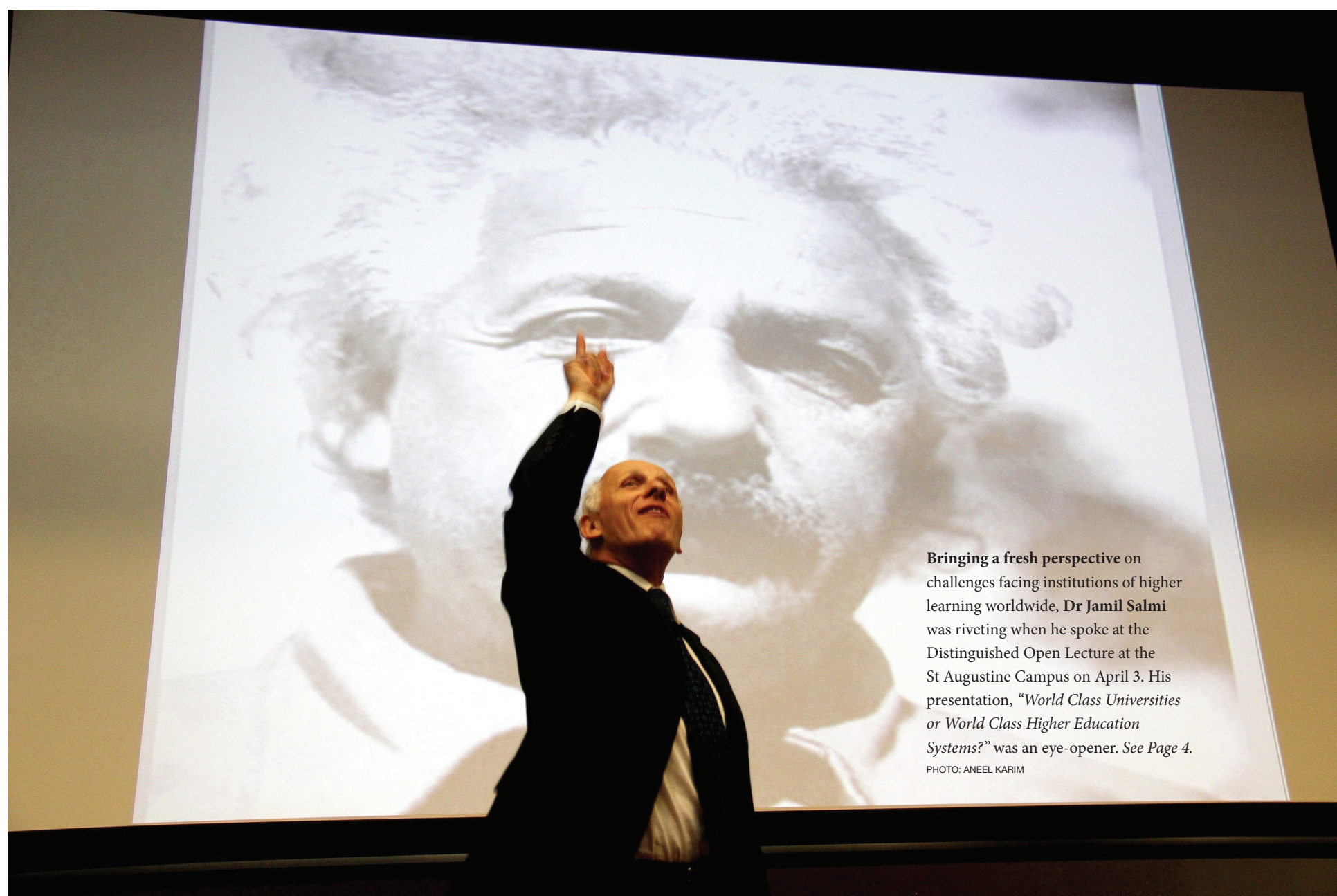




# Imagination Encircles The World



Bringing a fresh perspective on challenges facing institutions of higher learning worldwide, **Dr Jamil Salmi** was riveting when he spoke at the Distinguished Open Lecture at the St Augustine Campus on April 3. His presentation, "World Class Universities or World Class Higher Education Systems?" was an eye-opener. See Page 4.

PHOTO: ANEEL KARIM

## SAFETY – 10

### *On the Alert*

■ Beefing up Safety



## ENVIRONMENT – 11

### *Guanapo's Woes*

■ Investigating a Landfill

## RESEARCH – 13

### *Whose Morality?*

■ Ethics of Our Times



## LITERATURE – 14

### *Amazing Night*

■ Bringing Down The Show



CAMPUS NEWS

# Science and People



UWI students looking at departmental displays and Solomon the Snake courtesy Mr Mike Rutherford of The University of the West Indies Zoology Museum (UWIZM) and UWI Biological society respectively. PHOTOS: ANEEL KARIM

**Science, People and the Environment** was the theme of this year’s Research Day held by the Department of Life Sciences to show off the work being done at all levels by students. For the third year, students got a chance to demonstrate the relevance of their work to societies, particularly in relation to biodiversity, and to have it critiqued.

Migrant songbirds in the Caroni Swamp, seabirds on the north and east coast, spiders and guppies; you’d be surprised at how their ways of life affect you. Participants presented research on our forests, our cocoa, our rivers and beaches and looked at what affects our water quality, the impact of quarries, and even the economic value of the recreational resources provided at the Caroni Swamp Bird Sanctuary.

One of the final elements of the day’s agenda was a video presentation called “The Bioethics of horsemeat consumption in Trinidad,” which must have sparked quite a lot of interest given the global furor over unexpected horses at the table (more of that at a later date).

**PRIZES WERE AWARDED FOR THE PRESENTATIONS AND THE WINNERS ARE:**

**PG ORAL PRESENTATION**

- 1st place – Ms Lena Dempewolf
- 2nd place – Mr Ryan Mohammed
- 3rd place – Mr Maurice Rawlins

**PG POSTER PRESENTATIONS**

- 1st place – Mr Mike Rutherford
- 2nd place – Ms Kerresha Khan
- 3rd place – Mr David Gopaulchan

**BEST VIDEO**

The Bioethics of horsemeat consumption in Trinidad – Kerresha Khan, Hema Ramdial, Maurice Rawlins and Akilah Stewart.



Nicole Adimoolah’s presentation was on the effect of inbreeding on populations of *Theobroma cacao* L. (cocoa tree). She is a student doing the new regional online MSc Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Development in the Caribbean. This MSc is in partnership with University of Belize, Anton de Kom Universiteit van Suriname and University of Guyana.

FROM THE PRINCIPAL

## Research Brings Creative Knowledge



It is all too common to hear complaints that funding for research is misdirected if it turns out that the findings confirm what might be considered general knowledge. Many researchers will tell you that this betrays a fundamental misunderstanding about the purpose and value of their work.

What makes the difference between what might be called ‘street’ knowledge and methodical research data is the capacity to use that information in a systematic, thoughtful and meaningful way. For instance, it is not enough to declare that the country is besieged by violent crime; that is the kind of knowledge that should initiate an investigation into why that is so and what can be done about it.

Without accurate data and analysis, there can be no proper planning or interventions in matters relevant to policy-making. Initiatives to bring about change cannot be designed based on hearsay.

The researcher’s lot is always fraught with the possibility that the research may have yielded results that do not sit well with the public or with industry or with special interest groups but it should not cause a serious scientist to detour from the path to knowledge.

Recently our Campus invited tertiary education specialist, Dr Jamil Salmi, to be part of the Distinguished Open Lecture Series, and as he described challenges faced by Universities such as ours worldwide, we recognised those landscapes immediately. Yet, by bringing a vision that had been calibrated by extensive study of these environments, he was able to offer relevant and nuanced solutions that were creative and feasible.

At the heart of all these transformative moves, Dr Salmi insists that research and knowledge have to be the driving force for successful change. Economies have radically transformed their wealth and viability by focusing on competitive strategies. Dr Salmi discussed University frameworks for those transformations: quality, relevance, financial sustainability, institutional diversification and flexibility to change. He noted three fundamentals to build a leading institution; the ability to attract talent, abundant resources and good governance. Challenging yes, but at the UWI, and for the future of the Caribbean, we must continue to work at achieving the optimal mix of talent, resources and governance to support our strategic vision.

