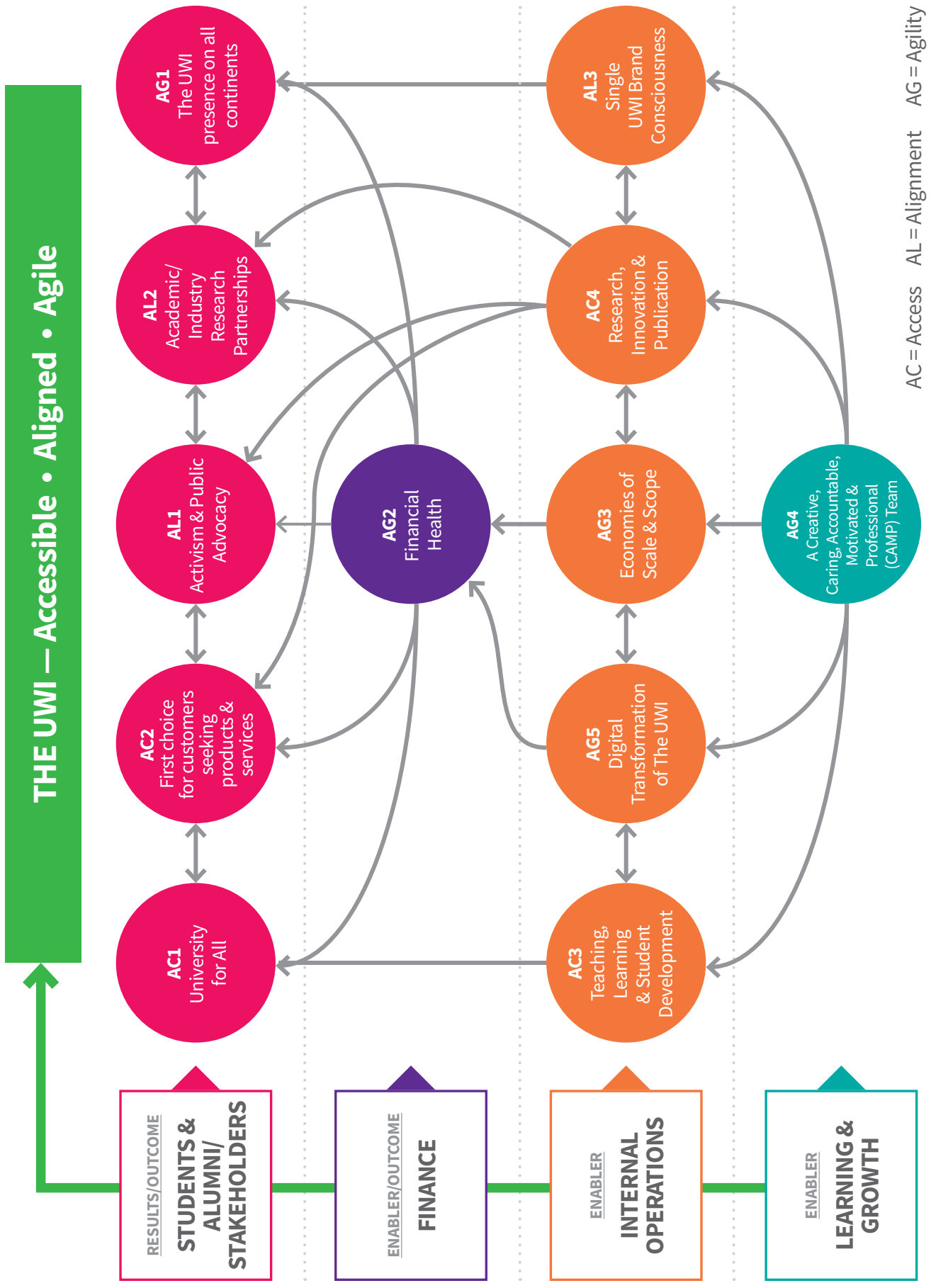
- **Integrity**
- **Excellence**
- **Gender Justice**
- **Diversity**
- **Student Centredness**

Altogether, the vision, mission and core values must be lived in order for the University to achieve its targets and outcomes over the five-year planning cycle. The vision, mission and core values provide the lens through which the University will make its strategic choices as reflected in the strategic objectives.

