



Back in Black

A Midnight Robber causes sheer panic and terror in the gayelle at The Old Yard 2023. Held on Sunday, February 12 at the Open Campus Quadrangle in St Augustine, this year was the return of this beloved event hosted by the **Carnival Studies Unit of UWI St Augustine's Department of Creative and Festival Arts**. After the long pandemic hiatus, *The Old Yard* reintroduced attendees to traditional characters like *Jamettes*, *Babydolls*, *Blue Devils*, *Jab Molassies*, *Moko Jumbies*, *Gorillas*, and of course, *Midnight Robbers*. It was a day of music, laughter, scandal, learning, dance, great food, and terror, sheer terror. PHOTO: ANEEL KARIM



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FROM THE PRINCIPAL

The UWI's Great Legacy, Cocoa's Sweet Future

Carnival, our grand festival and statement of culture, has ended. Now, the campus and the country are refocussing their efforts on the urgent business of progress. At the end of this first quarter of 2023, UWI St Augustine continues along its productive path, using the time efficiently to meet several of our transformational goals.

Truly, 2023 is a very important year, not only for this campus, but for the entire University of the West Indies. This year, we observe The UWI's 75th anniversary. It was in 1948 that the University College of the West Indies (UCWI) was established in Mona, Jamaica. The college was created following recommendations from the Irvine Committee, the West Indian arm of a UK commission created to look at the provision of higher education in the British colonies.

From this beginning, The UWI bloomed. In 1960, the second campus at St Augustine was established. For the St Augustine campus, birth is also associated with the renowned Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture (ICTA). ICTA was established over 100 years ago in 1921, and is the ancestor of today's Faculty of Food and Agriculture, still the only one of its kind.

The Cave Hill campus in Barbados was realised in 1963. The Open Campus, a distance learning campus created to provide better access to education for Caribbean people without a landed campus, began operations in 2007. Most recently, the Five Islands campus opened its doors in Antigua and Barbuda in 2019.

These structures matter, but The UWI's legacy is much more than campus grounds and buildings. In its 75 years, this institution has educated thousands of Caribbean minds—political leaders, business people, public servants, professionals, scientists, scholars, artists, activists, and organisers for social and community development, and led ground-breaking research that shaped Caribbean civilisation.

This research has also provided an enormous contribution to scholarship internationally. The work of UWI graduates in the arts and sciences has had great impact on the registry of human creativity, ideas of equality and morality, and critical thought. UWI graduates have helped to formulate policy and even led many of our post-independence states.

In the scope of history, even the history of the West, 75 years is a very short time. The UWI has used that time with an efficient audacity that is quite frankly mesmerising. We look forward to sharing more of the university's legacy in this year of celebration, and to celebrating together with our thousands of alumni.



The chocolate factory, IFCIC, and CRC itself represent UWI St Augustine at its best. They are supporting the rejuvenation of a valuable sector that is capable of creating new and lucrative opportunities for international trade.



Cocoa Research Centre Chocolate Factory

Our legacy deserves celebration and we seek to pay it forward. With this in mind, this message is an appropriate space to highlight the work of one of UWI's gems, the internationally renowned UWI Cocoa Research Centre (CRC) and its realisation of a long-standing goal – securing the funding for a chocolate factory which will pave the way in cocoa innovations.

Thanks to a public sector investment programme (PSIP) from the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, the CRC has been provided partial funding for the factory. It will be located at the University Field Station in Mt Hope as part of CRC's International Fine Cocoa Innovation Centre (IFCIC).

For many years, UWI CRC has been leading the effort to revitalise cocoa in the Caribbean and Trinidad and Tobago in particular. It has trained the now several chocolatiers in the country, nurtured and developed the largest cocoa seed bank in the world, built capacity for cocoa growers, and now turns to its own entrepreneurial efforts.

Trinidad is internationally renowned for the Trinitario cocoa bean used in premium chocolate products. The plans for the IFCIC include a business incubator facility; a museum of cocoa plants; a cocoa tourism centre; a restaurant, kitchen and labs; a "chocolate academy" for courses in chocolate making; and the chocolate factory.

This factory will be equipped for chocolate-making, and produce products such as couverture chocolate, cocoa liquor, cocoa nibs, and of course, chocolate. The factory is estimated to be completed by August/September of this year and commissioned by early 2024.

The chocolate factory, IFCIC, and CRC itself represent UWI St Augustine at its best. They are supporting the rejuvenation of a valuable sector that is capable of creating new and lucrative opportunities for international trade. They work with local farmers, manufacturers, and entrepreneurs. They partner with the government. They are a resource of knowledge and an international gene bank for thousands of varieties of cocoa.

CRC is UWI as it was intended to be, making a tangible contribution to national and regional development.

Rose-Marie Antoine

Professor Rose-Marie Belle Antoine

Campus Principal

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Visit **The UWI's 75th Anniversary** website
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The factory will be equipped for chocolate-making, and produce products such as couverture chocolate, cocoa liquor, cocoa nibs, and of course, chocolate.

CAMPUS NEWS

UWI Math Fair seeks to solve the math phobia in schools

BY DIXIE-ANN BELLE

For some, memories of secondary school mathematics involve many stressful hours. A group of academics at The UWI St Augustine are working to change students' sometimes fearful view of math and transform the way they learn the subject. Their solution is The UWI Math Fair.

For the fifth year, the Math Fair, organised by the Department of Mathematics and Statistics (DMS) in the Faculty of Science and Technology (FST), has proven to be an eye-opening look at the tangible world of math.

This year's event was the largest ever, attracting over 2,200 students and over 150 teachers. Representing 63 schools from Trinidad and Tobago, they came to the St Augustine campus to participate in the math-themed activities.

The idea for the event came from an alumnus who recognised the potential to transform the way students learn mathematics in local schools. A former member of the department, Linda Deonath, championed the idea which was embraced by the department's administration and encouraged by DMS head Dr Vrijesh Tripathi and Dean of the Faculty of Science and Technology Dr Brian Cockburn.

Sparking enthusiasm in students

Dr Akhenaton Daaga, one of the event coordinators, explains that the Math Fair was created to convince students that "there's no impediment to someone choosing the field or feeling that they could become proficient".

He lamented the number of students who feel math is not for them. "That psychological block is a lot," he says, adding that they hope to encourage those who enjoy mathematics to explore further.

"Our main goal and objective of the fair is to spark enthusiasm for various applications of mathematics in real life," observes Shastri Singh Doodnath, another member of the event team. "We really want to show them that mathematics is not only just in the classroom, just writing down these X's and these Y's."

Hundreds of students participated in the online competitions like the Math Olympics and Math Modelling categories. The Math Creativity competition was particularly well-received with over 300 submissions.

"[The competition] is basically just allowing students to get those creative juices flowing and to really start to bridge gaps between mathematics and fun activities like art and music," explains Mr Singh Doodnath.

Administrative assistant and secretary, Kaira Paul, spoke about how the students embraced the art element of STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and math).

"We had extempores. We had art pieces. We had memes. We had people doing modelling of the World Cup trophies, people designing their dream house, and then explaining how geometry and mathematics would help them in making good decisions while keeping the aesthetic of things."

Overwhelming response from students, teachers, and parents

Even teachers enthusiastically participated in a special category.

At the physical event, patrons eagerly visited various booths featuring games and presentations. They also listened to talks about mathematics careers.

The organisers are delighted with the enthusiastic feedback from students, teachers, and parents.

"The response has been so overwhelming that we have to look at increasing the activities," Paul declares. They are also considering adding to the event space on campus, and perhaps inviting primary school pupils to attend as well.

All this, they hope, will change the view of mathematics in classrooms across the country.

