



# UWI TODAY

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES • ST AUGUSTINE CAMPUS

SUNDAY 23 MAY 2021



## St Vincent under Threat

The power of La Soufrière's eruption is captured in an unearthly light. The volcano has forced tens of thousands from their homes and left the island of St Vincent in a situation of grave economic uncertainty. Thankfully, the people of this beautiful island were able to evacuate safely from the danger zone through the support of national and regional services, one of the most important among them being the UWI Seismic Research Centre (SRC). UWI St Augustine continues to help their Caribbean neighbours (some of whom are students) through the work of SRC and the campus community. PHOTO: CHRISLON FRASER



**CAMPUS NEWS - 04**  
**Dispelling Vaccine Myths**  
Health experts take on COVID jab misinformation

**UWI IN SOCIETY - 06**  
**A Better Way to Travel**

Q&A with Transport Engineer Dr Trevor Townsend



**IN THE SHADOW OF LA SOUFRIÈRE - 09**  
**Love for SVG**

Vincentian students share their stories, hopes for home



**OUR PEOPLE - 12**

**Moving to the Beat of his own Drum**

Innovator, entrepreneur and snare master Kevon Willie





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## FROM THE PRINCIPAL

# Responding to Crises

At the time of writing, Trinidad and Tobago has a seven-day average of 292 new COVID-19 cases per day. We have had 211 deaths, 42 in the first nine days of May. The government has enforced increasingly stringent measures to limit public gatherings and non-essential movement. The health system is in danger of being overwhelmed. Some say it has already been.

Among those lost to the virus is one of our own. A member of the UWI St Augustine campus community, employed with the university, has died due to COVID-19. We feel a collective sorrow for her passing, especially those of us she worked closest with and spent the most time. Our campus has followed strict protocols to protect staff and students throughout the pandemic. In fact, we have been closed to students for well over a year, providing teaching and other services remotely. Following the recent directives from the government, we have closed the campus almost completely. Nevertheless, we are still part of Trinidad and Tobago, and our republic is under siege.

We will continue to do everything in our power to ensure the safety of all personnel while maintaining our standards of teaching, research and other work.

Our island neighbour, St Vincent, is still dealing with the fallout of the explosive eruption of La Soufrière, a devastating natural disaster that forced roughly 20,000 people (18 percent of the population) to evacuate their homes. Reports have put the cost to St Vincent and the Grenadines at as much as 50 percent of its GDP.

These are difficult times, at home and in the region.

My hope is that at the time of reading, there has been improvement; the pandemic precautions have had some success in lowering the number of cases, and the international effort to support SVG has raised enough to preserve the economy and provide for those in need. However, as part of The University of the West Indies, we have the capacity to do more than just hope. We can provide invaluable assistance. In fact, we have been.

This challenging period has provided the opportunity, both here at the St Augustine Campus, and region-wide as the collective institution of The UWI, to apply our research, expertise, knowledge resources,



**Now our campus community is engaged in fundraising efforts to assist the people of St Vincent, some of whom are our students. I encourage all of our readers both on and off campus, to contribute what you can.**

outreach and the human capital of our graduates to the current crises. We were at the forefront of the Caribbean response to COVID-19. We are still there, right here in T&T, working with the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to recover the ground that has been lost in this new wave of the pandemic.

In this issue of UWI TODAY we focus on the response to La Soufrière and the role of The UWI Seismic Research Centre (SRC). SRC was integral to the monitoring, evaluation and advising on the volcano. It is no exaggeration to say that their work saved many lives. They are a Caribbean asset and we are proud to host them at UWI St Augustine.

Now our campus community is engaged in fundraising efforts to assist the people of St Vincent, some of whom are our students. I encourage all of our readers, both on and off campus, to contribute what you can. We are in the midst of a resurgent pandemic that has lasted well over a year and many of us are feeling its effects on our income and livelihood. Still, whatever you can give has value, and will be appreciated.

We are in a time of great turbulence, where reevaluation and change have become necessities. Upheaval requires adaptation, and all around us is upheaval. In 2019, in my presentation to the Campus Council, I called for “bold strokes” to move us forward, that message is more relevant than ever.

Yet as we move forward, let us not forget the outstanding accomplishments of this institution. As we face the crises before us, let us take courage from our faith in our capabilities and dedication to the well-being and prosperity of Caribbean society. We are a vital Caribbean resource and we will be here, working hand-in-hand with national and regional bodies, finding solutions and offering aid.

*Brian Copeland*

**PROFESSOR BRIAN COPELAND**

*Campus Principal*

## Relief for St Vincent and the Grenadines

The University of the West Indies is mobilising its resources and expertise to provide support for the people of St Vincent and the Grenadines affected by La Soufrière.

Consistent with its traditional emergency assistance protocols, The UWI has activated a two-phased approach to the response. The first phase is a rapid response deployment of relief aid and experts to assist in the areas of greatest need, in

close coordination with the Government of St Vincent and the Grenadines and its National Emergency Management Organisation (NEMO). The second phase concentrates on the mobilisation of expertise in the rehabilitation response.

UWI St Augustine is asking all staff, students, alumni, friends, and readers to join its relief drive.

**Donations can be made via:**

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## ■ CAMPUS NEWS

**UWI St Augustine Campus Principal Professor Brian Copeland** has had his tenure extended for another year. The decision was made at the annual meeting of The University of the West Indies University Council on Friday, April 30.

The meeting, which was chaired by UWI Chancellor Robert Bermudez and held virtually for the second consecutive year, also approved the reappointment of Professor Sir Hilary Beckles as UWI Vice-Chancellor, and Professor Clive Landis (Pro Vice-Chancellor for Undergraduate Studies) as the new Principal of the Cave Hill Campus in Barbados.

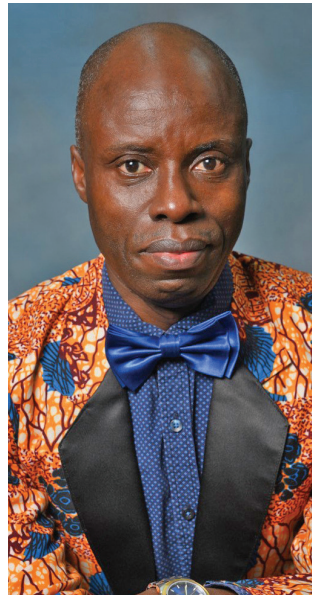
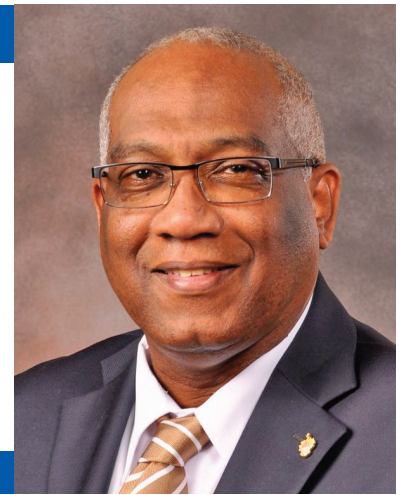
In addition, Dr Mark Wuddivira, Head of the Department of Food Production and Senior Lecturer in Environmental Soil Physics, has been appointed Dean of the Faculty of Food and Agriculture (FFA). Dr Wuddivira succeeds Professor Wayne Ganpat, whose tenure as dean at FFA was a time of intensified focus on innovation, entrepreneurship, the implementation of new food production practises and technology, research, and advocacy for national and regional food security.

Dr Brian Cockburn has been reappointed Dean of the Faculty of Science and Technology and Dr Akshai Mansingh has been reappointed Dean of the University's Faculty of Sport, which serves the five campuses of The UWI through their Academies of Sport. All appointments and reappointments take effect from August 1, 2021.

