



# Where Futures Bloom



**Prospective students create chalk art** at the JFK Quadrangle of the St Augustine campus at the UWI Open Days held on July 8 and 9. The “chalking” was an activity presented to visitors to the campus by the Visual Arts Unit of the Department of Creative and Festival Arts within UWI St Augustine’s Faculty of Humanities and Education. It was one of many such activities offered by the campus’ faculties and departments to give potential students a taste of what the university has to offer. Visitors were given the opportunity to meet some of The UWI’s distinguished researchers and teachers, tour the sweeping and beautiful campus grounds, visit the labs and other state-of-the-art facilities, learn about options for scholarships and other financial aid, and just enjoy a brief slice of campus life. PHOTO: ANEEL KARIM





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## FROM THE PRINCIPAL

# UWI'S SPECIALISED UNITS

– *providing vital service and support for the Caribbean and beyond*

While we continue to commemorate the creation of The University of the West Indies' 75 years ago, 2023 is also the year to celebrate another important milestone for the university – the establishment of the UWI Seismic Research Centre (SRC). Originally named the Seismic Research Unit, the SRC was born from a Colonial Development and Welfare (CDW) project and began operations in 1953. In the 70 years since, it has grown to become a vital Caribbean resource for information on the status of earthquakes and volcanic activity in the English-speaking Eastern Caribbean.

In 2020-2021, the SRC played a crucial role in the response to the eruption of La Soufrière volcano in St Vincent. It continually provides the region with regular updates on the seismic activity that has been taking place since early July of this year.

Earthquakes and volcanoes are powerful, primal forces that we have no power to control. Our greatest assets in the face of such disasters are data and emergency protocols that maximise our ability to mitigate the dangers. The UWI SRC has a seven decade legacy of providing this service to millions of people in our region. I was very pleased that we were able to host a special SRC anniversary event on June 21 during which Dr Keith Rowley, the first “local” head of the department, was honoured (see article in this issue). That wonderful occasion reminded me of the several other key UWI centres and units providing vital service and support to the country, region, and beyond.

The SRC is just one of several specialised centres at UWI St Augustine. There are more than 20 university centres, units, and institutes. Some of them are well-known through the media or the pages of UWI TODAY. Others may not spend much time in the spotlight, but their work is equally necessary and potentially transformational. All of them are great assets to The UWI and, by extension, Caribbean society.

These specialised entities serve many functions. They might be designed for very specific educational services and training. They might be research hubs for very specific fields. They provide knowledge and expertise to policymakers and organisational leaders. They support civil society organisations, and in some cases, lead national and regional advocacy and justice efforts. In some cases, they are service providers in a number of sectors. Many of our specialised units perform several of these roles. Some perform all of them.

Through the National Herbarium, we are able to protect, preserve, and provide extensive information on the flora of Trinidad and Tobago. The Mechanical and Manufacturing Enterprise Research Centre provides a hub for industry-academia partnerships. The UWI Archaeology Centre conducts archaeological research, mapping, surveying and excavation for the preservation of our heritage. We train leaders in business and entrepreneurship at the Arthur Lok Jack Global School of Business, one of the most well-recognised and highly regarded institutions in the region. We conduct extensive research and provide policy



**This is an opportune time to speak about our specialised units because they tend to work in a very direct and tangible manner to meet the needs of society. Many were created to meet a very specific need. As such, they show just how positive an impact The UWI has in Trinidad and Tobago, and the region.**

support for the strengthening of regional health policy at the Caribbean Centre for Health Systems Research and Development. Our centres, units, and institutes do these things and much more.

This is an opportune time to speak about our specialised units because they tend to work in a very direct and tangible manner to meet the needs of society. Many were created to meet a very specific need. As such, they show just how positive an impact The UWI has in Trinidad and Tobago, and the region. In an environment of slowed economic growth and the need for every institution - academic or not - to demonstrate the value they bring, we can point to our UWI centres, institutes, and units with great confidence.

See how our Cocoa Research Centre has revolutionised our cocoa sector and almost singlehandedly created and nurtured a vibrant chocolate industry. Observe the example of our Centre for Language Learning, which is not only well-regarded for its teaching, but is also an informal centre for diplomacy and cultural exchange. As a nation still plagued by gendered violence and discrimination, this society relies on the advocacy and thought leadership of our Institute of Gender and Development Studies. Our St Augustine Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship works toward catalysing an entrepreneurship and innovation revolution in Trinidad and Tobago, with The UWI leading by example.

Perhaps, the best known of The UWI's specialised units is the one I began with, The UWI SRC. They were there, on the ground, in St Vincent when the volcano erupted. Its forecasts helped the government make crucial decisions about evacuating people from affected areas. Some 20,000 people were evacuated from harm's way. We turn to it whenever we feel a tremor.

Speaking shortly after the event, SRC director Dr Erouscilla Joseph said, “We approach this as scientists, but it's a risky job and we continue to do it because we're conscious that people's lives and livelihoods could be affected.”

What better way to encapsulate the valuable work of The SRC and the work of The UWI itself?

■ For more information on UWI St Augustine's specialised centres, units, and institutes, visit <https://sta.uwi.edu/academic-departments/>

*Rose-Marie Antoine*

Professor Rose-Marie Belle Antoine  
Campus Principal

## EDITORIAL TEAM

## CAMPUS PRINCIPAL

Professor Rose-Marie Belle Antoine

## DIRECTOR OF MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Wynell Gregorio

## AG. EDITOR

Joel Henry

Email: [joel.henry@sta.uwi.edu](mailto:joel.henry@sta.uwi.edu)

## CONTACT US

The UWI Marketing and Communications Office

Tel: (868) 662-2002, exts. 82013 / 83997

or Email: [uwitoday@sta.uwi.edu](mailto:uwitoday@sta.uwi.edu)

Visit The UWI's 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary website  
<https://uwi.edu/75/>



## ■ CAMPUS NEWS

# ‘A legacy to be cherished’

## UWI Seismic Research Centre celebrates 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary

BY JOEL HENRY

Seven decades ago, The UWI Seismic Research Centre (SRC), was established. Today, the centre provides an important service to the region, monitoring and studying earthquakes, volcanoes, and tsunamis in the English-speaking Eastern Caribbean, as well as timely and reliable information to the governments and people of the region.

Their 70-year legacy was celebrated at a commemorative event that brought together Prime Minister Dr Keith Rowley and senior members of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, UWI Chancellor Mr Robert Bermudez, leaders and other members of the campus community, representatives of the public and private sectors, and many of the people who served with SRC over its seven-decade history.

The event, titled “Honouring Legacies and Fostering the Future”, was held on July 21 at UWI St Augustine.

“As we reflect on the achievements of the UWI Seismic Research Centre over the past 70 years,” SRC Director Dr Erouscilla Joseph told those in attendance at Daaga Auditorium on the St Augustine campus, “let us celebrate the tremendous strides we have made together. Our commitment to scientific excellence, regional collaboration, and the well-being of our communities has brought us this far.”

Dr Rowley – a geologist and the first Caribbean-born, UWI-trained scientist to be appointed director of the SRC – gave the feature address at the ceremony. The Prime Minister called on all students of The UWI, past and present, to appreciate the work of the centre and the university itself.

“This is a legacy not only to be cherished by those directly involved, but to be nourished by every student who enters and claims UWI as alma mater,” Dr Rowley said. “It also should be a beacon and an imprimatur for every lecturer and researcher in every single department, with a motto that says Oriens Occidente, that light shining in the west. We are all rays in that great beam. Let us all endeavour to keep shining.”

Professor Rose-Marie Belle Antoine, The UWI St Augustine Campus Principal, said the SRC is “one of our flagship UWI institutions”, and it has “served the nation, the region, and its people with distinction, passion, and technical expertise over the years”.

She highlighted the SRC’s role in communities as an example of The UWI at its best.

“Who in Trinidad and Tobago is not aware of the SRC?” she asked rhetorically. “Who among us has not awaited the UWI stamp of approval when we felt a tremor?”

Prof Antoine also tied the SRC’s 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary with The UWI’s 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary, also taking place this year:

“Seventy five years ago, our CARICOM forefathers came together and decided it was time to move forward. It was time to generate knowledge from within.... We celebrate that vision.”

