

# UWI TODAY

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES • ST AUGUSTINE CAMPUS

SUNDAY 14 AUGUST 2022



## PROFESSOR STAR GAZER

For decades, Shirin Haque (Senior Lecturer in Astronomy at the Department of Physics, UWI St Augustine) has been a pioneer, leader, and educator in astronomy and some of its related fields in T&T and the wider region. This past July, The UWI recognised her outstanding achievements in the discipline and contribution to the university by appointing her to the highest academic rank. She is now Professor Shirin Haque. “*Extremely humbling and mind-blowing*,” is how Professor Haque describes her achievement. She is the first Professor of Astronomy at The UWI. PHOTO: NYLA SINGH PHOTOGRAPHY





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EDITOR’S MESSAGE

# Open Season

Like the ending of a long and surreal Caribbean winter, Trinidad and Tobago is finally thawing from the pandemic. Public spaces are reopening, travel restrictions are loosening - life and work are returning to a somewhat familiar place. We aren't completely free from COVID-19 – far from it – but we can coexist. Things haven't returned to 100 per cent normalcy, but that is not a bad thing. It would be a terrible waste for us to attempt to dogmatically sprint backwards to how we lived before, a way of life that helped to get us into this crisis in the first place.

Winter is ending at The UWI St Augustine Campus as well. Academic Year 2022/2023 officially begins on August 28 (registration starts a little earlier on August 22). The campus will finally be open to students once more as we return to in-person classes.

Campus life is an important part of the university experience, and it has been missed.

These moves to open the campus began months ago. In early June, staff officially returned. Later that month, UWI St Augustine held the “Postgraduate Experience”, a unique cocktail event where prospective graduate students could explore the opportunities available to them at the university. While the event took place at the Trinidad Hilton and Conference Centre, the venue on the outskirts of the capital made the campus and its offerings more accessible to the hundreds who attended.

In July, that kind of informational experience did actually take place on campus with The UWI Open Days. Prospective students and their families were invited on to the campus to explore the faculties, departments, facilities and vibes at UWI St Augustine. It was the first in-person campus event of its kind since COVID-19 closed down the country. In fact, it might have been the most people on the campus grounds in two years. The campus community worked very hard to host our guests over those three days (July 8 to 10), but it was fulfilling work and a truly significant moment.

That momentum continued on July 24 with UWI Fête Champêtre. Held on a warm Sunday at the Campus Principal's Residence, this was a fundraising initiative created to provide scholarships and bursaries to deserving students. It filled the void left by UWI Fete, UWI St Augustine's signature fundraising event, which normally takes place during the Carnival season and has been on hiatus because of the pandemic. Fête Champêtre brought the joyous sounds, colour and life back to campus while also making the statement, “UWI St Augustine is back”. With tickets completely sold out, it succeeded in raising valuable funds for students.

Academic Year 2022/2023 feels like more than a new year. It has the potential to be a new era. One we look forward to with optimism and the determination to make the most of the opportunities it provides.

Normally, this space in UWI TODAY is preserved for the Campus Principal. However, there has been another hugely significant moment in this new era at UWI St Augustine. Professor Brian Copeland has completed his tenure as Principal. As Editor, I have had the privilege of working with Prof Copeland and sharing his messages with the society for over three years. He is a dynamic leader with a very strong and transformational vision for the campus and T&T itself. It was a pleasure working with him.

On August 1, Professor Rose-Marie Belle Antoine officially assumed office as Pro Vice-Chancellor and Campus Principal of UWI St Augustine. She is a beloved educator, administrator and public intellectual, and a passionate leader in the fight for many social justice causes. We look forward to sharing her messages in UWI TODAY and, more importantly, the campus' story under her leadership.



Students welcome visitors to the campus for The UWI Open Days 2022. PHOTO: ANEEL KARIM



A very fashionable garden party-goer at Fête Champêtre. PHOTO: ANEEL KARIM



Attendees at the Postgraduate Experience held at the Trinidad Hilton and Conference Centre. PHOTO: ATIBA CUDJOE

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## ■ CAMPUS NEWS

**Professor Shirin Haque** has made history as the first in her field to rise to The UWI highest academic rank. Haque is the first professor in the field of Astronomy at the Caribbean university.

The outstanding scholar is one of The UWI's five newest academics promoted to the rank of Professor with effect from May 2022. When asked how she felt about the appointment, Prof Haque said, "Extremely humbled and mind blowing."

She added, "Frankly, I lacked the confidence that I could make it and kept postponing my application despite the urging from several academic well-wishers and mentors. It surprised and humbled me when the common refrain in the deluge of congratulatory messages that poured in was 'long overdue!'"

Yet, as a pioneer in her field, she dealt with naysayers early in her career:

"I recall my first supervisor for the MPhil, clearly telling me, 'You know you won't get a job with this?' and I immediately thought of Plan B – I shall be a physics teacher in school. But I had to give my passion for astronomy a shot. From there on, it feels like serendipity played an amazing role in bringing me to this point."

The new professor spoke highly of The UWI, saying the university has been "amazing in nurturing and supporting me." Her hope, she said, was to "give back to the region a fraction of what they have done for me."

Congratulating the new professor, Vice-Chancellor of The UWI Professor Sir Hilary Beckles praised her for illuminating both The UWI and the Caribbean on the world stage.

"This brilliant star has been an exemplar for women in science and aspiring astronomers for decades and is truly deserving of this historic promotion."

"The university community," he added, "is especially proud that she has received her tutoring and dedicated her academic service here at The UWI. She embodies excellence and the university's mission to advance learning, create knowledge and foster innovation for the positive transformation of the Caribbean and the world."

### Advocate for the stars

Before her professorial appointment, she served as a senior lecturer in the Department of Physics at St Augustine. She was the only student pursuing and graduating from the Department of Physics at St Augustine in Astronomy for decades until the seven postgraduate students she supervised.

"I have given numerous talks in schools and I see so many children who remind me of myself at their age," Prof Haque said of her quest as educator and advocate for her field. This work can now be enhanced by her appointment.

"Their eyes are wild with passion for astronomy, but there are demotivating voices cries all around them. It's been said that if you can see it, you can be it. Becoming a professor is an honour that gives you a voice and legitimacy," she said.

The timing of her appointment is also excellent because the field of astronomy is in a period of major evolution – and with it, new career opportunities.

"The amount of data expected in the coming decade from the next generation of VLA (Very Large Arrays) in radio astronomy is going to create a severe workforce shortage," said Prof Haque.

Already, the National Science Foundation (an independent agency of the US government that supports research and education in science and engineering) has reached out to her to "train, recruit and create opportunities for the best and brightest of our students".

The UWI is the only non-US partner in a group of about a dozen universities in the Radio Astronomy Data Imaging Analysis Lab (RADIAL) programme.

No discipline, she said, has as much transferable skills needed in the coming decades as astronomy. They are highly sought after for their programming skills, mathematics, data analysis and critical thinking.

"So I am going back to the schools and hope to introduce astronomy as the 34th subject in CXC CSEC, and then onto CAPE," she said.

Professor Haque's main research interests include astrobiology, observational astronomy, cosmology, and solar astronomy. She has also published in cross-disciplinary fields in psychology, cultural studies in science, women in science, and science education.

### Women in science

When asked what she felt the impact of her success could be for women and girls with an interest in the sciences, she recalled a conversation with her mother:

"When the announcement of my professorship came, my mother, who grew up in a village in India, innocently remarked

# Shirin Haque becomes UWI's first astronomy professor

BY JOEL HENRY



PHOTOS: NYLA SINGH PHOTOGRAPHY



"This is why I have begun work with diversity, inclusion and equity. It is my hope that more **women will be inspired to be scientists** in physics, chemistry, mathematics and computer science, where women are still underrepresented."

