



UWI TODAY

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES • ST AUGUSTINE CAMPUS

SUNDAY 28 APRIL 2024



Spirit of **St Augustine**



Members of The UWI St Augustine Spirit Team smile for the camera after one of their performances on campus at **Open Days 2024**. The Spirit Team, an initiative of the **Division of Students Services and Development (DSSD)**, danced, cheered, and brought campus pride to the event which took place on April 13 and 14. More than 3,000 people attended the Open Days to learn about educational opportunities and student life at UWI St Augustine. PHOTO: DEXTER SUPERVILLE



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FROM THE PRINCIPAL



In mid-March, a team from UWI St Augustine went to Lengua Village in Moruga to be part of the Moruga/Tableland Community Day. We were invited by the Member of Parliament Ms Michelle Benjamin, and were of course delighted to accept.

Representatives from seven of our faculties attended, and we shared samples of some of our campus-grown products and services. These

included high-quality milk from the University Field Station, our organic pesticide Biophyt 1.0, and health services such as blood pressure testing. The team chose products and services that we felt would be of specific value to members of the community.

Members of the campus team also engaged the young people of Moruga/Tableland with games and quizzes, activities we have become quite accomplished at from experience gained through our school visits and campus tours such as the Open Days (covered in this issue of UWI TODAY).

As a campus community, indeed as a university, engagement with smaller and distant communities is extremely important to us. “Access” is one of the three pillars upon which The UWI’s strategic plan is constructed.

The UWI Triple A Strategic Plan 2022-2027 states: “[Access] refers to increasing participation in tertiary and higher education for all with the capacity and desire to learn. This will involve, among other things, ensuring that The UWI offerings (teaching and learning, student development, consulting, research and public advocacy programmes) reach the underserved and diaspora Caribbean populations and all others with an interest in higher education on all continents.”

ACCESS



Triple A Strategy
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The UWI Triple A
Strategic Plan
2022-2027 states:

[Access] refers to
increasing participation
in tertiary and higher
education for all with
the capacity and desire
to learn.

This university was conceived, and has evolved, as an institution central to the development of the Caribbean through the preparation of its people for work and life, the provision of information services, and outreach activities to support individuals and communities. However, it is an unfortunate reality that even in the most open and egalitarian societies, the

fruits of development are not enjoyed equally. That is why access is so important.

During my time as Dean of the Faculty of Law I implemented policies to provide opportunities for a legal education for deserving students who ordinarily would not be able to study law at the university level. I did so because I understood that, contrary to the myth that education systems are egalitarian, several factors contribute to student success, and in many cases students with the necessary intelligence, aptitude, and work ethic may not be able to meet the traditional requirements to study because of other material or behavioural factors.

Most importantly, I have always understood that as a nation and a region we are robbing ourselves of the enormous human potential of so many because of systemic factors within Caribbean society.

All year round, we conduct visits to schools throughout Trinidad and Tobago, exposing secondary-level students to the opportunities available to them in higher education. By doing so, we not only make them aware of the possibilities of a university education, we hopefully ignite a fire in them to broaden their horizons and find new ambitions.

Likewise, we encourage our students to take part in volunteerism and community engagement through several initiatives, as well as through the work of our Division of Students Services and Development.

We at UWI St Augustine look forward to more opportunities to visit rural and outlying communities. We are also seeking out opportunities through which our expertise and services can be used to benefit people that all too often do not receive equal support from society.

As educators and Caribbean people engaged in the development of this regional society, there is an ultimate metric for our success: Seeing the growth of young people in communities like Moruga/Tableland and observing them benefitting from an education at The UWI to become leaders and good citizens.

Rose-Marie Antoine

Professor Rose-Marie Belle Antoine
Campus Principal

The UWI launches new research cluster for Indigenous Studies



Members of the Indigenous Peoples community in Scotts Hall Maroon Town, St Mary, Jamaica participating in a ritual.

The UWI School for Graduate Studies and Research has launched an interdisciplinary network of researchers dedicated to better understanding and addressing the challenges faced by regional indigenous communities. The new research cluster for Indigenous Studies was launched on March 26, 2024.

“Indigenous communities, often marginalised, frequently find themselves excluded from research,” said Pro Vice-Chancellor for Graduate Studies Professor Aldrie Henry-Lee. “This research cluster presents a unique opportunity to elevate Indigenous Peoples’ voices and perspectives.”

Kasikeiani (Chieftainess) Ronalda Pairman of the Yamaye Guani Taino Peoples voiced her support for the establishment of the research cluster. She praised UWI for prioritising collaboration over intrusive research practices. She also noted her desire to see research positively impact indigenous groups.

Kalaan Nibonrix Kaiman, a chief from the Yukayeke Yamaye Guani (Jamaican Humming Bird Taino people), also attended and expressed excitement about the opportunity to collaborate, share insights, brainstorm solutions, and incorporate community wisdom into research.

Professor Diana Fox, University Director of the Institute for Gender and Development Studies (IGDS), stated that the formation of the research cluster signals the expansion of The UWI’s collaboration with Caribbean Indigenous Peoples.

Ethical protocols for research among the communities are being developed by The UWI, the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), and the Indigenous Peoples Advisory Group, as well as Indigenous Peoples community researchers.

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UNIVERSITY NEWS



MEETING OF THE MINDS:
Participants of the Caribbean
Future of Science Symposium at
the Mt Irvine Bay Resort in Tobago.

Landmark science symposium held in Tobago

Government officials and a host of international scientists, engineers, technologists, business people, and artists attend five-day meeting to chart the region's future

BY TYRELL GITTENS

From March 8 to 12, a diverse group of globally renowned experts in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) gathered at Mt Irvine Bay Resort in Tobago for the inaugural Caribbean Future of Science Symposium. The goal of the gathering was the fostering of substantive discussions on expanding the potential of science and research in Trinidad and Tobago and the region.

With the theme of identifying areas where science and research could be advanced, attendees discussed topics like properly equipping Caribbean scientists with the skills to navigate the rapid advancement of artificial intelligence (AI), address climate, and harness the potential of music technology.

The symposium was made possible through funding from the Simons Foundation to The UWI. Simons Foundation describes itself as a foundation that champions science through grant funding, support for research, and public engagement. UWI St Augustine also provided support.

LIFTING THE CARIBBEAN IN SCIENCE

The Caribbean Future of Science Symposium's director was theoretical physicist Prof Stephon Alexander from Brown University, and its chief strategist was Mr Everard Findlay, a global systems strategist. Both Alexander and Findlay are Trinidad-born. The symposium's local organising committee was chaired by UWI St Augustine astronomy Professor Shirin Haque.

A highlight of the symposium was a public lecture by the Physics Nobel laureate Prof Michael Kosterlitz.

In a recent interview, Prof Haque explained that the symposium has been in the works for over a year, and it was the brainchild of both local scientists and scientists with Trinibagonian roots.

"We have been having discussions for a while now as to how The UWI could lift the Caribbean region in science," she said. "The beauty of it was that these people who left Trinidad a long time ago were able to reach out and contribute to lifting science in the region."

She added, "The passion and motivation of the team is what really made this event happen."

Attendees included astronomer and Nobel laureate Dr Wanda Díaz-Merced, American bass guitarist and composer Melvin Gibbs, UN representative Hermina Johnny, UWI St Augustine Campus Principal Prof Rose-Marie Belle Antoine, Finance Minister Colm Imbert, UTT President Emeritus Professor Clement Imbert ORTT, CEOs of global biotech companies, and luminaries in the arts.

Graduate students and faculty members from The UWI



Finance Minister Colm Imbert speaking at the symposium.

were also in attendance including Emeritus Professor Brian Copeland, data scientist Prof Patrick Hosein, theoretical physics lecturer Dr Roger Andrews, and UWI Mona physics lecturer Prof Tannecia Stephenson. Regional physicists included Dr Claude McNamarah from the Bahamas, and Dr Abuenamneh Aiyejina from Antigua Open Campus.

A BIG SHIFT IS HAPPENING

With science and technology now at the forefront of global development, Haque said it is important that the region recognises and invests in the field to be competitive.

"A big shift is happening and we are in the digital wave," she commented. "If we are not players in the global science and technology drive, then we will be left behind."

The astronomy professor pointed out that "there are many issues that we face in the region which science can address, like climate change".

These discussions were guided by keynote speakers such as Dr Díaz-Merced, Prof Kosterlitz, Prof Hosein, data scientist at the University of Virginia's School of Data Science Prof Renee Cummings, music technologist at NYU's Steinhardt School Prof Ted Rowe, and Prof Copeland.

"In the night, there were also panels about how we [experts in our fields] can bridge the gaps in science in the region and

also help the region make a statement on a global scale," said Prof Haque.

She shared that attendees agreed on the importance of the Caribbean embracing AI and developing its capacity to engage with the technology as "we are going to get left behind very fast".

"There were also discussions about the possibility of having a scientific institute of international stature based in Tobago," she said. "Just think of how something like this would change the landscape of science and technology in the region, and how this can be a hub of growth."

Beyond the symposium, Haque said some of the ideas conceptualised have already been turned into action and more projects are on track to be actualised. Opportunities have been secured for local scientists to spend time at international institutions and access technology that the region may not yet have.

PROJECTS POST-SYMPOSIUM

"Things have already happened coming out of the symposium," said Prof Haque. "Dr Wanda Díaz-Merced has already started a project in Tobago for astronomy and science for people with disabilities [Dr Díaz-Merced is blind]. Another attendee, Prof Harrison from Newcastle University, came back to Trinidad and had a workshop which introduced astronomy and science to people who are visually impaired."

She added, "At that meeting, we had three blind people and other stakeholders figure out how we can transform an audio technology developed at Newcastle University with a Caribbean flavour using our own local people."

Assessing the symposium as a success, Haque said there are plans for future iterations of the event. But it was just one part of a larger project that will be executed over the next three years.

She shared that funds have been allocated to allow local scientists and researchers to work on some of the technologies and solutions discussed at the symposium.

She said, "Moving forward, the inclusion of young people and high school students will be key in these efforts. In conversations with teachers in Tobago, they told me they are having a hard time promoting science and mathematics to students in the school."

She added, "Imagine the effect that it can have when local students see Trinidadians and Tobagonians participating in cutting edge research right at home and abroad."

The UWI, Prof Haque said, has already made commitments to support projects and research arising from the symposium.

■ CAMPUS NEWS

From St Augustine to Moruga/Tableland

UWI team shares information, entertains, and makes new connections at community day festivities



MP for Moruga/Tableland Ms Michelle Benjamin (left) with Campus Principal Prof Rose-Marie Belle Antoine.



Students interact with personnel at The UWI booths.

A team from UWI St Augustine joined with the people of Moruga/Tableland, and other educational institutions and state agencies, to celebrate community day on March 19, 2024. The objective, a statement from the campus read, was to “nurture relationships that are beneficial not only to the university but also to the communities we serve”.

The campus statement added that the visit was a way of “reinforcing our commitment to educational outreach and community development.”

Seven of UWI St Augustine’s eight faculties took part – Engineering, Food and Agriculture, Humanities and Education, Medical Sciences, Social Sciences, Science and Technology, and Sport. They, along with UWI recruiters and Student Champions, shared information on programmes of study, enrolment, and campus life with attendees of the community day event at the Lengua Islamia TIA Primary School.

