



# UWI TODAY

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES • ST. AUGUSTINE CAMPUS

SUNDAY 1 OCTOBER, 2017



**THE FORMAL ROBING:** The Chancellor was formally robed by the four presidents of the student guilds: from left, Howard Brown, Open Campus; Kai Bridgewater, Cave Hill; Osborne Grant, Mona; and Jonathan St. Louis-Nahous, St. Augustine. Enrobing the Chancellor is part of the tradition of accepting him and because students are meant to be the centre of the University the role falls to them.

## Chancellor Bermudez

On September 16, 2017, Mr. Robert Bermudez was ceremoniously installed as the sixth Chancellor of The University of the West Indies. His installation was held at the Daaga Auditorium on the St. Augustine Campus and was attended by the President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, Mr. Anthony Carmona and the Prime Minister, Dr. Keith Rowley, as well as ministers of government and members of the diplomatic corps from the region. The senior management of the University was also resplendent in their academic regalia as they took part in one of the most formal of the University's traditional rites. *Please see Page 4 for the Chancellor's installation address.* PHOTO: MARIA NUNES

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■ CAMPUS NEWS

# Matriculation Moments



At The UWI, matriculation refers to the criteria establishing the educational requirements for entry into any programme offered by its Faculties.

“Applicants who have been accepted to a programme of study at The UWI would have exceeded the matriculation criteria and are therefore said to have “matriculated” into The University of the West Indies. Matriculation, as described above, should not be confused with the matriculation ceremony, which in true Caribbean style is often abbreviated to just “matriculation.” This is held every year at The UWI and, unlike its Oxford counterpart, is not mandatory,” said the St. Augustine Campus Principal, Professor Brian Copeland, in this space in our last issue.

The matriculation ceremony, nonetheless, was held on September 21, 2017, at SPEC (Sport and Physical Education Centre). Among the rituals, is the symbolic signing of the student register, witnessed by the Campus Registrar, and a general welcome to students as they begin their journey at The UWI. PHOTOS: KEYON JAMES



FROM THE EDITOR

## WEST INDIAN METTLE IS BEING TESTED

They say that it is times of crisis that really test our mettle, show us our strengths and reveal our weaknesses. The region’s mettle has been severely tested by the forces of nature as hurricanes of unprecedented scale ripped their way through the islands.

The level of devastation has been unimaginable and the consequences can still not be truly assessed as the immediate task has been to salvage lives and to find some way to provide the basics of life: food, water, shelter, and so on.

For our brothers and sisters, our real neighbours, the horror and despair must be overwhelming. How do you find the wherewithal to reconstruct your life? How do you summon even tiny shreds of optimism when everywhere you look there is devastation? Where collapsed houses and useless vehicles languish alongside mud, fallen trees, debris, and the place you comfortably called home has erupted overnight into a wasteland? How do you go without potable water and electricity when you have no idea when it will be restored?

Everything has been turned upside down, and life has assumed the quality of a surreal and cruel nightmare. It is more than enough to sink one to the deepest level of hopelessness.

Crises test our mettle. For the most part, the people of the region have put up their hands and joined in the efforts to help their neighbours. We have seen an avalanche of relief efforts coming in all different forms from a wide range of sources. People are almost falling over each other to find ways to send money and supplies, to use social media to activate consciences and encourage others to rally around our region.

One of the problems might be uncoordinated efforts that could result in a surfeit of one kind of relief item, and not enough of another. That is why it is important that people pay attention to those on the ground who can identify the most urgent

needs and provide some guidance as to the specifics of what would be necessary for clearing up, restoring power, and the grim task of rebuilding. Resources are scarce; we know this. The islands have already been facing shrunken economies and while an optimist will see an opportunity for building stronger infrastructure, no one can deny that this is something that can be achieved without significant support.

The UWI has been offering its technical support, and each campus has organized its own activities to raise funds and to collect supplies to send to the stricken islands of Dominica and Barbuda. While there have been several initiatives on small scales, there are also campus-driven ones, like the Disaster Relief Fund at St. Augustine. What has been striking is the way in which staff and students have become involved, how they have taken it upon themselves to link up with external groups who are more structurally organized to deal with relief efforts. They have been helping Dominican students at the campus, because they have to do without family support and are anxious about the wellbeing of their relatives.

There is something about giving that is immensely gratifying to the spirit. This is how we reinforce our sense of belonging; because what goes further towards making you feel that you belong to something than being able to lend a hand towards sustaining and developing it? This is how we build resilience; because what can lift the spirit of the despondent soul more than knowing that there are people who care enough to drop what they are doing to come to your rescue? Does it not give them a sense of solace that they are not alone, that people who are strangers in one sense, regard them as family?

This is how we build community; a true West Indian community.

**VANEISA BAKSH**  
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# CHIEF SERVANT of The UWI

*This is the speech given by Chancellor Robert Bermudez at his installation ceremony, which was held on September 16, 2017 at the Daaga Auditorium, UWI St. Augustine.*

## I N A U G U R A L   A D D R E S S

**My fellow West Indians** I would like to start by acknowledging a great West Indian who is with us today, our former Chancellor, Sir George Alleyne, someone who has dedicated his life to the service of his country, this region and particularly this University. I am the beneficiary of his distinguished legacy.

I have followed three basic rules for all of my career: stay focused on your core competence, keep your head down and keep your mouth shut. This evening I am jettisoning these rules forever.

I started life as a baker and to this day still see myself as such. Standing here before you as Chancellor of The University of the West Indies, makes me marvel yet again at the vagaries of life. I am deeply conscious of the responsibility of this office and I wish to thank the University Council for bestowing this extraordinary honour upon me.

In trusting its leadership to someone outside of academia, the University has made a clear statement that, as it enters its 70th year, it is recalibrating itself to the demands of the future. Its newly adopted strategic plan stands on three pillars: access, alignment, and agility. I fully endorse the plan and the framework that has been put in place to ensure its timely implementation.

As the University approaches this milestone, most of our contributing countries have already, or are about to celebrate their 50th year of independence or self-government. For those of us who remember the glorious evenings when the Union Jack was lowered and our national flags were run up, it was a time of great excitement and expectation. Also a time of much change and uncertainty: Would independence work? Could we govern ourselves? There was a view that this experiment would end in failure. The colonial powers had their doubts, based on the number of restrictions and checks placed in our constitutions.

As was to be expected, in the last 50 years we have faced many challenges and weathered many storms; some of them of our own making, some outside of our control. However, today we can celebrate a successful outcome; we have grown into functioning noisy democracies, with fair and free elections, and an unfettered right to free speech. All in all, we are a free people with a system of governance, though not perfect, the envy of many.

The UWI played a pivotal role in building the institutional fabric of our democracies. It has trained our leaders in every field, the lawyers, the physicians, the public servants, the clerics, the teachers, the nurses, the engineers and, dare I forget, the politicians and heads of state. The UWI was instrumental in providing the critical ingredient



to our success: educated, self-assured young people, ready and willing to serve, committed to our cause. If that was the goal in 1948 for establishing the UCWI, then the UWI has been a resounding success.

By any measure, we have made a success of ourselves. We have improved our standard of living, we have improved our healthcare, we have improved access to education, we have improved our infrastructure. We have been successful. We may be materially poor when compared to our large, rich neighbours, but we are not backward! We are rich in talent!

In our exuberance and self-confidence we often forget that we are only five million souls. Yet we have made our mark; in sport, in music, in the arts; in academia we punch well above our weight. Marley, Rihanna, Bolt... these are global icons, known and loved by millions. Less well known but equally astounding are our Nobel Laureates.

I mention these larger than life figures only to illustrate those who have achieved global prominence. There are

tens of thousands of West Indians who have achieved remarkable success in every field, many of them alumni of this University.

Anniversaries are times of celebration, but they must also be used for reflection and for rededication. The world around us is changing at an astonishing pace and every indication is that change will accelerate exponentially in the years ahead. Every aspect of our lives will be touched by this and many of these changes will be disruptive to the existing order.

I have been told that the University must embrace change, and this is true. However the whole truth is that we must all embrace change. This maelstrom will engulf us all and how we deal with it will define our future.

These changes will impact on the social order as citizens become more connected, both to each other and the outside world. Gone are the days where we stood on the seashore and wondered what the world beyond was like. Today we know. We can see for ourselves without leaving our homes. This presents a major challenge. It creates a level of expectation among the youth that **MUST** be satisfied.

Our economies will be challenged by the coming changes. If my predecessor had proffered in his address that by the time he left office there would be electric self-driving cars, it would have been met with a polite smile. If I suggest now, that by the end of my term artificial intelligence will have rendered obsolete many of the professions that have existed since the time of the Romans, that too would be dismissed.