Also in attendance at the event were President of the Senate Nigel de Freitas, Education Minister Dr Nyan Gadsby-Dolly, National Security Minister Fitzgerald Hinds, Social Development and Family Services Minister Donna Cox, and Minister in the Ministry of Education Lisa Morris-Julian.

Dr Joan Latchman, the former director of SRC, also spoke, introducing Dr Rowley to the audience for his feature address. Dr Latchman worked with PM Rowley at the centre during his time there.

The commemorative event, hosted by The UWI SRC, was the latest this year on campus as 2023 marks The UWI’s 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The diamond jubilee milestone, themed “UWI at 75. Rooted. Ready. Rising.”, includes several events and activities designed to celebrate the regional university.

■ For more information on UWI SRC, visit <https://uwiseismic.com/>

■ For more on The UWI’s 75th anniversary celebrations, visit <https://uwi.edu/75/>



**SEISMIC**  
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**70<sup>TH</sup>**  
**ANNIVERSARY**



Prime Minister Rowley (right), receives a copy of his PhD thesis and an award for being the first Caribbean-born, UWI-trained scientist to be appointed head of the SRC from Campus Principal Antoine (centre) and SRC Director Joseph.

**Dr Rowley – a geologist and the first Caribbean-born, UWI-trained scientist to be appointed director of the SRC – gave the feature address at the ceremony. The Prime Minister called on all students of The UWI, past and present, to appreciate the work of the centre and the university itself.**



Dr Erouscilla Joseph, Director of The UWI Seismic Research Centre.



From left: Deputy Principal Prof Indar Ramnarine in conversation with Social Development and Family Services Minister Ms Donna Cox, Education Minister Dr Nyan Gadsby-Dolly, and UWI Chancellor Mr Robert Bermudez.



## ■ CAMPUS NEWS

The 2018/2019 cricket season was a watershed period in the history of The UWI Women's Cricket Club (UWI WCC). After undergoing a restructuring, the team's runner's up position in the Trinidad and Tobago Women's Cricket Association [TTWCA] Championship Division earned them promotion to the Premiership Division.

Then came the pandemic.

This year, the UWI cricketers finally made their debut in the TTWCA Premiership Division. The team performed above expectations by placing 3rd in the 50-Over league and 4th in the T20 league. Their supporters were treated with outstanding individual and team performances.

The team's 4th Awards Function and Inaugural Fun Day celebrating its 2023 achievements was held on June 10 at The UWI Academy of Sport. Sandamali Dolawatta, led the list of top performers scoring the most runs in the T20 league as well as capturing the most wickets.

Other outstanding performances were given by Nadra Dwarika-Baptiste and Rachael-Ann Dookhoo who tied for most wickets in the 50-Over competition, and Victoria Madoo, a national athlete, who scored most runs in the 50-Over competition.

The players attributed the team's success to several factors: hard work, commitment, strong camaraderie through a collective club spirit, an experienced coach in former West Indies Test and ODI captain – wicketkeeper Stephanie Judith Power, and a motivating fan base.

"She was our first [female] coach, and to achieve what she laid out for us was really something else," said team member and manager of UWI WCC Nadra Dwarika-Baptiste.

Joining the team in 2018, Power predicted they would make it to the premiership in two years. The team was promoted in 2020.

"She said that, next year, we will finish in the top two, and I am hopeful," said Dwarika-Baptiste, who is also an administrative assistant for Facilities and Events at the St Augustine Academy of Sport.

Impressive performances against long standing arch rivals Achievers Women Cricket Club, and powerhouse Hibiscus Cricket Club demonstrated the strengths of the UWI WCC. The team avenged its T20 lost to Achievers Women Cricket Club with a thrilling victory in the 50 overs league. A stunning diving effort by wicket keeper and 50 overs captain Tammika Nanan-Ramsumair, to dismiss Anjali Goordeen and two wickets in two balls from Vincentian Alison Antoine were straws that broke the back of the Achievers Women's batting that

Performances like those against long standing arch rival Achievers Cricket Club and powerhouse Hibiscus Cricket Club demonstrated the strengths of the UWI WCC. The team avenged its T20 lost to Achievers Women Cricket Club with a thrilling victory in the 50 overs league. A stunning dive

# UWI WOMEN'S CRICKET TEAM has strong season in premiership debut

BY KANISHA VINCENT



UWI Women's Cricket Club award winners (from left) Shalini Samaroo, Nadra Dwarika-Baptiste, Alison Matthews, Sandamali Dolawatta, Victoria Madoo, and Rachael-Ann Dookhoo.

from wicket keeper and 50-overs captain Tammika Nanan-Ramsumair, led UWI to their first 50 overs win in their first attempt in the Premiership. Nanan's catch earned her the "Catch of the Season" at the club's awards function.

Despite losing to seasoned campaigners Hibiscus Cricket Club, the UWI WCC were very competitive. The UWI team posted 209 runs all out for 43.2 overs, to which Hibiscus WCC responded with 212 for 5 wickets, winning by 5 wickets.

The 2024 season will see the return of former national Under-19 captain and West Indies World Cup player Shalini Samaroo. The team will be looking forward to drawing from Samaroo's experience, especially after debuting for the national senior women team in the 2023 CG United Women's Super50 and Twenty20 Blaze tournaments that were held in St Kitts and Nevis.

Ameila Khan, a bowling all-rounder with potential to stand alongside greats like Ellyse Perry and Marizanne Kapp,

will also return. She won the Best Fielder award in the 50-Over competition. Alison Matthews was awarded for most boundaries across both versions of the game.

The excitement in and around women's cricket continues to grow. The team triumphed over Players Sports Club in their first exhibition game as part of the Point Fortin Borough Celebrations' Week of Sport 2023 in May. It was the first time that two women's team featured in the event.

Internationally, viewership is at an all-time high, and regionally, competitions like the Women's CPL are expanding to provide more career opportunities for athletes. Now the gap must be filled locally, and according to Dwarika-Baptiste, "support starts at home".

*Kanisha Vincent is equal parts sport scientist, storyteller, poet and freelance writer.*



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## ■ CAMPUS NEWS



## Open Days 2023 at St Augustine

### UWI invites prospective students and their families to tour the campus

**Eager youngsters and curious adults** ventured onto the green and sprawling St Augustine campus on July 8 and 9 for The UWI Open days 2023. Scores of enthusiastic visitors explored The UWI's undergraduate and postgraduate academic programmes, and took part in immersive campus tours.

One of the highlights of the Open Days was the tour of the Zoology Museum in the Faculty of Science and Technology. The museum contains a collection of preserved fauna, including whole specimens, bones and shells.

Guests also took part in scientific and art displays, super-sized games, and generous giveaways. For those concerned about the cost of pursuing higher education, the campus

# OPEN Day 2023

shared information on the abundance of scholarships and financial aid options available to them. UWI St Augustine offers over 200 scholarships and bursaries.

■ **For more information** on degree programmes, faculty, and campus life at the St Augustine campus, visit <https://sta.uwi.edu/>

## Linking Passion to Careers

BY AMY LI BAKSH

**For some students entering university life**, their careers are already crystalised in their minds. For others, the future can seem more of a mystery. That's where the Careers, Co-curricular and Community Engagement Department team within the Division of Student Services and Development (DSSD) at UWI St Augustine come in. Their role – supporting students in finding their future niche – begins with their career assessment programme, targeted towards first-year students.

"It's our first engagement with students," says Ms Kathy-Ann Lewis, Manager of Careers, Co-curricular and Community Engagement, "apart from students, we would have engaged with in secondary schools. Once they enter the university, one of our first engagements with them is for them to take a career assessment."

She adds, "There are four different assessments – we assess their interests, skills, personalities, and job preference."

From this framework, the team can then provide students with a targeted list of careers that could be a good fit for them to pursue.

For students unsure of where they would like to end up once their degree programme is complete, the department offers a wide range of services from that initial point of contact, through the university life of a student, and after graduation.

The digital system utilised by the department also functions as a career portfolio for students.

"Once they set up their profiles, they can revisit their unique portfolio and continue taking assessments, exploring careers, and updating their resume based on their assessments," says Ms Lewis. "As they move through the system, they can plan their career."

The process of career planning is a vital one that Lewis and her team encourage students to begin early. While some may have a nebulous idea of getting their degree and then finding a job, she encourages students to focus on career exploration and planning, and begin thinking about life after university early on in their university life.

Career advising and mentoring can give students the support and wisdom of experienced voices. At the same time, informational interviews and job shadowing can provide hands-on experience of the realities of the world of work.

