



## ‘We will build, one step at a time’

Inducted to accolades, Campus Principal Rose-Marie Belle Antoine stresses campus’ role in serving communities and a pragmatic approach to getting things done

BY SERAH ACHAM



**UWI St Augustine Campus Principal Professor Rose-Marie Belle Antoine** has the academic cap (also known as the mortarboard) placed on her head by Mr Robert Bermudez, Chancellor of The UWI, at her induction ceremony on January 21, 2023 at the Daaga Auditorium. PHOTO: SCULLY PHOTOGRAPHY

On Saturday, January 21, 2023, UWI’s St Augustine campus inducted its 10th Pro Vice-Chancellor and Campus Principal Professor Rose-Marie Belle Antoine.

It was a moment of praise for both her many accomplishments and the promise that her leadership could bring to university and regional societies in the midst of many social, economic, and environmental challenges.

A “daughter of the Caribbean, a UWI graduate, and a distinguished award-winning scholar who has made significant contributions to policy and jurisprudence in the Caribbean and globally”, was how UWI Chancellor Mr Robert Bermudez described Professor Antoine.

The UWI Vice-Chancellor, Professor Sir Hilary Beckles, called her a “history-maker” and “freedom fighter”. He said that her “record of distinguished leadership and development expertise...

her tenacity... sharp intellect and deep commitment to our people” have left her colleagues with “no doubt that she will strengthen this team and see to it that we continue to be rooted, ready and rising”.

He also pointedly addressed the role she would play in these difficult times for The UWI and the Caribbean.

“Our new Principal joins the management team... at a time when we are facing our greatest challenges,” he said, laying out her task to propel the St Augustine campus on its mission “to contribute to the next systemic transformation of the Caribbean economy”.

A self-proclaimed and proud “intercampus citizen”, having experienced three campuses during her illustrious teaching career, Professor Antoine has defined her life by creating paths and fostering change. She has served as the Director of UWI’s Master of Law (LLM) and the foundational Dean of the UWI St Augustine’s Faculty of Law, has successfully executed transformational work

in Caribbean discrimination and civil liberties law, and founded the ground-breaking International Human Rights Clinic.

Her chosen theme for the induction ceremony was “Together we can create change”.

The event, which took place at the Daaga Auditorium on campus, was attended by university officials and regional dignitaries, including St Lucia’s current Prime Minister, Philip J Pierre; and former Prime Minister (and Professor Antoine’s husband) Dr Kenny Anthony; Jamaica’s former Prime Minister, P.J. Patterson; Trinidad and Tobago’s Chief Justice, Ivor Archie; Minister of Education Dr Nyan Gadsby Dolly; National Security Minister Mr Fitzgerald Hinds; Minister of State in the Ministry of Education Ms Lisa Morris-Julian; Opposition Leader Mrs Kamla Persad Bissessar; Chief of the First Peoples, Mr Ricardo Bharath; and members of the judiciary.

*Continued on Page 4*



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PHOTO: GUYTON OTTLEY

# The Induction Ceremony of Professor Rose-Marie Belle Antoine

JANUARY 21, 2023

UWI TODAY is pleased to share highlights from the address delivered by **Professor Rose-Marie Belle Antoine** at her induction ceremony as Pro Vice-Chancellor and Campus Principal of The UWI St Augustine Campus. For the entire address, please visit our website at <https://sta.uwi.edu/uwitoday/>

## Belief that Social Justice is the Key to Development

“Many wonder why—with a PhD in Financial Law and specialist in Labour Law, I have focussed so much on rights, equity, and justice. The reason is that very early on I realised that the sine qua non of all the work I could possibly do as a lawyer and academic was rooted in social justice. Ultimately, the common denominator is wanting to improve lives.

I intend to place this at the centre of what we do at The UWI St Augustine. For me, the meaning of civil liberties, like equality, resides in economic and social rights enshrined in education, health, work, water, and the environment. When the big buildings and grandiose schemes are gone, what will be remembered is the collective, humanistic intellectual force that lives in The UWI.”

## Reclaiming our Identity and Heralding our Achievements

“While our significant UWI contribution has not diminished, it has become invisibilised. Individual consultants flourish but UWI’s collective voice and presence need to be stronger. The housewife must appreciate that the yam or sanitiser she buys in the supermarket are innovations from our labs.

We are too often the quiet soldiers in not so quiet revolutions. My job is to ensure that we remain visible, that all stakeholders look to The UWI to do the important developmental work of the region, and to nurture our staff to be able to be champions of change. This in itself can increase our market value and bring tangible economic benefits.”

## UWI Centred in the Community

“My philosophy has always been that a university, this campus - must be entrenched in its community to have relevance.

We cannot retreat and become reactionary – we must be proactive, thought-leaders and problem-solvers. I want to expand

the UWI from the classroom to the communities. Scholarship should be taken to the people. It is then that our research, our teaching, will be grounded and transformative.”

## Equality, Marginalisation, and Increased Access

“In my frame of education for true development, I propose a more progressive approach to access, expanding to the under-served and forgotten. Not just the urban poor but the rural under-served. We have been insensitive to the socio-economic and socio-cultural constraints (even ethnic and gender) to accessing education, especially in our professions. Admissions can no longer be based purely on CAPE results.

I have asked my colleagues to reconsider and refashion our approach to access to The UWI to encompass a broader vision that examines deep structural issues in the society, to consider other desirable attributes that we wish to inculcate in our graduates. This is not path breaking. The Rhodes and other scholarships emphasise not just academics, but leadership and extracurricular activities.”

## Green Agenda – Multi-Disciplinary Directions

“Decades of interdisciplinary research and education on climate change including futuristic agriculture, the blue economy, renewables, and its health deficits, have placed us at the forefront of this global threat. Yet, at this moment of urgency, great research is necessary but not sufficient. We must do more.

It is an absolute imperative for us to bring the science, not just to policymakers, but to the people, to have real impact and help to save the planet and ourselves. The average citizen must identify with it, experience it, and believe in it. The apathy is frightening.

To set the example, I have started to green the campus and am working to finalise an agreement with Blue Waters to set up a recycling post.”

## Continuity – Revenue Generation

“Converting our intellectual efforts into monetary gain through a more entrepreneurial thrust, including social entrepreneurship, remains a key agenda for my tenure, as it has been for at least three previous administrative regimes. This campus has been a UWI leader.

Several of our innovative products are already patented and certified. We continue to source the right manufacturers and investment partners from the private sector to leverage these exciting opportunities to commercialise – from lab to shelf - like our patented sealants, roofing compounds, fingerprinting classification system, etc.

Last month, we were finally able to fulfil the dream of our internationally renowned Cocoa Research Centre. We obtained funding and awarded the contract for a cocoa factory.

I am grateful for the already emerging initiatives and partnerships from giants in our private sector in the first few months of my tenure – such as the Sabga family, with whom plans are underway to establish an ANSA McAL UWI Entrepreneurship Fund.

We are also moving ahead with the planned UWI Global (offshore) School of Medicine, building on decades of recognised first-rate medical teaching and research.”

## Students

“Meeting the needs of students and preparing them for this new, more complex world will remain a top priority. These are times when the very relevance of university education is being challenged. We need to recalibrate our programming to encourage active and on-the-job learning.

We must have sustainable fees for the campus, if we are to survive, but we must also protect our students by speaking more directly with banks and the private sector, and by increasing bursaries and promoting innovative bond arrangements in exchange for financial assistance and loan schemes.”