These are all elements of the UWI’s strategic plan, and in the case of the St. Augustine Campus, balancing talent, resources and governance is what underpins our continuous efforts to review and enhance what we do, so that we can bring greater value to our country and region.

CLEMENT K. SANKAT  
Pro Vice Chancellor & Principal

EDITORIAL TEAM

CAMPUS PRINCIPAL  
Professor Clement Sankat

DIRECTOR OF MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS  
Mrs. Dawn-Marie De Four-Gill

DIRECTOR OF MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS (Ag.)  
Mrs. Wynell Gregorio

EDITOR  
Ms. Vaneisa Baksh

ACTING EDITOR  
For the period from May 1 to August 2, 2013, Mrs Maria Rivas-McMillan will be editing UWI TODAY, please address all correspondence for the paper to her at [maria.mcmillan@sta.uwi.edu](mailto:maria.mcmillan@sta.uwi.edu) during this time.



## ■ CAMPUS NEWS



PHOTO: ANEEL KARIM

# Dare to be DIFFERENT

*Jamil Salmi Challenges  
Tertiary Educators*

BY DR EDUARDO R. ALI

**Should we build 'World Class Universities or World Class Higher Education Systems?'** This was the question Dr. Jamil Salmi posed at the two events held on April 3 by The UWI, St Augustine, in his honour.

At a breakfast forum hosted by Campus Principal Professor Clement Sankat at the Hilton Trinidad and Conference Centre, Dr. Salmi, a global tertiary education expert, discussed what it means to establish world class universities and other institutions. He noted that traditionally world class universities have been distinguished for having top graduates, leading-edge research initiatives and dynamic knowledge and technology transfers. They attract and manage distinguishable faculty, staff and student talents, have an abundance of resources, are successful in fund-raising, and have governance systems that are apolitical and autonomous and strong leadership teams.

He described what he termed a higher education ecosystem, pointing out the differences between 'prestige' and 'excellence.' He cautioned against using world rankings as the basis for development, remarking that their different methodologies are not entirely objective or supportive of the unique mission of a distinctive university.

He noted that there is danger in homogenization in that all institutions within a sector are not the same. Differentiated systems in higher education, that is, different institutions which focus on their strengths and the purpose for their existence, are important. He cautioned against academic drift, where institutions shift in their primary purpose/mission too quickly, causing an unnecessary strain on national and institutional resources and increased competition for markets and funds which contributes to what he terms the 'global talent war.'

Professor Sankat underscored the comments raised by Dr. Salmi, particularly noting the leadership and economic challenges in building world class universities, whilst others

raised challenging issues such as assuring and enhancing quality through accreditation, methods for raising funds, talent recruitment and management, financial challenges in current economic times, developing the ecosystem concept with differentiated institutions and focusing on relevance over ranking.

Later, at the UWI's Distinguished Open Lecture Series, Dr. Salmi drew a vivid picture of the future of tertiary education. He challenged participants with investing in futuristic open universities that relied on the best academics to facilitate students' learning in truly needs-driven programmes that are technology-mediated, negotiated content and primarily conscious of the career and personal developmental needs of students. "Is your tertiary education system ready?" he asked.

Dr. Salmi spoke of the importance of knowledge, changing educational needs and practices and new challenges for small states as they embrace policy reforms and institutional changes in tertiary education. He discussed the differences between poverty and wealth through creation of new knowledge economies. By different economies making the transition from primary to tertiary education access, he said, highly technological societies have developed niche products which have radically transformed their economic competitiveness, wealth and viability.

He outlined the changing skills and competencies that would be required in societies, from routine manual tasks being performed by machines to highly complex knowledge jobs done by innovative persons. He asked tertiary educators and institutions to consider what would be needed to develop these competencies as the new talent for economies. He referred to new pedagogical practices focused on the learner and the importance of re-training and re-tooling careers through continuing professional development. This means that for small island developing

states, a new paradigm for tertiary education needs to be considered; one centred on quality, relevance, financial sustainability, institutional diversification and flexibility to change, he said.

Dr. Salmi's work has taken him around 80 countries world-wide as a tertiary education policy expert with the World Bank, as an academic researcher and a policy and strategic management consultant to governments and universities in Europe, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. He has published many reports and books which have given developed, developing and transition countries much to consider in their policy reforms in tertiary education and strategic transformations within universities.

At the end of his lecture, there seemed to be a consensus from listeners that while financial constraints present limitations, leadership at all levels in the system should focus more on entrepreneurship, risk-taking, creativity and innovations as absolutely critical ingredients for institutional change and progress.

"In our sector, information technology is not seen as the core business for change but an additional component. If we have to do what Dr. Salmi suggests we need to reprioritize, realign and re-engineer," was one comment.

"How do we make the transition?" asked one academic. "There is a difference in the response of corporate versus academic adopters. Academics generally want change but administrators are not willing to contribute or entertain these changes."

Undoubtedly, Dr. Salmi's presentations provoked thought into how the tertiary education sector and corresponding institutions should embrace transformation from policy-making and leadership to academic cultures. What would now be needed are measures for such changes that the tertiary education sector would have to define, enable and deliver.



## THEATRE

# When Maria Antonia went to Town

The Department of Creative & Festival Arts (DCFA) of The UWI just completed its run of *Maria Antonia* at the Little Carib Theatre, and from all accounts, it was a success.

As part of the requirements for the BA in Theatre Arts, Production II students of the DCFA are brought together as a company to perform in and produce a full-length play.

**Dr. Jorge Morejon** – a Cuban-American dance lecturer at the Department, worked on the production as both translator and director. *Maria Antonia*, the 1967 Cuban classic written by Eugenio Hernandez Espinosa, is the tragic story of an Afro-Cuban woman who defies the men, women, and traditions of her community in search of self and meaning. Through her trysts with men, her defiance of religion, and her thirst for change, she presents the struggles of a post-revolutionary Cuba – one where women are forced to re-evaluate their roles in society. It employs Afro-Cuban culture – for example Santeria, a syncretic religion of West African and Caribbean origin; and Rumba dance – as part of its aesthetic. The play, therefore, presents itself as an opportunity, not simply for the teaching and honing of necessary skills in theatre, but for students to be exposed to Cuban culture and familiarize themselves with the history of the Caribbean region.

**Syntyche Bishop** played the role of *Maria Antonia*, with a supporting cast that included **Tafar Lewis**, **Robert Noel**, **Kareem Durity**, **Ketisha Williams**, **Daniella Johnson**, **Dernelle Smith**, **Merlisia McIntosh**, **Khadein Benn**, **Lequacia Renee Quash-De Suze**, **Jarell Akini Alder**, **Adam Pascall**, **Lalonde Jay Ochoa**, **Marvin Dowridge**, **Ion-lee Farmer**, **Marcus Waldron**, **Shanice James**, **Simeon Chris Moodoo**, **Kirsten Shade**, **Candace Sturge Dunbar**, **Gabrielle Jade Le Gendre**, **Alana Ash** and **Ruzanne Gustave**.

You can catch the final dance performance of DCFA's *Sole to Sole* today at the Little Carib Theatre from 6pm.

Here are some images from the production captured by **Wesley Nicholls**.





## ■ CAMPUS NEWS



# Patois Meets Panyol

## *Venezuela is closer than you think*

Venezuelan Patois contingent on field trip in Blanchisseuse, from left: Prof E. Esteban Mosonyi (V), Juan Valdez (V), Rosa Olivino de Briceño (V), Nnamdi Hodge (T&T), Felix Savary (T&T), Saturnino Briceño (V) and Concepcion (T&T).

PHOTO: ANDREINA CARABALLO

6TH CONFERENCE OF PATOIS SPEAKERS OF VENEZUELA AND THE CARIBBEAN  
 SIZYÈM ASANBLÉ MOUN KI KA PALÉ PATWA/KWÉYÒL KI SÒTI VÉNÉZWÈL ÉPI KAWAYIB-LA  
 6A ASAMBLEA DE HABLANTES DE PATUÁ DE VENEZUELA Y DEL CARIBE

The Department of Modern Languages and Linguistics was pleased to host the 6th Conference of Patois Speakers of Venezuela and the Caribbean as this was the first time that Trinidad & Tobago has acted as the host nation. Since 2005, all previous conferences have been held in Venezuela, either in Güiria (Estado Sucre) or El Callao (Estado Bolívar), where Patois is barely alive and highly endangered, even more than it is in T&T.