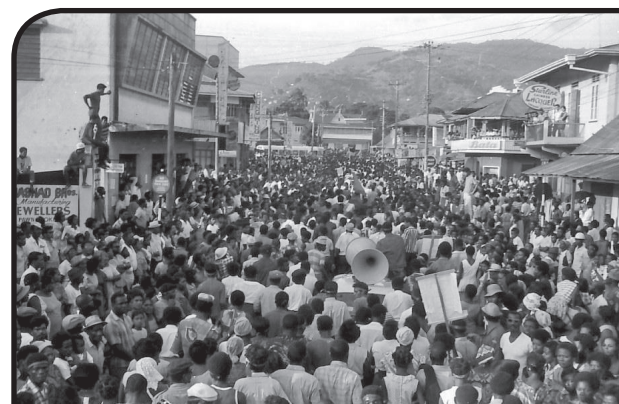
"As the world becomes more and more technologised, there's so much more of a need for proficiency with mathematics at some kind of level," says Dr Daaga.

The team expressed their appreciation to their many sponsors and supporters and to the Ministry of Education who supported the promotion of the event among the schools.

■ Visit www.uwimathfair.com or email STA-UWIMathFair@sta.uwi.edu for more information.



PHOTO: ANEEL KARIM



A conference to revisit, and be inspired, by the 1970 BLACK POWER REVOLUTION

Can a rallying cry for today's youth come from an event that happened decades before they were born? This is the hope of historian and author Prof Brinsley Samaroo.

Prof Samaroo, former head of UWI St Augustine's Department of History, was speaking about the impact of 1970 Black Power Revolution.

It "changed the history of Trinidad and Tobago," he said, "forever more and afterwards."

On April 20 and 21, the revolution and its transformative power will be discussed at the Conference on the 50th Anniversary of the 1970 Black Power Revolution. The event is hosted by the Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies (SALISES) in collaboration with the National Joint Action Committee (NJAC).

The Black Power Revolution, Prof Samaroo said, "alerted the ruling white elite in the country that after all, they're not in the majority". He also credited Prime Minister Dr Eric Williams for promoting important societal changes because of it, such as transforming the sugar and oil industries. The revolutionary fire spread to other Caribbean countries like Grenada, Jamaica, and Guyana.

However, despite these pivotal moments, Prof Samaroo and his colleagues say the revolution receives little academic attention. It is not even taught in schools. The conference is meant to bring this history to the forefront. With this in mind, not only are the President of Trinidad and Tobago, the Prime Minister, the Chief Secretary of the Tobago House of Assembly and other government officials invited, but secondary school students, youth groups, and teachers as well.

He hopes young attendees will be inspired and energised: "Right now, with COVID-19 and all kinds of other problems, we are in a kind of state of depression."

He adds that thousands of youths in the 1970s had a similar mindset, but believes education can stimulate national development and change people's minds about leaving Trinidad and Tobago and instead invest themselves in the country's future.

Some of the themes suggested in the conferences call for papers include Afro-Indo unity in Trinidad and Tobago, cultural imperialism in the context of Black Power ideology, and contesting the internalisation of Christian and European attitudes and behaviour.

One of the most anticipated events will be a film and panel addressing the role women played in the revolution, a topic rarely discussed. There will be a display of pictures and articles, as well as a book sale of local authors and a sale of local delicacies.

The Conference on the 50th Anniversary of the 1970 Black Power Revolution will take place at Daaga Hall, the location where the revolution had its beginning under the leadership of activist, political leader, and UWI graduate, the late Makandal Daaga. (Dixie-Ann Belle)

■ Entry is free. E-mail salises@sta.uwi.edu for more information.

FILM

Dr Yao Ramesar, Coordinator of The UWI Film Degree Programme, is a name synonymous with the local and regional film industry. Later this year, the accomplished director returns with a stellar cast and crew largely drawn from the talent pool of the St Augustine-based film studies programme.

Fortune for All as a film idea came to the director in the midst of a trip back to T&T between directing two feature films, one in South Africa and another in India. The story came to him in the middle of the funeral that brought him back home in 2014/2015. The movie follows the Fortune family, and in particular three Caribbean siblings who find themselves simultaneously reunited by the death of their eldest brother and marooned on the family's coastal estate for a period of isolation. They are in the midst of something we are now familiar with – a deadly virus in their country.

"The film takes place while a virus is sweeping a Caribbean island, and it focuses on the impact on a middle class family who have an estate on the coast," Dr Ramesar explains. "The eldest brother dies first, which is likened to the eulogy I experienced at that funeral."

He adds, "Michael Cherrie, who I believe is T&T's foremost actor, and has been in all but one of my features, appears alongside the talented Nickolai Salcedo, Samara Lallo, and Kyle Daniel Hernandez. They are all graduates of the DCFA (Department of Creative and Festival Arts). Samara is also one of the most formidable actors we have produced in T&T."

The film also features contributions from Tayo Ojoade (editing), and Shea Best (direction of photography), who are UWI Film Programme alumni, and Simon Lee (a former lecturer in The UWI Film Programme). Natalia Gomez, vocal instructor at DCFA, performs the film's opera soundtrack.

Michael Cherrie, also a graduate of The UWI Film Programme, will soon be seen alongside Oscar-winning actor Regina King and directed by Academy Award winner John Ridley of *12 Years a Slave*, in the motion picture *Shirley*.

In a case of art imitating life, production of *Fortune for All* was shut down in 2020 due to the real-world pandemic. But the film will finally be seen in 2023.

'I always knew I wanted to tell stories through film'

Yao has always wanted to make films.

"I lived within walking distance of six cinemas. Growing up, I was already making all these movies – but in my head. I was playing out and recording these stories. I always knew I wanted to tell stories through film, to write my own, and not be a cog in the wheel. And I finally had a chance to do that when I first picked up a camera in my teen years and then later on when I studied film at Howard University."

He further immersed himself in an MFA in Film Directing, and even though he was scouted on several occasions to work on other films and the most financially

A story of family in all too familiar crisis

Director Yao Ramesar's latest film *Fortune for All* brings together some of T&T's top talents (many of them from UWI) both in front and behind the camera

BY KIERAN ANDREW KHAN



Actor Michael Cherrie (left) conferring with director Yao Ramesar.



A screenshot from the film with (from left) Nickolai Salcedo, Samara Lallo, and Michael Cherrie. PHOTOS: YAO RAMESAR

successful TV series in history – he stayed to the course of the auteur-director – insisting on telling the stories that were important to him. Dr Ramesar was also named the Caribbean's first Laureate in Arts and Letters in 2006 by the Anthony N Sabga Awards for Excellence.

Much has changed in the many years since the UWI Film Programme was started. And Dr Ramesar is proud of the shift that The UWI has been able to usher into the local industry.

"Industry is a mechanical thing in people's minds, but the film culture is more important in context of the development of a viable film industry. Which is – it's not hoping for a future industry – we have an industry and culture. It's being partly fueled by The UWI Film Programme, yes. We need to tell more stories of our own, but what may those stories be? We need to move on to the next phase – past the 'training wheels' talk of incubation."

He adds, "We make films; therefore, we are. To quote

the tombstone of CLR James, 'It's not where you're coming from, it's where you're going and at what rate'."

According to Dr Ramesar, there are a number of indigenous features starting to see the light in major distribution platforms like Netflix, Amazon Prime, and other popular platforms and festivals. He would also like to be able to track community made films and platforms such as the successful Santana series (created by Roger Alexis, a former UWI Film Programme student) and many others coming up through the democratisation of media through cheaper and easier access to technology.

"Over the past 15 years we have been pursuing this mythical 'El Dorado' that you would call a film industry – but we are already in the middle of that city. It's around us."

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



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■ OUR STUDENTS

Going for Goldman

Two Electrical and Computer Engineering students earn prestigious internship at Goldman Sachs

BY AMY LI BAKSH

Rebecca Gibbon in front of the Goldman Sachs building in London.

It started with an email, sent out to students of the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering (DECE) by senior lecturer Dr Akash Pooransingh. It was a call for applications for a space in the prestigious internship programme run by Goldman Sachs in the UK, a global investment banking, securities and investment management group.

Around the world, similar emails were being sent, and students from all over were beginning the painstaking process of applying.