Together  
we can  
Create  
the change

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# The Induction Ceremony of Professor Rose-Marie Belle Antoine



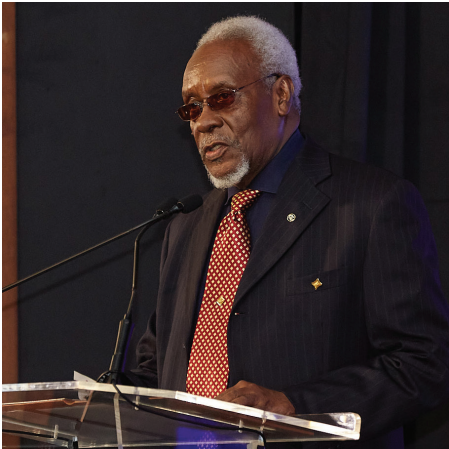
The UWI Vice-Chancellor Professor Sir Hilary Beckles. PHOTO: SCULLY PHOTOGRAPHY



Former UWI St Augustine Campus Principals Prof Emerita Bridget Brereton (left), Dr Bhoendradatt Tewarie (third from left), and Prof Clement Sankat (right), alongside Senator Dr Varma Deyalsingh (second from left) at the ceremony. PHOTO: SCULLY PHOTOGRAPHY



From left: Trinidad and Tobago Education Minister Dr Nyan Gadsby-Dolly, Minister of State in the Education Ministry Mrs Lisa Morris-Julian, former Prime Minister of St Lucia (and husband of Prof Antoine) Dr Kenny Anthony, and current St Lucian Prime Minister Mr Philip J Pierre. PHOTO: SCULLY PHOTOGRAPHY



Mr PJ Patterson, former Prime Minister of Jamaica, gave a stirring, and sometimes humorous, message of support to Principal Antoine. PHOTO: SCULLY PHOTOGRAPHY



From Left: Chief Ricardo Bharath Hernandez, Ms Jean Superville, and Shaman Mr Christo Adonis of the Santa Rosa First People's Community. PHOTO: GUYTN OTTLEY



Academic administrators and senior faculty members from the St Augustine campus give a round of applause during the induction ceremony. PHOTO: SCULLY PHOTOGRAPHY

## PROFESSOR ANTOINE wants The UWI St Augustine “entrenched in the community”

A variety of musical entertainers interspersed the proceedings. These included some of UWI St Augustine’s most talented performers such as The UWI Arts Steel Orchestra, and The UWI Arts Chorale, who accompanied soprano Natalia Dopwell. UWI graduates Laurissa and Renelle Maharaj (who performed on the violin and viola), musician and vocalist Abhijit Anchortassoo, and Khion de Las and Daniel Ryan (who performed a duet on the steelpan and saxophone) also entertained the audience.

The ceremony began with the Academic Procession, where Deans, lecturers and other members of academic staff filtered into the venue and were seated. Following this was the Chancellor’s Procession, which saw the university’s leaders, including the inductee, enter the auditorium in front of a standing audience and take their seats on stage. Dr Maurice D. Smith, University Registrar and event Chair, then began the official proceedings. University and regional leaders took the stage to offer Professor Antoine warm congratulations.

Deputy Campus Principal of the Cave Hill campus Professor Winston Moore, described Professor Antoine as a champion for issues of health, discrimination and gender. Professor Ian Boxhill, Deputy Campus Principal of the Mona campus, touted her strength, particularly as an advocate for women’s rights.

“When women lead, rivers flow upstream,” Professor Boxhill said, citing an Ethiopian proverb.

Ms Sharon Christopher, Chair of The UWI St Augustine Campus Council, shared her joy at Professor Antoine’s appointment:

“As I stand here today, at the first induction of a female Campus Principal in [St Augustine’s] 63-year history, I am indeed delighted.”

Ms Christopher affirmed Professor Antoine’s suitability to lead the campus through The UWI’s impending “institutional transformation”, a role requiring “a focus and a will that [she] has successfully demonstrated in every endeavour”.

Professor Antoine’s capacity to foster change is bolstered by the ease with which she builds relationships “at the most granular levels,” observed former Jamaican Prime Minister Patterson. “That has enabled her...to know and work with people across the entire region through constructive engagements in learning, teaching, research... and community service.”

After her induction, Professor Antoine stepped up to the podium. She expressed gratitude for the significant change she was able to create.

“It is a joyous feeling when one’s outputs do not sit on a shelf, but breathe life and effect real change – to laws, to lives,” she said, adding that in her new role “there is a broader landscape and opportunity”.

She aims, she said, to extend the campus’ reach and impact to communities:

“This campus must be entrenched in its community to have relevance.”

Among her plans for the St Augustine campus are taking stronger action against climate change; increasing revenue “through a more entrepreneurial thrust”; preparing students for “this new, more complex world”; and seeking to “better understand and serve the national agenda”.

Large intentions they may be, she acknowledged, but she is committed to seeing those plans through.

“As an unapologetic pragmatist, what I can promise you is that I, we, will build one step at a time. Our dreams are nothing if not backed up by practical action and a sense of purpose.”

Interested less in legacy, and more in results, the UWI St Augustine Campus Principal said, “When I leave this place, it will be enough for me to have you say, ‘she was useful and got things done’”.

Serah Acham is a writer and editor.

## ■ CAMPUS NEWS

Three scholars have launched a new book that examines Caribbean security in an increasingly fragmented world. Titled *Managing New Security Threats in the Caribbean*, it is the first academic work to touch on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and security threats in the region. It was launched on January 17 at the Office of the Campus Principal.

*Managing New Security Threats* looks at topics such as migration, human trafficking, gang violence, the COVID-19 response, threats to T&T's energy security, governance and public sector reform, and many others.

A publication blurb from the new book states, "with a wide-ranging look into some of the 'new' security threats facing state and non-state actors today, this book is designed to specifically offer new angles on tackling these threats in the Caribbean region."

The book is edited by The UWI's Dr Georgina Chami, lecturer at the Institute of International Relations (IIR); Dr Jerome Teelucksingh, senior lecturer at the History Department; and Dr Marlon Anatol, Senior Fellow at the Cipriani College of Labour and Cooperative Studies. It includes several essays by writers under the themes of The Global Security Landscape, Security Threats in the Caribbean, The Intersection of Security and Diplomacy, and the Future Outlook for Security Management in the Caribbean.

"This body of work will inform, advise, and guide. We have but to read it," said Campus Principal Professor Rose-Marie Belle Antoine at the launch.

In congratulating the editors, she noted the importance of regionally-driven research and analysis:

"Caribbean researchers know our space best. We are the ones who can view it from a perspective that is up close and personal, while stepping back to analyse it with a researcher's critical eye."

She referenced the opening of the 24th Meeting of the CARICOM Council for National Security and Law Enforcement in Trelawny, Jamaica, where that country's Minister of National Security and Deputy Prime Minister Dr Horace Chang said, "Long-term, Caribbean-led thinking is necessary to best chart the way to co-exist in a world that is witnessing new security threats."

■ For more information on *Managing New Security Threats in the Caribbean*, visit SpringerLink at <https://link.springer.com/> or go to the link <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-030-98733-6>.

## New book delves deep into Security Threats in the Caribbean and how to tackle them



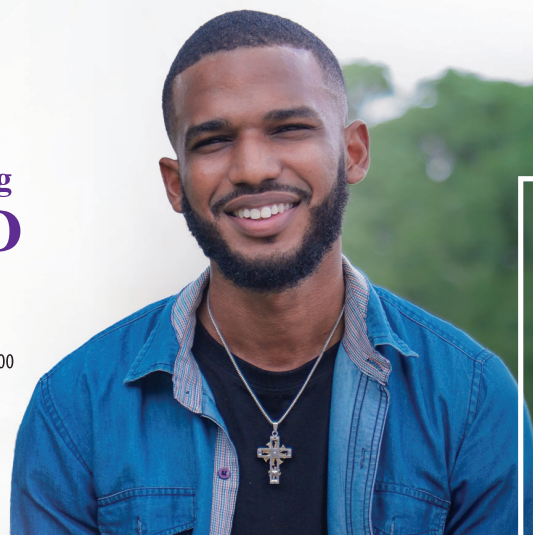
Editors (from left) Dr Marlon Anatol, Dr Georgina Chami and Dr Jerome Teelucksingh. PHOTO: ANEEL KARIM



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## ■ GENDER



Dr Letetia Addison

**Dr Letetia Addison was always a math kid.**

“Since I was young, I always loved numbers. I always loved calculations,” said Dr Addison, talking about the passion that would take her through a double major undergrad degree in Mathematics, an MPhil in Statistics, and a PhD in Mathematics. “It’s something that we use every day, as part of our everyday lives.”

Part of the appeal for her is the practical aspects of numbers, and how they can teach us more about ourselves and the world around us – which is what led her to data science.

STEM fields like data science are often either male-dominated spaces – or are at least perceived that way. But Women in Data Science (WiDS), which started as a one-day technical conference at Stanford University in 2015, is one of the movements to create a more encouraging space for women and girls to participate in data science initiatives.