Figure 1: The UWI Triple A Strategy Framework



Figure 2: The UWI Strategy Map



1.7 — Strategic Objectives

Strategic goals serve as the guiding framework for organizing The UWI's priorities over the next five years. While each strategic goal includes a myriad of possibilities that the institution can pursue over the planning period, given its limited resources and capabilities, it has to make choices about which will be pursued over the 2017-2022 planning period. As such, 12 broad objectives are identified over the period 2017-2022. These are captured in **Tables 1a-c**.

1.8 — Key Performance Indicators and Expected Outcomes

An important part of strategic planning is the need to have measurable outcomes at the end of the planning cycle. As such, attached to each strategic objective at the University level, are Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that will be used to measure the progress that the University is making towards the achievement of its mission and vision. The plan has identified nine principal outcomes which it seeks to highlight as the University moves towards achieving its vision and mission for the planning period. These principal outcomes are presented in **Table 2**.

In summary, the broad embodiment of **The UWI Triple A Strategy** is captured in **The UWI Triple A Strategy Framework** depicted in **Figure 1**. It shows the University's vision, mission, core values, strategic goals, strategic objectives and principal outcomes for the next five years.

The UWI Triple A Strategy Framework is translated into a University-wide balanced scorecard using the Kaplan and Norton traditional balanced scorecard framework. **The UWI Strategy Map** depicted in **Figure 2** shows how the various strategic objectives are inter-linked to help the University achieve its overall vision and mission and how it will become more **accessible**, **aligned** and **agile** by the end of the strategic planning cycle.

Dictionary of Strategic Goals

ACCESS (AC)

This strategic goal refers to increasing participation in tertiary and higher education for all with the capacity and desire to learn. This will involve, among other things, ensuring that The UWI offerings (e.g. teaching and learning, student development, consulting, research and public advocacy programmes) reach the underserved and diaspora Caribbean populations and all others with an interest in higher education on all continents.

ALIGNMENT (AL)

This strategic goal refers to building relevant and value-added relationships with alumni and the producers of wealth and promoting government and non-government sectors and international partners by ensuring that The UWI offerings are fulfilling the needs of the society it serves.

AGILITY (AG)

This strategic goal refers to The UWI using its resources (human and physical) and capabilities to respond to the needs of customers, including alumni, in a changing environment, creating an entrepreneurial university with a diversified revenue base, improving the global presence of the University ensuring economic sustainability through global expansion, operational efficiencies and financial profitability.

Definition of Core Values

Integrity: The UWI will perform in an honest, caring, ethical and trustworthy manner, and will create a culture of accountability in its management practices to ensure that these values are sustained.

Excellence: The UWI will serve its internal and external stakeholders by delivering consistently high-quality and relevant service, benchmarked against international standards and operational best practices.

Gender Justice: The UWI will actively create and sustain, as a core value, a social, academic, and administrative culture that supports and promotes gender equality and justice within its environments. This policy will require systematic research into its effectiveness with a view to taking appropriate actions of a corrective nature.

Diversity: The UWI will foster a culture and work/study environment that is open and welcoming to different ideas and perspectives, acknowledges and values diversity, is inclusive of and affirms the dignity of all persons regardless of race, socio-economic status, age, sex, gender identity and expression, physical and mental ability, sexual orientation, family or marital status, national origin, language, political or religious persuasion, health status, and other characteristics that make its constituents unique.

Student Centredness: The UWI will ensure that its policies, governance and daily operations are geared towards the delivery of an exceptional teaching and learning experience for all students.

**Table 1a: Strategic Objective-
ACCESS (AC)**

AC1	To be a university for all.
AC2	To be the university of first choice for alumni and non-student customers seeking products and services for all things Caribbean.
AC3	Improving the quality of teaching and learning and student development.
AC4	Improving the quality, quantity and impact of research, innovation and publication.