The conference aimed to highlight the historical, social and linguistic links between T&T and its nearest neighbour, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. The focus of one of these links was the Patois language (French Creole), still spoken on both sides of the Gulf of Paria, as are Spanish, English, English Creole, and at least three Amerindian languages, including Warao. During the conference, issues of language resources, vitality, documentation and revitalisation, and the necessity of central and local government support and legislation were discussed. Community elders and language practitioners were honoured and they engaged in all of the matters, as Patois-speaking communities in both countries chart their way forward.

This sixth conference was organised by Dr Jo-Anne Ferreira and Nnamdi Hodge, who have been part of the conferences since the first in 2005. Their Patois project involved documenting speakers and Patois traditions in Trinidad and Venezuela, and is now also a part of an

RDI-funded project based in DMLL and focusing on three autochthonous languages of T&T. The Conference was made possible because of grants from the Government of Venezuela, especially the Ministerio del Poder Popular para la Cultura, the Ministerio del Poder Popular para Relaciones Exteriores and the Embassy of Venezuela, as well as support from the Asociación de Patuaparlatantes de Paria, the Sociedad Conservacionista de Güiria, and the Instituto Venezolano para la Cultura y la Cooperación (celebrating 50 years in T&T this month).

The one-day UWI segment of the conference was well attended and took place at the Centre for Language Learning and the School of Education on April 10, in conjunction with the Society for Caribbean Linguistics (SCL), the Caribbean Yard Campus (CYC) and the Centre for Latin America and the Caribbean (CENLAC). The Santa Rosa First Peoples Carib Community was represented by Cristo Adonis, and Paramin was represented by Errol Felix, Bernard Fournillier, Kenneth Romain and Cecil St. Hillaire. The Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela was host to more workshops on Thursday morning, and the rest of Thursday as well as Friday were taken up with field trips and community visits.

At the UWI leg, entirely in Spanish and interpreted by UWI's own CITB (Caribbean Interpreting and Translation

Bureau), Her Excellency Ambassador Coromoto Godoy gave the feature address, Dr. Ramón Mansoor focused on Trinidad as a microcosm of Venezuela, and Dr. Lancelot Cowie of CENLAC looked at the histories of Afro-Venezuelans. Anthropologist Omaira Gutiérrez Marcano gave an overview of the Venezuelan government's initiatives to preserve Venezuelan languages and cultures, and of the constitution which protects all languages, spoken or signed. Professor Emilio Mosonyi of the Universidad Central de Venezuela spoke on Venezuela's Patois (Patuá), while Saturnino and Rosa Olivino de Briceño shared their experiences as native Patois speakers. Workshops were given by Dr. Joseph Farquharson (multilingual lexicography), Cristo Adonis (Trinidadian folk medicine, which uses a number of Patois words for our flora), and at the Embassy, by Rosa Bosch Teriús (Franco-Creole Venezuelan cuisine) and Rondel Benjamin of the Bois Academy (Stickfighting). Visitors were also treated to singing by the Vini Chanté choir at the Caribbean Yard Campus, and were welcomed by the communities of Paramin and Blanchisseuse.

The conference is expected to grow to include all the Créolophone territories of the region: Brazil, Venezuela, Trinidad & Tobago, Grenada, St Lucia, Martinique, Dominica, Guadeloupe, Haiti and the USA, and any country that has a Patois-speaking community.

To learn more, visit the Annou Palé Patwa (Let's Talk Patois) page and group on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/annoupalekweyol/> and visit the Department of Modern Languages and Linguistics: <http://sta.uwi.edu/fhe/dmll/>





# UNLOCK YOUR POTENTIAL



## EXPERIENCE...

Actuarial  
Science  
**HISTORY**  
English  
LINGUISTICS  
SPANISH  
Theatre  
COMMUNITY  
Dietetics & Nutrition  
**MUSIC**  
SPORTS MANAGEMENT  
Nursing  
Chemistry  
Dental Hygiene & Dental Therapy  
Human Nutrition & Dietetics  
Actuarial Science  
Dental Hygiene

Theatre in Education  
AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE  
Carnival Studies  
OPTOMETRY  
GEOGRAPHY  
Agribusiness  
PHYSICS  
POLITICAL  
SCIENCE  
Visual Arts  
INSURANCE &  
RISK MANAGEMENT  
**Drama**  
Mathematics  
ACTUARIAL  
SCIENCE  
Linguistics  
HUMAN  
ECOLOGY  
International Tourism  
INFORMATION  
TECHNOLOGY  
TECHNICAL  
THEATRE  
PRODUCTION  
BIOCHEMISTRY

HUMAN  
ECOLOGY  
Tropical  
Landscaping  
HOSPITALITY  
& TOURISM  
RISK MANAGEMENT  
FILM  
COMPUTER  
SCIENCE  
DRAMA  
SPORTS  
International Tourism  
INFORMATION  
TECHNOLOGY  
TECHNICAL  
THEATRE  
PRODUCTION  
BIOCHEMISTRY

Early Childhood Care & Development  
Dental Therapy  
COMMUNITY DIETETICS & NUTRITION  
GEOGRAPHY  
**DANCE**  
Agriculture  
SPANISH  
Visual Arts  
SOCIOLOGY  
CHEMISTRY &  
MANAGEMENT  
FRENCH  
Agribusiness  
Political  
Science  
OPTOMETRY  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
& NATURAL RESOURCE  
MANAGEMENT

[www.sta.uwi.edu/ads](http://www.sta.uwi.edu/ads)

## APPLY NOW

to these Undergraduate programmes!  
Application Deadline: **May 31, 2013**





## RESEARCH



# DENGUE: Past, Present and Future

BY PROFESSOR  
CHRISTINE CARRINGTON

Professor of Molecular Genetics and Virology,  
Christine Carrington stands under a phylogenetic  
tree showing the evolution of dengue virus  
serotype 4 in the Americas. PHOTO: ALEX SMAILES

Anyone living in Trinidad and Tobago could not have failed to notice that dengue is a major and all too often overwhelming problem for our region. Each year, millions of people in the Americas experience the debilitating and, in some cases, life-threatening effects of dengue virus infection. A very conservative estimate suggests that dengue costs the Caribbean about US\$321 million annually. This does not even consider the costs of surveillance, mosquito control and public education programmes or the impact of disruption to the rest of the healthcare system when an outbreak occurs.

Dengue has a long history in the Americas, with accounts of dengue-like illness as early as 1780 in Philadelphia, USA. However, outbreaks of the disease were few and far between up until the 1960s and '70s, when large epidemics of dengue fever swept through the region. In the 1980s outbreaks with large numbers of cases of the more severe and life-threatening forms of dengue first appeared. Since then the size, frequency and severity of outbreaks in the Caribbean and the wider Americas have been increasing steadily. This trend is expected to continue and to be exacerbated by climate change.

It is cold comfort to learn that we are not alone in this regard. Dengue, which is caused by any one of four types of dengue virus (i.e. dengue virus serotypes 1, 2, 3 and 4), is the most rapidly spreading mosquito-borne viral disease and currently one of the most important emerging diseases. Prior to the 1950s, dengue as a major public health problem was effectively restricted to Asia. Today, the four

dengue viruses and *Aedes aegypti* (the main mosquito species involved in transmitting the viruses from person to person) are found throughout the tropics. Recent estimates published in the journal *Nature*, suggest that about 390 million people around the world are infected by dengue viruses annually. Approximately 75% of these infections result in no symptoms, or symptoms so mild that they go unnoticed. However, for about 96 million people, disease is apparent. It may range from a mild, non-specific febrile syndrome to classic dengue fever (characterized by fever, headache, rash and severe muscle and joint pains), to life-threatening dengue haemorrhagic fever and dengue shock syndrome.

So why did dengue suddenly emerge in the Americas? Where did it come from? Why has the disease pattern changed, and what can we expect in the future?