We have two clear choices as I see it: We either join this new revolution, realign all of our institutions and processes to accept a state of constant change, use technology to bridge the divide that separates us from this world, and force ourselves into this new club whether it welcomes us or not. Our greatest challenge will be ourselves; to change our mindset, to dream big, to act big, to never conceive failure and most important – to allow the young among us to lead the way. I will not describe the other choice, as it is not worth considering. It involves failure, disorder and poverty.

Initially, technology companies provided tools to improve productivity in the traditional economy. As processing power increased and the Internet became all-pervasive, technology companies themselves began to provide services directly to the consumer. Today, technology companies driven by big data are disrupting traditional industries and profoundly changing interpersonal communication, the retail industry, the hospitality industry, the transport industry, and so it goes.

This is just the beginning of the change. Technology

## ■ THE INSTALLATION OF THE CHANCELLOR



**PRINCIPAL WELCOME:** Professor Brian Copeland, Principal of the St. Augustine Campus welcomes Chancellor Robert Bermudez to the UWI family after the installation ceremony.



**AT THE RECEPTION:** Chancellor Robert Bermudez and his wife, Ms. Usha Maraj. PHOTOS: MARIA NUNES

will drive everything in the future and will displace traditional jobs, from structural engineering to brick-laying. Our challenge will be to navigate a path through this to avoid social chaos.

The University of the West Indies has a pivotal role to play in assuring that we prepare our young people to face this exciting and ever changing world, and to retrain those of us for whom it is never too late to learn.

The University does not have a moment to waste, as change is upon us. The needs of our undergraduates are morphing as I speak. Importantly, the university needs to work collaboratively with the other institutions of learning, starting with the primary school systems to ensure that we receive more properly prepared matriculants, better able to benefit from a tertiary education.

The University now sees itself as an international institution with relationships on several continents. We must also see ourselves as an exporter of education. We have beautiful campuses in exotic locations, where millions come to holiday.

We need to use this comparative advantage along with our high academic standards and the fact that we are English-speaking countries to attract more international fee-paying students to improve the University's finances and create further diversity.

Financing is and will always be a major challenge. A university education is an aspiration of every family and in our case the commitment of every state. It will never be inexpensive and requires sacrifice on the part of everyone. The University must continue to grow its commercial activities. There is much opportunity for partnerships with the private sector as well as with the contributing states, to improve the finances of the University. To do this we need to step out of our comfort zone. We must learn to monetize our assets and create value by involving our academics in designing the solutions for the future.

Nonetheless, we must never forget our core purpose – the education of our youth. We cannot just produce certified young people. We must produce energized citizens with a social conscience, motivated to change their world.

The University must encourage student activism, discourse on the issues of the day, and the freedom to develop their minds outside of the strict confines of their studies. In my humble opinion, social skills, empathy, social consciousness and a concern for equity are as equally important to success as is technical competence.

This Daaga Auditorium, named in memory of a rebellious former slave, brings to mind a rebel of my time, Makandal Daaga, a man who chose to identify himself as the “Chief Servant” – a description that resonates deeply with me, as it captures what I believe good leadership to be.

So here I stand, my fellow West Indians, in these unfamiliar robes, chief servant of The University of the West Indies at the threshold of its 70th year, firm in the belief that we have the talent and resolve to meet the future with confidence!

I would like to thank the University again for providing me the opportunity to serve, as well as my family, my friends, my colleagues and the thousands of people who have touched my life and have made me what I am today.



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# University Ceremonies and Rituals

## *Purpose and Tradition or Simply Passé?*

BY SHYVONNE WILLIAMS

The installation of Chancellor Robert Bermudez and the July induction of Campus Principal Professor Brian Copeland, mean that two of the University's highest levels of ceremonial events were held at the St. Augustine Campus during the past three months.

Not to be overlooked as meaningless pomp and ceremony, these events call attention to the leadership transition of the regional institution, signalling the conferment of authority, and serve as the formal welcoming of these senior office-holders into the university system.

Episode Five of the Netflix biographical series, *The Crown*, which tells the story of the reign of Queen Elizabeth II, references the prestige and almost religious significance associated with bestowing the power of leadership. In that episode, Queen Elizabeth II places her husband, Prince Phillip in charge of her coronation and he upsets the planning committee with his insistence that it should deviate from ostentatious tradition.

Prince Phillip attempts to convince the Queen that her coronation should be a more modern affair: forward-looking and symbolic of the socio-economic and technological change of the times, her youth and the fact that a female would be taking the crown. In the end, although he had his way in introducing a modern twist by televising the coronation, Prince Phillip lost the battle of altering much of the traditions and rituals—including kneeling to his wife when she was crowned.

According to the archives, in 1943 the vice-chancellors of United Kingdom universities convened a special commission to consider the principles which should guide the promotion of higher education, learning and research... in the colonies. The recommendations of that commission saw a Royal Charter which established The UWI in 1947—opened formally in 1948—initially as an external College of the University of London as the University College of the West Indies (UCWI) and was made fully independent in 1962. It's no surprise then that these British traditions of ritualistic ceremonies are a standing feature at our West Indian university.

Dating back even further, the traditions and rituals—although adapted from the British—incorporate elements centuries-older, such as academic regalia, an academic procession and the mace, which are based on the tradition of the medieval university. The Middle Ages have made a substantial contribution to the modern course of instruction. The idea of a university itself is a medieval institution by origin and its structure which includes the division of teachers and of students into faculties and the ordered systems of curricula and the awarding of degrees, the administration of the university society, all took shape in medieval times. Even the name 'university,' which comes from *universitas* or *guild*, is a reminder of the fact, since guilds were a characteristic feature of medieval society.



PHOTO: MARIA NUNES

Ritual is characteristic of higher education, and not just in the British systems. In the US higher education system, the equivalent of an installation ceremony is called an inauguration or investiture or induction. Furthermore, in the US colleges and universities, the academic year is bookended with convocation and commencement. In between is a long line of building dedications, class galas, tree-planting ceremonies, alumni merrymaking, and founder's commemorations. Clearly, rituals and ceremonies are cultural markers of college campuses. (Manning, K 2000). But as Prince Phillip asked, what's the purpose of these traditions and rituals in this modern era?

Well, rituals are said to provide cultural preservation and transformation and allow communication that cannot be stated overtly and dramatise the rich history of the institution. As The UWI turns a page in its history, approaching its 70th anniversary, one can see the need for reinforcing the University's rich history at ceremonial events while transforming its strategic direction. Whether it's an induction or installation, the ceremony celebrating a new leadership is a joyous occasion on the University calendar. Months of planning, high profile guest lists and local and regional announcements herald an occasion of great joy for the University community.

### Induction Ceremony for a Campus Principal

I learned that inductions were uniquely constructed by The UWI, during the stewardship of Sir Alister McIntyre as

Vice-Chancellor. The first was a special double ceremony held at the Mona Campus in 1991 when Professor Gerald Lalor became its Campus Principal and Professor Marlene Hamilton was appointed Deputy Campus Principal. However, the inductions of Deputy Principals have been discontinued.

The programme begins with procession of the academic staff (every formal University ceremony begins and ends with one) which was derived from the clerical processions of the Roman Catholic Church. After the arrival of government and state dignitaries, the Chancellor's procession follows. This comprises the Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor, Campus Principals and Pro Vice-Chancellors who are all seated on the stage. Welcome remarks are delivered by the University Registrar and followed with greetings by representatives from across the University community. The Vice-Chancellor then typically contextualises the moment and the actual induction involves him robing the new Principal. This is followed by brief remarks from the University Chancellor, who then caps the Principal in the mortarboard (the academic cap with a stiff, flat, square top and tassel) and all of this culminates with the Principal's inaugural address.

### Installation Ceremony for a Chancellor

On the other hand, the actual installation of the Chancellor is among the first order of proceedings at this ceremony. Following the academic and Chancellor's processions, the University Registrar delivers introductory remarks, followed by the Vice-Chancellor who announces the purpose of the assembly during his statement. The Chancellor is then called upon to recite the official declaration, which reads that he has undertaken an obligation to promote the well-being of the University and its members. As part of the ceremony's ritual, he is also robed by the Presidents of the Student Guild Councils across the four campuses, and capped in the mortarboard, as a symbol of knowledge and wisdom, by a representative from among the Campus Principals. He then receives the mace—a wooden staff—from the Vice-Chancellor, signaling his official installation.

Although steeped in tradition, over the years the installation and induction ceremonies have been modernised and cultural variations are seen across the campus territories and based on the personalities and preferences of the incumbents. Chancellor Bermudez for instance, had a hand in the selection of some of the music used in his ceremony, requesting contemporary Caribbean artistes. The current version of installations, inductions and other University events also incorporate livestreaming and digital campaigns, inviting the world to tune in. I think Prince Phillip would approve.