"I thought only men can be professors!" While it is an amusing remark, it's also laden with stereotypes that mould our thinking and therefore what we believe we can achieve."

Afterwards, however, her mother insisted on calling her "professor" with pride.

"This is why I have begun work with diversity, inclusion and equity. It is my hope that more women will be inspired to be scientists in physics, chemistry, mathematics and computer science, where women are still underrepresented."

Prof Haque has published many scholarly works of note, including in the prestigious journal *Science in Astrobiology*. She has also produced 18 science magazine issues, four documentaries, two series for television, and numerous online media and popular science articles.

She has also won many awards – the Anthony N Sabga Caribbean Awards for Excellence for Science and Technology, the CARICOM Science Award (the first woman awardee) and the Outstanding Woman Award UWI 70th Anniversary, among many others.

So what next for this pioneering scientist and new professor?

"I smile at that question because it's what I ask myself all the time!" she replied.

"Looking back, my original plan was to be a theoretical astronomer, where I could work at home and be a mom to my two daughters as a single parent. John Lennon said life is what happens when you're busy making other plans. My best laid plans became moot as we launched into observational astronomy, then into astrobiology and now radio astronomy," she explained.

That diversity, however, was good for her because "that's where the most interesting developments were happening".

"The joy and mystery of discovery in astronomy has always been my driving force. That's why my title is Professor of Astronomy, simply. It encompasses all we do," she said. "So, what's next? We have to pay attention to the next big question in astronomy and see if and how the Caribbean can contribute."

"Will it be finding life conclusively? Or multiverses? Or archaeoastronomy? You can be sure, we will be on that bandwagon, joining hands with the international community of astronomers with our Caribbean voice."



## CAMPUS NEWS

When you think of soca music, you think of Machel Montano. But while the entertainer has been diligently building his music catalogue and reach, his mother, Elizabeth Montano, has been working to seal his legacy.

“Lady” Montano (as she is affectionately known) has been a mother to the @kingofsoca for as many years as she has been his manager, confidante, educator and archivist. The latter led to her book, the *King of Soca: The Ultimate Insider Reveals How Machel Montano Became One of the World’s Most Popular Soca Artists*, which launched on July 26. It was an idea she had long envisioned. Still, it took complete form when she pursued a Master in Philosophy in Cultural Studies at UWI St Augustine.

Montano is no stranger to The UWI. She first started at the university in 1976 (Mona Campus) with a Certificate in Education before pursuing her degree in that field. After some years, she read for her Postgraduate Diploma in Entertainment Management.

“Then I thought, let me take a chance at the MPhil in Cultural Studies. That programme lined up with our core competencies of what we were doing as a family, so it was almost natural that I would pursue this programme,” she says.

She graduated in 2018.

King of Soca is a 308-page coffee table book in this first incarnation, organised in five distinct eras: The Early Years, The Winer Boi, The HD, Monk Monté and Beyond 40.

Resplendent with vivid stories, guest contributors and vibrant photos, the book documents soca’s most prominent star from a small stage to the world stage. While capturing the evolution of soca music, it also captures the journey of a precocious youth from a small sleepy village who was “too young to soca”, to the music man who moved millions of waistlines in sync around the globe. His largest attendance on record, in March 2022, saw over 140 million people tune in as he shared the stage with world-renowned yogi and mystic, Sadhguru.

“I strongly believe that we need to tell more of our Caribbean stories, and I wanted to do it in the traditional way – a book,” says Lady Montano. “At first, people thought the idea and vision could not be executed and printed in Trinidad. I was told that at first it would have to be black and white if it was being done locally, but how can we tell our Caribbean story – the story of Trinidad and Tobago and soca, in black and white?”

“Our whole world is colour, and our story is colour. My life is a full and vibrant one. In showing it to Machel, we are both very pleased and excited with this book,” Montano highlighted in her interview with UWI TODAY.



## Lady Montano

*Mother, manager and now author to the @KingofSoca*

BY KIERAN ANDREW KHAN



FLASHBACK: Machel Montano performing at UWI Fete.

The cover of the *King of Soca* features a historic photo from 1984, with The Mighty Sparrow, Shadow and Lord Kitchener holding up a young Machel Montano “as if they are presenting him to the world” at an event at Madison Square Garden in New York. It covers a range of anecdotes and recollections from the “exhilarating to harrowing”.

Lady Montano recalls how controversy followed the young singer from his earliest years. The family was called irresponsible for their pursuit of their youngest member’s dreams.

“What people did not know is that Marcus and Machel’s parents were teachers, and my sons lived a very structured and balanced life,” she says. “Both of our children did well in their education – this, as I said, was very important to myself and their father. This was what our own parents taught us,”

She adds, “We also emphasised the value of extra-curricular activities. We first signed up Marcus (Machel’s elder brother) for guitar lessons and then Machel joined in to sing along. And we realised, he had a good and unique voice.”

Lady Montano calls on parents to guide their children’s natural and unique abilities to do the same – no matter what the world says.

She is still an active educator, teaching the last of her six grandchildren who just graduated from secondary school. She has also played a vital role in Montano’s Chocolate Company, a family-run chocolate and chocolate product company founded in 2014. In addition, she plans to use her book to educate and inspire a whole new generation of young people in the coming months.

Lady Montano, an icon in her own right, continues to support her family’s dreams and goals. Though she has slowed down to enjoy life in the last few years, she has no plans on stopping.

Now we know where the soca star gets his energy from.

*Kieran Andrew Khan is a freelance writer and digital marketing consultant.*



■ **King of Soca** is available for order (with delivery by Unqueue) through the website [www.kingofsoca.com](http://www.kingofsoca.com) and will be available at **Paper Based Bookshop at the Normandie and Nigel R Khan**. For regular updates, follow **@kingofsoca** across **Facebook, Instagram and Twitter**.



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## HEALTH

In 2011, there were 52,244 people living with a disability in Trinidad and Tobago – 3,302 were children. That's about 1 per cent of all children in the nation. Some of them have an additional challenge – accessing basic medical care. That includes dental care.

To meet this urgent need, the School of Dentistry at The UWI St Augustine's Faculty of Medical Sciences (FMS) opened a Special Needs Dental Clinic offering the full range of dental treatment to adults and children with special needs. The clinic is the only university-based clinic dedicated to the care of these kinds of patients in the Caribbean.

Special needs dental patients are those who present with “conditions that require special methods or techniques to prevent or treat oral health problems, or where such conditions necessitate special dental treatment plans,” according to the Royal Australasian College of Dental Surgeons definition.

Last month, it was reported that the clinic had received a grant of \$90,000 from Community Chest Ltd (CCL), a well-known local NGO.

“This grant has allowed these children to have all their treatment done at no cost,” says Dr Ramaa Balkaran, Coordinator of the clinic and a Lecturer in Special Needs Dentistry at FMS.

From June 2018 to 2019, the clinic has treated “roughly 200 adults and children solely with special needs” Dr Balkaran explains. Since receiving the grant, the clinic saw 150 special needs children alone from January to June 2022.

#### Much-needed support from Community Chest

It was in January of this year that Dr Edmund Chamley, Chairman of CCL, found the clinic's services to be a match for their goal of serving children from low-income families and made the contribution.

“We do cleanings, fillings, root canals and extractions, even extensive replacement of teeth. Some children need full replacement because all of their adult teeth have gone. All of that is covered currently with that grant,” said Dr Balkaran.