“I actually wasn’t going to apply,” said Rebecca Gibbon, who was a student in the department at the time. “On the last day of the deadline, my friends got together and said— no, you’re applying. So, imagine if I didn’t!”

Rebecca, along with fellow DECE student Anjana Valsalan, were two of many who went through the detailed process, starting with submitting information and an essay. They made it to the second step — a technical challenge on a site called HackerRank, testing their ability to solve problems with programming and mathematical knowledge.

One Zoom interview later, both students were accepted into the internship programme, being the only interns from the Caribbean to enter the 2022 cohort. Their next hurdle would be getting their visa documents together to head to the UK in the midst of a wave of immigration as conflict escalated in the Ukraine.

An enriching experience

“We ended up having to start the internship two weeks later than all the other interns,” said Anjana. “It was an intense situation to be in.”

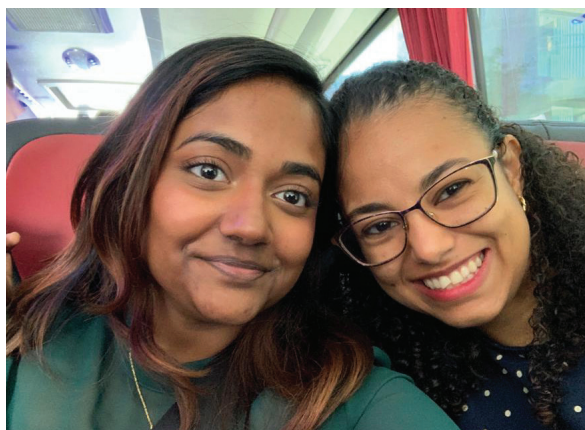
Jumping in on team projects that had already begun meant the two, who were now flat-mates, had a lot of catching up to do.

“We found a place [to live] on Wednesday. We flew out Friday. We arrived Saturday, and then we started work on Monday,” said Rebecca.

And, as they acclimatised to the internship, they



Anjana Valsalan



were simultaneously learning from scratch a whole new programming language from the ones they had previously been exposed to at The UWI.

Despite the hiccups at the start, both Anjana and Rebecca were able to have an enriching experience in the programme.

“Knowing that I was able to create a tool with my fellow interns that would actually be used within Goldman Sachs was really, really cool,” said Anjana.

Young women forging their own path

With both of them having an extra two weeks after the other interns had already left, they were able to get the full experience of the programme, with Rebecca staying on full-time at Goldman Sachs and Anjana returning home with an offer to work with Guardian Group, where she is currently. For both of them, this was a chance to work in the field they are truly passionate about.

Where did this passion come from? For Anjana, it was a childhood interest in puzzle-solving that led to the world of programming. For Rebecca, that spark was lit by Sci-Fi and robotics. They both came from families working in that sphere, with Anjana’s father being a mechanical engineer and Rebecca’s being an electrician. But, as women entering into a male-dominated environment, they had to forge their own path.

As more and more women enter into the many worlds of engineering, Rebecca and Anjana had similar words of advice for those who follow in their footsteps — don’t be afraid to try.

“Put yourself out there,” said Anjana. “Don’t think that you might not be good enough.... You never know what you would be good at, but if you try, you’ll get a better idea.”

Rebecca similarly urged young prospective students, especially women, not to give up or be intimidated working in these fields. “It’s not a man’s world — it’s just as much a woman’s world.”

With both of them having an extra two weeks after the other interns had already left, they were able to get the full experience of the programme, with Rebecca staying on full-time at Goldman Sachs and Anjana returning home with an offer to work with Guardian Group.

■ OUR PEOPLE

“We are vulnerable in the region, and we need to act now. We really need to ensure that our region urgently holds up to our responsibility of adapting to what we’re experiencing.”

This was the call of Urban and Regional Planning Professor Michelle Mycoo who delivered The UWI St Augustine’s first in-person professorial inaugural lecture since the COVID-19 pandemic. And while Mycoo was lauded for her many accomplishments, the message of her lecture was much more somber: as earth’s temperatures continue to rise, time is quickly running out to prevent the catastrophic results of climate change.

Our rapidly closing window to secure a livable future

Mycoo began her lecture, titled “Caribbean Small Island Developing States on the Frontline: The Urgency for Climate Action”, with a quote from the most recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report:

“The scientific evidence is unequivocal: climate change is a threat to human well-being and the health of the planet. Any further delay in concerted global action will miss the brief, rapidly closing window to secure a livable future.”

Professor Mycoo was one of five scientists from The UWI and only 263 globally to contribute to the IPCC’s Working Group II report on Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Vulnerability and Adaptation. She served as a Coordinating Lead Author for the chapter on Small Islands.

While SIDS are Mycoo’s area of expertise, her call to action is global:

“We live on one planet, and what we have found in the scientific literature is that we are causing stress to nature and nature is responding by showing that it’s stressed. The earth is very delicate. It has ecosystems that are intimately woven. It’s like a tapestry, and as soon as you pull a thread out of it, it begins to unravel unless we do things to make adjustments over time,” she said.

Many of the statistics Prof Mycoo shared present a dire picture: Carbon dioxide concentrations are at the highest in 2 million years; sea level rise is the fastest in 3,000 years; and the arctic ice area and glacier retreat are at the lowest in 2,000 years. In the Caribbean, we are already experiencing temperature rises, growing impacts of storm surges, cyclones, droughts and changing precipitation patterns, rising sea levels, coral bleaching, and the entry of invasive species – all of which are having negative impacts on the economy, water supply, public health, agriculture, fisheries, and food security.

Part of the solution, however, includes major lifestyle changes, according to Mycoo.

“We have to ask ourselves, ‘Is it that the earth’s system is changing on its own?’ Well, the challenges we face are actually driven by how we utilise our resources, how we live our lives, and how we intend to safeguard nature. The way we use land and all other natural resources, our unhealthy diets, the way we plan our cities, all of these in fact increase the threats and make us more vulnerable to climate change. We are the drivers of some of the impacts we are seeing in the modern era,” the professor said.

Moreover, she shared that we are not on track to limit global warming. “At the moment, we are at 1.1°C warming and we are not on track to limit warming to 1.5°C. The moment we cross 1.5°C, the SIDS are in trouble.”

A major research question to be answered was what are the solutions? According to Prof Mycoo, the answer is multifaceted.

“There is no single adaptation response. We have a

Accolades for Professor Mycoo, but action needed on climate change

BY ZAHRA GORDON



Professor Michelle Mycoo. PHOTOS: GUYTON OTTLEY

combination of measures that we need to use,” she said.

She outlined various adaptation responses that are already in use, or options available to governments and communities. On the list were coastal protection, mangrove replanting, watershed management, coral reef restoration, rainwater harvesting, investing in urban green spaces, elevating buildings, traditional architecture, upgrading informal settlements, revised building codes, increasing technical capacity, and improving data quality/availability.

Professor of Firsts

Prof Mycoo’s elevation to the rank of professor make her the first woman given these accolades in the Faculty of Engineering in 60 years. She was also the first Caribbean woman to serve as a Coordinating Lead Author on the IPCC report. Her research was further recognised when the IPCC was awarded the 2022 Gulbenkian Prize for Humanity.

As a scientist conducting research on SIDS for over 25 years, Mycoo has over 120 research publications, including a book. However, among the most fulfilling aspects of her work have been teaching and mentoring. At the lecture, her former students filled the space – such as Dr Sunil Laloo, who served as the open discussion moderator, and Annika Fritz-Browne who provided a vote of thanks.

Yet another former student, Imani Fairweather-Morrison, spoke about Prof Mycoo’s impact in education.

“I’ve had the distinct honour of being under the tutelage of Professor Mycoo, who we celebrate today. It has been an absolute pleasure taking her steer academically. She is precise. She has high expectations for excellence, but that is well balanced with deep love, care, and thoughtfulness for her students.”