*Not to be overlooked as meaningless pomp and ceremony, these events call attention to the leadership transition of the regional institution, signalling the conferment of authority, and serve as the formal welcoming of these senior office-holders into the university system.*

# HOME AT LAST

*Theatre and library to come next*

BY JOEL HENRY

In 1948, Beryl McBurnie, a fire sign, created the Little Carib Theatre. Already a renowned performer in New York, she had chosen to return to Trinidad a few years earlier. McBurnie was a dancer but she was also very much a teacher and an innovator. She had grand designs for Caribbean art. The Little Carib, the first of its kind space for dance and theatre in the region, was integral to her plans. And though the theatre suffered setbacks, it remains today a centre for the performing arts. Its stewards understand what McBurnie did—to thrive, the arts need a home.

On August 28, another home, a centre for teaching and innovation in the arts, was opened. UWI St. Augustine's Department of Creative and Festival Arts (DCFA), after many years, has its new headquarters.

"The time has come to have a pre-professional space," says Jessel Murray, Head of the DCFA.

Like the artists and thinkers of the colonial era, Mr. Murray views culture not only as a means of self-actualisation, but also as a resource for the development of the country and region. But where their focus was on Caribbean identity, his is more material.

"We are training professionals here. Not only for themselves, but in the current climate we have to add to the country itself. We have to create our own kinds of employment. I encourage young people to do what you love. But my message to young people is that you have to be able to love it but it also has to be economically viable. This is the best part of the job we are all in. You can like it and you can make a living from it," he says.

## Off-campus housing

It's early days in the new semester and early days at the new DCFA building. Sharing a space with the UWI Open Campus on Gordon Street, the new building has its own entrance on Cheeseman Avenue. Its lines are gentle, colours warm, and lecture rooms expansive. The hallways are, for the most, bare, except for the occasional student wandering through, taking in the new space.

"My great stress reliever is watching the students on the first day," says Mr. Murray, "watching them go 'oohh and ahhh'."

For the DCFA Head and his staff, it has been a challenging two-year journey to see their new headquarters completed, with many challenges still remaining. Even so, it is an improvement over their previous circumstances.

Founded 31 years ago at Agostini Street through the work of the late Dr. Patricia Ismond, and led by dramatist and educator Rawle Gibbons, the DCFA (then known as the Creative Arts Centre) grew and spilled past its boundaries. There are five units: Theatre Arts, Dance, Music, Visual Arts and Carnival Studies. These units and the DCFA offices were split between the Centre and Gordon Street. The building at Agostini Street, although beautiful, is showing its age.

"As Head, having to go back and forth between the two buildings was horrendous – dealing with traffic, running a divided department and having administrative systems in both places," Mr. Murray says.

Now he's focused on what the new space can bring:

"We are constantly trying to increase the professionalism

**"A theatre is not an entertainment space. It is a space for performance. Entertainment, as I define it, is passive. It is background. Performance requires direct engagement."**



PHOTO: ATIBA CUDJOE

and when you add professional spaces to professionalism there is so much more you can do to push the envelope."

He says the new building was phase one of a two-phase plan. The second part consists of the construction of a 400-person capacity full-service theatre and a library.

He says "a theatre is not an entertainment space. It is a space for performance. Entertainment, as I define it, is passive. It is background. Performance requires direct engagement."

The DCFA Head knows performance. As a music director he has led both the National Steel Symphony Orchestra and the National Sinfonia Orchestra. He is musical director for the UWI Arts Chorale and UWI Steel, multiple national award-winning orchestras. As an educator at Smith College and Amherst Regional High School in the US, he formed choirs and even a steelband. Those in the UWI community who do not follow orchestral music might know him best for his work as musical director for the annual graduation ceremony. For many it's the best part of the ceremony.

"Graduation ceremony is one of the easiest things to do," he laughs. "It's just a little vignette, a distraction from all the speeches and ceremony."

Easy is a relative term. As DCFA Head, lecturer and musical director Mr. Murray is incredibly busy. At its most extreme, he worked 14 hours a day, seven days a week.

He says, "In my family we tend to be workaholics. When I became Head of DCFA I was still leading National Steel. At that level, whenever the Prime Minister calls, you

say 'yes sir'."

This ethic guides how he leads the department: "There is nothing else but focused hard work."

Now more than ever, in the worsening economic climate and where the decades-long calls for diversification have become shrill, focused hard work seems essential for artists. For years, academics such as Dr. Keith Nurse and Dr. Jo-anne Tull (Lecturer and Coordinator in DCFA's Carnival Studies Unit) have advocated for the proper development of creative industries. Policymakers have made limited moves in that space. There have been some advances but there is still much unrealised potential. The DCFA's role is to give students the capacity to develop the industry themselves.

"I'd like to see us continue on the path to make students more self-reliant," Mr. Murray says. "We have to be able to answer the question students ask of us all the time: what do I do with my degree? We have to create some pathways for them to be self-sufficient so they can succeed in their craft."

Apart from the focus on rigour and professionalism, he points to programmes such as the Master of Arts in Creative Design: Entrepreneurship.

But there is something else that DCFA can do to help its students take ownership of a viable creative industry. In fact, the Department has done it already.

While waiting for our interview, a student approached me, asking for directions. She was lost in the smooth stone, the glass doors and high ceilings of her new school, a school for the arts, worthy of the arts.

## MENTAL HEALTH

The University's Counselling and Psychological Services (CAPS) is tucked away in a corner of the Health Services Unit (HSU) building. It's a small space – just a couple offices and a waiting area with a brochure stand chock-full of information on various issues that affect university students. A quick rifle through and you'll find the usual suspects of student distress: navigating relationships, dealing with stress, overcoming anxiety. You'll also recognise other common plagues like eating disorders and self-harm, and mental illnesses like bi-polar disorder and depression.

If you're visiting and you have to wait, worry not – there's a lot to keep you occupied and enlightened, which is, in fact, one of the CAPS biggest responsibilities, says Dr. Sarah Chin Yuen Kee, Counsellor and Co-ordinator. For a large campus like The UWI St. Augustine, with its student population of almost 19,000, "a counselling service ... should be playing a huge role in promoting proactive self-care and mental health wellness," she says.

A clinical psychologist, Dr. Chin Yuen Kee has more than 20 years' experience working in mental health; she's spent the last 11 at the CAPS. Until two years ago, the CAPS was a part of UWI's HSU, but following a restructuring of the campus' student services, it now falls under the Division of Student Services and Development (DSSD). The CAPS' Mission is "promoting mental health and wellness across the campus community."

Counselling services are vital to a university for a number of reasons. The typical university student is between 18 and 25 years old, the "key age range where a lot of mental illnesses appear for the first time, like bipolar disorder or schizophrenia," says Dr. Chin Yuen Kee. "That age range is essentially the bulk of our student population," so, though they may be the minority, there are "students who will develop mental illnesses during their time at university."

Add to that the fact that society is "more stressful," especially as students are taking greater responsibility for their own lives – financial problems may arise and, of course, they're dealing with the general stress of university life – "mental health can take a real bashing."

In addition to its face-to-face counselling services for students, the CAPS educates staff and students on mental health through outreach programmes, which communicate its services and encourage students to take advantage. However, the CAPS faces a challenge. "People often think ... something [must be] seriously wrong with you to have to go to counselling," shares Dr. Chin Yuen Kee. "There's that stigma that if you do come you're really messed up." So, she takes the CAPS to the students.

Since all undergraduate students must complete one or two foundation courses, one initiative has been to include a 15-minute presentation, covering a different mental health topic each semester. She points out that the Science, Medicine and Technology

in Society foundation course always had a health component, but it didn't address mental health. "So, I negotiated with the course facilitator to include a half-hour session."

"Obviously I'm advertising the counselling service," she says, "and I always emphasise that visiting a counsellor ... is just an opportunity to talk out whatever is going on in your life and help you figure out the next best step."

She is aware, however, that despite efforts to destigmatise counselling, "a lot of students will never come and see a counsellor." They may talk to someone they identify with or trust, however, like a fellow student, Resident Hall Assistant (RA) or lecturer. So, "we've instigated all kinds of training across campus," like the Mind the Gap co-curricular course, which is a prerequisite training programme for students joining the Guild of Students' Peer Counselling Association (PCA). "We cover lots of common mental health issues," and focus on teaching active listening skills and assessing risk, Dr. Chin Yuen Kee explains.

The Faculty of Science and Technology has a peer advisor programme, where "students sign up to help other students within that faculty." The CAPS provides them with training in listening and helping skills, dealing with students experiencing trauma, and recognising common mental illnesses, like depression. RAs also have a mental health component in their training. "It's very important that staff know there is a service that they can call for advice," if they're worried about a student, "or can refer [that] student to."

