

UWI TODAY

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES • ST AUGUSTINE CAMPUS

SUNDAY 27 MARCH 2022



Festival at the End of Time

A haunting figure draws back his cutlass to attack the long grass in this photo by Arnaldo James, a graduate of UWI St Augustine. Titled “Messenger 6.1”, it was one of the works on display at the Frye Art Museum in Seattle, Washington. Arnaldo and his collaborator (and fellow UWI graduate), Christopher Jordan, had their art exhibited from February to March, looking at themes like the meaning of the apocalypse and drawing on influences such as traditional mas. This February and March, T&T also celebrated its first Carnival since the pandemic. Like many practitioners of the arts, our agents of culture have had to grapple with the life-shattering events of COVID-19 and its impacts on the national festival. The experience may manifest itself in their work for years to come. PHOTO: ARNALDO JAMES



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FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Global University in a Multi-polar World

At the time of this writing, the Eastern European nation of Ukraine is on fire. At a minimum, thousands have been killed or injured (clear casualty figures are not yet available). Well over 60 cities and towns have been attacked. Estimates put the number of refugees at over two million and counting. This is a terrible tragedy.

We wish for a speedy end to all conflict, and our hearts go out to the Ukrainian people. Our thoughts go, as well, to the victims of military aggression around the world in places such as the Middle East, Central Asia, and Africa, who have not benefited from such a high level of international exposure and sympathy. There are many such struggles that have continued with little thought or comment for years, even as people are displaced from their homes, suffer famine, disease, and the lethal impact of armed conflict.

One of the disturbing, yet all too unsurprising pieces of the story of the war in Ukraine is how it has unearthed uglier aspects of European bias and prejudice. Several commentators expressed shock that such a conflict could take place in Europe, suggesting that war was somehow an indulgence of black and brown nations, an idea that quite frankly shows an astonishing level of ignorance of both European and world history.

The prejudice on display was especially glaring in the reports of the treatment of foreigners in Ukraine, many of them fee-paying university students, from India and Africa. There have been multiple stories showing that these students experienced segregation and discrimination in accessing services to leave the country—on both sides of the Ukrainian border. As a campus principal in a university native to the Global South, I asked myself why these students couldn't have come to study at The UWI?

The question is of course rhetorical. I am not questioning the decisions made by these international students. They made the choice they deemed best based on their circumstances and the opportunities available at the universities they attended. Neither am I questioning the capability or standards of Ukraine's institutions of higher education. I am not even passing judgment on the society, which has its cultural dynamics like all societies, and is currently undergoing a terrible ordeal. I am, however, looking critically at the current world order and the place emerging nations and regions hold in that system.

The UWI's vision statement reads: "To be an excellent global university rooted in the Caribbean". Our ambition is to be recognised among the finest institutions of higher education in the world, based on the quality of our teaching and learning, the excellence of our research, the value of the student



The UWI's vision statement reads: **"To be an excellent global university rooted in the Caribbean"**. Our ambition is to be recognised among the finest institutions of higher education in the world, based on the quality of our teaching and learning, the excellence of our research, the value of the student experience we provide, and the positive impact that we make in the region and wider world.

experience we provide, and the positive impact that we make in the region and wider world.

For some time now, The UWI has been working towards ever greater internationalisation. We have increased our ranking to the top 1.5 percent of universities in the world as evaluated by *Times Higher Education*. We have formed international partnerships to establish centres such as the SUNY-UWI Centre for Sustainable Leadership Development in the US, and the UWI-China Institute for Information Technology in Suzhou. Long before that, our research has made a vital

contribution to the collection of human knowledge, and our graduates have become leaders and experts in almost every field throughout the world.

Nevertheless, more can be done, and this is the time to do it. The old order of Western hegemony is weakening. New poles of economic power and cultural hegemony have emerged. Old ideas about the superiority of Western Europe and America are losing their hold. There is absolutely no reason that Caribbean higher education cannot become a highly competitive choice for international students from Africa, India, and anywhere else.

As we continue to rise from the destabilising effects of the pandemic and chart our way forward as a university, we should approach internationalisation with an even greater intensity, both through our policies and organisational culture. A globally competitive university seeking to be a first choice for international students must offer more. This requires not only a collective effort, but a collective mindset. We have to recognise that Caribbean people have the capacity to provide an educational experience that matches or exceeds what is offered anywhere else in the world.

When this global university shows prospective students this level of excellence, they in turn will have an alternative where they can receive both the highest standard of education while also being treated with the dignity and care they deserve, irrespective of their race or nationality.

Brian Copeland

PROFESSOR BRIAN COPELAND

Campus Principal

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■ CAMPUS NEWS

Chaconia, Hummingbird Awards for UWI

St Augustine Campus celebrates its 2020 and 2021 National Awardees



Ms Sharon Christopher



Professor Emeritus Stephan Gift



Dr Indrawatee Haraksingh

The ceremony, held at President's House, and hosted by the Office of the President, was the first after a delay of two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Awards were given for both 2020 and 2021.

Educators, scientists, leaders within the university system, and dedicated community servants – several members of the UWI St Augustine Campus community were recognised for their contribution to Trinidad and Tobago on March 7 at the National Awards Ceremony.

The ceremony, held at the President's House, and hosted by The Office of the President, was the first after a delay of two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Awards were given for both 2020 and 2021.

Campus Principal of UWI St Augustine Professor Brian Copeland extended heartfelt congratulations to the National Award recipients, thanking them for their contributions both to the University and Trinidad and Tobago. Professor Copeland is himself an awardee. He was a joint recipient of the Chaconia Medal Gold in 2007, and he was the first recipient of the Order of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago in 2008.

There are five categories and 13 classes of National Awards in Trinidad and Tobago: the Order of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (formerly The Trinity Cross Medal of the Order of the Trinity) – in Gold only – and the Chaconia Medal, the Hummingbird Medal, the Public Service Medal of Merit, and the Medal for the Development of Women – all in Gold, Silver and Bronze.

Members of the campus community received both Chaconia and Hummingbird Medals. The Chaconia is awarded to “any person (citizen as well as non-citizen) who has performed long and meritorious service to Trinidad and Tobago tending to promote the national welfare or strengthen the community spirit”, says an official statement from the Office of the President. The Hummingbird goes to “any person (citizen as well as non-citizen) who has rendered loyal and devoted service beneficial to Trinidad and Tobago in any field of human endeavour or for gallantry or other humane action”.

2021 Awardees

Ms Sharon Christopher – Appointed Chair of the St Augustine Campus Council for the five-year period, November 16, 2018 to July 31, 2023, Ms Christopher is an attorney-at-law, leadership development coach, motivational speaker, and UWI alumna. She is the founder and CEO of Sharon Christopher and Associates, which provides services throughout the Caribbean and North America.

A former senior banking executive, she has some 30 years of experience in the financial services industry, with proven success as a catalyst for change and driver of results. She is a known advocate for women's empowerment, rights, equality, and social justice, and was the founding chairman of the Advisory Board of the Institute for Gender and Development Studies at The UWI. Ms Christopher was awarded the Chaconia Medal (gold) for her contribution to business, banking and finance.

Professor Emeritus Winston Mellowes – Professor Emeritus Mellowes led the Department of Chemical Engineering at UWI St Augustine during a career that spanned over 30 years. As a professor of electrical engineering, he is acknowledged as an expert on fluid dynamics and the technology of sugar cane processing. For his contribution in the sphere of education, Professor Emeritus Mellowes was awarded the Chaconia Medal (gold).

2020 Awardees

Professor Emeritus Stephan Gift – Professor Emeritus Gift is a Retired Dean of the Faculty of Engineering at the St Augustine Campus (2015-2018) and former Pro Vice-Chancellor (PVC) Graduate Studies and Research (from 2018-2021). He is also the youngest PhD graduate in the history of the Faculty of Engineering, a member of the Caribbean Academy of Science, a senior member of the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers, and a fellow of the Association of Professional Engineers of Trinidad and Tobago. Professor Gift was awarded the Chaconia Medal (gold) for his contribution to engineering and engineering science.

Dr Lester Goetz – Dr Goetz is a Senior Lecturer of Urology at the Faculty of Medical Sciences. Dr Goetz introduced and served as Programme Director of Urology at UWI St Augustine. As a consultant urologist, he is a founding member and the first president of the Caribbean Urological Association, as well as the Trinidad and Tobago Urological Association. Dr Goetz is the recipient of the Hummingbird Medal (gold) for his influence in medicine.

Dr Indrawatee Haraksingh – Dr Haraksingh is a Professor of Physics at the Faculty of Science and Technology. A former recipient of the International Pioneer Award for Solar Energy, Dr Haraksingh has distinguished herself as one of the premier women in the field of renewable energy in the Caribbean. She also serves as a member of the Renewable Energy Committee of The UWI, promoting research and development at the highest academic levels. For her contribution in the field of education, Dr Haraksingh was awarded the Hummingbird Medal (silver).

Professor Kari Polanyi Levitt – Born in Austria, raised in England, and based in Canada, Professor Kari Polanyi Levitt nevertheless has made an important contribution to Caribbean economics and maintained a deep connection to The UWI and the region itself. An Emerita Professor in Economics at McGill University in Montreal, she has worked with colleagues in the Caribbean since the early 1960s, including Professor Lloyd Best, with whom she wrote the highly regarded, “Essays on the Theory of Plantation Economy”. In her long career, Professor Polanyi Levitt has assisted the Government of Trinidad and Tobago in the area of national economic development, and has for many years been a visiting professor at both UWI St Augustine and UWI Mona. In 2008, she was recognised for her decades of service to the university and the region with an honorary doctorate from The UWI.

Mr Ainsley Mark – Mr Mark was a lecturer in Accounting from 1971-1982, Head of the Department of Management from 1975-1976, Vice Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences from 1977-1979, and Senior Lecturer in Accounting from 1987-1992. A Former Vice-President of the Senate, Mr Mark was awarded the Hummingbird Medal (gold) for his dedication to community service.

Dr Verleen Bobb-Lewis – Employed by The UWI since 2014 in the School of Education, Dr Bobb-Lewis has served as part-time facilitator in the Master in Education programme. She has been the coordinator for the delivery of the Bachelor in Education, Early Childhood Care and Development, Masters in Education, and Diploma in Education programmes. Dr Bobb-Lewis was awarded the Hummingbird Medal (bronze).

Judge Rolston Nelson – Judge Nelson was appointed visitor of The UWI in 2019, a position previously held by the Queen of England. He is an Associate Tutor of the Hugh Wooding Law School since 1978, and editor of *The Lawyer*, the journal of the Law Association of Trinidad and Tobago, since 1987. Judge Nelson received the Chaconia Medal (gold) for his contributions to law and business.