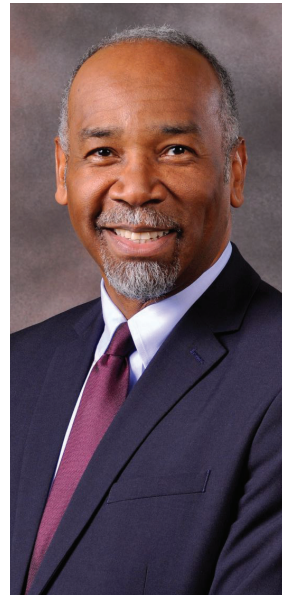
Professor Copeland has served one term as Campus Principal, beginning July 2016. He is a UWI alumnus, graduating from the St Augustine Campus in 1978, and has as served as a Professor and Head of the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, as well Dean of the Faculty of Engineering. Professor Copeland, who is

## PRINCIPAL COPELAND'S tenure extended one year

The UWI St Augustine Campus Principal Professor Brian Copeland



Dr Mark Wuddivira, the new Dean of the Faculty of Food and Agriculture.



Dr Brian Cockburn, reappointed as Dean of the Faculty of Science and Technology.

the first recipient of the Order of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago in 2008 for his work in steelpan innovation, and who has successfully patented new developments in steelpan technology, was scheduled to retire in August of this year.

This year's University Council meeting followed heightened interest in the leadership and functioning of The UWI after the release and region-wide debate over the *Report of The UWI Chancellor's Commission on Governance of The UWI*. The report, released in July 2020, was very critical of the regional university and made several recommendations, including the raising of tuition fees for students.

The appointment of Professor Landis to Cave Hill Campus Principal follows the retirement of Professor Eudine Barribeau, one of the Caribbean's most celebrated and accomplished feminist scholars and academic administrators.

■ **The open session of the 2021 University Council meeting can be viewed at [www.uwitv.org](http://www.uwitv.org) and the UWI TV Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/UWITV>**

## Virtual forum takes on vaccine concerns, misinformation

BY OMEGA FRANCIS



Professor Terence Seemungal, Dean of the Faculty of Medical Sciences

**Vaccine hesitancy is a growing issue in Trinidad and Tobago**, and the Caribbean, and many do not believe they should take the new AstraZeneca vaccine, despite the evidence that has shown its effectiveness. They have been listening to the news reports on the potential for a rare clotting disorder, or to online influencers who have been insisting that the vaccine is a sinister way to implant microchip trackers.

On Tuesday, April 27, 2021, UWI St Augustine's Caribbean Centre for Health Systems Research and Development (CCHSRD), Faculty of Medical Sciences (FMS) and Faculty of Social Sciences (FSS) hosted the virtual public forum "COVID-19 Vaccines: Truths and Untruths" to deal with concerns and misinformation.

Experts at the forum included Professor Clive Landis, Chair of the UWI COVID-19 Task Force; Dr Jeffrey Edwards, Lecturer in Public Health; Dr Talia Esnard, Sociologist and Department of Behavioural Sciences' Head; Professor Christine Carrington, Professor of Molecular Genetics and Virology; and Professor Terence Seemungal, Pulmonologist and Dean of FMS. They answered questions that ranged from blood-clotting concerns, immunity,

vaccine ingredients, and even the idea that the vaccines contained tracking technology.

When asked the burning question, "can you develop clots from taking the vaccine", Professor Seemungal said, "Yes, there is a possibility of a rare disorder, but it is just that: very rare. You have to balance the risk of that disorder against the risk of death from COVID-19".

The current estimated chance of developing a clot via the AstraZeneca vaccine is around five in every one million (in the UK). However, if you happen to develop one of these rare clots, the local medical community has the information to treat it, based on guidelines developed in the UK and EU.

Another question was, why even take the vaccine if you are a healthy individual? Isn't having a healthy immune system sufficient? It was pointed out that the vaccine allows the development of an immune response without being exposed to the actual virus.

"This immunity builds a person's resistance to fight the virus. Developing immunity through vaccination means that there is a reduced risk of developing severe illness and death due to COVID," said Dr Edwards.

Natural immunity from infection vs COVID-19 vaccine? In simple terms, if you have recovered from COVID-19, taking the vaccine is still necessary to reduce the risk of contracting the disease again.

The science has already shown how the vaccine has begun to change the landscape of the pandemic. Prior to the vaccination rollout in December 2020, the UK was experiencing on average near 420 deaths daily,

which peaked in January at 1285. Now, with a 67 percent vaccinated population, their daily death toll is an average of nine.

But, what about the microchips? Purely harmful misinformation. When it comes to the spread of information online and how we should consume it, Dr Esnard urged the public to always be critical of what we hear and ask questions of the information we receive.

"A conversation about the information that is spreading through social media, through social influencers and what is coming out of credible sources needs to be had," she said. "If we do not have an authentic conversation, there will be a deeper mistrust for healthcare workers, which would move the population from vaccine hesitancy to vaccine refusal."

So, while the Caribbean has, "done an excellent job in maintaining good public health; CARICOM in particular" according to Professor Landis, we still must continue to do our part, and when able, get vaccinated!



■ **Check out the UWI St Augustine Facebook page to catch the replay of the virtual forum.**



## ■ CAMPUS NEWS

# Life Sciences research team wins EMA Green Leaf Award for environment-friendly crop production methods

‘These protection strategies are more sustainable, environmentally sound, and economically viable’



Professor Jayaraj Jayaraman receiving the award on behalf of the Plant Microbe Biotechnology Group.

The Plant Microbe Biotechnology Group, a research team from UWI St Augustine's Department of Life Sciences, has won the Environmental Management Authority's (EMA) Green Leaf award for their research on the theme “Developing sustainable agricultural management strategies to improve vegetable production towards self-sufficiency and food security in the Caribbean region”.

They received their award at an EMA ceremony streamed on April 22, 2021. The Green Leaf Awards 2020 coincided with both Earth Day and the EMA's 25th anniversary. The group's work was one of 30 submissions nominated in seven categories. It consisted of the development of integrated disease management practises for vegetable crops using biological agents, including seaweed-based biostimulants (products that increase plant growth).

Explaining the purpose of their sustainable agricultural management strategies, Professor Jayaraj Jayaraman, the team lead, said:

“The use of chemicals needs to be limited to one third of its current level by incorporating alternative treatments and approaches through integrated disease management/ integrated pest management (IDM/IPM) systems which are guided by environmental principles and standards.”

The team, he explained, has developed innovative crop protection methods which were extensively tested and demonstrated in farmers' fields.

“These protection strategies are more sustainable, environmentally sound, and economically viable,” said Professor Jayaraman.

Several farmers and agricultural personnel in the Caribbean were trained on the updated crop management technologies through their project outreach activities.



Team lead  
Dr Adesh Ramsuhag



Lead researcher on the seaweed  
research project Omar Ali

The group also includes fellow team lead Dr Adesh Ramsuhag, as well as Mr Omar Ali, Dr Antonio Ramkissoon, Dr Chinnaraja Chinnadurai, Dr Ramjagathesh Rajendran and Dr Aidan Farrell.

Their outstanding work over the past eight years has helped them obtain research grants from the African, Caribbean, and Pacific – European Union (ACP-EU); the Conservation, Food and Health (CFH) Foundation; the Canada-based company Acadian SeaPlants Ltd; and UWI St Augustine's Research and Development Impact (RDI) Fund.