Among the patients of every age treated at the clinic are long-stay patients, those institutionalised for mental health issues, patients receiving radiation or chemotherapy, patients with physical and intellectual disabilities, and those who are medically compromised.

“The dentistry doesn't change, because the teeth are the same,” says Dr Balkaran. “What changes is the way that we accommodate these patients. It may mean that we have to spend more time doing behavioural therapy, such as ‘tell, show and do’ to describe everything we're doing, or maybe turn off the lights if they have sensory issues, or we have special chairs for them.”

#### Funding has been a challenge

For Dr Balkaran and Director of the School of Dentistry Dr William Smith, the grant from CCL came at a crucial time. The school has been giving dental care to patients (with and without disabilities) despite shrinking resources and funds, and balancing the activities of the clinic while educating students.

“We are providing dental services to the population at a much-reduced cost, and it is very difficult to then



## Special Needs Dental Clinic

*provides low cost and free oral health services despite scarce funding and resources*

reduce that cost to zero to provide free treatment for any category of patients, special needs being one of them,” says Dr Smith. “We are talking about 2 to 4 per cent of the population [with special needs that require dental care]. So, the financial challenges are real. We're trying to cope with them as best as we can.

“Dr Balkaran, in her own small way, is improving not only the quality of life, but the general health and wellbeing of these patients,” he says.

Opened in 2009, the Special Needs clinic was repurposed from an HIV/AIDS clinic. The dental clinic was established by Dr Salvación Barclay, a former lecturer with the School of Dentistry. She is credited with negotiating with the North Central Regional Health Authority (NCRHA) to provide the clinic space to treat patients with special needs. Dr Balkaran was appointed coordinator of the clinic in 2018 after Dr Barclay's retirement.

Dr Balkaran speaks about the positive contribution dental health can make in people's lives, benefits that go beyond their teeth. Dr Smith agreed and noted that in addition to the reduction in pain and suffering arising out of oral diseases, it can have a positive effect on patients' systemic health.

“Research has shown a relationship between poor oral health and cardiovascular and other non-communicable diseases,” he says.

Dr Smith advises that improving the oral health of both special needs and the general population would support the Ministry of Health's goal to reduce the incidence of non-communicable diseases in Trinidad and Tobago. Adequate resources and appropriate funding for good oral health may reduce hospital admissions and government spending on treating diseases in the long term.

In the meantime, even with its limited resources, the Special Needs Dental Clinic provides a standard of quality healthcare and increased life expectancy for neglected and low-income patients.

“Quality of life is not just for persons with a disability, but it also extends to their family and support system,” Dr Balkaran says.

**Children and adults** who have special needs or a disability, as well as their parents or caregivers, can access free or low-cost dental care services at the **Eric Williams Medical Sciences Complex Special Needs Dental Clinic in Mt Hope**. To make an appointment, contact **Dr Ramaa Balkaran at 645-3232, ext. 4038; 645-7816; 645-4352**.

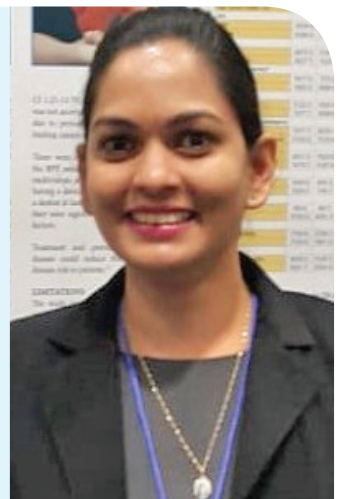


We are providing dental services to the population at a much-reduced cost, and it is very difficult to then reduce that cost to zero to provide free treatment for any category of patients, special needs being one of them. We are talking about 2 to 4 per cent of the population [with special needs that require dental care]. So, the financial challenges are real.

**Dr William Smith**  
Director of the School of Dentistry

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**Dr Ramaa Balkaran**, Coordinator of the clinic and a Lecturer in Special Needs Dentistry at FMS.







## *FashionTT/UWI partner to expand the fashion industry's entrepreneurial energy through mentorship and training*

BY KIERAN ANDREW KHAN

Fashion is a global, multi-billion dollar industry, and creating meaningful growth in the local sector is the work of the Trinidad and Tobago Fashion Company Ltd (FashionTT). The state company is in the fourth year of its Value Chain Investment Programme (VCIP) to deepen the industry's business development and export readiness. And though Trinbagonian creativity is world-renowned, our ability to meaningfully capitalise on our natural creative capacities continues to elude us. A recent partnership between The UWI and FashionTT seeks to change that.

Selected as the business consultant and service provider of the VCIP, the 2022 partnership will allow the university to deploy its programmes and personnel through UWI St Augustine's Faculty of Social Sciences Business Development Unit (BDU) and Entrepreneurship Unit to impact 170 participants in the FashionTT programme.

Lisa-Marie Daniel, General Manager, FashionTT, welcomes this new era. "We are very excited to be working with The University of the West Indies, a premier educational institution, to execute the three tiers of the VCIP. This programme seeks to improve the business operations of our designers and increase their sales, exports and job employment through it. We also aim to support our designers to build sustainable businesses and an improved standard of life that contributes to the country's economy."

She believes that these goals can align to the benefit of all stakeholders and the country at large. That commitment to the big picture is beginning to pay off.

According to Daniel and conservative estimations by FashionTT, the VCIP and other initiatives have helped to grow the local fashion industry by 35 per cent over the past few years. She noted the fashion industry is undergoing a strategic renaissance which capitalises on the immense creativity in T&T:

"Since the launch of FashionTT, our designers have been increasing their revenues by as much as 136 per cent and up to TT\$1M in a given year in revenues. Designers have also penetrated new markets, including South Korea, France, Fiji, Dubai, Samoa, the United Kingdom, and Australia."

She adds that in March 2022, FashionTT also launched its Virtual Trade Mission platform for 11 designers in T&T at the top tier of the VCIP. This led to one designer joining Macy's international site and others still under consideration by international buyers.

FashionTT has also worked to solve the production bottleneck by creating Made868, a local production facility, and a fabrication lab for accessories and fabric printing which Daniel calls a "game-changer".

### **Entrepreneurial support from UWI St Augustine**

The UWI's role in continuing the VCIP will be through training, mentorship and consultancy services for the participants in the programme through its business-focused units.

"The BDU and Entrepreneurship Unit are supporting arms of the Faculty of Social Sciences and possess the capacity to work with any entrepreneur, company or entity to help them build their management capacities," Dr Acolla Cameron, Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, explains.



A sari from designer Neha Karina. PHOTO: MELVERN ISAAC



Dr Acolla Lewis-Cameron,  
Dean of the Faculty of  
Social Sciences



Ms Lisa-Marie Daniel,  
General Manager of  
FashionTT

"At the core of this FashionTT initiative," she adds, "is really the entrepreneurial support that the university can provide specifically through the Entrepreneurship Unit. In the last five years, we have been building capacity in that unit in terms of providing mentorship and business start-up support for a number of budding businesses, both on and off the campus. We can leverage our best-in-class practices to adapt to any industry including fashion, and we expect that this partnership is the first of many more to follow. We have designed a system that will allow for knowledge transfer no matter the industry."

Dr Meena Rambocas, Deputy Dean, Planning and Programming, Faculty of Social Sciences, leads the BDU:

"The BDU is geared to support professional development through re-skilling, up-skilling and retooling to help industry stakeholders. It offers a valuable alternative and multiple learning pathways aside from the traditional university learning trajectory. As a result, we have a rich pool of people who have worked in many fields in addition to their lecturing and course administration duties at the university. We have staff members who have worked deeply in the creative and fashion industries, which is why this partnership is a natural alliance to allow the university to do what it does best."

