



Let the Games Begin!



UWI
GAMES
2026

ST. AUGUSTINE
TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

Second-year BSc Economics student Priyanka Khellawan readies her serve. Priyanka is a member of The UWI St Augustine team representing the campus at **The UWI Games 2026**. From **May 21 to 29**, approximately 600 student-athletes from all five UWI campuses are competing for glory against each other right here in T&T. They are doing battle in sports such as football, cricket, basketball, track and field, and of course, table tennis. However, while they might be rivals on the field, the UWI Games are also a celebration of Caribbean community and university pride.

PHOTO: JULIE-ANNE PAPIN-RAMCHARAN



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FROM THE EDITOR



UWI Games 2026 A Co-operation of Free Peoples

As I write, the St Augustine campus is hosting UWI Games 2026. Approximately 600 student-athletes and their supporters from the other UWI campuses in the region are taking part in intense competition from May 21 to 29 under the theme “Reunited. Reignited. Ready!” Some of the Caribbean’s top athletes in cricket, football, basketball, tennis and many other sports (ten in total) are testing each other to bring glory to themselves and their campuses.

Yet UWI Games are about much more than campus rivalry. They are an expression of The UWI’s regional character, a gathering of the Caribbean community, and an affirmation of the power of sport to develop that community and its young adults.

Sir Philip Sherlock, who was Vice-Chancellor of The UWI from 1963 to 1969, called The UWI “a special kind of partnership between peoples”. In a speech delivered in 1964, he said:

“We represent the West Indian effort at collaboration that is in direct opposition to the fragmentation and divisions imposed upon this region of ours through four centuries by the imperial rivalries of distant powers. We represent the co-operation of free peoples in a community whose history has been one of competition.”

Though the UWI Games are competitive events, in essence they encapsulate the spirit of his words. When our student-athletes take to the track, court, and field, they are participating in regionalism. They remind us that while we represent different islands and territories, we share a Caribbean identity based on scholarship and striving for better in the New World.

This edition of the Games marks a historic milestone: for the first time, all five campuses—Cave Hill, St Augustine, Mona, the Global Campus, and the newest campus, Five Islands—have converged on Trinidad and Tobago. It also represents a return to the Games since 2019, after the 2021 edition was cancelled because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Perhaps most importantly, this massive event is the latest example of the university’s investment in sport, driven by leaders such as UWI Vice-Chancellor Professor Sir Hilary Beckles, who endeavoured to restore

the institution’s sporting legacy. Thanks to their efforts, The UWI established the Faculty of Sport in 2017, which serves all of the campuses through its Academies of Sport.

The academies offer professional programmes in sport-related disciplines, and also help develop many of the region’s top athletes. These include numerous young sportsmen and women competing at the national level.

At UWI, we have always maintained that the “whole student” is not only developed in the lecture theatre. True education is holistic. It requires the discipline of training, the resilience to face defeat, and the humility to win with grace. Sport is a classroom in itself—for life lessons. It builds character and cultivates belonging.

Above all, UWI Games 2026 is a good time. The UWI’s best will show their wizardry with bat and ball. They will show their strength, speed, and agility on the track and in the swimming pool. They will enjoy good food, good music, and the good vibes of liming with their brothers and sisters from the other islands. What could be more Caribbean than that?

■ For updates on UWI Games, visit the official site at <https://sta.uwi.edu/uwigames/>

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UNIVERSITY NEWS

AFUWI Gala Honours PM HOLNESS and NORMAN SABGA, Raises Funds for Caribbean Students



FROM LEFT: Award-winning actress Ms Lorraine Toussaint; Chairman and CEO of the ANSA McAL Group Mr A Norman Sabga, recipient of the Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Global Business Leadership; and UWI Chancellor Dr Dodridge D Miller.

Jamaican Prime Minister Dr Andrew Holness and ANSA McAL conglomerate Chairman Dr Norman Sabga have been honored at the 29th Annual “The Legacy Continues” Awards Gala of the American Foundation for The University of the West Indies (AFUWI). PM Holness received AFUWI’s prestigious Legacy Award and Mr Sabga was presented with the Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Global Business at the gala, held on April 17 in New York.

Leaders, philanthropists, and members of the Caribbean diaspora attended the gala, the AFUWI’s premier fundraising event to provide scholarships and financial assistance to academically talented Caribbean students facing economic hardship, many of whom have been impacted by the devastation of Hurricane Melissa. Proceeds will directly support students of The UWI.

“At a time when thousands of students face uncertainty due to circumstances beyond their control, our collective responsibility is clear,” said AFUWI Executive Director Ms Ann-Marie Grant. “Education remains the most powerful and enduring pathway to recovery, resilience, and national development. This support ensures that the promise is not lost.”

A cohort of global leaders advancing education, public service, healthcare, business, and digital innovation were recognised on the evening. Other honourees included President of Howard University Dr Wayne AI Frederick; President of SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University Dr Wayne J Riley; Group Vice President of State Government Affairs at Charter Communications Ms Camille Joseph-Goldman; global technology executive and board director Dr Jacky Wright; Anthony and Gregory Belinfanti, honoured for their generational commitment to educational philanthropy; and Dr Kevon Rhiney, recipient of the UWI Alumni Associations – NY Chapter Pelican Award for distinguished geography research.

For nearly three decades, AFUWI has mobilised philanthropic investment in Caribbean higher education. Over the past 10 years alone, they have awarded more than 700 scholarships and facilitated in-kind donations totalling over US\$8 million, including books, medical supplies, and technology resources.

■ For more information on AFUWI, visit them at <https://www.afuwi.org/>

■ CAMPUS NEWS

UWI Games 2026

'The Energy will be even Greater'

BY TYRELL GITTENS



'[Sport] is about pride, possibility, belonging and the quiet confidence that grows when people come together to strive for something bigger than themselves.' - Professor Rose-Marie Belle Antoine. PHOTOS: LIFE VIDEO PRODUCTIONS

Promising to be a grand celebration of sports and camaraderie, the UWI Games, themed "Reunited. Reignited. Ready!" were officially launched on April 16 during an energetic ceremony at UWI St Augustine's Sport and Physical Education Centre (SPEC).

This year's event represents a comeback, as UWI Games have been on hiatus since 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Speaking at the launch, UWI St Augustine Campus Principal Professor Rose-Marie Belle Antoine said the return will be an unforgettable celebration of sport, student spirit and Caribbean excellence.

She shared that more than 575 athletes and officials as well as 300 volunteers and national athletes will participate in the Games from The UWI's 17 contributing countries and five campuses.

Prof Antoine said, "The numbers are impressive, but the energy and the spirit will be even greater."

"As many of you know, sport has never been merely about medals or scores. It has traditionally been one of the ways we level the playing field, pun intended, on the international stage and make our presence felt. It is about pride, possibility, belonging and the quiet confidence that grows when people come together to strive for something bigger than themselves."

While taking in the action from the stands, Prof Antoine also reminded spectators to reflect that every sprint, goal or boundary will tell the larger story of the Caribbean's indomitable spirit.

Whether on cricket fields, football pitches, athletic tracks or community courts, Prof Antoine expressed that sport has long served as a powerful statement that the Caribbean can punch above its weight and compete with the very best the world has to offer.

She added, "Think of athletes like Hansle Parchment,

a UWI student who won gold at the Tokyo Olympics, or Jehue Gordon, a gold medallist at the 2013 IAAF World Championships.

"Even distinguished honorary graduates Kirani James, Shelly-Ann Fraser Pryce, and Brian Lara are a reminder of how their excellence uplifts their communities, their countries and the wider region."

Deputy Principal Prof Derek Chadee, who serves as Chair of the UWI Games 2026 organising committee, said the Games speak to a renewal of spirit, connection, and shared purpose across all of the UWI campuses.

He added, "The UWI Games are not only about competition and organisation, but also about what they shape within our students. They influence identity, shape behaviour, and deepen human connection."

"Through that process, they quietly but powerfully affect how our students come to see themselves and how they learn to engage with the world around them—both during their time here and long after they leave our campus."

Beyond the fields and courts, Prof Chadee is optimistic that interactions and shared experiences during the Games will strengthen the bonds that define the university. He welcomed all interested individuals to come out and be a spectator. Entry is free for all events.

In addition to facilities at SPEC, other venues for the games include the National Aquatic Centre, the Hasely Crawford Stadium, and the National Racquet Sport Centre.