Dr Lakshmi Seeterram-Persaud – Dr Seeterram-Persaud is a 2013 Honorary Graduate of The UWI, an award-winning novelist, and teacher. She is the recipient of the Chaconia Medal (gold) for her work in education and culture.

■ CAMPUS NEWS

Mr Jerry Medford, President of the St Augustine Chapter of the UWI Alumni Association (UWIAA) and board member of the UWI Development and Endowment Fund (UWIDEF) passed away on Friday, February 25, 2022. He was described as a pioneer and trailblazer who devoted a large part of his professional life to the promotion and advancement of the work of the local and regional Alumni Association.

“Jerry served the association in several capacities, including that of President, Treasurer and member of the chapter,” wrote the Executive of the UWIAA Trinidad and Tobago Chapter in a tribute to the late leader. “He also served as University Alumnus Representative for two terms on the University Council, the UWI’s highest governing body, and on several campus special committees.”

In this position, he was responsible for the introduction of several initiatives. “Jerry,” the tribute stated, “had a clear vision of the role of the Alumni Association within the university structure.”

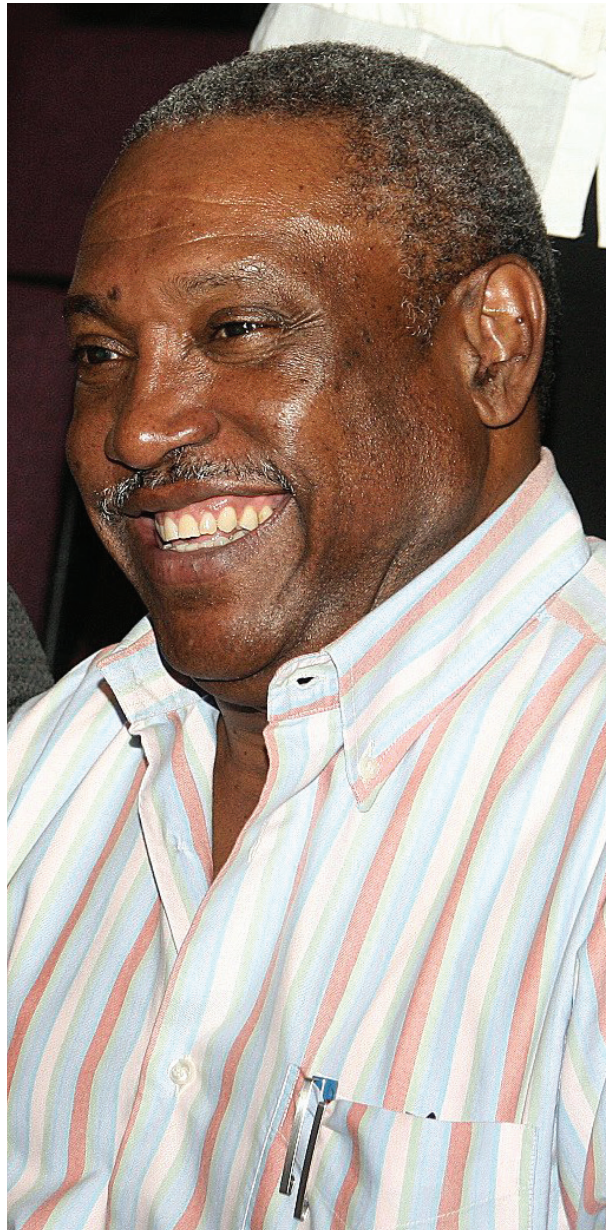
Mr Medford was a registered engineer in Trinidad and Tobago, and a fellow and past president of The Association of Professional Engineers of Trinidad and Tobago (APETT). He was also a member of The American Society of Civil Engineers, Engineers Without Borders, the Project Management Institute, and the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (Caribbean Branch). Additionally, he served as an Associate Member of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (UK) and a Member of The Society of Construction Law (UK).

The UWIAA Trinidad and Tobago Chapter highlighted his role as a member of the university’s Development and Endowment Fund for many years, saying “his rich legacy of service to the UWI alumni community, will certainly be remembered and forever treasured.”

In his capacity as the President of the St Augustine Chapter of the UWI Alumni Association, Mr Medford was a regular participant in campus activities, such as the annual graduation and matriculation ceremonies.

“He is fondly remembered for his work as hall supervisor and as UWI advocate – assisting with the fundraising activities for student bursaries,” said a statement from UWI St Augustine.

A ‘Rich Legacy of Service’



Mr Jerry Medford, President of the St Augustine Chapter of the UWIAA, passed away on February 25, 2022.

Jerry remained a devoted family man to his wife, Cheryl, and daughters, Melissa and Alana. We thank them for sharing him with us over the years, and our prayers are with them during this difficult period.

Mr Medford also served as a member of UWI St Augustine’s Audit Committee, the Board of Weldfab (Barbados) Ltd, and the Laventille-based NGO We Say YES (Youth Entrepreneurship for Self-Empowerment) Organisation. He was the Registrar to the Board of Engineering of Trinidad and Tobago (BOETT) and has represented BOETT at The UWI St Augustine’s Faculty of Engineering accreditation exercises.

“In spite of his many commitments,” said the UWIAA Executive in Trinidad and Tobago, “Jerry remained a devoted family man to his wife, Cheryl, and daughters, Melissa and Alana. We thank them for sharing him with us over the years, and our prayers are with them during this difficult period.”

They added that, “Jerry Medford was an unwavering UWI advocate and a true Caribbean citizen. May his soul rest in eternal peace.”



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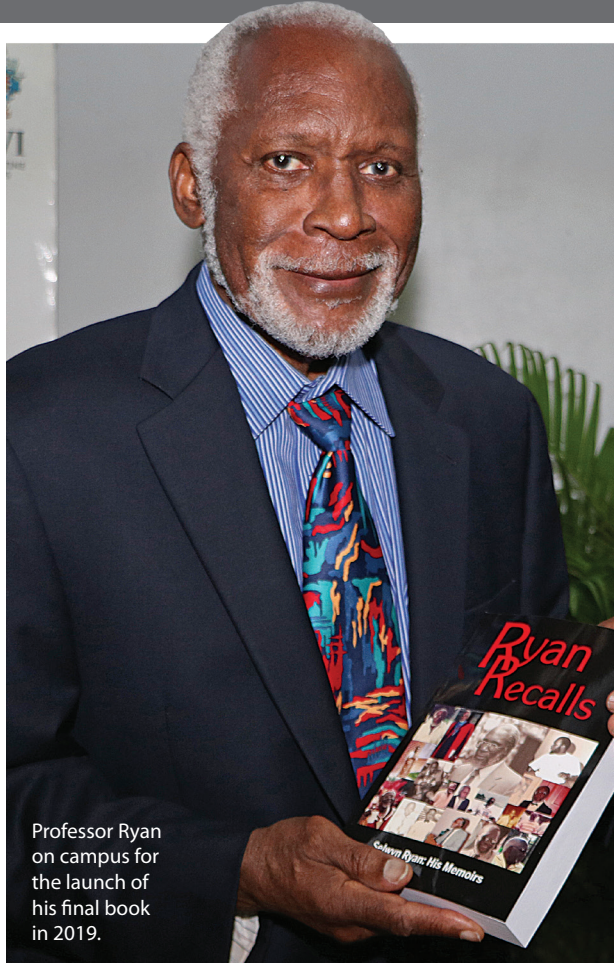
■ OUR PEOPLE

‘He has done so much for this country and region’

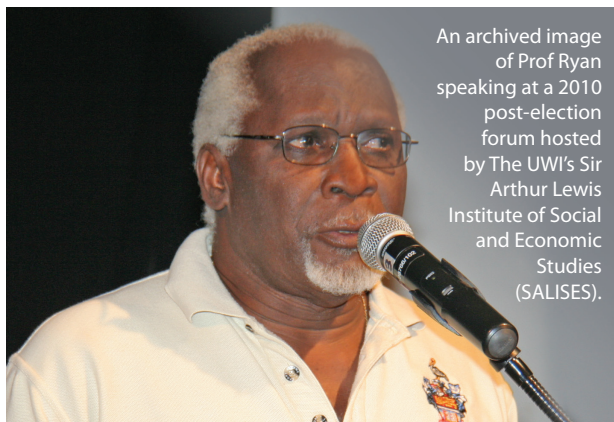
Renowned Caribbean scholar and writer Prof Selwyn Ryan has passed at age 86

The St Augustine Campus community of The University of the West Indies (The UWI) as well as UWI alumni around the world have been thrown into mourning on the passing of Professor Emeritus Selwyn Ryan, recognised as one of the Caribbean’s foremost scholars and writers of political history. He died on March 12 after battling illness.

Over his prolific career as a researcher and writer, Professor Ryan wrote newspaper columns, academic papers, and articles for journals, documenting exciting moments in the contemporary political history of Trinidad and Tobago and the Caribbean.



Professor Ryan on campus for the launch of his final book in 2019.



An archived image of Prof Ryan speaking at a 2010 post-election forum hosted by The UWI’s Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies (SALISES).

Dr Acolla Lewis-Cameron, Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, recalled his passion for Caribbean development, while Campus Principal Brian Copeland reflected on Prof Ryan’s fervent wish at his last book launch that younger academics pick up where he left off, and continue to write and record our history.

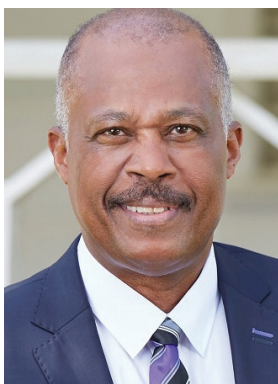
“We can pay no greater tribute to a man who has done so much for this country and region”, said Professor Copeland, “than by fulfilling his most earnest desire. Students and graduates of The UWI will continue – as succeeding generations have done for the last 75 years—to advance learning, create knowledge, and foster innovation for the positive and sustainable transformation of this region and, indeed, the wider world.”

Despite his highly regarded presence as a public intellectual, it was the St Augustine Campus that Professor Ryan considered his home away from home and where, in 2019, he chose to launch his last book, *Ryan Recalls – Selwyn Ryan: His Memoirs*. At that time, UWI’s Alma Jordan Library also celebrated the launch of the Selwyn Ryan Collection, a collection of manuscripts, correspondence, and scrapbooks from his early life at home and abroad, all donated by the professor as research material for students and younger academics.

Speaking at Prof Ryan’s funeral on Friday, March 18 at St Finbar’s Roman Catholic Church in Diego Martin, Dr Keith Rowley, Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, said, “Professor Ryan was and is a leading light and example of the best we could be in our region.”