Dr Cherisse Permell-Hutton, Business Development Coordinator of the BDU, adds, "We at the university have the capacity to provide what these types of entities and entrepreneurs require. We deem the MSMEs [Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises] to be very important in moving the economy forward – particularly this creative industry that we consider to be one of the sunrise industries. As a nation, we must reimagine the revenue generators to grow our economy, and we will do everything we can to support that goal."

### **A new era of university-private sector partnerships**

The Entrepreneurship Unit is led by Programme Manager Julian Henry, who notes that "the creative sector is a key area of interest for the further development of Trinidad and Tobago. Trinis play almost naturally into the sector but struggle with the business component. Our role, as it pertains to FashionTT, is to accelerate learning and understanding of that component. We seek to determine where these brands are in terms of export readiness and position the Trinbagonian fashion brand and also have individual brands that shine through."

An experienced business coach, he states emphatically that there is no other programme of this nature in the country.

Over the past few years, The UWI has strengthened its support of T&T entrepreneurs through various units, including the creation and development of the St Augustine Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (StACIE) and UWI Ventures. According to Dr Cameron, the units work together as a funnel and overall ecosystem to drive the process from idea to revenue generation.

The partnership with FashionTT represents a new era of public-private cooperation for the university and heralds a renewal of internal collaboration toward the continued development of the economy, in a meaningful and tangible manner.



## ■ CLIMATE CHANGE



# 'We face an existential threat from global warming and sea level rise'

UWI scientists make major contribution to **2022 UN climate report**, highlight urgent need for change to protect the Caribbean

BY ZAHRA GORDON



Professor Michelle Mycoo (fourth from left) speaking on a panel of experts on climate change adaptation in the Caribbean and Latin America hosted by the Inter-American Development Bank.

"Every part of the planet and all human beings are affected by global greenhouse gas emissions, which are the highest they have ever been in human history," said Professor Michelle Mycoo, a professor of Urban and Regional Planning in the Department of Geomatics Engineering and Land Management at UWI St Augustine.

She added, "Urgent action is needed at a global scale to curb the rise in temperature caused by such emissions and to prevent catastrophic outcomes such as ecosystem and infrastructure loss and damage, decreased food and water security, and population displacement."

Professor Mycoo is one of five scientists from The UWI who contributed their expertise to the most recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report. The report's critical message, experts concluded, was that global average temperatures could reach or exceed 1.5 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial period by 2040.

The goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius will likely be out of reach by the end of this decade unless countries drastically accelerate efforts over the next few years to slash their emissions from coal, oil and natural gas. Any further delay in concerted global climate action will miss the rapidly closing window to secure a livable world. This will be bad for small islands that are extremely vulnerable to climate change impacts and risks.

Professor Mycoo was the Coordinating Lead Author (CLA) for Chapter 15 of the IPCC report, "Small Islands". Dr Donovan Campbell, Senior Lecturer and Head of the Department of Geography and Geology at The UWI Mona Campus in Jamaica, was a Lead Author of Chapter 15.

The IPCC is a United Nations body responsible for assessing the most up-to-date scientific research related to climate change. Since its inception, the IPCC has published six reports which form the technical basis for international climate change negotiations. The most recent report was launched earlier this year.

Prof Mycoo and the other scientists contributed to Working Group II (AR6-WG2) under the theme: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability. Dr Aidan Farrell, Senior Lecturer in Plant Physiology in the Department of Life Sciences (DLS) at UWI St Augustine, was Lead Author on Chapter 5 – "Food, Fiber and Other Ecosystem Products". Dr Michael Sutherland, Head of the Department of Geomatics Engineering and Land Management, and retired professor John Agard, from DLS, served as reviewers for the report.

## The most vulnerable

The Small Islands chapter grouped countries geographically, putting together Small Island States from the Atlantic, Indian and Pacific Oceans. These states are already and will further be affected by increasing temperatures, intensifying tropical cyclones, changing precipitation patterns, sea-level rising, storm surges, droughts and invasive species.

According to Mycoo, many parts of the world are vulnerable, but Small Island States are especially at risk:

"Small Island States are extremely vulnerable because their ecosystems are very fragile. In our assessment, we saw different arenas for action so we do know that at the global level there is a need to stay below 1.5 degrees Celsius. We are aware from the report that we have at least the next decade to curb carbon emissions."

Professor Mycoo added that in the Caribbean there is a possibility of 100 per cent loss of endemic species if rising temperatures surpass the 1.5 degree marker within the next 90 years. "That's the extent to which our ecosystems are fragile. We face an existential threat from global warming and sea level rise, and we are extremely vulnerable as a population, but also our biodiverse sensitive ecosystems and our equally fragile economies."

In the Caribbean, coral bleaching is a particular concern.

"Coral reefs, for example, are extremely sensitive to changes in temperature, and 70 to 90 per cent of coral reefs around the world, including those in the tropics, have been degraded because of the warming up of the ocean due to global warming and ocean acidification," she said. "Coral reefs are especially significant for Small Island States. Reefs function as a habitat or nursery for young fish before they migrate to the deep ocean. So the fishery sector would be under threat because the fish will have no incubator."

She added, "Also, our beaches are composed of the coral reef that breaks down to create sand which resembles talcum powder. If the coral dies, then it means that beaches will no longer have beach material and that will impact tourism. [Fisheries and tourism] are two critical economic sectors. They are the linchpins of most Caribbean economies. If there is extensive coral death because of ocean warming and acidification, economically we become even more vulnerable."

Another Caribbean concern is food security. Chapter 5 on Food, Fiber and Other Ecosystem Products noted that the increasing frequency and intensity of extreme weather and warming oceans are directly linked to slowed agricultural growth and had negative impacts on food production. Areas with the largest impacts thus far include South and Central America and the Caribbean.

According to Dr Farrell, the Caribbean is not only vulnerable because of its geographic position, but also the heavy reliance on imported staples.

"Globally if we reach 2 degrees of warming, lots of parts of the world are going to see less productivity. Food for everybody will become more difficult. The trade of food might impact small islands even more because they generally aren't food self-sufficient," he said.

Farrell added that past reports did not take a close look at crops outside of the main staples such as rice and wheat. In the AR6-WG2, vegetation important to nutrition like leafy green vegetables and Caribbean fruit tree crops were examined.



Finding solutions

Diverse local vegetation is one way to combat food insecurity. “All around the tropics, people are realising that agroforestry is also a climate change adaptation. Diversity is a response to climate change. We don’t know when the heat wave or drought will come, so just having diversity makes you more resilient,” said Dr Farrell.

He added that “Trinidad already has quite a lot of that in the cocoa agricultural system. In that sense it’s not an adaptation because it was already there, but Trinidad is better off than some islands that don’t have agroforestry, and as long as we can keep those systems, that’s good news for us.”

Another solution mentioned in the report is aquafarming, which would aid in diversifying economies and furthering sustainability. Other options are more complex and call for public education, better governance, legal reforms, more data and Caribbean-specific studies.

“The Caribbean is right at the centre of what the world needs to do because it will likely see the impacts before some other parts of the world. At the moment, I feel that there’s a perception here that adaptation and mitigation should happen elsewhere, but we have moved past the point where you can look at what others are doing. Everyone who relies on the landscape for their livelihood and well being needs to think how they can adapt. Meanwhile, the message for governments is still: reduce greenhouse gas emissions,” noted Farrell.

Human settlements, including coastal cities in the Caribbean, roads and airports, as well as manufacturing plants, will require adaptation measures to protect people, economies and ecosystems. These measures include engineering options such as seawall defences and improved drainage infrastructure, combined with ecosystem-based adaptation such as mangrove replanting and watershed management.