UWI TODAY first covered the work of the group in 2017, [https://sta.uwi.edu/uwitoday/archive/june\\_2017/article19.asp](https://sta.uwi.edu/uwitoday/archive/june_2017/article19.asp), which includes very promising

research on antibiotic-producing microorganisms, novel antimicrobials and natural products identified from T&T's pristine environments.

Recently, they developed a novel seaweed extract-based biostimulant that not only protects crop plants from pests and disease, but also dramatically stimulates their growth.

The group used the latest technology, including transcriptomics and metagenomics, in testing the efficacy of the formula.

“We were also able to show that our seaweed extract had a beneficial effect in stimulating microorganisms in the soil, on the roots and in the plants. Hence there might be indirect beneficial effect by the microorganisms on the plant growth processes. This is a completely new phenomenon observed in a seaweed-based biostimulant,” said Dr Ramsuhag.

Omar Ali, a PhD student and the lead researcher on the seaweed research project, revealed that they had seen “a significant increase in produce yield (up to 50 percent or more) in addition to quality improvement in most of our field trials using this new seaweed extract formula”.

The group continues their work on natural products, biological plant farming, and environmental conservation research with the goal of contributing to sustainability, maintaining a strong research culture among students, and helping T&T through scientific innovation-based growth and technology development.

■ The 2020 Green Leaf Awards ceremony can be viewed on the EMA's YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/c/EnvironmentalManagementAuthority>



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## ■ UWI IN SOCIETY

# Moving right along

*Dr Trevor Townsend shares his vision for a more equitable and congestion-free transportation system*

BY KANISHA VINCENT



From private vehicles to the water taxi, transportation in Trinidad and Tobago is multifaceted. As a society, we face issues like congestion, lack of access to reliable public transportation, and the problems that stem from these. Having been involved in the transportation industry as a transportation engineer for over 40 years, Dr Trevor Townsend, Senior Lecturer in Traffic and Transportation Engineering at the Faculty of Engineering, sheds some light on our system, the pros and cons, and possible improvements that can be made.

## UT: WHAT DOES A TRANSPORTATION ENGINEER DO?

**TT:** The role of the transportation engineer is to intervene deliberately and delicately in the transportation system and, by so doing, ensure that it fulfills the needs of society, providing linkages between activities that are spatially separated. So we need transportation because we need to go from point A to point B in a way that is as efficient as possible, as environmentally friendly as possible, and in a sustainable fashion. Transportation engineering is about planning, organising, and managing all that in a way that can be sustained. Transportation engineers ask “why do I have to design this?” “How does this fit into the entire transportation system?” So, therefore, the transportation engineer has an overarching view of the transportation system.

## UT: HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE OUR TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM?

**TT:** We have the elements of the system, but as can be experienced on a daily basis, we don't seem to have any overall planning, organisation, and management of the system. In short, it's not organised in a very systematic way. And that is something which has been going on for a long time.

## UT: HOW HAS COVID-19 CHANGED OUR SYSTEM?

**TT:** COVID has significant impacts, especially if you think about the impact on public transportation. We did have a dramatic fall-off in the movement of people when we went into lockdown, and as such, a dramatic fall-off in the transportation of people. However, to an extent, as societies have opened up, that has also reverted, not quite to the pre-COVID levels. The need to be physically distant is a huge burden on the supply of public transportation. And this is a very significant problem that we are going to have to systematically work to overcome because societies all around the world have recognised that in terms of the movement of people, the private motorcar is one of the most inefficient ways. What we need is a clear policy, and planning, to move towards having a more robust transportation system.

## UT: WHAT ARE THE PROS OF THE CURRENT SYSTEM?

**TT:** As for the pros, we have a well-developed road network. All major areas in Trinidad and Tobago are reachable within the road network system, although there are different levels of quality of roads. Another positive is that we have a robust private sector that provides public transportation in the maxi-taxi system. It is a very good system and should be supported, improved, and further developed.

**Essentially, we are saying that these people who cannot afford a car (that is why they are utilising public transport) are less important than those who we think have privilege.**

## UT: WHAT ARE THE CONS OF THE CURRENT SYSTEM?

**TT:** There are some significant negatives, but the problems that we face are not insurmountable. The needs we have can be serviced, but they have to be organised and managed in a deliberate way.

The two main issues we have are [firstly], the lack of institutions and/or organisations that are mandated with the task of transportation engineering. We need a planning and design arm [of existing ministries] that understands and evaluates both current and expected needs and what we have to do to fill them. And we also need an organisation that is responsible for public transportation with that same kind of concept.

[Congestion is the second major issue]. Out of a survey performed in Trincity, data showed that 97 percent of households had one car and over 57 percent had two or more cars. And this is a community that is close to public transportation [the Priority Bus Route]. Therefore, what is driving people's decisions is the lack of confidence in the public transportation system. From another survey, the average occupancy ratio of persons to private vehicles on a highway is 1.3 persons per car. It can't work efficiently that way.

## UT: ARE THERE SPECIFIC TIME POINTS IN OUR NATION'S DEVELOPMENT THAT PRESENTED OPPORTUNITIES TO FIX SOME OF THESE ISSUES?

**TT:** There are always opportunities. We have been living these problems. [We need] to ask ourselves if there is a better way to do it. Anytime we have congestion, we have wastage of time. Nobody gains from the time you have spent there. This is considered a consumer loss. You have to manage and plan your way out of this. So any decision-maker who comes and says they want to deal with this congestion but doesn't want to take a medium to long-term view, then they are not prepared to address the issue. There is always an opportunity for a decision-maker to say “I want to do it differently”. So far, we have generally not taken the medium to long-term approach.

## UT: WHAT DOES THE PUBLIC POLICY OFFER BY MEANS OF EXPANDING THE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM?

**TT:** There is a Vision 2030 document that is very expansive, but documents are just there until an action plan is created. Successive governments have had “draft” transportation policies. I call them draft because since 1967, there hasn't been one that has been approved and agreed upon by the government on a national level. I have been involved in three so far; 1984, 1996, and 2010. These documents are already there. Things may have worsened but the main problems have not changed. Let us now develop some action plans and then start to take action to expand the transportation system. The only way you will get low-hanging fruit is if you planted a tree five years ago.

## UT: ON AVERAGE, HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE AND WHAT IS THE MONETARY INVESTMENT THAT COULD HELP TO MITIGATE SOME OF THE CHRONIC PROBLEMS WE HAVE?

**TT:** To start to create this change, major capital investment is not needed. We can implement a proper bus rapid transit system on the Priority Bus Route [PBR] as a short-term initiative. We already have the road, although we need to improve the intersections and this can be done at a fairly low cost.

In conjunction with the Association of Professional Engineers, we did a proposal on this to the Ministry of Planning. The planning would cost between \$3-4 million and implementation costs inclusive of stations, etc would amount to \$100 million over time. The government spends about \$400 million on public transportation each year. And this will have an impact on pollution, congestion, safety – all those things.

The [PBR] was always meant to be a low volume, high speed route, and when you put private cars on the bus route, you are disadvantaging the public transportation users. Without private cars on the PBR, the Public Transport Service Corporation (PTSC) could transport about 40 percent more passengers at no additional cost. These are the uncomfortable truths we have to face as a society. Essentially, we are saying that these people who cannot afford a car (that is why they are utilising public transport) are less important than those who we think have privilege.



## ■ IN THE SHADOW OF LA SOUFRIÈRE



# UWI SEISMIC RESEARCH CENTRE on the ground in St Vincent

BY ZAHRA GORDON

It may sound strange, but when the La Soufrière volcano erupted on April 9 in St Vincent and the Grenadines, geology professor Richard Robertson dressed for the occasion. His sombre suit consisted of a black t-shirt with the text “La Soufrière” on the front and matching black pants. Robertson had been based at the Belmont Observatory on the island – approximately nine kilometres away from the volcano – starting his first rotation on December 31, 2020, where he led The UWI Seismic Research Centre’s (SRC) scientific team as they monitored volcanic activity and prepared for the inevitable explosive eruption.