As the countdown is on to the revival of UWI Games, The UWI is also promising an exciting campaign leading up to the event that will include a women's cricket showcase and a badminton exhibition.



Students bearing the flags of the Caribbean flank (centre, from left) Deputy Principal Professor Derek Chadee, Dean of the Faculty of Sport Dr Roy McCree, and Professor Antoine at the launch of UWI Games 2026. In the front row are members of The UWI St Augustine Spirit Team and Peli, the campus mascot.

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

Thuraia Thomas

ATHLETE AND FUTURE ACTUARY

BY DARIUS PHILLIP



PHOTO: DARIUS PHILLIP

Thuraia Thomas, age 20, takes pride in representing Guyana for table tennis, but that's not the only kind of table that interests her. An undergraduate Actuarial Sciences student, she already has her eyes set on a career outside of the sport.

"My main goal is to use table tennis as a way to catapult my career," she says, "but I also want to continue to represent my country and the university."

In her more than 11 years of playing, Thuraia has been a champion for Guyana. She has shown her skills at the Guyana Table Tennis Association's (GTTA) Junior and Cadet Championships, winning titles for the Under 15 and Under 19 women's categories in 2018 and 2019. She has also represented her country from as recently as 2022, securing a junior world ranking of 254.

"Playing at both the national and international level has been an incredible experience," she says. "It helped me grow not just as an athlete, but as a person, especially in terms of discipline, resilience, and adaptability."

While she is very passionate about table tennis, Thuraia also chose to pursue her Bachelor's degree in the exacting discipline of Actuarial Science at the Department of Math and Statistics in UWI St Augustine's Faculty of Science and Technology. Her goal is to further her academic career and receive the high-quality professional training and support that the campus offers.

However, she is still very proud to play table tennis and represent Guyana on the international stage.

Last year she competed in the Islamic Solidarity Games in Saudi Arabia, which, she says, pushed her to the limits of her potential, and gave her motivation to improve.

"The competition definitely showed me that my level is capable of reaching those of higher world rankings...and by revising my strategies, and more work on and off the table, hopefully one day, I'll get to that level."

Studying in Trinidad and Tobago also allows her to pursue these sporting goals.

"The Trinidadian National Team has very good coaches and players at a high level, so it allows me to train and compete competitively while also not losing any play time," she says.

"Representing my country comes with a sense of pride, but it also pushes you to a higher standard. Internationally, the level of competition is much more intense, and it really challenges you mentally and physically."

While Thuraia competes at UWI Games 2026, she encourages anyone interested in table tennis to pick up a ball (and paddle) and play.

Darius Phillip is writer, photographer, and public relations professional.

■ CAMPUS NEWS

THE UWI AND AMCHAM PARTNER to Advance AI, Workforce Skills and Digital Innovation

The Artificial Intelligence Innovation Centre (AIIC) at UWI St Augustine and the American Chamber of Commerce of Trinidad and Tobago (AMCHAM T&T) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to advance collaboration in AI, workforce development, and digital transformation.

The partnership brings together academia and industry to drive initiatives in research, training, policy development, and innovation, with a focus on helping businesses and professionals adapt to evolving digital technologies.

Under the agreement, UWI St Augustine and AMCHAM T&T will collaborate on a range of activities, including joint research projects, professional development programmes, student internships, and public education initiatives.

A key focus of the partnership is the development of AI-related capacity across T&T and the wider Caribbean, including contributions to national policy on AI governance, data protection, cybersecurity, and digital trade. This will also bring capacity building through academic programmes, and continuing professional education short courses and microcredentialing, to the forefront of AI integration.

Commenting on the MOU, UWI St Augustine Campus Principal Professor Rose-Marie Belle Antoine, said that “it represents a deliberate shift from being consumers of technology to becoming creators of responsible, indigenous AI solutions shaped by our own realities.”

She added, “By partnering with AMCHAM T&T, we are strengthening the bridge between academic research and real-world application, and ensuring that AI development in the Caribbean is grounded in innovation, ethics, and impact.”

Speaking on the partnership, AMCHAM T&T Chief Executive Officer Nirad Tewarie stated, “AMCHAM T&T is delighted to partner with The UWI and the AIIC specifically on this initiative. Closer partnership between industry and



FROM LEFT: Head of the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering and Deputy Director of the Artificial Intelligence Innovation Centre (AIIC) Professor Arvind Singh; Executive Director of the AIIC Dr Craig Ramlal; Campus Principal Professor Rose-Marie Belle Antoine; Chief Executive Officer of the American Chamber of Commerce of Trinidad and Tobago Mr Nirad Tewarie; and Dean of the Faculty of Engineering Professor Bhesem Ramlal, display the signed MoU. PHOTO: ANEEL KARIM

academia represents a powerful but still largely untapped opportunity to bridge the gap between innovation and real-world application.”

Mr Tewarie said the collaboration “will enable our members and the wider private sector to better understand, adopt, and scale AI-driven solutions in a practical and responsible way. By working closely with one of the region’s leading centres of expertise, we can support stronger policy development, build digital capacity within companies, and position Trinidad and Tobago as a more competitive, future-ready economy.”

UWI St Augustine has been at the forefront of advancing AI in the Caribbean, most notably through the establishment of AIIC, which was launched in December 2025.

Dr Craig Ramlal, Executive Director of the AIIC stated, “In the face of a poor research to commercialisation ethos

throughout the region, the AIIC remains committed to developing the relationship between cutting-edge ideas and digital products and goods. Through this partnership with AMCHAM, we are also happy to explore what an AI and policy guidebook can look like for companies and organisations.”

The partnership is expected to support talent development, including the rollout of micro-credentials and short courses in areas such as AI literacy and data analytics. Companies will also benefit from structured programmes to guide digital transformation and the adoption of emerging technologies.

The agreement further integrates collaboration with regional initiatives such as AMCHAM T&T’s Tech Hub Islands Summit (THIS), where both organisations will contribute to technical workshops, innovation showcases, and knowledge-sharing platforms designed to accelerate digital progress across the Caribbean.

In coming years, the next time you sit down to have your teeth checked, the practitioner could be a UWI Orthodontics programme graduate. First of its kind in the English-speaking Caribbean, the three-year MSc programme is under the School of Dentistry at the Faculty of Medical Sciences in collaboration with The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh (RCSEd).

It officially launched in October 2025 with Dr Daniece Garraway and Dr Alexa Diaz in the first student cohort.

“We are so proud that we will be shaping the next generation of orthodontic specialists and strengthening the foundation for sustainable specialist dental education in the Caribbean,” observes Dr Trudee Hoyte, programme coordinator and lecturer.

Orthodontic specialists specialise in aligning bites and straightening. Their focus is diagnosis, prevention, and management of bite irregularities. They also oversee the facial growth of children. Dr Hoyte explains, “We also prepare patients for restorative or surgical treatment and contribute to care for individuals with craniofacial conditions.”

“Our health starts with our mouths,” observes Seth Boyd, representative of American Orthodontics. “If you have things like malocclusion, where the teeth don’t fit together, or you have a cleft palate, you have lots of issues that keep you from being able to eat or to smile.”

As the world’s largest manufacturer of orthodontic braces, American Orthodontics will provide essential materials to the programme for two years for free and after at a reduced cost. The students participate in online lectures offered at no cost to the programme by the RCSEd members.

“I have had the pleasure of being lectured by some of the best consultants and professors in orthodontics,” notes Dr Garraway.

The support allows the department to provide affordable education.

“I searched for programmes in the UK, but the cost was prohibitive,” says Dr Garraway. “The idea of continuing my studies at home and gaining clinical experience by treating patients in my own local healthcare system attracted me.”

UWI School of Dentistry launches first of its kind Orthodontics programme

BY DIXIE - ANN BELLE



FROM LEFT: Coordinator of the MSc Orthodontics and Lecturer in Orthodontics Dr Trudee Hoyte, alongside postgraduate Orthodontics students Dr Daniece Garraway and Dr Alexa Diaz, representative from American Orthodontics Mr Seth Boyd, and Dean of the Faculty of Medical Sciences Professor Hariharan Seetharam. Mr Boyd is handing over orthodontic brackets to The UWI team.

The programme can considerably increase accessibility to orthodontic services to communities and help reduce costs. Dr Hoyte says this could encourage patients to access care earlier and prevent the need for complex and expensive treatments later.