“For a long time, there has been consistent advocacy, hard work, and demonstrated capacity by women in STEM to show their contributions, their influence, and their capacity for decision-making. The work continues,” said Dr Sue-Ann Barratt, Head of the Institute for Gender and Development Studies (IGDS) at UWI St Augustine.

This year, Dr Addison is T&T’s Ambassador to the Women in Data Science Worldwide Conference. She is currently a Project Officer and Statistical Consultant at the University Office of Planning at The UWI, and has been hard at work with the organising team creating a wide range of activities to ignite the interest of the next generation of young women in STEM.

“I’m really happy to be a part of the Women in Data Science Initiatives because I think it gives women in STEM such as myself

# Women in Data Science

helps women and girls discover the world-changing power of numbers

BY AMY LI BAKSH

the opportunity to share that passion, to motivate others, and to allow them to feel like this is a safe space to learn and grow and communicate,” said Dr Addison.

The Trinidad and Tobago chapter of WiDS (which can be found at <https://widstt.org>) is hosting independent local events as part of the annual worldwide conference, including the 6th Datathon Challenge.

The prelude to the conference is a series of workshops hosted by the WiDS T&T Organising Committee to help data science enthusiasts learn more about the Datathon challenge and data science in general, while spotlighting the female perspective in data science-related fields. Here, participants are given a challenge with a specific dataset that they must use to make predictions about the data.

Dr Addison and her team are hosting the workshops, webinars and panel discussions to help arm potential participants with all the resources they would need to take on the challenge. Even absolute beginners can get involved, as the activities are open to anyone with an interest in numbers and how they can change our lives.

Learning how to work with data is a skill with very meaningful practical applications. One of Dr Addison’s WiDS projects in 2022 involved learning more about how we consume energy, which is particularly important as we confront issues like climate change.

“I was thrilled to be a participant last year where I was able to work on a predictive dataset on a social impact challenge, predicting energy consumption in buildings. It was a really hands-on experience for me, to be able to work with data; to take some of the knowledge of statistics and programming skills, and apply that to a real-world dataset and make predictions,” she said.

In a follow-up project, the team used machine-learning to make flood predictions. “We were able to develop a prototype to create a tool that would actually allow various OECS countries to predict the occurrence of a flood or natural disaster event based on variables like temperature and precipitation.”

The beauty of this type of research is how data can paint a picture of what is going on at a scale that we don’t often get to see.

“That’s why I was so glad to be a part of the WiDS initiative,” said Dr Addison, “because that’s where you can have a base to understand how to interact with these statistical models, and use them to tell a story and to give us the insights to enhance our lives.”

As the field encourages diversity and enables women and girls to be a part of these types of projects, we are collectively widening our scope of what sort of information we can learn, and how we can put it into practice.

“In terms of research and interventions, there is a thrust to understand how we can use the knowledge of science and technologies to address sustainably intersecting injustices – how social justice connects with gender injustice, connects with climate injustice,” said Dr Barratt.

With greater inclusivity comes a greater understanding of the diverse communities living in the world.

As WiDS 2023 hits the ground running, workshops and activities are continuing throughout February and into March, coinciding with International Women’s Day on March 8. All events are free and the team has a dedicated YouTube page, <https://www.youtube.com/@widstt>, to share tools and resources for those eager to learn more about the numerical world of data.

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

## ■ BOOKS

## Uncovering the realities of WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN THE CARIBBEAN

BY DIXIE-ANN BELLE



Dr Talia Esnard PHOTO: ANEEL KARIM

**As Dr Talia Esnard** prepared to start the first leg of her journey to interview women entrepreneurs across the Caribbean five years ago, she could not have been aware of the powerful insights she would uncover, insights she hopes can influence entrepreneurship as a whole.

She interviewed women in five countries, working “to understand their realities in naturalised spaces”.

Their discussions have been essential to her already extensive work on entrepreneurial spheres. They culminated in the senior lecturer and head of the Department of Behavioural Sciences’ latest book, *Entrepreneurial Women in the Caribbean: Critical Insights and Policy Implications*.

It is a topic close to her heart. “My own observations around how my mother navigated the entrepreneurial space motivated me.”

Her studies have shown that “there isn’t that deliberate consideration of women’s realities in the formation of women’s policies”.

Dr Esnard stresses the need to reconsider the norms and perspectives of entrepreneurship. “It has typically been discussed in relation to the field of management studies, business, and economics.”

She advocates for the importance of the sociological perspective. “We run the risk of not creating policies and interventions that impact the lives of the persons and the actors within the market.”

Her research deepened her consciousness about issues of power in our society and the resulting obstacles certain societal groups face. Her book further explores inclusivity in entrepreneurial spaces.

“How do we encourage issues of diversity,” she asks, “not just in terms of the product that we deliver and the service that we offer, but also about the actors that are in that space and the ways that they define and influence entrepreneurship, both as an activity and as a way of thinking?”

Dr Esnard believes these conversations are essential to encourage policy alterations.

“The work brings a contextual understanding to entrepreneurship,” she explains. “It emphasises the need to redefine, to bridge, and to really open up that conversation between enterprise and entrepreneurship and how do we bridge the gap.”

Her findings, she believes, could rewrite perspectives. For example, her interviewees’ responses suggest a redefinition of entrepreneurial achievement. For them, it is not only economically defined.

“Success for them was about satisfaction, empowerment, self-gratification,” she notes. “The emotions, the mind, and the well-being remain just as important as how the activity around entrepreneurship was able to impact the profit margins of their own businesses.”

Already, Dr Esnard is seeing interest in her work from people like accountants and project managers. She hopes her readers will achieve a consciousness of “the precarious realities” entrepreneurial women face and the need to reassess existing policies.

Her next research forays will include what she says is one of her most important projects – social justice and how women are confronting inequity.

This speaks to her passion for scholarship and vision in these areas, as is evident in her latest book’s dedication where she honours “the foot soldiers who paved the way... the women entrepreneurs who have given voice to their struggles and have continued to redefine the space.”

**Entrepreneurial Women in the Caribbean: Critical Insights and Policy Implications by Dr Talia Esnard** is available in physical and digital copies through Amazon, Barnes and Noble, Springer, Blackwell and Waterstone.

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

## ■ GENDER

**Break the Silence** – the Institute of Gender & Development Studies (IGDS) action-research programme geared towards ending child sexual abuse (CSA) – will implement new interventions this year thanks to a partnership with the Bankers Association of T&T (BATT).

BATT has pledged \$488,000 over a six month period to help IGDS continue the action-research project originally led by Professor Emerita Rhoda Reddock and Prof Sandra Reid from 2008 to 2011, and the continuing Blue Teddy campaign. The funding will assist with further impact evaluation, and sponsor new community interventions and evidence-based advocacy surrounding CSA as well as gender-based violence.

IGDS and BATT signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and formed an MOU Oversight Committee in November 2022. The committee comprises 10 member organisations including IGDS, BATT, the Children's Authority of T&T, The UWI St Augustine Social Work Unit, the Ministry of Social Development, the United Nations Children's Fund, and others. The first meeting of the committee will be held in February 2023.

Break the Silence was a watershed in The UWI St Augustine activist movement which arguably altered the landscape locally. The project resulted in the publication of three scholarly articles in international journals; a regional conference; a wide-reaching media campaign; numerous community projects (including walks and art projects at schools); a teacher's toolkit; guidelines for service providers; and five policy briefs. A book based on the findings of the research is forthcoming. The project also arguably changed public attitudes towards CSA.

"...since then, the whole climate related to child sexual abuse has changed," said Prof Reddock. "The numbers of reports to the police have increased. When we first started, there were very few reports. Now, we have more and convictions as well. Media reporting has also improved. That doesn't mean [CSA] has ended, but we did generate awareness, and empowered young people to report to their parents or teachers, and parents to seek help."

She added, "We would like to move the campaign beyond the university toward wide public ownership. This could allow the community outreach work to be revitalised to encourage independent action by organisations and communities. I think the support from the BATT is important to sustain the work of the network and to allow its reach to be expanded."

Details of new interventions are still in the planning stage, however, Prof Reddock believes there should be renewed focus on advocating for the introduction of age appropriate sexuality education in schools to empower young people.

BATT Executive Director Kelly Bute-Seaton, who will be representing BATT on the committee, noted that societal changes required multi-tiered approaches.