Residents of Lengua/Indian Walk, Fifth Company, St Mary’s, Moruga, Tableland, and Barrackpore learned of educational opportunities at the St Augustine campus, took part in games and quizzes, and received free health advice and services like blood pressure testing.

The UWI – as well as UTT, several government ministries, WASA, the Agricultural Development Bank, and other agencies – was invited by Member of Parliament for Moruga/Tableland Ms Michelle Benjamin.

The team from St Augustine also shared and displayed samples of UWI products. These included items from the University Field Station such as high-quality chilled milk and, Biophyt 1.0, an organic pesticide developed by researchers in the Faculty of Food and Agriculture. Biophyt 1.0, an alternative to hazardous chemical pesticides, was first featured in UWI TODAY in August 2019.

“The community,” read The UWI statement, “warmly welcomed representatives from various departments, and attendees interacted with and engaged with experts from diverse fields such as Modern Languages and Linguistics, Chemistry, and Geography. Additionally, the Faculty of Food and Agriculture presented captivating displays that drew significant interest.”

In a statement after the event, Ms Benjamin said, “Allow me to thank all the entities that attended with their host of officers, to display, guide, spread awareness, and encourage oneness and unity within our communities.”

The message from UWI St Augustine noted that, “Outreach programmes such as these are crucial for The UWI as they bridge the gap between our academic institution and the broader communities, fostering mutual growth and enriching educational experiences through direct engagement.”

Dixie-Ann Belle is a freelance writer, editor and proofreader.



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SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Imposter syndrome, feelings of inadequacy, a lack of confidence, and self-doubt are some of the main factors that women in STEM continue to grapple with, all while they fight stereotypes and discrimination in the male-dominated data science discipline.

These challenges — identified by Dr Talia Esnard, Head of the Department of Behavioural Sciences — plant seeds of uncertainty, which result in some women questioning their place in these programmes, coupled with the capacity to “survive” their rigour.

Thus, the pressing question remains: Are women given a voice to share their realities amidst these circumstances?

On Friday, March 15, the experts did just that at the “*Empowering Women to Harness the Power of Data Science: Inspiring Inclusion*” forum, a discussion aimed at unpacking the role of women in data science, debunking misconceptions, and sharing knowledge with the community.

Drawing inspiration from the progress made by women in recent decades, coupled with her desire to “build, grow, motivate, support, and clear the way for other women in the arena”, Dr Letitia Addison, Women in Data Science Trinidad and Tobago (WiDSTT) Ambassador and Project Officer at the University Office of Planning, shared the basis behind commemorating International Women’s Day through the promotion of women in STEM, particularly in data science.

According to the World Economic Forum, the *Global Gender Gap Report*, and the Boston Consulting Group, women account for only 15 to 22 percent of all global data science professionals.

While noteworthy progress has been made in addressing gender disparities here in Trinidad and Tobago, “ongoing efforts are still needed” for society to achieve true equality, said Assistant Director, Division of Educational Research and Management at the Ministry of Education, Ms Kamini Bhagaloo.

DATA SCIENCE AND OTHER DISCIPLINES

But, the first step towards uplifting others – fostering inclusivity and creating equal opportunities for all in this discipline – is understanding the harmonious relationship between data science and other disciplines.

Many people are of the belief that data science is simply “statistics, math, and crunching numbers”, noted Dr Addison, but in actuality, it is multi-disciplinary, crossing over to various fields.

Head of the Department of Mechanical Engineering Dr Jacqueline Bridge focussed her remarks on the cross-disciplinary overlap between engineering and data science.

“Engineers use data science to analyse what’s happening within their processes,” she explained.

Not only does the incorporation of data-driven approaches into everyday engineering practices help pick the most efficient and effective processes, but the data also guides engineers in monitoring performance, reducing failures, and ensuring that quality control measures are implemented to safeguard those who will use their designs. Dr Bridge concluded her presentation by reiterating the importance of data science in transforming engineering systems and revealing the opportunities that emerge from this mutually beneficial relationship.

Beyond engineering, data science revolutionises public health initiatives and addresses some of society’s pressing health-related challenges such as diabetes, heart disease, and cancer. Ms Nicola Taylor, PAHO/WHO Programme Management Specialist for the Dutch Entities, expressed that by using data to assist with identifying solutions for improving health outcomes, more innovative interventions can be developed for healthcare delivery.

Making her contribution on data science and healthcare, Dr Rajini Haraksingh, lecturer in the Faculty of Science and

Women in Data Science forum looks at opportunities and obstacles for a more inclusive field

BY SHAIENNE ST HILAIRE



FROM LEFT: Dean of the Faculty of Science and Technology (FST) Dr Brian Cockburn, Head of the Department of Mechanical Engineering Dr Jacqueline Bridge, Lecturer in Biotechnology at FST Dr Rajini Haraksingh, Head of the Department of Behavioural Sciences Dr Talia Esnard, WiDSTT Ambassador and Project Officer at the University Office of Planning Dr Letitia Addison, Lecturer in Computer Science at FST Dr Phaedra Mohammed, Republic Bank technical analyst Ms Julie Koon Koon, and former Head of Advanced Analytics at Guardian Group Ms Ebony De Leon at the WiDSTT forum. PHOTOS: LIFE VIDEO PRODUCTIONS.



Campus Principal Antoine addresses the audience.



However, to establish these resilient global systems, and foster a sustainable, gender-balanced environment, upcoming female leaders must be given a platform to share their perspectives.

Hosting forums like these, together with community-based mentorship, allow women in STEM to feel represented and validated. Furthermore, these activities create the space for men to get involved in supporting women, thus promoting inclusivity — the type of empowerment necessary for progress.

Ms Ebony De Leon, former Head of Advanced Analytics, Guardian Group, said speaking up and boosting confidence comes with reaffirming knowledge, and projecting this confidence into day to day speech. On the other hand, Dr Phaedra Mohammed, lecturer in the Faculty of Science and Technology, urged attendees to take advantage of the many resources available to better navigate data science.

Panellist Ms Julie Koon Koon, an MSc Data Science student at UWI St Augustine and Republic Bank technical analyst, shared her experience as a WiDSTT mentor to secondary school students. “The young people”, she said, “are way more advanced in their understanding of technology than I was at their age”.

When asked what she would tell students (many of who were in attendance at the WiDSTT forum) who were considering a career in data science, she responded, “I recommend you go for it. UWI has amazing programmes and lecturers, and the university offers a lot of support for students.”

In her remarks, Campus Principal Professor Rose-Marie Belle Antoine pointed out that increasing the number of women in data science can actually make it better by reducing bias:

“It is not simply about diversity, but about building a more objective and inclusive field. Data science is about solving real-world problems by analysing data, extracting meaningful insights from it, and visually presenting it to tell a story. As with any science, when one gender is overrepresented, there is a risk of bias.”

UNIVERSITY NEWS



75@75 recognises UWI STAFF EXCELLENCE across the region

BY JOEL HENRY

They are the administrators and technicians that ensure the university's operations run smoothly. They are the information specialists and technology experts that keep students and staff informed and interconnected. They maintain the buildings, attend to the sprawling landscape, and even beautify the campus with plants. They are the innovators in their labs and the social conscience of the campus to the outside world.

This April, 75 members of staff from The UWI campuses across the region were celebrated as part of the university's 75th anniversary activities in 2023. The initiative was dubbed "75@75". Honorees from UWI St Augustine were recognised at a special ceremony at the Office of the Campus Principal on April 11.

"For the last 75 years," a statement from The UWI read, "the

success of the university has depended on the work of many unsung heroes and heroines who have ensured that the organisation and its programmes not only run efficiently, but continue to thrive, behind the scenes."

A call for nominations was made across the entire university in all categories of staff – academic, administrative, technical and support staff – for members of The UWI community that "have displayed integrity, excellence in the workplace, and service beyond duty" the statement continued. Criteria included service (to the university), collegiality, professionalism, service beyond duty (institutional loyalty and engagement), and initiative.

The final decision was made by a university sub-committee which included members from The UWI campuses and Regional Headquarters.

The UWI St Augustine 75@75 honorees

Ms Mohanie Bachan
Ms Necole Blake
Mr Mark Bradshaw
Mr Christopher Cruickshank
Ms Arlene Dolabaille
Ms Elawatee Dookaran
Mr Eddy Gajadhar
Mr Keeno Gonzales
Dr Michael Hosein
Ms Sharelle Jackson
Mr Winston Johnson (*posthumous*)
Mr Shivan Maharaj
Ms Valerie Matas
Mr Nizamudeen Mohammed
Mr Elliott Nedd
Ms Lorraine Nero
Dr Anne Osborne (*posthumous*)
Ms Shelley-Ann Patrick-Harper
Mr Patrick Perreira
Ms Kheeshia Persaud
Ms Nikeisha Plato-Robinson
Mr Nishan Rampersad
Ms Charmaine Rampial
Mr Rodney Ramsingh
Mr Andrew Ramudit
Mr Wayne Sarjusingh
Ms Joy Smith
Ms Charmain Subero

The UWI Cricket Club, St Augustine (UWICC) continues its winning ways in the TTCB East Zone (TTCBEZ) competitions of 2024. Having won the high intensity Chairman's T12 Tournament in January for the second consecutive year, the club has added the Senior Division two-day title to its trophy cabinet. UWICC topped the standings with 122 points from seven matches.

Captain Jameel Lashley led the way by scoring 433 runs, including two centuries at an average of 72.17. Rondell Ramlogan, a 19-year-old Faculty of Social Sciences student, amassed the next highest total with 415 runs, scoring a century and two 90's at an average of 69.17. Leg spinner Bhisham Kissoon was the top bowler, claiming 28 wickets at an average of 12.68 runs with best bowling figures of 5/46.

Meanwhile, in the Reserve team competitions, the UWICC placed 3rd in the limited overs competition and narrowly missed out on a top three spot in the T20 competition due to a net run rate inferior to the third place team. Notable contributions were made with the bat by Duane Cockburn, Mikeal Sinanan, and team captain Tamayo Hutton, and in the bowling by Amaziyah Agard, Shawn Hosein, and Renaldo Manchan.

On April 13-14, the UNICOM-sponsored UWICC faced the winner of the North Zone competition, EYM Mico, in a play-off two-day match at the Curepe Recreation Ground in a bid for promotion to the TTCB Premiership Division II in 2025.

Under the management of Club president Dr Earl Ottley, the UWICC executive, and coach Stuart Gopaul, the UWICC will further challenge for the TTCBEZ Limited Overs and T20 titles over the months of April and May, aiming to round out its most successful year in the history of the Club.

The UWI CRICKET CLUB *continues most successful year*

BY DR EARL OTTLEY



MEMBERS OF THE UWICC TEAM: Back row (from left): Dr Earl Ottley (President of UWICC), Nickolas Wellington, Renico Alleyne, Derrick Jaglal, Rowdell Tracey, Bhisham Kissoon, Rondell Ramlogan, and Stuart Gopaul (Coach). Front row (from left) are: Brandon Barker, Renaldo Manchan, Shaveh Williams, Jameel Lashley (Captain), Mikeal Sinanan, and Yasir Khan.

Dr Earl Ottley is President of the UWI Cricket Club at UWI St Augustine.