PROFESSOR EMERITUS SELWYN RYAN: AN ICON TRANSITIONS

Statement from Professor Sir Hilary Beckles, Vice-Chancellor of The University of the West Indies



Professor Selwyn Ryan’s contribution to the rise of The University of the West Indies as an excellent, ethical and activist academy sets him apart as a stalwart of scholarship and an icon of the academe. Over a period of four decades, this phenomenally dedicated doyen charted new ground in political science, and stood his ground for the relevance and legitimacy of his discipline and institution.

In this regard, we recognise and celebrate his intellectual and scholastic contribution to The UWI as it continues on a journey of service to the Caribbean people.

Selwyn was not only a solid and reliable political scientist

that left no stone unturned in the search for facts and truths, but a splendid articulator of his empirical discoveries. He was a brilliant research empiricist. Theorising was not his preference. His primary commitment was to enable society to clearly understand the issues at hand for purposes of shaping political policy and practice. We all looked to him for research discoveries to fuel discourses relevant to the nation-building project in Trinidad and Tobago. His evidence dominated the discursive space. He shaped our understanding of the politics of divisive democracy, and centred the University’s voice with dignity and respect.

His substantial contribution transcended the St Augustine Campus and the indigenous environment. He was a Caribbean character with a regional mentality that defined his role as a “One UWI” intellectual icon. He was at home on the Mona Campus where he bonded with contemporaries such as the late, legendary political scientist Professor Carl Stone. To watch them in action across the “UWIVERSE” was

to observe Caribbean intellectualism at its finest and most effective.

Selwyn gave his all to and for us. He wrote with sophistication, not only about the systems and structures of governance, and the character of the political culture. He was sympathetic to the plight of the marginalised. He wrote about the plight of the “sardines” in the “shark dominated” Caribbean waters. There was no horizon beyond his willingness to confront. In this regard, he served as a major mind within our regional intellectual civilisation.

Our distinguished colleague was an outstanding researcher, writer, teacher, and administrator. We thank him for his superb innings at the crease, and wish him a blessed journey to the ancestral pavilion. I join with Principal Brian Copeland and colleagues at the St Augustine Campus in offering condolences to his family and loved ones on behalf of the regional and global community that is The University of the West Indies.

His substantial contribution transcended the St Augustine Campus and the indigenous environment. He was a Caribbean character with a regional mentality that defined his role as a “One UWI” intellectual icon.

ST AUGUSTINE CAMPUS COUNCIL MEETING

‘Time to review student fees’

Principal Copeland says economic realities require increase in tuition cost, emphasises increase in measures to provide financial assistance for those in need

“We’d like to see a change in culture where students take responsibility for their tuition,” announced Pro Vice-Chancellor and Campus Principal Professor Brian Copeland at the recent St Augustine Campus Council meeting.

During the virtual session on Tuesday, March 15, Professor Copeland gave a detailed look into campus operations from 2020 to 2021. In attendance were Dr Nyan Gadsby-Dolly, Minister of Education; Vice-Chancellor of The UWI, Professor Sir Hilary Beckles; and Campus Chair, Ms Sharon Christopher.

Prof Copeland revealed eight focal areas which will be the foundation of the University’s 2030 vision: the delivery mode of courses; The UWI’s global market; deliverables; the funding model; processes; teaching and learning; research and scholarship; and staff.

Elaborating on funding, Prof Copeland underscored the campus’ stringent efforts to cut spending. “We have been undergoing change with response to incremental budget cuts in the past six years.” He added that cost reduction measures had helped trim about a hundred million dollars out of the university’s expenditure, but “the pain has been showing over the last two years or more.”

Even with these measures in place, he asserted the time has come for a review of student fees. Stressing that fees have remained the same for 21 years, Prof Copeland observed that UWI’s are among the lowest in the Caribbean. He explained that though students are supposed to cover 20 percent of the economic cost, the actual number is 12 percent. He emphasised the need for students to show accountability for the cost of their education. “We want to significantly reduce the dependence on governments across the region, and be a bit more flexible in our financing.” He affirmed that they are well aware of the financial constraints many students face. “We are not doing this in a draconian way, but we do have to do it.”

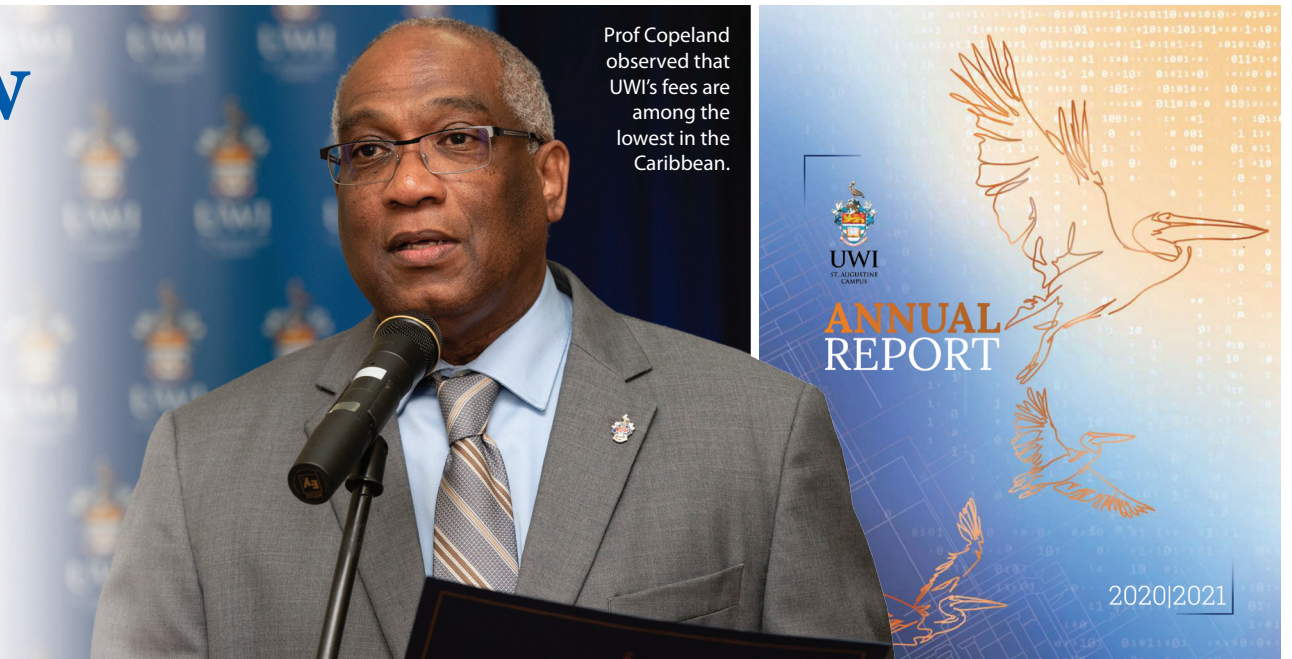
Prof Copeland said that 454 students have received a total of \$4.3 million in support from non-governmental scholarships and bursaries. He added that this was small by all standards. He indicated that The UWI would be stepping up measures to support students who would need financial assistance. “We know that students are challenged, so you know that we’ll be pounding the pavements, looking to see if we could beef up the existing range of support provided to students.”

He asserted that they would engage with stakeholders and the Guild in the upcoming discussions and that nothing concrete has been decided as yet. He could not give a possible deadline for the final decision.

Prof Copeland indicated that he expected students to return fully to campus in September 2022, but he also addressed the evolution of the course delivery mode in UWI’s future. Hybrid classes will continue to be incorporated into the curricula. Some courses could be completely online or completely face-to-face or a combination of both. Hyflex – a blend of “hybrid” and “flexibility” – could also become options, allowing students more choice in their mode of learning.

During her remarks, Campus Council Chair Sharon Christopher stated that the large majority of the recommendations of the Chancellor’s Commission on governance report should be accepted. She also addressed the controversy that has been

Prof Copeland observed that UWI’s fees are among the lowest in the Caribbean.



Vice-Chancellor Professor Sir Hilary Beckles

“The University did a deep dive into the challenges that we were facing. We were determined to show our people in the Caribbean that, as university leaders, we are confident. We are courageous, and we are conscious of our task.”



Campus Council Chair Ms Sharon Christopher

attached to the commission. “While public discourse is in itself welcome,” she stated, “the tone and content of much of the discourse was unfortunate to say the least.”

She explained, “What was recommended is that an executive committee of council, not of management, should be established and chaired by the Chancellor. This executive committee would have fewer members, would meet more regularly, and would be responsible for assisting council in carrying out its oversight responsibilities by being a first port-of-call, so to speak, for many of the matters that would come before council at its annual meeting.”

The commission also examined student fees. “The commission was mindful of the challenges being faced by regional governance to fund affordable tertiary education for its citizens on a long term, sustainable basis,” said Ms Christopher. She noted that the commission pushed for the provision of financial assistance for students in need.

Ms Christopher urged the student body to read the report carefully before coming to conclusions. “Do not just accept unsubstantiated rhetoric. Examine the facts. Come to your own point-of-view.”

Sir Hilary stated that the St Augustine campus has performed well over the past year, keeping doors open to students while foreign entities have been turning students away. “The University did a deep dive into the challenges that we were facing. We were determined to show our people in the Caribbean that, as university leaders, we are confident. We are courageous, and we are conscious of our task.”

He highlighted the diligence of the UWI Seismic Research Centre which he said saved many lives during the volcanic activity in St Vincent. He underlined UWI’s significant contribution to the region’s COVID-19 strategy. “Before the first case of COVID arrived in the Caribbean on March 13, we had already established a COVID task force,” he noted. “I have no doubt that we helped our region to save thousands of lives through our absolutely focused dedication.”

Both Ms Christopher and Sir Hilary took the time to congratulate Prof Copeland for his leadership as the time of his retirement nears. “His establishment of an innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem, beginning in 2016 and expanding in scope every year since then, gave the St Augustine campus a head start in 2020 when the challenges wrought by COVID-19 first began to rear their heads,” explained Ms Christopher. Sir Hilary commended Prof Copeland for helping rally the UWI principals around the strategic plan. Of his leadership, he stated, “You have shown that St Augustine campus is resilient. When it is mobilised, our colleagues and our students are committed to a positive approach to the future.”

The Campus Councils are the governing body of The UWI. This annual presentation acts as a business meeting to highlight the performance of the University in the past year. It also debuts the annual and faculty reports.