"The idea is that by the time they graduate, students will be clearer about their career path, what they want to do and how they intend to get there," says Ms Lewis. Although we know this may change over time.

Part of the philosophy of the department is helping to create well-rounded individuals entering the workplace – what authors Dr Anna Rowe and Dr Karsten Zegwaard refer to as "T Professionals".

"If you think about a capital 'T', there are the horizontal and vertical lines. The T Professional should have both depth, the vertical line, representing your disciplinary content knowledge. However, they also want the students with breadth – workplace skills and competencies," says Lewis.

A healthy balance of both is necessary for the graduate entering the modern working world. The knowledge of your field of choice and skills like problem-solving, teamwork, critical thinking and communication are necessary when entering the 21st century workplace.

Ideally, the process should build on the foundation of students' interests and what they wish to pursue, and give them the necessary tools to accomplish this. The assessment is based on a sound career inventory from the work of psychologist John Holland's.

"About 95 percent of the feedback shows that, intrinsically, students already have an idea of where they want to be. The assessment brings it together for them, gives them a structure and framework, helps them to articulate their goals, and to plan ahead," says Ms Lewis.

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

#### COCKTAILS AND CAMPUS LIFE

Prospective postgraduate students speak with faculty members and other representatives of UWI St Augustine at Postgraduate Preview on June 28 at the Hilton Trinidad and Conference Centre. The event gave attendees the opportunity to explore the many postgraduate programmes and discover the exciting research opportunities at the campus. Guests curious about furthering their personal and professional development at The UWI had the chance to interact with esteemed faculty, staff, and current students. They engaged in conversations, asked questions, and gained knowledge about the university's programmes, financial aid options, and campus life.

PHOTO: ANEEL KARIM





## ■ OUR STUDENTS



# TOGETHER, WE CAN MAKE IT HAPPEN

*New Guild Council seeks to empower students to create a more meaningful campus experience*

**“All students are members of the Guild of Students, every one of us,”** says Inool Nabbie, Treasurer of the 2023-2024 Guild of Students Council.

Commonly misconstrued, the distinction between the Student Guild – every registered student of the Campus – and the Guild Council – the students nominated and elected by their peers to advocate for each student’s rights – is vital to UWI students’ understanding of their value to the university.

“As students, we tend to feel like we don’t have a voice,” explains Tishia John, the Council’s Secretary and a Faculty of Medical Sciences (FMS) student. “We tend to think the persons that make the major decisions are those that hold high positions. We don’t make the rules. We just have to follow [them],” she says. “But, that’s not so.”

## ‘We understand the experiences of UWI students’

On June 1, 2023, after a hectic and exciting season of campaigning, UWI St Augustine inaugurated its Student Guild Council for the new academic year, a body comprising twenty (26) members, including five executives: President, Aishwarya Maharaj; Vice President, Tyrese St Louis; Secretary, Tishia John; Treasurer, Inool Nabbie; and Postgraduate Representative, Bradley Osbourne.

In speaking with the Guild Council members, one thing is clear: they care.

“We are students. We understand the experiences of other students, and we want to help,” says Aishwarya. The Guild’s president is also a member of the Faculty of Medical Sciences, another of three third-year FMS students to be elected to the Guild Council’s executive team for the 2023/2024 academic year. This is notable in the Guild’s history and is “definitely breaking barriers for the faculty, which we are happy to do,” she says.

Having served as the Guild’s treasurer in 2022-2023, Aishwarya shares that she ran for the position of President because she wanted to effect change. “I noticed there were so many different areas for improvement and I felt, based on my skills, that I had a vision and ideas that could really benefit the university.”

Her election campaign theme, she says, was to “improve the student experience”. She wants that when students graduate, they leave the campus feeling they had a great experience.



Ms Aishwarya Maharaj, newly installed Guild Council president, is congratulated by Deputy Principal Prof Indar Ramnarine at a campus ceremony on June 16, 2023.

## Building on the successes of their predecessors.

Though this Guild Council is just a couple months into their tenure, Aishwarya recalls some of the strides made by the past student government body. “When [the campus’ administration was] proposing a drastic fee increase effective almost immediately, the Guild was in opposition, of the approach proposed.”

Transportation around the campus has also improved because of the Guild Council. “We brought forward a proposal last year for increased shuttles and our students now benefit from four new shuttles.”

When the Guild Council raises issues with the campus’s administration it is noted because the Guild Council represents the concerns of the students and plays an integral role in championing their needs.

Guild’s Vice President Tyrese St Louis noted that, as the “main body for advocacy for all the students, the Guild sits on major decision-making bodies on the campus which can impact student life and experience at The UWI.”

As our chat continues, a consensus among the new executive team becomes clear – students don’t know how significant an impact the Guild Council has on the inner workings of the campus.

Aishwarya affirms that, “there are so many initiatives the Guild leads that students do not see, like everyday occurrences that happen to almost every student on campus”.

Other points of consensus are improving students’ university experiences through engagement, and, recognising the disruption to university life caused by the pandemic, revitalising campus culture.

## Student support, activities, financial assistance

In addition to their collective goals, each executive member has its own responsibilities and aims for their tenure.

Tishia recalls her own experiences as a first-year student, being lost and confused and not knowing that help existed. Now, among her goals as the Guild Secretary is to guide students and to lead initiatives that create unity among the student population. She is also planning a cancer month initiative in October to build awareness and to share the experiences of students living with the disease.

As the Guild’s Vice President, Tyrese’s office is responsible for both the Complaints Committee and the Inter Club Committee (ICC). “As far as the ICC goes,” he wants to “unify, professionalise, and revitalise the clubs of The UWI bringing greater out-of-classroom engagement opportunities to students.” For the Complaints Committee, he wants to introduce a more data-driven process for “compiling complaints and making it easy for students to lodge and follow-up on complaints”.

Inool explains that one of the pillars of his campaign was financial aid, due to the economic downturn. “We aim to increase financial assistance,” he says, as well as “engage corporate bodies to provide necessities for our students, like grocery items at a discounted rate.”

Aishwarya has a clear understanding of the value of each of their roles as members of UWI’s student government. “Being able to serve in a student leadership position where we can connect with students is important to the overall student experience,” she says.

Inool adds his hope that “students work with us to achieve our objectives for the year ahead. Our motto,” he is quick to point out, is “Together we can make it happen,” and so, that’s what they have set out to do.

“We want to foster that togetherness and we want to make sure that everyone knows – You are a member of the Guild of Students. You are important. You are valued and we appreciate you.”



**Since its founding as the Volcanological Research Department in 1953** – and subsequent restructurings to Seismic Research Unit in the 1960s and The UWI Seismic Research Centre (SRC) in 2008 – SRC has been on a mission to provide services which protect Caribbean lives and livelihoods from the hazards associated with earthquakes, volcanoes, and tsunamis.

As such, its long history of monitoring and studying the Caribbean's geological activities have become intertwined with significant events like the 1995 eruption of Montserrat's Soufrière Hills volcano, eruptions of Grenada's Kick 'em Jenny submarine volcano, and eruptions of St Vincent's La Soufrière, including the most recent one in 2020/2021.

As the SRC commemorates its 70th anniversary this year, UWI TODAY spoke with current Director Dr Erouscilla Joseph, and former Directors Professor Richard Robertson (2004-2008/2013-2019), Dr Joan Latchman (2011-2013), and Lloyd Lynch (1991-1994).



**Dr Joseph: Centre is more than earthquakes**

While some people are familiar with the SRC's earthquake monitoring services, Dr Joseph wants the public to know it does much more.

A trained volcanologist, she started her journey at the centre in 2002 as part of a team selected

to establish a new geothermal monitoring programme in Dominica and St Lucia.

She told UWI TODAY, "What some people may not know is that the centre was first established as a volcanology unit to respond to volcanic activity and then expanded to include seismological services.

"We do everything including volcano seismology, earthquake seismology, geology, petrology, geophysics, technical services associated with geothermal energy, ground deformation monitoring, and education and outreach services."

In 2008, Dr Joseph was also part of a team deployed to Montserrat to manage the Montserrat Volcano Observatory and respond to an ongoing eruption of the Soufrière Hills volcano.