■ CAMPUS NEWS

OPEN DAYS 2024

show prospective students opportunity – and hospitality

BY JOEL HENRY

It's mid-morning Saturday at UWI St Augustine, Open Days 2024. There are islands of people, 11 each, dotted on the sloping greens that connect the northern and southern halves of the campus. In each group are secondary students, some awed and anxious, and parents, intently focused on the words of their tour guides.

The guides, UWI student champions, show them some of the campus buildings, the faculties and their departments, the auditoriums and activity centres, the informal spots that don't have names but have been chosen by The UWI students themselves as places to study or congregate. With inspiring openness and maturity, the student champions most of them around the same age as the visitors, share their knowledge of life at St Augustine.

It's a welcome gift. Those young visitors and their families have important decisions to make about their futures. And it's a daunting decision. The campus tours, given by guides close to them in age, provides them the information they need and takes away some of the anxiety. These are the multiple levels on which The UWI St Augustine Open Days work. They inform, they familiarise, and they make visitors feel welcome.

'TWO DAYS OF EXCITEMENT AND EXPLORATION'

The tours are only one part of what has become one of UWI St Augustine's most comprehensive events. Open Days 2024, held on April 13 and 14, was a mass mobilisation of the campus community at all levels. All eight faculties, the specialised units, student services, campus support services, student groups, and even the university's external partners took part. Together they welcomed thousands of prospective students and their loved ones to the JFK Quadrangle and JFK Auditorium.

"You are invited to two days of excitement and exploration," the invitation from UWI St Augustine read. Open Days, it said, were "designed for prospective undergraduate and postgraduate students, parents, professionals, and the curious" to "offer in-depth insight into the diverse programme offerings, career options, and vibrant atmosphere of our campus".

Prospective students spoke with faculty members and admissions staff about programmes of study. They engaged with student services about scholarships (hundreds are available on campus) and other forms of financial aid. They received personalised advice for financing their education from institutions such as Eastern Credit Union, First Citizens, JMMB, and Republic Bank Ltd. The campus even set up stations staffed by volunteers so that students could apply on-site.

Campus life, however, involves more than attending and paying for classes, and Open Days gave visitors a healthy slice of the other aspects of the university student experience. There were games, puzzles, souvenirs, food, displays, live performances from the student dance group DSSD Spirit Team, and a mini-zoo (a particular favourite for many attendees).

■ For more information on undergraduate and postgraduate programmes at UWI St Augustine and financial aid, and to apply, visit <https://sta.uwi.edu/>



PHOTOS: ANEEL KARIM, DEXTER SUPERVILLE

Joel Henry is Acting Editor of UWI Today.

■ CARIBBEAN ICONS

In the Service of the Public

The late Reginald Dumas after receiving his honorary degree at the St Augustine campus graduation ceremony in 2011.

The indefatigable life of **REGINALD DUMAS** (April 4, 1935–March 7, 2024)

BY VANEISA BAKSH

A sage, is how the public orator, Professor Paul Teelucksingh, described Reginald Dumas as he presented the citation when he was conferred with the Doctor of Laws, honoris causa in 2011.

“He is evergreen with a keen sense of transition from one age to another.”

That was certainly true of John Reginald Phelps Dumas, who passed away on March 7, just a month before he would have turned 89. Reggie, as he was commonly known, had seen radical changes in the world he’d served as diplomat and statesman, public servant and champion of regional causes, and activist of international stature. Even as he demonstrated the sagacity to adapt to the times, he never departed from the core values that held him together through many buffeting moments.

As he addressed the gathering at the graduation ceremony at the St Augustine campus of The UWI that day, he shared three bits of advice. They reflect best the philosophical outlook that elevated him to the role of human extraordinaire so that The UWI was moved to confer its highest honour on him, although he was a Cambridge man.

“It strikes me constantly that we have grown technologically at the expense of the values crucial for a civilised society—values such as integrity, hard work, community spirit, ethical behaviour, concern for the national over the sectional interest, and so on,” he said. “All these and other values influence the quality of our lives.”

He was quick to add that a good quality of life was not to be equated with ownership of expensive material goods. “Is such ownership necessary for a decent life?” he asked, reminding that “the strength of the values and of the institutional pillars of the society you live in is what above all affects your quality of life, a central element of which is your mental and psychological comfort.”

‘EDUCATION IS NOT LIMITED TO THE POSSESSION OF A DEGREE’

His second bit of advice was to remember that “education is not limited to the possession of a degree”. As he urged members of the audience to continuously broaden their intellectual horizons, he cited an article making a distinction between information and ideas. The author had written that humans now had more information than they could ever process, and that in the future,



“there won’t be anything we won’t know. But there will be no one thinking about it”.

Finally, he said, “I implore you to keep this region constantly in the foreground of your thoughts. It is our region; it is the only one we can genuinely call ours. We must therefore do what we can to enhance its indigenous resources, intellectual, economic and other, and to strengthen its institutions—The University of the West Indies, naturally, but also CARICOM, the OECS, the CCJ, the cricket team, and so on. Nobody is going to do it for us.

“Strengthening institutions walks hand-in-hand with strengthening values. It is a long, slow, hard process. Forget about overnight success. But in that process we all benefit personally, and so do our individual countries and the region as a whole. Many persons have fought hard for this region of ours. Many have passed, or are passing, from the scene. If I have one appeal to make to you today, it is that, however difficult it may often be, and whatever your private issues, you continue that struggle, for your own sake and quality of life, and for the sake and quality of life of those around you, and those who will come after you.”

No one could have more eloquently and precisely illuminated the essence of the man than the man himself, and that is why I chose to reproduce his words here. Reggie lived by those words and his actions supported them throughout his life.

‘STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONS WALKS HAND-IN-HAND WITH STRENGTHENING VALUES’

His diplomatic career, from 1973 to 1988, saw him occupying the position of High Commissioner to Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean, India and Sri Lanka, Ethiopia and other Eastern African countries, and he served as Ambassador to the United States and was the Permanent Representative to the Organisation of American States.

He wrote about those experiences in *The First Thirty Years: A Retrospection* (2015), *Eleven Testing Years: Dissonance and Discipline* (2017), and the yet unpublished manuscript of his posting in India, which I had the privilege of editing with him. Along with his other publications: *In The Service of the Public: Articles and Speeches 1963–1993, with commentaries* (1995), and *An Encounter with Haiti: Notes of a Special Adviser* (2008), (he had been so appointed by the UN Secretary-General, Kofi Anan), they make an excellent case for such narrative histories to be part of the syllabus at our educational institutions—and not just confined to history classes, but as insights into our identity as a civilisation.

Following the diplomatic career—he was one of the first group of diplomats in the Trinidad and Tobago Foreign Service at Independence in 1962—he entered another realm, serving from 1988 as Permanent Secretary to the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, and Head of the Public Service.

In 1998, he co-founded Trinidad and Tobago Transparency Institute, the national chapter of Transparency International. He remained committed to sharing his experience and ideas until he died, writing a weekly column in the *Newsday* newspaper, and frequently being sought for his opinion on various matters.

It was a life deeply embedded in the ideals he held dear, a life worthy of emulation.

Vaneisa Baksh is an editor and writer.

UNIVERSITY NEWS

The future of entrepreneurship and innovation in higher education was the focus of participants at the opening session of the recent “HEInnovate and Labour Market Relevance and Outcomes (LMRO) Initiatives” event.

UWI administrators, government ministry officials, donor agencies, representatives of CARICOM English-speaking universities, and industry partners gathered on April 3 for the beginning of the action planning and knowledge exchange workshop, a preliminary event with two days of discourse scheduled to follow.

HEInnovate was born of a collaboration between the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the European Commission (Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport, and Culture). This partnership was an initiative of the Campus Office of Planning and Institutional Research (COPIR) at UWI St Augustine. The workshop itself was made possible through support from the Delegation of the European Union to Trinidad and Tobago, the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), and CARICOM/CARIFORUM.

Its aim is to inform and guide strategies and practices towards relevance in educational offerings and innovation and entrepreneurship for regional higher education institutions (HEIs) with free self-assessment tools and resources like case studies, guidance notes, training materials, country reviews, and webinars which are regularly offered worldwide.

Prior to the workshop, regional university representatives were asked to complete the self-assessment. The tool guides participants through a process of identification, prioritisation, and action planning in eight key areas. The participants were invited to discuss the findings in-depth and explore strategies.

Forty-four assessments were completed across six regional universities including The UWI. The HEInnovate team expected more submissions would come in with time but observed that the number they had received was a good foundation to begin discussions.

KEEPING PACE WITH AN EVOLVING WORLD

Summing up the goals of the session in an online address, Deputy Head of Unit Innovation and EIT, European Commission, Ingrid Rigler explained, “We are all united to reach a joint goal, making higher education institutions more innovative and entrepreneurial, so that they can keep pace with a constantly evolving world, and that they can better connect with the labour market.”

Presenters Andrea-Rosaline Hofer, analyst and project lead, OECD; Zuzsa Javorka, managing consultant, Technopolis Group; and Bárbara Gabriel, Manager of Science and Technology at Research Unit TEMA briefly presented their findings and some of the insights discovered through the thousands of self-assessments taken over the years.

Gabriel outlined the questions which they hoped to cover in the discussions: “What does it mean to be entrepreneurial? As a higher education institution, what are the defined characteristics? And are there already entrepreneurial universities from whom lessons can be learned?”

She noted that the sharing of experiences and practices were relevant to help institutions understand potential and translate the knowledge to suit each one’s reality.

The data showed the key areas of strengths across the regional institutions. Under entrepreneurial teaching and learning, the HEIs scored highly when it came to designing and delivering curriculum in conjunction with external stakeholders, when it came to providing diverse formal learning opportunities, and when administering a wide range of informal learning opportunities and experiences to stimulate the development of entrepreneurial mindsets and competences. The institutions also scored

UWI Explores the Landscape of ENTREPRENEURIAL AND INNOVATIVE EDUCATION

BY DIXIE-ANN BELLE



Participants of the workshop on April 3 at the Institute of Critical Thinking, UWI St Augustine. PHOTO: ANEEL KARIM



well in areas of leadership and governance, as well as organisational capacity.

The areas with the lowest scores, and therefore the need for improvement, were the impact of the entrepreneurial HEIs; the level of the institutions’ contribution to global and social cohesion, mitigation of climate change and the HEI carbon neutrality; and the institutions’ links to entrepreneurial ecosystem and networks.

HIGHER ED CONNECTING WITH SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

Among some of the discoveries based on the data was the importance of HEIs connecting with secondary school students at an early age.

“I think in higher education, there is a very important role for informing learners at 15-years-old what are the opportunities for them later on,” suggested Hofer. “And that doesn’t mean that these learners have to be oriented towards higher education, but oriented towards existing and emerging occupations.”

The importance of aligning higher education with the emerging needs of the economy was also a theme of the day.

During his welcome address, Pro Vice-Chancellor for The UWI Board for Undergraduate Studies, Prof

Derek Chadee observed that the workshop was useful in refreshing the four R’s – reinforce, remind, redirect, and re-evaluate.

In his remarks, Dr Paulo Santiago, Head of the Policy Advice and Implementation Division, Directorate for Education and Skills, OECD, outlined some questions that would be of great interest to HEIs.

