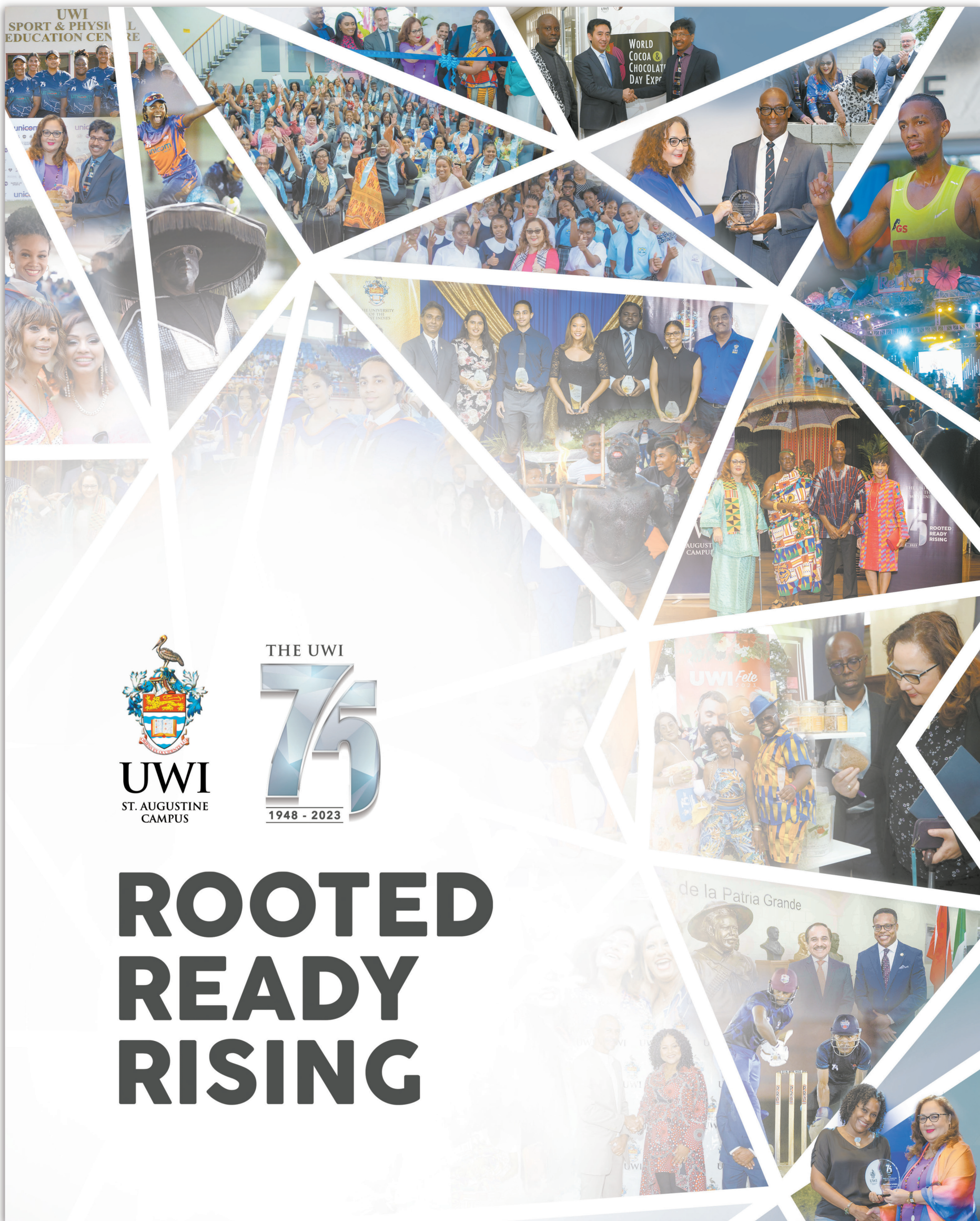




THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES • ST AUGUSTINE CAMPUS

SUNDAY 24 DECEMBER 2023





FROM THE PRINCIPAL

A YEAR OF CELEBRATION AND GRATITUDE

In the foreword of the *Pelican Annual 1966*, one of The UWI's original student publications, Campus Principal Sir Dudley Huggins described the experience of establishing and developing The UWI St Augustine campus as an "exciting adventure". It was a sentiment that could apply to the entire university.

It's been seven decades and five years since the creation of The University of the West Indies, enough time to establish a legacy, but still a brief moment in the ocean of human history. We are a young institution in a young region, and as we look at all that has been achieved by these Caribbean people in their Caribbean university, it can be easy to forget the tiny ember from which The UWI sprang, and the painstaking labours required to stoke that flame.

In 1966, my predecessor, Sir Dudley, wrote of many difficulties, just as The UWI faces many difficulties today. Yet, he said, "the old and the young, the teacher and the taught, need to look for hope rather than despair, for resolve rather than doubt". And in motivating the fledgling campus community, he called on them to draw on their greatest power: unity.

"Our university – three campuses but one university – derives strength from that unity. We have cause to take pride in that circumstance in that The UWI is the outstanding example of unity..." he wrote.

It is a necessary reminder in this final month of 2023, in this year of commemoration of this university's 75 years as one of the Caribbean's greatest institutions and assets. Today, we can look back with pride at the labours of the founders in tending that flame, a flame that has become, as declared, a light rising in the West.

In that spirit, I wish my final message of 2023 to be one of gratitude – not only for the work of the university's founders but for the incredible work taking place at UWI St Augustine today. This year has been challenging, however, through the collective efforts of this campus community, St Augustine achieved many objectives and, on balance, made 2023 a success.

This year, the campus held several activities to commemorate the 75th anniversary, including the hosting of the Principal's Research Awards and Festival that is covered in this issue of UWI TODAY. These events allowed us to celebrate our researchers, expose society to their work, highlight the campus and university's tradition of research, and encourage even more faculty members and students to continue that research tradition.



This year has been challenging, however, through the collective efforts of this campus community, St Augustine achieved many objectives and, on balance, made 2023 a success.

The awards and festival are also a reminder of the value The UWI brings. More than ever, as an institution, we must not only continue to provide ever greater value, we must also proclaim that value to the sectors we partner with and the public we serve.

This year, UWI St Augustine worked on building our relationships with the government and private sector with the aim of creating or deepening partnerships. We intensified our labours in the innovation and entrepreneurship space for the development of campus-grown products and services. We also reached out to engage society through outreach activities, as well as invited the public to the campus for events of national and international importance.

In 2023 as well, our campus community members, both past and present, represented UWI St Augustine well, receiving numerous recognitions for their work, speaking with authority on the most urgent topics, and ascending to prominent positions in a host of fields.

And of course, the campus community successfully carried out the core operations for which they are best known – providing higher education and information services. At all levels, they continued to fulfill the purpose for which this university was established many years ago. I am extremely grateful for their efforts.

Now, the campus looks forward to 2024, another year in our "exciting adventure". We will, undoubtedly, face many challenges, but as a campus and a university, we will marshal our strengths and continue the legacy that was created for Caribbean people 75 years ago. It is my deep desire that seven decades and five years from now, when the leaders of The UWI of tomorrow face their own struggles, they will find comfort in messages such as this, and take comfort that the adventure continues.

To all staff, students, alumni, retirees, and members of society that have worked with UWI St Augustine in 2023, thank you. I hope the New Year brings you health and happiness.

Rose-Marie Antoine

Professor Rose-Marie Belle Antoine
Campus Principal

We come out to DANCE

Debra Paponette (right) and **Antonia Williams**, students from the Certificate in Dance and Dance Education programme at UWI St Augustine's Department of Creative and Festival Arts (DCFA) and members of The UWI Arts Festival Dance Ensemble perform on December 3 at Our Lady of Fatima RC Church in Curepe. They were taking part in "MISSA", a presentation of UWI Arts Chorale and UWI Arts Steel. The event was part of DCFA's Season of the Arts series.

PHOTO: ULTIMATE MEDIA TT



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■ OUR PEOPLE

On Thursday October 26, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres formally launched a High-Level Multistakeholder Advisory Body on Artificial Intelligence. The body's goal is to foster a globally inclusive approach to ensuring that AI technologies are harnessed responsibly, maximising their potential to supercharge efforts to achieve a more sustainable world, while minimising potential associated risks and inequalities.

Amidst a fiercely competitive selection process, drawing over 2,000 candidates from 128 countries, UWI St Augustine's very own Dr Craig Ramlal secured his place among the elite group of 38 AI experts.

At 35, Dr Ramlal boasts an impressive academic and research résumé. On the St Augustine campus alone, he is a lecturer at the Faculty of Engineering's (FENG) Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering (DECE), the Head of the Control Systems Group at DECE, the Coordinator for the Postgraduate Studies and Research at the department and the Principal Investigator of the Intelligent Systems Lab – a research lab which focuses on developing machine learning, intelligent control algorithms, and AI-enabled software.

On being appointed to the Secretary General's advisory body, Dr Ramlal couldn't hide his elation.

"I'm very honoured, very humbled and very happy to participate in this forum where everyone is at the cutting edge of their field. When any member or the body speaks, every sentence is weighted by years of experience," he says, speaking of his early interactions with other AI luminaries on the advisory body.

Dr Ramlal's happiness with his selection is, however, not limited to his pride in his personal accomplishment. He is also pleased about the opportunity to represent the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean (GRULAC), contemporarily known as the Global Southwest, during the panel's deliberations. For Dr Ramlal, diversity of ideas and inputs is an imperative stipulation for building better AI systems which can serve the global good, as opposed to only limited corporate interests in more developed countries.

Reducing the disparities in developing AI systems

At the top of his wish list of accomplishments for the UN advisory body is to make governance recommendations which can "reduce the disparities between those who can create and use AI and those who don't have the economic capacity to do so". He says the challenge lies in the fact that, because of disparities in funding, many developing countries are "currently not able to create AI systems that would benefit their own countries", while developed nations are simultaneously "moving very quickly to develop better and better systems".

This is a complex problem when considering large language models (LLM). LLM – a type of AI algorithm that uses deep learning techniques and enormously large data sets to interpret, summarise, generate and predict new content – are one form of generative AI that are specifically designed to generate text-based content. As he explains, large corporations who are at the forefront of developing the most powerful AI systems have used LLMs which, they admit, are flawed because they contain cultural biases due to the homogenous datasets they are derived from.

On the other hand, while Dr Ramlal believes that there is a genuine desire to obtain more diverse data sets to reduce bias, despite the Caribbean's diversity, "our data sets are extremely minimal. It's difficult to create, and

there is a lack of incentives to create datasets within the Caribbean."

Notwithstanding this challenge, he sees tremendous worth in governments, and industry and academic players in the Global Southwest investing heavily in the development of safe AI technologies.