When the mushroom cloud finally shot over eight kilometres high into the air, Robertson, with his fellow team members volcano-seismologist Roderick Stewart and volcanologist Thomas Christopher, was calm in the midst of chaos, satisfied by the fact that their forecasts helped the government make crucial decisions, including evacuation of the red and orange zones (communities surrounding the volcano) on the night of April 8.

“The first event in the morning (on April 9) wasn’t too surprising,” said Robertson. “There was a lot of excitement. Nothing beats seeing [the volcano] rise. It looks alive and there’s a lot of adrenaline. As a scientist, I’m always interested in seeing it, but it’s a good and a bad feeling because I know there’ll be a lot of damage. Seeing it and understanding it are two different things though, and we had to compartmentalise in order to continue doing what was needed under the extreme stress.”

As expected, the eruption caused widespread devastation. Approximately 20,000 people were evacuated – many of whom remain in shelters. The ensuing ash fall damaged, and in some cases, completely destroyed, public and private properties such as homes, hospitals and schools. The water supply system was disrupted. Crops were decimated in a country with an economy based largely on agriculture. The United Nations has since deemed the event a humanitarian crisis.

The eruption destroyed one and cut power to three of eight seismic stations installed by SRC, which had to be quickly replaced, and as fieldwork continued, Robertson witnessed firsthand the aftermath of the eruption.



PHOTO: KAVILLE HAZLEWOOD

“Our masks weren’t just for COVID at that point. The ash was caked on the streets and you had to walk and drive slowly because everything gets kicked up into the air when you move. There’s a constant smell of burning and the grit gets into your eyes and blurs your vision. It’s really not pleasant,” Robertson recounted.

While in the field, he saw trees collapse and roofs cave in under the weight of ash, which he described as a heavy “grey snow”. At the observatory, Robertson and team had to continue working in between constantly sweeping ash away from the floor and equipment. They even had to worry about ash getting into their food.

This was not his first experience with La Soufrière, however. Robertson, who is Vincentian, was a teenager when the volcano last erupted 42 years ago in 1979. The strong earthquakes and tremors leading up to the eruption were familiar. This time, however, he was in a position to help:

“I became a volcanologist because of the ‘79 eruption. One of the reasons fundamentally that I did this is because when Soufrière erupted back then, I did not see people who looked like me or spoke like me, who were giving advice to the government, apart from Dr (Keith) Rowley. The thing that was impressed upon me the most was the fact that we had a volcano that could erupt again in the future and there was nobody in St Vincent that could understand what was happening. And that is what I set out to do. It’s terrible to see what the volcano can do in terms of damage, but if it does, at least I can help.”

And help he did. SRC first detected effusive eruptions at La Soufrière on December 27, 2020 from their headquarters in St Augustine. In the effusive phase, molten rock or magma pushes to the surface and gently oozes out, producing lava flows and lava domes. By December 29, they confirmed that there were high temperatures caused by the magma reaching the surface and the team was deployed to the island on December 31. They got straight to work installing seismic monitoring stations, ground deformation sites and a camera at the summit to increase the accuracy of information collection.

The Belmont Observatory had to be quickly renovated in order to be habitable. The seismic stations enhanced monitoring of the growth and development of the volcano’s



PHOTO: COURTESY UWI SEISMIC RESEARCH CENTRE



The scientific team that was on-island at the onset of the explosive phase (from left), Richard Robertson, Thomas Christopher and Roderick Stewart. With the support of the wider SRC team in Trinidad and Montserrat, they were instrumental in making the call to recommend raising the alert level which ultimately led to the evacuation.



## ■ IN THE SHADOW OF LA SOUFRIÈRE

dome. Additional monitoring techniques were also used, which included drone flights and mapping. In mid-March, activity began to change with the occurrence of volcanic tectonic earthquakes (VTEs) – high-frequency vibrations caused by rock fracture or minor fault movement associated with deformation. According to Robertson, the VTEs were the first cause for concern.

There was another period of VTEs on April 5, but they went into tremors on April 8, which continued up to the explosions the following day. They started discreetly on April 9 but went into near continuous explosions later that day up until midday on April 11, when the gaps between explosions increased from about 1.5 to 8 hours.

The eruptions from April 9 to 11 were much larger than 1979, and data is still being collected on how much so. SRC scientists have described the eruption as unusually intense, which they say is not necessarily related to climate change, but the configuration of the dome.

SRC director Dr Erouscilla Joseph said the increased monitoring, coordination of field and monitoring activities, outreach and advising, completed with limited resources, is a feat of which both The UWI and SRC can be proud. Joseph noted that SRC responsibilities entailed much more than simply communicating data. There was a lot of coordination involved with multiple organisations, which was made more difficult because of the pandemic.

The SRC worked with multiple agencies including the National Emergency Management Organisation, Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) and the Office of the Prime Minister. They also had to create a social media programme and participate in virtual and public town hall meetings in St Vincent.

Joseph noted that the SRC's contribution to saving lives was as important as the scientific monitoring: "We approach this as scientists, but it's a risky job and we continue to do it because we're conscious that people's lives and livelihoods could be affected. This is why we're careful with monitoring volcanic activity. It may be of scientific interest, but the human aspect is one of the big things we strive to keep in mind."

Even though the SRC is under-resourced, said Joseph, they have received a grant to assist with replacing equipment and the continued work in St Vincent from the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility, financial assistance from CDEMA and other donor agencies, and donations of equipment from the US Geological Survey's Volcano Disaster Assistance Programme (USGS VDAP) and energy services company Halliburton.

Although the intense volcanic activity has decreased, heavy rainfall has caused mudflows (lahars) from the ash build up. Landslides and floods are delaying the clean-up efforts and exacerbating damages. Robertson noted that living in shelters poses many challenges and empathised with those still there. An ending or return to normalcy is unclear. He said he'd even heard of people returning to check on their homes to find items stolen.

"There's a lot of concern about life and livelihood. Some people have gone back to try to save their homes by cleaning up and so on, but the mudflows are going to continue to destroy. Most people I've spoken to just want to know when it will be safe to return. Hopefully that will happen soon," said Robertson.



PHOTO: COURTESY OF UWI TV



**"We approach this as scientists, but it's a risky job and we continue to do it because we're conscious that people's lives and livelihoods could be affected. This is why we're careful with monitoring volcanic activity. It may be of scientific interest, but the human aspect is one of the big things we strive to keep in mind."**

**Dr Erouscilla Joseph, Director of SRC**



An aerial shot of Sandy Bay covered in ash. PHOTO: COURTESY OF UWI TV

## UWI Women's Cricket Club donates items to St Vincent

The UWI Women's Cricket Club (UWI WCC) has joined the regional university's call to "Rally Round" Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to provide relief for those affected by the La Soufrière volcanic eruptions.

"We stand with the people of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines," said team coach Stephanie Power, "especially our Vincentian counterparts in sport, and we remain committed to assisting in any way that we can. Club members donated cases of bottled water, non-perishable food items, household, cleaning, and personal care items."

Since the explosive eruption of the volcano began in early April, many citizens have been displaced from their homes and are residing in shelters and other forms of temporary housing. Coach Powers said that some of those affected are members of the Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Under-19 National Women's Cricket Team.

The shipment left Trinidad and Tobago on April 21. The UWI St Augustine, together with its regional campuses, continues its relief efforts to support the citizens of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines during its time of need. UWI WCC operates under the St Augustine Academy of Sport, Faculty of Sport at The University of the West Indies.