“How to use labour marketing information to monitor relevance?” he observed. “How to adapt education offering itself to more advanced skill needs. A third main question would be how to promote continuous development of teaching and learning. A fourth key question is what works in incentivising students to become involved in study programmes with higher labour demand. And finally, how to support students to succeed in their studies and at work.”

St Augustine Campus Deputy Principal Prof Indar Ramnarine declared, “It is important to recognise the challenges that this changing environment presents, and move towards ensuring that tertiary learning institutions remain relevant and adaptable.”

During his greetings from the Ministry of Education, Dr Peter Smith, Chief Education Officer, affirmed, “The goal can no longer be about ensuring young people get jobs after they graduate. It is about sustainability and entrepreneurship, and a constantly evolving job market and educational system in a symbiotic relationship.”

He added, “Diverse ambitions require diverse roots, and it is the duty of the ministry to establish inclusive avenues that level the playing field for all individuals to achieve their aspirations.”

Dixie-Ann Belle is a freelance writer, editor and proofreader.

■ UWI IN SOCIETY

Tobago is known for its abundant marine biodiversity. Trinidad is known for its one hundred-plus years-old history in the oil industry. Together, the two islands that make up this country should be both uniquely positioned to deal with the crisis of an oil spill, and motivated to protect the diverse life that calls its shores home. And yet, on February 7, 2024, a mysterious barge being pulled by a tugboat overturned, leaking a growing black stain of fuel oil into the Caribbean Sea near the southernmost tip of Tobago.

A crucial issue with a spill of this nature is how it will affect the life around it— from microscopic marine creatures all the way up the food chain to the people living in this region. I spoke to The UWI's Prof Judith Gobin, Head of the Department of Life Sciences and Professor of Marine Biology, and Dr La Daana Kanhai, who has a PhD in Marine Ecosystems Health and Conservation, about the impact this type of spill can have on the environment.

"We need to think about the impact of the oil spill on the biophysical environment— the flora and fauna— and we also need to think about the impact on the human environment— on people," says Dr Kanhai.

OIL SPILLS CAN IMPACT PLANTS, ANIMALS, AND PEOPLE

Early reports of samples taken from near Tobago revealed that the spillage was "bunker fuel", which is considered a hazardous substance. For a spill like this, says Dr Kanhai, there are four categories of impacts to be considered for the biophysical environment: physical, biological, chemical, and ecological.

"Initially, when you have an oil spill, what people would be seeing are the physical effects," she explains.

The dark slick covering the surface of the water, smothering sandy/rocky shores and the roots of mangroves are the first obvious signs. This can be problematic itself, because oil on the surface of the water column can disrupt sunlight entering the water and subsequently the process of photosynthesis. Oil on the roots of mangroves can compromise oxygen availability for these plants. Oil on sandy/rocky shores can smother associated fauna and disrupt important activities (foraging for food, nesting, etc).

Below the surface of the slick, it can be even more difficult to ascertain the damage, and this is an area of serious concern.

"We have not had any surveys of what's happened underwater," says Prof Gobin.

The Caribbean is one of the largest oil producing areas of the world, and where there is oil industry, there are spills. Trinidad and Tobago has faced several instances of spillage in the past, including the deadly 1979 oil spill in Tobago, still ranked one of the largest in the world, and the 2013 series of Petrotrin oil spills— the same year that the Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs produced the National Oil Spill Contingency Plan. This plan is still in place, and was said to have come into effect for the most recent spill, although the Director of the Tobago Emergency Management Agency (TEMA), Allan Stewart, said that logistical support was slow to arrive.

A TRANS-BOUNDARY POLLUTION PROBLEM

As the days went on and the spillage continued, fingers were pointed over who was to blame. The mystery of who this barge belonged to and why it was so close to the country's marine space without the necessary documentation, unfolded just as slowly (It was found to be called the Gulfstream, and en route from Panama to Guyana). It would be a full month before it was reported that the leaking had finally stopped. By then, the slick had spread not only to the lower shores of Tobago's coastline, but also to neighbouring islands throughout the Southern Caribbean, extending as far as Bonaire.

"When we speak about oil pollution in the marine environment, we are speaking of a trans-boundary pollution problem," says Dr Kanhai.

This is because oceanic currents are capable of

Continue Cleaning, Monitor the Impacts

UWI marine experts tell of the potential impacts of the oil spill near Tobago, share a path forward to assess the damage and mitigate future disasters

BY AMY LI BAKSH



PHOTO: TRINIDAD GUARDIAN

"We need to think about the impact of the oil spill on the biophysical environment— the flora and fauna— and we also need to think about the impact on the human environment— on people,"

transporting spilt oil beyond national borders. It affects life in and around the water— all manner of creatures from the microscopic plankton to megafauna like the turtles that nest on our beaches— and also affects human life in a myriad of ways. Particles of the spill, as time goes on, begin to partially degrade, and the bits that cannot degrade enter into the marine food cycle.

"The undissolved matter ends up sitting in the sediment, then fish and small organisms feed on organic matter which contain a mix of these oily particulates" says Prof Gobin. "And then they are eaten by larger organisms and this continues up the food chain. At the top, humans will then eat fish that may be contaminated, because these hydrocarbon particulates are now stored in muscle and other tissues."

The fishing industry is not the only one that has already been and will continue to be affected by this spill. Tobago's tourism industry will also face the consequences, as the areas in the immediate vicinity include coral reefs, beaches, and a popular bird-watching location amidst the mangrove swamp.

"You have to think of society and the economy as well," says Dr Kanhai.

Much of the damage has already been done, and what's left is to continue cleaning efforts and monitor to see how it will affect the surrounding ecosystems in the long term.

"It's really a wait and see" says Prof Gobin. "This reef area has been previously surveyed by the Institute of Marine Affairs. We should have baseline data of what lived there, and in terms of monitoring, to do a survey that copies what we already know, then another in six months, and then a year and so on, to see how it changes. What we are looking for is to see what the impacts are and how severe."

For future oil spill disasters, the hope is that the relevant bodies will be able to put into action the National Oil Spill Contingency Plan.

"It is an emergency," says Prof Gobin. "The contingency plan clearly details what to do in these emergencies."

Marine and human lives depend on our ability to respond to these types of crises, and when we fail, the ripple effects can be catastrophic.

Amy Li Baksh is a Trinidadian writer, artist and activist.

■ UWI IN SOCIETY

If you happen to be on The UWI's St Augustine campus on a Thursday afternoon and walk past the Centre for Language Learning (CLL), you'll likely be met with a curious sight – kids, some as young as five, chatting intently with UWI students at their sides.

Snippets of their conversations may reach your ear and you might smile at the excitement, even wonder, in the small voices. Your brow may furrow slightly at the halting English words that tumble out, sometimes buffered by easy Spanish, as you hazard a guess at what's going on. What you would be witnessing is the UWI Student Volunteer Pilot Project for Migrant Children in T&T, an initiative aligned with the UWI Community Engagement Framework, designed to help prepare Venezuelan migrant children for entry into our country's primary schools.

Simply called the Migrant Mentorship Programme by those involved, this project is an undertaking of the Faculty of Humanities and Education's (FHE) Department of Modern Languages and Linguistics (DMLL) and the CLL. Led by CLL Director Dr Nicole Roberts, and DMLL Instructor Mr Rómulo Guédez-Fernández, it pairs UWI students (mentors) with migrant children (mentees) to teach them English and other primary school basics.

Integrating migrant and refugee children

This project was initiated when, in July 2023, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago announced intentions to integrate Venezuelan migrant and refugee children into T&T's primary school system. UWI St Augustine Campus Principal Professor Rose-Marie Belle Antoine saw an opportunity for the university to assist in a meaningful way. With most migrant children having little command of the English language, she knew they would need some preparation if they were to cope, let alone succeed, in our schools.

"The education of our migrant children has been a longstanding concern of mine," Professor Antoine shares. Knowing that the FHE was already involved in work with migrants, and believing the DMLL to be perfect for this initiative – "With our language experts, who better to teach native Spanish speakers?" – she reached out to the faculty's dean, Professor Elizabeth Walcott-Hackshaw.

Professor Walcott-Hackshaw then involved Dr Roberts and Mr Rómulo Guédez-Fernández, and they devised a plan of action.

An earlier project, the administration of the English as a Second Language Proficiency Test of Spanish-speaking migrant children in Trinidad and Tobago (meant to assess the English-language proficiency of Venezuelan migrant children), revealed that these children were not only weak in their English-speaking skills, but also in the basic subject areas crucial at the primary school level – creative writing, reading comprehension, and mathematics. Called "the Testing Project", it was a collaborative initiative between the Catholic Education Board of Management, PADF and UNICEF, in partnership with

The UWI.

Jesse Ragbir, UWI postgraduate student, Migrant Mentorship Programme Assistant Coordinator, and evaluator with the Testing Project shares that "A lot of these children [need] remedial help because many of them haven't been in school at all", and they struggle with reading and writing, not just in English, but in Spanish as well.

With this information, Dr Roberts and Mr Guédez-Fernández set out to craft the Migrant Mentorship Pilot Programme.

Students step up to give service

Security and ease of access being top priority, UWI's CLL building became the designated programme headquarters, and invitations to participate were extended to migrant families living near enough to the campus for the children to attend on Thursday afternoons.

Then came the time to gather the mentoring troops.

It was important to Professor Antoine that the volunteer project be a cross-faculty initiative, giving every student an opportunity to be involved.

"I felt many students would want to serve," she says.

So, a call went out to the UWI student community, inviting those interested in joining the programme as mentors. It turned out she was right.

"We were really surprised [at] how much the students took to the idea," Dr Roberts says. "We got a number of UWI students, not just from Humanities, and that was really nice to see."

Academic staff were also happy to become involved, Mr Rómulo Guédez-Fernández adds, including Prof Walcott-Hackshaw who guided and supported the team, Faculty of Social Sciences' Professor Surendra Arjoon who helped prepare the mentors for their teaching roles, as well as the History Department's Professor Jerome Teelucksingh.

"So we have synergy between students, academic staff," and even the CLL's administrative staff, Mr Guédez-Fernández says.

The Migrant Mentorship Pilot Programme kicked off with its first session on Thursday, September 14, 2023, with 20 migrant children from four to 14 years old, 40 UWI student volunteer mentors and four assistant coordinators.

There were initial challenges, Rómulo shares, including creating a curriculum that catered to the children's different age ranges.



PHOTOS: ANEEL KARIM

UWI volunteer pilot project goes to make a difference by mentoring in English and other

BY SERA D



The children are on such different levels. Each child needs an entirely separate curriculum designed specifically for them.



Student volunteer mentors, mentees, and the coordinators of the programme share a moment. A PHOTO: COURTESY CENTRE FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING.

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gives students the opportunity
ing Venezuelan migrant children
primary school basics

H ACHAM



At left (sitting) is Mr Rómulo Guédez-Fernández, and Dr Nicole Roberts is seated fourth from left.



The UWI students are the heart of the entire project, sharing that the mentors have taken initiative, finding their own ways to interact and engage with their mentees.

Fulfilment through helping children develop

Recent UWI graduate Talia Khan – another Testing Project evaluator and Migrant Mentorship Programme Assistant Coordinator – says that the children's levels of proficiency in speaking and writing English also vary, not just between the age groups, but individually.

"The children are on such different levels. Each child needs an entirely separate curriculum designed specifically for them," she says.