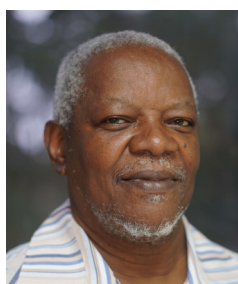
She also helped manage the SRC's co-ordinated response to the 2020/2021 eruptions of La Soufrière in St Vincent.

Recently, the centre has also made inroads in building its capacity to use InSAR (Interferometric Synthetic Aperture Radar) satellite imagery to detect surface deformations associated with geological processes.

Dr Joseph explained that while the SRC continues to make progress in developing its research and monitoring capabilities, there's been a parallel drive to increase outreach activities as it is important for all stakeholders – including the public – to have a better understanding of the Caribbean's geological processes that can affect them.

She added, "We continue to expand our expertise, and I see the centre being able to provide increased amounts of technical services to a wider range of stakeholders, so that the full potential of the centre can be greater actualised."

Moving forward, she wants regional governments to continue providing the SRC with adequate funding to ensure the provision of essential monitoring services required to provide warning and advice needed for informed decision-making.



**Lloyd Lynch: Advancement in the Centre's technological capabilities**

A former head when the SRC was still a unit, and current research fellow in instrumentation, Mr Lynch is responsible for the design and upkeep of the centre's geophysical instruments which

monitor earthquake and volcanic activity throughout the region.

■ UWI SEISMIC RESEARCH CENTRE 70<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

# SEVEN DECADES ON THE GROUND AND IN THE REGION, Working to Protect Caribbean People

BY TYRELL GITTENS



PHOTOS: COURTESY THE UWI SEISMIC RESEARCH CENTRE



Current staff at the UWI Seismic Research Centre pose for a photo in 2023.

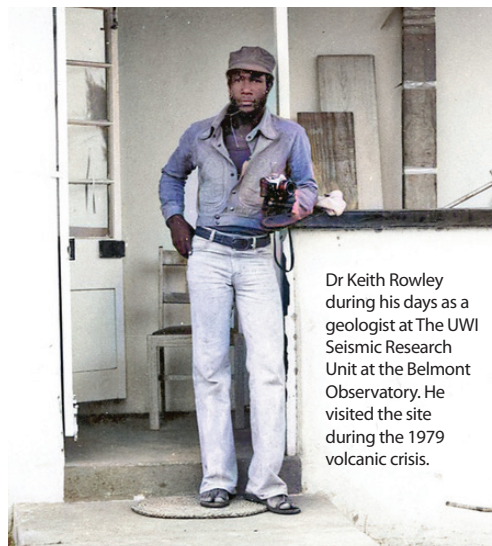


Prof Richard Robertson during fieldwork at La Soufrière, St Vincent, in 2020.



# SEISMIC RESEARCH CENTRE

## 70<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY



Dr Keith Rowley during his days as a geologist at The UWI Seismic Research Unit at the Belmont Observatory. He visited the site during the 1979 volcanic crisis.



Technical staff at the Seismic Research Unit in 1974 busy at work.



Dr Joan Latchman at work during her time as head of the SRC.



Mr Lloyd Lynch conducts maintenance work on the SRC's monitoring equipment at the top of La Soufrière in 2021. The maintenance work was done once the threat levels at the volcano were downgraded following its eruption in the preceding months.

He told UWITODAY that, over the years, advancements in technology have seen changes to the instruments that the SRC uses.

With each technological upgrade, Mr Lynch said the centre has been able to scale up the number of the stations it operates and record events with higher fidelity.

"During my time at the centre – which spans nearly 40 years – we have been through three generations of monitoring equipment and communications technologies used to move data from remote monitoring instruments to the processing centre."

Today, the SRC depends on the internet and satellite communications systems to link its growing network of modern, low-power computer-based remote monitors/recorders. Such systems significantly bolster the region's early warning services for volcanic activity and tsunamis.

The quality and quantity of data acquired serve to inform, test, and validate models that provide insights of the tectonic processes that fuel the underlying hazards.



### Dr Latchman: Improvements in SRC's Gender Balance

Serving as the SRC's director from 2011-2013, Dr Latchman started her journey as a seismic technician in 1972 upon completing her A-Level studies. She was one of just three female workers.

Dr Latchman told UWITODAY, "In those years (when I first started), the gender balance in seismic was male dominated, and I was the only female technician.

"We had two other ladies apart from myself, who were the secretary and the typist. The academic staff was also primarily male and foreign."

As a technician, Dr Latchman worked with former unit head – and now Prime Minister – Dr Keith Rowley, who was a geologist at the unit.

Dr Rowley, she said, encouraged her to pursue higher studies to move up the academic ranks.

Dr Latchman recalled, "In 1977, Dr Rowley asked me one day, 'so what do you plan to do? Do you plan to sit here and read records for the rest of your life?'"

"I told him that I wanted to do more studies, and I was working towards it.

"At that time, he asked if I would work and study, then suggested to the unit's head that I be allowed to work and study."

While there were hurdles, Dr Latchman was able to successfully complete a major in mathematics, and minor in computer science, in 1980.

With that additional qualification, she was able to secure a fellowship at the International Seismological Centre from 1988-1990.

She would eventually go on to successfully complete her masters in 1998 and PhD in 2009.

Appointed the SRC's director in 2011, Dr Latchman is happy to have seen an improvement in the gender balance over time and more women participating in the field of seismic research.

"I hope that the centre continues to serve the region and be an agency to which stakeholders can look for advice on geological hazards, and necessary action is taken to mitigate the effects of those hazards," she commented.



### Prof Robertson: Focus on expanding SRC's role and capacity

Looking forward, Professor Robertson wants the SRC to continue expanding its public outreach and create even more projects in collaboration with communities.

In doing so, he said the centre will continue to learn from the communities they serve, teach people in the process, and expand its data

collection capacity when they empower residents to assist in monitoring activities.

He explained, "We are still an institute that focuses on alerting and advising the government authorities about what is happening with geological systems across the region.

"But I think we have evolved towards doing a lot more than that, which includes information and outreach in the public domain, as well as a variety of products like data which various stakeholders can use."

Outside of its core functions, Prof Robertson said the SRC has also been on a drive to develop the capacity of Caribbean professionals in the field of seismology and volcanology.

For example, he said the centre's personnel in earlier years were mainly composed of foreign professionals, but this has changed over the years due to wide-ranging efforts.

"While that was the case in the past, we have moved towards growing that pool of people both in terms of now having master's and PhD programmes in volcanology and seismology.

"Within our own staff, we have also focussed on developing the capacity of people to take up more leadership roles.

"A lot of the senior staff we have now are from within the region, so we took a strategic decision a couple years ago to grow the centre in this way."

### ■ For more information on

The UWI Seismic Research Centre and their work, visit them at <https://uwiseismic.com/>

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



## TECHNOLOGY



Students from the Seeds for the Future 2016 cohort getting hands-on training at Huawei Labs in Shenzhen, China.  
PHOTOS: COURTESY HUAWEI TECHNOLOGIES (T&T) LTD.

As the yearly group of students chosen for the Huawei Seeds for the Future (SFTF) programme first absorb the knowledge that they will be visiting China, one can imagine their feelings of excitement, anticipation, and even apprehension.

According to Valene Rampersad, who participated in the first UWI cohort in 2016, they wonder about language barriers, communicating with family, and what foods they might eat. Nothing can quite prepare them for the experience.

Seeds for the Future is Huawei's flagship information and communications technologies (ICT) training programme. It has been giving students from across the globe learning opportunities for 15 years. The international technology company developed the initiative to promote industry development in the countries where it is based, and to close the knowledge gap between the classroom and the industry while introducing students to new and emerging technologies.

"We also aim to drive long-term economic, social, and environmental sustainability," explains Tricia Henry, Public Relations Manager, Huawei Technologies (T&T), who manages the programme locally.

This year will mark the milestone of 100 T&T students participating in SFTF.

### Cultural Immersion

Besides incorporating training, presentations, tours, and other experiences, SFTF encourages students to immerse themselves in Chinese culture. Those who travelled to China visited historical sites and Huawei's facilities.

"It is not just about learning new technology," explains Henry. "The world of work is very much globalised, and young graduates will find themselves, more and more, working in cross cultural, cross country work environments."

Participants interact with students from countries like France, Papua New Guinea, and Zimbabwe. Kalyani Mathura, a member of the 2020 cohort, recounts an unexpected meeting in a restroom at a Huawei event with a Colombian student she had met during her stint in the programme.