There are workshops too.

"We've run several 'Mind Your Madness: Challenging the Stigma' workshops," which focus on issues faced by students. She recalls one workshop series that focused on "obsessive love," a topic relevant to university students, as many are "negotiating serious relationships for the first time," and don't understand that domestic violence is not only physical, says Dr. Chin Yuen Kee. "Your partner checking your phone all the time, criticising the way you dress, bad talking your friends, or not wanting you to go back to your family on the weekends," also constitutes abusive patterns. "That was the most popular workshop ever," she says.

Another topic addressed "why sanity is a myth," and introduced the idea that "mental health exists on a continuum. We can all have symptoms that, if they were to persist [and] make us less capable of doing our work, could actually constitute a diagnosable condition, but doesn't mean you have that for life," says Dr. Chin Yuen Kee. Mental health is fluid. "Sometimes we are more well and sometimes less well."

Other workshop topics include suicide, self-harm, anxiety and depression. These workshops are free and open to the campus community so "people ... understand [mental health] a little bit better and there are fewer myths like, 'only weak people get depressed.' That's just ridiculous," she says. There are "genetic reasons and underlying physiological factors that

# MINDS M

Counselling services try to

BY SERA



"Over the  
suicidal r  
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people don't understand, so they think that mental illness is in your head," and people experiencing depression should simply pray about it or adopt a better attitude. "But," she says, "if your biochemistry is working against you," sometimes medication is necessary, "just as you would take insulin for diabetes."

Dr. Chin Yuen Kee also talks about the CAPS Open Mind Series which looks at "more provocative stuff," like "why monogamy is a myth" and, last year's workshop on sexuality which explored LGBT issues, different sexualities and gender identities, the "ABCs of sexuality."

In 2013, the CAPS also established the Safe Space programme, a therapeutic support group, which meets weekly, to discuss issues of "sex, sexuality, gender



# MATTER

*help campus cope with life*

H A C H A M



Over the last academic year, 116 risk checks were completed just three weeks into the current semester. Dr. Sarah Chin Yuen Kee has completed over 20 risk assessments.

identity, stigma [and] bullying,” says Dr. Chin Yuen Kee. The intention was to initiate a conversation across campus, “because, in the Caribbean, there are pockets of huge intolerance to anything that is beyond the heteronormative view.” Young people who may be questioning their sexuality or realise that they “don’t fall into the standard,” may be “afraid to come out” or ask questions openly, “and we know that [LGBTQ students], are more likely to be isolated.” So, she says, the CAPS responded to the need for safe spaces for LGBTQ students by creating the Safe Space programme. She explains that it’s a peer support group, where these students can get to know, and socialise with, supportive peers, “both in and out of the LGBTQ community.” Since Safe Space began, “we’ve had a huge

shift on campus,” she says. In fact, “last year, a student group started, called LGBTQ Joy ... and I thought that was fantastic,” – it was a student-led initiative and the first of its kind. The DSSD recently hosted a “love march,” which was another event with big impact. “Again, for the first time, I saw students with LGBTQ rainbow posters and LGBTQ slogans ... I really don’t think that would have happened back in 2008.”

This semester, says Dr. Chin Yuen Kee, the CAPS is focusing on suicide, “because that’s another issue that’s very misunderstood.” Typical misconceptions are that people who consider suicide, or attempt it, are “selfish or weak.” The truth is, “suicide is rarely about wanting to die, but about coping with incredible pain.” If your life is unbearable and you have no hope of it ever changing, ending your life may seem logical, she explains. “It’s often an expression of despair, a desire for escape or relief, not a desire to end your life.”

But the stigma and shame attached to suicide often prevents those suffering from talking about their feelings, “and it’s almost impossible to get any support if you don’t speak up.”

Unfortunately, the incidence of students experiencing suicidal thoughts is too common. Dr. Chin Yuen Kee says that the CAPS conducts risk assessments for students who indicate thoughts of suicide. These thoughts, she says, can be “as fleeting as, ‘I wish I were dead,’” or they could be “an incredibly well-thought-out plan.” These assessments are meant to determine “what the student’s suicidal feelings mean to them.”

Over the last academic year, 116 suicidal risk checks were completed and, just three weeks into the current semester, Dr. Chin Yuen Kee has already done over 20 risk assessments.

The past few years have seen suicides on campus and within the wider community. In an effort to start a dialogue on understanding suicide, the CAPS has partnered with the Yellow Pebble Foundation to initiate the [Fullstop.] project, which aims “to promote mental wellness among our young adults.” It was launched over the August vacation, via social media – look for “[Fullstop.] project” on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter – and was rolled out on the campus with this year’s orientation. The project will also be highlighted as a part of October’s Mental Health Awareness initiatives on campus. The UWI staff and students are showing their support by visiting [Fullstop.] online and posting photos of themselves wearing [Fullstop.] buttons, posing with the [Fullstop.] sign, or just posting a selfie, to say, ‘I don’t stigmatise and I will support a friend if they open up to me.’

Through [Fullstop.], the CAPS is also attempting to gather data “on our experiences of suicide locally,” Dr. Chin Yuen Kee says. The project is running an anonymous online survey with just four “yes-no” questions. “We’re encouraging people, once you reside in Trinidad and Tobago, to go online, fill out the survey and help us gather local data.”

The CAPS is also encouraging students to take care of their mental health, by hosting fun events and activities this October. Of particular interest are the Mood Food workshops that the CAPS will facilitate in collaboration with the PCA. They will be held at the residence halls on UWI’s main campus, as well as at the Mt. Hope campus. These workshops aim to help students understand their eating habits and how those habits affect their mood and cognitive abilities. It’s important that students know they need to eat well so they can “study well, sleep well and remember what [they] studied,” advises Dr. Chin Yuen Kee. Not only will students learn the theory behind healthy eating habits, they’ll also learn to prepare budget friendly snacks that are healthy and easy to make. Smoothies and cinnamon popcorn were on last year’s menu.

The CAPS and the PCA have also approached U.WESpeak, a spoken word performance group, to “partner up for their October event,” so their performances will showcase some aspect of mental health.

Dr. Chin Yuen Kee says that the CAPS will also highlight stress management, mindfulness and meditation throughout the semester. There will be Mindful Mondays, a weekly workshop focused on “relaxation, meditation and mindfulness.” A workshop series on anxiety, held every Thursday in October, will teach students about different aspects of anxiety, like “social anxiety, panic, performance anxiety and why anxiety overlaps with depression.” The CAPS is working with the Guild of Students to host two workshops for postgraduate and final-year undergraduate students, on coping with stress and relaxation strategies, as well as recognizing depression and suicide.

With so many mental health initiatives already established and those to come during October’s Mental Health Awareness drive, Dr. Chin Yuen Kee hopes that all students will have the opportunity to participate in at least one activity that will encourage them to take better care of themselves.



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## International Forum on DIPLOMATIC TRAINING



Delegates from 55 institutions from 48 countries with representation from every continent of the world met in Santiago, Chile for the International Forum on Diplomatic Training from September 6-8, 2017. This meeting of Deans and Directors of Diplomatic Academies and Institutes of International Relations was organized by the Diplomatic Academy of Chile “Andrés Bello” and the programme focused on ‘Diplomatic training on the content and implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development’.

As the only representative from the English-speaking Caribbean, the Diplomatic Academy of Chile invited the Manager of the DAOC, Dr. Khellon Roach to speak on Panel 2 of the forum: “The Regional Scenario: Tackling Key Political and Development Challenges and Opportunities in Latin America and the Caribbean”.

Dr. Roach highlighted six main challenges to the Caribbean region: Crime & Security; Health, in particular, non-communicable diseases); Energy Security; Climate Change and the Environment; Natural Disasters; and Access to Financing not only to address the various challenges, but to also implement the new 2030 SDG Agenda.

Dr. Roach also underscored the importance of multi-track diplomacy for the Caribbean to punch above its weight and the need for deeper collaboration between the academies and institutions of Latin America and the Caribbean.

The organization of the IFDT around the 2030 SDGs was a very timely intervention and beneficial to the DAOC as it plans to offer several programmes related to the 2030 SDG agenda in 2018. Although the DAOC is not, at present, a member of the IFDT, after consultation with representatives of its co-chair (Diplomatic Academy of Vienna), the DAOC is actively considering formal membership.