It is clear that education is an extremely important aspect of Michelle Mycoo’s scholarship. When asked about the highlight of her career, rather than note awards or publications, the professor ended the evening by responding that she was most proud of her students’ achievements.



“We have to ask ourselves, ‘Is it that the earth’s system is changing on its own?’ Well, the challenges we face are actually driven by how we utilise our resources, how we live our lives, and how we intend to safeguard nature. The way we use land and all other natural resources, our unhealthy diets, the way we plan our cities, all of these in fact increase the threats and make us more vulnerable to climate change.” – Prof Michelle Mycoo

■ CARNIVAL

“Is Old Yard time again.”

These words by host Louis McWilliams, filled the “Gayelle” on February 12, 2023. That afternoon, the Department of Creative and Festival Arts (DCFA) in the Faculty of Humanities and Education held their first The Old Yard after the long pandemic hiatus.

The Old Yard is a passageway into traditional Carnival culture, meticulously designed to highlight the creative and national diversity of T&T’s history through folklore and music.

Entering the grounds, there was a sense of nostalgia as the sound of vintage Kaiso fills the Yard. Patrons chipped to their seats as they indulged in songs from Lord Christo, The Mighty Sparrow, and more. Held at the Open Campus Quadrangle at Gordon Street, The Old Yard offered a blend of cultural history in the style of a heritage fair. People of all ages, foreign visitors along with carnival enthusiasts, came together to get a taste of “ole time mas” from 19th century Trinidad.

As the sound of Mighty Sparrow’s Congo Man boomed through the air, the Jamettes and Babydolls emerged, interacting with the crowd, trying to woo and cause trouble. A Babydoll approached several men she claimed to be her child’s father while a Jamette went around striking conversations with the crowd. Following this, the Dame Lorraines’ made an appearance in their colourful dresses, hoisting their umbrellas and dancing around the stands. As the performances went on, Blue Devils, Jab Jabs, Midnight Robbers, Moko Jumbies, and Gorillas made their way into the Yard. They were followed by stick fighters, Indian Mas, and the Pierrot Grenade.

Love, Appreciation, and Respect for Traditional Carnival

“The Old Yard is essentially a traditional masquerade experience where people can come and engage in memory,” says Dr Jo-anne Tull, Project Director of The Old Yard, and an academic coordinator and lecturer at the DCFA.

The event is a production of the DCFA’s Carnival Studies Unit, although the department’s performers and artists from other units play an integral part. Carnival Studies focuses on creative enterprise management and entrepreneurship, festival studies, and mas design and Carnival research.

In addition to Dr Tull, several other people helped orchestrate The Old Yard. These include Jessel Murray (Head of DCFA), Joseph Drayton (Production Administrative Assistant), Tamara Da Breo (Adjunct Lecturer/Trainer), Xavier Kistow-Davis (Visual Arts Director/Final Year BA Student), and Peter Craig (Construction Lead), assisted by Ayinde Chinloulou, Sheldon Holder, and the students.

The students and DCFA staff are the masterminds behind the festival who make the performances engaging and unforgettable. Throughout the years, students and staff have made the space for performance displays and a way for The UWI to show its love, appreciation, and respect for traditional Carnival.

“Old Yard is a very important cultural tradition in Trinidad. I don’t think a lot of people are aware of all the old mas characters that are here. It’s a good learning ground,” said Kayah Alfred, a first-year student, who portrayed a Jamette.

Amayia Yeates, a first year student who performed as both Miss Mary and Madame Gwo Bunda, said that her favourite part of The Old Yard is “getting to interact with the audience and make them laugh”.

As the worst of the pandemic break had passed, Dr Tull and team were faced with challenges due to the COVID restrictions. She said, “The Old Yard is an experience for us internally, in terms of building our capacities to collect heritage, to store heritage, and to find ways to present the heritage in innovative ways. So, it was challenging to get it all done within a crunch time.”

She added that funding proved to be another difficulty because of the short season and the numerous competing interests. The DCFA aims to get a signature sponsor to facilitate the showcasing of the full slate of the masquerade.

Nonetheless, the DCFA is able to look with pride upon the execution of this year’s festival. They also continue to look forward to the future of The Old Yard.

Vandana Beetan is a second-year International Relations and Communication Studies student at UWI St Augustine.



PHOTOS: ANEEL KARIM

Back Ah Yard

The Old Yard, DCFA’s grand celebration of traditional Carnival, history and culture, fills the gayelle once more

BY VANDANA BEETAN





A Festival in TRANSFORMATION

From outsourced mas making to competition from other markets, experts ask how T&T's Carnival can survive and thrive in a time of change

BY TYRELL GITTENS

When Roman Catholic priest Father Clifford Hendey played mas in 1966 with Angostura Starlift in Woodbrook, he stirred controversy and passionate discussions about what Carnival represented and who was allowed to participate.

During a Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies (SALISES) virtual webinar on February 24 on the evolution and devolution of Trinidad and Tobago's Carnival, Sociology Professor Emeritus Anton Allahar said Hendey's decision showed the growing acceptance of Carnival in non-traditional spaces.

"The year after that (1967), Calypsonian Mighty Cypher won the Calypso King Contest when he sang 'If the priest could play, who is we?'" he said.

As Carnival has evolved from a socially unacceptable festival to an economic product, there have always been passionate discussions about the festival's direction.

Profitability and cultural significance

But Allahar said it is the responsibility of the sector to use those discussions to guide the festival's product. People, he said, must also reflect on the true meaning of Carnival.

"Carnival has evolved and become a huge profit making enterprise. But Carnival remains the stage upon which the complexities and contradictions of the nation are articulated," he told the virtual audience.

"Carnival is a tradition which serves to encapsulate the fluid, evolving complexities – and multiple political, social and economic contexts – that define not only the nation, but its people."

Acting SALISES director Dr Godfrey St Bernard said he has witnessed Carnival's transformation.

From changes in the costumes of mas bands, to changes in the way steelbands operate for Panorama, Dr St Bernard stressed the importance of those involved in Carnival reflecting on where the festival is heading given its cultural, economic, and historical value.

However, economist and UWI lecturer Dr Marlene Attzs said Carnival's growth can be a positive development. It can provide opportunities for economic diversification, generate foreign exchange, and boost the creative sector.

She warned, however, that growth must be properly managed, pointing out that some aspects – like making costumes in factories abroad as opposed to locally – are not sustainable.

Growth must be properly managed

Dr Attzs said, "Prof Allahar made mention of our pretty mas (costumes) being imported from as far as China, which has become the reality. Many years, I was part of a neighbourhood community which actually sat, designed and made children's costumes."

Calling for a better measurement of the return on investments made on Carnival, she dismissed the accepted practice of anecdotal financial analysis for Carnival post-mortems.

"While anecdotes are sometimes useful, controversial, and sometimes make for good bacchanal, I don't think they help us advance Carnival as the kind of sustainable sector that it can be."

Carnival Studies lecturer Dr Jo-anne Tull said any long-term planning for Carnival must create unique branding for the festival. She said it is no longer profitable for Carnival's sole identity to be the fact that it was made in T&T.

Carnival as part of a larger tourism strategy

Jamaica's Carnival, Dr Tull explained, is an example of how a carnival can become its own brand when entwined in an island's overall tourism strategy.

"When you look across the (Caribbean) region, much of the policy interventions around festival branding have tended to tie branding with marketing the destination and tourism.

"That is a little ironic in the context of Trinidad and Tobago, which has never fully and predominantly never pursued a tourism strategy," she said.

With the continued commodification of T&T's Carnival, its brand has only continued to be diluted, which is unsustainable.

If Carnival is to develop sustainably, Tull said, it cannot be looked at in a vacuum. Instead, the festival must be viewed through a broader lens as something that is unique in its own right among the world's other carnivals.

She warned, "There are innovations occurring – and new-styled carnivals – which are part of the carnival spawning, and they have become competitors to T&T's carnival.

"They are pursuing the same market which you are pursuing, and you have to think about the Carnival tourists chasing carnivals and looking for the best experience."