■ To view highlights from the **2020/2021 UWI St Augustine Annual Report**, visit <https://sta.uwi.edu/annualreport/report.php>

■ CARNIVAL AFTER COVID

The lilting sounds of the voice of Winston McGarland Bailey, **The Mighty Shadow**, often filled my childhood home. Like mine, many households have a deep love for the artist who spoke to what Dr Suzanne Burke refers to as “...the Caribbean condition, in ways that are distinctly accessible, resonant, and revolutionary as a form of joy and a portal for release”.

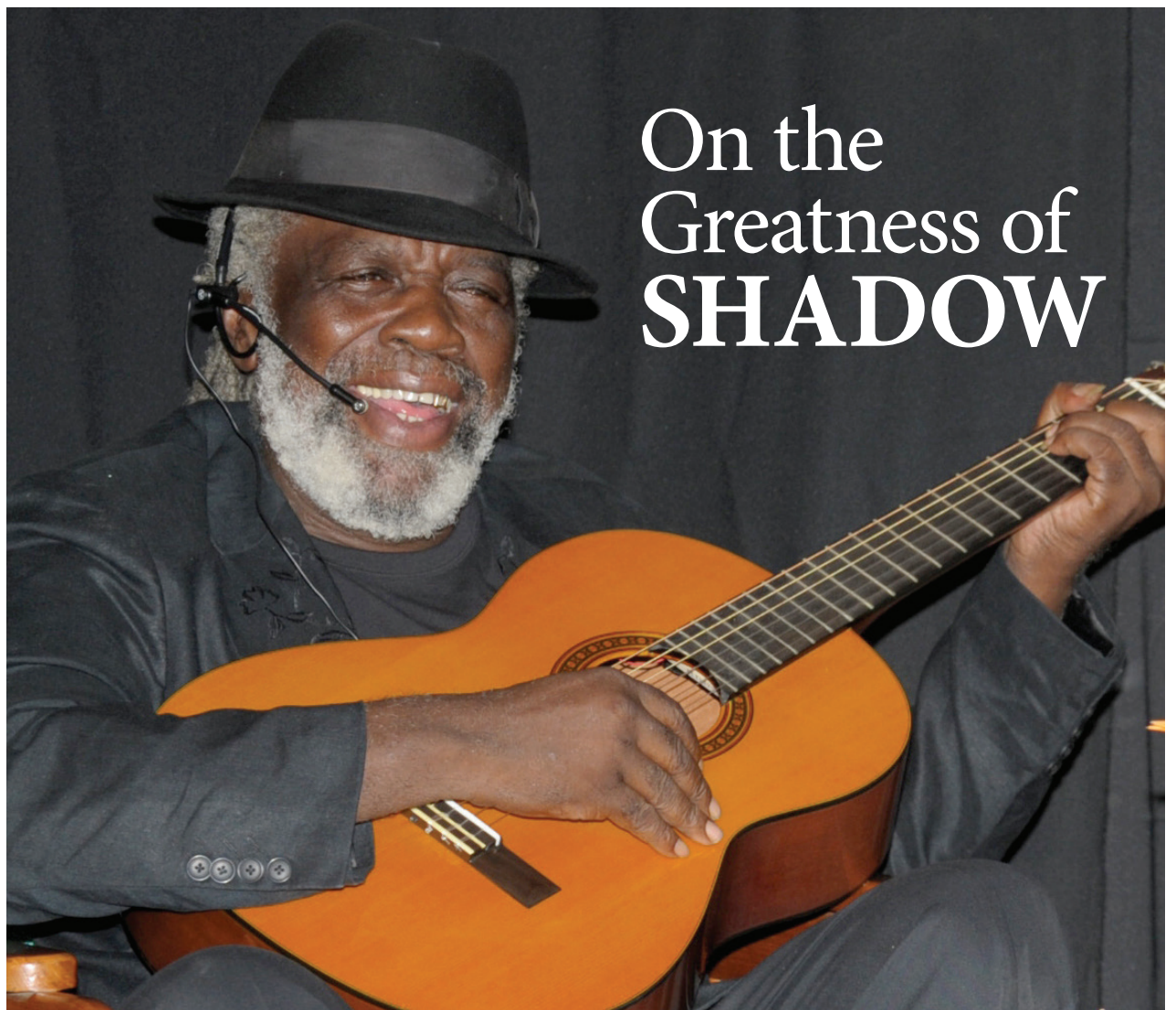
In the midst of an ongoing and ever-changing pandemic, music has become a most vital ‘portal for release’, and it was the conditions of lockdown that inspired Dr Burke and a group of other music enthusiasts – including Sean Samad, Erica Ashton, Omari Ashby and John Gill – to begin having a series of bi-monthly meetings (which were really bi-monthly listening parties). They call themselves Groundation Foundation.

“During lockdown, we started having these listening parties,” said Dr Burke, Head of the Department of Literary, Cultural and Communication Studies at UWI St Augustine. “We would do themes like empowerment, freedom, etc. And then we kind of pivoted, as the two months of lockdown turned into two years, and we started focusing on particular artists.” And naturally, Shadow became the topic of conversation. The morning after that heated Saturday night discussion, she could feel that the depth of topics being shared needed to be explored in a wider space.

The richness of that night would become the precursor to “Dreadness – The Mystical Power, Philosophy and Performance of Shadow”, a two-day symposium on Shadow and his body of work that ran from March 3-4. Months after his 80th birthday, which was on October 4th, the symposium sought to celebrate and analyse some of the themes, ideas and musical choices that made Shadow’s work so unique and reflective of the society around him, through the lens of the concept of “Dreadness”.

Rayshawn Pierre, who opened the discussion with her paper entitled, “Uncovering the Canon – The Sound of Social Agency”, addressed the meaning of the word and how it defined Shadow’s work. “Dictionaries do not provide a large enough scope for the word Dreadness, and perhaps this is a good thing... Dreadness is disruption. This has less to do with the dominant worldview and everything to do with the will to dismantle that which has been deemed common but dysfunctional— and at any possible cost.”

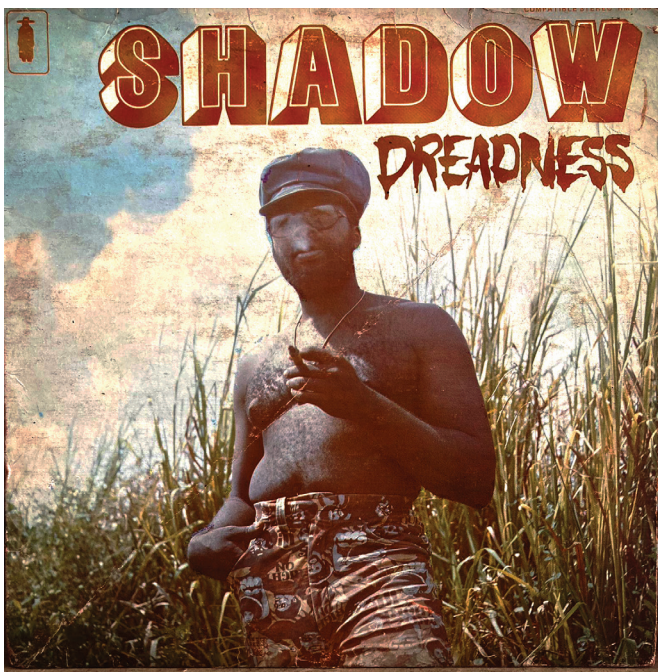
Winston Bailey was, seemingly effortlessly, a voice of the people. And even if judges on stages did not always recognise this, the crowds did. He was able to speak on topics that truly moved the people, because he truly was of the people. “Living in the small town of Mt Lambert, we saw Shadow moving amongst us regularly in his unfussy way from his home in Mt Hope,” recollected Jessel Murray, the Deputy Dean for Distance and Outreach in the Faculty of Humanities. “We can imagine if he were here now, he would



BY AMY LI BAKSH

*I believe in the stars in the dark night.
I believe in the sun in the daylight.
I believe in the little children.
I believe in life and its problems*

The Mighty Shadow, “My Belief”



From Left: Dr Suzanne Burke with DJ Kabuki, DJ Honey Colada, DJ virtual Dingolay Dance Party held on the final day of *Dreadness*.

wonder what all the fuss is about. He was a man like that.”

Quiet, introverted, but fiercely observant in his music. He was not always given his roses (although he was presented with an Honorary Degree by The UWI in 2018, the year of his passing), but he knew the worth of the music he was creating. Abeo Jackson, who presented on day two of the conference her offering entitled “Man Cyah Take Horn: The Interactions of Colonialism, Capitalism, and Gender Stereotyping”, said of the maestro that he was “...extremely sure of his own Dreadness as a lyricist and observer of the world.” And even today, decades after it was penned, his music rings true to the society we live in now. He spoke of the realities of poverty, of the nature of Caribbean relationships, of the ancestral traditions that trace lines back from our lives to those that came before us. These ideas are evergreen; but now, in the face of a post-pandemic world, they are more relevant than ever. “When everything is moving, normally, you may not have the time to reflect on the structures of power that hinder you, both internal and external,” said Dr Burke. “Because the pandemic slowed us down, it gave us the opportunity to really reflect and analyse these structures that have been with us forever.”

As several of the symposium panelists noted, Shadow’s work has always been associated with some of the darker characters in our Carnival history – Devil mas, Jab molassies, midnight robbers.

*Long ago in Tobago
The Carnival was not so
Was plenty jab jab and devil
They came down to Les Coteaux...*



Pay the Devil was a tribute to one of the masqueraders of Shadow’s Tobago childhood, and throughout his music he had an affinity for this type of mas.

As Rayshawn Pierre noted in her symposium presentation, “Shadow, like these custodians of darkness, has never been afraid of what it means to be dark.”

While Shadow had a penchant for incorporating our history and culture into his lyrical writing, he was not stuck in the past. Martin Raymond, assistant professor at the University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT) within the digital media arts programme and one of the musical minds who has shaped the sounds of much of our popular music, spoke on his experiences working with Shadow and seeing firsthand how his mind worked:

“He knows that music has always been rooted in these ancestral traditions,” said Raymond. “He was always forward thinking. In fact, one could actually describe Shadow in the canon of an Afro-Futurist.” As poignant as his work still is now, one cannot help but feel that he must



Winston Bailey was, seemingly effortlessly, a voice of the people. And even if judges on stages did not always recognise this, the crowds did. He was able to speak on topics that truly moved the people, because he truly was of the people.



have had some sort of strange insight into the trajectory of a world after his death.

In the days following what might be the most unusual and unprecedented Carnival we have ever experienced, it was interesting to hear the speakers reflect on Shadow’s understanding of Carnival’s role in upending the status quo and subverting the power dynamics in our postcolonial Caribbean. What would he make of Carnival 2022? One can only wonder. With local musicians and artistes in particular having to restructure their way of living and creating for the past two years, our music is moving in unexpected and new directions out of necessity. But we hope that the creators of tomorrow can continue the legacy of our ancestral traditions and, as Dr Burke said of Shadow, continue “speaking truth to power”.