The students often find themselves acting as cultural ambassadors. "People are actually amazed by the variety of persons that come from Trinidad and Tobago, so it's really a good opportunity to showcase the country," observes Henry.

The pandemic disrupted SFTF in 2020. Huawei organisers found themselves drastically changing course and shifting their mode of instruction completely online. Utilising their established learning platform, iLearningX, they shortened SFTF from two weeks to one.

"The big challenge for them, was taking the content that we had been doing in an offline/face-to-face manner for so many years and curating it to suit an online fashion," notes Henry.

The participants were able to experience an extensive Chinese culture workshop and lectures from ICT experts. Cultural exchange was still incorporated and the T&T cohort even performed a song. The online platform made it possible to accommodate more students. Twenty joined from Trinidad, with 13 from The UWI. Six UWI students participated in the first cohort.



T&T students on a 2018 visit to the Great Wall of China in Beijing.

Cultivating a  
harvest of ICT-ready  
UWI students  
through Huawei's

# Seeds for the FUTURE

BY DIXIE-ANN BELLE



Huawei Technologies (TT) Public Relations Manager Tricia Henry (centre, black jacket) with graduates from SFTF2019 at Huawei in Shenzhen. Six out of 10 T&T students were from UWI that year.

**Seeds for the Future is Huawei's flagship information and communications technologies (ICT) training programme. It has been giving students from across the globe learning opportunities for 15 years.**

The format brought its own obstacles, according to Mathura. "Just dealing with the loneliness," she recalls. "I want to do this," she says, describing her feelings at the time, "but then you're online. You're in your room by yourself."

### From mentees to mentors

The industrial engineering student went on to complete the course and became a Huawei intern in 2021. She now works there as a Solutions Manager.

Formerly an Electrical and Computer Engineering major, Rampersad has been at Huawei since 2019, and is now a Solutions Account Manager.

Both appreciate the opportunity to be mentors to others entering Huawei, and to stay in contact with those they met through the programme.

"I am thrilled to see the immense growth each year as my efforts in mentoring really goes a long way in helping them to develop their career within Huawei and beyond," remarks Rampersad. "It's part of the job that serves to fulfil a more personal need to give back."

Other former participants have become interns in Huawei locations. Some have launched their own start-ups and been SFTF speakers.

Both Rampersad and Mathura encourage others to apply if ICT interests them, even if the applicant is not pursuing computer science or telecommunications. They encourage more women to participate and join the ICT industry.

Once chosen, Mathura advises, "Give time to the events. Really try and be active in the live sessions." She suggests

interacting with other participants as much as possible "because you never know who your future colleagues will be".

### Travel to Costa Rica

The online format continued in 2021 and 2022. In 2022, three SFTF's top performers travelled to Huawei's office in Panama for training and to see Huawei's operations there.

This year, participants will once more travel as part of the hybrid format. Students from eight Latin American/Caribbean countries will meet in Costa Rica to carry on the programme's legacy.

Henry also encourages students to apply for the newest cohort, emphasising benefits to students, the university, and the industry.

"The programme has enhanced the available pool of skilled personnel in the technology sector, which in the long term will help reduce unemployment rates." She predicts, "It will build on the T&T national diversification thrust in the area of ICT."

### Learn more about Seeds of the Future here:

<https://www.huawei.com/minisite/seeds-for-the-future/program.html>





## SPORT

# ADVANCING SPORTING SUCCESS

## in the Region Through Science, Technology and the Academy of Sport

BY KIERAN ANDREW KHAN



Dr Anand Rampersad, Head of the St Augustine Academy of Sport in the Faculty of Sport. PHOTO: ANEEL KARIM

The UWI's St Augustine Academy of Sport (SAAS) is one of three that fall under the purview of the Faculty of Sport. Previously known as departments, the four academies (also at Cave Hill, Mona, and the Open Campus) represent a new era of commitment by the university to the potential of sport in the region. Dr Anand Rampersad leads the team at the St Augustine campus. August 2023 will mark his first year in the role.

"My involvement in sport goes back to primary school and my passion for cricket. Where I fell short in playing, I made up in other areas, such as scoring, studying history and writing about it. While growing up, the dominating prowess of the West Indies [cricket team] was both an inspiration and a motivation. We had positive role models whose focus was on unwavering success. Cricket was also a very different game for the Caribbean back then. The bat and the ball were weapons of mass destruction against the colonising powers of the time," he recalls.

Today, he reads about and views each and every sport voraciously and "eats, breathes, and sleeps sports, 24 hours a day, eight days a week".

Dr Rampersad's love for sport is only matched by his fascination for the sociological understanding of social phenomena. He was shortlisted for two positions on campus – the other as a lecturer in Sociology. Still, he chose to lead the SAAS as he saw it as an opportunity to bring his experience as a lecturer in the social sciences and marry it with his love of and respect for sports.

His long-term involvement in community sports also led to his formation of a women's cricket club with John Trumpet, and spending over a decade deepening the development of women in the sport built on his experience with men's clubs, including Caldrac Cricket Club. He has also maintained a regular column with the Trinidad Guardian titled "Sportification".

### The Faculty and the Academy

The SAAS is tasked with many areas of operation, including consolidation of existing sporting products like the well-known UWI SPEC International Half Marathon, which is carded to return in October, and with the planned introduction of a 5K. The academy also oversees the rental of all sports facilities on the campus, and recently hosted the Trinidad and Tobago Football Association's girls under 14 competition over six weeks and its own under 23 Momentum Invitational Basketball League.

The UWI SPEC is also one of the three venues for the Cricket West Indies [CWI] Rising Stars Women under 19 regional tournament. In September, the academy will continue hosting Caribbean Premier League men's and women's teams to train at the Sir Frank Worrell Cricket Ground.

Academically, the SAAS offers a bachelor of science in Sport Kinetics and Sport Coaching. A certificate in the Art and Science of Coaching is also offered. The Faculty of Sport is a recent development, established in 2017 as the only new faculty at The UWI in over four decades.

"The Academy of Sport allows for something new and exciting – which is the scientific approach to sports. This takes place at two levels – sport for development and the development of sport in relation to elite athletes. Managing risk in training, nutrition, form, biomechanics, and leveraging technology are new conversations for us in the region, but the focus on these things will bring benefit in the long term," Dr Rampersad notes.

### Wider Roles and Looking Forward

There is also a broader view. With the Caribbean region facing an onslaught of health issues concerning non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, and obesity, sport has a crucial role in any strategic response. Dr Rampersad believes that the work at the SAAS can benefit students, staff, and the broader national community in promoting sports and healthy lifestyles, and he believes in tying sport into the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals with a strong focus on equal opportunities for gender inclusion.

"We are looking to establish a new record of runners at this year's UWI Half Marathon and 5K. Our goal is to break the 2016 record of 1600 participants with a minimum of 2000 participants. We would like to have at least 1,000 male and 1,000 female participants as we seek to promote gender equality and equity through sports. We hope to set and achieve this goal this year after a three-year hiatus and as we celebrate the university's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary," Dr Rampersad says.

Dr Rampersad enjoys running and travelling when not lecturing or watching sports in his own time. He also has his eyes set on visiting 50 countries. He's currently at #33.

■ **For more information** on the St Augustine Academy of Sport, the Faculty of Sport, and educational opportunities in this emerging field, visit <https://uwi.edu/sport/>

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



## HEALTH



# 'I work to improve the well-being of populations'

**Professor Patricio V Marquez**, internationally renowned Public Health specialist, receives title of Honorary Professor from The UWI and three-year attachment to HEU, Centre for Health Economics

BY PAUL HADDEN

**"Public health policy goes way beyond** the biological aspects of health. Instead, it focuses on how biology interacts with social, economic, and environmental drivers to determine who has good health in a society and who doesn't. To echo the words of the eminent Stanford University health economist Victor Fuchs, it is the study of all of those things that determines 'who shall live.'"

These are the words of Professor Patricio V Marquez, former Lead Public Health Specialist for the World Bank Group, and recent recipient of the title of Honorary Professor from The University of the West Indies.

Aside from his 32 years of service at the World Bank, Professor Marquez's has also served as Consultant to the World Bank post-retirement for the preparation/implementation of the US\$26 billion Global COVID-19 Emergency Response Programme over 2020-2022 that covered more than 110 countries. He is the co-author of the "Better Together: A Mental Health Strategy for the World Bank Group", which was launched on May 4, 2022, to cover staff and families.