"The gravity of child abuse and gender-based violence in our country is undeniable and destroys the fabric of our communities. The solutions to these scourges don't reside in any one person or entity. They are societal," she said.

"So, it's important that we look at these things as a collective. It requires our collective action. I believe the holistic approach requires not just the intervention of NGOs and civil society, but also government and corporate. This gives corporate entities an opportunity to use their influence to elevate some of these matters in national conversation, to help influence policy and to contribute financially to initiatives that will improve our communities."

■ **For more information on the Break the Silence campaign,** visit the IGDS website at <https://sta.uwi.edu/igds/breakthesilence/>

<sup>1</sup> In 2014, Prof Reddock and Dr Sandra Reid were awarded the UWI-NGC Most Impactful Research Award for their work on this project. This project was funded by the UNITE Campaign, UNICEF and The UWI St Augustine Research and Development Impact Fund



# Break the Silence

IGDS' impactful <sup>1</sup> initiative to combat child sexual abuse, gets major boost from the Bankers Association of T&T

BY ZAHRA GORDON



BATT Executive Director Ms Kelly Bute-Seaton



Professor Emerita Rhoda Reddock speaking at the event "Filling the Gaps", the launch of the partnership with BATT and of the IGDS Bilingual Toolkit for Break the Silence.



Dr Sandra Reid, Senior Lecturer of Psychiatry and Deputy Dean of Clinical Sciences.



Dr Sue Ann Barratt, Head of IGDS

**BATT has pledged \$488,000 over a six month period to help IGDS continue the project originally led by Professor Emerita Rhoda Reddock from 2008 to 2011.**

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

## ■ CAMPUS NEWS

## DR BEVERLY-ANNE CARTER RECEIVES PROFESSORSHIP

Former Director for the Centre of Language and Learning and leading Caribbean academic in learner autonomy



**Dr Beverly-Anne Carter**, an outstanding academic and administrator who served for 17 years as the Director of the Centre for Language Learning (CLL) at UWI St Augustine, has received her professorship appointment. The appointment was announced in a statement from The UWI's Office of Administration.

Professor Carter joined The UWI in 1991. She served at the St Augustine campus as a Lecturer and Senior Lecturer in the French

language, as Deputy Dean of both Students, and Distance and Outreach in the Faculty of Humanities and Education, and then as Director of CLL. She retired in October 2022.

"Professor Carter," said a statement from The UWI,

"earned her promotion to the highest academic rank at the institution following a rigorous assessment process by independent external assessors, which included evaluation of the quality and quantity of her research, publications, and other professional activities, including enhancement of the university's reputation. Her appointment took effect during the last quarter of 2022."

Her most outstanding contribution was at the helm of the CLL. She led the Centre through numerous quality assurance exercises, and supervised postgraduate students at the Masters and PhD levels. In addition, she received grant funding for several projects, most notably for the establishment of the first Confucius Institute at The UWI St Augustine campus. She also received funding to carry out the multidisciplinary research project, Language and Competitiveness – Positioning Trinidad and Tobago for Sustainable Development.

Under her directorship, CLL received official recognition from the Embassy of Japan in Trinidad and Tobago for its contribution to Japanese language education. The Embassy of Korea in Trinidad and Tobago also

recognised the Centre's dedication to the teaching of the Korean language and culture.

Among her professional accolades, Professor Carter is the recipient of the prestigious French National Award, Chevalier des Palmes Académiques, for distinguished academic service in propagating the French language and culture. She has also received highly-regarded fellowships and awards from the University of Oxford, Mc Gill University, Harvard University and the University of the South Pacific.

One of her assessors commented, "Without a doubt, Dr Carter, based on publications and the standing of her work, is the leading Caribbean academic in learner autonomy, and stands tall in the field internationally for her longstanding research and practice in this domain. Her research has made a singular and distinctive contribution to the international applied language research literature; her writings have challenged and complexified taken-for-granted assumptions about learner autonomy, teacher/student responsibilities, and technology-mediated language learning."

■ OUR CAMPUS



# Return

## After two years, UWI St Augustine for student scholarships

BY DIXIE-ANN BELLE

**One sure sign that Trinidad and Tobago Carnival is back on track is the re-emergence of UWI Fete, one of the signature events of the season. After a hiatus, organisers reintroduced the UWI flagship fundraising event with the theme ReLive, striving to attract patrons back to the scene of previous revelries at the St Augustine campus.**

"The idea behind ReLive was that, as life continued to steadily re-emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic, there was an ardour, fuelled by nostalgia, to relive the salient and beautiful moments of yesteryear," explained Dr Deirdre Charles, Director of UWI St Augustine's Division of Student Services and Development (DSSD) and Chair of the Fete Committee of The UWI Development and Endowment Fund (UWIDEF).

The team sought to rekindle the passion which has drawn loyal participants for over 30 years.

"These were the moments that simultaneously took our breaths away while breathing new life into us. ReLive celebrated the intentionality of life and living, and invited us to immerse in a liberating and thrilling experience," said Dr Charles.

Patrons had plenty to entice them, with catering by Chefs Khalid Mohammed and Debra Sardinha-Metivier and a crowd-pleasing performance roster which included Kes the Band, Roy Cape, Voice, Nailah Blackman, Farmer Nappy, Patrice Roberts, DJ Private Ryan, and more.

While the event team was committed to inspiring the Carnival spirit of camaraderie and festivity, the fete for a cause's main goal was ever at the forefront.

"The UWI fete, long etched into T&T's annual Carnival calendar of activities, is one of the key fundraiser events which supports the UWIDEF pipeline of initiatives geared towards supporting students who cannot afford tertiary education," explained Dr Sterling Frost ORTT, Chair of UWIDEF.

Proceeds fund UWIDEF's mission to provide undergraduate and postgraduate scholarships. Each year, 200 scholarships and bursaries are awarded to deserving students. In addition, they finance 10 Star Awards valued at \$15,000.00 each and 200 bursaries of \$5,000.00 each.

"To date, The UWIDEF has given over 4,000 bursaries and 77 scholarships," stated Dr Charles.

In the past, corporate sponsors were some of the keenest supporters of the cause, but this year brought challenges.

"The economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic remains, and the recent Russia-Ukraine war has resulted in a global economic downturn," Dr Charles said. "Obtaining sponsorship for the event and getting corporate Trinidad and

*Dixie-Ann Belle is a freelance*

# of the Fete

the pre-eminent fundraising event  
and bursaries lives again

ANN BELLE

Tobago to purchase tickets proved to be more challenging than in previous years.”

She expressed gratitude to those who were able to support, especially Angostura.

Some loyal fans were also hesitant to attend. “Our target audience skews towards a mature one, and there are still patrons who are apprehensive about the lingering health risk of contracting COVID-19,” noted the Fete Committee Chair.

The organisers provided sanitising stations and advised attendees to wear masks.

However, she pointed out, “given that this was the first UWI Fete since large scale events restarted, the turnout was a satisfactory one.”

Dr Charles noted that enthusiasm for the event was tangible among both organisers and attendees.

“UWI Fete embodied a euphoric expression of our commitment to create, capture and revel in the beautiful life moments and experiences of today.”

Dr Frost also spoke confidently about the quality and reception of the event: “Patrons always enjoy themselves, and this year’s ReLive was no exception.”

The UWIDEF Chair is also enthusiastic about the future of UWI Fete and its continuing evolution.

“The UWI fete will continue to be a staple and enabler of our culture through this convergence of national identity and human capital development,” he said. “As such, this tool for national development must be reviewed and renewed continuously to ensure alignment to this goal.”

Dr Frost added, “As Chair of the UWIDEF Board, I have been leading a revisit of all our fundraising activities, including The UWI Fete, as the socio-economic environment and human capital requirements have shifted post-pandemic on the heels of other global issues. The intent is to calibrate and revitalise without compromising what has worked for us perennially.”

Building on ReLive, Dr Charles said the team is confident that the festive momentum will charge on into UWI Fete 2024.

Later this year, UWIDEF will host its second Garden Party and The UWI Golf Challenge, one of the region’s most beloved sports-related fundraising events.

■ **For more information on UWI Fete and related events,** visit <https://www.facebook.com/UWIFete/>.  
**For more on UWIDEF and its fundraising activities,** visit <https://www.uwi.edu/alumnionline/st-augustine-endowment-fund> or email [uwide@sta.uwi.edu](mailto:uwide@sta.uwi.edu).

writer, editor and proofreader.