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

Uncommon resilience

Despite facing discrimination and a lack of support, people with disabilities still rise

BY PAUL HADDEN

“People with disabilities can certainly contribute to society. We just need to be creative and give them a chance,” says Katherine Agong.

“My biggest hope for people such as my daughter Nabila is that they will be able to live long, happy lives, and to be content and confident in themselves. For my daughter, I just want her to do her best and to reach her full potential, no matter what that is.”

Katherine’s daughter, Nabila, is one of several participants in a project launched by The UWI to raise awareness about the issues people with disabilities face in Trinidad and Tobago, as well as to highlight their achievements and contributions to society.

The campaign was spearheaded by the chair of the Disability Studies Research Cluster at the Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies (SALISES) Dr Bepyher Parey, as well as fellow cluster members Dr Elisabeth Kutscher and Ms Hannah Enightoola. It was launched in commemoration of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities in December of last year.

The team sought out about 30 individuals with various disabilities, spanning physical, intellectual and sensory, who were contributing to society in some way, and conducted a series of video interviews. The videos were made public earlier this year.

“I saw a recruitment ad for the project that Dr Parey had posted on LinkedIn,” says Katherine. “I am always looking for opportunities to advocate for people with disabilities in Trinidad and Tobago, so I thought that this would be a good way to show the rest of the country, and the world, that someone who has intellectual disabilities, someone like my daughter, still has purpose and can play a good role in society.”

Her sentiments mirror those of Dr Parey and her team, who stress that their work is not only to speak about disabilities, but also about capabilities. The awareness project is just one way that the cluster seeks to show that all citizens have something to offer society once they are equipped with the correct skills and given the right opportunities.

Most persons with disabilities in T&T live in poverty

Unfortunately, the ongoing research done by the cluster continues to show that T&T is far from being a society which offers equal access to opportunities to people with disabilities. The results of analysis of the complaints made by people with disabilities to the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) are shocking.

“The truth is that many persons with disabilities in this country live in poverty,” says Dr Parey. “Our cluster did in-depth research into formal complaints made to the EOC and found several cases of people being asked to resign because of a disability. It may not be national policy that forces persons who develop a disability later on in life to leave their jobs, but it is unfortunately the policy of a lot of companies, something that could be considered unjust.”

Another issue which surfaced from the research carried out by Dr Parey’s team is the lack of support, both emotional and financial, for members of the disability community. It is a sentiment that is echoed

Participants in the project launched by the Disability Studies Research Cluster



**Anil
Maharaj**



**Nabila
D'Oyley**



**Justin
Jarvis**

■ UWI IN SOCIETY

by one of the other participants on the project, Justin Jarvis, who had to undergo a double amputation of his legs at the age of 23 due to a condition known as vasculitis.

"I grew up in Mayaro, close to the beach, and sports were always a big part of my life," Justin said. "Whether it was swimming, athletics, or playing football on the beach with my friends, sports were always something that motivated me. For a time, I also believed that my calling on this Earth was to be a dancer. So, you can imagine how devastated I was to lose my legs at such a young age and have to re-evaluate everything I did."

While awaiting amputation at the hospital, it became apparent to Justin that there was not much government assistance for people in his situation.

"Here I was, this young man who was about to undergo an amputation, and there was no sort of support from any kind of counsellor to help me mentally prepare myself for this sort of life transformation.

"Perhaps as a young sports fanatic who was about to lose my legs, it would have been good to have someone visit me and give me some sort of hope. I think there is definitely more room for people in the government to step in and find ways to make the transition a bit easier for people such as myself."

While the project was able to help bring many such issues faced by persons with disabilities to light, what was most striking for those involved was just how much the participants have all been able to overcome in their personal lives, in spite of their many challenges.

"What was most inspiring for us as a team was to witness the resilience displayed by the participants," says Dr Parey "More than anything, what we want people to know is how much these people are capable of contributing. There is a lot of talent in this community, so we need to continue to strive to remove the barriers preventing them from achieving their true potential. The truth is that this current legislation does not support equal opportunities for persons with disabilities, and this is something that needs to be changed."

■ Both the videos and articles from the public awareness campaign can be accessed on the **SALISES official YouTube channel** as well as their website, tinyurl.com/salisesdsrsc

Paul Hadden is an educator and freelance writer with a passion for the art of storytelling.



Dr Bephyer Parey

– a People Person

BY PAUL HADDEN

"One of the defining moments of my professional life was taking a career aptitude test at the Student Services department at The UWI," says Dr Bephyer Parey.

"What the test told me was that I needed to be around people, and that I needed a job which would focus on others and on building community. I had never really thought much of it before, but taking that test really revealed to me that a career in mathematics and statistics was not going to be enough for me. Interacting with other people is what would bring me the most joy."

This quest for building and strengthening communities has deeply shaped Dr Parey's life's work, and she is not only now recognised as one of The UWI's most prominent researchers, but also regarded as a superstar educator.

Initially trained in mathematics and statistics, and currently working as a Junior Research Fellow at the Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies (SALISES), Dr Parey has been able to integrate this desire to build communities through her teaching practice. She is a passionate educator who goes above and beyond in the classroom. Just last year, she was awarded the prestigious UWI/Guardian Group Premium Teaching Award, which is given to educators who have demonstrated excellence in teaching.

The importance of connection

She believes that one of the reasons for her success is her ability to form strong connections with her students:

"I try to build rapport with my students from day one, and also encourage them to build rapport amongst themselves. Many of them will end up working in fields, such as policy development, where they will be working in teams, so it is essential that they learn to dialogue with each other."

Aside from striving to encourage a sense of comradeship in her classroom, Dr Parey also believes that it is essential to cultivate students' emotional intelligence. She echoes the same sentiment as many educators who have been observing students since the beginning of the pandemic: many of them are struggling.

"Many of our students are going through a lot in their personal lives, but they do not have the tools to process these emotions properly, and this has an effect on their academic success. So, we try to give them the tools to develop awareness of their own emotions."

Another important aspect of her pedagogical practice is the aim to expose her students to as many different ideas and scenarios as possible. "This came to me from one of my own professors at The UWI, Professor Edward Farrell (now retired), who once shared in a talk that it was not about 'being bright', but about 'being exposed'. This is something that has always stuck with me."

Advocate for people with disabilities

Dr Parey is also the holder of a PhD in Social Policy, and her thesis focused on the barriers to the including persons with disabilities in this country. Most recently, she has been involved in a public awareness campaign in which she sought to spotlight the experiences and contributions of people living with disabilities in Trinidad and Tobago. Both her PhD and the project have sprung from personal experiences in her life.

"My own father became physically disabled when I was just 13 years old," says Dr Parey. "Although at the time I couldn't truly understand everything that my father was going through, I know that this experience is one which has led me to the work that I do now advocating for persons with disabilities here in T&T."

Apart from cultivating her passion for research, education, and advocacy, Dr Parey has always strove to seek balance in her personal life.

"Throughout my studies, especially during my undergrad, I was also very involved in extracurricular activities, and I saw the importance of balancing my academic and social needs. I didn't want to focus only on my degree while neglecting other aspects of my life, and I still don't. This is something I also try to encourage with my students. There are different aspects to our lives, and we should always try to involve ourselves in communities corresponding to these different aspects. Having balance in our lives is essential."



FOOD

At a 2022 CARICOM Heads of Government meeting, leaders set a goal of reducing the Caribbean's food import bill by 25 percent by 2025.

As the region begins efforts to achieve the target, The UWI St Augustine's Faculty of Food and Agriculture (FFA) has committed to playing its part by reaffirming its support of activities which promote local foods.

In December 2022, the University Field Station in Valsayn hosted the most recent edition of Eat Local Day, a partnership between The UWI; the 4-H Leaders Council of Trinidad and Tobago; the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries; NAMDEVCO; the Agricultural Development Bank; the Field Naturalist Club; and the El Socorro Centre for Wildlife Conservation.