# Smoke IN THE SKY

*St Augustine's students from St Vincent share their experiences and hopes for the recovery of their island*

BY JODY ROBINSON

PHOTO: COURTESY UWI SEISMIC RESEARCH CENTRE

**Reports of heightened activity came since last December**, but evacuation orders were given for people living in vulnerable areas when a lava dome could be seen on Thursday (April 8) afternoon. The island is zoned based on proximity to the volcano. Those living in the green and yellow zones were relatively safe, and those in the orange and red zones were in imminent danger. No one was safe from ash fall. Ash spread everywhere and even affected neighboring islands such as Barbados and St Lucia.

A total of 4,000 displaced nationals are now living in shelters while others have moved in with friends and family or taken boats to neighbouring islands. The UWI students from St Vincent and the Grenadines have been severely affected by the eruption as they deal with school, exams, and the pandemic. Some of them agreed to share their stories with **UWI TODAY**.



## Teron Pope

"I was lying in bed and going through WhatsApp when I learned about the eruption," said Teron Pope, a final year student majoring in Economics and with a minor in Finance. "Even now, I can't wrap my mind around it."

Teron lives in a safe zone but he witnessed the eruptions from his house. He had no water for the first week. His family had to manage their water. They were also away from ash exposure. The experience, he says, affected his studies:

"It was hard for me to remain motivated. This is my final semester and I had to ask for extensions."

Thankfully, his lecturers and schoolmates have been very supportive. Teron highlighted Dr Roxanne Brizan-St Martin, lecturer in the Department of Economics. "She actually reached out to me when she learned of the increased activity [of the volcano]. She has been speaking to me throughout this experience and even connected me to a counsellor to assist with my lack of motivation."

He said that he really wants the situation in his homeland to end soon, but he understands they have a long road ahead in restarting the economy, and revamping tourism and agriculture.

Teron also called for the support of the campus community and greater society: "Don't forget about us and our plight. Thousands have been affected, so donate whatever you can. Don't forget, no matter how long this goes on."



## Justene Farrell

The night of the eruption, there was an all island blackout, recalled Justene Farrell.

"At about 1 am, I no longer felt the fan and I woke up to complete darkness. We could all hear the volcano and it was so scary," she said. "It was so loud and felt so near that everyone who could use social media were posting and asking whether a 'green zone' even existed and if anyone was truly safe."

The final year Statistics and Economics student at the Faculty of Science and Technology was in disbelief. "As a child, you hear about past eruptions, but I never thought it would erupt in my lifetime." She and her family are living in a green zone but they have been affected by ash fall, and water and electricity deficits. They have set up wash stations at every door and they keep the house fully locked up.

School has been interrupted as well. "I felt like I lost an entire week of school just thinking about everything and keeping up with the updates. I had to refocus and pull myself together."



■ IN THE SHADOW OF LA SOUFRIÈRE



PHOTO: COURTESY OF UWI TV



**Jessica Prescott**

The President of The Vincentian Students' Association of the St Augustine Campus and a Faculty of Engineering student, Jessica Prescott was not as surprised by the eruption of La Soufrière because she'd followed the reporting. However, the experience was no less surreal.

"We saw some smoke in the sky while going into town and, within 10 minutes, the smoke and explosions got increasingly bigger."

The eruption came at a time when the island was experiencing a COVID-19 spike and a dengue outbreak; all this affected her.

"COVID, dengue, final year and now an eruption." She said. "We had to be filling up drums and barrels for days. I had to take some time for myself."

There was some relief. Jessica and other students have received extensions on projects and assignments. She also noted that the Division of Student Services and Development (DSSD) had enquired about their welfare and the Guild of Students, and other groups have plans to send aid. Jessica is grateful for any support, even if she doesn't directly benefit.

"We have lost millions in crops, land and animals for rearing, but the Caribbean has really rallied around us, and I am hopeful we will overcome."



**Chrislon Fraser**

For Chrislon Fraser, it has been quite a rollercoaster of events and emotions. He noted the overwhelming response from overseas. "Caribbean countries as well as the St Vincent and the Grenadines' diaspora in the United Kingdom, United States and Canada have come together to support us."

The eruption shocked him and he experienced trauma which impacted his school work. However, he was fortunate because he wasn't in the danger zone and could remain home.

"It is my final year as a Bachelor's of Law student, but this has really hindered my focus. I kept checking daily updates and I feel bad for others who had to be evacuated or stay in shelters," he said.

Chrislon stated that even though the volcano has affected their lives and livelihood, he is confident that they will rise above it:

"We are proud with a strong community spirit and national bond. We will come together to rebuild!"



PHOTO: COURTESY OF UWI SEISMIC RESEARCH CENTRE



PHOTO: COURTESY OF UWI TV

**The last major eruption of La Soufrière was in 1979. Since April 9 of this year, the volcano has erupted many times. Overall, the students are navigating an unprecedented time in their school journey. They are hopeful they will be triumphant with the continued support from The UWI and the global community.**

*Jody Robinson is a final year student from Jamaica completing a master's degree in Social Work. She served as the Deputy Vice President (Outreach and Development) for the Guild of Students 2020/2021.*



## ■ OUR STUDENTS



# NEW GUILD LEADERS

## *focus on student engagement, mental health*

BY GILLIAN MOORE



Guild President-elect Kobe Sandy



Guild Vice President-elect Christon Malchan

In 2016, two young leaders met in Canada, the trip there a reward for excellence. Little did they suspect that, five years later, they would be taking on the stewardship of the student body at the St Augustine Campus.

Then, Kobe Sandy and Christon Malchan were enrolled in RBC's Young Leaders programme, Malchan receiving the award for most outstanding participant. This June, they will be the big men on campus, having respectively been elected president and vice-president of UWI St Augustine's Guild of Students Council.

The Guild Council represents all enrolled students and their interests at the campus. Its aims include fostering the educational and social lives of students, and advancing unity and fraternity among members.

Sandy, who is studying for a degree in Public Sector Management, has had a lifelong interest in politics. Even in primary school, he says, he would research government ministers in T&T and the region.

"I have always dreamed to be prime minister," he admits.

While still in primary school in south Trinidad, supported by his entrepreneur mom and pastor aunt, he started a literacy-focused NGO, Friends Inc. Later, at Vessigny Secondary School, he became president of the student council.

Vice-President-elect Malchan has had a similar focus at his schools, San Juan Secondary and Queen's Royal College. But unlike Sandy, who served as chairman of the Guild's National Affairs Committee in his first year, this is Malchan's first foray into a leadership role at the tertiary level. He notes that most who run for Guild office start

out as members of committees before trying for top roles. While on the campaign trail he pitched: "I was boldfaced enough to jump to VP, don't you think I'm bold enough to represent you?"

Malchan is an Accounting student who grew up in a competitive atmosphere with four brothers at home (and seven other siblings on his father's side). He said the initial connection he and Sandy made in Canada was strengthened when they got to campus. "I think we are two strong leaders who are willing to lead, and who know how to work together."

He says their shared interest in advocacy will serve them well: "We discussed the fact that we will have differences of opinion but we have to remember it's for the betterment of the entire student population. I think we are mature enough and we have been working well together during this transition phase."

Malchan is aiming his efforts at increased student engagement, which he feels has fallen off since the pandemic caused classes to move online.

"People are becoming demotivated. COVID has everyone kind of off-balance. I want to bring back that balance, providing some kind of experience that's not coming off as a forum, but as something that is light, as something that you will enjoy. It's not the same as being physically present, but we want to bring back a sense of excitement."

Sandy says the defining mission of their new, year-long term will be navigating students through the landscape of COVID-19.