PHOTOS: KEYON MITCHELL

**To date, The UWIDEF  
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scholarships**



## ■ CULTURE

# Play one for Black Stalin



BY OMARI ASHBY

Some say that the limbo dance is the act of finding space where there is none. It should come as no surprise then that the Black Stalin started his creative career as a limbo dancer, because Leroy Caliste found space where there was none. Space as a calypsonian, as a voice for the common man, a voice for Caribbean unity, and a voice against oppression.

His calypso journey started in 1959 at the Good Shepherd Hall in St Madeleine and in three short years he would find himself singing in the Southern Brigade calypso tent. From there, he would go on to conquer stages nationally and then globally, picking up five Calypso Monarch titles along the way. But Stalin's impact goes way beyond his titles. Indeed, his music and his message made him the quintessential Caribbean man.

With his first full length album, *To De Caribbean Man* in 1979, Stalin revealed himself to be a gifted lyricist who could craft songs dealing with the issues of the day from the people's perspective. Songs such as *De Same Ole Thing*, *Play One* and *Caribbean Unity* showed that his early success was no fluke, but more significantly, it showed us a man who in his compositions would not lean on clichés or be satisfied with mere observations. No, Stalin would proffer solutions and action plans. In *Caribbean Unity*, he critically examined the failure of Caribbean leaders to unite the region and recognised the importance of acknowledging our common socio-historical context.

**“You say dat de federation  
Was imported quite from England  
And you going and form ah Carifta  
With ah true West Indian flavour  
But when Carifta started running  
Morning, noon and night all ah hearing  
Is just money speech dem prime minister giving  
Well I say no set ah money, could form ah unity  
First of all your people need their identity”**

*Caribbean Unity* stoked controversy when it came out, and it still sparks debate in contemporary discussions of race, gender, and Caribbean integration. This is an indication of Stalin's ability to create songs that are both topical and timeless.

Stalin crafted songs about love, political and social commentary, and party songs, each one with the insight of a man on a mission, a man who understood that echoes of colonialism still reverberated throughout the region. In *Bun Dem* he would plead his case to be given the job to “deal” with the oppressors of his people.



**Stalin crafted songs about love, political and social commentary, and party songs, each one with the insight of a man on a mission, a man who understood that echoes of colonialism still reverberated throughout the region.**

**“Judgment morning, ah by the gate and ah waiting  
Because ah begging di Master, gimme ah wuk with Peter  
It have some sinners coming, with them I go be dealing  
Because the things that they do we, ah want to fix them personally.  
Peter wait, Peter wait, Peter, look Cecil Rhodes by the gate.  
Bun he! Bun he!  
Peter, look the English man who send Cecil Rhodes to Africa land.  
Bun he! Bun he!  
Peter, take Drake, take Raleigh, but leave Victoria for me.  
Bun she! Bun she!  
Peter, ah doh care what you say, but Mussolini, he cyar get away.  
Bun he! Bun he!”**

The opening refrain of “Jah Know!” gave an indication that this “bunning” was righteous and overdue, giving voice to a sentiment permeating the Caribbean space at the time.

Nation Language, as Kamau Braithwaite calls it, was as important to Stalin's fight against oppression as his biting lyrical salvos.

“We normal way of speaking, Africans always resisting de European language. Ah mean we get licks tuh learn English. So we speech is resistance language.”

The above quote from Stalin was taken from an interview given to Winthrop R. Holder in 2001. Stalin was making the point that resistance language is the key to calypso. He argued the “whole world have to see us through our language”. I would argue that through the Black Stalin's music, the whole world did. He understood what it would take to dismantle the colonial project. He knew it was as much about what he said as how he said it. Stalin was a warrior of the word in every sense.

Former UWI lecturer the late Dr Louis Regis wrote two books on the Black Stalin, 1987's *Black Stalin – The Caribbean Man*, and 2007's *Black Stalin Kaisonian*. The latter publication traced Stalin's development from apprenticeship at the South tent, his entry into Port-of-Spain, his work with Sparrow in the Original Young Brigade Tent, his mentorship under Kitchener, and to his own emergence as mentor and inspiration to a new generation of Calypsonians.

On Friday, October 31, 2008, Black Stalin was conferred the Doctor of Letters (DLitt) by UWI St Augustine's Faculty of Humanities and Education. He often mentioned in his interviews the many theses written on him and his calypsos. So, it was indeed fitting that the Caribbean man was honoured by one of the institutions that stands as evidence of what can be achieved through regional co-operation.

“He was acutely conscious of our shared history, culture, passions, and concerns, and expressed them in his songs in a way we never could ourselves. In the true tradition of calypso, Stalin was also a griot, chronicling the issues and philosophies impacting our daily lives.”

This was part of a statement given by Barbadian Prime Minister Mia Mottley on his passing. Dominica's Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit said of Stalin, “While Leroy Calliste was a national of Trinidad and Tobago, he was also a Caribbean man and always stood and supported the Black race. He was an oral historian of our regional society as well as politics, whose amazingly crafted lyrics and melodies will abide as a testament to the life and culture, along with the times of our region and its people.”

These sentiments were echoed throughout the region about Leroy Calliste (DLitt), the limbo dancer from San Fernando, the Caribbean man, the Black Stalin.

## ■ ARTS

# DEBOLEENA PAUL

## Scholar of Movement



Deboleena Paul (left), Coordinator of the Dance Unit at DCFA, performs at the Festival of Movement held at the Little Carib Theatre late last year. She also hosted, directed, and managed the Dance Unit's signature event. PHOTO: VISHAL RAMOUDITH

PHOTO:  
MARQUISE  
BROWN

BY KIERAN ANDREW KHAN

**Every culture has its own flavour and colour.** And many years ago, an Indian diplomat landed on the shores of T&T, tasted ours, and could think of nowhere better to live.

Deboleena Paul is an accomplished performer and choreographer – that is an understatement. Paul is a master and scholar of Indian dance, holding three master's degrees. She has worked as a performer and choreographer across more than 200 stages for audiences in India, Southeast Asia, the Caribbean, and the USA.

Today, she is a dance lecturer and the Dance Unit Coordinator in the Department of Creative and Festival Arts (DCFA) at UWI St Augustine. She has also published two books: *Impact of Globalisation on Art and Dance* (2020), and *Storytelling Through Folk Dance* (2020).

However, she had no plans to live here when she first arrived in T&T. With a background in Political Science, she was first a diplomat and cultural ambassador in the Caribbean.

"I come from a family of scientists, but I was, from the moment I was born, a dancer," says Ms Paul. "My parents say I am 'a born dancer'. It was not because I saw people dancing. We did not have a TV (because my family did not like TV). It was simply one of my 'in-born' characteristics that I am a dancer."

She adds, "My family was supportive, in particular my mother, so I was allowed as a child to explore my passion for dance alongside my studies. My background is Political Science and Economics, and my favourite subject is Mathematics! But I always gave my time equally to studies and dance throughout my life."

This was not easy. Anyone who has studied dance can tell you how mentally and physically taxing it can be. In India, the study of traditional and contemporary styles at the highest level is incredibly demanding. Paul began learning dance at age 3, both in schools and eventually from private teachers, where at times the discipline bordered on brutal. She could spend hours – even days – learning to perfect one movement.

As exacting as these years were, they shaped her not only into an expert choreographer and performer, but also someone with great resilience, a capacity for hard work, and someone with deep ambition.

The first time she performed publicly in Trinidad was at the National Academy for the Performing Arts (NAPA). It was here that she discovered the true flavour and colour of T&T. She thought that she would be happy here if she could find work, but still, she returned to India after her tour was complete.

Back home, Ms Paul spotted an opening at the UWI's Dance Unit and applied. The career shift would allow her to double down on her passion. This year marks her decade of work

at the university. She left the life of diplomacy for a life of dance.

"Dance is not one genre – dance is movement," she says. "Dance makes you self-confident, it makes you strong. It allows for self-expression. It allows me to tell a story and connect with others who may not understand the artwork of dance."

These days, Paul prefers experimental dance forms – but approaches them from a scientific and mathematical mindset.

"Every new movement is an experiment. I don't work without meaning. So, the same way the scientist approaches something new with a planned outcome, I do the same. It is experimental movement, it is abstract, but with a reason."