While the students benefit from internationally recognised education, they also gain knowledge geared for Caribbean people. For example, 68 percent of the population has bimaxillary proclination—proclined upper and lower incisors. They have the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the condition. This has drawn the attention of specialists

across the world.

The programme could be transformative for orthodontics regionally. “We don’t have to have a million orthodontists, but if we can just add a few to the Caribbean or to Trinidad and Tobago, we can help a whole lot more people,” explains Boyd.

Dr Garraway anticipates great possibilities for her career and future orthodontists. “I would recommend that other interested dentists apply for the next intake. Furthering your education and career is costly, both financially and in terms of time, but if it’s something that you are truly passionate about pursuing, it will be worth it in the end.”

■ CAMPUS COUNCIL 2026

EDITOR'S NOTE: On March 25, 2026, UWI St Augustine held the **Annual Business Meeting for its Campus Council** at the Council Room, Lloyd Braithwaite Student Administration Building. **UWI TODAY** is pleased to share an excerpt from the welcome address from **Council Chair Mr Robert Riley**.

Whether you are here with us on campus or tuning in from afar, we are delighted to have you as part of this important gathering. As your Campus Council Chair, it is my privilege to begin today's proceedings and I am looking forward to sharing with you the strides we have made in going **Beyond**.

This past year, the St Augustine Campus celebrated a milestone of six and a half decades where we honoured our Caribbean roots while reaffirming our commitment to addressing global challenges. But there comes a time in every great institution's life when admiration is no longer enough; when pride, nostalgia, and goodwill, however genuine, must give way to something more tangible, more deliberate, and more consequential. I firmly believe that The University of the West Indies is at such a moment now.

As an alumnus, I know very well the affection so many of us feel for this great institution. We remember The UWI as the place that sharpened our minds, widened our horizons, introduced us to lifelong friends, and gave many of us the foundation on which we built our careers, our confidence, and our sense of purpose. For many years, and even up to today, that is still how I too regard this university—with deep respect and warm gratitude.

Since assuming the role of Chair of Campus Council, however, I have come to see another side of this institution: the side that does not always make the headlines; the side that requires judgement, stewardship, sacrifice, and resilience. In the last year and a half, I have seen more clearly the daily work it takes to sustain excellence in an environment where resources are tight, expectations are high, and the pressures facing higher education are becoming more intense across the world.

And that vantage point has changed me.

It has made me appreciate, in a deeper way, that The UWI cannot be treated merely as a cherished inheritance passed from an earlier generation. It must be understood as a living regional asset that requires continued investment, fresh commitment, and active belief, if it is to remain strong for the generations still to come.

This annual report reflects our 65th anniversary year under the theme “**Beyond**”, and that theme is not simply commemorative. It is also directional. It says that our task is not merely to celebrate longevity, but to strengthen relevance and build the institution the future requires.

The evidence in this year's annual report is very compelling, as it confirms we continue to head in the right direction.

The report reflects a campus that continues to teach, serve, innovate, and lead. It reflects students and staff advancing research, pushing further into artificial intelligence and emerging technologies, deepening entrepreneurship, delivering valuable service to communities, expanding access to justice, and bringing to life practical innovations that respond to the needs of the Caribbean and the world.

St Augustine Campus's Alumni Giving Project

Yet if we are honest, progress of this kind does not sustain itself on admiration. And that is why I want to speak plainly this morning about alumni giving.

For too long, many of us have supported The UWI in ways that are meaningful and appreciated, perhaps through advocacy, mentorship, internships, prizes, partnerships, and professional goodwill. Those contributions matter and are greatly appreciated. But I believe the time has come for us, particularly those of us who have benefited most from this institution, to embrace another level of responsibility.

That of giving and giving back... because great universities are not sustained by sentiment alone. They are sustained when those they have helped shape, decide in a real and measurable way, to help secure their future.

That is the significance of the St Augustine Campus's Alumni Giving Project.

This project is an appeal to alumni across this region and across the wider world to move from appreciation to action. It's an appeal to our consciences and asks each of us a simple but searching question: **if this university helped shape who we are, what are we prepared to do now to help secure its future?**

Mr Robert Riley, Chair of The UWI St Augustine Campus Council
PHOTOS: ANEEL KARIM



‘No great institution can be built alone’

Campus Council Chair Mr Robert Riley calls for greater alumni giving

That question is especially important for those watching and listening beyond this room, our alumni, friends, business leaders, partners, and supporters across Trinidad and Tobago, across the region, and across the global Caribbean community.

This university has helped to shape the leadership class of the Caribbean. Its graduates have gone on to lead governments, build industries, anchor professions, transform communities, and elevate public life throughout the region. The UWI ecosystem has long been one of the most powerful engines of social mobility, intellectual development, and regional identity that the Caribbean has ever produced.

So, the question is not whether The UWI is worthy of support. **The question is whether we, as alumni and as**

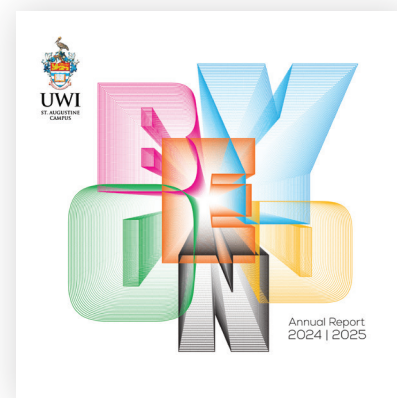
leaders, are prepared to support it in a manner that matches the scale of what it has given us.

And I say this morning with full conviction: **the future strength of The UWI will depend not only on the brilliance within its classrooms and laboratories, but on the willingness of its alumni to become active investors in its next chapter. Indeed, no great institution can be built alone!**

That, to my mind, is a pertinent message in this report. Is this annual report one of progress, absolutely! But it is also, unmistakably, a report of potential. It shows us what this St Augustine Campus is already achieving and it invites us to decide whether we will help take that work further—beyond 65, beyond our shores and beyond the limits of what many still imagine is possible for a Caribbean university.



Minister of Tertiary Education and Skills Training Emeritus Professor Prakash Persad shares a moment with Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences Dr Acolle Lewis-Cameron at the Campus Council meeting.



■ To view campus highlights from The UWI St Augustine Annual Report 2024/2025, visit <https://sta.uwi.edu/annualreport/campus-highlights/>

TECHNOLOGY



Dr Letetia Addison

The global conversation on artificial intelligence often feels like a sprint between superpowers. But in the Caribbean, the approach is quieter, more deliberate and arguably more consequential. At The UWI, **Dr Letetia Addison** is helping to shape that approach, leading Trinidad and Tobago's contribution to a **UNESCO-backed Artificial Intelligence Readiness Assessment**—an initiative that could define how the region adopts, adapts and ultimately owns its digital future. “We started with people, not platforms,” she says.

That distinction matters

Dr Addison, a biostatistics lecturer at the Faculty of Medical Sciences, is a woman of many hats, moving fluidly across statistics, artificial intelligence, and policy. Her work sits at the intersection of data and decision-making, grounded in a belief that numbers—when used well—can chart a more deliberate path forward for small states navigating big technological shifts.

Understanding AI Readiness

At the heart of the UNESCO initiative is what is known as the AI Readiness Assessment Methodology (RAM). It is, in essence, a diagnostic tool, one that evaluates how prepared a country is to adopt AI ethically, effectively, and in alignment with its national priorities.

“It’s a structured, evidence-based process to understand how ready we are—not just technologically, but socially, legally and culturally,” Dr Addison explains.

The assessment spans five key dimensions: legal and regulatory frameworks, technological infrastructure, education and research, societal and cultural readiness, and economic impact. The aim is not simply to measure capacity, but to translate that understanding into a roadmap for action. And that roadmap is urgently needed.

A System with Gaps—and Potential

While Trinidad and Tobago is not starting from scratch—benefiting from strong connectivity, a growing research base, and emerging AI hubs—the country finds itself in what Dr Addison describes as a “transitional readiness phase”.

“We have a solid foundation,” she says. “But what we need now is co-ordination.”

That word “co-ordination” emerges repeatedly. It is both the challenge and the opportunity.

Across consultations with stakeholders—from government agencies to academic institutions and private sector actors—a consistent theme has surfaced: data exists, but it does not flow.

