The University of the West Indies

UWI
ST. AUGUSTINE CAMPUS

TURNING VISION INTO VALUE:

OPERATIONALIZING COMMERCIAL INITIATIVES WORKSHOP

REPORT

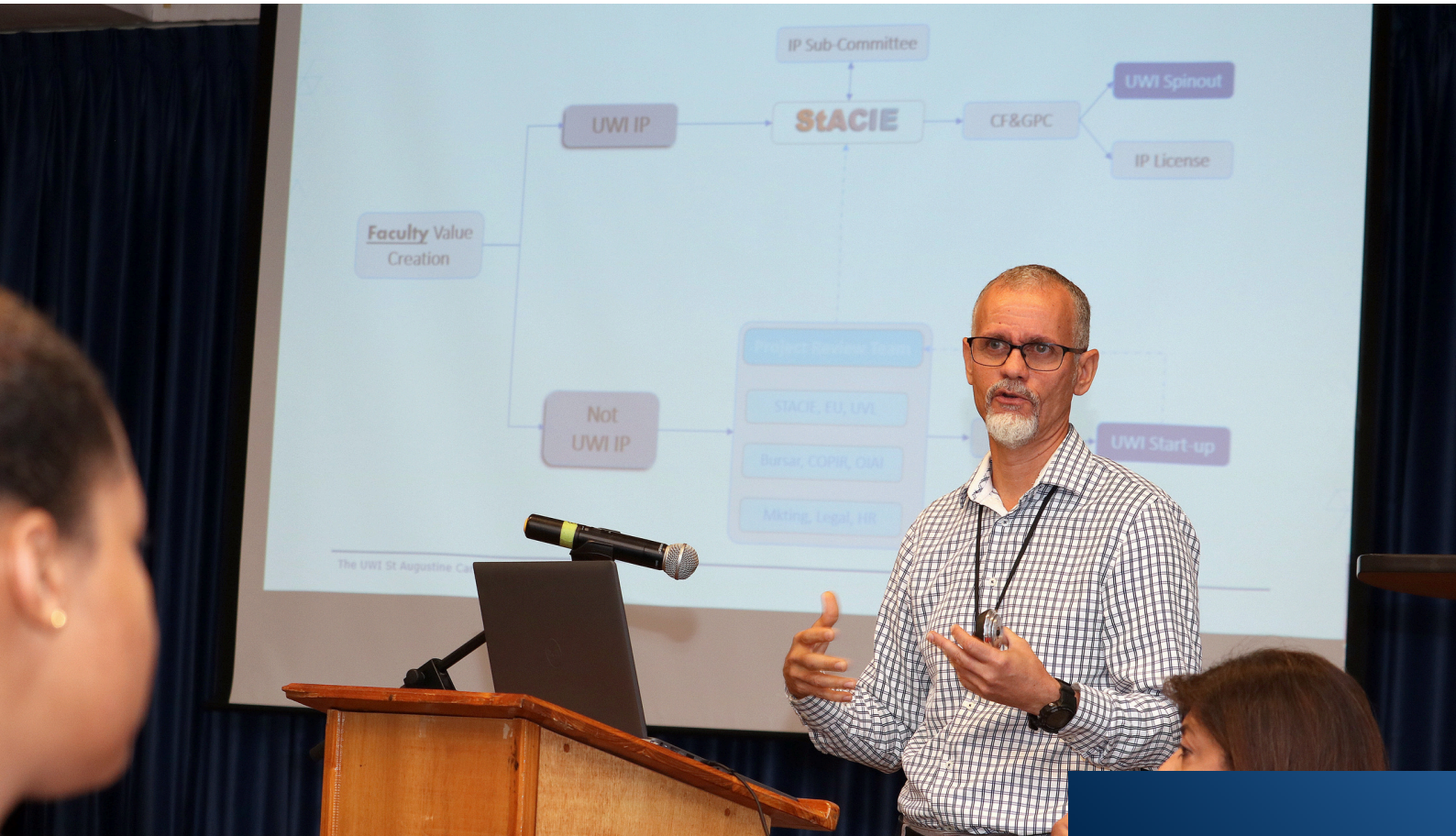






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Executive Summary

The workshop Turning Vision into Value: Operationalizing Commercializing Initiatives was held on Wednesday 30th April, 9:00am to 12:30pm at Lecture Room 2, Second Floor at the Institute of Critical thinking. The workshop was designed to inform and guide key stakeholders on the specific requirements for proposing, developing and operating commercial initiatives within the UWI St. Augustine environment and aimed to offer practical insights to support successful implementation and alignment with institutional procedures.

