

## **PROPOSED NEW FRAMEWORK FOR GORTT RESEARCH FUNDING**

In November 2009, the Campus Principal convened a meeting on ***The Research and Innovation Imperative for the UWI St. Augustine Campus*** to engage the professoriate of the UWI St. Augustine Campus and stimulate discussion on the development of a more focused strategy to strengthen the relevance, recognition and impact of our research. Six multi-disciplinary research areas were shared as a point of departure for reinvigorating the Campus' research agenda. These were Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Culture, Agriculture and Food Security, Sustainable Development and Environment, Health and Wellness, Infrastructure, and Banking and Finance.

This meeting generated vibrant discussions at the Faculty and Departmental level on the Campus' research agenda and areas that academic staff thought should receive attention and funding. Proposals on research focal areas and possible research centres were subsequently forwarded to the Campus Principal for consideration, including Arts, Cultures and Theories (ACTs) of the Caribbean (FHE), Centre for Coastal Engineering and Management (FE), Centre for Emerging Diseases and Global Health (FMS), and Centre for Geography and Environmental Science (FSA). These research areas are all consistent with and build on the research clusters identified in the UWI Strategic Plan 2007-2012.

As the Campus and University embark on the preparation of a new Strategic Plan 2012-17, the articulation of a clear and targeted research agenda for the UWI St. Augustine Campus is essential to sustain the positioning of the UWI as the preeminent tertiary education institution in Trinidad and Tobago and the region. A follow-up Workshop is therefore being planned for November 30, 2011, as a mechanism for consensus building on the research areas and questions to be given priority by the UWI St. Augustine Campus in order to increase the relevance and impact of the Campus' research. A framework for operationalising the research agenda using funds provided by the GORTT through a new facility, the T&T Research and Development Impact Fund (RDI Fund) will also be discussed.

The criteria that will guide the priority research areas to be funded through the RDI Fund will include national and regional development needs, the Campus' internal capacity and international recognition in specific research areas, and the potential of the project to have a notable development impact, *inter alia*. The GORTT Medium-Term Policy Framework 2011-2014 highlights seven development pillars, namely: People-centred development; Poverty eradication and social justice; National and personal security; Information and communication technologies; A more diversified knowledge intensive economy; and Good governance; and foreign policy. Within the context of this national policy framework, five priority areas have been identified for

action over the next 3 years: Crime and Law and Order; Agriculture and Food Security; Health Care Services and Hospitals; Economic Growth, Job Creation, Competitiveness and Innovation; and Poverty Reduction and Human Capital Development.<sup>1</sup>

### **Current Research Funding and Management Facilities at the UWI St. Augustine Campus**

At present, Faculty and student research activities are initiated, funded and managed through various platforms, including:

- **Campus Research and Publications Fund**

This fund is provided by the Campus and Centre budgets and is administered by the Campus Committee for Graduate Studies and Research on behalf of the Campus Principal and Office of Research the Fund. The total pool of funds available for the Academic Year 2010/11 was TT\$2.2million for all Academic staff and TT\$1,311,623.90 for Postgraduate student research.

- **Individual or Faculty-driven Research Grants**

Individuals or groups of researchers seek funding from various donor agencies to support their research. Applications for such grants are coordinated through the University Office of Research, the Campus Office of Research Development and Knowledge Transfer (formerly the Business Development Office), or individual Faculties and Departments.

- **Government of Trinidad and Tobago Research Fund**

Using a relatively small grant provided by the GORTT in 2005/6, an open call for research proposals was sent out to Academic staff and individual researchers or teams were provided with core funding for ongoing research or for new research initiatives.

- **Office of Research Development and Knowledge Transfer, St. Augustine**

This Office provides support for managing research in a number of ways including identification of funding sources, formulating project teams, proposal preparation, project management and quality control. Support is provided to researchers and research teams through the life of the project. The Office also deals with matters of Intellectual Property and Technology Transfer and provides training in a number of areas related to project development.

- **University Office of Research**

This Office works closely with the Office of Research Development and Knowledge Transfer, St. Augustine to identify research funding sources, create research project

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<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Planning and the Economy. October 2011. *Medium-Term Policy Framework 2011-2014*. Trinidad and Tobago.

themes and assist with proposal preparation and submission, particularly when the research themes are University-wide.