This difference in mindset is one of the reasons Ms Paul opted to reposition the Dance Unit's annual programme into the *Rhythm of Culture*. Traditionally, dance students participate in a show held on campus and are graded on their performance. But Paul saw a better way of sharing the legacy of dance.

"Instead of a show that is centred around students being graded, we introduced a festival held at the Little Carib Theatre, in November 2022. It was held over two days with the morning show being an opportunity for secondary schools to attend. Quite a few graduates of dance from the university are teachers or have their own classes or company, so it was a chance for their students to attend and be inspired."

The three showings across two days included 33 dance pieces and featured many different dance genres, cultures, talents, and guest artists. Students were not graded, but instead Ms Paul hopes that the Trinidad-based festival will create a space for the wider regional dance community.

"Rhythm of Culture was an opportunity to share students' hard work and the art form with the public," she says. "It was also a chance to inspire students interested in dance – who are told that dance leads nowhere. Dance allows you to learn more about yourself and become confident in who you are. Though I was always quiet, when I am on stage, I feel as if the whole audience came to see me perform, and I want to give them the best experience in return. I highly recommend anyone interested in dance to pursue it."

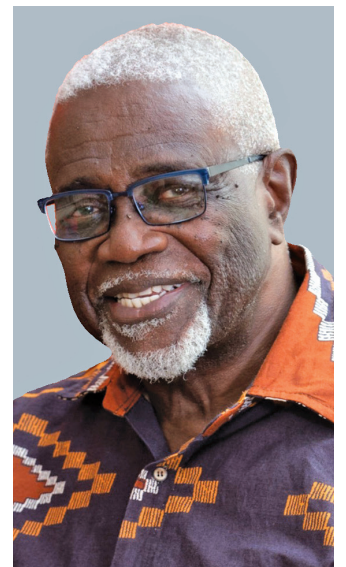
Paul has also immersed herself in another form of storytelling – documentary film. Her first film, *Cheene* (2022), is an ethnographic documentary on indentured Indians and their descendants, created in collaboration with Greek filmmaker Andreas Antonopoulos. Paul and Antonopoulos are also working on a second film about the culture and arts of Tobago made possible with a research grant from The UWI.

In the coming years, she hopes that the influence of the Dance Unit grows, and to see at least 100 students pursue dance annually at the DCFA. Sounds challenging, but never doubt the power of movement.

## Professor Gordon Rohlehr, one of the region's finest thinkers and celebrators of culture, has passed

**Pioneering Caribbean intellectual** who made an invaluable contribution to the study of literature, oral tradition and calypso passes away at age 80

Professor Emeritus Gordon Rohlehr, a beloved Caribbean academic renowned for his teaching and scholarship in West Indian literature, calypso, oral poetry, and cricket, passed away on January 29, 2023. He was 80.



Professor Rohlehr began his UWI career in 1968 at the St Augustine campus as an assistant lecturer in English Literature, spending four decades as an educator, writer, researcher and public intellectual. His contributions to the study and understanding of Caribbean culture have made an invaluable impact on the university.

"His legacy is carried in the students he nurtured at the St Augustine campus through conversation and intense enquiry," said Campus Principal Professor Rose-Marie Belle Antoine. "His former students and those who thronged his lecture rooms, as well as the many scholars and intellectuals who have benefitted from his pioneering and intense and thorough research, share a deep sense of loss and gratitude. We extend condolences on behalf of the Campus community to his family."

Born in Guyana, Professor Rohlehr studied at Queen's College before attending The UWI Mona (then known as the University College of the West Indies), and then the University of Birmingham in the UK. As a preeminent West Indian scholar, he has been a visiting professor at Harvard University, Johns Hopkins University, Tulane University and several others in the US and Canada.

However, his commitment to UWI St Augustine remained throughout his life, and he made many pivotal contributions to the university, as well as Caribbean society.

"He became part of an international movement that reflected on the traumatic nature of New World history and who saw the literature that emerged as rich in contradictions and promise. The multifaceted nature of that history of enslavement, indentureship and European incursion shaped Caribbean scholarship and literature, and shaped him," said a statement from the St Augustine campus.

Professor Rohlehr initiated and taught the first course on West Indian Literature in 1970.

"That scholarship, and his charismatic lecturing," the statement read, "fuelled generations of Caribbean scholars, many of whom have gone on to teach the courses he created or inspired in the Literatures in English section at the UWI."

Professor Rohlehr wrote in small journals, in newspapers such as *Tapia*, and spoke on radio and television. He connected with and interpreted the writings of the literary giants of the day, including Kamau Brathwaite, Derek Walcott, George Lamming, Wilson Harris, Roger Mais and Martin Carter.

His ground-breaking work includes several books, hundreds of essays, interviews, broadcasts and lectures. In 2022, he was recognised for his contributions to Trinidad and Tobago with the Chaconia Medal (Silver).

CAMPUS NEWS



# Caribbean Bioblitz

First inter-island event shares images and info on Geckos, hummingbirds, bullfinches and 1,200 more plants and animals

BY DR AMY DEACON

On December 3 and 4, 2022, more than 100 people took part in Trinidad and Tobago’s 11th annual Bioblitz – an intensive 24-hour survey of all the species found in our backyards.

Organised by the Department of Life Sciences (DLS) at UWI St Augustine in partnership with the Trinidad and Tobago Field Naturalists’ Club, this year’s event had an exciting twist. It brought on board colleagues and neighbours in Jamaica and Barbados for the first ever “inter-island” Bioblitz.

The main aim of a bioblitz is to engage people with their local biodiversity while also contributing valuable data on the distributions of species. They usually involve experts, students, and the public intensively surveying a particular area for biodiversity over a 24-hr period. This year, the “area” was defined as the collective backyards of T&T, Jamaica, and Barbados.

Beginning at noon on December 3, scientists, students, and wildlife-enthusiasts across the three countries scoured their gardens for plants, animals, and fungi for 24 hours, taking photographs and uploading them to an app called “iNaturalist”. This app let us keep track of all the species being seen and share photos with experts who helped identify them.

In total, an incredible 4,537 observations were added over the period. These photos represented at least 1,281 different species, from mushrooms to hummingbirds to coconut palms!

It was no surprise that T&T was best represented, given that the event is already well established here, but it was fantastic to see such excellent participation from the other islands. Jamaica alone contributed over 1000 observations representing more than 400 species. No doubt this success was thanks to the enthusiasm of our colleagues at The UWI

Cave Hill and Mona campuses, as well as various NGOs on these islands, who jumped at the chance to be involved and helped spread the word.

As in previous years, T&T’s top ten was dominated by birds – kiskadees, tanagers, hummingbirds and mockingbirds – reflecting our status as a hotspot for bird diversity (we share our twin islands with nearly 500 species of birds!). However, the most-observed species in T&T was the streak lizard, otherwise known as Wiegmann’s Striped Gecko, which was seen 19 times over the weekend.

Expanding beyond our shores this year was a chance to showcase what makes Caribbean biodiversity special. While we have species in common between the islands, each is also home to numerous endemics that have evolved in isolation over thousands of years and are found nowhere else.

We were lucky to observe some great examples of these during the bioblitz weekend, including Barbados’s endemic



Red-billed Tropicbird.  
PHOTO: KEVIN FOSTER



Green Iguana.  
PHOTO: STEPH TRAN



Tree Boa  
(also known  
as Cascabel)  
PHOTO: ZAK ALI



Frangipani Tree.  
PHOTO: MICHELLE CAZABON-MANNETTE



Charlotteville Litter Frog.  
PHOTO: ZAK ALI



Variegated Croton.  
PHOTO: MICHELLE CAZABON-MANNETTE



By using **iNaturalist** to record our Bioblitz observations, including endemic and introduced species, we are adding data that helps scientists to monitor the status of endemic and threatened species, and track the spread of invasive species.



Tree Boa  
(also known  
as Cascabel)  
PHOTO: ZAK ALI



Saffron Finch.  
PHOTO: JEROME FOSTER

bullfinch, Jamaica's spectacular Red-billed Streamertail hummingbird, and both of T&T's endemic stream frogs.