### THE MAKANDAL DAAGA SCHOLARSHIP IN LAW



The family of Makandal Daaga: from left, Akhenaton Daaga, his mother Liseli and sister, Karomana, at right, with Kareem Marcelle, scholarship winner, and Professor Rose-Marie Belle-Antoine, Dean of the Faculty of Law. PHOTO: ATIBA CUDJOE

## For Social Justice and Equality

BY PROFESSOR ROSE-MARIE BELLE ANTOINE  
DEAN, FACULTY OF LAW

Usually, when we think of lawyers, not so positive associations come to mind. We at the Faculty of Law want to change that. The Faculty of Law, St Augustine wants to create, not only graduates with excellent lawyering, technical skills, but more importantly, wonderful citizens. As Dean, it has been one of my most important goals and a burning passion to inculcate in our charges a sense of community, a vision of law as a social engineer and a multidisciplinary instrument of progress for the improvement of society. We must promote lawyers who will be active proponents of positive change with a view to people-centred justice.

From its inception, the Faculty of Law, St. Augustine has shaped its offerings of legal education, scholarship and outreach to reflect these values. We have been promoting a conscious activism, as part of the Faculty’s image and in our students. This has been demonstrated by our involvement with human rights projects, work with non-governmental organizations and other public education programmes, over the years.

The Faculty of Law is also focussed on broadening access to legal education, long considered a privileged education, while at the same time, making certain that the products of such education represent the core tenets of law, that is, justice and progress, in sustainable ways. Lawyers should come from all walks of life, to better serve the society.

The Makandal Daaga Scholarship in Law was created to fulfil these objectives. Persons with a proven track record of community service, or activism, who would not normally have the opportunity to pursue The UWI law degree, are the target applicants. Such advocacy includes work on issues of justice, equality, or democracy, whether in an NGO, governmental, regional capacity or in an individual capacity. Candidates are selected after satisfying a select committee on interview that he or she will use the once in a lifetime opportunity to add value to the society, for the public good, to uplift, inspire and elevate.

It is named in honour of someone, who, although not a lawyer, embodied that very passion for social justice and egalité that we wish to envelop our law graduates with.

The work of late social activist Makandal Daaga, the “Chief Servant” of the people, who spearheaded the Black Power Movement, focused on the central tenets

of law: equality, social justice and fairness. His advocacy made substantial impacts on areas that are of particular relevance to law and legal policy. Makandal Daaga (born Geddes Granger) was one of Trinidad and Tobago’s most distinguished and inspiring sons. He was a revolutionary leader best known for his leadership of the transformational Black Power Movement in the 1970s, striving to create a nation and region that elevated the place of persons of African and non-white heritage. The struggle that Mr. Daaga and his comrades engaged in challenged the status quo to create a more egalitarian and just society, including the goal of economic justice. Mr. Daaga and what his lifework represents, exemplify what the Faculty of Law believes those who shape and implement the law should be. His advocacy, and that of the several organisations he instituted, made significant impacts on areas that are of particular relevance to law and legal policy. These include race relations, non-discrimination and equality, labour relations and employment practices, equity in property ownership and commercial arrangements, democratic governance and constitutional reform, gender empowerment, youth development and the protection of our cultural heritage.

Mr. Daaga did not only lobby for change. He succeeded in bringing about important, tangible reforms, not least in relation to the employment opportunities for persons of African and East Indian descent in Trinidad and Tobago, which itself influenced other countries. His work also helped to reshape the commercial infrastructure of the country in terms of the legal ownership and control of capital, which previously had been dominated by external and ‘white’ interests. This notion of concrete progress is an important indicator for the Scholarship.

Our inaugural Makandal Daaga Scholar, Kareem Marcelle, is a young man from Sea Lots, Port of Spain with a determination, not just to succeed in his own life despite the odds, but to elevate his community. He exemplifies the *raison d’être* of this Scholarship and the life and work of Makandal Daaga. His story is inspiring to us and we hope to our students and stakeholders. We are ready to do all that we can to help him succeed, and in so doing, create a better country and region.

■ THE MAKANDAL DAAGA SCHOLARSHIP IN LAW

# Kareem Marcelle: The First Scholar

BY REBECCA ROBINSON

“He represented the best that East Port of Spain had to offer,” said an outgoing minister of government. The line could easily describe Kareem Marcelle, a young man who has set aside his own turbulent life to serve others in the East Port of Spain region and who, because of his activism, has earned the Makandal Daaga Scholarship to study Law at The UWI, St. Augustine Campus this academic year.

Kareem is the last of four children for his mother and father who respectively earned \$700 fortnightly as a kindergarten teacher, and \$1,500 monthly working in the market. “But we were rich in morals and good values,” he says.

He recalled that in Standard Four, just before the start of the new school year, his father said quite suddenly, that he was going to the US for three months. With two children in secondary school and two in primary school, emotional and financial upheaval ensued. His two older brothers stopped school to take jobs to help provide for the five of them. It came to light later that his father was not returning. Unknown to them, he had a wife and she had sent for him.

Kareem moved through Sacred Heart Boys R.C. to Daniels Community College, which went into receivership shortly after he started, making his hard to come by books and one shirt abruptly obsolete. He was transferred to Trinity College in Maraval, where, in spite of the choppy start he became president of the debate club and the 2012 National Youth Parliamentarian.

At home, he began to get involved in the life of the community. He is still the PRO for the Beetham Gardens Village Council, which organizes inter-community sports and cultural competitions aimed at uniting factions in the area. For three months (June-August) every year, young ladies who enter the queen show are trained not just to walk on a stage, but also to be role models, and the netball and football competitions end with a grand family day. Kareem is also the PRO for the Positive Impact Organization, another



Kareem Marcelle, the first recipient of the award.  
PHOTO: ATIBA CUDJOE

community-based initiative that provides mentorship and counseling services for schools in the area without guidance counselors.

Another community outreach organization Kareem is part of is BEYOND, which is the Beetham Estate Youth Outreach Network Development. He is the Youth and Education Officer and assists in running after-school programmes, one of which organizes for students to complete their SBAs.

“It’s really easy not to hand in SBAs, the cost of a colour print is one dollar a page, plus the cost of trips to Internet cafes. When you hand it in and the teacher marks on it,

where is more money coming from to re-print a whole project? Many children from this area do not have access to these resources, so they do not hand in SBAs. This was my struggle too. I know,” he says.

Because these factors are the reality for children from the area, volunteers, usually graduates of the programme, come back and help current students stay on track to handing in SBAs, frequently helping with the cost of printing. BEYOND also helps annually by gifting 25 families with completed booklist items that include uniforms – the scarcity of which is also familiar to him.

How does a self-made successful young man deal with the society-imposed stigma attached to people from the Beetham? Kareem: “The bad elements in my community represent 1% of the people who live there. Most people are law-abiding and hard-working citizens. And personally, I try to tell people where I am from early! I think I am a good example of a Beetham resident and I am not running away from it.”

He wants to be an attorney-at-law as he sees law as the foundation of his community, the place that has filled gaps in his family life and where he continues to thrive.

Every year he personally hosts a children’s Christmas party for about 1,500 on Christmas Day, as he knows “what is it like to not have a gift to go outside with on Christmas morning among other children.” Kareem seems motivated to give and to do by all the deficits he experienced in his earlier years. As PRO for the Beetham Gardens Village Council he is currently organizing the area’s first community career fair, which will come off in November.

Kareem was a facilities assistant at NIDCO for the three years prior to winning the scholarship. He has since relinquished the position for a combination of reading for his Law degree and continuing to work in his community. It is really fitting that this young, bright star wins the first offer of the Makandal Daaga Scholarship in Law.

For more on the application guidelines visit [www.sta.uwi.edu/scholarships](http://www.sta.uwi.edu/scholarships). Applications for this scholarship close on May 7, 2018. Applicants must also satisfy the matriculation requirements of The University of the West Indies and must simultaneously apply to the Faculty of Law by May 31st, 2018. For more information visit call 662-2002 ext.82039, 82040; email: [law@sta.uwi.edu](mailto:law@sta.uwi.edu)

■ CONFERENCE OF THE ECONOMY, OCTOBER 11-12, 2017, LEARNING RESOURCE CENTRE

## In Tribute to Sir Alister McIntyre

BY ROXANNE BRIZAN-ST MARTIN



This year, the Conference of the Economy (COTE), is being held under the theme “Trade and Caribbean Development Nexus” and honours Sir Alister McIntyre a distinguished scholar, an ambassador and advocate, both regionally and internationally, for integrated

and export competitive Caribbean economies.

Sir Alister recognized the role of integration, trade in goods and services and poverty eradication to achieve sustainable development, which laid the foundation for his

work and career. He was known as a venerable Caribbean integrationist and, as a practitioner, piloted the movement for integration as Secretary-General of Caricom 1974-1977. He served at The UWI in many capacities, including as Vice-Chancellor from September 1988-September 1998.