"Students are in crisis," he says. "Whereas, on a

physical campus, you have the joy of interaction – that has been demolished. It's very tough, mentally. We want to be sure the administration is aware and sees that students are not at their best. They are trying to get above the water, where we are drowning."

The new Guild president adds that, "we must now understand that this is an unprecedented time, and it calls for innovative and progressive leadership. That is what I want to bring to this organisation, and of course, to be that catalyst to encourage, inspire and actually engage the students."

To this end, the Guild team (under the previous executive) launched its "Mind U" initiative last year, with a series of online forums on the subject of mental health.

"We will continue to ensure that the students' welfare is of paramount importance, providing mental health avenues for our members to cope, and ensure they have access to food assistance [for those who need it]. We will provide access to counselling, and ensure all this [is available] on a new virtual platform — and have lectures and assignments done in a standardised manner," says Sandy.

He wants to see the Guild's advocacy role extending even beyond campus. "I feel the [Guild's advocacy] has decreased tremendously. In 1970, the Black Power Movement, which was led by students of the UWI Student Guild, changed the whole society. I'm not saying we should go out and protest in the road the same way, but we have to hold public servants to account."

"Together we can make it happen," he says. "That is our theme."



## ■ OUR PEOPLE

# KEVON WILLIE

## Beating a sound for T&T

BY SERAH ACHAM

When Kevon Willie started KAW Drums in 2013, he was looking for a sound for Trinidad and Tobago. In 2021, in the middle of an unrelenting pandemic that cancelled the festival for which this country lives and which lives in every Trinbagonian, he used his drums to honour that sound and to show us that it would live forever.

KAW Drums is a custom-made-drum company whose instruments look as beautiful as the music they make. Using high-quality local wood, with the first made for Panorama, and now supplying drums to many in the Carnival industry, the company's identity is as rooted in Carnival and T&T as it is in its owner's passion for the drum.

Born and bred in South Trinidad, with parents who were pastors, Kevon grew up in his church, where music flowed and a drum set was always close.

"I played drums for my kindergarten graduation," he says, explaining just how early his life in music began.

At eight years old, he was drumming the beat to church services. As a student at St Benedict's College, where "everything was about music", he played with the band, performing at every school event and winning the National Gas Company of Trinidad and Tobago (NGC) Sanfest twice. He was also involved in "drum clinics" with the drumming community.

Kevon thought his path was set – after secondary school, he'd go on to attend Berklee College of Music or Full Sail University because, "I always wanted to study drums, always wanted to be a part of drums".



Hans Dieffenthaler of Kes on KAW drums.

Instead, he did as his parents wished and, in 2010, enrolled in UWI's Mechanical Engineering programme, choosing to pursue his love of music outside the classroom. Until, that is, he found a way to bring drums front and centre once more.

"I always wanted to explore... some studies with musical instruments," he shares. So, for his final-year project, he took Professor (and now Campus Principal) Brian Copeland's "pan course" (The Technology of the Steelpan) and "that's where it started for me". Making an instrument and the feeling of accomplishment that followed was "mind-blowing".

"I recall Kevon as student on the course," says Professor Copeland. "That course never had a sizeable enrolment but those who enrolled were generally very committed and engaged."

The Campus Principal, himself an innovator with the steelpan, said that for many the course was seen as a risk because engineering students could not see it as part of their career path. Kevon, he says, "embodies what is, to me, the kind of graduate that the country needs right now."



Kevon Willie. PHOTOS: COURTESY KAW DRUMS

Copeland continues, "he has become an entrepreneur, one with foreign earning potential centred on a product based on competitive uniqueness and driven by technology and know-how. That is what we have been envisaging for our graduates in our Innovation and Entrepreneurship initiative at The UWI."

Once Kevon had his degree in hand, with a major in Manufacturing and Production and Design, he says, "I applied it to drums".

Having lived in the local music community, witnessing and joining jam sessions with great musicians, he saw "what people were looking for in terms of a sound for Trinidad".

Kevon started with Panorama, where the steelbands are so large that the only drummer in the 120-performer ensemble would be drowned out. "Drummers wanted a louder snare" to project their sound over the entire band, he says. However, what they needed hadn't yet been made. "That's when we came up with our Panorama snare."



The NYU Snare Drum.

The first was made for Bunji Garlin's then-drummer, and the reviews from that performance – Kevon posted a short clip of it online – were phenomenal. The orders started coming in one by one, "and then word just spread because people would throw up videos on Instagram". That's when he realised he had a viable business idea and, in 2013, at 22 years old, Kevon launched KAW Drums – to this date, the only crafter of custom drum kits in the Caribbean.

That "Panorama snare", made from thick brass, is KAW Drums' only standard snare. Everything else is custom-made, usually with a mix of wood and metal.

"The woods definitely have a big part to play" in the sound each drum produces, he says. Mahogany, for example, produces "low, warm tones"; purple heart generates a sound "more high and pitchy". And he only uses Caribbean woods, with most coming from local forests – mahogany, teak, appamatte and mora, for example – because "the wood we have in Trinidad is some of the best."

Eight years after its launch, KAW Drums has joined the global music community, with drums in the hands of some of the top musicians in the US, UK, Paris and wider Caribbean. Think of the drummers who've played for Mary J Blige, Beyonce, Stevie Wonder, and Chronixx. UK-based, Trini-born Richard Bailey, "one of the biggest drummers of the past era, [who] played with Bob Marley and Steve Winwood" is on that list, Kevon says. And it's a list that keeps getting longer, helped by one KAW Drums offspring that's sitting in New York-based club, Groove.

"It's one of the legendary clubs where Jimi Hendrix and all those artistes that came from New York passed through," Kevon says. The house snare is one of his. "Many drummers... play it and give us reviews," or ask how they can score one for themselves.

While the world is still discovering the sound of KAW Drums, at home, it has become integral to Carnival. Most of



our soca artistes use Kevon's drums, including Kes, Bunji Garlin and Ravi B. For Carnival 2020, nine out of 12 bands featured KAW Drums snares, including Exodus.

This year, feeling the loss we all did without Carnival, KAW Drums hosted "Tiny Fete" – a small production posted on its YouTube and Instagram channels, meant to spread some Carnival vibes and pay tribute to the drummers whose beats have us jumping and wining, throwing our hands in the air and our waists this way and that. With Hans Dieffenthaler, Gerion Williams and Alpha Simpson on board, the KAW Drums team set up their shop with a drum kit, records and lights, and hosted small sessions with soca's "foundation drummers". The message to T&T from KAW Drums: "The beat is still here. The sound is still here. Soca will never die."

As for why his drums resonate so strongly with drummers who play them, Kevon thinks "it's the love and the energy put into making the drum that's reflected in the sound... along with the engineering part".



## ■ CAMPUS NEWS

# UWI students to represent T&T at CONFERENCE OF YOUTH 16

“Being a first-generation university student in my family, it was at times challenging navigating different spaces,” says Adriel Charles, a final year student pursuing her BSc in International Relations with a minor in Cultural Studies at the St Augustine Campus.

Adriel found her place through involvement in student groups and extracurricular activities such as the Guild of Students and UWI St Augustine’s Model UN Club. It was through the Model UN Club that she was given a great opportunity—to be a Country Coordinator for Trinidad and Tobago, along with fellow UWI student Ruth Baptiste, for the UN Climate Change Conference of Youth 16 (COY16).

COY is an event under the Official Youth Constituency of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) that prepares young people for participation in the annual UN Climate Change Conference. Students from more than 140 countries will take part in developing a climate policy document, hold sessions on capacity-building, learn at skill-building workshops, and engage in cultural exchange with participants from all over the world. COY16 takes place in Glasgow, Scotland in November 2021.