Choosing local over foreign food

While the university has supported the event for the past several years, FFA Dean Professor Mark Wuddivira said it has now taken on a new meaning given CARICOM's target to reduce food imports.

"We continue to support different initiatives to ensure CARICOM's 25 by 2025 target is attained," he said. "One of the most effective ways to get to the target and cut down on the region's food import bills is for us to get people to start thinking about local produce."

The FFA Dean wants to educate the general public on the diversity of local crops and their benefits.

With Trinidad and Tobago's food import bill at an estimated TT \$6 billion per year, he reminds people that the region's dependency on food imports is the result of current generations developing a preference for foreign foods.

Prof Wuddivira added that the movement's focus on positively shaping the attitudes of children towards local foods is important as it serves the country well when they become future consumers.

Teaching children the steps from garden to table

UWI agribusiness and entrepreneurship lecturer Dr Omardath Maharaj, one of the movement's founders, said outreach to children is crucial because they are an impressionable audience:

"This effort started in the field of farmers, and we have now taken the movement over the years to different schools. The conversations with the children involve growing things in their school gardens and bringing them to the table. But, we have also sought to get the parents involved as well."

Even before being elected president of the 4-H Leaders Council of Trinidad and Tobago in 2016, Natasha Lee was actively involved in the movement. As a teacher, Lee has been taking her students to eat local events since its inception in 2012.

But since becoming president of the council, she has sought to expand the local movement in more schools.

"The idea of having the students involved is so that they can see where their food is coming from and appreciate fresh foods as opposed to imported produce which is usually processed in some way," she explained.

Home Grown, Home Eaten

Eat Local movement shapes a new, timely narrative on local foods

BY TYRELL GITTENS



A patron of the 2022 Eat Local Day is served an all-local lunch - made from 100 percent local ingredients - by (left to right) FFA Dean Prof Mark Wuddivira, President of the 4-H Leaders Council of Trinidad and Tobago Natasha Lee, a representative from the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries, and UWI lecturer (and Co-founder of Eat Local Day) Dr Omardath Maharaj. PHOTO: NATASHA LEE

Lee also wants to be an example of what she promotes. She has taken on the role of chef at Eat Local Days, and curates a menu of dishes made almost entirely out of locally grown goods.

She plans to publish a cookbook:

"I really want to create an all-local cookbook. When you look at some of these existing cookbooks, they claim to be local, but when they use simple ingredients like regular flour - as opposed to locally produced root crop flour - it defeats the purpose."

Food security - regional mission, national mission, UWI's mission

While there are a lot of moving parts to achieving national food security, FFA Senior Crop Science lecturer Dr Wendy-Ann Isaac said consumption patterns at the household level are important.

Apart from eating local, she stressed the importance of people growing local crops to reduce their food vulnerability.

Isaac recently taught a 10-week course with homeowners

where they learnt how to create home gardens, properly manage the spaces, and make organic pesticides and fertilisers.

Isaac said, "As a faculty, we continue to open ourselves up to the public, and we have been doing a number of different things including new programmes."

"In September 2022, we launched a Master's degree in Food Security, and we have a lot of people from different stakeholder groups participating in that programme."

"We also have a very good programme of value addition for food and nutrition security."

Apart from all this, the FFA is in talks with national and regional agriculture ministers and their permanent secretaries to find solutions to food and nutrition security.

Overtime, these talks are expected to materialise into a drive to develop sustainable products and services which complement the goal to reduce the region's food import bill.



Mr Ramdeo Boondoo, president of the Root Crop Farmers' Association, author, and 2022 Chaconia Medal (Gold) awardee, with students at Eat Local. PHOTO: JOSHUA MORRIS



Public relations officer of the 4-H Leaders Council of Trinidad and Tobago, Elizabeth Theodore, demonstrates how to make pancakes using coconut and cassava flour. PHOTO: NATASHA LEE

FOOD

For the first time in four years, FFA will host its techAGRI Expo. This year's expo, faculty reps said, has been redesigned to place a greater focus on entrepreneurship and youth involvement in agriculture.

The last techAGRI was held in March 2019. This year's event is scheduled to take place later this year. FFA Dean Wuddivira said the staff and students were eager for the Expo's return:

"This reshaped event seeks to encourage and energise our youth to develop a passion for agriculture, innovation, and entrepreneurship in all forms. We expect that this will translate into a drive to develop sustainable products and services."

Dean Wuddivira said the faculty will also work with the Ministry of Youth Development and National Service to boost young peoples' involvement in local food production.

'We need to be agile'

While the expo is a flagship event, the FFA is engaged in many other initiatives to support the local agriculture sector.

Dr Wuddivira summarised his vision for the faculty using the acronym RURA, which stands for (R)enouncing the faculty's status quo of simply teaching people how to plant, (U)nleashing the faculty's potential, (R)iding on the faculty's rich 100-plus years' history, and being (A)gile in taking opportunities for development.

"We need to reach out to other stakeholders like the private sector, the public sector, and developmental organisations," he said. "We need to be agile."

He added, "We need to do this in order to send the message that we are in a food crisis, and we can take care of this crisis by looking inwardly and increasing the quality of our food production."

Dr Omardath Maharaj said techAGRI is another way FFA mobilises its resources to promote agriculture.

"The expo has continuously provided a platform where all like-minded people come together to discuss the continued development of agriculture," he said. "This year will be particularly interesting given that discussions will be fuelled by the pandemic and the (Russia-Ukraine) war."

While not giving away all the secrets on what to expect, 4-H Leaders Council of Trinidad and Tobago President Natasha Lee said her group wanted to add another dimension to techAGRI. They have planned a mini 4-H fair within the expo.

"Right now we have almost 160 registered 4-H clubs under the National 4-H club in Trinidad and Tobago," she said. "So, over the three day period, we want to give each club the opportunity to shine in our space."

Patrons at techAGRI can expect a variety of fresh produce, goods, and other surprises from the 4-H clubs.

President of UWI Agribusiness Society Nathania Arneaud said the club's members and students from the FFA have made themselves available to assist in the successful planning and execution of the faculty's events.

She said, "We recently revamped the AgriBusiness Society, and we hope to use it as a club to collaborate with people in the field of agriculture because agribusiness encompasses people in all different areas."

"So, for the expo, we will be proudly assisting in promoting the event and working with other clubs in the faculty to have a great booth."

Arneaud said the event is also an important space which can inspire people to come up with ideas of their own about ways they can contribute to local agriculture and food production.

(Tyrell Gittens)

For more information on techAGRI Expo 2023

visit the Faculty of Food and Agriculture homepage at <https://sta.uwi.edu/ffa/> or on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/ffatechagriexpo/>



A young attendee at techAGRI 2019 meets a rabbit.

TechAGRI 2023

focusing on entrepreneurship and youth



Local entrepreneurs answering questions about their products.



Fresh produce for sale.

'We need to do this in order to send the message that we are in a food crisis, and we can take care of this crisis by looking inwardly and increasing the quality of our food production.'

Prof Mark Wuddivira – Dean of the Faculty of Food and Agriculture



Ms Nathania Arneaud, President of The UWI Agribusiness Society



Students look at an A-frame hydroponic system at the FFA's Technology Demonstration Park. Even though the park is not located at the main techAGRI event, visitors still come to marvel at the agricultural innovation on display.

CLL 25TH ANNIVERSARY

A Legacy of Language Learning, Cultural Appreciation, and Community

“I have always loved foreign languages,” says Dr Nicole Roberts, Acting Director of the Centre for Language Learning (CLL).

It’s a sentiment shared by staff and students of the centre – a passion for languages, learning about other cultures, and sharing that love and knowledge with others. For a quarter of a century now, that has been the work of the CLL.

The Centre for Language Learning at The UWI St Augustine campus opened its doors in August 1997. This year, it celebrates its 25th anniversary. In that time, the CLL has become a gathering place for students of varied languages, and today, is known as a venue for classes, an oasis for study, and a place to relax, lime with friends, and imbibe all kinds of foreign culture.