Conference presentations will be organised along five subthemes:

1. *Regional Human Resource Development*
2. *Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and Financial Development – A Regional Assessment*
3. *Economic Integration in the Caribbean: Can it Work?*
4. *Issues in Caribbean Development*
5. *Export Led Growth*

In his book “*The Caribbean and the Wider World*,” Sir Alister provided commentaries on his life and career, spanning his upbringing in his home country of Grenada to his role in the development of The UWI. His career, which focuses on Caribbean and global developments, was attributed to his drive to overcome many challenges and build capacity in himself and by extension the Caribbean region.

For the younger generation, Sir Alister has provided historical perspective on the development process in the Caribbean.

## ■ CAMPUS NEWS

# A STRONG WOMAN

*Worth her weight in gold*

BY ZAHRA GORDON



**“Powerlifting is a sport that forces you to meet yourself and learn who you are.”**

PHOTO: ATIBA CUDJOE

As a female powerlifter in Trinidad and Tobago, Syanna Andrews has encountered a considerable amount of negativity. It has not stopped her one bit.

She was introduced to powerlifting in 2015 and in that short time, Andrews has already represented T&T twice internationally. The first was at the North American Championships in St. Croix, US Virgin Islands in 2016. In July this year, Andrews competed at the Pan American Championships in Orlando, Florida. She topped her class and earned T&T a gold medal.

It was a welcome surprise for Andrews, a second-year UWI, St. Augustine linguistics and languages student, who said she expected to do her best, but not to win.

“I’m still shocked because I didn’t expect it. In the moment it was about doing what I had to do, focusing on lifting, remembering everything my coach said. I was in my own world. It took a while to sink in, but when I think about all the work that I put in and where I came from in terms of injury and all the times I thought about quitting, it was worth it,” she said. “To hear my national anthem being played in front of all these international athletes and experiencing that sense of national pride was great.”

Competing at the international level was an encouraging experience for her. “Internationally, being a woman is not an issue and it’s super inspirational to see other women compete and to witness the kind of weight they can move,” said the 24-year-old athlete.

The local arena has been slightly less motivating. Of the

20 members on the national team, only eight are women. In addition to low female participation, Andrews also faced some opposition to her involvement in the sport.

“In smaller communities we’re more focused on physique and not wanting girls to look like men, but with powerlifting it’s not so much about the aesthetic, it’s about the function of the body. A lot of people look at me and don’t think I lift the amount of weight that I lift because I’m not very muscular and I don’t look like a bodybuilder,” she said.

“That’s the most challenging thing about being a woman in this sport: people expect me to remain feminine. They’ll say things like ‘Don’t look like a man, and don’t lift too much.’ My family at the beginning used to make jokes and say things like you’re not going to have any children or you’ll get a hernia. People assume certain things and think that you’re not supposed to be doing that as a woman. So it’s nice to be able to dispel those myths.”

Another challenge Andrews faces is maintaining a balance between training and school. Andrews has to manage studying and gym sessions, sometimes driving straight from class to training with her coach, Sanjeev Teelucksingh, at Evolution Gym in Chaguana.

The rigorous training required for national and international competing is also new territory for Andrews, who was not active in sports during secondary school.

“Being active is not new to me as I was always involved in a lot of things, but more arts-related: choir and dance. I played football and swam for school but not competitively,” she said.

“The level of training needed to represent the country takes a lot of time and dedication. A minimum gym session for me is three hours. It’s not easy, but anything you want to do you have to give to it.”

Andrews is hoping that this balancing act will help her become an ambassador for both her country and the sport.

“What I really want to do is be a translator or interpreter and the good thing with powerlifting is that you get exposed to a lot of different athletes and cultures. You can travel the world with this sport when you’re good enough. I feel like making these connections and friends will broaden my horizons and I really want to bring that knowledge back home,” she said.

On a larger scale, Andrews would also like to be an ambassador for female powerlifters. She has a poignant message for women within and outside of the sporting community.

“Powerlifting is a sport that forces you to meet yourself and learn who you are. It gives you back so much more than you put in, even when you’re putting in a lot, the rewards are inexplicable. It’s the type of sport where you’re always trying to beat your best lift. I want women to know that this is not a sport for men only. The women who compete in this sport are incredibly strong mentally and physically and those are the type of women we need more in society: women who know how to be strong and who are not ashamed or afraid of that.”

## ALUMNI

# The Future in their Own Hands

*UWI grads get Young Leaders of the Americas awards*

BY PAT GANASE

**Applying their education**, preserving traditional values, and expanding communications through social media tools, three graduates of The UWI have been awarded opportunities to network with Young Leaders of the Americas through an initiative of the US Embassy in Trinidad and Tobago.

Brent Eversley, Kristle Gangadeen, Keron Bascombe, and their associates, are not uncommon in their generation. They demonstrate the smarts, the agility and enterprise to be innovative and worthwhile contributors, not just in Trinidad and Tobago, in the world. Through YLAI, they will be hosted in the USA during October and November with opportunities to learn and teach, to share experiences in – but not exclusive to – agriculture, clean energy, e-commerce, education, entrepreneurship, health care, hospitality, marketing, and branding, among other fields.

## BUSINESS WITH FRIENDS

Brent Eversley belongs to a “liming group” of five friends who met at university and stuck together after graduation “to do small promotions, parties, and entertainment gigs.” The group created a model cooperative: two years of talk (research and development) created a plan, which they are executing, managing to ensure growth and sustainability. With Eversley’s leaning and leadership, they entered the wide open field of agri-business.

In 2012, they launched Green Farm Nation and started hydroponic lettuce production a year later on a 5,000 sq ft house lot. Last month, they moved to a three-acre field in Carlsen Field, Chaguanas. Using small space technology, they grow several varieties of lettuce, bell peppers, cherry tomatoes, and micro-greens for local supermarket chains. Each of the five directors: Eversley, Myron Edwards, Micah Sobers, Fidel Wellington, Marvin Edwards – have different expertise and career paths – finance, engineering, tourism and marketing, agribusiness. Brent runs the farm. But they all come together for the weekly harvest. There are other regular meetings to assess the business, to plan the way forward.

Eversley is fully employed as operations director of the farm. He holds a BSc in Agribusiness Management with a minor in Environmental and Natural Resources Management. A five-year stint working through the ranks of the Trinidad and Tobago AgriBusiness Association (TABAA) provided hands-on experience and further training: greenhouse technology, project management and farm management. When he was retrenched from TABAA in 2012, Green Farm Nation was born. The next business development is agro-processing: they have already started in a modest way “de-leafing” lettuce and packaging in ready-to-use containers. They are looking at inputs to traditional food manufacturers – dried chadon beni or pepper mash – while developing their own processes and products.

“We have unique agri-products that the world requires,” says Eversley. “Our vision is to be competitive at local, regional and international levels. We are working with a network of agri-business producers throughout the Caribbean – from soaps to fresh food. People don’t like to share their techniques, but we can share information.”

## GRANDPA’S ORIGINAL RECIPE

Kristle Gangadeen, a marketing graduate from UWI in 2009 and the Arthur Lok Jack Business School in 2015, co-founded Awedis (Awesome Distributors) in 2013. The first product was Grandpa’s ponche de crème sold at the seasonal artisan markets of that year.

The idea for Grandpa’s emerged when Johan Sherwood,



Brent Eversley is the co-founder and operations manager of Green Farm Nation. PHOTOS COURTESY THE AWARDEES



Kristle Gangadeen has been making and marketing Grandpa’s ponche de crème from an original recipe since 2013.



Keron Bascombe on stage in the final round of the Pitchit Caribbean Mobile app Development Challenge. Tech4agri’s app is called Agriyouth and is one of the few apps that have been part of the regional Caribbean Mobile Innovation Programme (CMIP).

Gangadeen’s student colleague at business school offered his grandfather’s recipe for a test marketing case. This exceptional ponche de crème kept paranderos coming to Grandpa’s door every Christmas. “We have used the original recipe, based on local rums and spices,” says Gangadeen, “and we will introduce a new flavour, caramel cappuccino this Christmas.” This month, she launched her website [www.grandpasTT.com](http://www.grandpasTT.com), and is also on Facebook.

This year, Gangadeen was retrenched from the Tourism Development Company. A national scholar, she grew up in Santa Flora where her grandfather and father worked in the energy sector. Today, she is happy to have a small business with huge potential, and intends to develop it carefully. “We will use recipes for awesome TT traditional foods, elevate them, market locally and then push on the world market.”

Gangadeen became aware of the Young Leaders of the Americas Initiative when she attended the launch of Virtual Reality Pan created by Dingolay Ltd, owned by an alumnus of YLAI.