Systems operate, but often in isolation. Policies exist, but lack cohesion.

“The issue is not always a lack of data,” Dr Addison notes. “It’s that the data is siloed, inconsistent and not easily integrated. That becomes a bottleneck for AI.”

In a region where interoperability has long been an aspiration rather than a reality, AI has exposed the cost of fragmentation.

The Trust Factor

Beyond infrastructure, another layer complicates the equation: trust.



FLASHBACK: Dr Addison (back row, centre) with representatives of UWI St Augustine and the UNESCO Office for the Caribbean at the UNESCO RAM Validation Workshop 2026, hosted at the Office of the Campus Principal in February 2026. PHOTO: ANEEL KARIM

In small societies, where proximity often blurs the line between public and private, concerns around surveillance, bias, and data misuse are not abstract.

“Trust is not assumed. It has to be earned,” Dr Addison says.

That insight has shaped the Caribbean’s approach to AI in a fundamental way. Rather than retrofitting ethics after deployment, the emphasis is on embedding ethical considerations from the outset through public engagement, transparency, and inclusive system design. This is where the Caribbean’s approach begins to diverge from the global race to deploy AI at any cost.

While larger economies race to scale AI capabilities, often prioritising speed over scrutiny, the Caribbean is carving out a different lane, one that prioritises resilience, cultural relevance, and long-term sustainability.

In education, institutions are grappling with the reality that students are now “AI natives”, requiring not just new curricula, but new methods of assessment and engagement. In the public sector, there is growing recognition of AI’s potential to improve service delivery—if implemented without compromising individual rights. And in the private sector, businesses are beginning to explore how AI can be integrated in ways that are practical and cost-effective.

Real-World Impact: From Classrooms to Climate

Perhaps most compelling is the work unfolding in climate resilience.

Dr Addison is part of a team developing AI-driven tools for disaster risk reduction; systems designed to move the region from reactive responses to proactive planning.

“We want to enhance early warning systems and improve

real-time monitoring,” she explains. “It’s about making our traditional processes more efficient and more adaptive.”

For small island developing states (SIDS), where climate vulnerability is a lived reality, this is not theoretical innovation. It is a survival strategy, and we can’t depend on global AI models that do not account for or understand the realities of SIDS.

While the Caribbean may not compete with global powers in terms of scale, it has the potential to lead in specificity, to develop AI solutions rooted in its own realities, trained on its own data, and responsive to its own challenges.

“We have the opportunity to become producers, not just consumers, by strengthening talent pipelines across tertiary institutions,” Dr Addison says.

What Comes Next

Looking ahead, the next phase of the UNESCO initiative will focus on translating assessment into action. This includes strengthening governance frameworks, building institutional capacity, fostering academic-industry partnerships, and ensuring that AI literacy becomes a baseline competency across sectors.

If successful, the outcome will not be an AI-powered utopia, nor a workforce displaced by automation. Instead, it will be something more measured, and perhaps more meaningful: a society where technology enhances human capability, rather than replacing it.

“I will always be a proponent of enhancing traditional systems, not replacing them,” she says.

In a world increasingly defined by acceleration, the Caribbean’s deliberate pace may prove to be its quiet advantage.

CULTURE

“No bois man eh fraid no bois man, no bois man eh fraid no stick man, no bois man eh fraid no demon,” was the refrain that attendees at the 2026 Old Yard sang out in unison as they sat around the gayelle. The powerful voice leading the singing from the centre of the gayelle was Champion Stick Fighter, Keegan ‘Tendaji’ Taylor.

With microphone in hand, Taylor described his role as being the Shantwelle of that gayelle, the leader of the singing and chanting, and the words he sang were a *lavway*, which are the songs sung during stick fighting.

But Taylor is so much more than a stickfighter and a Shantwelle. “I am what some people might call a multihyphenate,” he says. “I work extensively in the creative entrepreneurial field. I do video production, I do film making, digital marketing, content creation. I’m also a songwriter.”

His songwriting credits include the Soca classics *Waiting on the Stage* performed by Machel Montano, the stickfighting anthem *Buss Head* performed by Machel Montano, Bunji Garlin and Skinny Fabulous, and *Rosie* performed by Destra and Yung Bredda.

Despite the multiple hats that Taylor wears, he seems to have found the magic for melding the various arenas that he works in. For *Buss Head*, Taylor not only provided background vocals on the track, but his company Badjohn Republic is also listed as one of the producers, and he appeared in the video as a stickfighter.



“I have weathered a few storms, and I might lose a contract or two, but I can’t lose my job as long as I have the zeal to go out there and I have my creativity.”

This cohesion in his career did not come about overnight. He tells of the period in his life when he was a part of the corporate world, sitting in board meetings doodling and brainstorming ideas of how he could make the jump to fully being in the creative industry.

Doing it Cold Turkey

“I left the security industry and went into music full time. I had to do it cold turkey. I sat down and spoke with my family. I told them that things would be a little tough for a while but I had to do this, and I never regretted it,” Taylor says.

Despite having to confront his own imposter syndrome, he stands firm on the belief that his talents and enthusiasm for what he does are his keys to overcoming self-doubt.

“I have weathered a few storms, and I might lose a contract or two, but I can’t lose my job as long as I have the zeal to go out there and I have my creativity. I will always find ways to make myself valuable to others.”

While his family supported his endeavours, his mother, June Taylor, always encouraged him to be smart about the decisions he made for himself, and to always build a solid foundation.

To build this foundation in the entertainment field, Taylor enrolled in The UWI St Augustine, pursuing a degree in Business Management with a minor in Marketing. And even though he has continued to surpass all goals he set for himself, he does not intend to pause. So he enrolled once again at UWI St Augustine, and is currently completing his thesis for his Master of Arts degree in Cultural Studies.

He admits that, in his younger years, he was drawn to the campus for the social life that students enjoy.

“UWI was more than just the books, it was a social labyrinth,” he remembers fondly. “It was a place that really helped me to find myself.”

To this day, he still recalls his roommate in Milner Hall (now Freedom Hall), and how they became best friends. His time at The UWI was not without its challenges, as less than desirable grades landed him in Summer School, but he reiterates “what got me through UWI was the friendships and networks”.

Taylor has not only returned to the campus as a postgraduate student, but he has also been invited by some of his lecturers to discuss his art. He recalls being asked by Cultural Studies Lecturer Dr Marsha Pearce to dissect a song that he penned and sang named *Doh Cry*. He has also shared his expertise in the Creative Entrepreneurship field by visiting the class of the same name to talk about the encoding of language and tradition in our art.

A Brave Fella

A large part of Taylor’s art is his participation in the local tradition of stickfighting. Telling the tale of what led him to the bois, he explains, “I have been involved in martial arts for many years, but not just karate. I do different things, Kendo, Russian martial arts, and I practice Chinese and Japanese styles as well. But there was a time when I was doing a lot of research and trying to find myself as a man, as a black man, and as a Caribbean man. So, I asked myself ‘What does Keegan from Trinidad, as a martial artist, do?’ And the answer was stickfighting.”

He Who Mak

BY SHER



FROM LEFT: Taylor with “King of the Rock” Selwyn John, winner of the 2026 National Stickfighting Finals, and other warriors from the gayelle.

es It Happen

E E N A L I



The stickfighting community of St Mary's in Moruga welcomed him, and Taylor speaks humbly of how stickfighting masters like King David, King Stokeley, Kali and Congo Barra took him under their wings and taught him the art. The fear that he felt during his first fight is what drove him to want to conquer the gayelle, and he acknowledges it today as one of the greatest life lessons that he has ever learned.

"I was a brave fella," he recalls vividly. "I said to myself that I'm not afraid of that, I could take cuff and kick. But when veteran stickfighter, Acid, picked up his bois and was bringing it down at 300 miles per hour in front my face, I experienced fear for the first time."

In addition to being a bois man and a Shantwelle, Taylor has also immersed himself in the history of the bois. He describes that it was the amalgamation of different enslaved people coming together and sharing information on the plantation that created a unique stickfighting style in Trinidad and Tobago. Part of this unique style is the manner in which the bois is held.

"We are the only ones where we fight and hit with the same one staff. In Trinidad and Tobago, we hold the stick on both ends, whereas other fighters hold the stick in one hand and something resembling a shield or protection in the other hand."