Research has shown that dengue viruses originated in the forests of the Old World where up to today, in West Africa and South East Asia, a sylvatic or wild form of the virus is transmitted between non-human primates (monkeys and apes) by forest dwelling mosquitoes. Although humans are not their preferred host, given the opportunity, some of these mosquito species will feed on humans. Hence, humans living in forest fringe regions can occasionally become infected with sylvatic dengue viruses. These "spillover" events do not usually result in sustained onward transmission of sylvatic dengue viruses in human populations. However, analysis of the evolutionary relationship between currently circulating sylvatic and

human dengue viruses indicates that this has happened at least four times (most likely in South East Asia) giving rise to the four known human dengue serotypes. While another *Aedes* species of mosquito was likely the original vector for human dengue, sustained transmission of dengue in human populations is undoubtedly a consequence of the subsequent involvement of *A. aegypti*, which prefers feeding on humans and breeding around man-made environments.

The earliest evidence of a disease with symptoms consistent with dengue is of "water poison," documented in China during the Jin Dynasty over 1500 years ago. Dengue virus eventually spread to Africa and then to the Americas during the Atlantic Slave Trade. However, the dramatic global expansion of dengue virus out of Asia, beginning in the 1950s, has been attributed to troop movements and population displacement at the end of World War II. Expansion of the airline industry, increasing human population sizes and urbanization further facilitated global dissemination. These factors provided opportunities for rapid, long-distance movement of infected humans and mosquitoes into high-density human populations and conditions that favour the creation of breeding sites suitable for *A. aegypti*. As a consequence, in the Americas where for almost 200 years only dengue virus serotype 2 existed, within 18 years (from 1963) the three other dengue virus serotypes were introduced from Asia and very rapidly spread throughout the Americas. New strains of existing serotypes have continued to appear.

There is currently no cure for dengue, although early



detection and appropriate management of individuals who show warning signs of developing severe dengue can reduce case fatality rates from 10% to as low as 1%. Several vaccines are currently in clinical trials, but none is yet approved for use. In the absence of a cure or a vaccine, reducing dengue virus transmission depends entirely on reducing mosquito populations and breeding sites, and interrupting contact between humans and mosquitoes, but these interventions must be well targeted. Access to accurate and timely information on the number and distribution of dengue cases is critical. Unfortunately, this is not as straightforward as it sounds because a large proportion of dengue virus infections occur without symptoms. Even when individuals show signs or symptoms of the disease dengue can only be confirmed by laboratory testing since it is generally clinically indistinguishable from a range of other flu-like illnesses. Determining how much dengue is around and where it is, is further complicated in settings such as ours, where reporting systems tend to be slow and inefficient, where regulatory and quality control on diagnostic laboratories are variable and where the public health infrastructure is easily and often overwhelmed.

Fortunately, while we humans have been struggling to obtain and document this type of information, dengue viruses (like all other organisms) have been doing a good job of keeping a record of their own past imprinted in their genetic material. Using our knowledge of how viruses evolve (i.e. how their genetic material changes over time), it is possible to estimate when and where a given epidemic began or particular strains of a virus arose, the order and timing of transmission events, how virus population size has changed over time and even the patterns and rates of virus movement between geographic regions. The genetic material required

for these types of analyses may be relatively easily obtained from patients' blood or from infected mosquitoes.

Researchers at The UWI, St Augustine have been using this type of "molecular phylogenetic" approach to reconstruct the histories of the four dengue virus serotypes in the Americas (including when and where each serotype was first introduced) and to investigate how factors such as patterns of human movement between countries, the size of human populations and the geographic distances between countries and major population centres influence the rates and directions of movement amongst countries. Our results suggest a significant time lag between the arrival of each of the serotypes to our region and when it was first reported. This indicates that for some time after arriving viruses remain below our detection threshold (which may be quite high due to poor surveillance in many countries in the Americas). We have also found that dengue virus in a given location is more likely to move to a nearby and larger human population than to a smaller or more distant population. However, while most of the strongest links (in terms of dengue virus movement) are between neighbouring countries, there are a few countries (including T&T) that act as major hubs for virus dispersal throughout the region. Presumably, this reflects human movement patterns, which would be expected to play a more significant role in dispersal of dengue on a regional scale than movement of infected mosquitoes. Investigations continue into whether airline traffic patterns can predict dengue virus spread within the Americas.

This molecular phylogenetic approach cannot replace good epidemiological data. However, it complements traditional approaches and provides insights into the evolutionary dynamics underlying how epidemics behave.

It can contribute towards improved surveillance and development of models to predict the spread of viruses, particularly when coupled with other sensitive and specific molecular tools for rapid detection of both known and unknown viruses. Work in this area (funded by the UWI-Trinidad and Tobago Research and Development Impact Fund) is currently underway at The UWI. The aims are to determine the rate of dengue virus infection among patients who present with fevers at selected healthcare institutions in T&T, to identify viruses associated with those cases that cannot be attributed to dengue virus, and to identify factors that best explain the behaviour of dengue virus outbreaks within T&T. The overall goal is to facilitate improved surveillance and develop models to predict (and ideally prevent) the spread of dengue in T&T.

The World Health Organisation's recently published strategic plan for dengue prevention and control aims to reduce morbidity and mortality by at least 25% and 50% respectively by 2020. They believe that these targets are achievable using already existing tools. However, they emphasise that research "continue(s) to play an important role in reversing the trend in dengue..." As the cost and time required to retrieve and analyse genetic data continue to decline, one can envisage a time in the not too distant future when real-time analysis of genetic, clinical and demographic data from patient specimens collected at the "point-of-care" will be routinely incorporated into surveillance strategies for dengue and other viruses.

*Christine Carrington is Professor of Molecular Genetics and Virology, based at the Department of Preclinical Sciences, UWI St. Augustine.*

### ■ HOW DO I KNOW IF I HAVE DENGUE?

Dengue can only be confirmed by laboratory testing but if a person lives in or has travelled to a dengue endemic region and they have fever plus at least two of the following symptoms then they probably have dengue:

- Nausea, vomiting
- Rash
- Aches and pains
- Tourniquet test positive (i.e. evidence of minor pin point bleeding under the skin after a blood pressure cuff is applied to the arm and inflated for 5 minutes)
- Leukopenia (low white blood cell count)
- Any warning sign (see below)

Severe, life-threatening dengue occurs in only a minority of cases but it is difficult to distinguish between those who will and will not proceed to severe dengue. There are however warning signs that a patient is at increased risk of severe disease. Warning signs include:

- Abdominal pain or tenderness
- Persistent vomiting
- Clinical fluid accumulation (i.e. fluid accumulation in the lungs or abdomen)
- Mucosal bleeding (e.g. bleeding gums)
- Lethargy / restlessness
- Liver enlargement >2cm
- Laboratory tests detect increase in haematocrit (HCT) with rapid decrease in platelet count

Patients with these warning signs require strict observation and medical intervention.

Severe dengue (also known as dengue haemorrhagic fever / dengue shock syndrome) is characterized by:



- Severe plasma leakage leading to shock and fluid accumulation with respiratory distress (difficulty in breathing)
- Severe bleeding
- Severe organ involvement (e.g. liver damage, impaired consciousness, abnormalities in the heart and other organs)

### ■ WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF DENGUE?

Depending on the nature and severity of the symptoms, dengue disease used to be divided into undifferentiated fever, dengue fever and the severe, life threatening dengue hemorrhagic fever. Dengue hemorrhagic fever was further subdivided into grades I-IV in order of increasing severity, with grades III and IV being dengue shock syndrome.

This has now been simplified so that patients are classified as having (i) dengue without warning signs, (ii) dengue with warning signs and (iii) severe dengue.

### ■ ARE SOME DENGUE VIRUSES WORSE THAN OTHERS?

There are four types of dengue virus known as dengue virus serotypes 1, 2, 3 and 4. All of them can cause severe dengue so none of the viruses is really worse than the others.

### ■ HOW MANY TIMES CAN I GET DENGUE?

A person can be infected only once by each serotype because infection with a given serotype causes their body to produce an immune response that provides lifetime protection against future infection with that particular serotype. Unfortunately the immune response to one serotype increases the risk of severe disease upon infection with a different serotype. So the good news is that a person can only get infected by dengue viruses four times, however there is a higher risk of severe disease when a person is infected for a second, third or fourth time.