Prof Marquez is also a Senior Associate at the John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health; a member of the International Advisory Committee for the Global Mental Health Programme at the University of Washington; a governing member of the Charles Darwin Foundation for the Conservation of the Galapagos Islands; a Pledge Champion at the Tobacco Free Portfolios Foundation; and recently, a member of the International Advisory Committee for the preparation of the World Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD) 2023 Conference that was held in Toronto, Canada on June 25-30, 2023.

## Developing health agendas in the Caribbean

He also boasts of a long and fruitful relationship with The UWI, where he is especially known for his work with the Centre for Health Economics (HEU) at the St Augustine Campus, and for his contributions towards the fight against HIV and AIDS in the region. More recently, he has been recognised as a proponent of raising taxes on tobacco to increase prices, reduce use, and prevent premature death and ill health.

One of the things that he intends to accomplish during his three year attachment to the HEU is to embark on a process of inter-generational transfer of knowledge and experience by working with younger individuals involved in the development of health agendas for their countries and communities.

"At this new stage of my life," he says, "I would like to use some of my accumulated knowledge, including the tacit knowledge acquired over years of services in different countries, to help open up some new frontiers for the next generation. Throughout my career, I have worked in over 80 countries, and now that I am at a different stage in my life, I believe that it is my responsibility to contribute to the generation that will substitute ours."



From left: Professor Marquez with HEU, Centre for Health Economics Director Dr Althea La Foucade, and Emeritus Professor Karl Theodore, advisor to the HEU  
PHOTO: COURTESY HEU, CENTRE FOR HEALTH ECONOMICS.

Originally from Cuenca, Ecuador, Professor Marquez's work within the region can be traced back to a CARICOM initiative at the turn of the century to tackle the growing AIDS epidemic, when the Caribbean was the second-most affected region in the world in terms of HIV prevalence rates after Sub-Saharan Africa. Working alongside such eminent faculty of the UWI as Professor Courtney Bartholomew and Professor Karl Theodore, he co-authored a report on HIV and AIDS in the Caribbean.

On behalf of the World Bank, he was later asked to put together a regional support programme, valued at US\$150 million, which was allocated to support different Caribbean countries in putting together and launching national HIV and AIDS programmes.

"It was clear at the time that, if this issue was not addressed head on, it stood to cause major damage to the population and economies of Caribbean countries," says Professor Marquez.

He notes that one of the major successes of the initiative was realised in 2001 when Barbados became the first country in the world to receive support from the World Bank to introduce antiretroviral drug treatment to prevent the progression of HIV to AIDS—at the time when treatment was not considered as cost-effective, anticipating what is now common medical orthodoxy that "treatment is prevention". This support was later expanded to other Caribbean countries, including Trinidad and Tobago.

Professor Marquez believes that this successful initiative is indicative of two of the region's strengths regarding health policy: our ability to work together as a region, and the expertise that can be found within the islands.

He adds, "We also need to recognise those institutions which have regional natures such as The UWI and the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) that play a critical role in institutional efforts regarding health policy in different countries."

## Our elephant in the room health issue

Professor Marquez specifies that he would like to do his part to combat the biggest health issue currently facing the Caribbean:

"The big elephant in the room facing all Caribbean countries is how to effectively deal with non-communicable diseases, and particularly obesity, which contributes to a whole host of medical conditions. With the proper measures, we know that this is something that we can handle."

"At one stage, people used to say that smoking would never stop because everybody smokes. We know now that absolutely nobody needs to smoke to be happy. The same can be said of processed foods; people do not need to eat these heavily processed foods, full of salt and sugar and trans-fats, in order to be happy and healthy."

"And, this is not just a health problem, it's an economic one, because if you are not preventing problems then you have to treat them, and some of these problems are very expensive to treat. So, this fight against these preventable non-communicable diseases in the region is one thing that I would like to help contribute towards leveraging action from different sectors – from fiscal and regulatory policies to healthcare."

For Professor Marquez, this new phase of his life marks yet another point on a journey that started back in his hometown of Cuenca where he was deeply influenced by the work of his father.

"I must say that all of the work that I do can be traced back to the example of my father, who was a pathologist and also a very good clinician. As a pathologist, he had to conduct autopsies to determine the cause of death and it was then that he realised that most, if not all, of those who were dying from preventable diseases, such as tuberculosis, were the poor."

"I vividly remember him asking, 'why is it that the poor are dying of these diseases that can be prevented?' This has remained with me all my life, and it is the reason that I find myself much more interested in the social and economic drivers of health. It is why I have spent the majority of my life working as a Public Health specialist, and why I continue to work with institutions such as The UWI to help devise measures to improve the well-being of populations."



## HEALTH



# Post-pandemic mental health has deteriorated

**Prof Gerard Hutchinson:**  
We need a complete cultural overhaul

BY VANEISA BAKSH

Fourteen years ago, in the August 2009 edition of UWI TODAY, I interviewed Professor Gerard Hutchinson, now Head of Psychiatry at the Department of Clinical Medical Sciences at The UWI, regarding the mental state of Trinidad and Tobago.

We spoke again a few weeks ago, and his analysis of the nature of the society was essentially the same. Little has changed, except that the force of the global pandemic has introduced even more dimensions to the mix.

Back then, he had observed the increase in Borderline Personality Disorders and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorders (ADHD). In the first, patients have strong fears of abandonment and resort to shifting identity based on superficial acts, like how they dress, to be different. It suggests shallowness and instability, he'd said, similar to the traits exhibited by ADHD, which Trinidadians are predisposed to on account of their overactive, impulsive, and inattentive natures.

The society itself presented an unstable framework because of its sheer complexity – if it were a patient, it would be diagnosed with ADHD – and its innate qualities combined with easy access to drugs and guns had met at a point of convergence that had erupted out of control, he'd said.

Worsening violence was a symptom of something deeper, “which is the quintessential Caribbean problem. It's about identity and belonging,” and the loss of it. “If you don't feel like you belong somewhere, then there's no incentive to hold it together.”

The institutional response to escalating crime from the policing, judicial, and health systems lagged behind, not adjusting to the demands on the system from trauma, for instance. People react more excessively to things that happen, he said.

The upsurge in violent crimes had also been recognised. “The perpetrators of the violence feel that they are caught up in something that they can't control. They feel that they are reacting rather than acting, and I think that, for the most part, they would like a way out, but that way out has to be provided with dignity and pride, because one of the other things that has happened... is that peer respect or community respect or rank has become a much bigger thing than it was.”

The pandemic, with its enforced lockdown amidst a large number of COVID cases and deaths, has pushed people towards extremes.

While he had spoken about the breakdown in trust for public and private institutions pre-COVID, the

**Professor Gerard Hutchinson,**  
Head of Psychiatry  
at the Department  
of Clinical Medical  
Sciences



circumstances of the pandemic exacerbated that mistrust as citizens tried to cope with restrictions and the loss of loved ones.

COVID shone a light, even on the health of the society, he says. Our high death toll was a reflection of the deficiencies in the health system. It was compounded by the prevalence of non-communicable diseases, obesity, and so on; co-morbidities were a big factor.

“We struggled to cope. Our death rates were among the highest per capita in the world. We don't control eating, drinking, substance abuse, diabetes, high blood pressure, and they're all connected in a web,” he says. The health system is still lagging behind. Even if you are diagnosed with ADHD, where is the treatment?

There are more people with depression, sometimes submerged depression, much of who are young people, he says, and there is a sense of hopelessness. They don't see opportunities. They look around and see that the likelihood of success is pretty low.

They recognise their despair; sometimes they seek help indirectly through self-harm, or attempted suicides. Managing behaviour is the key to improving our health system, and by extension, our mental health, he says. This period, since COVID, is a transitional phase, and it

is manifested by several factors. Identity, for instance – definitions of sexuality, gender fluidity, ethnic and racial communities – is one of the things that we are trying to come to terms with. We like to follow metropolitan movements. He thinks we have made strides socially, because we are ahead of the curve in the Caribbean.

The education system continues to come up short. Nearly half of the children who took part in the SEA exams a couple years ago scored less than 50 percent of the total. Many will not get through secondary school because they don't have support systems. They are condemned to lives as KFC workers, CEPEP workers, and even lives of crime, he said. These are all factors affecting the mental wellbeing of the society. People react, often with hostility, to situations they don't understand.