A Caribbean approach to AI

Dr Ramlal also believes that there is no need for Caribbean nations to attempt to compete with the OpenAIs of this world. "Our focus should really be strengthening our own niche industries with these AI systems," he argues. There is scope for AI technologies to power the improvements in the agricultural sector in a way that can positively affect climate change, as well as in other industries such as tourism, oil and gas, and medicine. In order to effect these changes, Dr Ramlal sees three approaches as key:

1. Education and investment – "We need to educate people on what the potential benefits are to "developing/curating ethically sound data sets, and we need to invest in AI research and development. We also need to increase the talent pool of people who can create AI systems that move quickly into benefitting our niche industries."
2. The development of proper digital infrastructure, especially cyber security – "If you are going to use people's data, you must have proper cyber security systems to protect it."
3. Collaboration between public, private and academic institutions – "This collaboration will help create the necessary human capital, policies, insight on data and requisite hardware and software tools necessary to develop the local and regional AI industries."

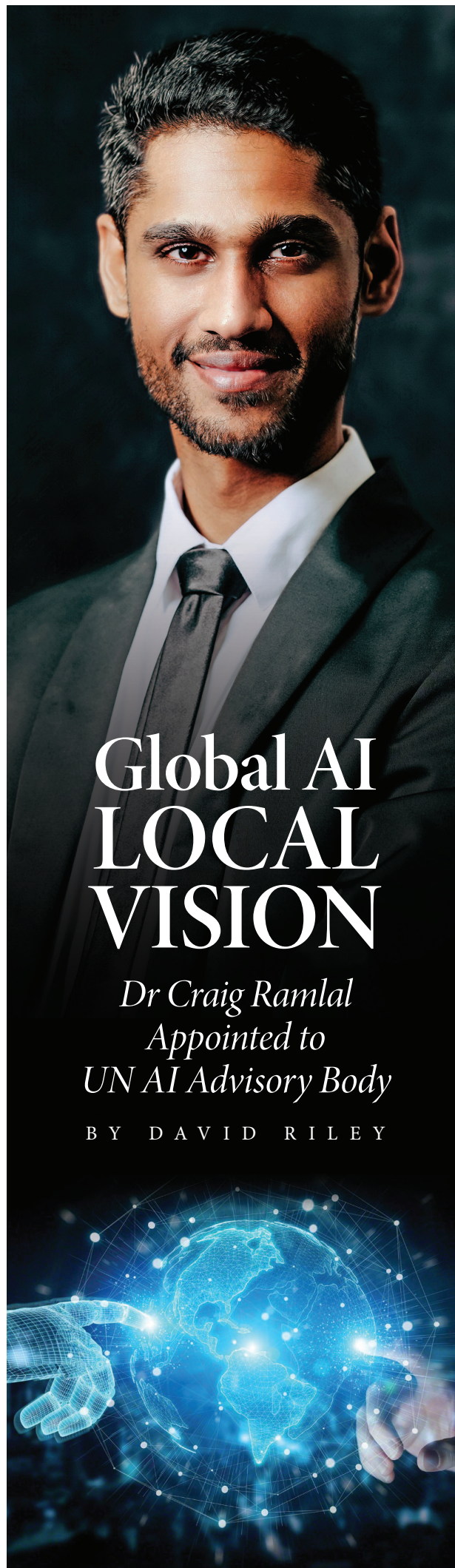
For his part, Dr Ramlal is already at the forefront of his own AI revolution which he heads off in his role as lecturer, researcher and coordinator at UWI St Augustine. He jovially, but perhaps accurately, describes himself as "probably the biggest person in the Global Southwest to push students to study AI!"

A driving force in AI education at St Augustine

Additionally, as a major proponent of up-skilling the regional population, Dr Ramlal has been a driving force behind several Continuing Professional Education (CPE) courses which are now being offered at the St Augustine campus. They include 'Introduction to AI', 'Statistics in AI', 'Practical Machine and Deep Learning' and 'Pre Processing for Machine Learning and Data Analysis'. There are limited academic barriers to entry for pursuing these courses, which are designed to empower everyday people with general knowledge of artificial intelligence technologies, as well as to introduce the populace to new tools which can bolster their productivity.

In the 2024/2025 academic year, UWI St Augustine will launch its Master of Applied Science in Artificial Intelligence and PhD in Artificial Intelligence degree programmes.

The UN's High-Level Multistakeholder Advisory Body on Artificial Intelligence will move swiftly to present its first preliminary recommendations to the Secretary-General by the end of this year. Dr Ramlal's appointment not only recognises his exceptional expertise in the field, but it also positions him at the forefront of a global movement to harness AI responsibly and inclusively, shaping a better future for humanity – a movement which he has steadily been working to ensure that his compatriots from the Caribbean and Global Southwest benefit from.



■ CAMPUS NEWS

Department of Management Studies students WIN AWARDS AT ALBUS RESEARCH CONFERENCE

BY DIXIE-ANN BELLE

Five students from the Department of Management Studies have represented UWI St Augustine at the Academy of Latin American Business and Sustainability Studies (ALBUS) conference and come home with awards.

This is the hybrid (held both in-person and online) conference's first year. Created to promote Latin American research, it is organised by researchers from diverse countries to share knowledge and research findings, and to formulate networks and strategies.

Satesh Sookhai, PhD student and winner of the best student paper award; Denise Julien, PhD student and winner of the best presentation award; and MSc students Daniel Floyd and Kalitri Dwarika presented their research at the conference in the Dominican Republic. Jenna-Leigh Metivier presented online. "We see that the depth of the quality of the work spans our MSc programme to our PhD programme," notes Dr Shellyanne Wilson, Head of the Department of Management Studies (DMS).

Julien's research explores the use of service quality factors to identify strategies for improving customer satisfaction for generational segments.

"It's very relevant to what's happening in the financial industry," said Dr Meena Rambocas, Senior Lecturer in the DMS. "It's ensuring that there is a level of customer satisfaction, level of customer service orientation." She added, "[Julien] also had samples from different generational cohorts, which really added a new dimension to the discussions of customer satisfaction."

Satesh Sookhai's award winning paper focuses on the relationship between rewards and employee motivation in small business.

Dr Rambocas explained, "He's taking the conversation of rewards and motivation to a next level."

Dr Rambocas and Dr Wilson praised the students' work which impressed the ALBUS committees.

"What really stood out for us is the kind of scientific rigour that our students exercised in their research," said Dr Rambocas, noting that they addressed problems currently faced by business.



From left: Denise Julien, Satesh Sookhai, Dr Meena Rambocas, Kalitri Dwarika, and Daniel Floyd at the ALBUS conference in the Dominican Republic in November 2023. Not shown is Jenna-Leigh Metivier, who presented her paper online.

"They came up with contributions that really promoted the academic discourse in the area," she added.

Julien expressed satisfaction with the opportunity to collaborate with her Latin American peers. "One of the key takeaways for me is to be open to discussing and receiving feedback on research from other peers," she commented.

Sookhai said he feels his achievement fired his curiosity and motivation for research.

"I've learned never to [have] self-doubt," he said. "I strongly recommend attending international conferences to observe and learn from other researchers."

Dr Wilson commended Dr Rambocas as an excellent mentor and as the driving force behind attending the conference. They both worked closely with the students, coaching them and evaluating research designs.

"The department really wants to keep cultivating academic culture, research culture, and having the students exposed to that," said Dr Wilson. She stressed, "It's so important for a university to keep building and growing and fostering that culture of academic rigour, and discovery and research."

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



DMLL Research Notes

UWI St Augustine's Department of Modern Languages and Linguistics (DMLL) is sharing the research work of their staff and students in *DMLL Research Notes*, a special publication from the department.

Each issue focuses on their publications and conferences, features an interview or profile of a member of staff, and details abstracts of MPhil and PhD theses, as well as abstracts of final year undergraduate projects. DMLL Research Notes also highlights academic programmes and co-curricular student events.

■ For more information, visit DMLL at <https://sta.uwi.edu/fhe/dmll/dmll-research-notes>



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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.

When globally renowned actuary John Robinson was just seven years old, he was asked to lead a group activity for his school's cub scouts.

While it may be a trivial moment to some, Robinson credits it as his first leadership experience which ignited a passion for leadership. Several decades later, Robinson reflected on that moment as he was elected by members of the Society of Actuaries (SOA) to serve as the society's 74th president and chair.

With a focus on promoting actuarial education and research, the SOA has over 32,000 members, making it the world's largest actuarial organisation. Robinson's presidency was also historic because he was the first person of colour to lead the organisation.

During a seminar at the UWI St Augustine campus on November 28, Robinson spoke about his goal of raising awareness for the profession and opening doors for others like him.

Robinson shared, "Coming into 2021, my plan was to retire, and I wanted to return to the Caribbean to teach A-Level Mathematics."

But, 2021 was a powerful year.

"It was the year after George Floyd's death, and I live in Minnesota. His murder occurred less than 20 miles from my home. I nominated myself for President of the SOA, because if it was any year my candidacy was important, it was 2021."

As president, Robinson chaired the SOA Board and Leadership Team, and travelled the world as an ambassador of the SOA to help elevate its profile and build wider networks.

Born in England and raised in Jamaica, Robinson graduated from the UWI Mona Campus in 1976 with a special degree in Mathematics.

After a brief three-year stint teaching Mathematics at Excelsior High School in Kingston and deCarteret College in Mandeville, he decided to do a Masters in Statistics at the University of Delaware, and later went on to complete a second Masters in Statistics at Florida State University.

He recalled, "I knew being an actuary was going to be a worthwhile career. It was the idea of a challenge that I wanted to take on, and I knew that, if I met the challenge, there was a significant chance of having a good, secure job, with a good income."

While he became an SOA associate in 1984, it took Robinson ten years to complete the rigorous exams to become a Fellow of the Society of Actuaries. However, he has no regrets about the time it took as he reflected on his ultimate leadership roles in the SOA. These also included a tenure on the association's board of directors before his presidency.

Robinson also credits his work experience as an important part of his development as an actuary and subsequent leadership of the SOA.

His résumé includes stints with the Jamaica-based company R Watsons and Sons; and the US-based companies Nationwide Financial, F&G Life, Loyal American Life Insurance Company, and Hartford Life Insurance Company; and Capital Region BOCES. In his last job prior to retirement, he served as a life insurance regulator for the State of Minnesota.

Today, Robinson is a retiree, but he volunteers and still does consultancy work. He continues to serve as immediate past president of the SOA until October 2024, and is focused on inspiring the next generation of actuaries.