### ■ WHAT SHOULD AND SHOULDN'T I DO IF I THINK I HAVE DENGUE?

- Do NOT take aspirin, ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin), and naproxen (Aleve).
- If you need a pain reliever take acetaminophen (or paracetamol) e.g. Tylenol, Panadol.
- Rest and drink plenty of fluids
- Avoid mosquito bites while febrile
- Consult a doctor
- Watch for warning signs (especially after your fever begins to decline, usually 3 to 7 days after symptoms began).
- Go IMMEDIATELY to an emergency room or the closest health care provider if any of the following warning signs appear:
  - Severe abdominal pain
  - Persistent vomiting
  - Signs of bleeding (e.g. red spots or patches on the skin, nose bleed, bleeding gums)
  - Vomiting blood
  - Black, tarry stools (feces, excrement)
  - Drowsiness or irritability
  - Pale, cold, or clammy skin
  - Difficulty breathing



## CAMPUS NEWS

# ON THE ROAD TO DISASTER READINESS

BY RAJESH KANDHAI

The UWI St. Augustine campus has partnered with the Disaster Unit of the Tunapuna Piarco Regional Corporation (TPRC) to develop its capabilities to respond to emergency and disaster type situations. The campus represents a sizeable and unique entity within the jurisdiction of the Corporation and the emergencies may not be similar in nature to other places in the country.

The TPRC delivered CERT training for 80 participants from various departments across the campus and members of The UWI Security Services. The CERT programme is one by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), US Department of Homeland Security, and it has been adopted locally by the ODPM and Disaster Units of the various Regional Corporations. This programme educates people about disaster preparedness for hazards that may affect their area and trains them in basic disaster response skills such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization and disaster medical operations. Using the training from the 5-day programme, CERT members can assist following an event when professional responders are not immediately available.

This training ended with an emergency response exercise on April 8, simulating smoke, explosions and injured persons in the Alma Jordan Library. CERT members were required to establish an Incident Command Team, manage the emergency and treat victims. All of this was carried out under the guidance of external agencies such as the Trinidad and Tobago Fire Service (Fire Prevention Officers, Search and Rescue Teams), the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (Canine Division and the St. Joseph and Tunapuna Police Stations), the Trinidad and Tobago Red Cross Society and the Disaster Unit of the TPRC.



Another wounded being taken for treatment.  
PHOTOS: ANEEL KARIM

The exercise tested the Campus' readiness to respond to emergency situations; the preparedness of internal emergency services such as the Division of Facilities Management, the Health Services Unit, the UWI Security Services; the response time of the CERT members; the availability of equipment to access the building and search for and rescue injured persons.

The exercise allowed us to understand where our strengths lie as well as identify opportunities for improvement.

*Rajesh Kandhai is Manager, Occupational Health, Safety and the Environment, UWI St. Augustine.*



Even the dogs were out as part of the drill at the St. Augustine campus.



No, they aren't about to toss Rajesh Kandhai over the top of the Alma Jordan Library; he was one of the 'injured' being rescued.

## NEW POSITIONS

**Three senior lecturers** at The UWI have been promoted to the rank of Professor based on their academic qualifications, research achievements and active involvement in the University community. They are Michael McFarlane, Yasodananda Kumar Areti and Rajendra Ramlogan.

Professor Michael McFarlane joined the University in 1986 and was awarded indefinite tenure in 2006. He was promoted to Senior Lecturer in 2007 and simultaneously held the post of Consultant Surgeon in the Department of Surgery, Radiology, Anaesthetics and Intensive Care at UWI's Mona Campus in Jamaica.

Before his Professorial appointment Yasodananda Kumar Areti was promoted to the post of Senior Lecturer in the Department of Anaesthesia and Intensive Care at UWI's Cave Hill Campus in Barbados in 2009.

Professor Rajendra Ramlogan has lectured in the Department of Management Studies at the St. Augustine Campus since 2001 when he joined the University. He was promoted to Senior Lecturer in 2005.

The UWI has also appointed Mrs Laleta Davis-Mattis as University Counsel and Head of the Legal Unit, succeeding Dr Beverley Pereira, who has retired. A Jamaican, Mrs Davis-Mattis first joined the academic staff at the UWI Mona Campus as an Adjunct Lecturer in 2002 in the Faculty of Pure and Applied Sciences and more recently, the Faculty of Law.



## RESEARCH

**How do you shut down a dump?** This was one of the questions coming from Stetson Malchan of the Guanapo Community and Environmental Development Organisation (G-CEDO) during a lively town-hall style meeting held in March between residents and members of a UWI-led project team at a community church.

The multi-disciplinary team, from the Faculties of Science and Technology, Engineering and Medical Sciences at UWI and the Caribbean Institute of Metrology and Hydrology (CIMH) along with partner institutions, the Solid Waste Management Company Limited of Trinidad and Tobago (SWMCOL) and the Water Resources Agency (WRA) came together to address issues expected to crop up as their project unfurls.

This project, funded by the Trinidad and Tobago Research and Development Impact Fund (RDI Fund), called “The impact of the contaminants produced by the Guanapo Landfill on the surrounding environment” has been set up to assess the extent of contamination from the Guanapo Landfill to the air, water and soil, as well as identify the potential impacts of this contamination to ecological and human receptors.

This was one of the first community activities and there was an excellent turnout by residents, and even Arima’s MP, Rodger Samuel, was there.

The programme began with greetings from UWI by Dr Denise Beckles, SWMCOL by Mr Rhyann Hanoomansingh, Communications Sales and Marketing General Manager and from WASA/WRA by Dr Sharda Maharaj, Consultant. Dr. Beckles outlined the project, highlighting goal and positive impacts to the community. This was followed by a few short presentations. Dr. Andy Ward of CIMH (Ground water hydrology and landfill modelling) described the structure of landfills and using an example of the type of model that would be developed, showed residents how the information would allow managers to predict the movement and concentration of pollutant chemicals from the landfill.

Dr. Monica Davis also made a short presentation on the likely public health effects of landfill emissions, and the methodology she would use to determine the severity of any health impacts on residents of the area. This was followed by a presentation from Mr. Stetson Malchan, of G-CEDO. Mr. Malchan gave some information about the water quality sampling that G-CEDO members are doing as part of the WRA’s “Adopt-a-River” programme.

Afterwards Dr. Beckles, Dr Ward and Ms Maria Allong, Quality Health and Safety Manager (SWMCOL) answered questions from the audience. Concerns included queries about the level of pollutants in the water, problems from both the landfill and the quarries in the area, information about how to shut down a landfill, where will the information from the study go and how will it be used. MP Samuel indicated his desire to close the landfill entirely.

Mr. Roger Belix said he had done tests at his own expense in 2010 and found mercury in the river water. He was concerned about the health impact from the landfill, and wanted to see the involvement of the Ministry of Health in this project. He also noted the presence of quarries upstream, and asked about the impact of this on the water. He was told that in her role as a public health specialist, Dr Davis would be assessing the likelihood of a serious public health impact, and what action should be taken. Quarrying would affect the rivers in the area, but in a different way from the landfill.



# What have we done to GUANAPO?

*Report on the launch of the RDI  
funded project on the Guanapo Landfill*

A suggestion was made that the study should include some indication of bioaccumulation of the chemicals in the organisms of the river, because people in the area consumed fish from the rivers. It was also suggested that a recycling cooperative be considered, so that the activities of the community who scavenge could be more controlled (similar to what obtained in the Beetham a short while ago), but SWMCOL said there were safety concerns relating to people being allowed on the landfill site.

The meeting was assured that all information would

be readily available to the public, as this was a requirement of the RDI fund. There would be a final symposium, where the data and conclusions would be presented, along with articles in the press and academic journals. Dr. Beckles also undertook to ensure that there would be literature that would be also accessible to the informed layperson. It was noted that the primary reason for the project was to obtain useful data, data that could be used to tell SWMCOL and WASA what would be the best action to mitigate problems at the dump.

*“A suggestion was made that the study should include some indication of bioaccumulation of the chemicals in the organisms of the river, because people in the area consumed fish from the rivers.”*



# PROTECT OUR CHILDREN

*Some ways you can take steps to make it safer*

BY LORITA JOSEPH

**UWI's Department of Behavioural Sciences** and the **Social Work Unit** hosted a workshop in February titled, **Understanding Child Sexual Abuse: Perspectives from the Caribbean, for early years, primary and secondary school teachers, school social workers and guidance officers.** This was one of a series of activities funded by the **British High Commission**. Eighteen schools from the St George East District were represented.