To address this problem, Mr Guédez-Fernández says, they create material specific to the various levels of the children, for each subject, adapted to the primary school curriculum.

Talia explains that the coordinators create these worksheets and make them accessible to the mentors who then pick their own activities for each session. And, they are learning, Talia says of the children. "They are developing that English competency, as well as the math skills."

Witnessing this, she says, "is very fulfilling."

Jesse adds that it is particularly rewarding to see the children so excited to learn: "These mentorship classes are the first time that they are having some sort of semi-formal education, so a lot of them really look forward to it."

The UWI students involved also benefit considerably, Mr Guédez-Fernández shares, from building teaching skills, to developing proficiency in the content areas they teach, as well as, of course, in the Spanish language.

"They feel really happy in terms of the experience they have," he says.

Dr Roberts acknowledges some of the students' initial discomfort with speaking Spanish as their language skills may not have extended past the form three level. "But now, because they're interacting with these kids weekly, they are comfortable with the language."

UWI students are the heart of the project

"The UWI students are the heart of the entire project," says Talia, sharing that the mentors have taken initiative, finding their own ways to interact and engage with their mentees. For example, those with the youngest mentees, "who would be a bit more hyper than the others", have learned to take them out of the classroom. "They show them the signs around the CLL building, they point to the wall and say, 'So, what colour is this?' or 'What does the sign say?'"

Amisha Pooran, FHE Spanish and Linguistics student in her second year and mentor for an 11-year-old boy, shares that "he looks forward to the sessions every Thursday as much as I do." To her, "education is a human right and should be accessible to all", so she is happy to be part of an initiative like the Migrant Mentorship Programme.

The mentees and mentors now share a bond, Talia says, recalling that when the children were invited on stage to say a few words at their Christmas gathering last year, "they all said that they're thankful to their Miss or to their Sir, and they learnt a lot and can't wait to come back."

The mentor responses are just as heartening. "This is a transformative experience! It changed me," some have told Rómulo. They've also expressed heightened cultural awareness and awareness of the educational needs within the Venezuelan migrant community.

Observing parents and grandparents waiting for their children on the first day of the programme, some UWI students approached Mr Guédez-Fernández and Dr Roberts with a proposal – the CLL should host an English as a Second Language class for them while they wait for their children. So now, Mr Guédez-Fernández says, "There is a class for parents," taught by two UWI students.

Noting that the students had no training in teaching, he says, "We sat down with them and created a very simple lesson. Now they are learning how to teach English as Second Language (ESL) by doing it."

In addition to the skills that they build, the connections they make and the benefit of doing good for others, the UWI student mentors are awarded a certificate of participation at the end of each semester.

Now into the second semester and second leg of the Migrant Mentorship Programme, Dr Roberts is confident that the pilot project has been a success. And this, she said, is just the start, acknowledging that while the legislation that sparked this programme hasn't yet been passed, these children aren't in school and the programme gives them an opportunity to learn.

Adapting to help more migrants

"We're going to have to find a way to deal with levels," she says. "We cannot only continue with these 20 mentees, because there are other kids out there. So, we're going to have to find a way to adapt."

Mr Guédez-Fernández reveals plans to offer summer classes under the Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) programme, for any migrant who needs it. And, of course, they intend to keep the Migrant Mentorship Programme going and growing as far as possible, with talks of introducing the programme to Jamaica and Barbados.

Though funding is limited, the programme receives donations of books and materials from individuals as well as sponsorship for snacks and drinks from Massy Stores. The goodwill extends beyond the university.

"You can't sit back and think about the funding," Dr Roberts says. "The rest will come. We've been fortunate so far."

"It really does take a lot of different brains, a lot of effort and heart, to figure out how to resolve this whole dilemma," Talia acknowledges.

While the country waits for the legislation to be passed, and school cycles move forward, and these migrant children get older, one thing is certain – all the hearts and hands involved in UWI's Migrant Mentorship Programme will keep teaching and learning at the CLL on Thursday afternoons.

Serah Acham is a writer and editor currently pursuing her MFA in Creative Writing at UWI St Augustine.



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■ BOOKS

Any Trinbagonian knows that a local recipe is less about following the exact measurements on a piece of paper, and more of a fluid process of gauging what your dish needs and what you have available. There's history and structure, yes, but the best cooks often embrace the improvisational nature of the kitchen.

When Dr Lesley-Ann Noel began writing the first draft of what would become *Design Social Change: Take Action, Work Toward Equity, and Challenge the Status Quo*, it was cooking that she turned to for a guide on how to approach writing on how we can utilise design to envision a more equitable, thoughtful future.

"This book has a cooking metaphor running through it," says Dr Noel at her book's Trinidad and Tobago launch on March 18, 2024 at NALIS. "I've been using cooking as a metaphor for action, as well as a metaphor for flexibility for a little while."

The final book removed some of the cooking references from the first draft, where the ideas were presented closer to recipes, partly because the editing team felt that a recipe metaphor might give the wrong idea to readers— that Dr Noel's words are a strict guideline to be followed, rather than a jumping-off point for people to find their own ways of approaching social change. But, perhaps it is her Caribbean background that encouraged her to view "recipes" as more fluid than static.

Dr Noel, a former visual arts lecturer at UWI St Augustine for almost two decades, is now an assistant professor at North Carolina State University, with a focus on design studies in the Department of Media, Arts, Design, and Technology. She will join the Ontario College of Design as the Dean of Design in July.

Listening and seeing others

Living and working in different parts of the world (like Brazil, East Africa, and around the Caribbean) has shown her that the needs of a community depend on the culture of that space. She talks in her book about "listening and seeing others"— a concept that may feel more natural in Trinidad and Tobago than in the US.

"I live in North Carolina, and we cross paths with people, and we don't tell people good morning," she says. But in the Caribbean, walking down the street to a flurry of good mornings from neighbours and strangers is commonplace. For us, to find our way to designing the social change she speaks about, we may have to lean on some of her other "recipes" for building community and changing the world around us together.

The book is a visual treat, with colourful pages and a series of vibrant illustrations by Trinidadian artist Che Lovelace. Lovelace recalls their first encounters at The UWI St. Augustine Campus:

"She was running the Visual Arts Programme at The UWI and I remember her as somebody always open to ideas."

When the team was looking to find the right artist to collaborate with for the visuals of the book, Noel kept coming back to Lovelace's work. She recalls saying to the publication team at the school, "All of this work that you're showing me is not better than work from Trinidad and Tobago— and not better than Che's work in particular."

For Che, the collaboration was an immediate yes: "I feel this book really addresses this sense that we are located somewhere, but we are affecting the entire world."

Prototyping in Ordinary Life

Dr Lesley-Ann Noel's new book, Design Social Change, looks at design as a personal tool for a more equitable and thoughtful tomorrow

BY AMY LI BAKSH



Dr Lesley-Ann Noel. PHOTOS: ROGER LEWIS PHOTOGRAPHY

All of us are designers

Although both writer and artist have a connection to academia, this book is intentionally meant to be more accessible to readers from any space, rather than having a purely academic focus.

"Actually, all of us are designers," says Noel.

Her goal was to get any reader to consider the impact they can have on the world around them. The book is part of a series of works that pushes readers to use design outside of the world of design with questions like "How can we get more people to think about design for belonging? To use design to make spaces inclusive? How can we get people to understand prototyping in ordinary life?"

She explores many tools for people to use to help foster change in their own lives, community, and the world at large. She asks you to think of ideas sometimes as simple as reframing how we look at our own emotions.

"Anger can provide necessary cues on change that is needed in the world," she says. "Anger is like an additional spice that is needed for change. Don't be afraid of it."

Making the future a more equitable place is not about one individual changing everything. It is about more people imagining the ways that they can come together and find that space that they are passionate about, what can be improved, and what their role can be. With this book, Noel asks you to think about what is important to you, and how you can change it for the better.

The book is a visual treat, with colourful pages and a series of vibrant illustrations by Trinidadian artist Che Lovelace.



■ **Design Social Change** is available at the Paper Based Bookshop, The Writers Centre, and Amazon. If you would like to connect with Dr Lesley-Ann Noel, she may be reached via: [linkedin.com/in/lesleyannnoel](https://www.linkedin.com/in/lesleyannnoel) and [Instagram.com/lesleyannnoel](https://www.instagram.com/lesleyannnoel)

Amy Li Baksh is a Trinidadian writer, artist and activist.

■ OUR CAMPUS

COVID-19 - it seems like society has made a collective decision to erase the pandemic from memory. Yet its effects still linger, some bad (particularly in the economic space), but a few surprisingly good. UWI St Augustine's Division of Student Services and Development (DSSD), the body responsible for supporting students in a host of ways, has enjoyed one enormous benefit from the upheaval and isolation of those years: a dynamic expansion online.

"DSSD has taken a new direction," says the division's director Dr Deirdre Charles. "It was almost forced upon us by COVID-19."

Like the rest of the campus, the pandemic forced DSSD to take their services online. This was a massive undertaking. The division has eight departments (nine including the Office of the Director), with responsibility for student accommodation, financial services, student activities and much more. Suddenly, they had to adapt to an empty campus and students learning remotely.

"Out of that came so many ideas that gave us such innovative ways of reaching our students," Dr Charles explains.

A number of programmes went online. Financial advisory services, psychological counselling, career services (including their very popular UWI RBL World of Work event), and even aspects of the First Year Experience (FYE) student orientation programme were delivered online. Dr Charles herself started delivering video messages for students on social media platforms.

"I began doing videos on different areas to reach the students, and to help guide them without being face-to-face. It was also a way to help them understand that all their services and developmental activities would continue."

And what started as measures to provide services during extraordinary circumstances have not only been maintained, they have grown and become integral to DSSD's work.

As Dr Charles explains, "What we found is that students really like online. Even when they returned to the campus, many still choose to access services online."

Students who receive stipends from DSSD can now do so from their computers. Many application processes can now be completed virtually. Students who receive counselling can have their sessions in the comfort and anonymity of their homes.

DSSD evolves to serve students better

Adapting to the pandemic has given the division powerful tools in the online space

BY JOEL HENRY

"It has really helped with efficiency of the division, and it meets the students where they are, because technology is their thing. They are very techie. They like things at their fingertips," says the DSSD director.

Rebuilding campus life

However, face-to-face services are still in full effect. In fact, one of DSSD's important post-COVID missions is rebuilding campus life. As Dr Charles explains, when the pandemic ended, there was a whole cohort of students who had never attended physical classes.

"Some of them came to campus for the first time, but they were in their final year," she says. "Campus life for them was sitting behind the computer in their rooms."

Their efforts to re-energise the campus are bearing fruit. The World of Work Recruitment Fair, an initiative to help students find career opportunities with some of T&T's major employers, has been incredibly successful this April. Dr Charles says the fair "is buzzing" and the brand is where it is supposed to be. The students, she adds, "have embraced it".

So, what next for DSSD? Dr Charles says she is going to embark on strategic planning for the division involving research and visiting other universities to analyse best practices in student services from around the world. From this, working with the managers and staff, she will prepare DSSD for the next decade.

In the near term, they have "a lot of exciting programmes in development", she says. "Kudos to the staff. I have a really good team behind me. A good team of managers and their employees that keep the ship afloat. We are ready to soar."