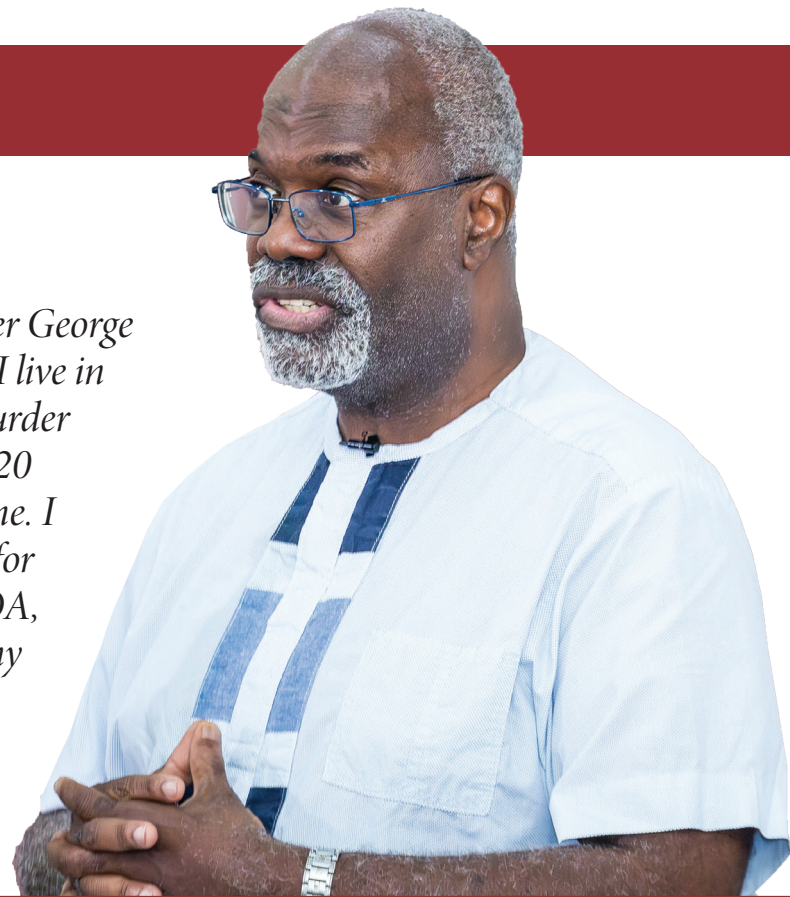
"People who do actuarial science degrees do get a skillset which is valuable in fields other than insurance and pensions, the traditional domains of actuaries," he said. "I would encourage students to continue to excel in their actuarial programme because it will bring them rewards."

A past president of the International Association of Black Actuaries, he also wants to continue opening doors for black actuaries around the world.

He explained: "One of the things that you will find in all of the actuarial organisations that I know is they have embraced the concept of diversity, equity and inclusion. Therefore, they do want to have diversity in their memberships, and they seek to ensure that everyone in our profession feels welcome."

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

'It was the year after George Floyd's death, and I live in Minnesota. His murder occurred less than 20 miles from my home. I nominated myself for President of the SOA, because if it was any year my candidacy was important, it was 2021.'



JOHN ROBINSON

From UWI grad to leader of the world's largest actuarial society

BY TYRELL GITTENS

CARIBBEAN ACTUARIES making their mark around the globe



Mr John Robinson (second from left) with (from left) Dr Robin Antoine, retired Senior Lecturer in Statistics and former Head of the Department of Mathematics and Statistics (DMS), Campus Principal Antoine, and Mr Stokely Smart, Senior Lecturer/Subject Leader in Actuarial Science at DMS, on a courtesy visit to the Office of the Campus Principal.

While visiting Trinidad and Tobago for the 2023 Caribbean Actuarial Association (CAA) Conference (held on Nov 29 to Dec 1 at the Hyatt Regency Trinidad), Immediate Past President of the Society of Actuaries (SOA) John Robinson spoke at a seminar for aspiring actuaries at UWI St Augustine's Noor Hassanali Auditorium on November 28.

Actuaries are commonly defined as mathematicians who use statistics to calculate premiums, dividends, or pension, insurance, and annuity rates for insurance companies.

Hosted by the UWI St Augustine Actuarial Science Club, the event attracted a broad audience which included campus students, secondary school

students, and a global viewership via livestream.

Today, Caribbean actuaries can be found practising around the world, and like Robinson, are members of prestigious actuarial societies, especially in North America and Europe. UWI St Augustine actuarial science lecturers Stokely Smart and Asad Mohammed are both members of the SOA, with Smart being a Fellow of the Society, and Mohammed an Associate.

"I would like to see a very strong Caribbean Actuarial Association," Smart said. "As I meet the current actuaries, they are all individually very strong and know what they are doing, which I hope translates to continuing to build a strong Caribbean Association."

Tyrell Gittens

SEVEN DECADES, FIVE YEARS



A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF MEMBERS OF THE CAMPUS COMMUNITY ON THE ST AUGUSTINE GREENS. PHOTO: KC MEDIA

The sun will soon set on our year-long celebrations to commemorate this remarkable achievement of our university — 75 years of academic excellence, nation-building, and the socio-economic transformation of our region. The University of the West Indies has come a long way since the recommendation by the Irvine Committee in 1945 and the enrolment of the first medical students at the campus in 1948. As we approach the end of this milestone, it is only fitting to revisit the journey that led us here, celebrate our achievements, and reflect on our legacy through our theme: UWI at 75 — Rooted. Ready. Rising.

ROOTED

As a university with its foundation in the region, The UWI has been steadfast in its commitment to national and regional development. Our objective has always been to serve the needs of our people, communities, and the wider region while preparing our students and citizens for the rapidly changing global environment. At The UWI,

education and research remain the core of what we do. They are the driving forces behind our success and that of our nation and region.

READY

We are witnessing numerous technological advances, the rise of artificial intelligence among them. At the same time, we face several pressing challenges – social, geopolitical, economic, health, and climate-related. However, The UWI is an asset of the region to confront these challenges and find new solutions, both through its own work and in collaboration with partners beyond the campus walls. The university is generating crucial research in a host of areas such as diplomacy, education, climate change, culture, gender, health policy, economic policy, crime, food security, and many many others.

RISING

We have accomplished much as a university over the last 75 years, producing world-class

scholars, researchers, and leaders. Since its inception, The UWI has graduated over 240,000 students, including 25 heads of government and 2 Nobel Laureates. Our campus has been recognised as a global leader in research and advocacy. Looking forward, our goal is to further elevate the reputation of the university and this campus through new commercialisation efforts to not only help finance the university, but also contribute to society's betterment. We will also intensify our outreach work, and engage communities on a deeper level to provide assistance where it is most needed.

We encourage all stakeholders – governments, the private sector, NGOs, schools, cultural groups, institutions of higher education, individuals, and others – to partner with us in this mission.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the readers and friends of The UWI for their contributions to the growth of our university.

PROFESSOR ROSE-MARIE BELLE ANTOINE
Campus Principal

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES AT 75



Let us Recommit ourselves to the Ideals that Shaped The UWI

DR THE HONOURABLE
NYÁN GADSBY-DOLLY
MINISTER OF EDUCATION

Seventy-five years ago, the founders of this institution envisioned a space where knowledge would thrive, grounded by a steadfast commitment to the region. Throughout the years, the role of universities has proven to be more than just a mere repository of knowledge. Far from being ivory towers isolated from the world around them, instead, they are formidable institutions designed and equipped to serve a purpose greater than themselves – to serve their communities and nations.

In meeting challenges head-on, The University of the West Indies represents the resilience and innovation we need to adapt to an ever-evolving world. It is my firm belief that our education system must champion the holistic development of 21st century skills, attitudes, values, and behaviours. This requires a cultural transformation that is so needed today to mold our young people into that of the ideal Trinidad and Tobago citizen.

This transformation requires all of us to reassess and rethink our paradigms, all the while avoiding a short-change in quality. Such a trajectory is poised to propel us consistently upward, mirroring the calibre of capable individuals this institution has nurtured across diverse sectors of society.

As we look to the future, let us recommit ourselves to the ideals that have shaped The UWI over the past 75 years. The challenges we face today – be they social, economic, or environmental – require a new generation of leaders who are not only academically adept, but also compassionate and globally aware. The UWI must continue to be a driving force in nurturing such leaders.

As we commemorate this diamond anniversary, let us look to the future with optimism, knowing that The UWI will continue to be a guiding “light rising from the West”.

Thank you, and may The University of the West Indies continue to shine bright.



What a Proud Legacy we have Built

PROFESSOR
SIR HILARY BECKLES
VICE-CHANCELLOR OF
THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES

Over the years, I’ve maintained that universities are not built to serve themselves. They are built and resourced to serve their communities and nations. This unequivocal truism has been the guiding philosophy on which our beloved UWI has based all that we do to serve the people of the Caribbean.

What a proud legacy we have built in just 75 years, having evolved into an internationally respected, top ranked, global academy that has been at the heart of the economic and social development of the region.

Eight years ago, when I was first appointed Vice-Chancellor, I thought it critical to have a transformational strategic plan that would move The UWI to the highest level. Therein was the origin of our *Triple A Strategy*, built in two phases. Phase I focused on fixing the university’s reputation – which was in need of repair; and Phase II is focused on translating that positive global brand reputation into revenue.

I believe this is my greatest contribution to The UWI at this time. I have invested all of my experience as an academic, higher education administrator, and Caribbean economic historian to build this plan that is our *Triple A Strategy*.

And why did we build this strategy upon the three pillars—Access, Alignment and Agility? Well, the focus on Access is because we recognise the Caribbean currently has the lowest enrolment in higher education in the entire hemisphere. The Alignment focus is an imperative to foster much closer organic relations with all of our key stakeholders. Against the backdrop of our vision to be an excellent global university rooted in the Caribbean, Agility is essential to our thrust of global activism and advocacy.

Phase I of our *Triple A Strategy* was a success, as proven by our global ranking positions, and has set us on a positive path to Phase II’s success.

As we move forward in the second phase of the *Triple A Strategy*, 2022–2027, our emphasis is on the *Revenue Revolution*. The university’s financial health is our top priority, and we are aggressively pursuing this by taking greater responsibility for financing the university for ourselves. We acknowledge that without the firm and sustainable contributions of our people and our governments in the financing of this enterprise, we would not be here today. We anticipate their continued support, but are fully seized of the need to diversify our sources of income to reduce dependency on government subventions, and move towards improved budgets for our future sustainability.

We are activists in pursuing income generation for our university. Each campus is embracing an entrepreneurial UWI ethos, and projects are already in train. One of the most game-changing initiatives is the transformation and rebranding of the Open Campus into the Global Campus, and the establishment of the International School for Development Justice (ISDJ), putting us upon a solid footing of earning income and also addressing national, regional, and global needs. We have astutely recognised the financial difficulty of the region and our funding governments, and we are aggressively pursuing “self-help” strategies for the future. I am confident that we will achieve our objectives.

Transformational leadership requires building strong teams and having the confidence in those teams. I have invested in building a strong team of principals, pro vice-chancellors, and senior leaders, and have won the support of our student leadership. I have successfully leveraged the University Finance and General Purposes Committee effectively as the Parliament of the University, and it has proven to be a wonderful institutional tool grounded in a democratic context within which to mobilise everyone. This is the source of my energy – the ability to win support for transformational development.