And while Taylor hopes that the warrior tradition of stickfighting will continue, he acknowledges that the evolution of the artform has already begun. He highlights the use of padding as one of the big conversations that is now taking place within the community.



Stickfighter, Shantwelle and creative entrepreneur Keegan 'Tendaji' Taylor.

"I am in support of the use of padding, but in a specific way. Part of my work is to make stickfighting

accessible to more persons, and the use of padding in the gayelle will allow that."

Taylor has pledged to continue to work not just in the gayelle, but to ensure that stickfighting and other cultural arts from Trinidad and Tobago are recorded so that they can live on.

He says, "Kalinda Kollektive is my cultural outreach nonprofit organisation which focuses on archiving the arts of stick fighting, as well as other warrior traditions within the Caribbean. We teach and disseminate information through workshops and various digital means that we're developing to ensure that the culture remains alive."

Shereen Ali is a writer, photographer and a storyteller at heart



Taylor takes the mic after his third place finish at the National Stickfighting Finals held in February 2026 at the Moruga Multi-Purpose Youth and Sports Facility. At left is Minister of Culture and Community Development Ms Michelle Benjamin.

■ OUR GRADUATES

UWI graduates are everywhere – politics, business, the arts, and as public intellectuals. In the coming months, **UWI TODAY** will profile some of our high achieving alumni who have made or are making a positive impact on society.

“My parents had a very great influence on me,” she says. “My father served as President of the Guyana Heritage Society. As a child, I was fortunate to attend many academic lectures.”

Collins-Gonsalves is now the Managing Director of the Historical Research International Inc (HRI), which offers in-depth historical research for companies, government agencies, historical societies, and other organisations. She says her work as a historian of Business History and the practical application of historical research and writing led her to start HRI.

Throughout her academic life, history always fascinated her. As early as high school, at St Stanislaus College in Guyana, she was awarded the prize for Best History Graduate alongside a host of other accolades. She then went on to the University of Guyana, where she did her Bachelor of Arts in History, served as the president of the University of Guyana History Society, and upon graduation was awarded the Council of the University Prize.

But it was at The UWI that Collins-Gonsalves found the historical niche that would become her bread and butter.

“My research at The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, centred on a 100-year study of the Entrepreneurship of the Portuguese in British Guiana (now Guyana),” she says.

This work took her across the world—from Guyana, and Trinidad and Tobago, to England and Madeira, Portugal. “This international research influenced my own entrepreneurial journey. Corporate and business history were my initial focus. Now, [HRI] has expanded to include biographies, research on the history of organisations, public history for museums, archives, and government agencies, among other aspects.”

She credits the lecturers and academics at The UWI for helping to shape the trajectory of her work. “I had very good lecturers, and they were very instrumental in my journey,” she says.

In addition to support from her supervisor, Dr Heather Cateau, she also had in her corner Prof Bridget Brereton and the late Prof Brinsley Samaroo.

“They both reviewed my work when I was a post-graduate student, and they have helped to shape my work over time... In fact, it was Prof Brereton who encouraged me to publish my second book.”

Being at UWI also helped her further develop the skill of critical analysis, which is important for parsing through archival records, newspapers, oral history and the range of sources that must be investigated to create as close to a complete picture as possible. In Caribbean history, where many of our stories have been missed by the archive or erased entirely, this has been crucial.

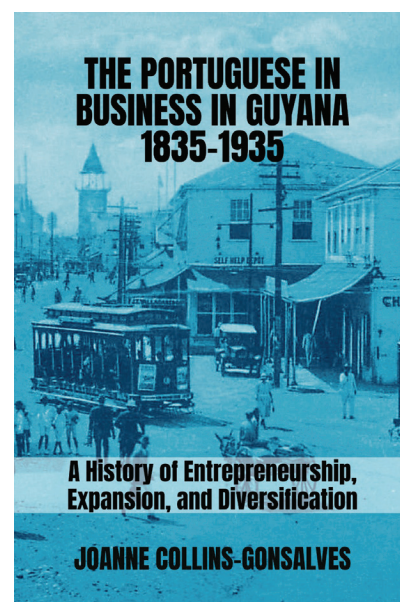
“Thorough research sets a strong foundation for historical writing... and has been key to writing my books over the years,” says Collins-Gonsalves, who



Studying the Past to build her Future

BY AMY LI BAKSH

History and research were woven into Dr Joanne Collins-Gonsalves life as early as she can remember, and it's no wonder that these spaces have become her own as well.



For young Caribbean historians entering the field, she is a shining example of how a love for history can become a thriving business and publishing career.

notes that she has found this to be a cornerstone of UWI St Augustine's History Department.

With this as her foundation, she has authored over 30 research projects, books, book chapters, academic articles, research papers, conference papers and biographical profiles. In addition to a book emerging from her research at UWI, *Portuguese in Business in Guyana 1835-1935: A History of Entrepreneurship, Expansion and Diversification* in 2025, she also published *From Ashes to Ferro-Concrete: A History of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception (Guyana) 1814-2014* in 2014, and her second book (which Prof Brereton encouraged her to tackle) *Iris de Freitas Brazao, Legal Luminary and Trailblazer: Caribbean, Canada, Wales, England, 1896-1989* in 2023.

“[Prof Brereton] actually wrote the introduction to that book,” says Collins-Gonsalves. “I’m very

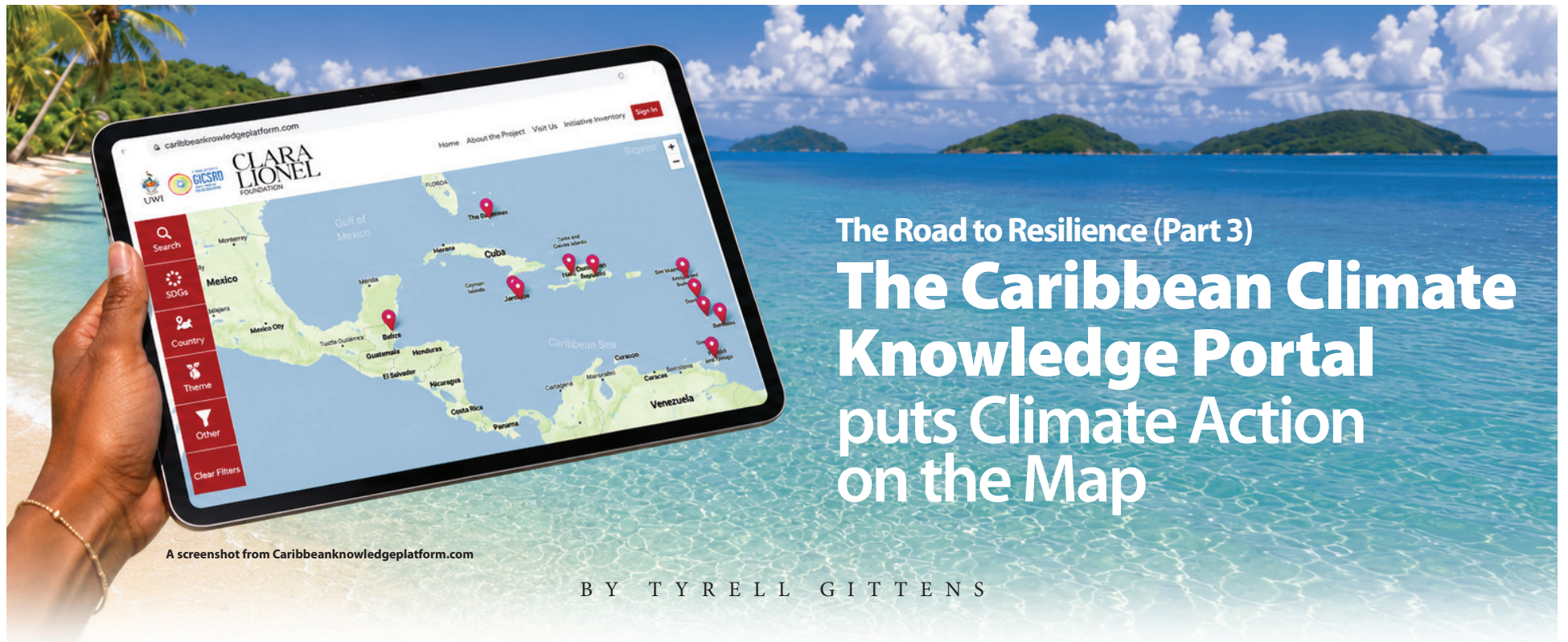
honoured that she was able to do that.”