Outline

- Welcome and Overview- Mrs. Reanti Singh- (Head COPIR)
- Business Planning and Development- Mr. Julian Henry (Director AG. OIAI)
- Monitoring and Evaluation- Ms. Keren Wilson (Planning Officer COPIR)
- Questions & Feedback- Moderator Mrs. Wynell Gregorio (Director Marketing and Communications)
- **Break**
- Financial Processes and Procedures- Mrs. Michelle Newallo (Deputy Bursar)
- Questions & Feedback- Moderator Ms. Keren Wilson
- Marketing and Branding Guidelines- Mrs. Wynell Gregorio
- Human Resource Processes and Procedures- Mrs. Coreen Copeland (Director Human Resources)
- Questions & Feedback- Moderator Dr. Graham King (Director- STACIE)
- Closing- Mrs. Reanti Singh

Key Topics

1. Reanti Singh- Opening:

- The session began with the introduction of members from the Internal Strategy Review Team, established under the mandate of the Campus Implementation Committee to identify and assist with opportunities for commercial potential within the university's ecosystem.
- A brief recap was provided on **Phase 2 of the Triple A Strategic Plan**, highlighting key ongoing initiatives, including the Alumni Giving Project, UWI Fine Cocoa, UWI Seal-It, FHE Humankind Studios, FMS Optometry Centre, and the Global Medical School. The overarching financial target of USD $17 million for UWISTA was also referenced.
- Several challenges and gaps were acknowledged, particularly those related to transitioning from idea to market-ready product or service. These included limited knowledge of business processes, insufficient skills in commercialization procedures, a lack of alignment between product offerings and the UWI brand, and challenges with regulatory application—especially in areas such as staffing and compensation.
- The goals of the workshop were outlined as follows:

1. To support the strategic objectives of The UWI
2. To raise awareness of commercialization opportunities within the academic environment
3. To introduce participants to practical frameworks and tools that can guide the commercialization process

2. Julian Henry- Business Planning and Development

- Identifying Value proposition- Participants were encouraged to reflect on key questions prior to conceptualizing a business idea. These included identifying the unique value being offered, defining the target market, assessing the requirements for commercialization, evaluating financial potential, and determining how value can be created and effectively delivered to the market
- Value creation/ proposition- The presentation emphasized a strategic shift from focusing solely on technology and expertise to prioritizing consumer needs and market demand. The recommended approach involves engaging directly with potential customers and conducting thorough research to uncover actual needs. Expertise should then be leveraged to align with those needs, allowing for innovation and the creation of meaningful value that resonates with the intended audience.
- Effective Commercialization Planning- Beyond value creation, the session underscored the importance of comprehensive business planning. The use of the Business Model Canvas was recommended as a tool for mapping out the commercialization process. It was noted that many start-ups falter due to the absence of a detailed operational plan. Emphasis was placed on the need for better visualization and process mapping to clearly outline the steps, resources, and infrastructure required. A complete business plan should be developed prior to presenting any proposals to the board, as it provides clarity and precision on what support or investment is being requested.

Key Topics

3. Keren Wilson- Monitoring and Evaluation

- Defining and Measuring Success- The importance of intentionally defining success was emphasized, beginning with clarity around goals and financial targets. Setting measurable Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and fostering a culture that meaningfully integrates Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) practices were highlighted as essential. The phrase “what gets measured gets managed” was cited to reinforce the value of measurement in driving accountability and improvement. Participants were also encouraged to adopt a multidimensional view of success—beyond revenue generation—recognizing alternative indicators such as enhanced student employability, tangible real-world impacts, increased brand visibility, and the integration of academic practices. These broader measures reflect growing demands from student communities and evolving expectations within higher education.
- Monitoring and Evaluation-M&E was presented as a vital tool for the continuous tracking and assessment of implementation, with a focus on relevance, effectiveness, and outcome-based results. The role of M&E as a source of credible evidence for demonstrating business performance to potential investors was also underscored. Key components discussed included practical approaches to embedding M&E into an initiative, understanding the results chain, and identifying characteristics of strong KPIs that align with strategic objectives.