**Table 1b: Strategic Objective-
ALIGNMENT (AL)**

AL1	Promote greater activism and public advocacy.
AL2	Increase and improve academic/industry research partnerships.
AL3	Promote a cohesive single UWI brand consciousness.

**Table 1c: Strategic Objective-
AGILITY (AG)**

AG1	Establish a physical presence of The UWI on all continents.
AG2	Restore financial health to The UWI.
AG3	Generate economies of scale and scope for The UWI.
AG4	Foster a creative, caring, accountable, motivated, professional (CAMP) team.
AG5	Foster the digital transformation of The UWI.

Table 2: Principal Outcomes for The UWI: 2017-2022

Strategic Goals	Key Performance Indicator	Target
Access	Number of students enrolled in senate-approved undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.	65,000 students enrolled by 2022
Access	Number of alumni and non-student paid-up users of University products and services.	50% increase in paid-up users
Access	Number of research publications in ranked refereed journals per Full Time (FT) academic staff.	2 refereed research publications per FT academic staff per year
Alignment	Number of spin-off companies.	8 spin-off companies
Alignment	Number of patents commercialized by industry.	4 patents commercialized
Alignment	External stakeholders perception score.	80% perception score
Agility	Number of physical satellite locations outside of the Caribbean.	5 physical satellite locations
Agility	Margin.	2%
Agility	Internal and external stakeholders satisfaction score.	80% satisfaction score

2.0 From Strategy To Action: The Implementation Framework

For The UWI to effectively translate its strategy into action, it has to be deliberate about the use of its scarce resources and capabilities over the next five years. Although the planning cycle covers a five-year period, The UWI will implement its plan on a yearly basis. As such, the initiatives reported on in this document will cover those implemented at the campuses and RHQ over the period 2017-2019.

Overall, in Year One there are 38 identified initiatives. The specific tasks and activities to realize these 38 initiatives will be managed by the four campuses and the RHQ.

2.1 – The Implementation Plan

Each initiative has a number of critical tasks and activities that must be achieved in order to realize the outcomes for The UWI. The UOP has developed an electronic version of the balanced scorecard which will be used as the management tool to monitor, evaluate and report on the plan. The various scorecards will be built at both the campus level and the wider University level to monitor progress on initiatives, risks and outcomes. The Planning Officers on each campus will be responsible for uploading data into an integrated information system which will be used to monitor performance on a quarterly basis.

Figure 3 provides an example of the integrated information system that will accommodate the reporting and monitoring of the plan over the five-year planning cycle.

At the campus level, each Campus Principal will be the overall owner of the scorecard while at the University level, the Vice-Chancellor and the Executive Management Team will own the scorecard. However, the owner of the scorecard at the level of the RHQ will be the Vice-Chancellor.

2.2 – Accountability in the implementation of the Strategic Plan

The scorecards are built with an accountability framework in place. At the campus level, although the Campus Principal is responsible for the overall scorecard, Deans will have direct responsibility for faculty scorecards and heads of departments will have responsibility for departmental scorecards, which will all be aggregated to produce the campus scorecard. Similarly, administrators such as Registrars, Bursars, Pro Vice-Chancellors, etc., will have scorecards that feed into the campus and the RHQ, designed along the lines of their executive reporting relationships. This overall accountability and ownership will be key to the effective implementation of the **Triple A Strategy**.