## SMARTPHONES FOR AGRICULTURE

Keron Bascombe is in agribusiness but has no farm. His fields are the hearts and minds of farmers, aspiring agripreneurs and ultimately, communities everywhere that grow healthy on the products of farmers. He started his blog promoting agribusiness in 2011. Today the Tech4Agri website is a forum and education site, a virtual hub and network for everyone involved in agriculture and agro-production, in Trinidad and Tobago and regionally.

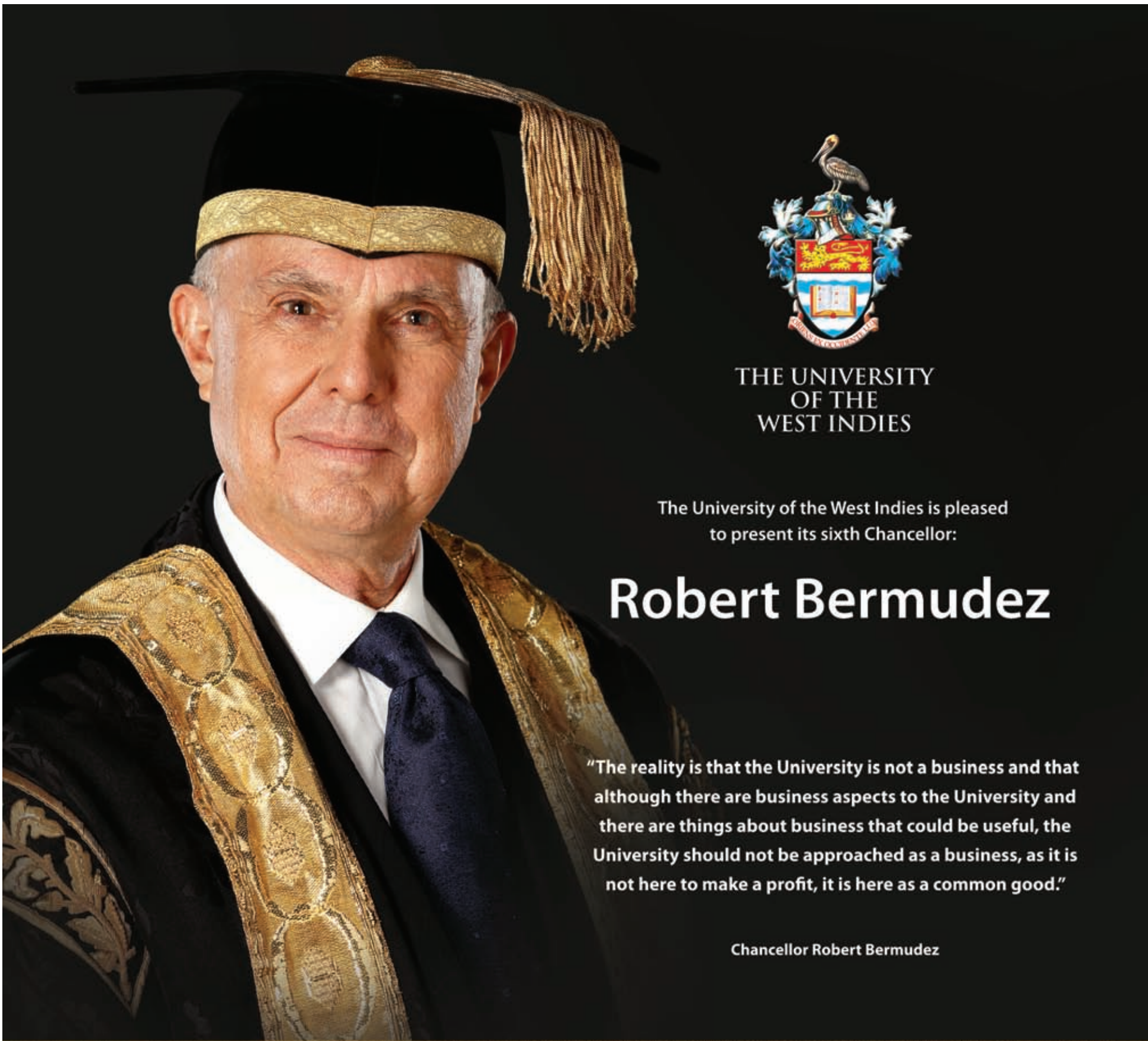
Bascombe considers himself a “freelancer in agricultural journalism and communications.” He uses and trains others in the use of social media – “mobile journalism” and smartphone technologies (filming and editing) – to promote “innovation in agriculture, research, agribusiness, entrepreneurship, science etc.” Tech4Agri works throughout the Caribbean, with seven volunteer members in Trinidad, and three partners from Dominica and St. Kitts.

Although most farmers may not be into the new communication technologies, their children are. Tech4Agri provides training in the use of social media for communication and management; attracting a younger generation back to agri-business by sharing information and fostering inter-generational communication. “Not everyone has the opportunity to pursue further education – especially in agriculture – but the website is a regularly updated source of information from around the world.” See <http://www.tech4agri.com/> for news, training opportunities, innovations in agriculture education and practice.

Bascombe says, “Tech4Agri is changing the way we communicate about agriculture, and hoping to change the dynamic of the sector, attracting young people back to the important business of food production.”

UWI supports a small office on campus for Tech4Agri; and some funding comes from the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA) which is based in the Netherlands. “I am a consultant with CTA; and I volunteer with the Young Professionals for Agricultural Research and Development (YPARD) serving as the country representative for Trinidad and Tobago.” Bascombe is an ambassador for the Thought for Food Organisation; and Tech4agri serves for the next three years as the Youth representative (local) on the Steering committee of the Global Forum for Agricultural Research (GFAR).

Bascombe is currently working on his Master’s in Agri-business communication at UWI St. Augustine.



THE UNIVERSITY  
OF THE  
WEST INDIES

The University of the West Indies is pleased  
to present its sixth Chancellor:

## Robert Bermudez

**"The reality is that the University is not a business and that although there are business aspects to the University and there are things about business that could be useful, the University should not be approached as a business, as it is not here to make a profit, it is here as a common good."**

Chancellor Robert Bermudez

**A man of the Caribbean who is as deeply committed to serving the diverse people of the region as this University has sworn to do.**

Mr. Bermudez has enjoyed a distinguished career in business, spanning more than forty years, during which he established a standing regionally and internationally that is well acknowledged. He purposefully led the growth of the Bermudez Group from a local, family-owned business, to a successful manufacturing concern operating throughout the Caribbean and in Latin America.

The Chancellor holds the highest office in The UWI system, exercising powers and responsibilities laid down in The UWI Charter, Statutes, Ordinances and Regulations. Chancellor Bermudez' vision for the University encompasses a keen sense of the mission, effectiveness, relevance, and interdependence of academia and the economy.

We look forward to his guidance and leadership at a time when regional integration, innovation, enterprise, and international competitiveness are all critical in our continued drive to sustainable Caribbean development.

# Film Programme Alumni FIND GREEN DAYS IN THE CINEMA

BY ZAHRA GORDON

According to producer Christian James, he threw all reason out the window by enrolling in The UWI, St. Augustine Film Programme in 2006. At the Sixth Form level, James, 32, had been a science student and was warned against venturing into the uncertainty of the creative industries.

Director Michael Mooleedhar, 32, has a similar story. Yet, seven years after the two graduated in the Film Programme's first cohort, James and Mooleedhar are collaborating and reaping the benefits of their risky decisions.

Their feature-length film "Green Days by the River," an adaptation of Michael Anthony's classic Caribbean novel, was the first opening night film of the trinidad + tobago film festival (ttff) by a local director and producer. The film was released on the 50th anniversary of the book's publication and helped spawn a resurgence of interest in the novel.

The National Library and Information System (NALIS) chose to relaunch the One Book, One Community initiative this year using the novel and it's been returned to the syllabi in many secondary school literature classes.

"This film is a gift to Trinidad & Tobago. This book is one that means a lot to people and the country and one thing we hope is that the film will be around 50 years from now in the same way the book has tested time. We're hoping to have that type of effect," said Mooleedhar, who also has a Master's in Creative Design Entrepreneurship from UWI.

Mooleedhar and James said they were lucky to have professors such as Dr. Jean Antoine and Bruce Paddington (ttff Founder). "I think what UWI did was it created a good foundation and base. It opened up our minds to all the different aspects of filmmaking. We probably didn't come out of it as experts, but we got really good exposure," said James.

When the project began in 2014, UWI also provided support to the filmmakers in the form of assigning a research assistant from the Institute for Gender and Development Studies to help the team remain true to the pre-Independence period in which Green Days is set. Moreover, the campus turned out to be a talent pool. The production assistants, interns and the two female leads, Vanessa Bartholomew and Nadia Khandai, are all UWI students.