In 2025, Collins-Gonsalves was recognised as one of Canada's Top 100 Black Women to Watch by CIBWE and she serves on the Advisory Board of the Farquharson Institute of Public Affairs, Jamaica among others.

For young Caribbean historians entering the field, she is a shining example of how a love for history can become a thriving business and publishing career. As to why students should study history, she notes that “history and historical research have often been highlighted as one of the disciplines that promote critical thinking, coupled with the skills and tools of rigorous research.”

For scholars of tomorrow, critical thinking is a crucial skill in a world where it is in short supply. She is married to Serafin Gonsalves and they have two children, Matthew and Theresa.

RESEARCH



A screenshot from Caribbeanknowledgeplatform.com

The Road to Resilience (Part 3)

The Caribbean Climate Knowledge Portal puts Climate Action on the Map

BY TYRELL GITTENS

Since 2024, The UWI and the Clara Lionel Foundation, founded by Barbadian artist, entrepreneur, and philanthropist Rihanna, have been collaborating on a two-year project focusing on early-warning systems for disaster-prone communities. In a three-part series, the three project components will be explored. This third and final part of the series looks at the creation of the Caribbean Climate Knowledge Portal. The portal showcases climate resilience initiatives being carried out by organisations throughout the Caribbean and makes information about these projects available to regional government agencies, civil society organisations, and the wider public.

Across the Caribbean, government agencies and civil society organisations are implementing critical projects to strengthen the region's resilience to socio-economic vulnerabilities driven by intensifying natural hazards. But the financial, technical and human resources needed to sustain these projects, or even invest in new ones, are limited. This reality means that every climate project in the region counts, and misdirected or duplicated initiatives can strain the already limited resource pool.

Regional agencies and organisations need a central platform to access information on ongoing and upcoming projects, so that they can focus on developing projects that target underserved areas or themes. This includes identifying project overlaps and filling gaps, allowing government agencies and civil society organisations to direct their efforts toward developing needed projects and to more efficiently co-ordinate existing initiatives to maximise impact.

The UWI has received funding from the Clara Lionel Foundation (CLF) to develop the Caribbean Climate Knowledge Portal (CCKP), an initiative designed to improve access to information on existing Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) projects across the region. It is accessible at <https://caribbeanknowledgeplatform.com/>.

Over 48 projects in the Caribbean and Central America

Designed as a practical, publicly accessible tool, it already hosts more than 48 projects, representing countries across Central America and the Caribbean. Users are required to submit project information which the project team verifies before the project is added to the platform, strengthening the flow of up-to-date information.

Dr Thongs, Scientific Co-ordinator of the project and lecturer at UWI St Augustine, explained that many solutions to climate challenges in the region already exist, but these efforts are often developed within separate institutional, disciplinary, or national silos.

"Practitioners and decision-makers are not always aware of the experiences, lessons, or innovations emerging elsewhere in the region," she said.

"The Caribbean Climate Knowledge Portal was created to help bridge these gaps by providing a shared space where climate information, tools, and best practices can be accessed, compared, and applied across countries. The portal is more



Geography students gaining real-world experience with drone technology acquired through funding from the Clara Lionel Foundation. Their work feeds into the knowledge portal.

than a repository of climate initiatives. It shows both what is being done across the Caribbean and where these activities are taking place."

Originally launched in 2024, the platform has been upgraded to enhance the user experience, and is currently in its final testing stages with the Mona GeoInformatics Institute. The upgraded version, scheduled for release in early May, will be more visually intuitive and user-friendly, with improved search capabilities that make it easier to locate and compare projects across the region by Sustainable Development Goals, country, theme, status of project, and lead organisation.

Dr Thongs said, "The Caribbean Climate Knowledge Portal is more than just a database, as its real power comes from the people behind the data. Researchers, project managers, and knowledge leaders across the region hold the key to making this tool truly transformative."

Helping the region work smarter on climate change

The collaboration between The UWI and the Clara Lionel Foundation is part of a larger pilot project in Trinidad and Tobago that is aimed at improving disaster resilience and early-warning systems.

In a statement, the CLF said, "The Caribbean has no shortage of people doing extraordinary work to protect their communities from climate change, but what has been missing is a way to connect those efforts. This portal changes that. We hope it becomes a living resource that grows with the region and helps ensure that no community is left navigating these challenges alone."

"This database helps people work smarter together. By bringing information about climate projects, research, and community programmes into one place, it makes it easier for organisations to connect and co-ordinate their efforts. It also

helps ensure that projects support broader development goals for the region. When people have clear information, they can plan better, avoid repeating work, and focus on solutions that truly help communities adapt to climate change."

In support of policymakers, the CLF wants the portal to give a clear picture of what is already happening across the region so they can design better policies and investments, while also helping researchers identify unanswered questions.

"A map that shows projects across the region makes it much easier to understand what is happening and where help is still needed. People can quickly see which areas already have support and which ones may have been overlooked. This helps governments, researchers, and organisations make better decisions, and use their time and resources more wisely," they state.

Overall, the CLF is hopeful that the visibility provided by the platform will encourage more collaboration and openness among climate projects, helping the region function more like a connected network working toward the same goal.

Using the partnership between the CLF and The UWI as an example, the foundation is calling on all regional stakeholders to recognise that partnerships will be key to the region's future resilience, as no single organisation can solve climate challenges alone.

With the launch of the portal marking the winding down of the partnership, Dr Thongs said they are now handing the baton to the wider public, whose engagement with the project's outputs will determine its ultimate success.

She said, "The real work, however, continues, and it relies on all of us. Together, we can turn these individual initiatives into a co-ordinated regional effort, addressing gaps, maximising impact, and ultimately moving the Caribbean forward in climate resilience and sustainable development."

CLARA
LIONEL
FOUNDATION

CLF is hopeful that the visibility provided by the platform will encourage more collaboration and openness among climate projects, helping the region function more like a connected network working toward the same goal.

■ OUR CAMPUS

What do you see when you walk through the St Augustine campus grounds of UWI? Are you lost in your own thoughts, headed to your next lecture? Watching the walkways to make sure you don't step on a crack or bump into a fellow pedestrian? So many of us walk these paths every day, from one faculty to another, under concrete buildings, and trees, and other fixtures both human-made and otherwise. But in the bustle of day-to-day life, there are entire worlds that can be missed. This was the premise behind the first ever **Campus Biodiversity Week**, organised by the **Department of Life Sciences** in collaboration with the **UWI Biological Society**.



This Oil-digger Bee, photographed in the Campus Pollinator Garden, is unusual because it lines its nest with floral oils, while also pollinating the flowers that it visits. PHOTO: BRYAN RAMDEEN



Participants pose for a photo after surveying the vervain in the Campus Pollinator Garden for bees, butterflies, hummingbirds and other important pollinators. BY VASHANNA PERSAD

Exploring a Secret World at St Augustine

BY AMY LI BAKSH

CAMPUS BIODIVERSITY WEEK 12-19 April 2026

The UWI St Augustine Main Campus & Mt Hope/ELMHC

From April 13 to 17, the team hosted daily activities, including guided nature walks and explorations of the teeming life that can be found here on campus, and participants were encouraged to help document plants, animals, and fungi using the iNaturalist app, and be part of building a shared biodiversity record. "Our campus has so many different species," says Vashanna Persad, current president of the UWI Biological Society. "We really wanted to show—'look at how much biodiversity we have here...this is here right now, and it's at the tip of your fingers'. Students should really have a little bit of awareness about this, so they can go and spread the word to their friends and family."

The idea emerged from two interconnected events that have been a part of Life Sciences for years. One is Biological Week, which is a collaborative event between the Department, the Biological Society, and other organisations, and the other is BioBlitz, where persons are invited to a specific location to help document species over a specific period of time. Dr Amy Deacon, lecturer in the department, proposed the idea of a sort of on-campus BioBlitz during a conversation with Persad, and the idea began to blossom into what would become Campus Biodiversity Week. "We said, what about a Campus Biodiversity Week where we'd use the iNaturalist app, that the Department of Life Sciences is actually very consistent with using, to identify different species," says Persad. "We got all of our lecturers involved."