Indeed, we are full of Pelican pride in our hard-earned status as a symbol of regional unity, of transformation and activism. As we look towards our centenary, The UWI re-commits itself to bold visioning of a future for the Caribbean beyond 2030.



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES AT 75



Meeting the challenges of our time

In 2017, **Mr Robert Bermudez**, one of Trinidad and Tobago's leading figures in the world of business, was appointed the sixth Chancellor of The University of the West Indies. Since then, he has been a constant figure, presiding over the university's councils and ceremonies, and representing The UWI at forums of the highest level. **Ms Vaneisa Baksh** sat down with **Chancellor Bermudez** to discuss Caribbean society and the university, now in its 75th year, which was established to serve it.

VB: What do you think are the biggest challenges facing West Indian societies currently?

RB: Climate change is probably the most worrisome threat in the sense that you have more severe storms, hurricanes and sea level rise for these small-island states, with very material consequences for people who live there.

How climate change is going to affect food supplies is something that is always on the forefront of my mind because we are small economies and small land masses. By and large, we do not produce the food we consume. We import significant quantities of commodities; things like wheat, corn and grain used to rear chickens, and produce bread and pasta, all the things we take for granted in our diet.

If you look at the bigger picture, what we are seeing develop is a breakdown of the global order which was set up after the Second World War. I think the Bretton Woods Agreement [1944, set up a collective international currency exchange framework that lasted until the 1970s, and originated the IMF and the World Bank] created the environment that led consequently to the independent states that we today call CARICOM. This global order is changing and morphing into something that is quite different and one has to think about what impact the elephants dancing will have upon our small-island states. We could find ourselves in very difficult situations, having to make critical choices as a consequence of the realignment of the powers and the realignment of values, as the world seems to be lurching towards the political right, and how that is going to affect us as small, dependent states.

To me, those are big challenges that we face collectively as CARICOM.

There is concern about the growing violence and criminal activity in all our societies and much of that is driven by our location, so close to Central and South America. A lot of our countries have become transshipment places for drugs and other illicit activities. That will take a huge effort to get under control.

Also connected to the crime issue is the lack of opportunity. We have many young people, and there is inadequate opportunity for all of them, and that leads to them making lifestyle choices, of which crime and criminal activity is one of the options. We have increased crime on one hand, and on the other increased immigration, people going off to the developed countries to seek opportunity, but that is not anything new. West Indians have always travelled abroad to seek their fortunes, but that diminishes our pool of talent, which is unfortunate.

VB: How do you think those can be approached?

RB: I don't have the answers, but I have thoughts on these issues. We have to start by looking at ourselves and asking where we want to be. The reality is there is very little we can actually do because we are not the ones emitting the gases, with the exception of Trinidad. The rest of the islands don't produce any significant amount of greenhouse gases. At some point, that matter will have to be addressed, but I don't believe the world has come to terms with the fact that decisions have to be taken and changes have to be made.

We are very vulnerable as a region, but we don't have the tools to fix it. There are discussions about making funds available to small-island states, countries that require support, but it is early days yet, and in many cases, even if the funds are made available, these fixes will take a while because they will require people moving from at-risk areas, will require an assessment of what the housing need is from islands that are in the hurricane alley (the area where almost consistently you have hurricanes). So, this risk will be with us for some time before we get funds. They are real and frightening risks in my mind.

We need to consider more educational opportunities, better access to primary, secondary and tertiary education. That is probably the only solution to crime, and it is also the only solution to creating opportunity, because people have to create their own opportunities. We can't go looking to ask other people to come and create opportunities in our societies. We have to create them ourselves, and to do that, we have to create a better-educated cadre of citizens, and the more that the young people are given the opportunity to have access to technology and modern tools, the greater the chance that they will be successful and be able to create a better and more prosperous society.

Something I feel strongly about is that technology is going to allow us to be part of a greater society. It will allow us to jump over national borders, and work digitally and develop our skills, and also sell our skills on a global basis, which is an opportunity that people my age and people before me did not have. You either had to take a ship or a plane to go to a first-world country. The idea that we can now do that without leaving our homes in the Caribbean is an enormous advantage, and there are many people doing it already.

We need to provide greater skills so more can do it because we have basically talented people. We have the advantage that we are English-speaking, and we are in the same time zone as the United States of America. I believe that we need to use technology to create greater opportunity for the young so that they are able to have options that do not involve crime, and see crime as an undesirable lifestyle.

VB: How do you feel the growing presence of AI will affect livelihoods and lifestyles?

RB: I personally feel that AI presents a huge opportunity. The key is for us to embrace it in these islands, and I go back to the point that I made earlier, that is to give our young people the necessary skills to try and focus on computer sciences, because opportunities are going to be available, and you're not going to need to be physically there. This allows us to live in the digital world, and these islands are particularly suited to that. A West Indian can have the best of two worlds: work for US dollars while living at home in their natural environment, where they want to be. It's a huge opportunity, but we have to focus on the young people getting the right tools.

There's a lot of discussion about whether AI will do away with jobs. I have an optimist's view. First of all, AI machines are not going to take over the world. We have a great ability to survive. Self-preservation is a human trait. I am confident that humans will manage the risks. Yes, there will be job losses. Technology always brings job losses. But in total, it creates employment. Jobs that are of a particular nature are replaced, but then these technologies create jobs and opportunities that were never there before.

VB: You think it will balance it off?

RB: No, it will be on the positive side. It will create employment: a net employment creator, but very different jobs, and that is why we need to focus on getting the best possible access to skills, particularly these skills around technology.

In my view, technology is going to create access, and it is going to create opportunity, but the reality is opportunity for those who have skills. So, this is where you have to get yourself a toolkit that allows you to live in the new world. Because there's no point complaining about artificial intelligence. It's coming. So, you need to focus on what is the tool kit that the young people need in order to prosper in that environment. I am certain and confident that the young people have the aptitude.

VB: What can The UWI do to truly integrate itself into Caribbean development?

RB: The UWI really and truly has an important role to play in all of this. It plays a critical role in developing talent which is going to be the greatest competitive advantage that the region can have. So, The UWI needs to be at the forefront of AI, understanding it, understanding what are the skillsets that young people are going to need in order to exist and prosper. We don't want young people to just exist, we want them to prosper in this new environment. The UWI, at 75, has to tailor itself to be a tertiary educational institution that is at the cutting edge of developing the tools and the skillsets that are necessary for our young people to prosper. I feel confident that they should be able to do that.

Vaneisa Baksh is an editor and writer.

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES AT 75

From colonial to post-colonial: UWI, A UNIFYING FORCE FOR THE CARIBBEAN

BY ZAHRA GORDON

What began as a colonial project in October 1948 as the University College of the West Indies (UCWI) took only 14 years to morph into the post-colonial, paradigm shift we know today as The University of the West Indies (UWI). With five campuses in Antigua, Barbados, Jamaica, Trinidad and a satellite campus, after 75 years in existence, The UWI has a long history of uniting the Caribbean.



BEGINNINGS: The very first class of students at the University College of the West Indies Sciences, pose for a photo. They were 33 medical students hailing from Antigua, Barbados, British Guiana, Grenada, Jamaica, St Kitts, St Lucia, Trinidad & Tobago, and Turks & Caicos. Classes began on October 4, 1948. PHOTOS: COURTESY THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES MUSEUM.

“It has become a cliché, but some clichés are true. The University has been a tremendous unifying force in the region,” noted Emerita Professor of History Bridget Brereton.

“The Federation collapsed in 1952. CARICOM hasn’t on the whole lived up to all the great expectations for it, but UWI has always been a huge unifying force, and you see that on so many levels. For example, when heads of government get together, it’s amazing how many of them are UWI graduates, and may have known each other. The example would equally be the thousands of friendships, marriages, and cross-island families created as a result of UWI.”

Irvine Committee and Establishment

In 1945, at the end of World War II, the government of the United Kingdom convened the Commission on Higher Education in the Colonies. The Commission’s West Indian arm was the Irvine Committee, led by Sir James Irvine of St Andrews University in Scotland, whose mission was to consider how tertiary education in the Caribbean should be guided, and to facilitate collaboration with established British institutions. Their



The very first graduation ceremony at UWI St Augustine in 1964. The ceremony took place outside the Main Administration Building.

recommendation was for a single, regional campus in Jamaica, open to both men and women, amidst the growing debates around and drive towards trade unionism, nationalism, and adult suffrage.

According to Prof Brereton, there were two factors leading to the founding of UCWI:

“The first factor was internal to the British colonial Caribbean and this was the rise of nationalism. All over the Anglophone Caribbean, the emergence of

organisations and groups of people who we could loosely describe as progressive nationalist — that is they were interested in ending colonialism. They were interested in an orderly movement of the different colonies towards self-government, and eventually, independence.

“These people were around for a long time, but became a significant force in the Colonial Caribbean in the 1930s during World War II and particularly in the immediate post-war period. One of their goals was to encourage the development of secondary and tertiary education in the Caribbean in order to help produce an educated, trained, professional cadre of people who could take each colony towards self-government and independence.”

She continued:

“The second factor is external, and it has to do with the British colonial authorities. By the time that World War II began, and above all, by the time World War II was ending, in 1944-45, I think it was abundantly clear to any far-seeing Brit that Britain would not be able to hold onto the colonial empire post war. India and Pakistan got Independence in 1947. Sri Lanka and Burma got independence in 1948. So, we’re looking at the late colonial period and particularly during the government of the Labour Party, which was in power in Britain from 1945-1951. During that period, the people who were making policy for the British colonies were anxious to leave a decent legacy. One way they realised they could do that was by encouraging and permitting the establishment of tertiary institutions in colonies that didn’t have it.”

UCWI opened its doors in October 1948 in Mona, Jamaica with a cohort of 33 medical students – 23 men, 10 women from nine countries – Antigua, Barbados, Guyana, Grenada, Jamaica, St Kitts, St Lucia, Trinidad & Tobago, and Turks & Caicos. UCWI was enrolled in an apprenticeship period with the University of London, meaning that all degrees awarded were considered “external London” degrees. Soon after the Faculty of



Pictured are the first graduates of UCWI in January 1953. They were 15 students from the Faculty of Natural Science.

UCWI opened its doors in October 1948 in Mona, Jamaica with a cohort of 33 medical students – 23 men, 10 women from nine countries – Antigua, Barbados, Guyana, Grenada, Jamaica, St Kitts, St Lucia, Trinidad & Tobago, and Turks & Caicos.

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES AT 75



Elsa Goveia, the first Professor of West Indian History, as well as the first woman to be appointed professor, at the UCWI. Prof Goveia, who was from Guyana, was "one of the university's most influential scholars and had a lasting legacy in her field".



Sir Hugh Wooding, the first West Indian-born Chancellor of The UWI.