## DELICATE ADAPTATION

The coming of age story of Shell, a teenager in rural Mayaro set in 1952 is one that's not only familiar among Caribbean readers, but also popular. James said the team didn't feel any negative pressure, however, in doing an adaptation. They worked closely with Anthony, who was supportive of the project from inception and also has a cameo in the film. Mooleedhar says the film is as close to the novel as can be while retaining an entertaining quality. "There's a difference between a book and a movie. It's not a play and there're certain creative liberties you take to make it more cinematic."



Christian James and Michael Mooleedhar shake hands with Michael Anthony, author of "Green Days by the River." The film won the award for BEST TRINIDAD & TOBAGO FEATURE FILM, and also copped the People's Choice awards at the ceremony on September 26.

"At first glance the book is such a simple story you wonder how you are going to make this into a movie, but the themes are extremely complex. You're dealing with a boy becoming a man, with love; so the situation may not be complex, but the emotions are, and the film has to bring that to life." Mooleedhar explained.

"There's also the idea of space and the land and what the connection of the land meant to people. I don't think that connection exists for the majority of Trinidad and we tried to bring out those themes and amplify them and give them visuals."

For James, simplicity was the key to a successful first feature. "That's specifically why we chose this story. As first time filmmakers, you don't want to choose any high concept, time-travelling type of film. You're still developing your craft and if you can tell a simple story in a unique, poetic way, you can master your craft," he said.

The story also had a special meaning for some of the cast members. Khandai read the book at a young age and identified closely with the main character. "I read this book when I was 11 when I had just written SEA. It really resonated with me as a young person going from one stage of my life to another as secondary school was a foreign environment. At the time, I felt a lot like Shell did in his new home experiencing all these new

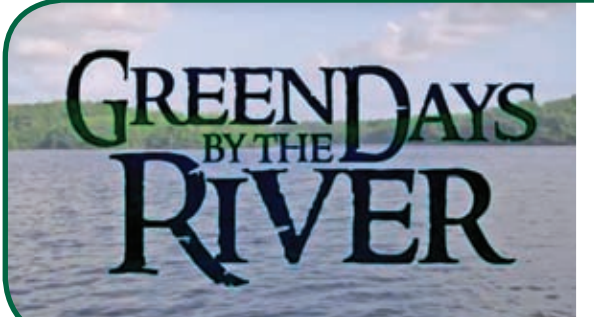


things, trying to find his place as a man and his place also as a child continuing to strive to be true to himself," said Khandai, a 24-year-old medical student in her third year.

For Bartholomew, a final year sociology student, Green Days has reaffirmed her love for theatre arts. "Doing the film definitely encouraged me to stay within the industry and to get back into that creative atmosphere," said Bartholomew who was active in theatre in secondary school. Like Khandai, Green Days was Bartholomew's first formal audition.

## NEXT STOP

Working on the film hasn't only been inspiring for Bartholomew and Khandai; James and Mooleedhar plan to use everything they learned in the past three years on bigger and even better projects. "We've spent three years putting energy into this project so we'll need a short break, but I just want to keep directing. Every time you direct something, you get excited about what you learned and theoretically, you feel like you're getting better. So I don't want to wait two years to do something again and forget what I learnt," said Mooleedhar.

Green Days will be screened at the Belize International Film Festival in November and the Bahamas International Film Festival in December. The team is also planning a Caribbean-wide limited release.

**Green Days by the River**  
is in theatres nationwide.  
Running Time: 100 mins  
Rating: PG 13  
For more information,  
visit: [www.greendaysbytheriver.com](http://www.greendaysbytheriver.com)

# UWI CALENDAR *of* EVENTS

## OCTOBER – NOVEMBER 2017

### WEST INDIAN LITERATURE CONFERENCE

October 4 to 7

School of Education and the Centre for Language Learning (CLL)  
Auditorium, The UWI St. Augustine

The UWI St. Augustine's Department of Literary Cultural and Communication Studies (LCCS), Faculty of Humanities and Education, hosts the West Indian Literature Conference under the theme, Affect & Ethical Engagement. This annual, collaborative, intellectual engagement which is now in its thirty-sixth year, is hosted by The UWI campuses and non-campus territories, as well as by the University of Puerto Rico and the University of Miami, The University of Bahamas and The University of Guyana.

For more information, please visit the Campus Events Calendar at [www.sta.uwi.edu/news/ecalendar](http://www.sta.uwi.edu/news/ecalendar)



### WORLD COCOA AND CHOCOLATE DAY EXPO

October 6 to 7

JFK Auditorium  
The UWI St. Augustine

World Cocoa and Chocolate Day will be celebrated with an open to the public expo involving cocoa stakeholders and well-wishers. Hosted by the Cocoa Research Centre, this sixth annual celebration of cocoa and chocolate is a celebration of chocolate – displays, contests, cosmetics, crafts and more. Be there at the JFK Auditorium on October 6 from 11am to 6pm and October 7 from 9.30am to 5pm.

For more information, please visit [www.CocoaCentre.com](http://www.CocoaCentre.com)

### COTE 2017

October 11 and 12

Learning Resource Centre Auditorium, The UWI St. Augustine



The UWI St. Augustine, Department of Economics' annual Conference on the Economy (COTE 2017) honours Sir Alister McIntyre under the theme, Trade and Caribbean Development Nexus.

For information on conference rates and more, please visit: <http://sta.uwi.edu/conferences/17/cote/>

### NANOMEDICINE SYMPOSIUM

October 15

Amphitheatre A, The Eric Williams Medical Sciences Complex

The Faculty of Medical Sciences presents their inaugural symposium on Nanomedicine under the theme, Nanomedicine's purpose, potential and passion in the Caribbean context. Original work will be presented related to the following Nano-related topics: Diagnostic Therapeutics, Vaccines, Nutraceuticals, Drug Delivery Services and more.

For more information, please visit the Campus Events Calendar at [www.sta.uwi.edu/news/ecalendar](http://www.sta.uwi.edu/news/ecalendar)

### VICE-CHANCELLOR'S AWARDS

October 25

The UWI St. Augustine

Six awards will be presented at The UWI Vice-Chancellor's Awards for Excellence 2016-2017. These awards recognise excellence in teaching, administration and research accomplishments, service to the University community, contributions to public service, and all-round excellence in a combination of two or more of these core areas and a departmental award for service and operational excellence.

For more on the awards, please visit

<http://sta.uwi.edu/news/releases/release.asp?id=21724>

### INTERNATIONAL HALF-MARATHON

October 29 • 5.30am

UWI SPEC, St. Augustine

The 14th Edition of The UWI Spec International Half-Marathon, will begin at 5.30am at the UWI Sport and Physical Education Centre under the sponsorship of First Citizens. This year, the proceeds will go to various cancer support organisations and the colour is purple. Registration ends on October 6, and can be done online with credit cards. Package collection is from October 9 to 20.

For more information, please visit these websites.

<https://sta.uwi.edu/spec/marathon/> • Charity: All Cancers

<https://sta.uwi.edu/spec/marathon/register.asp> • (can be done online with credit cards)

### GRADUATION CEREMONIES

October 26 to 28

The UWI St. Augustine

Celebrate the graduating Class of 2017 at this year's Graduation Ceremonies scheduled to take place at The UWI Sport and Physical Education Centre (SPEC). The UWI St. Augustine will confer honorary degrees on the following persons: Hazel Brown – LLD; Winsford Devine – DLitt; Andrew Marciano – DLitt; Professor Emeritus Clem Seecharan – DLitt.

For more information and updates, please visit <https://sta.uwi.edu/graduation/>

### STEM CELL RESEARCH WORKSHOP

November 2 and 3

Faculty of Medical Sciences

Eric Williams Medical Sciences Complex

A theoretical and practical introduction to stem cell research will be the focus of these two workshops hosted by the Department of Pre-clinical Sciences of the Faculty of Medical Sciences. The first workshop on November 2, will run from 9am to 3pm and on November 3, the second will be from 8.30am to 2pm. They both take place at the Biochemistry Wet Lab, Building 34, 1st Floor, Department of Pre-clinical Sciences. Cost: UWI Staff with ID: \$300 for both days. External participants: \$500 for both days. This includes lunches and snacks. Cash only, please. The registration deadline is October 6.

To register, please contact Mrs. Monique Dare-Assing at 645-3232 ext 2776.

**UWI TODAY WANTS  
TO HEAR FROM YOU**

**UWI TODAY** welcomes submissions by staff and students for publication in the paper. Please send your suggestions, comments, or articles for consideration to [uwitoday@sta.uwi.edu](mailto:uwitoday@sta.uwi.edu)