“Prior to the pandemic, the CLL was a really active hotspot for students,” says Dr Roberts, who assumed the position of Acting Director in June 2022. “It was a centre for not just language classes, but also a hive of cultural activities and a meeting place for students. There were films and other cultural activities going on pretty much every week in semester. There was literally a buzz at the CLL at all times.”

As pandemic fears subside, the CLL hopes to recover that communal energy.

In 1997, a new language learning centre

Yet, so much has changed since the centre’s creation. The 25th anniversary, administrators say, is a good time to take stock of the original mission of the centre, recognising its achievements to-date, and reflecting on its vision for the future. Dr Sylvia Moodie-Kublalsingh, the first Director of the CLL, is an ideal person to do that reflecting.

“Professor Compton Bourne [then Campus Principal of UWI St Augustine] called me and asked if I would be interested in heading a new language learning centre,” recalls Dr Moodie-Kublalsingh. “I was happy. I have always wanted to teach languages to anyone on the campus.”

Initially, classes were held at the Learning Resource Centre (LRC). The full-time staff, she says, consisted of “myself and a secretary”. The centre was originally going to be named the Language Learning Centre, but because the acronym “LLC” would have been too close to “LRC”, she decided instead to name it the Centre for Language Learning.

CLL in those earliest days taught Spanish and French before quickly expanding to include Hindi and German (1998-1999). Italian was added in 2001, and by 2004, the CLL incorporated Japanese, Mandarin Chinese, Portuguese and English as a second language (ESL). Arabic was introduced in 2005, and Yoruba classes began in 2011. Russian (2014) and Korean (2016) were the most recent of the CLL’s course offerings.

“My most memorable moments were teaching the students,” Dr Moodie-Kublalsingh said of those days.

Under her tenure, she cemented the national niche for the CLL as a centre of excellence in foreign language teaching and learning, yet she remains humble.

“I like anonymity. I like to be in the background,” the now retired educator says. “I am very Christ and God centred, and I think that everything that I do is being done through me by God.”

A language teacher since her start at the St Augustine campus in 1970, she has written several books, including the Viva! Series for secondary school Spanish.



Dr Nicole Roberts,
Acting Director of CLL



CLL's former directors, Dr Sylvia Moodie-Kublalsingh (left) and Prof Beverly-Anne Carter.



Students at a CLL Open House event.



South Korean Ambassador to T&T Mr Doo Young Lee (left) shakes hands with former Campus Principal Professor Brain Copeland at the launch of the Korea Corner at CLL in 2017.



Members of CLL staff with Professor Carter (front row, right).



A chef teaches Chinese noodle making. The learning of Chinese language (Mandarin) and culture are offered through CLL as well as the Confucius Institute, which was established at UWI St Augustine in 2013.



A performer of the Afro-Brazilian martial art of Capoeira.

Dr Moodie-Kublalsingh ensured that Trinidad's "heritage" languages were taught at the CLL. She called for a revival of a multilingual Trinidad (Moodie-Kublalsingh, "The Teaching of Hindi": 142) because ancestral languages such as Portuguese or Arabic are part of our heritage.

CLL's international trajectory

Professor Beverly-Anne Carter became the second director of the CLL in August 2005.

"My primary research area is Learner Autonomy," says Prof Carter, who recently received her professorship after 17 years as the leader of the centre. "I have always been very interested in technology applied to language teaching and learning. A context like the CLL seemed ideal to research and practice in those fields."

Her tenure took the CLL on a more internationalised trajectory. International memberships were created and MOUs signed. The CLL joined the Association of Departments of Foreign Language (ADFL), the Association of University Language Communities (AULC), the European Confederation of Language Centres in Higher Education (CERCLES), the Centre for Language Education and Cooperation (CLEC) and the Japan Foundation Nihongo Network.

With support from Hanban, the Confucius Institute was opened in 2013, and the Korea Corner in 2017, inside the Self-Access Facility. The CLL became the venue for the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) in 2012, CELTA in 2015, the Diploma de Español como Lengua Extranjera (DELE) test in 2013, and the Japanese Language Placement Test (JLPT) in 2019. In 2019, the CLL also became the venue for the Annual Japanese Speech Language Contest.

Advances in digital technology, and global access to the Internet and social media are constantly changing the goals and the nature of foreign language education. Thus, Prof Carter ensured that the CLL remained on the cutting edge of technology in education. She encouraged continuous, professional development among all levels of staff, including technical and teaching staff. Teaching staff were afforded training opportunities in digital technologies and innovative foreign language teaching methodologies. She made certain that the CLL's teaching spaces were equipped with state-of-the-art, technologically-advanced resources.

Prof Carter speaks very openly of the importance of the CLL staff, saying "the day-to-day working with a staff who were generous, supportive, and as invested in the CLL as I was (and to be clear, I am referring here to both academic and ATS staff), meant so much to me."

She adds, "We were a team wanting to make the CLL a centre of excellence for languages in all regards. I had their backs, and they had mine."

She also appreciated the added value of foreign language learning in the area of entrepreneurship. Having been awarded TT\$500,000 in grant funding in 2013, she and her research team designed five sub-projects, which focused on strategic planning for the local business, education, and tourism sectors.

Now retired, Prof Carter is very optimistic about the future of the CLL and the study of foreign languages in T&T.

"I know a number of young foreign language educators, some of them my former students, who are well equipped to do good work to advance the field," she says. "Similarly, my academic colleagues at the CLL have much to contribute to enrich our understanding of [language] acquisition in a university context. It's their turn now."

As to her own plans, she "has a few commitments to wrap up, but for now I have no plans to embark on anything new in academia. There is life outside the UWiverse. And I really would like to enjoy the gift of unstructured time that retirement affords."

The next 25 years to come

"As The UWI is currently poised to embark on its revenue revolution, we are convinced that the CLL is well-positioned to support its efforts," comments Dr Roberts.

Speaking on the future of the centre, the acting director says that, "nowadays, the study of a foreign language is essential for employability. Hence, beginning in the academic year 2022-2023, The UWI embarked on the phased roll-out of a university-wide foreign language policy."

This initiative, the result of in-depth internal strategic planning and discussion with regional education stakeholders, seeks to make each graduate "conversation-competent" in a language other than English. The CLL designed and delivered four blended courses in Mandarin Chinese, French, Japanese, and Spanish in September 2022. These are the first blended, foreign language courses at The UWI regionally.

"Only one of these courses is required to satisfy the foreign language requirement," says Dr Roberts. "However, upon completion of any one of our courses, we are certain that students should be convinced of the value of foreign languages. While fluency cannot be the goal with a one-semester course, our goal is that our students connect on a shared cultural wavelength."

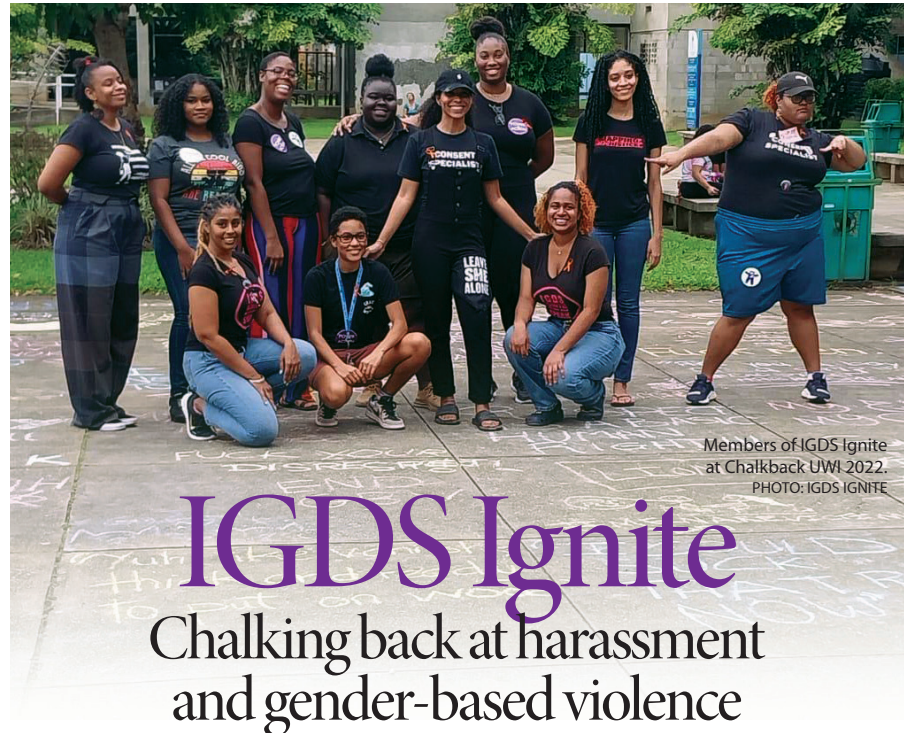
The CLL continues to offer, active language learning through dynamic classes and through cultural material.

