



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES  
ST. AUGUSTINE CAMPUS, TRINIDAD & TOBAGO, WEST INDIES

## INTERNAL COMMUNIQUÉ

July 16, 2020

# Developments at The UWI-Arthur Lok Jack Global School of Business and the University Inn and Conference Centre

Dear Colleagues,

While the COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced the vital role that universities like The UWI have to play in our communities, it has also brought us administrative, operational, and financial challenges. For higher education globally, the financial impact of COVID-19 has been immediate. For the St. Augustine Campus, in particular, we expect that the challenges we faced pre-COVID-19 will be compounded by what could be a longer-term downturn in the global economy that would negatively impact our income during the course of the new academic year as well as our enrolment figures. It is in this context that I write today to share an update on developments at The UWI-Arthur Lok Jack Global School of Business (UWI-ALJGSB) an affiliate of The UWI; and the University Inn and Conference Centre (UICC), operating as a subsidiary company under The UWI.

In an address to UWI-ALJGSB staff on July 6, and in my capacity as Chair of the Board of Directors, I announced that just a few days before, the Board approved a new Strategic Plan and structure for the School. The transformation in strategy and structure is based on the need for immediate action to ensure the School is not only prepared for the challenges and requirements of the new normal post-COVID-19, but also to be self-sustaining in the short-term.

While the School has, for some time, been experiencing financial challenges as a result of significant changes within the tertiary education sector, and was in a process of a gradual reorganisation of its operations over the last two years, this redress had to be accelerated because of the sudden adverse effect of the COVID-

19 pandemic. This new strategy calls for a major consolidation and rationalisation of programmes and services in response to market needs. Significantly, the new structure requires a leaner workforce.

Our main Campus at St. Augustine has also had to take some hard decisions. We have just undergone a retrenchment exercise at the UICC because of prolonged financial challenges. As you may also know, we have been asked by University Headquarters to reduce our operating budgets and in accordance with this mandate, Deans and Heads of Faculties and Administrative Departments have been working to revise their respective budgets.

The reality is that we will need to do more than simply 'tighten our belts' as we have been striving to do in recent years. Hard work, and perhaps some sacrifice will also be required. We will need everyone's best thinking on how we can continue to thrive in an environment where resources are likely to be constrained for some time to come. In keeping with this, I must make mention of the recent unprecedented and challenging work being done to assess and more clearly define our business processes to increase operational efficiencies in Academic and Administrative Departments. This exercise was delayed due to the lockdown but has now assumed a much greater urgency.

Colleagues, I acknowledge that an explanation and an expression of gratitude can do little for our impacted colleagues who are experiencing hardship from the decisions taken at UWI-ALJGSB and the UICC. These are challenging times, both for our colleagues across this campus, in our Affiliate Schools, and for our students. As a UWI family and broader community, it brings to bear, the extraordinary and difficult circumstances we are all working and living in as we attempt to define a new normal during COVID-19. No leader wants to be the author of this type of message. However, I thought it necessary to share a personal account of the actions we are taking and the rationale behind them.

Throughout our history, The UWI has encountered many challenges and overcome them all. I am confident that we will do so again, with your continued support.

**Professor Brian Copeland**

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