### **Towards a more focused Campus Research Agenda**

One of the key priorities for the UWI St. Augustine Campus as we embark upon a new Strategic Plan 2012-2017, is to position our Campus as the leader in producing relevant and impacting research in selected areas. To do so, we will need to harness our talent and financial resources, continue to strengthen our partnerships with industry and government and to connect our research and innovation more directly with the needs of our society. We must dispel the perception of the UWI as either distant or disconnected from the lives of the communities nationally, regionally and internationally, while holding on to the pursuit of excellence and to the generation of new knowledge as the very basis for the future existence and raison d'etre of our Campus and University.

### **The T&T Research and Development Impact Fund (RDI Fund)**

Given the pool of available funds, as well as the intense competition for research funding at the national and international levels, the UWI St. Augustine Campus is adopting a targeted approach to building a critical mass of research in multi-disciplinary niches which focuses on projects with recognizable and substantive impact in the short and medium term.

The purpose of the RDI Fund is to promote cutting-edge research that will directly contribute to the advancement of the national and regional development agenda by addressing pressing development challenges and proposing actions that will have a positive and meaningful impact on society. The rationale behind re-shaping the architecture for national research funding is to demonstrate more clearly to our stakeholders, and to taxpayers, the benefits and value of investing in research. While the UWI is constantly engaged in knowledge transfer through its teaching, research, consultancies and public service, it is nevertheless often questioned about the role it plays in helping to solve societal problems through the application of its research. The issue that is sometimes raised is whether, and to what extent, the research conducted by academics has led to any of the following:

- (i) enhanced capacity in a specific new and/or under-resourced discipline;
- (ii) improved performance in the public and/or private sector;
- (iii) better public policy making;
- (iv) increased investment for a specific sector or industry or in support of a particular product or service;
- (v) stronger public engagement on an issue of national/regional importance.

The focus of the RDI Fund on research-directed action will place issues such as the impact of research and knowledge transfer and the development effectiveness of research funding at the centre of the UWI St. Augustine's research enterprise. This is in keeping with the research

mission outlined in the UWI Strategic Plan 2007-2012 to conduct rigorous basic and applied research that serves to:

- Explore solutions to priority national and regional problems and challenges;
- Create significant new knowledge;
- Exploit developmental potential and comparative advantages;
- Elucidate important contemporary social issues;
- Situate self and society in a changing world order; and
- Provide a sound basis for public policy formulation and decision-making.

The operational framework for the RDI Fund will be developed around the following key objectives:

- To provide dedicated grant resources ranging from TT\$500,000 to TT\$2 million per project;
- To encourage research focus in agreed multi-disciplinary research areas;
- To support multi-disciplinary research teams which may include academia and industry collaborations, collaborations with other UWI Campuses and/or other international universities, and virtual networks of researchers;
- To foster enhanced monitoring and evaluation of progress, execution and impact of research projects; and
- To strengthen an integrated and coordinated approach to research through a nexus of funding, capacity and effective research management.

The RDI Fund will launch its first Call for Proposals by January 2012 and approximately TT\$7 million will be allocated for the first round of evaluations. Additional details on the operation of the Fund and the Call for Proposals will be provided in the coming weeks.

The matrix below should not be interpreted as implying that the priority Thematic Areas and the Research Questions to be addressed within these have already been determined. It is provided to stimulate your discussion and deliberations on the thematic Areas that will ultimately constitute the Campus' Research Agenda and to give you a sense of the **types of questions** and expected impacts that could form the basis of a project submitted to the RDI Fund for support.

<b>Proposed thematic areas for research</b>	<b>What are the possibilities for multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary research? Who are the teams we might invite?</b>	<b>Is this central to our national/regional agenda Can we make an impact internationally?</b>	<b>Do we have installed capacity/comparative advantage? Are we recognised for this field of research?</b>
<p><b>Sustainable Development and Environment &amp; Infrastructure</b></p> <p>1. How do we achieve a potable supply of water for the population by the year 2017?</p>	<p>Engineers Natural Sciences Climate specialists Social Scientists Humanities</p> <p>Different aspects of water use, preservation, purification, land drainage systems, abuse of water, changing of habits, changing of systems that waste water at present etc offer scope for excellent interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary teams.</p>	<p>Water will become one of the most sought after commodities in the near future. In addition, the replacement of bottled water and decrease in plastic is a goal of all nations. Potable water refers to water that is available in taps, reservoirs, tanks, reserves that provides for a population needs including irrigation, domestic, commercial and industrial use and the provision of a consistently reliable source all year.</p>	<p>While we may not have specific expertise, we have experts in different areas who may pool to tackle such an issue.</p>