"Our campus has so many different species," says Vashanna Persad, current president of The UWI Biological Society. "We really wanted to show—'look at how much biodiversity we have here. This is here right now, and it's at the tip of your fingers.'"

The beautiful (and highly perfumed) flower of the Cannonball Tree. PHOTO: MICHAEL OLTON

■ OUR CAMPUS

One of the activities during the week was a tree walk with Dr Michael Oatham, a Tropical Forest Ecologist and Head of the Department of Life Sciences, where he guided participants to visit a range of different tree species on campus, some of which are close to 100 years old and date back to UWI's predecessor, the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture (ICTA). "I think that fundamental to most tropical ecosystems is these organisms, the trees, because they form the habitats for the other animals and plants that you get in those ecosystems," says Dr Oatham. "So, my role in the Biodiversity Week was to try and introduce people to some of the different types of trees which we have on campus, because we've got a really large variety, both the native ones, which are found originally here in Trinidad and in Tobago, and also the introduced ones, the exotics, which have been brought in from around all the different parts of the world."

ICTA has left behind a visible mark on the landscape of UWI. "Part of the role of ICTA was to research tropical plants and animals, which could be domesticated and used for agricultural purposes and production, not only in Trinidad, but also in the other tropical parts of the British Empire, as it was back then," says Dr Oatham. "So, they would quite often pull different plants and animals from different tropical areas onto the ICTA campus, and they would research them and do all the agronomy on them, and all the production studies, and how to maximise production, and so on, here at ICTA in Trinidad."



Clockwise (upper left):

A Lesser Sac-winged Bat, one of 12 different bat species known to live on campus. These insect-eaters play a vital role in the ecosystem, consuming hundreds of mosquitoes, flies, moths and beetles every night. PHOTO: BRYAN RAMDEEN

Dr Michael Oatham giving a tour of the campus's diverse trees and their history. PHOTO: MICHAEL OLTON

Dr Luke Rostant explaining to participants how he (and other scientists) capture and handle bats, giving them a unique chance to see species like this Great Fruit-eating Bat up close. PHOTO: BRYAN RAMDEEN

Biology student Elijah Vesprey handling a Tropical Racer spotted during the Night Walk. PHOTO: BRYAN RAMDEEN

This tiny Cassius Blue butterfly was one of more than 300 species recorded on campus during Biodiversity Week. PHOTO: BRYAN RAMDEEN

Naturalist Dan Jaggernaut with the fruit of the Cannonball Tree, one of campus's most iconic trees. PHOTO: MICHAEL OLTON



Alongside the tree walks, the week also hosted a deep dive into marine biodiversity, hosted by Dr La Daana Kanhai, lecturer in Marine Biology and Ecology; a pollinator walk set up by insect expert Rajindra Maharaj and hosted by Dr Deacon; tours of the UWI Zoology Museum collection by its curator Zaheer Hosein and his team; a guided bird walk by Ornithologist Dr Mark Hulme; tours of the National Herbarium by curator Dr J Francisco Morales, and even a night-time walk to explore some of the nocturnal residents of the campus including Dr Luke Rostant's Bat Station and Dr Amy Deacon's Moth Station. The night walks in particular were a big hit.

"Species-wise, biodiversity night produced a lot," says Persad. "I wouldn't have guessed that we had so many different types of bats on campus. I think that was one of the days that we had the most people come out. I was around like 40 to 50 people [editor's note: well over 60 people were in attendance], and they were so interested to see that."

For the students and the team involved, this pilot project was an exciting adventure in looking at the campus through a new lens, and paying attention to all of the natural wonders that exist unassumingly right next to us as we go about our daily lives.

■ OUR CAMPUS



Students tackle the pressing concern of ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION AT UWIYSIP 2026



Members of several UWI St Augustine student societies with (back row, centre) Ms Haleema Ali-Sisbane, Project Specialist at the HEU, Centre for Health Economics. PHOTO: ANEEL KARIM

For decades, oil and gas have powered national development and made Trinidad and Tobago an industrial giant in the region. However, an over-reliance on the energy sector and the need to find new, robust economic activity has been the urgent concern of economists and policymakers for many years. On March 4, students from UWI St Augustine shared fresh perspectives on this persistent national topic.

The UWI Youth Social Impact Platform (UWIYSIP) held the discussion, themed “Building Resilient Economies through Economic Diversification”, at the Faculty of Social Sciences (FSS) Lounge on the St Augustine campus. The event, hosted by the HEU, Centre for Health Economics, the Department of Economics and several student groups, brought together students from across the campus.

The highlight of the event was a student panel discussion moderated by Final Year student Cheyanne Gadar, which featured student panellists Lauralee Seepersad, Varian Narine, Jalen Joseph, Joshua Jitta, Lian Mathura-Singh, and Deviani Harnarinesingh. The discussion explored various perspectives on economic diversification and the role that economics, innovation, entrepreneurship, behaviour change, policy and law can play in strengthening economic resilience in the Caribbean.

Chairpersons Jyasi Murray and Breanna Moolchan opened the session, which was followed by opening remarks from Shinik-Ann Duprey who represented the student clubs, and Dr Ricardo Lalloo, Lecturer in the Department of Economics. In her remarks, Dr Christine Laptiste, Co-ordinator at the HEU, Centre for Health Economics, highlighted the importance of the UWIYSIP to the Centre, and reaffirmed the HEU’s commitment to its long-term sustainability as well as the valuable collaboration with the Department of Economics and the participating student groups.

The Dean of FSS, Dr Acolia Lewis-Cameron, commended the HEU and the Department of Economics for another successful collaboration in her remarks. She encouraged students to remain curious, noting that inquiry is the starting point for innovation. Haleema Ali-Sisbane, Project Specialist at the HEU, highlighted the importance of creating spaces where young people can participate in discussions on issues that will shape their future.

A key feature of the programme was a student reflection delivered by Dylon Singh, who shared insights from his experience participating in the initiative the previous year. He highlighted the value of the platform in enabling students to engage directly with pressing economic and social issues and noted that his participation helped strengthen his skills in problem solving, critical thinking, teamwork, and communication.

The formal proceedings were followed by a networking session that allowed students, faculty members, partners and sponsors to continue conversations and build connections.

■ BOOKS

Advocate for the Night Folk

BY SHEREEN ALI

Neigeme Glasgow-Maeda has built an impressive portfolio of work, along the way receiving many international accolades. However, after decades of working in all areas of film production, in addition to serving as a mentor, entrepreneur, academic and even a DJ, he felt there was still work to be done.

It was anger a trip to Senegal that pushed him to complete his most recent work, *The Lore: Dark Tales from the Caribbean*, which tells the story of folklore characters existing in modern Trinidad and Tobago.

“I was angry and could not sleep, so I put pen to paper. A line became a paragraph, that became a story that became an episode,” Glasgow-Maeda recalls.

He did not set out to write a book, but after securing an editor for the series, he wondered if he could get it published. And with his sights set on taking his first book to market, He told himself that he had to make it the best that it could be.

At the recent launch, hosted at the Alma Jordan Library, he explained that he was invited to be a mentor at a television festival in Senegal, and when he met the young producers and directors, passionate about telling their native stories, he was frustrated that similar advocacy wasn’t being done back home.

While bringing *The Lore* to life, Glasgow-Maeda continued to wear his many other hats. He oversaw his film production company in Luxembourg, NGM Productions. He travelled to film festivals where he spoke and mentored. In 2025, he enrolled at UWI St Augustine, and is now working on his PhD in Cultural Studies.

“I have always wanted to be a West Indian scholar. UWI is not only in the top 15 percent of universities globally for postgraduate studies, but they also offer exactly what I wanted to pursue,” he says when asked about his reason for choosing to study at The UWI, despite previously studying, teaching and residing abroad.

He hopes that his doctorate research will help contribute to the growth of an economically viable film industry in the Caribbean.

His love for the arts started from a young age. He fondly recalls attending plays at Central Bank on his



Film producer, production manager, and author Neigeme Glasgow-Maeda with a display for his book *The Lore: Dark Tales from the Caribbean* at the launch on April 17 at the Audio Visual Room of the Alma Jordan Library on the St Augustine campus. PHOTO: SHEREEN ALI

own, and experiencing his sisters, as children, playing mas with Peter Minshall. This appreciation is what drives him to preserve creativity and culture. He hopes that through film and books, the characters and stories that we grew up with will never be forgotten.