Species that united the three countries included many plants of agricultural importance, such as guava, mango and papaya. The country lists also shared several animals in common. Many of these are also non-native to the region thanks to deliberate introductions in the case of the Honeybee, which is originally from Europe, and accidental arrivals, for example the Tropical House Gecko, which is native to Africa and likely arrived by ship.

A particularly interesting case is the very noisy Lesser Antillean Whistling Frog. This species is native to Barbados, but has established itself on Jamaica and Trinidad in recent years and was spotted on all three islands during the Bioblitz. This is the frog most often heard calling in urban Port-of-Spain with its high-pitched "weep".

By using iNaturalist to record our Bioblitz observations,

including endemic and introduced species, we are adding data that helps scientists to monitor the status of endemic and threatened species, and track the spread of invasive species.

Plans are already underway for the 12th Bioblitz, which will be an in-person event for the first time in three years. However I'm certain we will continue the new tradition of online bioblitz events alongside the on-location surveys, as they have proved to be a wonderful way to engage even more people with the biodiversity on their doorsteps, and, as shown this year, a fun way to unite nature-lovers and scientists across the islands in their shared enthusiasm for Caribbean natural history.

*Note: anyone can use iNaturalist.org to record and identify species they see – not just during a Bioblitz! It is free to use and is available via an app on your phone or their website.*



Students (from left) Jo-Marie Westmaas, Serene Ramjohn, Krysten Pau, Sapphire Ramsoomair, and Isabella Mootoo collecting samples in the Acono River.

## Environmental Biology students measure pollution at Acono River

In November 2022, environmental biology students from the Department of Life Sciences took part in a field trip to the Acono River to assess the level of pollution. The river, located in the village of Acono in the Maracas, St Joseph Valley, has been a site of conflict between community members, First People's groups, eco-defenders on one side, and quarrying companies on the other. Defenders of the river say that decades of quarrying has already damaged the area and polluted the river.

The students, all from the BIOL 3469 (Research and Practical skills in Environmental Biology) class, went to the area to "collect information on the river system to make an assessment of pollution", said lecturer Dr Linton Arneaud.

"They wanted to find out the extent of pollution using scientific methods," he elaborated.

The five students designed a survey, used habitat and physiochemical descriptions, and analysed benthic macroinvertebrates (aquatic animals without backbones that are large enough to see without a microscope) and fish.

"The lower stream of the river is more polluted than the upper stream as a result of human activities," said Dr Arneaud of their findings.

Internationally, much is being done to fight climate change. Unfortunately, much more is still needed if the human race intends to mitigate the effects of global warming, sea-level rise, habitat loss, and species extinction. Recognising this, UWI St Augustine is equipping students with the skills and technical abilities to fill specific jobs in the fields of biology, biotechnology, chemistry, engineering, marine ecology, tropical forestry, and other environmental-related disciplines.

The BIOL 3469 course requires students to refine research-evaluating skills, master basic biological material/sampling techniques, and communicate more effectively in ecology and environmental biology. Dr Arneaud stressed the importance of these skills, as well as "citizen science and community-based approaches" to dealing with climate change.

He also praised the students themselves, all young women, for their strong interest and drive in contributing to the science necessary to tackle this pressing issue.

"They indicated that the fight against climate change in the Caribbean is dependent on the ability of our native species and rich ecosystems to adapt to increasing rainfalls, temperatures, and sea-level rise," he said. "These young scientists believe that Trinidad and Tobago needs to stop talking about climate change and embrace opportunities to save the region from economic and ecological calamity, and start fighting back."



Fish collected in a seine for analysis.

## PERSPECTIVES



Dr Annita Montoute

**China's New Era**

In the New Era, under the current leadership of President Xi Jinping, a new paradigm of economic, social, and political growth emerged in the People's Republic of China as a guiding framework for human progress and modernisation across the developing world. Integral to China's political reform in this era is the vision of a community of shared future; an aspirational dictum underscoring China's

commitment to advancing inclusivity in the prevailing global order, wherein states at all levels of development would be accommodated and their individual political and social structures respected.

Correspondingly, in solidarity with the community of nations, China articulated common development, political inclusiveness, and co-operative security as the three pillars that would underpin its contributions to global governance. Moreover, the recently concluded 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China reiterated that China has always been committed to its foreign policy goals of upholding world peace and promoting common development, and it is dedicated to promoting a human community with a shared future.

Laying out the basis to China's diplomacy, the Congress emphasised that China is committed to its fundamental national policy goal of opening up to the outside world and creating new opportunities for countries to advance their own development.

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) constitutes the focal point of China's international diplomacy strategy in the 21st century. As its main foreign and economic policy tool, the BRI is central to China's modern trajectory towards opening and creating a community of common destiny with its global counterparts.

Assessment of the BRI is mixed. Some criticisms include that it is a neo-colonial project which supports China's expansionist ambitions, the inability of developing countries to pay debt incurred from their participation in projects, and adverse environmental and social impacts along BRI routes.

At the same time, others argue that the above takes away from the agency of participating countries and relegates them to passive and powerless roles rather than active participants in the initiative. Additionally, a Bruegel (2019) study conducted a global survey of media articles of the BRI and found that, with the exception of South Asia, all regions generally positively received this initiative.

**Latin American and Caribbean countries are among those which have benefitted the most from China's emergence as a global trade power in the last 20 years. For the period 2000 to 2020, China-LAC trade grew 26-fold from US\$12 billion to US\$310 billion.**

**China-Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) Relationship**

China's *Second Policy Paper on LAC* (2016) presents a blueprint for deepening co-operation with the region. The paper defines China's updated objectives and expanded mechanisms for collaboration in LAC, alongside broader financing and infrastructure building proposals for trade and investments.

The revived policy centres on building new relationships based on mutual political trust, closer international relations co-ordination, mutual opportunities for cultural learning, and impactful reinforcement of existing regional and bilateral LAC relations. Targeted areas of co-operation include climate change, trade in specialty products, expanded trade arrangements, and the establishment of public-private partnership arrangements for construction and infrastructure building.

The China-Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) Forum, launched in 2014, provides a platform for inter-regional dialogue of foreign ministers at triannual high-level meetings between China and the LAC. Following consultations, in January 2018, an invitation to join the BRI was formally extended by China's Minister of Foreign Affairs

to countries in Latin America and the Caribbean at the second China-CELAC Ministerial Forum in Santiago, Chile. A Special Declaration on the Belt and Road Initiative was then signed by the forum's participants, and consequently, 15 LAC countries signed memoranda of understanding (MOUs) with China in 2018, and three in 2019. By 2021, 19 LAC states were signatories to the BRI.

Latin American and Caribbean countries are among those which have benefitted the most from China's emergence as a global trade power in the last 20 years. For the period 2000 to 2020, China-LAC trade grew 26-fold from US\$12 billion to US\$310 billion. This development has been accompanied by a decrease in trade with traditional partners. The EU, for example, which had been the most important and second largest trading partner for South America and the whole LAC respectively, has experienced a decrease in its market share as China's trade increases with LAC countries. China is also one of the most important sources of foreign direct investment and finance for the LAC region.

Critically, as the former imperial powers' strategic interests wane in Latin America and Caribbean, the region's relationship with China has continued to flourish. China's non-imperial ambitions in the region have been influential in opening up partnerships based on the ideals of mutual benefit and trust, equality, and win-win co-operation.

Immediately distinguishable in the Chinese-LAC relationship is the absence of an overtly imposing stance regarding the negotiation and re-payment structure of loans by the Chinese towards the region's small island developing states (SIDS). In addition, in contrast to Western backed loans, Chinese financing does not carry neo-liberal conditionalities. As US and EU interest in the region eroded in recent years, among other factors, Caribbean SIDS entered into more financing engagements with China, particularly for infrastructure project-related loans. These arrangements, negotiated through no-bid contracts and below-market price interest rates, are often less onerous than typical multilateral or Western bilateral loans.



BY DR ANNITA MONTOUTE

**Looking Ahead**

China's latest global initiatives, namely, the Global Development Initiative (GDI) and the Global Security Initiative (GSI), offer additional opportunities for the LAC region. The GDI, tendered by President Xi at the UN General Assembly in 2021, articulates China's commitment to expediting a renewed

**As US and EU interest in the region eroded in recent years, among other factors, Caribbean SIDS entered into more financing engagements with China, particularly for infrastructure project-related loans.**

path for more vigorous global co-operation towards attaining the goals of the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Through the GDI, China aims to provide a platform for global alignment of development policies around climate change and green development, development financing, poverty alleviation, industrialisation, food security, the digital economy, connectivity, a COVID-19 response, and vaccines.