Departments of the Division of Student Services and Development (DSSD)

Office of the Director

- Provides leadership and strategic direction for the entire division.

Careers, Co-Curricular and Community Engagement Department

- Helps students develop their skills and provides a well-rounded experience to adapt to life after graduation.

Counselling and Psychological Services Department

- Provides mental health and wellness services to students.

Financial Advisory Services Department

- Guides students through the process of securing financial aid and manages scholarships, bursaries, and other financial support.

Guild Administrative Office

- Acts as liaison to the Guild of Students and provides mentorship in leadership and governance.

Student Accommodation Office

- Oversees student housing on and off-campus, and helps students adjust to life away from home.

Student Activities, Facilities, and Commuting Students Department

- Oversees campus amenities, facilities, and recreational activities, as well as supporting commuting students.

Student Engagement Unit

- Fosters student involvement in co-curricular and social experiences.

Student Life and Development Department

- Provides support for international, regional, and mature students, as well as students with disabilities and medical conditions.



Dr Deirdre Charles, Director of DSSD, with students.

■ OUR CAMPUS

More than 30 years ago, UWI St Augustine held the first of what would become the blueprint for Carnival all-inclusive fetes. UWI Fete was a game changing initiative and a highly effective fundraiser that over the years has raised more than \$20 million to provide financial support for students. Now, The UWI's Development and Endowment Fund (UWIDEF) has created a new event with an even bigger role - The UWI Garden Party.

In July 2022, the first Garden Party, Fête Champetre, was held. As the first UWI-branded fete since the end of the pandemic, it was a great success.

"The people loved it," says DSSD Director and one of the party's main organisers, Dr Deirdre Charles. "It was staged at a time when people had done nothing for the year. People were looking for a place to go and exhale."

There were similarities between The UWI's Carnival event and this one, but there are important differences as well. The Garden Party's performances are not limited to soca artists, and jazz and other genres are represented by some of their greatest exponents in T&T. The Garden Party is also smaller, and more intimate, and the themes are international. The first event had a French theme. This year's event, scheduled for July 7, is Italian - La Festa in Giardino.

Italian food, wine, impeccable decor, performers at the highest level, the organisers have promised an even bigger (but still intimate) and more enjoyable experience. But in the one thing that matters most, The Garden Party and UWI Fete are the same. All proceeds from the event go towards providing scholarships and bursaries for students to attend The UWI.

"It's a win all around," says Dr Charles. "Attendees have a good time, hear good music, have good food, and engage with people. But they also know the money they paid for a ticket will go to a student in a few months."

The organisers have an ambitious goal for La Festa in Giardino, they want to double the amount earned.

"We recognise that since we started giving those bursaries many years ago, inflation has kicked in," says Dr Charles.

As Director of the DSSD, she is intimately aware of the needs students have for financial support. She has personally

THE GARDEN WHERE STUDENTS BLOOM



UWIDEF's innovative new fundraising event's second outing promises a taste of Italy, increases goal for scholarships and bursaries

assisted several students and the division's Financial Advisory Services department has been responsible for directing financial aid to thousands.

She recalls one family of four, three sisters and the youngest a brother, all hardworking students with ability, but without the means to attend university. So far, the financial support provided by The UWI has allowed all three sisters to pursue their degrees at UWI St Augustine.

"I'm waiting on the brother," she says, smiling.

In August 2023, UWIDEF announced that they have transitioned away from UWI Fete and will now make the Garden Party, along with The UWIDEF IGNITE concert (covered in this issue of UWI TODAY), and The UWIDEF Charity Golf Challenge, its three fundraising mechanisms.

Dr Charles encourages both the private and public sector to take part in these events:

"I say to our partners in industry, come join us at this event in an effort to ensure increased retention rates. This will have a positive impact on the labour force both locally and regionally. This is a regional workforce building initiative. These scholarships and bursaries are for national, regional, and postgraduate students."

■ **The UWI Garden Party - La Festa in Giardino**, is scheduled for July 7 on the grounds of The UWI St Augustine campus. For more information, visit www.facebook.com/UWIFete/ or www.instagram.com/uwifetesta

Joel Henry

HONoured FOR HER CONTRIBUTION TO YOUNG LIVES IN T&T



This past March, Dr Charles was among a small and select group to win an award for their contributions to Trinidad and Tobago from the Ministry of Youth Development and National Service. At the ceremony, held on March 27 at the Trinidad Hilton, she was honoured as one

of ten people recognised as mentors that have played a significant role in youth development. Her category was education.

At first, she did not appreciate the significance.

"When I got the call [informing her of the award] it was business as usual," she recalls. "I was in a meeting. It went over my head."

Soon, however, she recognised the accomplishment for what it meant.

"It was significant for me to receive such a national award as a small-island girl from a country I love so much," she says.

"I am humbled by the opportunity to contribute to youth development and to be recognised by Trinidad and Tobago, a country which adopted me. It touched me in a real way."

Dr Charles has been a student services professional at UWI St Augustine for 23 years, and the award was an affirmation of her work and that of the entire DSSD. However, it is the profession itself that she finds most fulfilling.

"Recognition is something I don't ever look for," she says, "I just do the work. I love the work."

There is one group though that she takes special pleasure in hearing from - the students themselves. The DSSD director has many stories of students who have

approached her to show their appreciation for her impact on their lives, sometimes years after they have graduated.

She recalls one incident, "one of the toughest times" in her career in which she sought to develop processes and transparency in the Guild of Students (DSSD works closely with the Guild, providing guidance and other support). The students were unhappy and the conflict went to the highest office of the campus.

Some five-plus years later, one of the Guild members at the time reached out to her.

"He said to me, 'Dr Charles, I would just like to tell you thank you'. There was so much they did not know back then, and today in his current role as a leader he understood how much I tried to instil in them," she says.

"We stayed on the phone for a few minutes well," she adds, "as he thanked me for not giving up on the student leaders. This made my heart smile."

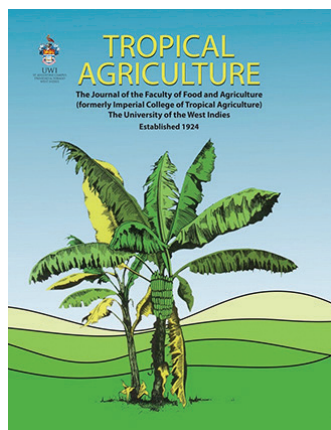
FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Tropical Agriculture

Celebrating 100 years of Continuous Publication



BY BRUCE LAUCKNER, SAROJINI RAGBIR, AND TREASURE ALCINDOR



This year, 2024, is the 100th anniversary of the journal **Tropical Agriculture** which is published by UWI St Augustine's Faculty of Food and Agriculture. In August 1921, the colonial authorities made the decision to close the Barbados based Imperial Department of Agriculture for the West Indies, and to establish

the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture (ICTA) in Trinidad at St Augustine. In October 1922, ICTA opened its doors to students in Tropical Agriculture from the UK and its colonies.

Two years after commencing operations, in 1924, the first issue of *Tropical Agriculture* was published by ICTA at a cost of six pence. For the next 43 years, *Tropical Agriculture* was a monthly publication. Articles were published on research and the general status of agricultural development by authors in the West Indies and in British colonies in Africa, Asia, and Oceania.

There were also articles by scientists based at ICTA and in the UK on more general topics which might be found in textbooks on agriculture. In addition, the monthly issues had sections on market trends for the major export crops, as well as a regular article called "College News" which included sports results from teams representing ICTA, births, marriages, deaths, and information on which of the mainly expatriate staff went off to England by sea for home leave.

From ICTA to UWI

In 1960, the second campus of the University College of the West Indies (UCWI) opened at St Augustine and ICTA became its Faculty of Agriculture. In 1962, UCWI gained full university status as The University of the West Indies (UWI). Throughout this period of rapid change, *Tropical Agriculture* continued as an academic research journal. From the inception of The UWI, the *Tropical Agriculture* editor has been appointed by the university.

In 1954, the publishing of *Tropical Agriculture* was taken over by Butterworths in London, but the editorial



Tropical Agriculture Editor-in-Chief Mr Bruce Lauckner and Managing Editor Ms Sarojini Ragbir with an issue of the journal.



Ms Treasure Alcindor, Technical Assistant for Tropical Agriculture, goes through the very first issue from 1924.

Two years after commencing operations, in 1924, the first issue of Tropical Agriculture was published by ICTA at a cost of six pence.

staff remained at St Augustine. This situation remained until 1992, when the then Faculty of Agriculture took the decision to bring back the publishing of the journal to St Augustine where it has remained to this day.

The last printed volume of *Tropical Agriculture* was in 2022 and the journal is now in full electronic format. At the same time, the journal became completely open access; making current issues accessible to anybody online without a subscription at journals.sta.uwi.edu/ojs/index.php/ta/index or by searching online for "*Tropical Agriculture journal*". A small publication fee is charged for papers to be published. Although current issues are free to read and download, access to archives (from 2019 dating back to 1924) requires online payment.

All submitted papers are subjected to peer review and editing to determine suitability for publication. The disciplines covered by the journal include soils, agro-ecology, environment, geography, crops, livestock, forestry, fisheries, post-harvest technology, food and nutrition, agricultural economics, and agribusiness management and

extension. Almost all the article authors are from tropical countries, with submissions from around the world.

The editor-in-chief and the staff from the Communications and Publications Unit of the Faculty of Food and Agriculture are responsible for the publication of the journal. They report to a Tropical Agriculture Management Committee chaired by the faculty's Dean and with membership comprising its department heads. There is also an International Editorial Board of distinguished tropical agricultural scientists from around the globe.

With agriculture in the Caribbean and other tropical countries needing to respond to the challenges of climate change, increased populations, and increasing food prices, research will play an especially important role. *Tropical Agriculture* is a vehicle to disseminate research findings from scientists to scientists around the world. After a century of publication, *Tropical Agriculture* has played a significant role in agricultural research, and will continue to do so for many years to come.

Mr Bruce Lauckner (Editor-In-Chief), Ms Sarojini Ragbir (Managing Editor) and Ms Treasure Alcindor (Technical Assistant), are members of the editorial team of Tropical Agriculture.

■ OUR PEOPLE

Taking up residence in Trinidad and Tobago for the past five years, after spending time in the UK making fiction films, Andreas Antonopoulos, lecturer responsible for the BA Production course at The UWI St Augustine Film Programme, has used his environment to his benefit.

Finding inspiration from the world around him, coupled with the innate need to understand the culture and explore new modes of storytelling, the films that he has created have captivated audiences since *Rhythms of Trinidad* in 2021, which won a Best New Media Award at the Trinidad and Tobago Film Festival.

Andreas creates a visual experience in his films utilising lyrics, music, and history. He has crafted his documentaries on different cultural aspects of Trinidad and Tobago in a form that is not usually seen.

When he came to Trinidad and Tobago in 2018, and started at the Film Programme in 2019, Andreas had one focus, and to tell the story of the islands in a way that brings a different emphasis to them.

Enthusiastic about Caribbean history

“When I came here, I started working because I was very enthusiastic about the history, which I had no idea about,” he says. “I wanted to break the thinking that the Caribbean is about mostly the beach and the bar, and mainly a tourist destination, which is not true. But many of people have no idea what is happening here. For these reasons, I started working.”