With so much vibrant conversation coming out of this dive into the works of Shadow, I wanted to know if there was more to come. “People have been asking the same question that you’ve been asking,” said Dr Burke with a laugh. As far as Shadow goes, there are hopes to continue the discussion with a focus on his album covers and the stories that he told visually as well. “Those album covers were artistic pieces in and of themselves... You could just read Shadow’s album covers and read all of the things that he was trying to say in his music.”

And of course, the rest of the listening party topics will hopefully be expanded on as well. “We’ve decided that we will continue to interrogate the popular musics of Trinidad and Tobago, and the icons of our popular musics... And so, we will continue this process of us looking at ourselves and examining our society through the work of our popular music icons.”

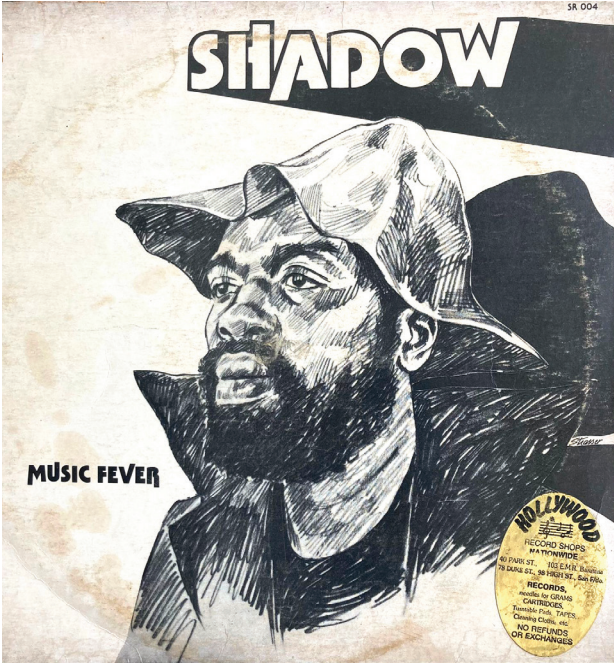
One of the exciting aspects of the conference was hearing perspectives from great minds from across both The UWI and UTT. “One of the things that I try to do, in the conferences that I am involved in, I try to bring in UTT, because they have a music programme,” says Dr Burke. “As national academics working in this area, we need to reach across the aisle and say — what are you doing with your programme? We are too small to be in silos.”

With music keeping many of us afloat right now, we cannot underestimate its value in capturing the truth of our lives. “This is really how people cope every day,” said Dr Burke. “Every day, people listen to music, and it gives them the ability to go out and face whatever they’re facing.” And so, we must celebrate the music that tells our stories, and reflects the world back at us in ways that sometimes speak truths we might not be ready to hear.

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



John Gill, and master of ceremonies Mark Nottingham at the



■ CARNIVAL AFTER COVID

It's a monthly online national conversation, moderated by Denise Demming and, on March 4, the focus was on the economics of A Taste of Carnival, the National Carnival Commission's offering for 2022.

The main presenter was Dr Jo-anne Tull, a lecturer in cultural industries development and management at The UWI. Dr Tull explored the intersections between economics and culture—a largely neglected area of research—and used Carnival as an example.

Her central premise was that the idea of Carnival as primarily an experience must be re-evaluated in the context of economics “if we are giving contemplation to trade and export, and if we are serious about sustainable development.”

Traditionally, she said, that notion of a “fleeting experience” is the way Carnival has been conceptualised. It is not a surprising interpretation given the approach to its staging and management over the years. Wendell Manwarren, an artist, producer, and educator, and one of the panellists at the discussion, provided a useful breakdown of how this functions when he noted that, during the season, people get locked into their particular interests almost to the exclusion of everything else. Wirebenders bend, pannists steel themselves, masmakers sew, glue and construct costumes, calypsonians compose, soca and chutney performers get into their grooves, and fete promoters market and coordinate their events. It is an enormous range of activities, covering a wide expanse of economic ventures that remain lodged inside silos. Everyone's interaction with the overall event is filtered through their individual niches.

For Dr Tull, all of these seemingly disparate acts are part of the Carnival ecosystem. It is a way of seeing that will enable “holistic conceptualisation, planning, development and analysis.”

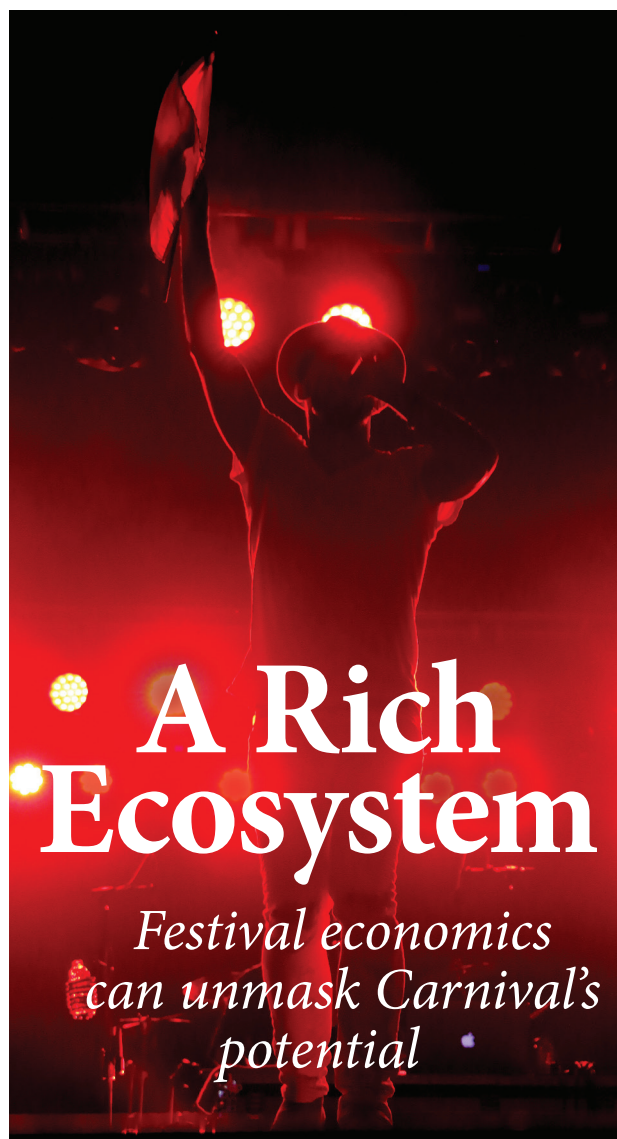
“Measuring it as an experience limits both the concept and the scope of what the Carnival means, as if it were only about a moment, as if it were confined only to its immediate stakeholder groups, and because of that, its broader impacts tend to be overlooked,” she said. “That is why they were able to come up with the term, A Taste of Carnival.”

She defined festival economics as a way to capture, measure and assess data derived from the activities, processes and stakeholders within a cultural ecosystem that features performances, participation and practices such as a Carnival ecosystem.

If the focus remains on the aspect of experience, it is unwieldy to assess but, girded on an ecosystem, it provides different tools and forces us to recognise components that are often ignored.

“Measuring is knowing,” Dr Tull said. It is at the core of everything she has done in her Carnival studies research over more than a decade. Too many elements fall outside the usual parameters of evaluation, and this stymies overall development. She wants to see policy shifts as a result of research based on the festival economics she advocates passionately.

“We don't know the level of investment by communities,” she said, especially those associated with the responsibility for traditional mas forms. We don't know the internal expenditures from other communities. We have not even thought to measure such things as the increase in purchases of SIM cards or car



BY VANEISA BAKSH



The value of academic research, such as that done by **Dr Joanne Tull**, should be factored into measurements of the festival ecosystem.

rentals by visitors. She revealed that, for many tourists, it is common for their individual spend to be around US\$14,000 for a visit during the season.

The usual approach to planning is to focus on festival programming and marketing, to offer an experience. The data captured from this is woefully inadequate for planning because it is confined to only one segment of the ecosystem.

The global pandemic has forced participants at all levels to rethink their strategic approaches to the festival. It is an encouraging sign of the capacity to adapt to change. The dependence on state agencies, such as the National Carnival Commission, for direction and permissions was cast aside as creatives and others saw their financial survival threatened. Manwarren said that, for him and his 3Canal team, it was a matter of evaluating the health and safety conditions before going ahead with their plans.

Dr Tull proposed that the focus should be shifted to the entire ecosystem: creatives and creative entrepreneurs; creative communities and their activities; Carnival experience-related and supporting industries and enterprises; facilitative infrastructure; education (such as the Carnival studies at The UWI's DCFA, and broader aspects taught at secondary schools), research and development platforms; security; health; statutory bodies and of course, the ultimate goal of shifting policies to provide a more relevant form of preserving and protecting various aspects of the cultural heritage of the region.

Dr Tull's work has not been confined to studying the Trinidad and Tobago experience. She has served as a consultant throughout the Caribbean, and has been able to assess the similarities and differences in each environment. The data-gathering she advocates would benefit all of the carnivals as it would increase the capacity to provide complementary festivals that can still maintain individual characteristics.

Based on his experiences at several global carnivals (150 such in the world!), Manwarren believed that visitors come to partake of local fare, not to have versions adapted for foreign tastes. There is a creature known as a Carnival tourist, someone whose pleasure is found in globe-trotting to sample exotic festivals (like a cricket tourist). It might mean some level of accommodation, but not an abandonment of the cultural heritage that we have to preserve and honour even as we seek to create a viable industry out of it.

Dr Roger Hosein was astonished at the figure of US\$14,000 as an individual expenditure that he jumped in to declare his regret that he had not been able to pursue research into this realm.

Others shared their perspectives as well: Camille Parsons, CEO at Advanced Dynamics Ltd, on the challenges with new digital approaches, like streaming. Robert Amar, with a stridently business approach, and Prof Anthony Gonzales, who asked about the distribution of gains. The discussions served to accentuate how many more are needed.

Dr Tull's concept of recalibrating research to measure an ecosystem rather than an experience was a compelling one that deserves to be embraced and supported. She ended by hinting that, with all the unknowns surrounding the financial revenues of the existing industry, we might be surprised to see how favourably it compares with oil and gas.

Carnival before the era of social distancing.