Even the influx of Venezuelans has triggered xenophobic responses. Yet, they are not averse to exploiting the situation. He describes a visit to Moruga, where close to the police station, a fisherman invited him to hop across to Venezuela for the afternoon. You can bring anything back, he was told. And by anything, he means anything, including people, he says. The police post nearby was of no consequence.

To change any one thing requires that you have to change everything. “I think people recognise that, but are they willing to give up what they have to effect that change?” Rather than address crime at its various roots, people prefer to hire security companies. Big corporations recognise that providing security is big business. They feed on the fear.

He thinks there has to be a complete overhaul of the culture of the place.

“We're naturally hedonistic. The hedonism, the short attention span, the impulsivity, the selfishness: the inclinations are there.” As with ADHD, there is no support. At least in other societies, the imposition of rigour forces a management strategy. But here, everything goes. “We're cavalier, and that is a Trinidadian thing.”

We have to create new models of aspiration because the models we have now are empty, he says.

Art, in all its manifestations, is one of the things that will bring salvation – allowing people to recognise we all have a creative impulse, and we have to allow it to express itself to bring us together.

“Even with all the hedonism, we are an endlessly creative people. We continue to see art as something to do on the side, but I think we have to use who we are and what we are as vehicles to get us out of the state we are in.”

Here is the link to the August 2009 interview: [https://sta.uwi.edu/uwitoday/archive/august\\_2009/article1.asp](https://sta.uwi.edu/uwitoday/archive/august_2009/article1.asp)



## TECHNOLOGY

In February, Reuters reported that ChatGPT registered an estimated 100 million monthly active users in January, making it one of the fastest-growing consumer internet applications in history.

The figures meant the platform was able to outpace the initial user engagement of popular social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok in a matter of months.

Using the machine learning technique of reinforcement learning from human feedback, ChatGPT's website said the platform is trained to follow an instruction in a prompt from a user, provide a detailed response, and collect data based on the interactions to enhance its response capabilities overtime.

But, while ChatGPT has become the most recent face of artificial intelligence (AI) tools, it isn't the first or only one.

During a UWI Vice-Chancellor's Forum in May titled "Artificial Intelligence – A Blessing or Curse for Higher Education", education experts said that AI tools have gotten more popular and easier to access with technological advancement.

### Understanding and ethical use of AI

Acknowledging that AI is here to stay, they called on educators and educational institutions to focus on preparing students to comprehensively understand and ethically use it.

Patti West-Smith, Senior Director of the Customer Engagement at US-based anti-plagiarism tech firm Turnitin, said educators now "have an obligation to equip students to really understand what these tools can and cannot do, and what purposes they serve".

She explained, "Over the last couple of months, we've learned that the world of work ahead of them (students) will almost certainly require them to use these tools. So, if we are not arming them with the right understanding, and experiences to be able to use these tools effectively and ethically, then we are really short-changing them."

Apart from ensuring students understand AI, West-Smith said unequal access to these tools can also further the digital divide and disparities in learning. She called on educational stakeholders to ensure all students have access.

### AI can have biases

Though West-Smith thinks that AI offers opportunities to rethink the processes relating to writing and assessment,

**EXPERTS:**  
**Education**  
**system**  
**must**  
**adapt to**



BY TYRELL GITTENS

Arianna Valentini cautioned educators to ensure their students are aware that AI tools like ChatGPT are inherently biased like all technologies which rely on collecting human data.

A research and foresight analyst at The UNESCO International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean, Valentini said AI tools can't replace the value of human discourse, the importance of writing skills to educational development, and critical thinking.

She added, "[AI] depends on the information and how it has been programmed. So, the biases that AI can have include gender biases, and they can be geographically biased to the Global South and North."

Dr Margaret Niles, manager of research insights and products innovation at the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC), said the education system must determine how it will exist alongside AI tools by re-evaluating and recalibrating the teaching/learning transactions to accommodate rather than fear them.

She said, "At the council, we accept that ChatGPT is here and it will come in different forms. We are not fearing it."

Dr Niles added, "We do understand that we have to focus

a lot on authentic assessment, and that our stakeholders will now need to be very vigilant as we develop the strategies and policies to support the integration of ChatGPT across our syllabi and curriculum."

### Putting guardrails in place

However, she pointed out that educators must now put guardrails in place to preserve soft skills like critical thinking and creativity while ensuring students fully understand the true meaning of academic integrity.

Valentini echoed Niles' sentiments on re-evaluating learning styles, and said that AI can be a springboard into discussing the development of competency-based curriculums and assessments versus content-based curriculums.

She said, "Everyone has mentioned we are going to be needing critical thinking, entrepreneurship skills, and all these transversal skills that might be easier to reach through a competency-based curriculum."

"This can also help us design new assessments that are not going to be easily replicable with artificial intelligence."

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

## ENERGY

For over a century, non-renewable fossil fuel energy powered economies, increased global development, and enabled continuous advances in our everyday lifestyles. However, the energy landscape is changing rapidly, driven by a growing concern about the impact of global warming.

Scientists have reported global warming to be primarily driven by anthropogenic activities, particularly from energy industries, through the burning of fossil fuels and deforestation, resulting in the rise in the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

Rising global temperatures are linked to extreme weather events such as heat waves, floods, landslides, drought, wildfires, and rising sea levels. These events have direct impacts on all forms of life, including loss of species, food and water shortages, public health risks, and displacement of people and communities.

Indirect consequences, including disruptions to food production and water crises, have the potential to reverse economic development gains.

This phenomenon initiated a call for a transition from non-renewable fossil fuel energy to renewable alternative energy as a means of safeguarding the sustainability of the global environment amidst rising energy demand.

### Changing the energy sector is unavoidable

Since the largest anthropogenic source of carbon emissions is the energy sector, its transformation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and mitigate climate change is unavoidable. The world's main energy supply comes from fossil fuels – coal, oil, and natural gas – which generate significant carbon emissions in their extraction, production and consumption.

## From Oil and Gas to Renewables

**A basic view into sustainable energy transition for small, oil-producing developing nations**

BY DR PORTIA FELIX



Furthermore, climate change impacts are not evenly felt worldwide, as low-income countries and geographically vulnerable regions, including small island developing states (SIDS), are likely to be most impacted.

Climate impacts have implications for oil companies and oil-exporting countries. The most important is the speed of

transitioning to renewable energy. While energy transition has momentum in certain regions of the world, for example Europe, in others it is slow, and in some cases unmoved.

Also, determining which energy type will prevail, or what the ultimate energy mix, can be difficult. Oil companies and oil-exporting SIDS must consider how best to be part of the renewable energy revolution.

Oil companies can consider a portfolio with both hydrocarbon and renewable assets, rather than completely shifting from hydrocarbons to renewables. For oil-exporting SIDS, such as Trinidad and Tobago, with subsidised prices and rising domestic energy consumption, loosening the hydrocarbon economy can provide for renewable investment.

### Renewable energy, hybrid energy sector

Although the adoption of renewable energy is advancing quickly, particularly in the electricity sector, it is likely that fossil fuels will continue to occupy the energy landscape for some time. However, what we might see in the future, possibly in oil-exporting SIDS, is the emergence of a viable hybrid energy generation sector, accommodating the use of both types of energy generating resources.

However, it should be noted that although the penetration of renewable energy into the mainstream fossil fuel energy industry has many benefits, there is a strong possibility of negative environmental impacts occurring in the generation of renewable energy.

The production of biofuels, for example, though renewable, can cause unintended environmental consequences when mass-produced. So, even in the coming age of renewable energy advancement, we must exert considerable efforts toward avoiding other forms of environmental issues.

*Dr Portia Felix is an assistant lecturer in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering in the Faculty of Engineering.*



## ARTS

Despite its relative youth, the UWI Film Programme has garnered a long list of outstanding alumni. In the past year alone, both current and former students have won awards and participated in high profile, international film festivals and workshops.

According to programme co-ordinator Dr Yao Ramesar, these successes are an indication that film is the future:

“Film is an integral part of the future economy. Someone studying film at our programme is being prepared for the real world, and that real world is increasingly about engagement and employment in the creative industries sector in general, and film in particular.”

In February, three alumni – Jian Hennings, Andrei Pierre, and Sophie Walcott – were selected to attend the Berlinale Talent Campus at the Berlin Film Festival. The Talent Campus is a development programme for emerging filmmakers with only 200 participants chosen globally.