None of these measures can be implemented without access to adaptation finance. Which, Prof Mycoo said, “is the elephant in the room”. New strategies are being developed to make it easier for accessing finance from the global community donors.

While the report is extensive, there is still more research to be done. Both Prof Mycoo and Dr Farrell noted that implementation of adaptation and mitigation measures as well as monitoring and evaluation of their effectiveness were keys to success in the fight against global warming.

‘Coral reefs, for example, are extremely sensitive to changes in temperature, and 70 to 90 per cent of coral reefs around the world, including those in the tropics, have been degraded because of the warming up of the ocean due to global warming and ocean acidification. Coral reefs are especially significant for Small Island States. Reefs function as a habitat or nursery for young fish before they migrate to the deep ocean. So the fishery sector would be under threat because the fish will have no incubator.’ – **Professor Michelle Mycoo**



“Globally, if we reach 2 degrees of warming, lots of parts of the world are going to see less productivity. Food for everybody will become more difficult. The trade of food might impact small islands even more because they generally aren’t food self-sufficient.”

Dr Aidan Farrell



Dr Farrell collecting cocoa pods.



Caroni Swamp mangroves, Trinidad: Maintaining and restoring mangroves is considered one of the most effective ways to protect coastlines from the impacts of climate change.



Cocoa pods growing in the International Cocoa Genebank, Trinidad, the world’s largest public collection of cocoa varieties and an invaluable resource in breeding new varieties better suited to future climates.



The IPCC AR6 WG2 authors

ipcc

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

■ Historic Feat

The report was not only important because of its message on climate change – an historic feat was achieved with its publication. Professor Mycoo was the first Caribbean woman to be selected as a Coordinating Lead Author and was among a growing number of female scientists who authored the IPCC report. When the first report was published in 1990, less than 10 per cent of the contributing scientists were women. On the AR6-WG2, 41 per cent of the scientists were women. According to Prof Mycoo, this is the highest number of women scientists to contribute to an IPCC report. As a CLA, she also made it a point to spotlight women authors and Caribbean scientists. The Small Islands chapter had the highest number of women contributing authors. Of 11 contributing authors to the chapter, 10 were women and three were from the Caribbean.



Professor Michelle Mycoo

*Zahra Gordon is a poet, freelance writer and communications lecturer.*



# Thousands attend UWI St Augustine's Open Days

PHOTOS: ANEEL KARIM



Former Campus Principal Professor Brian Copeland chats with students from his alma mater, Presentation College.



Father and son at the campus Open Day.

Thousands flocked to The UWI St Augustine Campus for a three-day Open Day experience that ran from July 8 to 10, 2022. The campus issued a general invitation for prospects to “jump in a car, hop on a shuttle, bring your friends and family to enjoy a day on campus”.

There were expo-style faculty booths in the JFK Quadrangle, faculty information sessions in the JFK Lecture Theatre, and an on-site application centre complete with advisers on the process as well as on bursaries, scholarships, and other funding mechanisms. In addition to the expo, there were giveaways, tours of student halls, and lots of food to make it a wonderful day for family and friends.

“It was so engaging!” said Zion Benjamin, an applicant for the Faculty of Medical Sciences. “I got to learn CPR and to do a suture. I was able to think about it and decide if this is really what I want to do.”

Fazal Mohammed, a parent whose son is beginning at UWI St Augustine this academic year as an engineering student, said, “It’s the first time visiting the campus and the Open Day. I was very impressed. Engineering will be a whole new chapter of his life.”

His daughter, Mohammed said, planned to enter the university in 2023.

“After two years of online and hybrid teaching and learning,

it’s good to see the campus come alive with young people again as we prepare for a return to pre-pandemic teaching from September,” said Campus Principal Professor Brian Copeland.

Copeland said he was delighted at the response and the engagement from prospective students and their families.

Mrs Wynell Gregorio, Director of Marketing and Communications, noted that the Open Days were part of a series of online and face-to-face activities encouraging potential students to apply. These activities included an evening in June at the Trinidad Hilton and Conference Centre dedicated to postgraduate study that allowed prospective students to engage with faculty and staff.



Free eye tests conducted at the three-day event.



Generating electricity with oranges: A prospect takes in a demonstration from the Department of Chemistry.



Faculty of Sport representative Mrs Nadra Dwarika-Baptiste speaks to prospects about the faculty's offerings.



Dr Dave Harnanan of the Faculty of Medical Sciences and a prospective student demonstrate the medical process of endotracheal intubation.



## ■ OUR GRADUATES

**UWI graduates are everywhere** – politics, business, the arts, and as public intellectuals. In the coming months, **UWI TODAY** will profile some of our high achieving alumni who have made or are making a positive impact on society.

# Economist for the People

One of Marla's key beliefs is that our Caribbean economic policies need to be modeled after the reality of the region's situation and not from theoretical knowledge gained from textbooks geared towards more developed economies in other parts of the world.

## *Marla Dukharan shares her analysis from a Caribbean perspective in a sometimes wry Caribbean voice*

BY PAUL HADDEN

**“What is important is to be committed to your craft, believe in what you are doing, and try to make a difference. That's why I get up every morning and do what I do, to try to get people to understand what's really happening.”**

These words are from UWI graduate Marla Dukharan, one of the region's leading economists and advisors, whose valuable insights on Caribbean economic issues have been used to influence both public policy and private sector decision-making throughout the years.

Marla has been working in the field for well over two decades and her career has seen her hold important roles in several major financial establishments including: Republic Bank Ltd, Caribbean Money Market Brokers Limited (CMMB), RBC Financial (Caribbean) Ltd, and Bitt Inc.

She is also a highly sought after speaker at both regional and international conferences, and shares many of her ideas online via her website and YouTube channel. Her monthly *Caribbean Economic Report* is valued for its insightful analysis of economic activity within the major economies of the Caribbean and also for its breakdown of the effects of geopolitical events on the region.

Her frank and unique communication style is often tinged with a touch of humour, as can be seen in some of the titles of her lectures and webinars including, “Why Inflation Targeting is the Best Thing since Ackee and Saltfish” and “Pick up Something and Run With It? Culture, Corruption and Impunity”.

To Marla, being an economist is more than just a career, it is a calling. “Ever since that day I opened my first ever economics textbook, *Economics: A Student's Guide* by John Beardshaw, I knew that this is what I was put on this Earth to do. I had never really considered studying economics until A-levels, but reading that book completely changed my life. It was as though a hundred light bulbs went off in my head at once and everything just came together and made perfect sense.”

A graduate of the Faculty of Social Sciences, she completed all of her tertiary education at UWI St Augustine, obtaining a BSc, MSc, and eventually MPhil degree in economics from the university. While she acknowledges the role that UWI has played in shaping her career, she also stresses that most of her learning has taken place outside of the classroom.

### Realism in Caribbean economics

“Of course UWI has played a fundamental role in shaping both my career and who I am as an economist,” says Marla, “but a lot of what I have come to learn and understand about the way that our economies work and how to apply this understanding to solutions and policy recommendations has come from researching, observing, and studying these regional economies first-hand. It was really having to report and write on these economies as well as to conduct surveillance on them for many years that has given me this very contemporary, broad understanding of how they work.”

One of Marla's key beliefs is that our Caribbean economic policies need to be modeled after the reality of the region's situation and not from theoretical knowledge gained from textbooks geared towards more developed economies in other parts of the world.

“I try to write a lot about this, and I also try to have discussions with people on video and podcasts because I feel like this is something that really needs to be ventilated: the fact that we are different. We need to look at the actual conditions that we face and how our economies really work,” she says.