**Child Sexual Abuse (CSA)** is one of the most under reported criminal acts against children. It violates children's rights and perforates their sense of security and normalcy; a perforation further enlarged by the colluded silence of those who have the responsibility to protect them. Caribbean societies are not untouched by the scourge of CSA and while the subject remains largely taboo, our societies live with its effects daily. In their report on the study "Perceptions of, Attitudes to, and Opinions on Child Sexual Abuse in the Eastern Caribbean," Jones and Trotman Jemmott (2009) say that "child sexual abuse has not only multiple layers but increasingly severe consequences for Caribbean societies."

In Trinidad and Tobago, guidance officers and social workers within the education system regularly encounter instances of CSA. Mandated to report all instances of disclosure, and to do therapeutic interventions, it is a challenge to be proactive in relation to an issue that usually comes to them after the fact. But there are measures that can help; one is in the area of information sharing, that is, creating awareness and building knowledge among parents, teachers and students.

## Workshops or seminars for parents and teachers can focus on:

- What is CSA
- The warning signs of CSA
- Child Development and age-appropriate sexual behaviour
- Steps to take if CSA is suspected
- How to talk to children about CSA, about their bodies and saying NO
- How to create safe spaces
- How to build trusting relationships to facilitate dialogue with children
- How to respond to a child who has disclosed
- Steps to take when a child has disclosed
- How to support a child in the post-disclosure period
- Questions to ask if my child is going to camp or sleeping over at a friend's house
- How to protect my child from cyber predators

## Information sessions with students can focus on:

- What is CSA
- Understanding your body
- Appropriate and inappropriate touching
- Saying NO
- Speaking up
- Finding a trusted adult/person
- What are some of the signs you may see in a friend who is being sexually abused
- How to respond to a friend who tells you that they are being abused
- What to do if you are being abused
- Strategies to stay safe: At home; school; camp; playing sports; on the internet



- Websites that students can go to for information on CSA

Information sessions may also involve watching movies or videos on CSA, or reading stories and newspaper articles on CSA, followed by discussions on the stories presented. Students can also be engaged in developing a safety protocol for themselves for different contexts: at home, the mall, at a party, a friend's house. This is a good group/classroom activity.

## When talking to children remember to:

**Use concrete examples** – What if you are at a friend's house and her older brother asks you to play a game that makes you feel weird or uncomfortable or involves something like touching or taking off your clothes?

**Model healthy boundaries** – Help students to practice setting healthy boundaries. Model saying "no."

**Talk about touch** – Remember that sexual touch can be very confusing. In a strictly physical sense, sexual touch can feel good and for a victim of sexual abuse, this can create more shame and confusion about the situation.

**Explain about tricks** – Some people who sexually abuse children use tricks, bribes or threats to keep them from telling. The abusive person might promise gifts, they might tell the child that it is their fault or that no one will believe them, or that if the child tells anyone they will hurt their family or pet. Explain these tricks to students. Assure them that what the perpetrator is doing is wrong, even if a child did not object to the sexual interaction at the time.

**Highlight helpers** – Engage children in a deliberate discussion about who are the persons in their space that they may be able to go to for help.

**Be approachable** – By having conversations about healthy sexual boundaries and answering questions accurately and respectfully, you send the message that you are someone students can talk to even when something has already happened.

## Other proactive strategies can include:

- Engaging your school's administration in the creation of a CSA prevention policy for your school.
- Creating a community support outreach programme through the school's PTA.
- Networking with organizations working in the field of CSA to provide training at the community level for parents.
- Lobbying for specific professional training in the area of working with CSA victims

Child victims of sexual abuse often suffer in silence, trying coping strategies that may result in more harm and can often go through life struggling with issues of intimacy and trust. As helping professionals, approaching CSA in a proactive way empowers children, gives them a voice and a say in their own safety and protection and forces those who have responsibility for them to be accountable for their care, protection and maintenance of their rights.

This paper was presented by Lorita Joseph, a Guidance Officer with the Ministry of Education who is currently pursuing a PhD in Social Work at UWI, St. Augustine. Her research focus has been in the area of children and trauma, looking at children's responses to natural disasters and more recently, children's responses to the loss of family members through homicide.

**THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION** defines Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) as, "the involvement of a child in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend, is unable to give informed consent to, or for which the child is not developmentally prepared and cannot give consent, or that violate the laws or social taboos of society. Child sexual abuse is evidenced by this activity between a child and an adult, or between a child and another child who by age or development is in a relationship of responsibility, trust or power, the activity being intended to gratify or satisfy the needs of the other person. This may include but is not limited to, the inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity; the exploitative use of [a] child in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices, and the exploitative use of children in pornographic performances and materials."

(pp. 15-16, Report of the Consultation on Child Abuse Prevention, Geneva, 29-31 March 1999, World Health Organization, Social Change and Mental Health, Violence and Injury Prevention)



## ■ CAMPUS NEWS

# What's the Matter with the World?

BY PROFESSOR SURENDRA ARJOON

The prevalent moral climate of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is characterized by our inability to distinguish between right and wrong; truth becomes a matter of taste, morality is about individual preferences or about obeying rules, everything (including truth) is negotiable; that's why it is sometimes asserted that politics has its own morality (though it's more accurate to say that politicians have their own morality).

These views are reflected in the US Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy's notorious mystery passage: "At the heart of liberty is the right to define one's own concept of existence, of meaning of the universe and of the mystery of the human life." In other words, what is good for us is up to us!

History repeats itself as this reflects the recurrence of Plato's and Socrates' denunciation of the relativism of the Sophists' maxim "man is a measure of all things" (Protagoras) – the Sophists were the academics of that period. We have therefore become a society of *philodoxers* (lovers of opinions) rather than *philosophers* (lovers of wisdom). Opinion has replaced truth!

The study of philosophy, according to Thomas Aquinas (not our President!), is not for the sake of knowing the opinions of people, but for the sake of knowing the truth of things; which forms the mission of the University: to discover and disseminate truth and put it at the service of society. The idea of the *University* is derived from universal knowledge or universal truth, so it is therefore more accurate today to call universities 'multiversities' or 'relativities' as the notion of truth becomes a matter of opinion or relativized – some believe that their research can create new truths as opposed to gaining insights into an objective moral order.

C.S. Lewis points out that people appeal to some standard of behaviour when quarrelling: *how'd you like it if anyone did the same to you; that's my seat, I was here first; leave him alone, he isn't doing you any harm; give me a bit of orange, I gave you a bit of mine; come on, you promised.*

Society has lost its moral language and its ability for rational deliberation and so is incapable of arriving at a consensus on moral issues (capital punishment, abortion, same-sex union, same-sex marriage, cloning, contraception, euthanasia, *in vitro* fertilization, and so on). It often prescribes incompatible solutions that promote a culture of relativism and subjectivism (that is, one cannot impose moral demands on others) which leads to the denial that moral judgments can be true or false but are simply expressions of preferences. In other words, it presupposes the use of freedom in which one does what one wants based on what one finds pleasing, convenient, expedient, politically-correct or useful. Autonomy has replaced authority!

The final outcome spawned human-centred ideologies and political movements into all aspects of today's culture, culminating in a practical militant atheistic materialist secularism in which, according to Voltaire, it was originally believed that *God created man in his own image and likeness*, and now man has proceeded to return the favour: he wants



Surendra Arjoon, Professor of Business and Professional Ethics at UWI's Department of Management Studies

PHOTO: ANEEL KARIM

to determine when life begins (*in vitro* fertilization and cloning) and when life ends (abortion and euthanasia). Man has replaced God!

## Modern Social Sciences: Dangerous and Misguided?

Leon Kass (University of Chicago) and Harvey Mansfield (Harvard University) observed that the social and behavioural sciences have a long history of being shaped and driven by political ideologies. For example, they cited that at one time psychiatrists almost universally considered homosexuality as a mental disorder based on scientific evidence as was classified in the "Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders" (DSM). After a sustained political campaign, the American Psychiatric Association voted in 1973 (majority vote of 58%) to remove homosexuality from the DSM, not because of new scientific findings, but in response to external political pressure and political manoeuvring within the Association. Politics has replaced science!