<p><b>Sustainable Development and Environment &amp; Infrastructure</b></p> <p>2. How do we arrest the problem of annual flooding and the loss to homes, work time, and impact on the environment by 2017?</p>	<p>Engineering Natural Sciences Climate specialists Social Scientists</p>	<p>Self evident value especially in relation to the flash flooding in Port of Spain and other parts of East and Central Trinidad.</p> <p>What are the consequences of flooding, how has it been caused by changing climatic conditions and by our own degradation of forested areas, improper drainage and so on. How may we intervene and provide solutions that can make a difference in five years time.</p>	<p>Engineers and Natural scientists have been working in related areas. How the problem affects people when it occurs, eg loss of property, lives, work time in offices etc needs to be also quantified by social scientists.</p>
<p><b>Environment &amp; quality of life Gender and Development and Gender Relations, Masculinity</b></p> <p>3. How do we resolve the escalated crisis in masculinity and at the same time impact on the reduction of crime by 2017. How might we intervene in the conventional prison methods of handling criminality that produces recidivism?</p>	<p>Gender Criminology Judiciary Education</p>	<p>The assumption here is that the large majority of criminals are young men, and that education and training for an occupation or profession (other than crime) is no longer an attractive prospect. This is global problem and if we find some way to seriously impact on this issue then we can make a difference to other societies. Note that while focussed on masculinity, these studies require comparisons with why femininity has</p>	<p>Numerous studies on gender, men and masculinities have been carried out by the IGDS regionally and locally – the findings of many of these have not been made available or popularised, brought together for analysis, nor has there been a broader interdisciplinary take on the problem, and an attempt to devise intervention models for change in this society.</p>

		not responded to a changing world order with similar crises.	
<b><i>Health and Wellness, Quality of Life</i></b>	4. How do we devise a system of public health that will ensure that the needs of the less privileged are also met with a service that is efficient, reliable and trustworthy by 2020?	Health Economics Unit Public Health Regional Health Authorities Faculty of Medical Sciences Social Sciences	One of the most important services that a population requires of state provisions is that of a public health service which they can rely on. This is particularly important for a population where there is an increasing aged cohort. Confidence and security in a health system is one of the primary goals of every person in society. Despite changing GDP's how may a society prioritize its earnings and surpluses around the health and welfare of its population? How does this response demonstrate a real measure of development in the 21 <sup>st</sup> century?
<b><i>Health and Wellness</i></b>	5. Which diseases are most preventable and what intervention processes are necessary to ensure that the rates of communication are reduced by 2017?	Faculty of Medical Sciences Social Sciences Faculty of Science and Agriculture	There is an inordinate amount of research now carried out on Dengue fever, mosquitoes, diabetes, sexually transmitted diseases etc. How do harness aspects of this research and demonstrate concrete gains? How do societies transform

		<p>habits, customs, cuisine to ensure that some diseases are preventable through social intervention and that good workable solutions and interventions may be proposed?</p>	
<p><b>Agriculture and Food Security/ Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Culture</b></p> <p>6. How might we reduce the food import bill and increase exports of food and food products regionally and internationally to generate a surge in the agricultural sector in the next decade by focussing on those foods that we currently have an advantage in production due to soil and climate conditions and cultural preferences?</p>	<p>Agriculture Agricultural Economists Food and Nutrition Expertise Life sciences</p>	<p>Agriculture/Agribusiness Financing entire value chain for agriculture Food security Reducing import bill – all of these are important issues for any country to achieve and for diversifying the economy.</p>	<p>The increasing importance of Agriculture and agricultural economics over the last decade, a resurgence in faculty and graduate students in this area and the splitting of the faculty of natural sciences all point to the need to refocus our priorities and goals as demonstrated through research and intervention.</p>
<p><b>Agriculture and Food Security/ Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Culture</b></p> <p>7. How might the University of the West Indies take its most important and successful research areas in agriculture – cocoa and tropical flower production and ensure that these provide us with the basis for a serious industry and competitive advantage in research and innovation?</p>	<p>Cocoa Research Unit Herbarium Life Sciences Biological Sciences Agricultural Economics Cultural entrepreneurship – Creative arts for packaging etc</p>	<p>This area draws on some of the well known and historically valuable signifiers of research gains for the campus, thus it must build on what has already been achieved and advance the possibilities that we may be overlooking.</p>	<p>We are the world experts in some of these fields. Think of what Blue Mountain Coffee has done for Jamaica!</p>