“None of this belongs to us, we are custodians of it,” he says. “I want the stories and characters to go everywhere because they came from everywhere else.”

■ OUR CAMPUS



A TWO-DAY PEAK AT POSSIBILITY

Held under the theme **“Possible is Now,”** the event gave visitors the opportunity to explore academic programmes, engage with lecturers and student ambassadors, tour the campus, attend career guidance sessions, and learn about options for financing their education.

On March 28 and 29, more than 3,000 prospective students, parents, guardians, professionals, alumni, and other visitors journeyed to UWI St Augustine for Open Days 2026, transforming the JFK Quadrangle into a bustling centre for discovery and opportunity.

Held under the theme “Possible is Now,” the event gave visitors the opportunity to explore academic programmes, engage with lecturers and student ambassadors, tour the campus, attend career guidance sessions, and learn about options for financing their education.

Visitors explored the interactive booths from all eight faculties, giving them the chance to learn about undergraduate and postgraduate degrees, as well as certificate and professional development programmes. The event also featured innovation showcases, virtual reality demos, hands-on activities and direct access to support teams to answer questions about student life, admissions, and academic choices.

One of the strongest draws of the weekend was the series of career sessions, which attracted large numbers of attendees. These sessions helped prospective students connect their interests to career possibilities and better understand the range of academic options available to them. Parents and guardians also took part in the financial information sessions, where many sought guidance on programme costs, the Government Assistance for Tuition Expenses (GATE) Programme, and the more than 300 scholarships and bursaries available to support students.

Open Days also included Industry Talks, which gave prospective students the opportunity to learn from engineers, scientists, and other professionals, letting attendees hear first-hand how academic study translates into professional pathways.

Several campus tours took place across the two days, with guides leading groups across the grounds and giving them a feel for the spaces, services, and atmosphere that shape student life at St Augustine. The Zoological Museum tours attracted strong interest, adding another distinctive and memorable dimension to the Open Days experience. Visitors also took time to capture special moments with *Peli the Pelican* and the *Spirit Team*, whose appearances throughout the event proved to be a favourite for photos.

■ Those unable to attend Open Days 2026 can visit www.sta.uwi.edu/apply for information on available programmes and admissions. Prospective students can apply for programmes by July 17, 2026, and are encouraged to follow the campus’s social media platforms for updates on future events and academic opportunities.



Visitors explored the interactive booths from all eight faculties, giving them the chance to learn about undergraduate and postgraduate degrees, as well as certificate and professional development programmes.

The UWI Calendar of Events **May–June 2026**



For those wishing to attend the Games as a spectator, please register at <https://forms.office.com/r/jkeNLMLYQ7>

UWI Games 2026 May 21 to 29

Venues
UWI Sport and Physical Education Centre (SPEC)
St Augustine Campus

Hasely Crawford Stadium
Port-of-Spain

National Aquatic Centre
Couva

National Racquet Sport Centre
Tacarigua

ONLINE

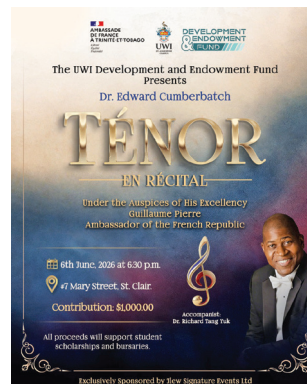


Tune in for this regional sporting event that brings together some of the Caribbean's top young talent for exciting competition in cricket, football, basketball, lawn tennis, swimming, table tennis, hockey, volleyball, track and field, and netball. UWI Games will bring together all five regional campuses—Cave Hill (Barbados), Five Islands (Antigua), Mona (Jamaica), the Global Campus, and St Augustine—for one of the largest celebrations of sport in the university's history under the theme "Reunited. Reignited. Ready!"

Viewers can watch live at UWI TV:

Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/UWITV>
Website: <https://uwitv.global/live/>
Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/@UWITVGlobal>

For more information, visit <https://sta.uwi.edu/uwigames/>



The UWIDEF Ténor en Récital June 6 Residence of the Ambassador of France St Clair Port-of-Spain

The UWI Development and Endowment Fund (UWIDEF), invites you to an intimate, salon-style experience where vocal artistry meets philanthropy. This new and exciting fundraising initiative, hosted under the patronage of His Excellency Guillaume Pierre, Ambassador of the French Republic,

and created to provide scholarships and bursaries for students, will feature acclaimed tenor Dr Edward Cumberbatch accompanied by distinguished conductor and pianist Dr Richard Tang Yuk. Join UWIDEF for the first in this three-part series that promises an unforgettable evening of musical excellence for the purpose of giving deserving young people a chance at higher education.

For more information, visit <https://uwidef-sta.org/>

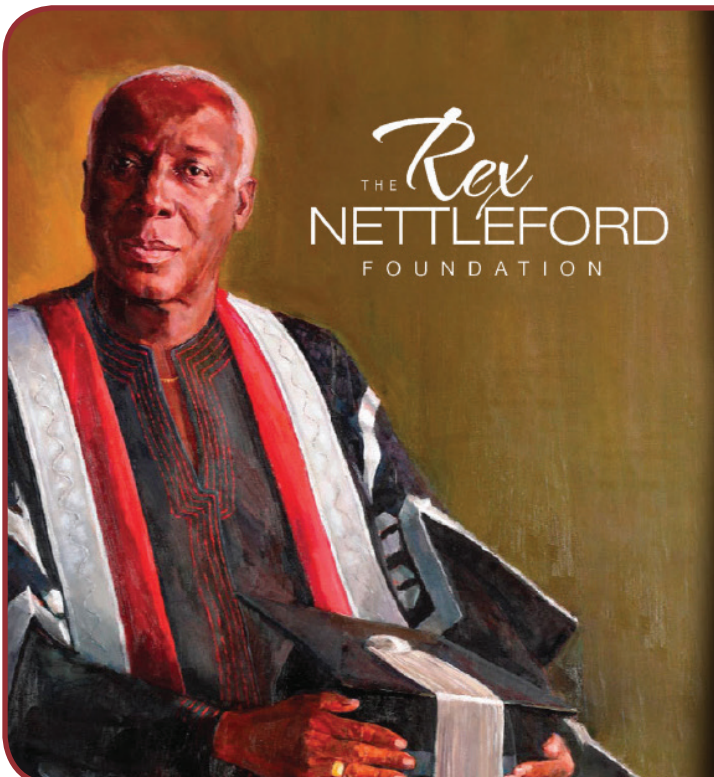


Prof Farooq Kperogi

The International Media and Communication Conference June 24 to 26 Lecture Theatre 1 Faculty of Engineering St Augustine Campus

As artificial intelligence reshapes media and its consumption, this conference invites academics, media professionals, students, policymakers, and others to explore these transformations through Caribbean and Global South perspectives. Hosted by the Department of Literary, Cultural and Communication Studies under the theme "The Digital Nexus: Media and Communication in the Age of AI," the conference will be a space for dialogue on the intersection of AI, communication, media, and society. Featured speakers include media scholar and activist Prof Farooq Kperogi, Executive Director of The UWI's Artificial Intelligence Innovation Centre Dr Craig Ramlal, and legal expert.

For more information, visit conferences.sta.uwi.edu/imcc/
To register, go to <https://conferences.sta.uwi.edu/imcc/registration/>



INVITES YOU TO **THE REX NETTLEFORD
DISTINGUISHED LECTURE**

Dancing the Nation into Being: Art, Agency and the Caribbean Imagination



FEATURING
Professor Krista Marciano
Dean of Theater, Boston
Conservatory at Berklee

**Saturday 27 June 2026
6:00 p.m.**

The UWI Learning Resource
Centre, The UWI,
St. Augustine Campus

RSVP: Visit <https://bit.ly/RNFLECTURE>



2026 Rex Nettleford Distinguished Lecture June 27 Daaga Auditorium St Augustine Campus

The Rex Nettleford Foundation invites you to the Rex Nettleford Distinguished Lecture, "Dancing the Nation into Being: Art, Agency and the Caribbean Imagination". The lecture will feature Professor Krista Marciano, Dean of Theater, Boston Conservatory at Berklee.

Prof Marciano has a career of more than 30 years as a dancer, choreographer, and educator, including time at the Martha Graham Dance Company, the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater and over 17 years on Broadway in numerous hit musicals.