■ CAMPUS NEWS

A Creative Lament for Festivals Lost

After two years without Carnival, students express themselves through mas making

BY SERAH ACHAM

On the surface, Carnival is about spectacle – the splendour of Trinbagonian culture, of our people, wrapped up in a dazzle of feathers, beads, glitter, soca, and steelpan. And we love it, we miss it, we can't wait to have it back. But, beneath the spectacle, and intertwined within it, is so much more. Our collective Carnival, as a nation, and our individual experiences of Carnival, are whatever we want them to be – need them to be, in fact. And our festival bends and contorts to give us just that, so at the end, we are reinvigorated.

In recognition of the two years of loss we've endured due to the COVID-19 pandemic – loss of so much and in so many ways, including those Carnival celebrations we hold so dear – and wanting to provide an outlet through which we could express and release our grief, Robert Young, owner and lead designer of The Cloth, brought to the fore this more that Carnival gives when he conceptualised the theme of Vulgar Fraction's Carnival band for 2022, 'Mas' Mourning – Mourning Mas' – Becoming Wreaths'.

Vulgar Fraction, an independent mas' production group that counts more than 20 years of Carnivals in its lifetime, encourages and facilitates participants' creativity by involving them in the creation of their own costumes. This year, mas' players were to use the dried leaves and flowers reflective of the wreath.

An opportunity to make their own mas' was the outlet Dr Marsha Pearce, UWI lecturer and co-ordinator of The University's Visual Arts Programme, knew her students needed. So, she collaborated with Young and Vulgar Fraction to turn her students' participation in the band into a course assignment.

Dr Pearce teaches a course titled "Critical Readings in Caribbean Arts and Culture," which is mandatory for all students at the DCFA (music, dance, theatre, carnival, and visual arts) and is part of the Faculty of Humanities and Education's Cultural Studies minor programme. Therefore, the Becoming Wreaths assignment was done by a range of students.

'Mas' Mourning – Mourning Mas' – Becoming Wreaths' was launched on February 17, 2022, at The Cloth's atelier, Propaganda Space, in Belmont, with a panel discussion featuring Carnival practitioners and cultural scholars: Dr Pearce; Celeste Walters, art psychotherapist; Wendell Manwarren, actor, rapso artiste, music producer, and Carnival bandleader; and Addelon Banjela Braveboy, singer, songwriter, composer and Orisha high chief priest; and Ardene Sirjoo, broadcaster and producer, who served as moderator. The launch was open and accessible to the public via a Facebook livestream which was projected onto the outside wall of the atelier for anyone who wanted to view and participate in the event from nearby.

Following a tribute by Christian Strong to loved ones who have passed, Sirjoo introduced the panel and the conversation began with Pearce's explanation of the word 'wreath' in the context of the theme.



DCFA Theatre Arts student Zacary Sosa in his costume entitled "The Eternal Broom". It was made in memory of the late dramatist, director, and actor Tony Hall.

'Wreath', Pearce explained, has roots in the word 'writhe', meaning "to contort ... to twist and curl the body into emotional discomfort, mental anguish or physical pain". While the loss wrought by the pandemic has caused us to instinctively become wreaths, "to curl ourselves up ... shrinking into small circles ... becoming like tight fists," she says, we can make this transformation a conscious decision, which "has the potential for openness, connection and community".

For Pearce, this theme was a call by Vulgar Fraction "to a conscious act of opening, a deliberate shifting of ourselves from small, tight circles to something monumental," creating a loop within which we hold our ancestors and honour those still with us. Representing "more than endings," she said, this "infinite loop [is] a cycle powerfully marked by healing and beginnings ... a contrast to the paralysis or the going-nowhereness that immense pain can cause."

This opening is what Pearce wanted her students to achieve through their participation in Vulgar Fraction's band. "I experienced that shrinking in the virtual classroom setting," she explained, as she witnessed her students deal with death and sickness, some logging into class after returning home from a hospital visit. In asking her students to "engage in this deliberate act" of becoming wreaths, she said, she wanted to

"allow them the space to acknowledge, to recognise and to process what they were feeling [and] experiencing". She also wanted them to focus on something "life affirming, celebratory of survival and what it means to exist".

Walters followed with a distinction between grief and mourning – internal feelings vs. external expression. As "a space for us to be in community with each other ... for processing, memorialising," she said, Carnival is an appropriate tool for mourning and particularly so for "a mas' like 'Becoming Wreaths' ... It's about giving people an opportunity to mourn and maybe even touch material again because, throughout this pandemic, there's been this tactile deprivation, and just interacting with the material alone can encourage that processing."

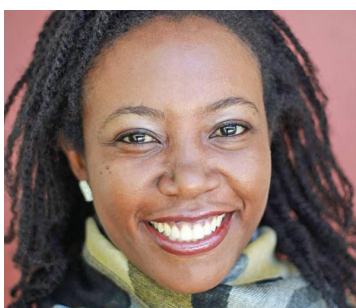
Co-founder of local and loved rapso group, 3 Canal – which turns 25 this year – Manwarren grew up with and into Carnival. He said that 2021 was his first year without our festival and "the idea that this thing that we've done religiously, ritually, for the last 25 years suddenly was not there, the absence, the loss, was beyond palpable".

He recalled a conversation with the late Tony Hall in the early days of the pandemic, where the cultural icon reminded him that Carnival "is not always about spectacle". In allowing her students the opportunity to join the 'Becoming Wreaths' mas', he acknowledged that Pearce was teaching her students that there is a deeper meaning behind our Carnival. "Every mas' is a mas', even the most cokey eye mas'," he said. "We make the Carnival ... [it's] the only time we ever fight for something, so nobody can come and tell you what form this time ought to take and what you should do."

A religious leader, Braveboy spoke of the importance of commemorating life and death from the perspective of the Ifa tradition. As a priest, his role is to comfort and support bereaved families in their grief, as well as to perform burial ceremonies – of which he has done over 30 during the last four months due to COVID-19 – and he feels loss heavily. "When I look at mass mourning, I see it in so many areas of life ... We know that death is important, just like life, and both are interwoven ... [but] that moment where you are detached from that physical appearance of that person is so overwhelming at times."

After the panellists discussed experiences of loss, grief and how the meaning of Carnival has transformed for them two years into the pandemic, Sirjoo invited Young to share his own perspective.

"There is a way I hear people talk about the pandemic," Young began. "It's like we lost some kind of connection to people ... to ourselves ... So the process of making the mas', of creating their own costume, forces the person playing the mas' to find themselves again. "It's allowing my brothers and sisters," many of whom may not have picked up a paint brush in decades, to "get a chance to ... say 'I will attempt to' and," Young said, "there's a magic that happens... we explore and we explore and things came about."



Vulgar Fraction, an independent mas' production group that counts more than 20 years of Carnivals in its lifetime, encourages and facilitates participants' creativity by involving them in the creation of their own costumes. This year, mas' players were to use the dried leaves and flowers reflective of the wreath.

■ ART



An offering to the Diaspora

Two DCFA graduates share their vision
in an exhibition at Frye Gallery in Seattle

What's in a photograph? For Arnaldo James, Department of Creative and Festival Arts (DCFA) alum, prolific Trinbagonian photographer, graphic artist, curator, and educator, it's the way a photo can be open to interpretation.

“What appeals to me is the duality of photography, moments are captured that can be a document and a construct. Without context, photographs embody nonfiction and fiction, that's really exciting to me. I intentionally create photographs that straddle real-world observation and constructed moments.”

Arnaldo's mission with his art has been to bring honour to the experience of Black people, and this calling is especially evident in his current collaboration with Christopher Paul Jordan (also a DCFA alum) to present *In the Interim: Ritual Ground for a Future Black Archive* at the Frye Museum in the Seattle, Washington. This project, Arnaldo says, is an offering made to the African Diaspora. It is, in fact, the duo's second collaboration, the first have been the *Mission Black Satellite* exhibit in 2018.

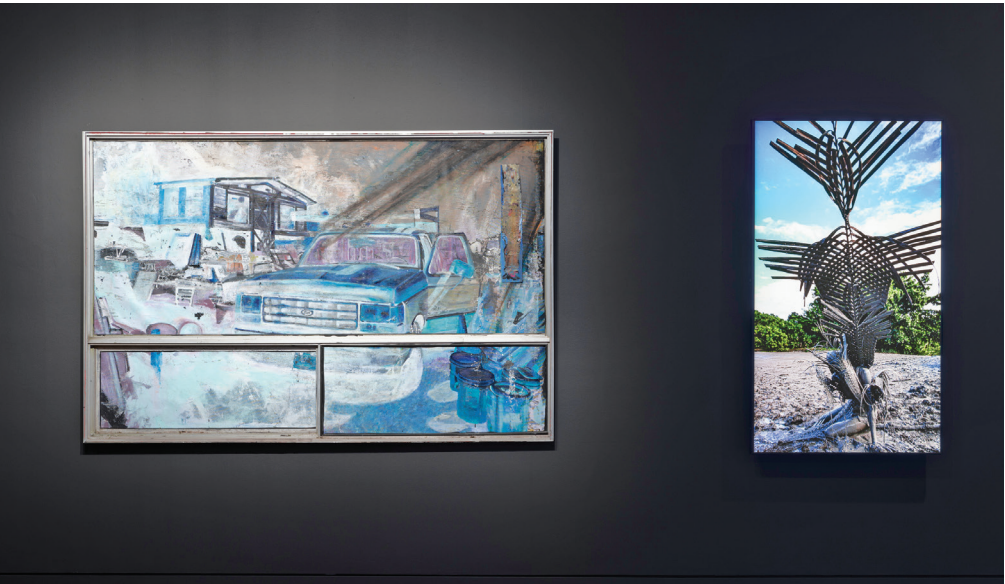
The *In the Interim* exhibit was made possible by the James W Ray Venture Projects Award through the Raynier Institute and Foundation at the Frye Art Museum and the Artist Trust Consortium. It is the result of the work that both young artists built upon from a friendship forged through their shared art experience, after meeting in 2014. Developing their skills during their time at the UWI DCFA, they were able to create work that challenges the current understanding of Black



Christopher Paul Jordan. PHOTO: CHUCK TAYLOR



Arnaldo James





audiences, and the Black Diaspora. Deeply inspired by their shared passion for Pan-Africanism, Black histories, and Black circumstances, *In the Interim* is an examination of what makes the Black experience unique.

Both artists, black men from different cultural backgrounds, hold individual perspectives that they brought to the *In the Interim* exhibit, and to their art overall. Arnaldo's Trinbagonian awareness allows him to dig deep into the traditional mas culture, as well as the spiritual connections that are often made through water. His pieces bring the West African spirituality that has been coded into the Trinbagonian cultural DNA to the forefront. Traditional mas has always had an otherworldly and spiritual element, and these aspects are very prominent when viewing his photography for the exhibit. Christopher builds upon the idea that the Black experience can be viewed through the panes of a window. His paintings were made on windows that were retrieved from historically Black neighbourhoods in Tacoma (Washington State).