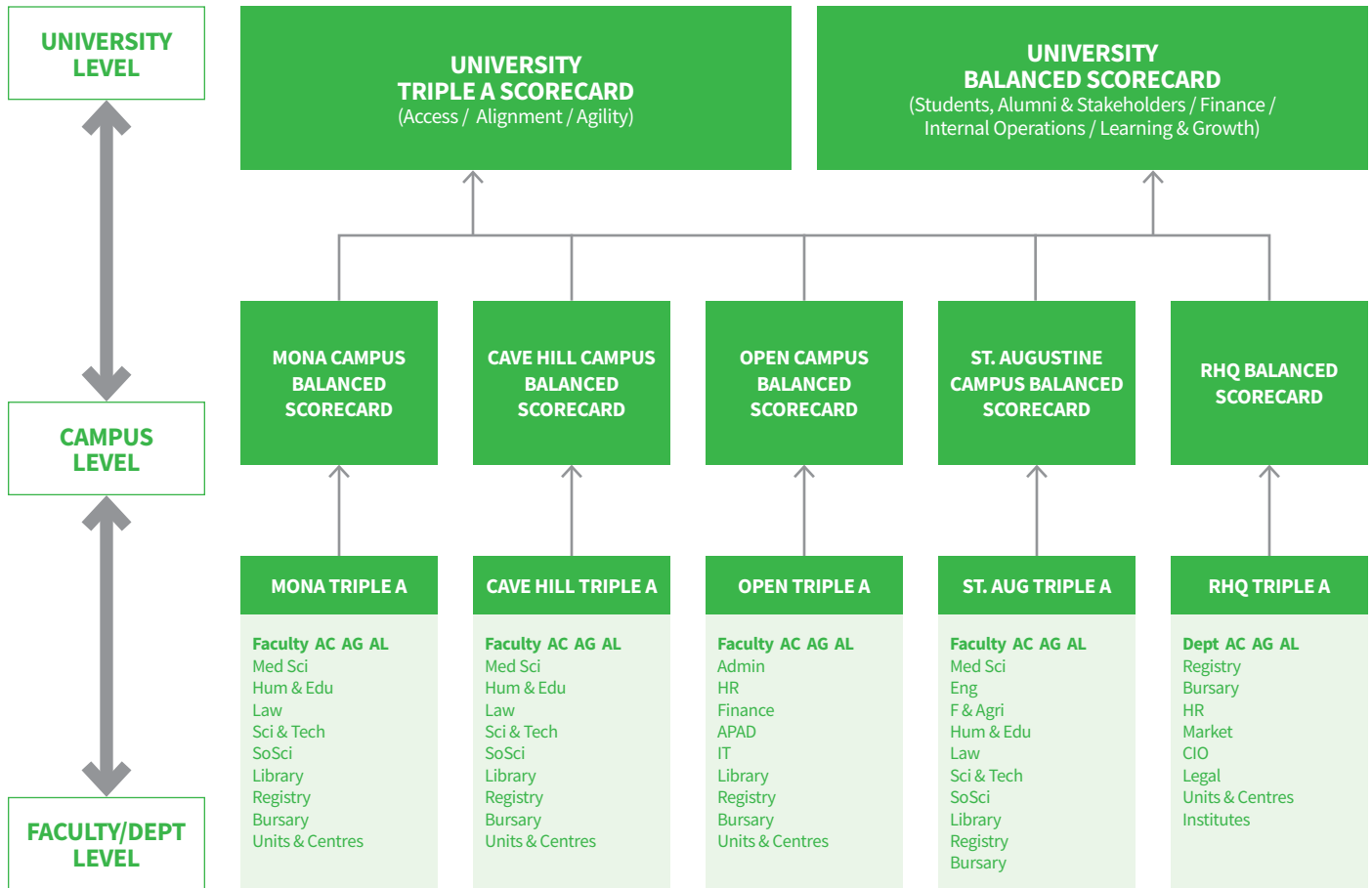
2.3 – Risk Analysis of the Strategic Plan

The UWI is a complex institutional architecture with a paradoxical governance structure that is both regional and national. Without a laser focused approach to strategic planning, there is great danger of the strategic plan not achieving its vision, mission and principal outcomes. The following are some high level risks that are identified and must be corrected in order for the plan to be effective.

A. Multiple Strategic Plans

Having multiple strategic plans in a single organization will divert attention from the central planning operations and will make the process of strategic planning cumbersome and untidy. Therefore, The UWI must have one strategic plan owned by its senior management with operational planning done at the various business unit levels (campuses/RHQ). The cascading of the balanced scorecard and having it linked to performance reviews will help to overcome this risk.