"We hope that the initial contact will strike a chord with our learners, leading them to aim higher and reap greater benefits," says the acting director.

"As we contemplate our 25-year legacy, we look forward to the next 25 years. Our vision? To surpass our record of excellence in the areas of innovative foreign language teaching and learning, research, publications, and entrepreneurship."

■ **For more information on CLL**, connect with them on social at Instagram: @centreforlanguagelearning | Facebook: @clluwista
Twitter: @clluwi | Flickr: @clluwista | YouTube: @clluwista

■ GENDER



Members of IGDS Ignite at Chalkback UWI 2022.
PHOTO: IGDS IGNITE

IGDS Ignite Chalking back at harassment and gender-based violence

BY VANDANA BEETAN

Chalk, for most young people it is a symbol of learning and education. Teachers put the chalk to blackboard and the lesson flows. For a group of student activists at UWI St Augustine however, chalk is being used to teach a very different kind of lesson – the urgent need to fight sexual harassment and gender-based violence. The initiative is called Chalkback UWI.

Chalkback UWI is one of the activities of IGDS Ignite, a student-led social justice and feminist group spawned from the Institute for Gender and Development Studies (IGDS) at UWI St Augustine. Started as a project in 2016, Ignite has quickly become one of the campus' biggest activist groups. Their focus is feminism, equality, equity, and gender justice.

Chalkback UWI is a yearly event that gives students the opportunity to share their experiences and emotions about sexual and street harassment by writing messages in chalk graffiti on the UWI quadrangle ground. There are also a variety of educational games and activities.

Kelsie Joseph, a 24-year-old Sociology major, and one of the members of Ignite, recalls her experience as a new student, saying she was shocked to be given advice such as "walk in groups" and "be safe" instead of "enjoy your time at university" and "make a lot of friends". However, when a girl was sexually harassed on campus, she quickly realised why. Together with a group of students, she decided to make a change for the safety of students.

Kelsie is a co-founder of Cat Calls of UWI, another IGDS Ignite initiative. Ignite also engages in other educational programmes. Collectively, they promote social justice in and out of campus, as well as in primary and secondary schools.

Inspired by Cat Calls of NYC, Cat Calls of UWI was co-founded by Tia Marie Lander, a Sociology graduate with minors in Gender Development and Social Development Policy and Planning. Currently, the project is led by Kelsie and Aaliyah Ragoonauth-Maharaj, who graduated with a double major in Communication Studies and Psychology. The aim is to provide a safe space for students to share their experiences of harassment, in order to raise awareness and denormalise it.

Raising Awareness

The first Chalkback was held in 2019 during the IGDS' 16 days of Activism activities. Since then, it has been a hit on campus. According to Kelsie, last year's Chalkback was the biggest turnout they have had, despite coming back from the pandemic break.

"I was surprised at how well received it was, and how open students were with playing the different games, chalking their stories, and ultimately expressing their frustration with street harassment," says Charissa Kerr, a 22-year-old Psychology major.

Ignite has a presence on campus and in wider society through collaborations with clubs and NGOs. They are doing tremendous work toward educating people about gender-based violence and harassment.

"We can't aim to solve a problem when the population doesn't even know that there is a problem to resolve in the first place," says Aaliyah.

Ignite's main goal is to raise public awareness about the issues while also lessening the instances of catcalling and gender-based violence cases. They hope that Chalkback will continue to grow through the passion of the student population and its members.

■ **For more information on IGDS Ignite**, visit their webpage at <https://sta.uwi.edu/igds/ignite>, or on Instagram at <https://www.instagram.com/igdsignite/>, and Twitter at <https://twitter.com/Igdsignite>. For more on Cat Calls of UWI, visit them at Instagram and Twitter @catcallsfuwi.

The UWI Calendar of Events **March–April 2023**

A Midsummer Night's Dream

March 31 to April 2

Learning Resource Centre

The UWI St Augustine Campus

The Department of Creative and Festival Arts (DCFA) invites you to the staging of William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Directed by Michael Taylor, with musical direction from Samantha Joseph and choreography by Mindy Giles, this is the DCFA's annual student theatre production. Come enjoy this story of comedy, fantasy, mischief, and desire, performed by the students of the BA Theatre Arts programme. Cost: \$120 (Tertiary students with student ID pay \$100, children pay \$80) Tickets may be purchased at the DCFA on Agostini Street, St Augustine. Special packages are available to school groups attending the Friday 10 am show.

For show times, more information, and tickets contact the DCFA at 662-2002 ext. 85455, WhatsApp 272-3232 (DCFA), or email dcfa@sta.uwi.edu



Social Justice Leadership: Evidence from Practice

April 13

ONLINE

How can school leaders make their school communities fairer and create better engagement and a deeper sense of belonging? This open lecture, hosted by the School of Education, will be given by Dr Paul Miller, a Professor of Educational Leadership and Social Justice, and Director of the Institute for Educational and Social Equity (IESE). Dr Miller will examine several examples of school leaders doing social justice work.

For more information, email petronetta.pierre-robertson@sta.uwi.edu

Conference on the 50th Anniversary of the Black Power Revolution

April 20 to 21

Daaga Auditorium

The UWI St Augustine Campus

Fifty years ago, Trinidad and Tobago experienced one of its most transformative periods – the Black Power Revolution. This conference, hosted by the Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies (SALISES) and the National Joint Action Committee (NJAC), seeks to demystify the revolution and clarify the distortions and misinformation that have existed about it in the public domain. Its purpose is to enlighten people, especially the youth, on the significance of the events that occurred during the period, and combine academic research and analysis with the experience of some of the revolutionaries of the era.

Attendance is free. To register, visit: <https://bit.ly/blackpowerrevconference>.

For more information, email francine.alleyne@sta.uwi.edu or go to <https://sta.uwi.edu/salises/>



The Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies presents

CONFERENCE
ON THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

**BLACK
POWER
REVOLUTION**

20th – 21st April 2023 from 8:00 am
Daaga Auditorium, The UWI St. Augustine



50th



IGNITE: A Benefit Concert

April 2

Daaga Auditorium

The UWI St Augustine Campus

For one night in April, the Lydian Singers and the Signal Hill Alumni Choir will share their powerful voices to help deserving students in need. IGNITE – A Benefit Concert brings these beloved choral performers to UWI St Augustine for a fundraiser hosted by the UWI

Development and Endowment Fund (UWIDEF). Come enjoy their dazzling repertoires of folk, calypso, spirituals, anthems, and national songs, while helping young people secure their education. Cost: \$250.00. Tickets are available at Adam's Bagels (622-2435), Solera Wines and Spirits (Port of Spain, 628-7258, and Marabella, 227-2282), The UWI Division of Student Services and Development (730-6489), or via our 24/7 Virtual Box Office.

For reservations, go to <https://bit.ly/IGNITEBenefit> or contact 742-2752 or 342-9388