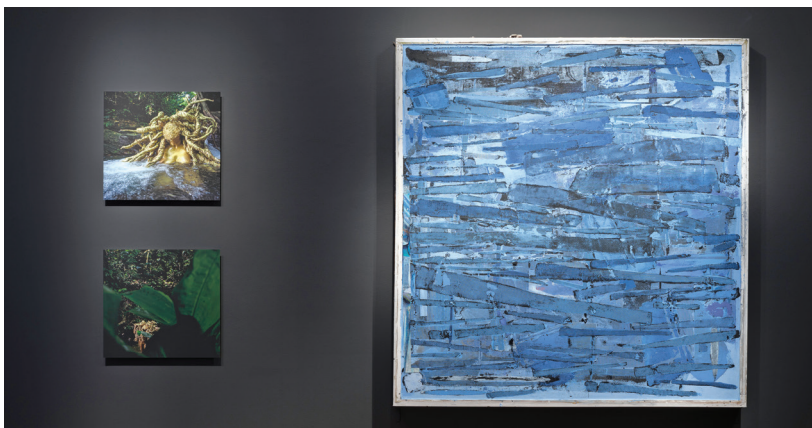
In the Interim challenges the current culture of inclusivity and the legitimacy of needing Black-only spaces: safe spaces where Black audiences can create, identify, and exist.

Thus far, the responses to *In the Interim: Ritual Ground for a Future Black Archive* exhibition have been positive, and Arnaldo and Christopher intend to continue collaborating in the future. For both, Arnaldo says, the work has just begun:

"Chris and I are on a mission for life."



Installation view of *In the Interim: Ritual Ground for a Future Black Archive*, Frye Art Museum, Seattle, February 12–May 15, 2022. PHOTOS: JUEQIAN FAN



MARQUISE BROWN

DCFA Dance graduate to teach and perform at Edinburgh Festival Carnival

BY JOEL HENRY



Marquise Brown

Marquise Brown, a recent graduate of the Dance Unit within UWI St Augustine's Department of Creative and Festival Arts (DCFA), will soon be taking his skill and knowledge of dance to Europe. The young dancer will spend three months in Scotland teaching, doing workshops, performing, and helping with the Edinburgh Jazz and Blues Festival Carnival taking place in July 2022.

The activity is being organised by the Edinburgh Festival and the Belmont Freetown Cultural Arts and Folk Performing Company in Trinidad and Tobago. He is scheduled to stay at the University of Edinburgh. Marquise is one of the members of Belmont Freetown taking part in the cultural exchange initiative.

"I'll be working with other artists from different countries," he said, "along with another Trinidadian dancer, Ms Okia Brathwaite." Among his activities, Marquise will be "teaching some of the folk dances of Trinidad and Tobago, like the Calypso dance and Sailor dance, in different schools and communities in Scotland."

The initiative is an emerging artists' exchange programme run by the Edinburgh Festival. Belmont Freetown "consists mainly of young adults" and has the main objective of fostering "youth engagement through cultural and arts around the community," a statement from the company explained. Marquise is a senior dance member.

"He is very much what we need for creative and festival arts," said Ms Deboleena Paul, Lecturer and Coordinator of the Dance Unit at DCFA. "He is very passionate about the art form, and very patient. He gives himself time to learn."

Marquise is one of the students that was highlighted previously in UWI TODAY in an article on Indian dance and music at DCFA, https://sta.uwi.edu/uwitoday/archive/march_2020/article3.asp. At the time, a final year student, he commented that, "we have to give back that same love and appreciation for the art itself" that teachers like Ms Paul gave to them.

Now, he is elated about this new opportunity:

"I've always wanted to travel and dance, and this is truly a dream come true. On the trip I want to share my culture, knowledge, and offer a great presentation for Trinidad and Tobago. I also want to learn and experience other cultures. One of the best parts of the trip is that I will be able to really learn a lot from not only the Scottish, but from people from different parts of the world."

He also recognised the role that the DCFA has played in his development, saying it had "made [him] into the person able to get this opportunity". The Dance Unit, he said, had exposed him to different genres and helped build him as a teacher.



■ GLOBAL AFFAIRS

The Russia-Ukraine War

Global and Regional Impact

BY JACQUELINE LAGUARDIA-MARTINEZ,
DAVE SEERATTAN AND ANNITA MONTOUTE

The Russian invasion of Ukraine, which started in February 2022, can be viewed within a realist framework of power transitions in which major shifts in balance of power could potentially be a source of conflict and war. US hegemony is increasingly being challenged, and Ukraine is the battleground for balancing Russia's place in the region and the world. This development could lead to a recalibration of global power relations, and the violent transition to a new global geopolitical order. Today's scenario is unlike the bipolar order of the Cold War era which had a clear division between capitalist and communist blocs surrounded by non-aligned states. Instead, today's geopolitical environment is marked by a myriad of actors with multiple and contradictory interests struggling to advance their priorities in an environment defined by COVID-19 and global economic slowdown.

This invasion has deep historical roots, going back to the founding of the first Slavic state in the 9th century, Kievan Rus, which was a federation of states consisting of modern-day Ukraine, Russia, and Belarus. The breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991 and Ukraine's independence from it, coupled with Russia's increasing sense of insecurity, are among the contemporary roots of the invasion. Considering Russia's reduced status, it feels threatened by Western incursion in its sphere of influence, and the disregard for its position regionally and globally after the implosion of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). Moscow has seen the Soviet space crumble at a juncture where the importance of preserving areas of influence – as agreed in 1945 during the Yalta Conference – is key to maintaining the geopolitical order. Russia presents itself as a fortress under siege, threatened by the United States, the North Atlantic Treaty Alliance (NATO) and the European Union (EU). Ukraine has become the arena in which Russia aspires to neutralise the threats to its security and, in the eyes of many, to restore the glory of the Soviet era and feed ambitious nationalist dreams of imperial restoration, emulating the Catherinian Era.

Russia's armed invasion is a clear violation of the territorial integrity of Ukraine and the principles of international law. It has led to the greatest humanitarian catastrophe since the end of World War II, worsening impoverishment and deepening bitter divisions in a multiethnic and culturally diverse society that used to live in peaceful coexistence decades ago. The invasion is only one among many current armed conflicts, such as the civil wars in Ethiopia and Myanmar, and the wars in Yemen and Syria, all of which deserve our consideration and support for civilians and victims.

The Russia-Ukraine war also has implications for South-South relations, particularly for the Brazil, Russia, India, and South Africa (BRICS) group. Among other things, the bloc is seen to represent the interests of developing countries in global fora. Since 2015, several developments have fragmented and weakened the group, and reduced its effectiveness and prestige. Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 and, now, its illegal war against Ukraine is increasing its international isolation. This is a further blow to the BRICS group's credibility to advance the interests of the global South, the vast majority of which – particularly Caribbean states – subscribe to the norms of the global order. Besides, BRICS countries have subordinated these principles to selfish realist interests, in their stance on Russia's actions. Politically, the war strengthens Russia's bonds with China and India, which would like to re-integrate Taiwan and Pakistani Kashmir into their respective countries.

The BRICS group, particularly through its New Development Bank (NDB), offers Russia a way around Western sanction. After Crimea's annexation, in contravention of its policies to not fund sanctioned parties, the NDB continued supporting Russian projects because Russia is a co-founder and significant shareholder. The NDB's financing in local currency allows Russia to evade international sanctions which involve transactions in US dollars only.

The invasion sets a dangerous precedent for territorial disputes and the behaviour of more powerful parties in these circumstances, including in the Caribbean region. For example, the invasion conveys a particular message to Venezuela in relation to its claim of 3/4 of Guyana. Although Caracas has indicated otherwise, Guyana's new oil finds may further incentivise Venezuela's territorial claim. The invasion could also give support to secessionist movements, globally, and in the Caribbean region.

Considering global economic interdependence, the war will impact the global economy mainly through financial and trade channels. The financial and trade sanctions imposed on Russia have already had far-reaching adverse effects on the international commodity and financial markets. The V-shaped global economic recovery expected in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic is therefore in doubt. At the very least, global growth which was projected to be 4.4 percent in 2022 will be marked down. The extent of the decline will depend on the duration of the conflict, whether it widens to include other countries, the evolution of

the COVID-19 pandemic, and other potential shocks that may arise, such as natural disasters and other geopolitical conflicts. In the Caribbean, the main impact of the war will be on food and energy price inflation. The region is therefore likely to experience increased difficulty in terms of food and energy security. This will complicate already fraught supply chains, and place increased pressures on businesses and consumers. The spike in energy prices will benefit the energy producers, but most other Caribbean countries are energy importers. In general, countries are to expect huge increases in their import bills.

Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS) have pre-existing weaknesses in their external accounts which are likely to intensify. International financial conditions may also tighten, which would accentuate problems for countries with high external financing requirements. In this context, it is likely that some states may require support from multilateral financial institutions, implying that the footprint of the IMF in the region may get larger. Employment and income levels weakened by the COVID-19 pandemic could deteriorate further, and increase poverty. These developments will complicate the economic recovery process underway in the region.

Considering the economic constraints and the geopolitical challenges related to the conflict, the Caribbean must act decisively and strategically. The region must make full use of instruments created or retrofitted by the IMF in the wake of the international financial crisis. Central banks will have to sharpen surveillance of financial institutions to safeguard financial stability. Leveraging international and regional cooperation would be critical to the region's successful navigation of this crisis. In particular, the international community will need to preserve and increase access to international liquidity, and facilitate orderly sovereign debt restructurings. Investing in renewable energy and making economies more resilient to climate change is also critical in a region with high exposure to natural disasters.

Additionally, the region needs to continue to raise its voice as champions of peace and diplomacy. It should strengthen regional integration, and improve alliances with Latin America. Promoting regional food and energy security, together with safeguarding the permanence of Latin American and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace, should be at the core of Caribbean SIDS interests in this time of uncertainties where, unfortunately, history has showed us that the smallest and more vulnerable suffer the most.

■ ENVIRONMENT



Plastic Pollution

A threat to the Caribbean's coastal marine ecosystems

BY LA DAANA KADAKANHAI

Did you know that the Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem (CLME) is recognised as the most biodiverse region in the Western Tropical Atlantic Ocean?

Within this region, the coastal and marine ecosystems (beaches, mangrove swamps, seagrass beds, coral reefs and the deep sea) provide crucially important habitats for resident and migratory organisms. Coastal communities rely on these ecosystems and the provisioning, regulating, supporting and cultural services that they provide, which directly impact human well-being. Yet, the biodiversity within this region is under severe threat due to several stressors, such as climate change, overharvesting of natural resources, coastal development, pollution, and abnormal influxes of Sargassum seaweed.