Kass and Mansfield further noted that the political climate has strongly influenced much of the existing research on many other issues such as same-sex marriage. Norval Glenn of the University of Texas wrote: "Given the widespread support among social and behavioural scientists, it is becoming politically incorrect in academic circles even to suggest that arguments being used in support of same-sex marriage might be wrong." Apart from measurement limitations, one needs a large amount of data to come to any meaningful scientific conclusion. The data simply does not exist. Science has replaced common sense!

## Beyond our Competence: A Moral Cliff

It is interesting to note that the moral dimensions of issues such as same-sex marriage, *in vitro* fertilization, abortion, and the death penalty have been largely ignored. Those who argue in favour of legalizing abortion because of unsafe practices have missed the point. There is no right way of doing the wrong thing! Empirical social sciences cannot lay claim to be a normative for human behaviour, but remain descriptive, indicative and conjectural. For example, if a longitudinal survey finds that a majority of women are taking contraceptives, one ought not to conclude that this is a trend so it must be morally permissible. This reflects a scientific and metaphysical blunder as the conclusion falls under the field of moral philosophy and beyond the competence of the social sciences. The moral blindness and legalization of actions based on subjective preferences while ignoring an objective moral order would be disastrous and plunge society over a moral cliff. Advocacy has replaced morality!

## The Ethical Challenge

The ethical environment is characterized by human-centred ideologies propagated by analytical intellectuals who indoctrinate the masses with their gnostic enlightenment. What is required is a sincere search for truth which is the aim of all intellectual efforts in order to address the ultimate questions on the meaning of life and happiness based on a philosophy transcending what is time-bound to what is eternally-valid and permanent. In the words of philosopher Joseph de Torre, *unless wiser people are forthcoming, the future of the world stands in peril!*

*"Society has lost its moral language and its ability for rational deliberation and so is incapable of arriving at a consensus on moral issues"*

Surendra Arjoon, Professor of Business and Professional Ethics at UWI's Department of Management Studies, has summarized the text of his Professorial Inaugural Lecture, held in March, titled: *What went wrong with the World? The Ethical Challenge for Business in the 21st Century.*



## ■ LITERATURE



# Learning the Ropes

*Gala brings Lit Week to a close*

BY SERAH ACHAM

The monologue was performed by world-famous Trinidadian actor, Errol Sitahal, looking quite different from the Gayelle years.

Each year UWI celebrates Caribbean literature with its Campus Literature Week, hosted by the Faculty of Humanities and Education (FHE), through its Department of Literary, Cultural and Communication Studies. All writers in Trinidad, whether new to the game or old hands, are invited to share their work with anyone who'd like to listen. For four days during the week, the Alma Jordan Library opens its doors to members of the bookish public who flock in for these lunchtime readings. This year, from March 18<sup>th</sup>–21<sup>st</sup>, the Campus was host to popular names in Caribbean literature, like Monique Roffey, Gerard Besson and Lisa Allen Agostini. We also heard from new writers, many of them members of UWI's MFA Creative Writing programme, as well as budding poets. The week ended, on Friday March 22<sup>nd</sup>, with a Gala Reading featuring UWI's Writer-in-Residence, award-winning author of several novels and short story collections – Rabindranath Maharaj.

The evening began with opening addresses, which included remarks by the FHE's Dean, Professor Funso Aiyejina, who emphasised the need to recognise and appreciate Caribbean literature, particularly the talents of its creators, and, more so, "the need to nurture creators of literature" lest our stock run out. One day after the death of Chinua Achebe, one of most important figures in African literature, this message was even more powerful – who will tell the world of the Caribbean, of our history, our present, our future, when the Naipauls, Lovelaces, Seniors and Lammings are no longer of this earth? Who will write of the Caribbean experience then? Thus began Campus Literature Week in 1999, said Prof Aiyejina.

Fourteen years later, the celebration continues. This

year's gala showed that literature isn't just about books. Maharaj stepped up to the stage to deliver his reading, the audience was treated to an entertaining monologue from a film he is currently writing. Still to be titled, it is set in Trinidad and tells the story of a man who opens his home and heart to a little Canadian boy he found stranded at the seaside. The monologue was performed by world-famous Trinidadian actor, Errol Sitahal, who had the audience captivated throughout the entire performance.

It was then time for Robin's reading and the mark of a truly loved book was clear when a few audience members cracked open their own copies of *The Amazing Absorbing Boy* so that they could follow along with him. For the next half-hour or so, the audience found itself following 17-year-old Sam through Canada as he struggled to find a life for himself there. By the time Sam knew the ropes, the audience was in fits of laughter as he tried to explain the Canadian customs to his Uncle Boysie, who was visiting from Mayaro – although the woman behind the counter at the coffee shop called him "hon" as she handed him their drinks, it's not something that you'd call another man, for example.

The question and answer session was just as lively, with audience members trying to soak up as much of Maharaj's knowledge and experience as possible. He told of how he ended up in Canada and became the world-renowned writer he is today, his inspiration for *The Amazing Absorbing Boy* and his writing routine, with many techniques and tips thrown in for anyone who wished to grab them up.

Though there seemed to be more questions than there was time for, no one was left in the cold as the conversation continued at the cocktail reception which followed.



Rabindranath Maharaj reading from the *The Amazing Absorbing Boy*. PHOTOS: ANEEL KARIM



## ■ CAMPUS NEWS

# 25 YEARS IS NOTHING MINOR

## Portuguese and Brazilian Studies Growing More Popular

BY DR JO-ANNE S. FERREIRA

**Brazil has captured** the imagination of UWI students, largely because of its fame in football, music and Carnival. Interest in the Portuguese language is growing, with both students of the Faculty of Humanities and Education (FHE) and students and members of the public at the Centre for Language Learning (CLL) clamouring for courses that would help them to go to Brazil and Portugal as tourists, study or do trade in Brazil, or reconnect to Portuguese roots.

The Faculty has hosted a Brazilian Film Week, and Brazilian films are featured in the annual Foreign Language Film Festival. UWI, St Augustine will next visit Brazil as part of its BRICS country tours, and so Brazil continues to play an important part in campus life. The new Minor in Brazilian Studies (*see sidebar*) complements the Major in Latin American Studies and other Majors.

The programme stands to benefit from a new staff and student exchange agreement between UWI and the Universidade do Porto (UPorto), one of Portugal's most prestigious teaching and research institutions. The UWI has joined the University of Porto in a partnership with the European Commission that funds postgraduate studies in countries such as Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Spain and Sweden.

The Mundus ACP II project is managed by UPorto. Prof Fátima Marinho, Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities at UPorto, came during the first week of Semester II, 2012-2013 to develop links, particularly with the Department of Modern Languages and Linguistics (DMLL), and the Department of History. She gave two guest lectures on the Portuguese historical novel of the 19th and 20th centuries, and visited the Alma Jordan Library's Portuguese and Brazilian Studies Display.

The future of Portuguese and Brazilian Studies at The UWI is bright, with great international scope and prospects and its value today has to be credited to the foresight of Dr Lancelot Cowie, currently Director of the Centre for Latin America and the Caribbean (CENLAC). In 1987, when the Luso-Brazilian Studies language and culture programme started at St Augustine (the first UWI campus to introduce Portuguese language studies, and its own society and magazine), Dr Cowie was the visionary behind it, and the key figure in forging significant links with the Universidade de Brasília (UnB), located in Brazil's capital.

Working with former Heads of Department, Dr Ena Thomas and Prof Barbara Lalla, Dr Cowie saw the need to develop links with more Latin American universities. Then PVC Principal G.M. Richards held discussions with Brazilian and Argentine envoys, focusing on collaboration in methodology, materials and curriculum development in the teaching of Portuguese, Spanish and English as foreign languages, and on joint research in the areas of wood technology, fibre optics, fuel alcohol, biotechnology and computer software development.

The Portuguese language programme started with support from the Embassy of Brazil in Port of Spain, which lent St Augustine the first teachers: Sonia Regina Reis da Costa, and later attaché Prof Yeda Pessoa de Castro, a Brazilian specialist in African languages trained at the National University of Zaire. The Embassy of Brazil continues its support with prizes for outstanding academic performance, donations of books and films, and cultural



Trinis who have studied and worked in Brazil, from left: Christobel Maynard, Brent Joel, Vinola Griffith, Lesley-Ann Noel and Jo-Anne Ferreira.

events and receptions hosted at the Embassy.