“This is an outstanding achievement given the degree



Adriel Charles



Ruth Baptiste

of competition and limited opportunity for participation,” says Dr Georgina Chami, Coordinator of the Post Graduate Diploma programme in International Relations at UWI St Augustine’s Institute of International Relations.

Dr Chami, who is also the faculty advisor to the Model UN Club, adds that the conference is “a great opportunity for our two representatives to be global ambassadors for T&T on Climate Change and speak to our peculiarities and vulnerabilities as small states.”

Ruth, who is studying Sociology with International Relations as her minor at the Faculty of Social Sciences,

says she was partially inspired in her pursuits by one of her lecturers, Dr Tyehimba Salandy.

“[He] often probed us and asked difficult but necessary questions,” she says. “He connected for us the relationship between the physical and outward reality to our inward and innermost states and that contemplation rearranged many predetermined ways of perceiving, thinking, and interpreting the world.”

Adriel points to her experience at the Model UN Club, calling it one of the best youth spaces with which she’s been involved, and saying it provided many opportunities, including conferences and collaborations on campus, such as with the Institute of International Relations and the Faculty of Science and Technology.

She urges anyone interested in following in her footsteps to have courage:

“Don’t be afraid of being in leadership spaces. The more you move out of your comfort zone, the more you learn about yourself and various topics as well. Especially now that we’re in a digital space, it’s so much easier to find and attend global conferences! Whatever your area of interest, do your research and attend various conferences and workshops. Lastly, be patient with yourself and your growth process! I promise you it will be worth it.”

## EXPLORING THE TEACHER EDUCATOR EXPERIENCE

*Dr Jennifer Yamin-Ali launches new book that looks at their ‘invisible work’*

When asked what prompted her interest in teacher educators, Dr Jennifer Yamin-Ali, a senior lecturer at UWI St Augustine’s School of Education, says, “When you start a journey, you don’t know where you’re going to end up. In my case, it was simply about following my heart and putting my nose to the wheel, as they say.”

The result is the publication of *Teacher Educator Experiences and Professional Development: Perspectives from the Caribbean*, an in-depth look at the profession that includes the experiences of teacher educators, students, and the author herself. The book was launched virtually on March 26.

“My interest in teacher educators began with the diploma in education (DipEd) programme and our work as teacher educators,” says Dr Yamin-Ali. “Apart from lecturing, tutoring and marking scripts, much of what we do seems to be invisible work, a term that is sometimes used in the literature.”

Consisting of five chapters, *Teacher Educator Experiences* has been endorsed by experts in the field from the University of Cumbria, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam in the Netherlands, and The Jan Kochanowski University of Kielce (UJK) in Poland. It delves into “the hidden work” of teacher educators, looks at their professional development, provides the narratives of four teacher educators, and even gives the author’s personal journey.

The book also includes the perspectives of the main recipients of their work, she says:

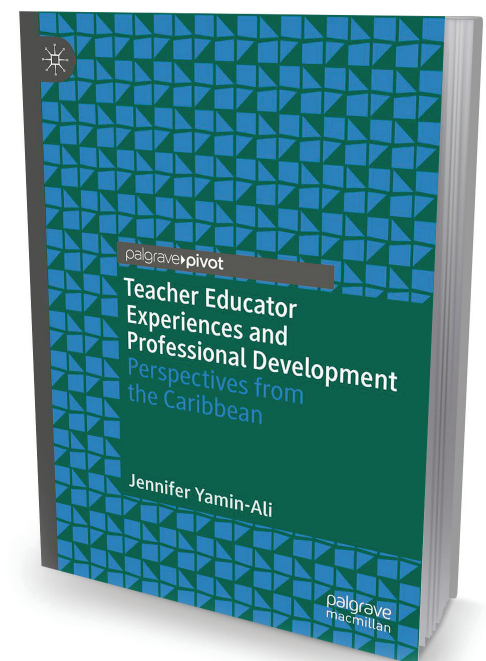
“I think one of the strengths [of *Teacher Educator Experiences*] is that I was able to include the voices of students in terms of how teacher educators may either sustain good practice or enhance current practice. While there are some conflicting views as to the validity of using student feedback to determine professional needs of teaching staff at any level, I do think that such



Dr Jennifer Yamin-Ali

feedback can be a wake-up call or a signal, at the least, for considering the quality of our work.”

*Teacher Educator Experiences* is Dr Yamin-Ali’s second book, following *Data Driven Decision-Making in Schools: Lessons from Trinidad*. Her areas of specialisation include foreign language teacher education, teacher education in general, and micropolitics in educational organisations.



■ **Teacher Educator Experiences and Professional Development: Perspectives from the Caribbean** can be purchased locally (at a discounted cost) by emailing **Jennifer.Yamin-ali@sta.uwi.edu**. The book, hard and e-copy, is also available at **springer.com/booksellers** and at **Amazon.com**



## ■ CAMPUS NEWS



Regan Asgarali

The creative community in Trinidad and Tobago (and the Caribbean at large) is vast and diverse. Our culture and art forms have a unique signature that is recognisable around the world. But are our creatives aware of their rights when it comes to the intellectual property of the work they produce?

In the digital age, where our connectivity is more online than ever before, especially with the COVID-19 pandemic, this is a vital question. The UWI Film Programme, the UWI Intellectual Property (IP) Help Desk and the Alma Jordan Library (AJL) recently hosted an intellectual property virtual lecture on April 15 entitled “Creatives and Intellectual Property – Take 2” highlighting intellectual property in the Orange Economy to help creatives (particularly those in the film industry) navigate this legal maze.

Mr Regan Asgarali, an attorney-at-law attached to the Intellectual Property Office of Trinidad and Tobago as the Controller of Intellectual Property (and an alumni of the Faculty of Law at The University of the West Indies), was the featured speaker. Mr Asgarali outlined the basics of trademarks, copyright and neighbouring rights, all focused on the many facets of the film industry but relevant to a wide range of creative media. These creative “goods and services” like film, games, fashion, music and performing arts, are what encompass the “Orange Economy”, and unlike many industries right now, this economy is in a period of growth.

One thread that remained constant throughout the presentation was the vastly different landscape we have before us now than any generation previously, thanks to technology. As Asgarali noted, the “streaming

## Protecting your work in the ORANGE ECONOMY

*IP Controller Regan Asgarali headlines UWI virtual lecture on film and other creative rights*

BY AMY LI BAKSH



revolution” of the last ten years has changed the face of intellectual property rights. “Your Instagram page is now very critical because that is where your fans go to get real-time updates. Social media influencers are now replacing traditional forms of publishing in advertising agreements.”

Alongside his explanation of traditional copyright terms and information, he also highlighted the way digital media has affected creators and the laws that protect them. “As you build your brand, you can exploit your brand through licensing opportunities,” said Mr Asgarali, who laid out the different ways creators could both protect and leverage their rights to create revenue streams like corporate sponsorship or product placements.

The IP Help Desk was launched in 2018 to provide the campus community with free access to education, information, training and advisory services in the field of IP. Ms Georgia Alexander, a librarian at the Alma Jordan Library and a key member of the IP Help Desk Team, also spoke briefly at the lecture, saying that, “We want to continue this as an annual series for our students. It’s such a broad yet intricate area, and there are many opportunities to enhance your knowledge via WIPO [World Intellectual Property Organisation] and the Trinidad and Tobago Intellectual Property Office (TTIPO). There are free courses online if you go to the WIPO site, so you can build your capacity in this area.”

For the creative community, these resources can make a big difference to managing the IP side of creative work, especially during this pandemic, when the arts are so needed and yet continuously underfunded.