In spite of the many serious challenges that it faces, Marla believes that the Caribbean is indeed a region of limitless potential:

Try to spend some time in the other Caribbean countries if you get a chance. It really helps to shape your perspective on where we are from, and drives home the point that we could do so much better in Trinidad in Tobago.”



“Here in the Caribbean, we have massive amounts of natural resources, but we also have some of the most resilient, resourceful, brilliant, and talented people in the world. We could be so successful here and ensure that we have happy, healthy, prosperous people throughout the region; but unfortunately there are a lot of things we don't get right.”

Pointing out these problems, in spite of the criticism that it can engender, is what Marla believes is one of the fundamental responsibilities of both economists as well as other analysts in the region.

“We have a duty to find the data, analyse it in an impartial, dispassionate way, and then put our views on the data out there whether or not it's going to be a view that people want to hear, and whether or not you are going to be criticised for it.”

She adds, “A lot of people misinterpret facts as criticism, but part of being an analyst is to fight against all the misinformation that is deliberately spread, and to present the truth. On the other hand, when we find something that is worthy of praise that the average person might not be aware of, then we also have a responsibility to bring that to the public's attention.”

Although Trinidad is home, Marla has been living in Barbados since 2018 and has travelled extensively throughout the Caribbean. Her message to her fellow Trinbagonians is as follows:

“I would encourage people in Trinidad and Tobago to really travel around this region and see it first-hand. We come from a country that the rest of the region sees as rich, but when you travel to the other islands and see what they've been able to do with so little, when you see the kind of stability and effective governance that they've been able to create, it's really eye-opening. Try to spend some time in the other Caribbean countries if you get a chance. It really helps to shape your perspective on where we are from, and drives home the point that we could do so much better in Trinidad in Tobago.”



## ENERGY

# A partnership to prepare Guyana's future professionals for its OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY

BY PAUL HADDEN



In May of 2015, significant amounts of oil were discovered off the coast of Guyana. The latest estimates show over 11 billion barrels of oil now in the nation's reserves. As impressive as these numbers are, Guyana is still only in the first quartile of its exploration phase, and is expected to exceed a production of over 350,000 barrels of oil per day by the year 2030.

With a population of just under 800,000, Guyana is reported to have the 17th largest oil reserves in the world and one of the world's fastest growing economies. However, a discovery of this magnitude also has its challenges. One of the most significant has been finding a way to train its citizens for this new and lucrative industry.

To bridge this knowledge gap, UWI St Augustine, the University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT), and the University of Guyana (UG) embarked on a project to give Guyanese students the training for the country's budding oil and gas industry. Two programmes were created: an Associate of Science Degree in Petroleum Engineering offered by UG in collaboration with UTT and a Master of Science Degree in Petroleum Engineering offered by the UWI in collaboration with UG.

## From oil to education exploration

"When the commercial oil discovery was made in 2015, a team of us that included then Principal of The UWI Clement Sankat, travelled to Guyana to meet with the Guyanese Prime Minister and representatives from the Guyanese Ministry of Natural Resources, Ministry of Education and University of Guyana to discuss the potential role that The UWI could play in this discovery," says Professor Andrew Jupiter, a key player in T&T's energy sector and the Coordinator of the Petroleum Studies Unit.

Prof Jupiter says that "it was decided that The UWI should play a pivotal role in education because we have a well-established programme in Petroleum Engineering. We are able to provide the technical expertise needed by the Guyanese students".

The project was spearheaded by Professor Jupiter and Professor Raffie Hosein, Head of the Department of

Guyana is reported to have the 17th largest oil reserves in the world and one of the world's fastest growing economies. However, a discovery of this magnitude also has its challenges. One of the most significant has been finding a way to train its citizens for this new and lucrative industry.



Professor Brian Copeland (left) and University of Guyana Principal Professor Ivelaw Griffith display the Memorandum of Understanding between the two institutions in a photo from 2019.  
PHOTO: COURTESY STABROEK NEWS

Chemical Engineering. The first steps towards the offering of the master's programme began not long after the initial discovery, when Professor Jupiter and a team went to Guyana to discuss the potential role The UWI could play in education towards the development of the oil and gas industry.

After further talks in Guyana, and a visit of the Guyanese contingent to Trinidad to meet with the lecturers and tour the facilities at the St Augustine Campus, it was agreed that the Master's in Petroleum Engineering would be delivered through The UWI in partnership with UG. UG would provide accommodation for the students while the lectures would be given by the academic staff from UWI St Augustine.

An agreement was signed between Campus Principal Professor Brian Copeland and Principal of UG Professor Ivelaw Lloyd Griffith, on January 25, 2019. The programme officially commenced on August 31, 2019, with special preparatory classes being held in-person at the Turkeyen campus in Guyana before the start of the semester.

## In-person and online learning

"I wanted the programme to begin on [T&T] Independence Day so that it would be a really memorable day for us," says Professor Hosein, who was the programme's first official lecturer. "We had ten students who had registered for the programme, eight of whom were on scholarships through the Guyanese government. The plan was to provide the students with an intensive week of in-person classes before the semester began to help them gain a solid foundation in the course material."

After these face-to-face classes, Professor Hosein and his colleagues returned to Trinidad to begin lectures at the St Augustine Campus. The Guyanese students joined the classes virtually. Many of these lectures had already been given in-person in Guyana, but it was decided that a second time would give the students a better appreciation and knowledge for the demanding petroleum engineering courses.

"We wanted to offer the Guyanese students as much



help as we could,” adds Professor Hosein, “so we tried our best to find out what challenges they may be facing, and to give them extra tutorials so that they would feel comfortable with the course material.”

The face-to-face classes were also a way for the Guyanese students to form relationships with their Trinidadian professors and lecturers.

“Because we had already met the professors in person, it was easy for us to feel like we were part of the class when it switched to online,” says Mr Rene Hamilton, who was part of the first cohort of Guyanese students to graduate from the collaborative programme in 2021.

“In many ways,” he adds, “it felt like we had studied the great majority of the course before the course began and this gave us a great platform to get a jumpstart. My perspective as a Guyanese student was different to the Trinidadian students who have been exposed to the oil and gas industry early on. For us, this was all very new, so it was a huge learning curve. The in-person training made a world of difference and gave us a really good start.”

### Adapting to the pandemic

The initial plan was to continue this pattern of pre-semester in-person classes. Then came the pandemic.

“COVID changed everything and forced us to be more creative,” says Professor Jupiter. “It especially posed a challenge to the internship that the students had to complete for their degree.”

To facilitate the internship, The UWI signed a MoU with the National Energy Corporation in March 2020 to work with the NGC Group of Companies, who gave the students the opportunity to work on the project of designing a pipeline to transfer natural gas from offshore to onshore Guyana.

“The internship posed a great problem at first as we had planned to have it in-person at an oil and gas company,” says Rene, “but I think that The UWI was flexible and able to quickly adjust to the new situation. We were given a very practical and relevant project to work on, and the knowledge that we received from the many technical experts at NGC made for a very rich experience.”

A second internship was organised through the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries of Trinidad and Tobago, fully supported by the Permanent Secretary, Mrs Penelope Bradshaw-Niles.

“As if one internship was not good enough,” says Rene, “we were then given a second internship through which we



‘We Guyanese students really felt that we were given so much knowledge which we could now implement in our own country. In spite of the pandemic, the level of adaptability demonstrated by The UWI was evident. I must give commendations to all those who were involved in these internships and in the creation of the programme in general.’

**Mr Rene Hamilton, member of the first cohort of graduates from the Master of Petroleum Engineering programme**

looked at the regulatory structure of the oil and gas industry from Trinidad’s perspective.”