Pierre’s film, *My Maxi*, won Best Trinidad and Tobago Film People’s Choice at the 2022 trinidad + tobago film festival (TTFF). This year, *My Maxi* has also screened in Jamaica and St Vincent, and at the UK’s Barbican Centre’s Snapshots festival and the US’s Essence Festival. The film is also scheduled to play at the upcoming Toronto Caribbean Tales International Film Festival.

In March, alumnus Oyetayo Raymond Ojoade won Best Documentary for his film *Hidden Crime* at the Coal City Film Festival in Nigeria. Meanwhile, in May, final-year student Akkel Charles was selected to participate in France’s Cannes Film Festival’s impACT Lab – an intensive workshop for emerging producers.

Also this year, alumnus Shea Best’s film, *Darkie*, was picked up for distribution by US company Studio Anansi. Best’s film was also selected as Best Psychological Drama Short at Italy’s Hollywood on the Tiber Film Festival in 2022. Moreover, alumna Solange Plaza was awarded a grant through FilmTT’s Scripts to Screen Programme.

Pierre credited UWI Film and lecturers such as Dr Ramesar with helping him hone his critical lens.

“My UWI experience really helped me learn how to lean into creating subtext in a film. That academic approach to filmmaking is what will continue to differentiate me because most (in the local market) are self-taught. Studying film really allowed me to exercise my creativity and gave me that ability to look at things through unilateral lenses; to be able to explore layers through art, not just a visual or commercial medium, but to be truly artistic,” he said.

Attending the Talent Campus was monumental for him.

“I created so many new relationships with other Caribbean filmmakers. The group chat we started has evolved into an organisation to lobby for Caribbean film in the region.”

Pierre added, “I’ve always pined for the opportunity to leave here and I think being able to go to Berlin was such an eye-opening moment and consolidated all the whispers that anything is possible. It made me realise how small the industry actually is and how big things can happen with the right project. That trip converted me from a local filmmaker to someone with an international mindset. People want to see Caribbean films. They want to know what’s going on here. It was amazing how many people had an interest in us.”

Charles shared similar sentiments about his time at Cannes. “I can’t put the experience into words. It was life-changing.”

He added that apart from learning more about sustainability in production, Cannes was a great opportunity for networking and opening the conversation about the Caribbean, and T&T in particular, having a more prominent presence at the festival in the future.



UWI Film alumnus Steven Taylor on set with Academy Award-winning actor Will Smith in Atlanta, USA.



UWI Film alumni Sophie Walcott and Jian Hennings (right) at the Berlin Talent Campus, Berlin Film Festival earlier this year.

# Film is the Future: UWI Film takes over the international market

BY ZAHRA GORDON



UWI Film alumnus Michael Moolleedhar (second from left) and UWI Film student Akkel Charles (right) at the 2023 Cannes Film Festival in France.

Another of the successes of The UWI Film Programme is that alumni are creating a local talent pool. Dr Ramesar’s most recent feature, *Fortune for All*, boasts a cast and crew that are primarily UWI Film alumni. Both Best and Ojoade were crew members. Alumnus Michael Cherrie was the lead actor. Dr Ramesar noted that he did not plan for the film’s cast and crew to be primarily from UWI, but it was a coincidence that speaks to their levels of competency.

*Fortune for All* was released internationally in Italy at the Ischia Global Film Festival in July. The film is also an Official Selection at the Cacique Film Awards, Lulea International Film Festival in Sweden, Le Festival International du Film Pan Africain de Cannes in France, and the Florence Biennale in Italy. It was also recently screened in Egypt.

Dr Ramesar sees himself as leading by example for student-filmmakers tapping into the international market.

“UWI people are making their mark at high levels,” he said.

As an educator, Dr Ramesar takes pride in the achievements of his students. “I’m very proud of their efforts and impacts. I’m glad they are picking up the space and my heart is full. Every time I see something they’ve produced, I’m like ‘wow’ and I know the hard work and discipline that it’s taken to do so. I really respect that and I get great pleasure in watching their work.”

Started in 2006, over 100 students have graduated the programme since 2009. Soon, the programme will be expanded to include a Masters of Fine Arts in Screenwriting.



# The UWI Calendar of Events

## August 2023

### ICAMP Entrepreneurial Masters Scholarship 2023/2024 August 9 (Application Deadline)

The UWI, through the Intra-Caribbean Academic Mobility Programme (ICAMP), is pleased to offer 15 full-time master's scholarships aimed at catalysing home-grown solutions along the Caribbean's entrepreneurial ecosystem by advancing education and employability for Caribbean citizens.

This scholarship, which includes both taught and internship components, includes tuition fees, health insurance, other university fees, and others, if applicable. It is available for any Caribbean citizen who possesses, or will possess by the start of the 2023/2024 academic year, a certified undergraduate or postgraduate degree from a recognised university.

**For information on how to apply and other details, visit <https://icampcaribbean.org> or email [STA-ICAMP@sta.uwi.edu](mailto:STA-ICAMP@sta.uwi.edu)**



CARIFORUM



Intra-Caribbean Academic Mobility Programme (ICAMP)  
**Entrepreneurial Masters  
Scholarship Opportunities**  
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**15 full time Masters Scholarships**

**Apply at <https://scholarships.icampcaribbean.org>**

**Application Deadline: August 9, 2023**

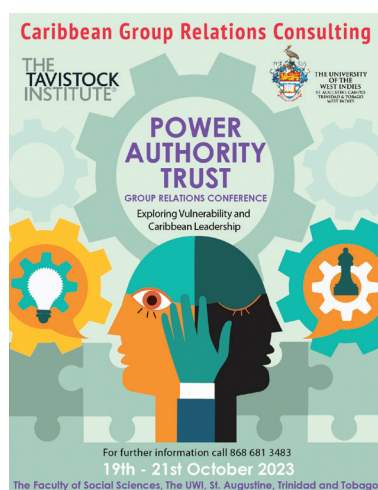
### Group Relations Conference: Power Authority Trust - Exploring Vulnerability and Caribbean Leadership October 19 to 21 Learning Resource Centre St Augustine Campus

This Group Relations conference, developed by the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations and hosted by UWI St Augustine's Faculty of Social Sciences, will provide a unique framework for senior and aspiring senior leaders to study leadership, authority, and the dynamics of power, trust, and vulnerabilities through interpersonal, inter-group and institutional relations.

This conference is for anyone interested in developing a deeper understanding of managerial and leadership processes in organisations. Participants may come from private and public organisations and include business leaders, consultants, administrators, human resource and marketing professionals, NGO and religious organisation leaders, educators, activists, researchers, and others.

The closing date for applications is October 5, 2023.

**For information on pricing and other details, and the application form, visit <http://caribbeangroupconsulting.com/conference>**



### Caste, Class and Race: Reflections of the Life and Work of Oliver Cromwell Cox (call for abstracts)

**September 30 (deadline for abstracts)  
April 26 and 27, 2024  
(conference dates)**

Oliver Cromwell Cox was a Trinidad and Tobago-born scholar, whose writings made significant contributions to mid-20th century sociological thought. His work challenged dominant thought and practices related to the social and economic organisation of race relations within Western societies.

UWI St Augustine's Department of Behavioural Sciences within the Faculty of Social Sciences invites the submission of 300-500-word abstracts for panels and roundtables on topics relevant to this important scholar and his work.

**Proposals or queries should be submitted to [STABehavioural.Sciences@sta.uwi.edu](mailto:STABehavioural.Sciences@sta.uwi.edu) under the subject heading "Oliver C Cox Conference 2024".**



### The UWI/Guardian Life Premium Open Lecture 2023 September 29 | Daaga Auditorium | St Augustine Campus

Join the Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning's (CETL) for The UWI/Guardian Life Premium Open Lecture, "Redefining Educational Success: Post-Pandemic Challenges and Opportunities". Featured speaker, Dean and Distinguished Professor Pedro Noguera, from the University of Southern California Rossier School of Education, will examine how education must evolve and the elements for shaping the current and future landscape of education. The Premium Open Lecture is a programme in which new ideas, concepts, and research focuses on learning and teaching in higher education.

**To register, go to <https://bit.ly/premiumopenlecture2023>.  
For more information, email [STA-premiuereventcelt@sta.uwi.edu](mailto:STA-premiuereventcelt@sta.uwi.edu)**