Emerita Professor Elsa Leo-Rhynie, the first woman to hold posts as both Deputy Principal and Principal at a UWI campus. She was appointed, respectively, in 1996 and then 2006 at UWI Mona. Prior to this, Prof Bridget Brereton acted as Campus Principal at UWI St Augustine.

Medicine was created, other faculties were added, including the Faculty of Natural Sciences, from which 15 students formed the first graduating class in 1953.

Student Activism and Democratisation

While The UWI may today boast a diverse alumni, its first students and faculty were not as wide-ranging.

"At the beginning," said Professor Brereton, "I think it's fair to say that the goals of UCWI were elitist — that is they envisaged a small number of people who would get access to UCWI and who, on graduation, would become part of a new ruling class — professional people, highly educated people, who would be able to take the British Caribbean to self-government and independence. So, you could describe it as elitist, or more charitably, as an attempt to create a new meritocracy because, unlike the old elites — who got there because they were of European descent or they were wealthy, their families owned land, etc — the new meritocracy who would be trained at UCWI were there through merit."

When UCWI became The University of the West Indies in 1962, it was an independent, fully degree-granting institution. This new configuration was the first step in the university's progression. According to Prof Brereton, the university's evolution has been constant, allowing for much expansion and greater access to tertiary education.

By allowing non-residential and part-time students, adding more faculties and postgraduate education, increasing the number of campuses (St Augustine in 1960 and Cave Hill in 1970), as well as implementing distance and online education, The UWI has created multiple entryways to higher education in the region. These changes were also supported by government programmes such as GATE in T&T, and the availability of bursaries, loans and scholarships.

"There has been a steady movement from 1962/1963 onwards to hugely expand the number of people who could get access to UWI to move towards a far more egalitarian and democratic kind of university," said Prof Brereton.

With the doors of the university wide open, however, the ethos of the students and the administration did not always mesh.

"The emergence of vibrant student movements, some political and some socio-cultural, helped to make UWI a more open and democratic university, and the converse is also true. By which I mean, it was because of the [administrative changes] in the 1960s, many more students were able to come to

UWI. Of course there was a downside, and that was, in many places — certainly in Jamaica, certainly in T&T — the governments of the day were not happy to see the campuses which they helped to fund with strong movements developing which were hostile to the government," Prof Brereton explained.

"UWI," she said, "might find itself in trouble from time to time with the local government, but the upside was that student movements really did vitalise and invigorate campus culture and had all kinds of positive spin-offs for the university".

When speaking of student activism, many think of the student demonstrations in support of UCWI alumni and lecturer Dr Walter Rodney in Jamaica in 1968, or the Black Power movement in Trinidad in 1970, of which many UWI students were thought leaders. However, the first documented student protests were by a group of female students from Mary Seale Hall (Mona) in 1960.

Achieving its Goals

One of the early goals of the UCWI had very practical applications.

"UCWI was designed to create skilled and trained professionals who were desperately needed in the post-war Caribbean. The very first cohort was medical students, and this was no coincidence. There was a desperate shortage of medically trained people, and it was extremely expensive to send people to British universities to train. So, there was a strong practical goal in the creation of UCWI and then UWI," noted Prof Brereton.

What did these practical goals mean for the future of The UWI? According to Prof Brereton, it has been no small feat that The UWI has developed into a top research-oriented university sustained in the Global South.

"The university has been able to create significant scholarship in many different disciplines and branches — scholarship which was not likely to have been created by Caribbean academics working abroad because they wouldn't have had the same incentives and networks and so on. Over the decades the thousands and thousands of people graduating from UWI have provided the backbone of professional, educated, trained people without which a modern society simply cannot function. I don't think there can be any question that the university has been central to the development of the Anglophone Caribbean over the last many decades," she said.

■ For more on the history of The UWI and a complete timeline, visit the UWI 75th anniversary site at <https://uwi.edu/75/history.html>

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



The UWI's first West Indian Principal and the very first Vice-Chancellor of The UWI, Sir Arthur Lewis. The renowned economist oversaw a major period of growth at The UWI, including the establishment of the St Augustine campus in 1962.



A protest against Apartheid South Africa during the Queen Elizabeth II visit to the St Augustine campus in 1985. PHOTO: COURTESY THE WEST INDIAN AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS DIVISION, ALMA JORDAN LIBRARY

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THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES AT 75

ST AUGUSTINE SHINES at 75th anniversary inter-campus talent contest

BY TYRELL GITTENS



2023 We Rise champion and jump rope master Isaiah Stokes.



Shimiah Lewis, a spoken word performer, took second place with her piece on the conversations around gender.



Joel Phillips took third place.

On November 8, representatives of The UWI St Augustine campus took the top three prizes at the finale of the 2023 UWI We Rise Talent Showcase. We Rise featured 15 performers representing all five UWI campuses – Cave Hill (Barbados), Five Islands (Antigua and Barbuda), Global (region wide), Mona (Jamaica), and St Augustine.

Held in commemoration of the UWI's 75th Anniversary, the virtual cross-campus event welcomed dancers, musicians, vocalists, and performance art pieces including spoken word and drama. Participants also represented a mix of the UWI's staff, students, alumni, and retirees.

Walking away with the top prize was jump rope performer Isaiah Stokes. Spoken word artists, Shimiah Lewis and Joel Phillips, placed second and third respectively.

The finale's judges included Dr Josephine Torrel-Brown (Head Judge), Anderson "Mr Blood" Armstrong, Michael Holgate, Carla W Springer Hunte, and Nadean Rawlins.

A Trinidad and Tobago national jump rope athlete, Stokes told UWI TODAY that his performance incorporated a variety of techniques including footwork, the multiple-unders, advanced rope manipulation, and power skills.

He explained, "I was ecstatic when I won the competition because I want to start a new university club to get people involved in jump rope. By entering the competition, I know the wider UWI community will be looking on, so they can see what jump rope is all about and get involved in the sport."

He added, "Jump rope can take you all over the world, and help with your fitness."

To date, Stokes has participated in jump rope tournaments in the US, UK, France, and Japan.

Reflecting on her performance, Lewis said she focused on the extreme concepts which may sometimes be included in discussions about gender equality:

"My piece looked at the current conversations going on around if women need men. It's socially accepted now that women don't need men. But my piece wanted to open the conversation about why we need each other for survival."

She continued, "The power struggle between the sexes is something that is constantly pulling us down instead of everyone realising we all have strengths and weaknesses which is why we should work together."

Having graduated from the UWI in 2020 with a BSc in Sociology, Lewis said it was a nostalgic experience for her to re-engage with the university through the competition.

Other finalists representing the St Augustine campus included Sherisse Bideshi (aerial performance), Suzette Edwards (theatre arts), and Jerod Griffith (vocals).

■ For more information on the 2023 UWI We Rise Talent Showcase, visit their site at <https://global.uwi.edu/we-rise-talent-showcase/75>

Eric Williams

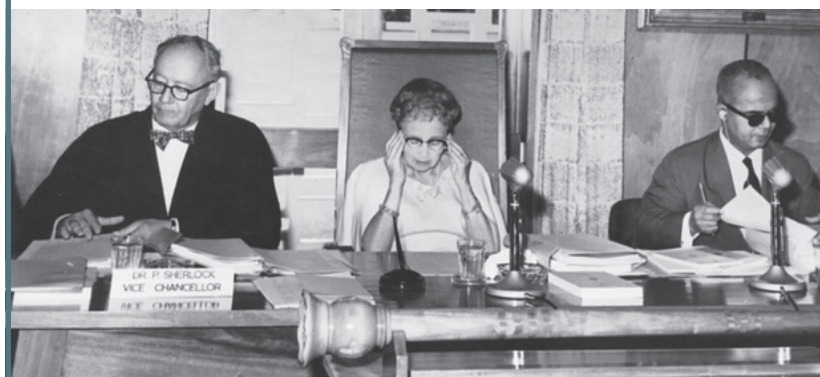
*a determined fighter for a
British West Indies university and
The UWI's first and only
Pro Chancellor*



Williams receiving his honorary degree, Doctor of Letters, from Princess Alice in 1966.
PHOTO: COURTESY THE ERIC WILLIAMS MEMORIAL COLLECTION

"Eric Eustace Williams, eminent historian and head of the government of Trinidad and Tobago for a quarter of a century until his death in 1981, was both dogged and undaunted in his efforts to establish what eventually became The University of the West Indies," says his daughter and Director of the Eric Williams Memorial Collection Ms Erica Williams Connell.

■ Read her analysis of his tenacious efforts, beginning in May 1944, in the UWI TODAY online at <https://sta.uwi.edu/uwitoday/>



Pro Chancellor and Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago Eric Williams (right) with UCWI Chancellor Princess Alice, Countess of Athlone, and Vice-Chancellor Philip Sherlock. Williams was appointed Pro Chancellor in 1962 and held the post until 1971. He was the first and only person to hold the position. PHOTO: COURTESY THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES MUSEUM

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES AT 75



A LEGACY OF INQUIRY

BY JOEL HENRY

Research, the Oxford Dictionary states, is “a careful study of a subject, especially in order to discover new facts or information about it.”

It is also one of the key factors in human progress. There is almost no way to overstate the contribution that research has made to our species. And one of the chief agents for supporting and implementing this “careful study” is the university. In the Caribbean, that role is filled primarily by The University of the West Indies.

In its 75 years of existence, The UWI has been the home of a staggering amount of research, some of which whose findings have reverberated through academia worldwide, influenced policy, improved practices across numerous sectors, developed technologies, addressed and helped solve urgent crises, and given us a better understanding of our history, norms, art, and culture.

As early as 1954, a mere six years after the establishment of The UWI as the University College of the West Indies, the institution was already being recognised for its work.

The UWI's historical records state that in that year, “a

Visiting Committee chaired by Dame Lillian Penson, former Vice-Chancellor of the University of London, termed the work of the first six years ‘a most remarkable beginning’ and gave special kudos to ‘the excellence of research in the humanities, in pure, and applied science and in medicine which is being undertaken at the college’ as well as to the work of the Extra-Mural Department.”

UWI St Augustine's research roots extend even further back. Before becoming part of The UWI in 1960, the campus was the headquarters for the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture (ICTA). Founded in 1921 (originally as the West Indies Agricultural College), ICTA was the British Empire's centre for postgraduate education as well as research in tropical agriculture.

ICTA's research was an asset to the agricultural sector, and its legacy lives on through its “descendant” entities at UWI St Augustine such as the Faculty of Food and Agriculture and the Department of Life Sciences in the Faculty of Science and Technology.

Today, The UWI has an extensive and well-articulated research culture, consisting not only of the work being carried out in its faculties, but also in several units and centres. The UWI's many researchers have contributed to numerous peer-reviewed, reputable academic journals, and the university itself publishes several research publications.