The lecture is currently available on The UWI St Augustine Film Programme and AJL Facebook pages, and any additional information can be found by emailing the Help Desk at [intellectualproperty.helpdesk@sta.uwi.edu](mailto:intellectualproperty.helpdesk@sta.uwi.edu) to schedule a virtual consultation with an IP consultant via Zoom.

*Amy Li Baksh is a Trinidadian writer, artist and activist who makes art to uplift and amplify the unheard voices in our society.*

## ERIC WILLIAMS COLLECTION

### commemorates the life, work of the late Prime Minister on the anniversary of his passing

BY SHEREEN ALI

March 2021 marked the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the passing of Trinidad and Tobago’s first Prime Minister, Dr Eric Williams. It also marked the 23<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the inauguration of The Eric Williams Memorial Collection Research Library, Archives and Museum by Former US Secretary of State Colin Powell at UWI St Augustine.

The Collection is housed at the Alma Jordan Library and consists of the Dr Williams’ library and archives. It is available for consultation by researchers and contains 7,000 volumes, as well as correspondence, speeches, manuscripts, historical writings, research notes, conference documents and reports. The Museum contains a wealth of memorabilia from the period which spans from colonial to independent T&T. Photography depicting aspects of his life and contribution to the development of the twin island republic complete this rich archive.

Speaking on the importance of the Collection to the St Augustine Campus, Campus Librarian Frank Soodeen described Dr Williams as “an eminent, globally-celebrated Caribbean historian who has left an indelible mark on Trinidad and Tobago, the Caribbean and academia.”



Mr Soodeen emphasised the Alma Jordan Library’s commitment to collecting, preserving, and providing access to unique Caribbean resources.

The library is the repository for over 150 Special collections, three of which are named to the prestigious UNESCO Memory of the World Register: the Derek Walcott Collection, the CLR James Collection, and the Eric Williams Memorial Collection. While pandemic restrictions have limited physical access to the Collection,



the Alma Jordan Library shared a curated virtual version of the exhibition that was done in partnership with the University of Texas. The UWI supplied the data for the virtual exhibition and the University of Texas acted as the curator and host.

■ The exhibition can be accessed at: <https://bit.ly/3mLuWUU> and <https://bit.ly/3sfAacu>



## ARTS



"Make-up Doesn't Make the Man" by Saniyah Bedeshi



"The New Normal" by Leonard Lewis



"Anorexia" by Joseann Modeste

# Art in a pandemic

## Visual Arts graduating class grapples with COVID-19, racial justice and life in 2020

COVID-19 and the social isolation that followed, Black Lives Matter protests spurred by the killing of George Floyd – 2020 was a strange and taxing year for everyone, including artists. Students from the graduating class of the Department of Creative and Festival Arts (DCFAs) Visual Arts programme reflected on its impact in their work. That work has been collected in a publication, *Certificate in Visual Arts Catalogue 2020*.

"Art offers a language when we are overwhelmed and there are no words," says Dr Marsha Pearce, lecturer and Visual Arts Unit coordinator, in the introduction. "This is the foundational understanding of art that we nurture at the Virtual Arts certificate programme at The UWI DCFA."

Dr Pearce and her students have given their kind permission for UWI TODAY to share some of their outstanding work.

■ To see the entire *Certificate in Visual Arts Catalogue 2020*, visit [https://issuu.com/dcfavvisual/docs/booklet\\_final](https://issuu.com/dcfavvisual/docs/booklet_final)



"Swamp Valley" by Ariela Alleyne



"Crestfallen Soul" by Bindhi Colai



Untitled drawing by Justine Lai King

Dr Marsha Pearce,  
Coordinator of the  
Visual Arts Unit



## "Art offers a language when we are overwhelmed and there are no words"



"Dragon" by Sharon-Rose Jattan



"Departed" by Nemai Ali



"Emma" by Rajesh Tilkarani



# UWI Calendar of Events

## MAY–JUNE 2021

### Building Mental Resilience: Your COVID-19 Response

May 26  
9am to 10am

ONLINE

Join some of Trinidad and Tobago's leaders in business, accounting, banking, public sector management and academic administration for a breakfast meeting on building resilience during the pandemic. Hosted by the Business Development Unit of UWI St Augustine's Faculty of Social Sciences, and moderated by industrial and organisational psychologist Mrs Shian Ottley-Reid, this free event gives attendees the opportunity to hear about the experiences and challenges of leadership during COVID-19 and the strategies of mental resilience to overcome them.

Speakers include:

**Mrs Andrea Taylor-Hanna**  
Campus Bursar, The UWI St Augustine

**Mr Dion Abdool**  
General Counsel and  
Corporate Secretary at the  
Water and Sewerage Authority

**Dr Daryl Dindial**  
Chief Personnel Officer (Ag)

**Ms Pria Narinesingh**  
Country Managing  
Partner, Ernst & Young

**Ms Gretchen  
Camacho-Mohammed**  
Managing Director for  
Trinidad and Tobago, RBC Royal Bank  
(Trinidad and Tobago)

To register, visit  
[https://uwi.zoom.us/  
webinar/register/WN\\_  
ZsrK8E0iSpiPn4C1scclYg](https://uwi.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_ZsrK8E0iSpiPn4C1scclYg)

Business Development Unit  
Faculty of Social Sciences

## Building Mental Resilience

YOUR COVID-19 RESPONSE



### Sports Event Management

May 29  
noon to 2pm

ONLINE

Pedro Correia, a senior sport and events consultant who has held top managerial positions involving the planning and implementation of mega sport events such as European Football Championships, and worked on four FIFA World Cups, will share his knowledge and experience on event management at an online public lecture hosted by UWI, FIFA, and CIES (International Centre for Sports Studies). The lecture is organised by UWI St Augustine's Department of Management Studies and is free to the public.

For more information,  
email [Calisia.Gregorie@sta.uwi.edu](mailto:Calisia.Gregorie@sta.uwi.edu). To register, visit [https://uwi.  
zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_  
f9ScC4tsSba11ANLIRbiEg](https://uwi.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_f9ScC4tsSba11ANLIRbiEg)



### Virtual Open Days 2021 – Focus on the Faculties

June 2 to June 22  
6pm to 8pm

ONLINE

Virtual Open Days 2021, a chance for those interested in their educational future to learn about the opportunities waiting for them at UWI St Augustine, continues in June with a focus on the faculties.

Prospective students will have a direct line to faculty teams who will answer recruitment and admissions-related questions, provide details on their programmes, and give guidance on career options!

June 2..... Faculty of Humanities and Education

June 4..... Faculty of Social Sciences

June 9..... Faculty of Science and Technology

June 16 ..... Faculty of Law

July 21 ..... Faculty of Sport

June 22 ..... Faculty of Medical Sciences

For registration information, and information on the previously held faculty open days (Faculty of Engineering and Faculty of Food and Agriculture) visit <https://sta.uwi.edu/virtualopenday/>

2021 VIRTUAL  
OPEN DAYS



### Online Training with the Diplomatic Academy of the Caribbean

June 7 to 24

ONLINE

The Diplomatic Academy of the Caribbean invites interested people to register for its upcoming online training modules:

**Advances in Consular Affairs in the Modern Diplomatic Mission**  
June 7 to 10

**Caribbean Small States and Disaster Diplomacy**  
June 14 to 17

**Caribbean Small States and the Diplomacies of Climate Change:  
Negotiations in Practice**  
June 21 to 24

For more information or to register, email [diplomaticacademy@sta.  
uwi.edu](mailto:diplomaticacademy@sta.uwi.edu) or [nand.bardouille@sta.uwi.edu](mailto:nand.bardouille@sta.uwi.edu), or call 662-2002 ext 8536.