This internship included training on aspects of evaluating, monitoring, controlling, and auditing oil and gas operations.

### Young energy industry professionals

“We even got to meet the Minister of Energy and Energy Industries, Minister Stuart Young, as well as many other distinguished and knowledgeable persons who have had a lot of experience in the industry,” says Rene.

“We Guyanese students really felt that we were given so much knowledge which we could now implement in our own country,” he explains. “In spite of the pandemic, the level of adaptability demonstrated by The UWI was evident. I must give commendations to all those who were involved in these internships and in the creation of the programme in general.”

Another graduate of the programme, Mr Ramish Baichoo, had similar sentiments: “In spite of the challenges of the first year and then the difficulties that the pandemic presented, it was really a very well-put together course. Getting information from experienced people in the industry was extremely helpful to us who are completely new to the industry. Of course, the course was challenging in terms of the content, but it was a very good experience over all.”

The programme, now in its third year, continues to develop and adjust to the Guyanese oil and gas landscape. Even as the world starts turning more and more towards renewable energy sources, both Professors Jupiter and Hosein are confident that the industry will continue to hire petroleum engineers whose knowledge and skillset will be needed for the energy transition.

“Companies are reaching out to us on almost a monthly basis for us to recommend persons who are available for employment,” says Professor Jupiter, “There is definitely still a career in petroleum engineering and we feel confident that students will be able to continue to find good jobs for at least the next 40 years.”

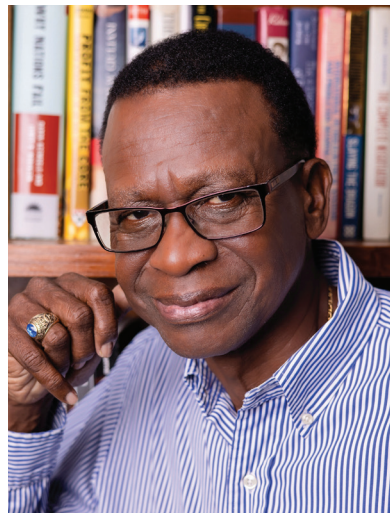
He adds, “I also want to stress that I believe there should be continued collaboration between Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago as Guyana’s industry develops. Guyana is already successful, but we would love to see further collaboration with Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago in all aspects of the service industry in the petroleum sector.”

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‘We wanted to offer the Guyanese students as much help as we could, so we tried our best to find out what challenges they may be facing, and also tried to give them extra tutorials so they would feel comfortable with the material.’

**Professor Raffie Hosein**



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**Professor Andrew Jupiter**



## ■ OUR CAMPUS



Geddes Granger, aka Makandal Daaga, Guild President 1968/1969, addressing thousands as he leads the Black Power Revolution in 1970. PHOTO: COURTESY UWI ST AUGUSTINE GUILD OF STUDENTS.

# Student government with a social purpose

*UWI St Augustine Guild of Students celebrates its 60th anniversary*

BY TYRELL GITTENS

From being led by Black Power Revolution leader Makandal Daaga to shaping generations of Caribbean luminaries, the history of The UWI St Augustine Guild of Students is a tapestry woven together by the actions of young people with an aim to not only transform the campus, but also the nation.

Since its inception in 1962 – the same year Trinidad and Tobago gained independence – the Guild has navigated an evolving society while progressing the St Augustine Campus' educational and social services, and fostering the fraternity of students.

So when it came time to celebrate its 60th anniversary this year, Guild President Kobe Sandy knew he wanted to honour those who came before while celebrating the present and embracing the future.

On May 29, the 2021/2022 Guild Council – led by Sandy – held a gala at the National Academy for the Performing Arts (NAPA) in recognition of their Diamond Jubilee.

Sandy told UWI TODAY, "What [the gala] was intended to do was show appreciation to the people who have contributed selflessly towards the Guild, whether it be students, staff or people from different communities."

The event's planning was supported by the Office of the Deputy Campus Principal, the Division of Student Services and Development (DSSD), the Marketing and Communications Office and Campus Security.

At the gala, clinical psychologist Dr Katija Khan, soca icon Austin "SuperBlue" Lyons, calypsonian David Rudder, singer Ella Andall, activist Amilcar Sanatan, and veteran journalist Dominic Kalipersad, received honorary life membership to the Guild for their national service.

Special awards were also given to former Guild president Makesi Peters (the Makandal Daaga Award for Advocacy and Activism), former National Affairs Committee Chairperson Jeniece Scott (the Terri-Ann Joseph Award for Extraordinary Female Leadership) and Kimmi Potts (the Kenton K John Award for the student that exemplified university spirit).



Guild President  
Kobe Sandy

## Representation and advocacy

Embedded in the university's Royal Charter, the Guild is made up of five executive offices, nine committee chairpersons, eight faculty representatives and several hall chairpersons. It is the liaison between students and UWI St Augustine management.

The Guild also hosts many events, including Guild Fest, Caribbean Integration Week, Campus Carnival and The UWI Guild Sports Day. They even take part in outreach activities. More than anything else, they are the students' representative and friend.

Reflecting on his Guild experience, Sandy said he always had a passion for service and it was only natural for him to gravitate towards serving on the guild when he enrolled in Public Sector Management Studies with Law, and a minor in International Relations, at UWI in 2019.

In the 2020/2021 academic year, he served as National Affairs Committee Chairperson and made a successful bid for the Guild's presidency in the 2021/2022 academic year. He was recently reelected to a second term as president for 2022/2023.

"It is very humbling to be president of an organisation with so much history, especially in a historic time," he said. "The Guild epitomises representation and advocacy, which is integral for the UWI and any tertiary level institution."

He referenced Makandal Daaga's involvement in the Black Power movement during his time as Guild President as inspiration and reminder that they were more than a student body.

When planning the Diamond Jubilee Gala, Sandy knew he wanted to honour Daaga, which led to the creation of the Makandal Daaga Award for Advocacy and Activism. The award was given to Makesi Peters.

Founder and CEO of Travee Technologies Ltd, Peters held several positions in the Guild, including president for two terms. He pointed out that regardless of gender, ethnicity, nationality, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic background or disability, the Guild has always been accessible to and advocated for all students.



## ■ OUR CAMPUS

Current councillor for the electoral district of Calvary in the Borough of Arima, Jeniece Scott reflected on her time as National Affairs Committee Chairperson in 2017/2018, saying that the experience was one of the driving forces behind her decision to get involved in local government.

Elected to office during the 2019 local government elections, Scott was only 23 at the time, which made her one of the country's youngest councillors.

Scott said it was a heart-warming moment to receive the Terri-Ann Joseph Award, which was named after the campus' first female Guild President:

"Getting the award, and being the first recipient, was quite humbling. It really showed that women are making an impact in the work that we're doing and being recognised within the various important spaces we occupy."

### Inspired to make a difference

Speaking at the diamond gala, then UWI St Augustine Campus Principal Prof Brian Copeland said, "the St Augustine Guild was already five years old when it began to actively speak out about global and local conditions that were deeply affecting our Caribbean lives. As we celebrate its history, I would like to invoke that spirit of advocacy, of activism, and the sense of community that was a keystone of Daaga's life."

He highlighted the need for greater advocacy on issues of environmental consciousness, sustainable living and food security with an additional focus of making progress on these issues through innovation.

Movement for Social Justice leader David Abdulah also reminded Guild members of their role in national development.

Serving as Guild Treasurer in 1973 and then President in 1974, Abdulah recalled his experiences of organising a major student strike in October 1973; hosting Walter Rodney and a representative of the ZANU of Zimbabwe for Orientation Week 1974; and standing in solidarity with striking oil and sugar workers in 1975.