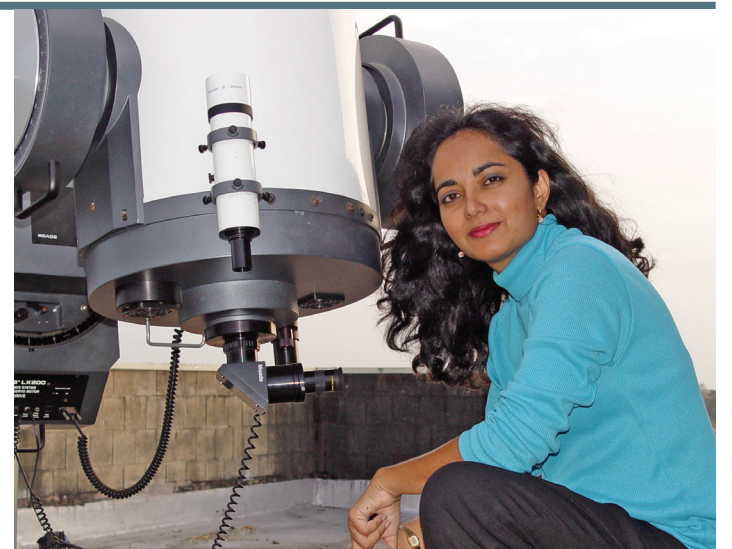
■ **At UWI St Augustine, the The UWI Trinidad and Tobago Research and Development Impact (RDI) Fund** has provided funding support for over 47 projects going back to 2012. These projects can be viewed at the RDI Fund website, <https://sta.uwi.edu/rdifund/>

■ **For a comprehensive listing of UWI researchers** and their work, visit the university's online repository, UWI Scholar at <https://uwischolar.sta.uwi.edu/>

■ **For more information on research at UWI St Augustine** and opportunities and tools for researchers, go to the School of Graduate Studies and Research at <https://sta.uwi.edu/research/>



In its 75 years of existence, The UWI has been the home of a staggering amount of research, some of which whose findings have reverberated through academia worldwide



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES AT 75

A stronger university, government, business relationship BUILT ON RESEARCH

Partner with us for purposeful research. That was the call made by UWI St Augustine Campus Principal Professor Rose-Marie Belle Antoine at the opening ceremony of the Principal's Research Awards and Research Festival. Professor Antoine invited the government and the private sector to collaborate with the university through funding or other mechanisms to improve society.

The Campus Principal told attendees at the event held on November 22 at the St Augustine campus's Daaga Auditorium that she hopes "Government, leaders of industry, our international development partners and civil society take special note of all of the nominees and their work, as well as the research on display at the festival".

Hosted with the theme "75 Years of relevance, responsiveness, and research innovation for a better life, environment, and sustainability", the research awards and festival were held by UWI St Augustine to share the work of the campus's researchers with the wider society. The aim was to show the value that the university brings to the region through its work in a host of critical areas like climate change, health, gender and equality, food security, manufacturing, crime, and many others.

There were 76 applications for the research awards. The festival, which ran on November 22 and 23 at the JFK Quadrangle, included 169 abstracts from campus researchers. This was the first campus-wide research festival in over a decade.

"Research," said Principal Antoine, "remains the core of what we do at The UWI, and is the key to our sustainability and success, and by extension, the development of our region."

She said she was extending "an invitation to all stakeholders to partner with us, whether through much-needed funding or creating an enabling environment to conduct purposeful research that will help change our country, region, and the world for the better".

She added, "As we navigate the many rapidly changing global issues that confront us, our aim is to build a stronger relationship between academia, government, and industry, and take the lead on national development issues."

Although The UWI has a long record of successful research, both applied (focusing on developing solutions to real-world problems) and pure (aimed at improving scientific theories for better understanding and prediction of the world), much of its past accomplishments and present work remains relatively unknown by society.

The university is engaged in a long-term effort to increase awareness because of the need for both solutions to some of the world's most persistent and threatening challenges, and more funding for operations and research. This is particularly important now as traditional funding mechanisms such as government subventions have been reduced over the years.

However, the Research Awards and Research Festival were not just created to expose the wider society to the work taking place at UWI St Augustine. As Prof Antoine pointed out, they also help familiarise the campus community with that research, which can lead to collaborative projects.

"The Research Festival, I hope, will create a space for deeper academic engagement and lead to even more multi-disciplinary collaborations. I remain firm in my belief that interdisciplinary research is the way forward," she said.

The St Augustine campus plans to hold the Principal's Research Awards every year.



FROM LEFT: Dr Angelique Nixon (Senior Lecturer at IGDS), Rae Alibey, and Renelle White receiving the Principal's Award for Most Impactful Community Research from Professor Antoine. PHOTOS: LIFE VIDEO PRODUCTIONS.



Professor Antoine (front row, centre) celebrates the awardees with Chief Justice of Trinidad and Tobago Ivor Archie (left) and Senator Allyson West, Minister of Public Administration (right) at the Principal's Research Awards.



Dr Sreedhara Rao Gunakala, Senior Lecturer in Mathematics in the Department of Mathematics and Statistics, is given the award for Most Outstanding Faculty Researcher in the Faculty of Science and Technology by Mr Suresh Sookbir, Programme Coordinator at the Food and Agriculture Organisation.



■ The work of researchers that was displayed at the JFK Quadrangle and in poster presentations at the JFK Auditorium have been compiled in a **Research Digest which is available for viewing and download at <https://sta.uwi.edu/researchawards>**

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES AT 75



Prof Christine Carrington (sixth from left), winner of the Principal's Award for Best Researcher, along with some members of her team, winners of the Best Team Research and Most Outstanding Regional/International Research Project awards. Pictured are Mr Soren Nichols, Prof Christopher Oura (winner of the Most Outstanding Faculty Researcher Award for the Faculty of Medical Sciences), Dr Arianne Brown-Jordan, Ms SueMin Nathaniel-Girdharie, Mr Vernie Ramkissoon, Dr Avery Hinds, Mr Nicholas Mohammed, Dr Nikita Sahadeo, and Ms Anushka Ramjag.

Prof Carrington's team, which also includes individuals from universities in the UK, the Ministry of Health, CARPHA, and UWI St

Augustine's faculty of Medical Sciences and Faculty of Science and Technology, won for the project "COVID-19: Infectious disease molecular epidemiology for pathogen control and tracking (COVID-19 IMPACT)".

However, Prof Carrington says: "besides continuing to monitor and further investigate COVID-19, the core team at UWI (in my lab) are applying the whole genome sequencing and genomic surveillance capacity built through this project to other diseases of public health interest, and to support a broad range of research projects in other areas. We also continue to provide technical support and training for others."



Dr Freddy James (right), a lecturer of Educational Leadership at the School of Education, receives her Outstanding Faculty Researcher award from Ms Karen Nieves, Manager of New Product Development and Technical Services at National Flour Mills.



CEO of UNIPET Mr Dexter Riley shares a hearty laugh with Dr Jacqueline Bridge, Head of the Department of Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering, as he gives her the plaque for Most Productive Research Department.



AWARD WINNERS

MOST OUTSTANDING FACULTY RESEARCHER

Faculty of Engineering – **Prof Kit Fai Pun**
 Faculty of Food and Agriculture – **Prof Mark Wuddivira**
 Faculty of Humanities and Education – **Dr Freddy James**
 Faculty of Law – **Dr Emma Perot**
 Faculty of Medical Sciences – **Prof Chris Oura**
 Faculty of Science and Technology – **Dr Sreedhara Rao Gunakala**
 Faculty of Social Sciences – **Dr Talia Esnard**

 MOST OUTSTANDING RESEARCHER AT A CENTRE/INSTITUTE/UNIT
 Institute of International Relations – **Professor Michelle Scobie**

 MOST OUTSTANDING GRADUATE RESEARCHER AWARD &
 MENTORSHIP AWARD

Graduate Researcher - **Dr Stephanie Mohammed**
 Mentors - **Dr Nikolay Zyuzikov** and **Dr Venkatesan Sundaram**

BEST TEAM RESEARCH

Prof Christine Carrington & Team
 For the team work on "COVID-19: Infectious disease Molecular epidemiology for Pathogen Control & Tracking (COVID-19 IMPACT)"

 MOST OUTSTANDING REGIONAL/
 INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH PROJECT

Prof Christine Carrington & Team
 For the regional project on "COVID-19: Infectious disease Molecular epidemiology for Pathogen Control & Tracking (COVID-19 IMPACT)"
 Team: **Dr Nikita Sahadeo** and **Dr Arianne Brown-Jordan**; lab technicians **Messrs. Vernie Ramkissoon** and **Nicholas Mohamed**; and research assistants **Anushka Ramjag** and **Soren Nicholls**.

MOST PRODUCTIVE RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

Mechanical & Manufacturing Engineering
 Head of the Department - **Dr Jacqueline Bridge**

MOST PRODUCTIVE RESEARCH INSTITUTE, CENTRE OR UNIT

Cocoa Research Centre
 Director- **Prof Pathmanathan Umaharan**
 Team: **Dr Lambert Motilal**, Geneticist and **Dr Naailah Ali**, Food Technologist

 PRINCIPAL'S AWARD FOR MOST IMPACTFUL COMMUNITY RESEARCH
 Dr Angelique Nixon

- Institute for Gender and Development Studies
 Lead Researcher for the project "A Sexual Culture of Justice: Strengthening LGBTQI and GBV Partnerships, Capacity and Efficacy to Promote and Protect Rights in Trinidad and Tobago"
 Receiving the award with her were
 Team: **Jeremy Stephan Edwards**, Executive Director, The Silver Lining Foundation and **Rae Alibey**, Director, Transgender Coalition.

PRINCIPAL'S SPECIAL INNOVATION AWARD

Mr Nizamudeen Mohammed and **Dr Lebert Grierson** for the development of asphalt-based sealants, coatings and lubricants

PRINCIPAL'S AWARD FOR BEST RESEARCHER

Prof Christine Carrington – Faculty of Medical Sciences

Continuing to build on an eminent RESEARCH HERITAGE

*An interview with Professor Duraisamy Saravanakumar,
Director of the School for Graduate Studies and Research*

BY DIXIE-ANN BELLE

The end of the year is a good time to reflect on past accomplishments, and this was no doubt at the forefront of the mind of Professor Duraisamy Saravanakumar, Director of the School for Graduate Studies and Research during the campus's recent 75th anniversary Research Festival and Principal's Research Awards event. While outlining the legacy of some of UWI's most exciting and influential research projects over the years, he was hard pressed to summarise the vast number of diverse offerings which have emerged from the various faculties.

To continue this impressive progress, Prof Saravanakumar believes that there should be a continued focus on six thematic areas. He identifies agri-food technologies for food and nutrition security; climate change mitigation and adaptation, and disaster management; regional health issues and advances; science, technology, and engineering solutions for sustainability; social, educational and cultural issues, policies, justice and practices for improved life and a sustainable environment; and communication and digital technologies, including AI and its applications and impacts.