Andreas’s career in filmmaking began in 2004 in Greece with his film school project *Mind Games*, and continued in the UK, where he created works such as *Nietzsche Said* (2011) and *Jasmine Does not Like Mangoes* (2015). In Greece and the UK, his films were fictional, taking a philosophical and political stance that inspired the viewer to think critically. They encouraged a level of introspection from the viewer that one often does not see in the typical Hollywood blockbuster.

While in Trinidad, Andreas was inspired to start making documentaries, supported by The UWI. Now, comparing it to his past work in fiction, he wholeheartedly prefers the format.

“I am in the right place to do [documentary filmmaking]. It is quite unexplored,” he says.

For him, fiction films have a huge complexity, but when he works on a documentary, he has an opportunity to utilise experimental forms, and this is a more satisfying mode.

His most recent film *Cheenee* (2023), a collaboration with Ms Deboleena Paul, Coordinator of the Dance Unit at the Department of Creative and Festival Arts, focused on the culture of indentured East Indians and their descendants, and was told entirely through the voices of a cross section of people they interviewed; a technique that he prefers when doing documentary films. (For more on *Cheenee*, read the October 2021 issue of UWI TODAY https://sta.uwi.edu/uwitoday/archive/october_2021/article3.asp).

In 2023, *Cheenee* was nominated for Best Documentary at the DOXA Documentary Film Festival in Canada. It has so far been screened at film festivals in Jamaica, Bangladesh and Canada. In April, the film will be shown at the Cinema of the World International Film Festival in India, and later this year at festivals in Hungary and Austria.

For Andreas, the typical storytelling style used for documentaries where there is usually a narrator or a script can often lead you in how to think, feel, and believe, and he does not have a need for this. He does not want to tell everything to the audience. He wants them to observe.

Inspired by Place

UWI Film lecturer Andreas Antonopoulos combines culture, history, and the voices of the people to create his documentaries

BY OMEGA FRANCIS



Documentaries allow for honest exploration

The documentary format is a way for him to be honest and explore what exists and do so creatively, using film as a medium.

Currently focused on the postproduction process on his upcoming feature film, *Le Hand* (2024), another collaborating with Ms Paul, Andreas has once again taken up this storytelling style, using lyrics to communicate the history and culture of Tobago. It will be an exploration of movement combined with the stories of the past via visual communication.

Le Hand, his fourth film, is a musical documentary. Working with historian Dr Rita Pemberton, former senior lecturer at UWI St Augustine’s Department of History, a narrative based on research was created. This was given to songwriter Gillian Moore, who made five tracks for the film. *Le Hand* is a conversion of history to song writing, and combination of film and dance to create something fresh and experimental.

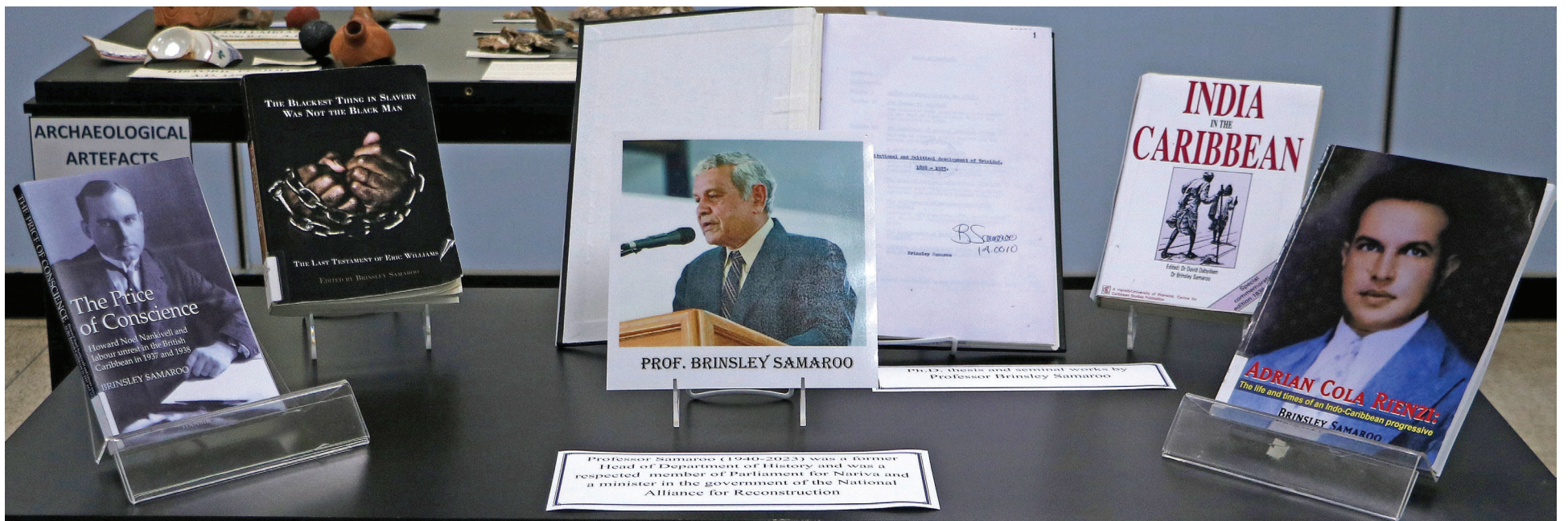
When asked about what his next project will be, Andreas emphasised that instead of being inspired by a specific subject matter, he is motivated to make films based on the approach taken. Ms Paul will once again collaborate with him on a future short film which is already in the planning stages.

While his works have been screened extensively in numerous festivals, this is not the central focus of his filmmaking. Rather, his work has all had an aspect of academic research, something he uses with his students to inspire them to explore new ideas and encourage more abstract thought when it comes to the filmmaking process.

HISTORY FEST 2024

Celebrating history and one of the REGION'S GREAT HISTORIANS

BY DARIUS PHILLIP



“We are not trying to revive history, it is alive,” stated Head of the Department of History Dr Gelien Matthews at The UWI St Augustine’s Alma Jordan Library. The occasion was the Professor Brinsley Samaroo Legacy Lecture on March 8, 2024.

The lecture kicked off History Fest 2024 and featured a host of commemorative speeches, historical memorabilia, and cultural practices to celebrate the life of Professor Samaroo, a renowned historian and public intellectual, who passed last year.

Over the past decade, The UWI and various scholars have used History Fest to pay homage to the intellectual exploration and excellence of others as they contributed to the study of history and its impact on our past, present and future. The memorial lecture not only showcased Prof Samaroo’s contributions to the academic historical world, but also highlighted the initiatives the History Department has taken to ensure the continued interest in the subject.

The Dean of the Faculty of Humanities, Professor Elizabeth Walcott-Hackshaw, spoke in her greetings on the legacy of Prof Samaroo and how people can “honour, reflect, and learn” from it. She also spoke on the value of history, not only for the department but also in literature.

“I do believe that history and literature tell a narrative that is so important to us,” she said.

The curriculum officer of the Social Sciences Unit at the Ministry of Education, Dr Carla Kronberg, echoed these sentiments stating, “We recognise the invaluable role that the Department of History plays in our collective heritage.”

Doctor Kronberg, who is also a lecturer at The UWI St Augustine School of Education, acknowledged the significance of Prof Samaroo’s work to the world of history.

Remembering Michael Anthony, Gerard Besson, and David Richardson

The legacy lecture also spotlighted other figures in history. These included author and historian Michael Anthony, publisher Gerard Besson, and Professor of



Emerita Professor of History Bridget Brereton receives a token of appreciation from Dr Gelien Matthews, Head of the Department of History. PHOTOS: ANEEL KARIM

History David Richardson.

However, the highlight of the History Fest was the feature address in honour of Prof Samaroo by Emerita Professor of History Bridget Brereton. Prof Brereton was a close friend of the late historian with whom she co-authored the *Dictionary of Caribbean Biography* in 1998 and *Understanding T&T: Environment, History and Culture of a Nation* in 2019.

“[Professor Samaroo] was always deeply interested in the religions of his ancestral land, both Hinduism and Islam,” stated Professor Brereton in her opening address.

She gave details on his early life, including his pursuit of a scholarship from the government of India to attend Delhi University in the late 1950s and achieve his bachelor’s and master’s degrees in History.

“This early exposure to the ancestral homeland deeply influenced his subsequent work on the Indian Diaspora in the region,” said Prof Brereton.

Her address also focused on the late professor’s two main areas of research interest: the labour and political struggles in 20th Century Trinidad and Tobago, and Indo-Trinidadian and Indo-Caribbean history.

She noted that during his time of study in the

Brinsley Samaroo, remained a key public intellectual figure and activist for many different political, social, and cultural causes over six decades. His work as historian fed into and informed his public and activist roles – history was alive in his life and practice!

Professor Bridget Brereton

University of London (where he completed his PhD thesis *Constitutional and Political Development of Trinidad, 1898-1925*) many historians “shamelessly ‘borrowed’ from it over the decades”, including herself, as the work was “pioneering archival research and analysis”.

Prof Brereton also spoke on his fascination with the political struggles of the 1930s and 1940s. These led him to produce the book *The Price of Conscience*. Prof Samaroo, she said, also admired Adrian Cola Rienzi, who was a key leader behind the Oil Workers Trade Union (OWTU) following the 1937 Butler Riots. This interest was also key to his involvement in the Black Power Movement in Trinidad and Tobago later in his life, as well as his scholarship in compiling Dr Eric Williams’s manuscripts that would later be published as *The Blackest Thing in Slavery was not the Black Man* in 2022.

Brinsley Samaroo, she said, remained a key public intellectual figure and activist for many different political, social, and cultural causes over six decades.

“His work as historian fed into and informed his public and activist roles – history was alive in his life and practice!”

■ CULTURE

The Department of Creative and Festival Arts (DCFA) Dance Unit at UWI St Augustine hosted a Secondary School Dance Workshop in late March and early April. The workshop was a transformative, 10-day event created to celebrate and preserve traditional Caribbean, African, and Indian dance forms.

Led by Ms Deboleena Paul, coordinator and lecturer of the Dance Unit, the workshop was not only a platform for professional and dancers to develop their skills, but also a space for cultural exploration.

Dances such as bélé, bhangra, bongo, ghoomar, kolattam, limbo, nation dance, orisha, and quadrille were taught. The workshop boasted the involvement of Bélé Queen and President of the National Dance Association of Trinidad and Tobago Mrs Emelda Lynch-Griffith, master performer Terry David of the Terry David Performing Theater, renowned limbo artist Cory Herbert, and multiple award-winning dancer and cultural ambassador Adam Pascall, among its instructors.

Ms Paul said the workshop's mission was to reconnect people with their local and diasporic cultures through dance, countering trends dominated by foreign styles. The esteemed instructors provided comprehensive training, encompassing theoretical understanding, practical skills, and performance techniques to uphold authenticity.

Ms Paul expressed disappointment at the low participation rate among teachers, highlighting the importance of continuous education and mentorship in fostering a thriving dance culture.

"Often I see when dancers get their degree and certification, they are no longer interested in furthering their dance studies and craft at a formal level," she said. "Education is ongoing and should be continued as we progress in age."

She also said students should be more discerning about the qualifications of their dance teachers and ensure that their instructors have not only learned from accredited institutions, but also have proper training in the theoretical and academic aspects of dance.