Portuguese is a heritage language that has been spoken in the Caribbean and Guyana for over 175 years by Madeirans and their descendants (whose history has been documented in two PhD theses in the Faculty of Humanities), and others. In Trinidad, informal classes actually started at the Associação Portuguesa Primeiro de Dezembro on Richmond Street in 1905, and in the 1980s, the NIHERST School of Languages was probably the first since to teach Portuguese formally.

Of the 16 teachers since 1987, 14 have been Brazilians, and UnB has been the main source. These include Elias Jorge Rodrigues Siqueira Nunes (now deceased), Angélica Costa Maha, Prof Maria Jandyrá Cavalcanti Cunha, Helber Vieira and Miriam Kurcbaum Futer, current instructor. Since the Portuguese teachers have either been temporary or part-time, the programme has been supported by a cadre of examiners from Education, French, Linguistics and Spanish.

Prof Cunha came in 2004 to renew the language programme, and her students participated in the Inter-Campus Foreign Language Theatre Festival for the first time. Cunha also published research into Trinidad's Brazilian community.

In 1999, the CLL started delivering Portuguese language courses to the University community and wider public (not for credit), and now has five part-time instructors, including three Trinbagonians.

Students majoring in Latin American Studies, Spanish and Linguistics have been among those reading Portuguese language courses, with total numbers over the last 25 years reaching 450.

Four students of the first UWI class of seven went on an exchange to UnB, which was reciprocated with four UnB students, two of whom stayed on as teachers (Mr Nunes and Ms Costa Maha). Students of Portuguese have visited the states of Roraima and Pará in Brazil, and students of other departments, including DCFA, have also gone to Brazil.

Six former UWI students have gone on to study at various institutions in Brazil with Dr Rachael Radhay completing her Master's and PhD at UnB, and others completing their BAs in Spanish and Portuguese, translation and other fields at a number of other institutions.

Several other Trinbagonians have gone to Brazil to

pursue their studies in areas such as dentistry, medicine, architecture and geophysics, or on cultural exchange trips through other universities, and to a number of conferences. The UWI has links with a number of other Brazilian universities, and plans to develop these and others.

St Augustine currently offers Portuguese and Brazilian Studies in the DMLL with two full-time teachers, Miriam Futer, instructor and Eliete Sampaio Farneda, visiting lecturer, both from Brazil.

One former teacher is the current coordinator of Visual Arts at the DCFA, Lesley-Ann Noel, who obtained her BSc in Industrial Design from the Universidade Federal do Paraná and a postgraduate diploma in furniture design from the Universidade Norte do Paraná. The current programme coordinators (Dr Anne-Marie Pouchet and the author) both did postgraduate work in Portuguese, the former at the Ohio State University, the latter at the Museu Nacional, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro.

Find out more at

<http://sta.uwi.edu/fhe/dmll/Portuguese.asp>

### ■ The Minor in Brazilian Studies

The Minor in Brazilian Studies, launched in November 2012, is the brainchild of Ms Miriam Kurcbaum Futer, and the product of a dedicated team, in particular Mr Helber Vieira, the first Visiting Lecturer from the Government of Brazil, and Dr Nicole Roberts (current Head, DMLL), who together developed the courses, with Dr Anne-Marie Pouchet and Ms Futer completing the project. The team included Eric Maitrejean, Dr Maarit Forde, Prof Valerie Youssef (then Head of Liberal Arts), and the current coordinator. Cave Hill has a similar programme and Mona has offered Portuguese language courses. The first new course, PORT 1003 Introduction to Brazilian Culture, has met with rave reviews from students, all keen to know Brazil better. The other new courses focus on society and culture, Portuguese for business and Brazilian literature, and begin in 2013-2014. A BA in Portuguese Studies is in preparation.



# UWI CALENDAR of EVENTS

## APRIL – JULY 2013

### NOT BUSINESS AS USUAL

May 2 – 3  
UWI St. Augustine campus

The Department of Management Studies, in collaboration with the Caribbean Centre for Money and Finance (CCMF), Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago and the Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies (SALISES) hosts the 5th Biennial International Business, Banking & Finance Conference themed “Re-engineering growth: Doing business in the new global environment.” This year’s conference serves as a forum for the exchange of ideas on critical business, banking and financial issues currently facing the Caribbean region.

INTERNATIONAL  
*Business,  
Banking  
&  
Finance*  
CONFERENCE

For more information, please contact the BBF5 Conference Secretariat at 465-0433, or via e-mail at [bbf5@sta.uwi.edu](mailto:bbf5@sta.uwi.edu)

### MISS MILES

May 17 – 19  
Learning Resource Centre  
UWI St. Augustine

Miss Miles – woman of the world, written by Tony Hall, is a powerful vehicle to engage young Trinidad & Tobago in the fight against corruption. The Gene Miles character created by Cecilia Salazar portrays the values of courage, patriotism, honesty and integrity. On Friday, May 17, at 11 am there will be a special secondary schools’ performance sponsored by Republic Bank and on Saturday May 18, the show will be at 8pm while on Sunday, May 19, it begins at 6pm.

Cost: UWI Students: \$75 with Student ID; \$100 for other persons.

For further information, please contact Transparency, [anika@transparency.org](mailto:anika@transparency.org), or 626-5756, or Trevor Jadunath, [littlecarob@gmail.com](mailto:littlecarob@gmail.com), 463-5059.

### SPORTS TALK

June 26 – 28  
Institute of Critical Thinking,  
UWI St. Augustine campus

The UWI Sport and Physical Education Centre (SPEC), in collaboration with First Citizens Sports Foundation host their first sports conference entitled “Science, Higher Education, Business: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Sport Studies, Research and Development.”

General Pre-registration \$400  
On-the-day: \$450  
Student Pre-registration: \$100  
On-the-day: \$125  
Registration Day Rate: \$150

For more information or to register, please e-mail [specinfo@sta.uwi.edu](mailto:specinfo@sta.uwi.edu)

### GROWING SECURITY

June 30 – July 6  
Hyatt Regency  
Port of Spain

The 30th West Indies Agricultural Economics Conference, themed “Agribusiness Essential for Food Security: Empowering Youth and Enhancing Quality Products” will be held jointly by the Caribbean Agro-Economic Society, the Caribbean Food Crops Society (CFCS) and the International Society for Horticultural Science (ISHS).

For more information, please contact Hazel Patterson Andrews at 662-2002 ext. 82445/82308 or via e-mail at [info@caestt.com](mailto:info@caestt.com) or [caesconference@gmail.com](mailto:caesconference@gmail.com)

## UWI TODAY WANTS TO HEAR FROM YOU

UWI TODAY welcomes submissions by staff and students for publication in the paper. Please send your suggestions, comments, or articles for consideration to [uwitoday@sta.uwi.edu](mailto:uwitoday@sta.uwi.edu)



### GOLFAID 2013

June 9  
Millennium Lakes  
Golf and Country Club,  
Trinity

The Faculty of Medical Sciences is hosting this fund-raiser, which is meant to support various organisations, such as the UWI Student Support Fund, Autistic Society of T&T and Persons Associated with Visual Impairment (PAVI). The cost is TT\$3,500 per team, inclusive of dinner and drinks at the prize-giving ceremony.

For further information, please contact the Secretariat at the Faculty of Medical Sciences: 645-2640 ext. 5025, 5009; Millennium Lakes; 640-8337; or Richard Lara: 681-9864.



### START ME UP

May 22 – 24  
JFK Auditorium  
UWI St. Augustine campus

The Faculty of Engineering at UWI, St Augustine in collaboration with the Engineering Students Society host the first Startup Weekend Trinidad. The event provides hands-on experience through real-time entrepreneurial activity to software developers, designers, marketers, product managers and startup enthusiasts and aims to initiate aspiring entrepreneurs in the use and practice of lean methodologies when starting their businesses.

For further information, please contact Abeni McDonald at 662-2002 ext. 82603, e-mail [info.swtrinidad@gmail.com](mailto:info.swtrinidad@gmail.com), visit <http://trinidad.startupweekend.org/> or <http://www.swtrinidad.eventbrite.com>. You can also visit their Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/StartupWeekendTrinidadTobago>.