"These are all the areas I think The UWI should influence and The UWI should focus on," he says.

Impactful work in many areas

Yet already, the contributions and potential impact of UWI's research are wide. Sustainability and climate change are being addressed in many areas, such as solar panels under the Faculty of Engineering. This is also apparent in the FAO funded project at the Faculty of Food and Agriculture, where black soldier flies are being bred to make pellets which can be used in aquaculture and to feed poultry and livestock. Prof Saravanakumar also highlights the SOILCARE project led by Dr Gaius Eudoxie at the Faculty of Food and Agriculture – a Caribbean Small Island Developing States initiative working toward landscape restoration and climate resilient food systems.

"UWI is leading in climate change," Prof Saravanakumar says as he also describes the work of Professor John Agard who has served on several global working groups, and in 2020, was appointed to a committee by the UN Secretary-General to draft the 2023 *Global Sustainable Development Report*.

UWI's research projects have the potential to transform the region and, eventually, the globe. Prof Saravanakumar mentions the work he and his team have done with biopesticides which can help with the sustainable management of plant diseases and improve crop yield. At the community level, there are people like Dr Angelique Nixon, Lecturer and Graduate Studies Coordinator at the Institute for Gender and Development Studies, who has been leading the Sexual Culture of Justice Project which works toward solutions to end gender-based violence and LGBTQI discrimination.

There is also research towards the creation of commercialisation opportunities, such as the work being done with asphalt sealants, coatings, and grease lubricants by Nizamudeen Mohammed and Lebert Grierson of the Department of Chemistry.



Prof Saravanakumar (right) in a field photo from a farm visit for his work in developing non-hazardous biological agents to treat local crops.

"This has been the outcome of 20 years of research," explains Prof Saravanakumar. He notes the products' wide range of uses in boating, building, and equipment lubrication processes. There is huge potential for commercialisation regionally and globally.

Opportunities for commercialisation

A highly anticipated chocolate factory will be a highlight of UWI's revenue revolution. "We have this international cocoa gene bank, and it is one of the most diverse gene banks with over 2000 germplasm," says Prof Saravanakumar. "Our cocoa germplasm have been characterised through genome

sequencing to identify their leading qualities for chocolate as well as for their pest and disease resistance and for the high yield."

Among all of these significant projects, Prof Saravanakumar identifies the work of Dr Wendy-Ann Isaac of the Faculty of Food and Agriculture as some of the most exciting. She leads the seed bank project which is sharing and preserving local seeds. The university has developed UWI7 sweet corn and the ICTA farm corn, which needs large production to supply farmers, to feed the population, break the grip of multinational providers, and fortify the nation's food sovereignty.

"That is one of the most important things that I see based on what we have done and what we have to do," declares Prof Saravanakumar.

He also highlighted the impactful, decade-long research of Professor Adesh Ramsubhag and his team on antimicrobial resistance and value addition of natural resources for sustainable environment.

Over the years, many researchers have drawn the public eye. Some of the most recent include Professor Judith Gobin, the professor of Marine Biology who made headlines when a species of tubeworm was named after her. She is now immortalised through the *Lamellibrachia judigobini* because of her substantial efforts to reveal and protect the marine life of the Caribbean and beyond. She is the first woman to hold this prestigious position in the Faculty of Science and Technology.

Research with life-saving potential

Professor Christine Carrington has become well known for her life-saving work with her team, in conjunction with the Pan American Health Organisation, the Caribbean Public Health Agency, and the World Health Organisation, during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. They worked on detecting COVID-19 variants in Trinidad and Tobago, and did genome sequencing for the region. Professor Carrington was recognised at the Principal's Research Awards with the Best Researcher Award and the Best Team Research Award. They were also honoured with the award for Most Outstanding Regional/International Research Project.

Prof Saravanakumar was highly impressed, he says, with the leadership shown by Campus Principal Professor Rose-Marie Belle Antoine in highlighting the campus's research. Echoing her words, he states, "No good research will go unnoticed," adding, "Recognition will be there, and it will be continuous, and we will be encouraging multidisciplinary team research, regional and international collaborations, impactful community research and innovative research findings suitable for commercialisation."

He looks forward to emerging researchers maintaining the standard of the university and to UWI rising still higher in the global ranking.

He predicts The UWI will continue to build an eminent research heritage that will impact countries beyond our shores, as it has been doing for the last 75 years.

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES AT 75

“UWI is like home to me. UWI gave me a lot of opportunities, and just like your own family is there to support you, UWI has supported me,” says Ms Mariella Pilgrim, librarian at the Alma Jordan Library (AJL). She has spent the better part of her adult life in service to the university.

Beginning her career at UWI St Augustine in November 1979, right after A-Levels through a recommendation from a family friend, Ms Pilgrim embarked on what would be a life-changing period.

“It wasn’t as if I was interested in being a librarian or anything of the sort. I came as a temporary Administrative, Technical, and Support (ATS) member of staff to work,” she recalls.

As a longstanding employee at the AJL, Ms Pilgrim helped shape the soul of the library, and in turn was shaped by it. Fuelled by the spirit and dedication to do good work, she ultimately rose to success through the ranks from an ATS library assistant to librarian. While she had no initial interest in becoming a librarian, Ms Pilgrim states that “I can safely say that I have enjoyed all the years I have worked there”.

No opportunity to idle

As an ATS staff member, she worked hard and never denied herself any opportunities that came across her path. Starting off on a temporary contract, she was eventually given a contracted position in 1980 due to her performance.

Reminiscing about her time spent under Campus Librarian Dr Alma Jordan, she recalls a directive Dr Jordan often told the staff: “[At] 8:30 in the morning, you must have your pen poised to work, and do not put your pen down until 4:30!” There should be no opportunity to be idle. While to many this may seem harsh and rigid, Ms Pilgrim and her colleagues understood their roles as library staff, and enjoyed their time and the lessons bestowed by Dr Jordan.

Looking back at her library career, she speaks fondly of how The UWI has helped her. Motivated by librarians Lutishoor Salisbury and Bertriana (Kim) Gransaul, who took every opportunity to encourage her in her day-to-day work, as well as the other staff members who continuously encouraged her to pursue a career as a librarian, she took up a NALIS scholarship. Ms Pilgrim was able to pursue her master’s degree in Information Studies (MIS) in Library and Information Sciences at the University of Toronto from 2003-2004. This led her to working for two years in service to NALIS and, afterwards, she was able to take up a librarian post at the Main Library in 2006.

Throughout the years, Ms Pilgrim has served in every section of the library except the specialist sections, like Accounts, IT, and the Bindery. While many of her colleagues were hesitant to move around to other sections, her motto from early on became “every move is an opportunity to learn something different”.

Purpose through service

But what, if anything, brought meaning to Ms Pilgrim’s 40-plus year career at the AJL? One might question how spending eight hours a day in an



Mariella Pilgrim

Long service and a life-changing journey

BY OMEGA FRANCIS



Ms Pilgrim assisting a student at the first Thesis Bootcamp.

academic library can be fulfilling, but Ms Pilgrim found her purpose through service to others. For her, it was not simply the books, or the evolution of technology that she saw on campus and within the library that made coming to work each day worth it. It was more about the people. Her colleagues were like family to her, and she fondly remembers the student body.

Now, just seven months shy of her official retirement, Ms Pilgrim looks back at the high points of her career and what she will miss the most.

When asked this question, she answered without hesitation, “I will miss the interaction with the students.”

One major highlight of her time that she remembers fondly was her Library Liaison venture, The Librarian Is In booth. With the approval of the Faculty of Engineering, Ms Pilgrim set up her booth, similar to a lemonade stand, at the undercroft of the faculty. She waited with a laptop and pen poised, ready to assist any student who needed her guidance.

At first, the booth was simply met with curiosity, with many students passing by to declare, “I just came to see what this is about”, but once word spread about the one-on-one assistance, the lines grew. Students were able to gain guidance for their theses, learn how to cite works correctly, and even find that resource they were having trouble locating.

When she saw how this venture was accepted, she knew she had found what she loved the most: the one-on-one interaction with students. Sadly, it could not be continued due to additional responsibilities. The Campus Libraries Thesis Boot camp for postgraduate students was another venture which she is passionate about as another opportunity for students to seek out their librarian for research assistance.

Debates on the library steps

When it came to the evolution of the university and how it has influenced the country and region at large, a point must be made to both the physical structures and the expansion of the student body that was witnessed by Ms Pilgrim. One notable change was the fact that there were no longer heated debates held on the library steps as the population grew.

“The place to have discussions was the library steps. You would hear the students having all manner of debates there, even the nuts man participated!” she recalls.

While those days are gone and those heated debates are held elsewhere, Ms Pilgrim did note that many of the students she witnessed now held prominent positions locally and regionally. UWI was, and remains, a place to foster thinking and innovation. However, with the expansion of the university, and the many opportunities provided, Ms Pilgrim cautions that society at large must recognise the value of The UWI and not short-change the system.

She states, “UWI provides the space for Trinidad and Tobago citizens to become educated in areas needed to improve our country.”

Omega Francis is a writer, editor and blogger.

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■ OUR PEOPLE



Engineering Solutions for a Sustainable Caribbean

Prof Bheshem Ramlal, Dean of the Faculty of Engineering, takes aim at the SDGs

BY KIERAN ANDREW KHAN

“People wonder why Geomatics Engineering is part of the Engineering Faculty, which is the very different place that I come from,” he says. “Geomatics engineering was perceived by some to not belong with the rest of engineering. But it is very significant in terms of what we do. The whole genesis of geomatics comes from the perspective of effectively managing land resources. Geomatics is the big picture side of engineering.”

‘Geomatics is the big picture side of engineering’

Professor Ramlal holds the position of Professor of Geospatial Engineering and officially assumed the role of Dean of the Faculty of Engineering on October 1. His research focuses on advancing spatial data infrastructures and integrating geospatial technologies into society. He has also served in several high-level capacities at the university, and governmental and regional bodies. His particular interest is in applying principles and knowledge of geospatial engineering to change how things are done.

“Almost everything that pertains to human endeavour is about space and what happens in that space. Geomatics engineering can be applied to all the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. One needs to understand the overall context of why and what you’re doing before the other aspects of engineering are engaged. These decisions all have domino effects.”

This bird’s eye approach to the work of geomatics engineers is needed now more than ever, according to the dean. The university is engaged, through the Engineering faculty, in numerous facets of research and development aimed at solving significant challenges in the Caribbean, chief among them is the need for a sustainable energy supply for the region.

Facing the challenge of producing renewable energy in the Caribbean

The current challenge in the Caribbean is to produce renewable energy that can be transported and stored in ways that are good for the environment. Batteries, for instance, represent a major environmental problem. Prof Ramlal explained that the university is currently engaged in various streams with stakeholders to address this issue and recently focused on green hydrogen.