Figure 3: Integrated Information System for the Balanced Scorecard Reporting Tool



B. Lack of role clarity and ownership

For the strategic plan to be effective, operational management has to be strong. Owners of strategic initiatives need to be clear about their roles and responsibilities and must be able to sell the plan to all of their stakeholders. The senior management team at both the level of the University and campuses must provide the oversight to the operational management of the plan and also, assign roles and responsibilities based on availability of resources and capabilities. Dedicated governance, for example, strict meeting dates, time and clear agenda for strategic oversight, timely reporting and monitoring by senior management will help to mitigate this risk.

C. Lack of funding

The initiatives to be pursued for this strategic plan will require strong financial support. New funds will have to be mobilized in order to execute some of the initiatives, including the acquisition of new human capital resources as some initiatives will require human capital that does not currently exist in The UWI. If new funds are not mobilized, The UWI will have to seriously consider cutting some existing activities and diverting resources towards the strategic plan. This will require carefully planned institutional audits to determine where redundancies are and how to eliminate them.

3.0 Summary and Concluding Thoughts

The UWI Triple A Strategy will provide the road-map for The UWI over the next five years. It comprises 12 high level strategic objectives, 18 high level key performance indicators with their respective targets and 38 high level initiatives to be executed over the medium-term of the next two years. These are all captured in the University and campuses balanced scorecards which will be reviewed annually but monitored quarterly. At the annual reviews, modification can be made to targets and indicators, where appropriate.

For effective implementation, the scorecard will be linked to the annual performance review of

the initiative owners. The University and campus senior management teams will provide operational governance over the strategic plan to ensure its effectiveness. They will be supported by the various committees and work groups that will be established to execute various initiatives. At the end of the planning cycle, *ceteris paribus*, The UWI should be more **accessible, aligned** and **agile** than it is today and will be able to deliver greater value to its students, alumni and stakeholders. Indeed, the implementation of the **Triple A Strategy** is geared towards producing ideal UWI graduates who will trade their skills to help in the revitalization of Caribbean development.

Seven (7) Key Attributes of The Ideal UWI Graduate

1. A critical and creative thinker
2. An effective communicator with good interpersonal skills
3. IT-skilled and information literate
4. Innovative and entrepreneurial
5. Globally aware and well-grounded in his/her regional identity
6. Socially, culturally and environmentally responsible
7. Guided by strong ethical values

1. Critical and creative thinker:

Graduates must be able to apply analytic thought and logical reasoning to a body of knowledge and to clarify the assumptions, reasoning and evidence of a specific issue and apply scientific principles. Key functions include generating alternative ideas, practices and solutions that are unique and effective, and exploring ways to confront complex and ambiguous problems and provide solutions.

2. Effective communicator with good interpersonal skills:

Graduates must be able to make constructive contributions, communicate persuasively and appropriately, and have excellent interpersonal and decision-making skills.

3. IT-skilled and information literate:

Graduates should acquire both IT and information literacy skills, which are essential parts of a wider concept of knowledge creation. An IT-skilled graduate is competent in the use of computers and software to manage information. Information literacy is the ability to recognize when there is a need for

information, and to be able to identify, locate, evaluate and effectively use that information to resolve an issue or problem in a range of media.

4. Innovative and entrepreneurial:

Graduates should possess a strong drive and leaning towards the creation and/or adaptation of new ideas and products, with the intention of creating new and sustained economic value.

5. Globally aware and well-grounded in his/her regional identity:

Graduates must be aware of their environment so that they are prepared for any eventuality that may affect their future or the environment of which they are part. They must be aware of global events and be knowledgeable and open minded and willing to contribute to political, social, economic, environmental and cultural issues; nationally, regionally and globally.

6. Socially, culturally and environmentally responsible:

Graduates must be able to acknowledge the social, cultural and environmental implications of their actions and be guided accordingly. He/she should recognize social justice issues with particular reference, but not limited, to his/her discipline and professional area.

7. Guided by strong ethical values:

Graduates should champion respect, and understand and apply ethical practices and values personally and professionally in all aspects of life.