4. Michelle Newallo- Financial Processes and Procedures

- Corporate Governance- The discussion covered key components of corporate governance, with a focus on the financial infrastructure required to support a commercial initiative. Attention was given to the implementation of internal controls and robust financial processes as essential pillars of operational integrity.
- Internal Controls- The importance of strong internal controls was emphasized, particularly in safeguarding assets, promoting accountability, ensuring transparency, and preventing fraud. These controls were presented as critical to maintaining the credibility and reliability of financial operations.
- Financial Processes- Several financial procedures and systems were outlined, including the management of petty cash, standardized financial reporting to the bursary, and established protocols for purchasing, procurement, inventory control, and asset management.

Key Topics

5. Wynell Gregorio- Marketing and Branding Guidelines

- Marketing Plan- The session reinforced the critical role of a well-developed business plan as the foundation for shaping a strategic marketing plan. A clearly defined business direction supports the alignment of marketing objectives with the overall goals of the initiative.
- Brand Identity-Emphasis was placed on the importance of each initiative cultivating its own distinct brand identity and narrative, while still aligning with the overarching UWI Made umbrella. The value of storytelling was highlighted—particularly through the documentation of experiences, visuals, and meaningful encounters—as a powerful tool for emotional resonance and deeper audience engagement.
- Target market- A market-driven approach was recommended, beginning with thorough market research to ensure that products or services are aligned with actual market needs. Rather than relying solely on demographic data, the focus should shift toward understanding the psychographics and behavioral personas of the intended audience. This approach enables the development of more compelling and targeted messaging.
- Budget and Resources- The discussion also addressed the importance of strategic budgeting, particularly the need to prioritize the allocation of resources to ensure maximum impact and sustainability of marketing efforts.

6. Coreen Copeland- Human Resources Processes and Procedures

- Guidelines/Procedures for Hiring Consultants and Ethics was discussed with the presenter providing a detailed Overview of the recruitment process.

Step 1: Get Approval from Campus Implementation Committee (CIC)
Step 2: Prepare Job description- Define roles and responsibility clearly and use approved HR Template as a guide.
Step 3: Advertise- Utilise Marketing & Communications, Open Job Ad for 2 weeks, involve HR in the process.
Step 4: Application Management- Late applications should not be considered, references should be at max 6 months old, maintain applicant's privacy
Step 5: The Selection Process- Predetermine a rubric for the assessment of candidates. Interview panel should be an uneven number to avoid deadlock.
Step 6: Offer a Contract- Consult Legal Unit for contract preparation. Contact the application's references and do a background check. Persons have the right to withdraw an offer if it is not accepted in 2 weeks
Step 7: Onboarding- Develop an onboarding plan (a template will be provided from HR). If OJTs are recruited that should be more OJTs than staff.

Feedback & Concerns



Questions Asked & Feedback

The following were some of the main questions/issues raised:

- *When registering initiatives at specific bodies, would it be under the name of the Business or UWI?*

Feedback: it depends on how the business is set up (either UWI internal or independent start-up)

- *What happens in cases of emergencies where things need to be facilitated quicker by the bursary due to time sensitivity ?*

Feedback: the bursary can make provisions for extraditions following proper communication and reason

- *What is the process for acquiring OJTs?*

Feedback: Request OJT applicant forms from HR

- *How to work around HR qualification standards when recruiting staff?*

Feedback: HR can work around this as long as the request to hire the desired applicant is justifiable/ ethical

Issues Raised

- **Terminology** - Consistency in terminology to reflect UWI commercial initiative' as those that are not considered as UWI IP products/efforts
- **Project Management Support Structure** – The need to create a team specific to restructure support and having dedicated managers/ resources to support initiatives
- **Non-revenue performance measures** – The need to consider non-revenue benefits and impact of commercial initiatives, e.g., Student internships, partnerships, learning experiences
- **Product Liability Insurance** – The need to provide for product liability insurance and professional indemnity insurance where there might be potential risks to The UWI's brand and reputation.
- **Quality Control and Performance standards** – The need to demonstrate appropriate certification, independent and scientific testing in respect of products as they would be held at a higher standard due to high expectations of the public from UWI testing as it is a research institution.
- **Product differentiation**- Emphasis on what we are doing differently in the value we are creating/ how are we establishing competitiveness in keeping with The UWI's core strengths
- **Business Registration**- Regularizing of the Commercial initiative in respect of the name. For example, when registering initiatives at specific bodies, would the business be under the name of the Business or UWI?
- **Expediency in the Procurement process** – The need to support initiatives with a fast-track approach to procurement
- Distinguishing between Market Strategy and Product Strategy
- Identification of process and support to transition from idea to commercialization