At the global scale, several initiatives have recognised the importance of our interconnected oceans and set ambitious goals that aim to address some of these stressors like plastic pollution. Under the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development, Goal 14 (Life Below Water) aims “to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development”. Target 14.1 specifically aims “to prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution” by 2025. The United Nations (UN) also declared a Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021–2030), with the hope that, at the end of 10 years, there will be six specific outcomes: A Clean Ocean, A Healthy and Resilient Ocean, A Productive Ocean, A Predicted Ocean, A Safe Ocean, and An Accessible Ocean. It is envisioned that one of these ambitious decade outcomes will be “a clean ocean where the sources of pollution are identified, quantified and reduced, and pollutants removed from the ocean”.

It is clear that coastal and marine ecosystems within the CLME are important, and that plastic pollution is one of several anthropogenic stressors putting pressure on these ecosystems. It is therefore imperative that action, underpinned by sound scientific data, must be taken to mitigate plastic pollution. However, the scientific initiatives in this present decade must build upon those that have been undertaken in the decades preceding this one.

It is in this context that study “The status of marine debris/litter and plastic pollution in the Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem (CLME): 1980–2020” was conceived and conducted (<https://authors.elsevier.com/a/1eatLzLNSc6cu>).

Published in the scientific journal *Environmental Pollution*, the study sought to assess the state of knowledge (between 1980–2020) on the distribution, quantification, sources, transport and fate of marine debris/litter and microplastics in the coastal/marine environment of the CLME, and the effects of plastics on biodiversity within the CLME. It is the identification of existing knowledge gaps for the Caribbean region that will guide us to prioritise critical areas for future research.

Within the CLME, there have been several snapshots of information based on both peer-reviewed studies and citizen/science-led initiatives such as the International Coastal Clean-up (ICC) events. These snapshots identify marine debris (of which plastic is generally the major component) as a persistent issue in multiple ecosystems and environmental compartments. While plastic debris within the region originates from both land and marine-based sources, the former is more significant. Rivers have been identified as important in transporting mismanaged land-based waste to the marine environment, while oceanic currents transport plastic debris into, inside of, and out of the region. The studies and initiatives prove that plastic debris is a threat to the biodiversity of the CLME.

Plastic pollution is a persistent issue that demands action at all levels. Available data can already inform measures to mitigate the leakage of plastic waste into the marine environment. However, greater efforts are needed to better understand the problem, its causes and effects.

At the latest United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA5) meeting, there was the historic adoption of a resolution that will pave the way for a global treaty on plastic pollution within the next few years. There is therefore global consensus that plastic pollution is an important environmental issue that must be addressed along with issues such as climate change. Trinidad and Tobago and the Caribbean likewise must include it as a priority issue.

■ **To read “The status of marine debris/litter and plastic pollution in the Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem (CLME): 1980–2020”;** visit <https://authors.elsevier.com/a/1eatLzLNSc6cu>

■ **To read “From Pollution to Solution. A global assessment of marine litter and plastic pollution”;** go to <https://www.unep.org/resources/pollution-solution-global-assessment-marine-litter-and-plastic-pollution>

Dr La Daana Kanhai is a Lecturer in the Department of Life Sciences. She was nominated by Trinidad and Tobago to serve on the UN Environment Programme's Scientific Advisory Committee on Marine Litter and Microplastics from 2019 to 2022.

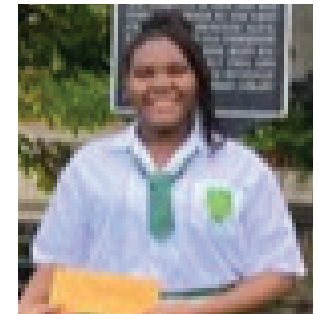
SOCIOLOGY UNIT

secondary school essay competition goes national

BY NATHAN CHAPMAN,
DR BENNIE BERKELEY
AND DR SHELENE GOMES



2021 Sociology Essay Competition
First place winner, **Lana Deo**,
Couva East Secondary School.



2021 Sociology Essay Competition
Third place winner, **Ellena Lewis**,
Couva East Secondary School.

Sociology is one of the tools we can use to understand what's happening in the world today. It provides the skills necessary to change our social conditions for the better. So how do we encourage future generations to engage with the discipline?

In 2021, The UWI St Augustine's Sociology Unit created a secondary school essay competition to give students an opportunity to learn about sociology.

“As a pilot launch of the competition, we were pleased with the overall response from schools. All essays were of high quality, well-researched and point to the potential of these students to become sociologists,” said Ms Fareena Alladin, Instructor in the Sociology Unit. “Moreover, it is our aim to encourage students to pursue sociology so that they can develop their sociological imagination as presented in these essays.”

Dr Anand Rampersad, Lecturer in the Sociology Unit, emphasised the importance of teaching students about sociology and the impact it can make to improve society:

“We are beset by so many social ills – poverty, alienation, unemployment, under employment, labour exploitation, and discrimination are visible and experienced by many in Trinidad and Tobago, six decades after political decolonisation. If we can light a spark in our youth to pursue social sciences such as sociology, it will contribute to a new generation of professionals with the abilities and intention to change Trinidad and Tobago and the region for the better.”

Seven schools participated in the 2021 essay competition: Bishop Anstey High School East and Trinity College East, Couva East Secondary School, Elders' Classes Private School, Holy Faith Convent in Couva, Pleasantville Secondary School, St Augustine Secondary School, and Upper Level Educational Institute. The essay topic was “What is a sociological imagination and what does it have to do with life in Trinidad and Tobago in the second decade of the 21st century?”

The 2021 Sociology Essay Competition winner was Lana Deo from the Couva East Secondary School. Second place went to Leah Dumont from Holy Faith Convent in Couva, and third to Ellena Lewis, also from Couva East Secondary. Prizes included book vouchers, cash, and a tablet computer. The winners were celebrated at the Sociology Virtual Open Lecture in May 2021.

Following the success of its first outing, this year's competition has grown from seven schools to a national contest. The topic of the 2022 essay is: “Sociology has an important role to play in creating a post-pandemic society which is more equitable and sustainable”.

The students were required to reference any two sociological theories/perspectives (Functionalism, Marxism, Interactionism, Feminism, Creolisation, Plural Society, Plantation Society) in their essays. The intention of this year's competition is to give students an opportunity to reflect on the sociological insights and possibilities of building post-pandemic societies. The competition has grown to 17 schools with 34 essay submissions. Winners will receive a monetary prize, tablet, vouchers from the sponsors, and recognition on the Sociology Unit webpage.

Speaking on the development of the competition, Dr Talia Esnard, Head of the Department of Behavioural Sciences, said, “as this initiative mushrooms into what can become a national competition, we look forward to the continued engagement of students and schools on matters that are pertinent to our changing societies.”

■ **For more information on the 2022 Sociology Unit Essay Competition** and information on the unit and the programmes they offer, visit their webpage at the **Department of Behavioural Sciences** site, <https://sta.uwi.edu/fss/behaviouralsciences/sociology>

Nathan Chapman is a PhD candidate in Sociology studying postcolonial slow violence. Dr Bennie Berkeley and Dr Shelene Gomes are lecturers within the Department of Behavioural Sciences.

UWI Calendar of Events | March 2022

DEMAs-RAMPERSAD SEMINAR: The Impact of the Pandemic on the Caribbean Region

March 31

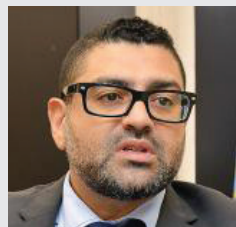
ONLINE

As restrictions on social gathering loosen and confirmed cases of COVID-19 fall, the region is being required to assess the consequences of this disruptive period. This March, UWI St Augustine's Department of Economics will bring together several experts to discuss the pandemic's impact as part of the Demas-Rampersad Seminar Series, a forum for scholarly presentations and discussion.

Participants include:



DR REGAN DEONANAN
Chair of the Demas-Rampersad
Committee and Lecturer



DR HENRY MOONEY
Economic Advisor at the Inter-American
Development Bank



MR DINDIAL RAMRATTAN
Statistician with the Caribbean
Development Bank



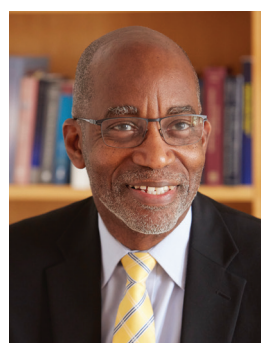
**PROF ABDULLAHI
ABDULKADRIN**
Coordinator of the Statistics and Social
Development Unit at the UN Economic
Commission for Latin America and the
Caribbean (ECLAC)

The seminar takes place on Thursday, March 31,
from 1pm to 3pm on Zoom. For more information,
Email: FSS-DeptEcon@sta.uwi.edu



Department of Behavioural Sciences
4th Biennial Postgraduate Research Conference

DECONSTRUCTING THE 'NEW NORMAL': Prospects and Challenges for Caribbean Societies



Dr David R Williams



Dr Stewart D Smith

DECONSTRUCTING THE NEW NORMAL: Prospects and Challenges for Caribbean Societies

April 7 and 8

ONLINE

The Department of Behavioural Sciences within the Faculty of Social Sciences will host this 4th Biennial Postgraduate Conference showcasing students' projects and research. Attendees will be exposed to discourse on a range of important topics pertinent to the Caribbean and its Diasporas during a global pandemic. Featured speakers include **Dr David R Williams**, Professor of African and African American Studies and of Sociology at Harvard University; Justice of Appeal **Charmaine A Joy Pemberton** of the Supreme Court of Trinidad and Tobago; and **Dr Stewart D Smith**, Senior Health Systems Advisor at Ministry of Health of Trinidad and Tobago.

To register, visit <https://bit.ly/DBSUWI>
<https://youtu.be/LjqWhiwyk0Y>

QRC/UWI celebrate International Women's Day, advocate for an end to gender-based violence

March 8 was International Women's Day (IWD). This year's theme was #BreakTheBias. In celebration of the event, UWI St Augustine's COTE (Conference on the Economy) Youth and IGDS (Institute for Gender and Development Studies) Ignite, joined forces with Queen's Royal College (QRC) for a week of activities.

The celebrations took place under the banner of "She's Royal", a project to raise awareness and inspire action to challenge gender-based violence. QRC's International Women's Week, which ran from March 7 to 11, included competitions, calypsos played throughout the week, and an audio message from the school's Head Boy and Deputy advocating for the end of gender-based violence. Students and staff wore orange, the colour designated by the UN Secretary General's UNiTE to End Violence against Women campaign, on Tuesday, March 8.