Ms Lynch-Griffith spoke on the importance of preserving traditional folk dance forms in a landscape dominated by contemporary influences. She lamented the lack of formal education opportunities in folk dance and the risk of cultural dilution over generations.



Learning, Preserving, DANCING

BY CHERISSE LAUREN BERKELEY

"There is a lack of avenues for education in folk dance as there is little to no documentation of the pioneers of our folk dances," she remarked.

Ms Paul also addressed internal struggles faced by some participants concerning body image issues. "I see many of the girls in this group being focused on their body image," she explained. "For my sessions, I have them face the back of the room so they aren't distracted by their reflections in the mirrors."

The workshop, she said, was also a good starting point

to pursuing dance in higher education:

"The DCFA offers a Dance and Education Certificate programme for students fresh out of secondary school, available upon the completion of the CSEC examinations. This workshop can be considered as a precursor to the certificate programme."

Cherisse Lauren Berkeley is a journalist, activist, mas-maker, and multidisciplinary artist.

THE JAMAICAN GIANT GALLIWASP COMES HOME

Coming in from the Cold is one of **Bob Marley and the Wailers** greatest hits, and this April a very special native of Jamaica returned home after more than 170 years abroad. The Jamaican Giant Galliwasp, a species of lizard presumed to be extinct, was repatriated by the University of Glasgow (UoG) in Scotland to The UWI Mona campus in Jamaica.

The specimen is thought to have been collected in the 1850s and was held in The Hunterian at UoG. This is reportedly the first repatriation of a natural history specimen in the Caribbean. A statement from The UWI said the exercise "symbolises an important milestone for scientific research, cultural heritage preservation in the region, and repatriation as part of the reparatory justice for the Caribbean."

UWI Vice-Chancellor Professor Sir Hilary Beckles said, "The reparatory justice movement deals with various issues of different scales that must be addressed. By returning the galliwasp to its rightful place, we take a small but significant step towards laying the foundation for a regional and international discussion on repatriation."



FROM LEFT: Mike Rutherford, Zoology Curator at The Hunterian; Professor Simon Anderson, board director of the GCCDR (with the wet specimen of the Jamaican Giant Galliwasp in hand); and Steph Scholten, Director of The Hunterian. PHOTO: COURTESY MIKE G RUTHERFORD

A joint team from The UWI and the Institute of Jamaica (IOJ) travelled to Glasgow to retrieve the specimen. They returned to Jamaica with the lizard specimen on April 24. The galliwasp will be held in the Natural History Museum of Jamaica on permanent loan in the national flora and fauna collection for safekeeping and public viewing.

Steph Scholten, Director of The Hunterian, said "We hope that this return will help foster further relationships between The University of the West Indies and the University of Glasgow, as well as deepen understanding of repatriation issues in the museum sector."

The repatriation exercise is within the sphere of the execution of a 2019 memorandum of understanding (MOU) between The UWI and UoG, aimed at fostering collaboration in research and education, and addressing the historical legacies of colonialism. One of the outcomes of the MOU is the Glasgow-Caribbean Centre for Development Research (GCCDR), which funds research projects that advance development goals in the Caribbean, facilitate academic partnerships, and raise awareness about the ongoing impact of historical slavery.

■ LANGUAGES



Embracing MANDARIN CHINESE on UN Chinese Language Day

BY JANINE LUTCHMAN

Mandarin Chinese is one of the six official languages of the United Nations (UN). In 2010, the UN dedicated a specific day, April 20, as Chinese Language Day to highlight the contributions of the Chinese language to global culture, and above all, to encourage people around the world to learn Mandarin Chinese. Today, Mandarin Chinese is one of the most spoken languages in the global community, and its impact is far-reaching, shaping the international communication sphere.

At The UWI, we recognise the immense value of learning Chinese, not only as a means of intercultural communication, but also as a gateway to opportunities in academia and business. Chinese was first introduced in 1999 at the Centre for Language Learning (CLL). Since then, the programme has seen tremendous growth, with its beneficiaries going on to pursue diverse career paths, excel in academic pursuits, and engage in meaningful cultural exchanges.

In celebration of UN Chinese Language Day, CLL is delighted to highlight our diverse range of programmes designed to help individuals of all ages embark on their journey to mastering Mandarin Chinese and embracing Chinese culture.

Public Stream Programme

The classes offered in the public stream are designed to cater to learners who would like to develop a solid foundation in Mandarin Chinese, with an emphasis on honing their listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. The programme consists of six courses spanning three levels, Levels 1A to 3B. A wide range of linguistic and cultural topics are covered from self-introductions, ordering food to visiting the doctor's office. Learners have the option of pursuing classes online from the comfort of their home, or in-person at the CLL.



Students from the Chinese 1B class of 2018/2019 pose with their paper cutting pieces.



Students taking part in a Chinese boba tea keychain workshop. PHOTOS: COURTESY CLL

Foreign Language Requirement (FLR) Programme

If you are interested in pursuing Mandarin for credit, you can sign up for Mandarin Chinese as part of The UWI's foreign language requirement. The FLR Chinese programme consists of two courses; CHIN 1007 (Part 1) and CHIN 1008 (Part 2). Each course carries three credits. Similar to our public stream programme, they present learners with a comprehensive overview of the language, focusing on building proficiency in the four basic language skills.

Introduction to Asian Culture I (Workshop)

This is a new addition to the CLL. This workshop exposes prospective students to the culture of two major East Asian countries, China and Japan. The programme is open specifically to young learners at the secondary school level and it aims to help them to develop communication skills, open-mindedness, and respect for cultural differences. The workshop is five days in length and will be offered in July 2024 for the first time. For more information on this workshop, contact us at: CLL.FHE@sta.uwi.edu.

As we celebrate UN Chinese Language Day, let us embrace the beauty of Mandarin Chinese and China's vibrant culture.

■ **For more information**, visit the Centre for Language Learning at www.sta.uwi.edu/fhe/ccl



Two students from the UWI East Asian Culture Club pose with their dragon design at the CLL Open House celebration in 2023.

CLL is delighted to highlight our diverse range of programmes designed to help individuals of all ages embark on their journey to mastering Mandarin Chinese and embracing Chinese culture.

Ms Janine Lutchman is Mandarin Chinese tutor at the Centre for Language Learning.

■ UWI IN SOCIETY

The Fire Rises

UWIDEF Ignite 2 benefit concert burns brighter



It was an evening of music, voice, and dance, brought together to provide for students with exceptional ability but limited resources seeking their future through higher education. Ignite, the benefit concert hosted by The UWI Development and Endowment Fund (UWIDEF), went bigger in its second edition, bringing several renowned choirs, orchestras, soloists, and dancers to the National Academy for the Performing Arts (NAPA).

“Ignite 2 - Rekindle the Flame” took place on Palm Sunday, March 24. Last year’s artists The Lydians and the Signal Hill Alumni Choir, were joined by several performing acts. These included the National Steel Symphony Orchestra of Trinidad and Tobago, the Shiv Shakti Dance Company, and the Southernaires Choir. UWI St Augustine’s own UWI Arts Chorale and UWI Steel also performed, as well



as soloists, Edward Cumberbatch, Neval Chatelal, and Quinton Neckles.

The Ignite benefit concert is one of UWIDEF’s major fundraising events to award scholarships and bursaries to deserving students. At their 2023/2024 ceremony, UWIDEF presented a combined total of 210 awards, including ten UWI Star scholarships for students who displayed excellence in academics and co-curricular activities.

Founded in 1990, UWIDEF has supported thousands of UWI students. On July 7, they will host The UWI Garden Party at the St Augustine campus (see article in this issue). Titled La Festa in Giardino, this event will be “an evening of delectable cuisine, vibrant jazz and soca rhythms”, reads a statement from UWIDEF. All proceeds from the Garden Party go towards scholarships and bursaries.

The Ignite benefit concert is one of UWIDEF’s major fundraising events to award scholarships and bursaries to deserving students.



The UWI Calendar of Events | May–July 2024



APETT Technical Conference 2024 May 14 and 15 HYATT Regency Trinidad, Port-of-Spain

The Association of Professional Engineers of Trinidad and Tobago, in collaboration with The UWI and UTT, invites you to embrace innovation, sustainability, and collaboration as we explore groundbreaking solutions to engineering challenges. Connect with esteemed academics, professionals, contractors, consultants, associates, and students from around the world. Themes will include sustainable development for small island developing states, energy and energy-related industries, resilient, artificial intelligence and digitalisation in manufacturing and processing, and engineering education and ethical practices. Don't miss this opportunity to be at the forefront of engineering excellence and shape the future together.

**For more information, visit APETT at <https://linktr.ee/apett>
To register, go to <https://bit.ly/apett2024conference>**

Social Media Strategies for Digital Success May 14 to 17

ONLINE

Seeking to harness the power of social media more effectively? This workshop, hosted by the UWI St Augustine's Business Development Unit, challenges conventional approaches to social media marketing and lets participants explore strategies to create meaningful connections with their audience, drive engagement, and convert followers into loyal customers.

The workshop will be administered by Juma Bannister, Co-founder and Executive Creative Director of Relate Studios, a specialist in relationship-led strategic marketing and productions. Topics include:

- Understanding the pitfalls of traditional social media marketing.
- Recognising the importance of utility and value in content creation.
- Learning strategies to foster relationships with your audience.
- Implementing tactics to increase revenue and business growth through social media.

**For more information, including pricing details, contact Amanda at sta-fssbdu@sta.uwi.edu
To register, visit <https://sta.uwi.edu/fss/business-development-unit>
or complete the registration form using the link:
<https://uwi.jotform.com/241054657326860>**



Chemistry 5K Fun Run 2024 May 26 Dept of Chemistry, Faculty of Science and Technology St Augustine Campus

The Department of Chemistry presents its second annual 5K Fun Run event. Come out and take part in this healthy activity, and engage with others from the campus community and beyond. Proceeds from the fun run will go towards the Chemistry Department's charitable causes.

Participants can look forward to a warm-up session, customised medals for all finishers, electronic timing, product sampling, post-race games, and exciting prizes

**Register at <https://bit.ly/UWI5kfunrun>.
For more Info, call 662-2002, ext 83266, or WhatsApp 338-0088 or 388-1526.**

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS 5th Annual National Health Research Conference: June 30

Send your abstracts for this upcoming health conference, scheduled for November 22, 2024, themed "Digital Health Transformation: Leveraging Technology for Better Care". Quality abstracts in all health-related areas can be submitted, including studies using quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods. Topics can include public health, environmental health, biomedical research, communicable and non-communicable diseases, nutrition, health economics, social and behavioural health sciences, and others.

For more information on the conference, visit www.healthresearchconferencett.com



The Garden Party 2024: La Festa in Giardino July 7 Campus Greens, The UWI, St Augustine

Exquisite cuisine, beautiful music and, most importantly, the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of young people seeking to further their education. Come join the campus community for La Festa in Giardino, an elegant evening on the lush campus greens for this fundraising event hosted by The UWI Development and Endowment Foundation. With a taste of Italy and the soul of T&T, all of the proceeds of the garden party go towards providing scholarships and bursaries for deserving students.

For more information and updates, including ticketing details, visit Facebook at www.facebook.com/UWIFete/ and Instagram at www.instagram.com/uwifetesta