Though Abdulah wasn't in the Guild during the 1970 revolution (he was living in Jamaica at the time), he said its legacy inspired many:

"At my time of being in the Guild, those events were still very fresh in my mind in terms of learning about it from those who were actively participating. My own orientation towards the struggles of workers and the different perspectives of transformational politics was shaped by my interactions with fellow students and with lecturers."

Serving on the Guild, Abdulah said he never saw himself as a youth or student leader but rather a national leader involved in the process of societal change.

He added, "The country needs to have a generation of young people who are activists for change. All social and political changes that have taken place in TT and throughout the world have been driven by young people. I think that our young people now have to take up the challenge of how to bring about fundamental change in our society."

### Campus life after COVID-19

Guild President Sandy highlighted the transformation throughout the pandemic as an example of how the Guild continues to meet the moment.

"When I was National Affairs Chairperson, which was at the beginning of the pandemic in 2020, I had a lot of ideas/plans but of course I had to adjust to the times," he said.

Guild relief projects included the distribution of food supplies and technological assistance for students who needed access to online learning.

"Now, as the campus begins to welcome back students, my upcoming tenure in 2022/2023 will be about reviving student life and the student experience. Every officer of the Guild has initiatives that will bring back engagement among the student body across every faculty and department."

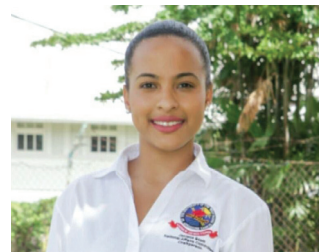
Sandy teased the return of a physical UWI Guild Fest and a revived Fresher's Fete. In commemoration of the anniversary, 60 special bursaries will soon be available to all registered students of the campus.

Looking towards the future, Sandy said, "We see the Guild as a force to be reckoned with and a stakeholder in the development of national policy which should carry us forward for another 60 years. The Guild is here to stay."



A very young (and afro'd) Mr David Abdulah (left) and Ms Valerie Belgrave (right) at the opening of her exhibition of batik work at the Trinidad Hilton in May 1974. In the middle is Ms Janet Hoating. At the time, he was Guild President and Ms Belgrave was the Admin Officer in the Guild Office.

"Valerie was one of the West Indian students involved in the struggle against racism at Sir George Williams University in Montreal and was arrested and jailed following the fire at the computer centre," recalls Mr Abdulah. "That incident sparked The UWI Guild at St Augustine to protest the presence of the Canadian Governor General in 1969. On her being freed in Canada, Valerie returned to Trinidad and was employed by the Guild. She became renowned as an artist, author and playwright."



Jeniece Scott, Councillor for the electoral district of Calvary in the borough of Arima, Guild National Affairs Committee Chairperson in 2017/2018, and winner of the Terri-Ann Joseph Award for Extraordinary Female Leadership.



Students taking part in Phagwa at a Guild event on campus. PHOTO: VISHANI RAGOBEER



Guild members preparing relief supplies for the Bahamas after Hurricane Dorian in 2019. PHOTO: AARON PAYNE



Makesi Peters, former Guild President and winner of the Makandal Daaga Award for Advocacy and Activism.



Students at UWI St Augustine showing support for the Guild-led protest at The UWI Mona Campus in Jamaica after History lecturer Dr Walter Rodney was prevented from re-entering Jamaica in 1968. The incident and escalating protest action is known as "The Rodney Affair". PHOTO: COURTESY WEST INDIAN AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS DIVISION, ALMA JORDAN LIBRARY.



Campus feminists take part in the Guild's Women's Day event. PHOTO: VISHANI RAGOBEER



UWI St Augustine's regional students at Caribbean Integration Week 2020 hosted by the Guild. PHOTO: AARON PAYNE

*Tyrell Gittens is a conservationist, environmentalist and geographer dedicated to the sustainable development of T&T and the advancement of environmental education.*



# UWI Calendar of Events **August 2022**



## St Augustine Campus August 15 to November 10

The first year is an important milestone in a student's university life. UWI St Augustine's First Year Experience (FYE) programme supports new students through every stage of the orientation and transition process, preparing the foundation for them to have a positive and successful time at the campus. This dynamic programme is held annually and features events and activities to inform incoming students, stimulate their excitement for learning, and foster their integration into the campus community.

FYE empowers them to be their best and encourages them to become co-producers of their university experience. Events and activities include:

- Campus Tours
- UWI Clicks: Learning The UWI Tech Interface and Student Portal
- Check-In: Regional and International Students
- Welcome Home: Halls of Residence
- Know Your Faculty
- UWI Life Student and Support
- Guild Fest
- Know Your Library
- Orientation for Students with Disabilities
- The Postgraduate Experience
- Health and Well-being Workshop
- Volunteer Open Day
- Co-Curricular Awareness Day
- Exchange Student Orientation
- Managing My Finances

**For more information and the full calendar of FYE events, visit <https://sta.uwi.edu/fye/>**



## **The Power of Project Management for Precision in Practice**

**August 17, 18, 24 and 25**

**ONLINE**

Increase your competitiveness in the job market or bring new value to your current position by taking part in this four-day project management seminar. Presented by the Business Development Unit of the Faculty of Social Sciences, the seminar will boost participants' abilities to plan, lead, and execute projects under stringent deadlines and budgets.

Hosted on Zoom, this seminar will be delivered by Mr Selris Mahabir, a project management professional (PMP) and Microsoft Certified Application Specialist with vast experience in developing project plans, monitoring projects, and training faculty and staff in the information systems at UWI St Augustine.

Participants in this four-day seminar will learn how to:

- Define the scope of projects and manage changes to it
- Understand the deeper purpose of planning
- Identify the project's quality objectives and controls to ensure they are achieved
- Identify and continually manage risk
- Manage stakeholders to ensure they remain committed to the project
- Build effective teams
- Evaluate the performance of the team
- Estimate and control project budgets

Cost: TT\$2,800/US\$400

10 per cent group discount applicable to:

- Groups of three or more individuals attending from the same organisation
- The UWI campus community

Online payment option (bank charges of 3 per cent applies).

**For more information, contact Dalaiah at [sta-fssbdu@sta.uwi.edu](mailto:sta-fssbdu@sta.uwi.edu). Visit <https://sta.uwi.edu/fss/business-development-unit-for-registration-details-or-complete-the-registration-form-at-https://uwi.jotform.com/221915255185861>**

## **UNCLOS at 40, has the convention lived up to its promises?** **August 25**

**ONLINE**

In December 1982, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) was adopted and opened for signature in Montego Bay, Jamaica. This conference, hosted by the Faculty of Law, will look at the benefits that the Caribbean has derived from UNCLOS and discuss if it continues to be fit for purpose in today's world – a world with imperatives for conservation and sustainable practices in our oceans and seas.

The conference is open to the public and will be an engaging event for anyone with an interest in law, international relations, climate change, trade, and marine affairs. It will be facilitated by international lawyer and diplomat Mr Eden Charles, lecturer in the Faculty of Law.

Mr Charles served as Chairman of the Preparatory Committee for the conclusion of a new international legally binding agreement under UNCLOS on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction (BBNJ).

Regional and international speakers include:

- Professor Stephen Vascianni - UWI Mona Campus
- Professor Elisa Morgera - University of Strathclyde, Law School
- Professor Frida Armas-Pfister - University of Buenos Aires
- Professor Edwin Egede - Cardiff University

**For more Information, email [law@sta.uwi.edu](mailto:law@sta.uwi.edu)**