Next Steps

1. Document issues and concerns
2. Review Guidelines for Commercial Initiatives document and accompanying toolkit in consideration of concerns and questions raised
3. Seek approval for Guidelines for Commercial Initiatives document and disseminate to the Campus Community
4. Explore opportunities for further training and sensitization
5. Collect feedback from participants about what additional guidance is needed



Contact Us

We welcome your feedback, questions, and continued dialogue as we work together to turn strategy into action. If you would like to learn more about the workshop outcomes, request additional materials, or explore opportunities for collaboration, please don't hesitate to get in touch with the Campus Office of Planning and Institutional Research. You can reach us via email at **reanti.singh@uwi.edu** or **keren.wilson@uwi.edu**. Strategic and operational planning is a continuous effort and we look forward to connecting with you.



Attendees	
Mrs. Coreen Copeland- Director HR	Prof. Hariharan Seetharaman- Dean- Faculty of Medical Sciences
Mrs. Michelle Newallo- Deputy Campus Bursar	Dr. Acolla Lewis-Cameron- Dean- Faculty of Social Sciences
Mrs. Reanti Singh- Head- Campus Office of Planning and Institutional Research	Dr. Winston Elibox- Senior Lecturer- Dept. of Life Sciences
Mr. Julian Henry- Director- Office of Institutional Advancement & Internationalisation	Dr. La Daana Kanhai- Lecturer- Dept. of Life Sciences
Mrs. Wynell Gregorio- Director- Marketing & Communications	Dr. Yomica Powder- George- Lecturer- Dept. of Chemistry
Dr. Graham King- Director- St. Augustine Centre for Innovation & Entrepreneurship	Dr. Faisal Mohammed- Research Fellow- Dept. of Chemistry
Ms. Keren Wilson- Planning Officer- Planning/ Research Analyst- Copir	Dr. Afraz Subratti- Engineering Technician- Dept. of Chemistry
Dr. Dawn- Marie Defour-Gill- Campus Registrar	Dr. Koffka Khan- Lecturer- Dept. of Computing and Information Technology
Prof. Derek Chadee- Deputy Principal	Dr. Xsitaaz Chadee- Lecturer- Dept. of Pysics
Mr. Kevin Kalloo- Campus Bursar	Mr. Rory Sarafat- Lab Technician
Mrs. Camille Ramcharan- Campus Legal Officer	Dr. Anand Rampersad- Head- Academy of Sport & Physical Education Centre
Ms. Miriam Self- Senior Programme Officer- Office of the Campus Principal	Prof. Pathmanathan Umaharan- Head- Cocoa Research Centre
Ms. Tennile Fannovich- Programme Officer- Office of the PVC (Graduate Studies and Research)	Prof. Duraisamy Saravanakumar- Director- Graduate Studies and Research
Dr. Alicia Elias- Roberts- Dean- Faculty of Law	Ms. Donna Caesar- Administrative Officer- Faculty of Food and Agriculture
Mrs. Anita Ali- Administrative Officer- Faculty of Law	Ayanna Gomez-Martin- Administrative Assistant- COPIR
Mrs. Stacey Greene Mc Neil- Dean's Secretary- Faculty of Law	Karelle Joseph- Research Technician- COPIR
Mrs. Janelle Rollock- London- Administrative Assistant, Faculty of Law	Fariel Ali-Khan- Research Technician- COPIR
Ms. Grace Clarke- Legal Researcher, Faculty of Law	Shivanie Ramsahai- Clerical Assistant- COPIR
Prof. Elizabeth Walcott- Hackshaw- Dean- Faculty of Humanities and Education	Mr. Kingsley Ekemiri- Head, Optometry Prog.
Ms. Naomi Howard- Project Coordinator & Media Specialist- Faculty of Humanities & Education	Ms. Shanelle Glasgow- Manager- Events and Projects
Ms. Solange Plaza- Consultant- Humankind Studio	Mrs. Wendy Maynard- Marketing and Communication- Events and Projects
Prof. Mark Wuddivira- Dean- Faculty of Food and Agriculture	Ms. Josanne Greene- Project Officer- Events and Projects- Marketing and Communication
Mr. Augustus Thomas- Laboratory Technician- Food Production	
Dr. Cherisse Permell- Hutton- Business Development Unit Manager- Faculty of Social Sciences	
Prof. Bheshem Ramlal- Dean- Faculty of Engineering	
Mr. Peter Poon Chong- Mechanical- Faculty of Engineering	