Presented by President Xi in April 2022 at the Boao Forum for Asia Annual Conference, the GSI outlines China's goals for contributions towards deeper involvement in governance of the international security architecture in pursuit of fostering global peace. The GSI articulates diplomatic principles around a framework for solving global security crises, led and guided by China, promulgating co-operative global security that respects sovereignty, legitimates all countries' security concerns, preserves security in traditional and non-traditional domains, and advocates for peaceful dialogue to resolve disputes and full compliance with the United Nations (UN) Charter.

The two initiatives offer a framework to continue to engage with China to address areas of development concern for both sub-regions, such as climate change, food security, crime and security, among others.

# 16 DAYS of ACTIVISM

## highlights fight against gender-based violence

“Violence in all its forms must come to an end,” said Dr Sue-Ann Barratt, Head of the IGDS, in a statement to the news media in September 2022. “We at the IGDS/UWI call on the national community to reflect on the far-reaching consequences of the diverse forms of violence we often deem as societal norms.”

In the closing months of 2022, UWI St Augustine engaged in **16 Days of Activism** against one of those forms of violence – gender-based violence (GBV). Campus activities were driven by the IGDS in collaboration with the Division of Student Services and Development (DSSD) and the Guild of Students.

*These activities included:*

**FILLING THE GAPS:** The launch of a partnership with the Bankers’ Association of Trinidad and Tobago and of the IGDS Bilingual Toolkit for Break the Silence, as well as the introduction of the Oversight Committee for Next Phase Research and Advocacy.

**WALK A MILE IN MY SHOES:** A panel discussion, display of victim/survivor stories, and an NGO village at the Daaga Auditorium. The panel discussion culminated with a candlelight silent walk on campus in partnership with the Division of Student Services and Development (DSSD).

**CLOTHESLINE PROJECT:** Zero Tolerance: A Student Guild initiative to share anonymous stories and content on t-shirts hung on clotheslines at the Student Activity Centre, the Halls of residence, as well as on social media.

**ART AGAINST VIOLENCE:** Staff, students and alumni artwork to make statements to end sexual harassment and sexual violence.

The UWI St Augustine **16 Days of Activism** ran from November 25 to December 10. **16 Days of Activism** is a targeted advocacy initiative that began in 1991 at the inaugural Women’s Global Leadership Institute.

PHOTOS: COURTESY IGDS



Students used chalk to leave anti-GBV messages in the campus’s JFK Quadrangle.



## Victim Eyes

### Youth Activists confronting the Culture of Sexual Violence

“We see the issues that affect us directly and those around us, some of us have even been victims or survivors to some of these issues,” said Jahan Charles, vice president and co-founder of Victim Eyes, a youth-led organisation created to raise awareness of rape culture.

Jahan, who like several members of Victim Eyes is a student at UWI St Augustine, added, “We see that a change is needed and have taken it upon ourselves to work towards it, because who else will?”

During the 16 days of Activism, Victim Eyes collaborated with clubs such as Pride UWI, Catcalls of UWI, Sexual Assault Survivor Stand, and the Caribbean Youth Environment Network. The group gave out over 800 orange ribbons to raise awareness about GBV. They also amplified the message through social media and did research that will benefit projects this year related to catcalling and GBV, and GBV in the health care system.

The group was birthed in 2020 out of a small week project in collaboration with UN Women, Spotlight Initiative and Trinidad Youth Council, and currently has 14 active members.

“Afterwards, we reflected and decided that we were not done with the topic of rape culture and wanted to continue. In a short space of time, we produced our bystander project and collaborated for 16 days of Activism. We also ran our own recruitment and training exercises,” said Jahan, a first-year Communication Studies student.

Victim Eyes has big plans to work with NGOs, clubs and other groups this year, as well as activities of their own, both through social media and in public.

“We are trying to break the generational issue of rape culture,” said Jahan, “so that the next generation and our own do not have to face it, or at least not deal with it as much as we do now. We are the next generation of leaders and we don’t have to wait for when we are older to lead a narrative when it can be done now.”

■ For more info on **Victim Eyes**, visit them on Instagram at [victim\\_eyes](#), Facebook at [Victim Eyes](#), or email them at [thevictimeyesproject@gmail.com](mailto:thevictimeyesproject@gmail.com).

Members of the youth group Victim Eyes.



Educate on Rape Culture  
Stand Against Rape Culture  
Support the Victims

# The UWI Calendar of Events **March–May 2023**



## **Caribbean Small Island Developing States on the Frontline: The Urgency of Climate Action – Professorial Inaugural Lecture by Professor Michelle Mycoo**

**March 1**  
**Auditorium B, Learning Resource Centre**  
**The UWI St Augustine Campus**

The UWI St Augustine Campus invites you to attend the Professorial Inaugural Lecture by Professor Michelle Mycoo. Professor Mycoo, a scholar in the field of Urban and Regional Planning, will present on the topic, Caribbean Small Island Developing States on the Frontline: The Urgency for Climate Action.

She is the first woman to be elevated to the rank of Professor in the Faculty of Engineering at The UWI in 60 years, as well as a member of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) which was declared a co-laureate of the 2022 Gulbenkian Prize for Humanity. Professor Mycoo has been conducting research on small islands developing states for over 25 years on urban planning and human settlements, climate change adaptation, water management, disaster risk reduction, and integrated coastal zone management.

**To register, visit:**  
**<https://bit.ly/MMycOOlecture>**



## **Seventy-Five Years of Ideas, Innovation, and Development Justice – The UWI, the Caribbean and the Global Agenda**

**May 3 to 5**  
**Learning Resource Centre Auditorium**  
**The UWI St Augustine Campus**

Since 1948, The UWI has been molding the minds of the region's leaders, scholars, creators, professionals, and civil society. This conference, hosted by the Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies (SALISES), will look at the history, present, and future prospects of this premier Caribbean institution.

This is the 24th Annual SALISES Conference, an international event that since its inception in 1999 has attracted panellists and audiences from across the globe.

**To register, visit <https://bit.ly/24thsalisesconference>.**  
**Early bird registration is available up to March 31. For more information, email [salises@sta.uwi.edu](mailto:salises@sta.uwi.edu) or visit <https://sta.uwi.edu/salises/>**

## **ReLiving it Up!**

**Musical sensation Hey Choppi** moves the crowd at UWI Fete 2023 on Sunday, January 22 on the grounds of the Campus Principal's Office at UWI St Augustine. After a two-year hiatus forced upon the society by the pandemic, this year's UWI Fete, themed "ReLive", returned to once again provide attendees with one of the Carnival seasons most enjoyable and complete all-inclusive experiences.

More importantly, the event raised funds to provide financial support to deserving students through scholarships and bursaries. UWI Fete is the flagship initiative of The UWI Development and Endowment Foundation (UWIDEF), and since its inception in 1991 it has helped thousands of students achieve their goals in higher education.

For many of the patrons that attended ReLive, that positive purpose made the performances, music, eats, and vibes all the sweeter.

PHOTO: KEYON MITCHELL



## **Donate to UWI Students**

**Make a difference in the lives** of our students through a financial contribution. Your support will enable the best and brightest, as well as students facing financial challenges, to cope and to continue to produce excellence.

You can contribute to any of our three financial aid programmes:

### **Adopt-a-Student Programme**

Provides eligible undergraduate students with a monthly stipend of TT\$400 to support day-to-day expenses and, in some cases, offset accommodation and tuition fees.

### **Scholarships and Bursaries**

Scholarships and bursaries are provided through donations from conscientious individuals or groups. The minimum donation is TT\$5,000. Undergraduate students apply annually to the scholarship and bursaries programme and acceptance is based on criteria developed by the donors and The UWI.

### **Hardship Grant Fund**

This grant provides support to students at all levels experiencing financially related challenges. Eligible students can access up to TT\$5,000 based on an assessment and interview to determine their level of need.

Donations to these programmes can be made by cheque, electronic cheque payment (ACH), and credit or debit card.

**For more information**, email [financial.advisory@sta.uwi.edu](mailto:financial.advisory@sta.uwi.edu) or call 1 (868) 662-2002 exts: 82100, 84185.