As Professor Bheshem Ramlal, the new Dean of the Faculty of Engineering, settles into his role at the St Augustine campus, he emphasises the importance of humility and understanding that you have to “know that you don’t know” – an approach he has long taken in other roles in his career. He also enters the position from a different perspective than the more well-known engineering streams, but sees this as a strength and opportunity.

“If we can take wind and solar and convert it to hydrogen, that’s green hydrogen. That’s better for us all. In T&T, a recent study suggested that we use 20 percent more energy than we ought to, especially in the industrial sector. If we can improve the energy efficiency across the country and use the surplus to generate hydrogen, then we are consuming the same amount of fossil fuels to create an additional energy source without increased impacts.”

The Faculty of Engineering is supporting the Department of Physics at the Faculty of Science and Technology to conduct a wind resource assessment with private sector support. Additional effort is being made to conduct research on electric vehicles. The National Energy Corporation and the National Gas Company also installed an EV charging station on the southern side of the Engineering faculty. The station uses solar panels to generate all the electricity for this purpose.

The professor notes that we need to escape the thinking that a hero is coming in to solve Caribbean challenges and save us. He also highlighted the recent appointment by UN Secretary-General António Guterres of Dr Craig Ramlal (no relation), Lecturer in Electrical and Computer Engineering, to the UN Multistakeholder High-Level Advisory Body on Artificial Intelligence as another way in which the faculty was actively seeking to solve challenges that benefit the broader population of the wider Caribbean region.

The faculty also recently signed an MOU with the Government of Mexico for the development of the Geospatial Observation Centre to process satellite imagery for the Caribbean. This centre will generate geospatial information to support the monitoring of

coastal erosion, Sargassum seaweed tracking, forest degradation, flooding and more, and will form part of a global network in the Americas, Africa, and Australia doing the same in those regions.

Educating and empowering staff

The Engineering faculty is one of the larger ones on the St Augustine campus. It has 13 different blocks, which are the remit of the dean and departments to maintain and upkeep – and this includes a services section with machine, welding, and carpentry shops to support the five departments. These departments are Geomatics, Mechanical and Manufacturing, Civil and Environmental, Electrical and Computer, and Chemical and Process Engineering. Despite this significant administrative aspect of the role, he puts human resources at the centre of his work.

“We have over 230 members of staff in the faculty, and having been an educator my entire life, I believe that it is most important of all to educate and empower people. When they are happy and comfortable, and when they are valued, they translate that into real value for the institution,” he says.

The new dean’s vision is also to continue to grow a network of talent, including alumni worldwide, to create a critical mass of people and knowledge that can benefit the country and the region.

He says, “We need to invest in more bankable data and to leverage the human resources we have access to here on the campus, but also those with ties to the university globally too.”

With over 20,000 graduates from the faculty since 1975, the possibilities are numerous and, more than ever, needed.



CARICOM TURNS 50

'In Unity there is Strength'

BY SERAH ACHAM



LEADERS COMMEMORATING A CARIBBEAN MOMENT: The region's heads of state in 1983 at the ceremony for the tenth anniversary of the establishment of the Caribbean Community in Chaguaramas, Trinidad.

Standing from left are Prime Minister (PM) of Grenada Maurice Bishop, PM of Belize George Price, (then) Deputy PM of Antigua and Barbuda Lester Bird, Prime Minister of St Vincent and the Grenadines Milton Cato, PM of Barbados JG "Tom" Adams, PM of the Bahamas Lynden Pindling, PM of St Kitts and Nevis Kennedy Simmonds, and the PM of Saint Lucia John Compton. Seated, from left are PM of Dominica Eugenia Charles, President of Guyana Forbes Burnham, PM of Trinidad and Tobago George Chambers, Secretary-General of CARICOM Dr Kurlleigh King, PM of Jamaica Edward Seaga, and Chief Minister of Montserrat John Osbourne. PHOTOS: COURTESY OF THE CARICOM SECRETARIAT

This year, we celebrate the 50th anniversary of CARICOM – the intergovernmental body established to unify the Caribbean region of the 1960s and 70s. For the then newly independent territories and those seeking independence – underdeveloped, small and lacking resources – joining forces was a strategy of survival.

CARICOM came into being as a replacement for the Caribbean Free Trade Agreement (CARIFTA), which existed from 1968 to 1972, and whose role was to promote trade among the region's English-speaking territories. Wanting to strengthen the region, as well as create a common market, the Caribbean's Commonwealth leaders, Prime Ministers Errol Barrow, Forbes Burnham, Michael Manley, and Dr Eric Williams, gathered at the Seventh Heads of Government Conference in 1972, and voted to transform CARIFTA into CARICOM's initial incarnation – the Caribbean Community and Common Market. CARICOM was officially established with the signing of the Treaty of Chaguaramas on August 1, 1973, and had four member states – Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago.



Prime Minister of Jamaica PJ Patterson (right) receives the CARICOM 30th anniversary torch from (then) young sprint sensation Usain Bolt in 2003.

Wanting to strengthen the region, as well as create a common market, the Caribbean's Commonwealth leaders, Prime Ministers Errol Barrow, Forbes Burnham, Michael Manley, and Dr Eric Williams, gathered at the Seventh Heads of Government Conference in 1972, and voted to transform CARIFTA into CARICOM's initial incarnation – the Caribbean Community and Common Market.

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

SPORT

A FIRST FOR SPORT AT ST AUGUSTINE

SAAS celebrates inaugural cohort of graduates from its degree programme

BY KANISHA VINCENT



From left: Deputy Principal Prof Indar Ramnarine congratulates awardees Vinaya Boodram, Nand Sookhan, Kirsten St Omer, Clayton Knott, and Brittany Mahabir, along with Dr Akshai Mansingh Dean of the Faculty of Sport, at the St Augustine Academy of Sport Awards. PHOTO: KC MEDIA

“For a small twin-island, we have so much potential in sport,” says Ms Ria Cromwell. “We want that to be more prevalent.”

The “we” she is referring to is the St Augustine Academy of Sport (SAAS), the local campus branch of the multi-campus Faculty of Sport, where she works as an administrative assistant.

With sporting greats from Sir Rodney Wilkes to Keshorn Walcott to Brian Lara, Trinidad and Tobago is no stranger to what it takes to achieve sporting greatness. Even so, the local sporting industry is still a baby when compared to giants like the United States of America and our Caribbean counterpart, Jamaica. Through the Faculty of Sport, UWI is seeking to develop sport and the sport industry throughout the region.

A St Augustine milestone

Although the faculty was officially launched at The UWI Mona Campus in 2017, St Augustine had a milestone of its own this past October. The SAAS produced its first degree graduates at the 2023 graduation ceremonies. They completed the Bachelor of Science in Sports Kinetics.

“The BSc [Sports Kinetics] is like the base of a tree, and there are many branches to explore after you complete it,” Clayton Knott, a member of the first cohort of five graduates, says about the programme which encompasses strength and conditioning, sport psychology, sport nutrition, and a host of other areas.

Joined by his fellow graduate Nand Sookhan, whose love for the preparation that goes into playing sport has shaped his life, the former students have gained a base of knowledge that has readied them to head into the industry.

As one of the most recent areas of study to be added to the campus, the sport programmes are bolstered by the vigour of the staff.

“You have renewed motivation and enthusiasm, and you think anything is possible,” notes Ms Cromwell when



Clayton Knott (centre, white shirt), in action on the rugby field.

asked about her experience as a member of the new faculty. “Looking forward we can visualise all the things we want to achieve so there’s a lot of intellectual excitement.”

Drawing from the experience of the sporting academies at the Mona and Cave Hill campuses, SAAS seeks to both create a foundation and distinguish itself in alignment with the sporting culture of Trinidad and Tobago. Tapping into the innovative teaching modalities proposed by the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CETL) to provide interactive and engaging delivery, and partnering with other sporting organisations, SAAS reflects the collaboration of sport.

Choosing SAAS an alignment of the stars

Choosing SAAS was described by Knott as “an alignment of stars,” with the programme being introduced at the right time. For Sookhan, who previously completed the Certificate in the Art and Science of Coaching, it was the interaction with course instructors Dr Jason Pilgrim and Mr Kenny Kitsingh that sold him on taking on the BSc.

Both Knott and Sookhan credit the practicum sessions,

where they brought together theory and practice, as the highlight of the programme. Their plans for the future are also a testament to the breadth of the programme and its possible impact.

For Knott, a rugby enthusiast, an increase in physical and professional infrastructure is paramount. He seeks to increase the number of available institutions and services that an athlete can readily access with an added focus on a more even distribution across the sporting disciplines. Sookhan, already a personal trainer, seeks to contribute to a happier, healthier population by educating the public on nutrition, strength, and conditioning.

“Having just graduated,” he said, “you understand that there’s so much out there.” He plans to continue his work as a personal trainer, which provided valuable experience for the course and a general sense of fulfilment.

SAAS recently collaborated with the Sports Company of Trinidad and Tobago’s Elite Athlete Wellbeing Unit. The unit provides sport science services to elite and developing national athletes. Head Tobias Ottley delivered inspiring remarks to the 2023 Graduating Class of the Certificate in the Art and Science of Coaching on November 20.

Cromwell noted, “We want to be able to develop and deliver the programmes that will contribute to world leaders in sport.”

However, as mentioned, the sporting industry is still young in T&T.

“Being in an area that is not yet fully developed in Trinidad and Tobago, there’s no clear cut path for you to follow,” says Sookhan.

Sport may be young, but the establishment of an academy of sport at the St Augustine campus augurs well for its development. With plans to create youth academies in ten sporting disciplines, do more research, help athletes achieve their goals, and introduce master’s programmes to the campus, Cromwell is looking forward to more students and, eventually, more sporting professionals for T&T.

SPORT

RETURN OF THE RACE

BY JOEL HENRY



PHOTOS: FREDERIC DUBRAY AND KC MEDIA



There's an interesting contradiction when you take part in a long distance race. You are both challenging others and yourself. Yet you feel like part of a community, and you are communing with yourself. It's the best of both worlds, and in the world of St Augustine and environs, those mutual feelings of competition and "cooperation" were on dramatic display at the **17th UWI SPEC International Half-Marathon and 5K Race.**

Over 1,800 participants from 21 countries came out on the morning of November 19 to take part in the first race since 2019. And while there were some challenges as the event warmed up from its three-year hiatus, the energy and enthusiasm was as powerful as ever.

T&T national **Nicholas Romany** came first in the half-marathon and French runner **Cécilia Mobuchon** was the women's winner. **George Smith** won the 5K race. But in their own way, every participant was a winner. Everyone who pushed themselves against their physical and mental limitations was a medallist. It was also a victory for The St Augustine Academy of Sport and The UWI SPEC, who successfully brought back this beloved regional sporting event.

For the full half-marathon photo gallery, visit The UWI Flickr page at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/theuwi/albums/>

Nicholas Romany



Cécilia Mobuchon





THE UWI



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