<b><i>Banking and Finance/ Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Culture</i></b>			
8. How do we put in place by 2017 mechanisms to support entrepreneurship that combines backwards and forward linkages in industry rather than viewing entrepreneurship as isolated creations of small and medium businesses to generate employment for a few individuals or firms?	Finance Economics Management Graduate School of Business SALISES	How may we examine and build on the best qualities of entrepreneurship that have supported and sustained the growth of the economy in Trinidad and Tobago? How do we build the skills component for society? The areas implicated here are restructuring of capital, a targeted approach to sector development access to capital, incubation and testing of markets, provision of technical services, leveraging the financial contributions of our diasporic communities for our regional development and so on.	Some initiatives in entrepreneurship, a management department, Arthur Lok Jack Graduate School of Business. A research focus here can help to direct the research goals of departments and institutes.
<b><i>Banking and Finance</i></b>			
9. How do we ensure that our population and society is protected against the risk of contagion with international finance in the coming five year period?	Social Sciences Economics International Finance SALISES Monetary Studies Unit	One of the uppermost questions in the minds of every adult citizen today is to do with consolidated money management and the need for confidence in local financial markets	This is an area that the University needs to be visibly associated with in terms of research – it is not clear that this is visible to the community outside of the university.
<b><i>Education, Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Culture</i></b>			
10. How do we leverage the	International Relations	The new revolution in the end of the	There are many initiatives in the

<p>opportunities presented by ICT to promote Caribbean knowledge in local, regional and global course delivery, adult education packages and so on, particularly to diasporic communities and to those who are interested in the global spread of ideas of one sort or another?</p>	<p>IDU Education Cultural Studies Geography ICT Social Sciences Mathematics and computing</p>	<p>20<sup>th</sup> and into the 21<sup>st</sup> century has been information technology and the spread of knowledge through the internet and other virtual media. Most young people will now learn by and through this media while those already trained will need to be retrained. We also need to shift into seeing education as ongoing rather than primarily degree driven. Which groups of adults have we not tapped for educational exposure online?</p> <p>Have we sufficiently grasped the importance of the shift in education through virtual technologies of learning and how must we respond to this rapid change in technology to ensure a place in the global agenda?</p>	<p>University, again among faculty and graduate students that may be brought together to make this more manifest in terms of what the university is already engaged in and where this is heading to.</p>
<p><b>Culture and Governance</b></p> <p>11. How might Trinidad and Tobago present and represent its image and practice of multiculturalism to provide a model to others and a set of practices that will ensure freedom from ethnic cleansing and a population who are educated to make informed political choices about their futures?</p>	<p>Humanities Gender Studies Cultural Studies Film Studies Social Sciences</p>	<p>How might we put policies in place and demonstrate commitment to practices to make sure that generations to come will respect the need for tolerance of difference and the value of cultural difference in the making and persistent reinvention of a society and of culture itself?</p>	<p>Again, this topic lends itself to many possibilities for bringing together scholars who can translate the impact of their work from paper to policies or interventions.</p>

<p><b><i>Cultural industries</i></b></p> <p>12. How may we quantify the value of the artist and cultural production to the society's development and future?</p>	<p>Humanities Social Sciences/Economics Creative Arts</p>	<p>Despite the importance of culture in society, it is still given token importance in funding and in recognition. How do we transform thinking in this area on the value of the artist in society? This can also relate to historical production, documentaries, photographers, and the like.</p> <p>The aim here is to demonstrate culture as a commodity that not only increases social capital but one that generates income and to quantify the extent of income or spin off benefits that accrue to a population and society.</p>	<p>This area solidifies the work that is being carried on by many scholars in the past and present and demonstrates the importance of these areas of study in a university.</p>
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