



## Time for a SEA CHANGE

A green sea turtle in rich and shimmering hues is captured in this painting by UWI's Department of Creative and Festival Arts (DCFA) Visual Arts student Shonari Richardson. The piece is one of several student works collected in a virtual exhibition/catalogue for World Oceans Day 2020, celebrated on June 8. The collection is a collaboration between the DCFA and the Department of Life Sciences within the Faculty of Science and Technology.

The green turtle is one of three species of sea turtle that nest on the beaches of Trinidad and Tobago. All are endangered. For many years, conservationists have warned us about the dangers of our impact on our oceans. The goal of World Ocean Day is to rally people from around the world to protect "30 per cent of the Earth's land and oceans by the year 2030". World Ocean Day is about coming together, taking action and doing things differently for the benefit of our planet.

Oceans are crucial for our survival. Will we collectively recognise the risk in their degradation? Can we change? Or will the old forces of conformity, complacency and the need for acceptance over advancement keep us trapped on an outdated, perilous course? These are questions we need to ask not just for our environment. They are just as pertinent for our economies, institutions, criminal justice systems, social safety nets, and our education systems.

As the Caribbean's university, UWI has a vital role to play in transforming society to match the times. One of the tasks is self-transformation, changing the institution to better serve its students and our region. Like the ambitious plan to protect our oceans, it requires us to work together, take action and do things differently.

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See what it's like to **#BeUWI**



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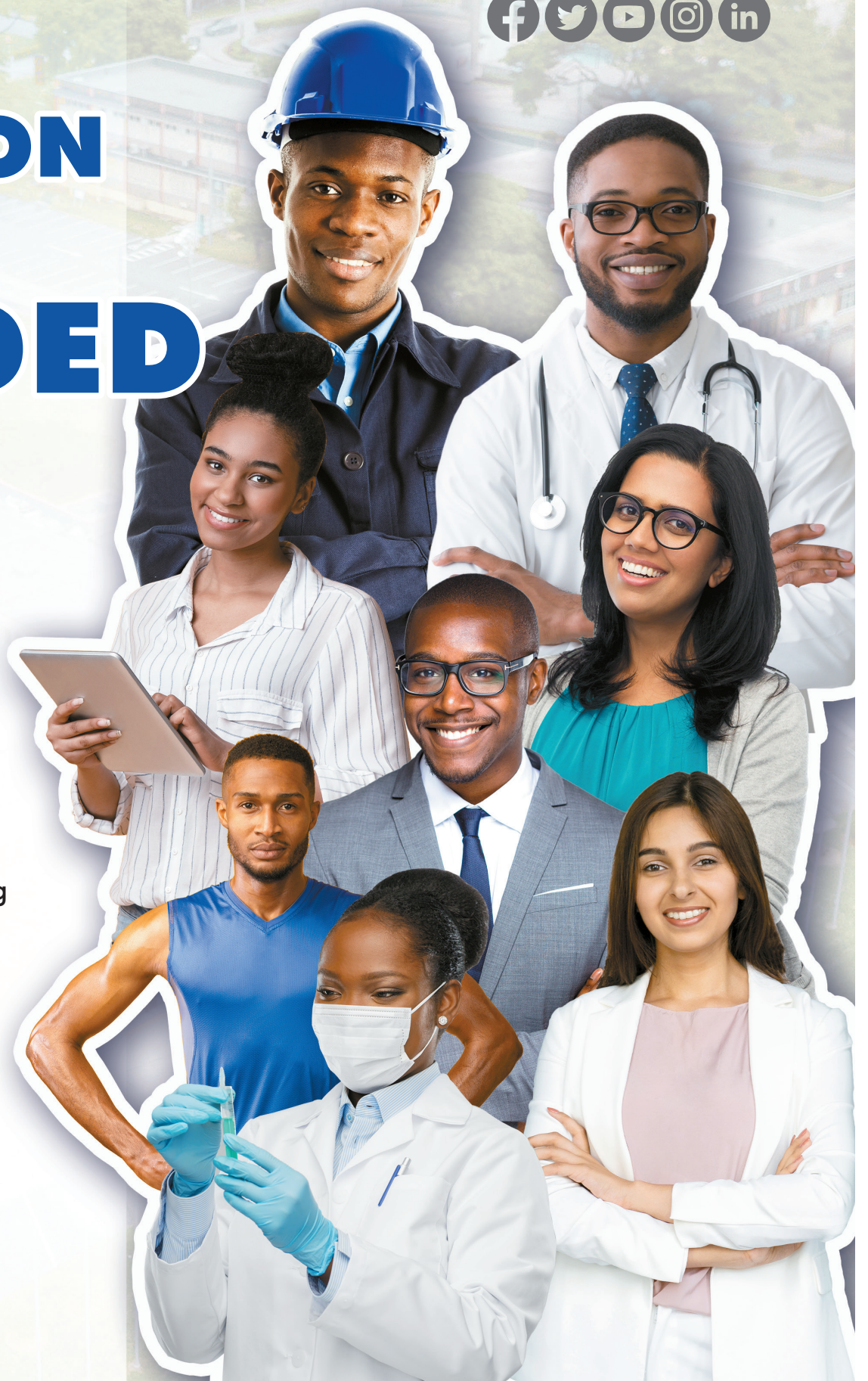
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## FROM THE PRINCIPAL

# The changes we have made

**“We are now faced with the fact that tomorrow is today,”** Martin Luther King Jr said in his famous speech at the Riverside Church in New York City in 1967. He was speaking at a time of great social and political upheaval in the United States. We are in a similar time, grappling with similar questions, but also new ones. As an institution, UWI has had to adapt to this new world very quickly.

COVID-19 has brought the future to our doorstep. The rapid transition The UWI has made in delivery of online classes and remote work, speaks to a level of agility that is in keeping with our Triple A Strategic Plan. I can also speak of the work groups at the St Augustine and other campuses that are currently ensuring operations and efficiency are maintained at any cost, despite the distance we have been forced to maintain. In terms of online assessments and assistance for students, we continue to provide communiqués that will guide them through new processes, as well as key resources such as our Regulations Guide for Assessments Done in Virtual Mode.

Of course none of these changes could be possible without the support of UWI St Augustine’s staff. They ramped up their online delivery training to facilitate a jump from a 34 per cent course delivery to over 94 per cent within a very short period of time. Our students have had to be patient with us through this change and we have been very grateful for their understanding of our efforts.

We are well aware that the pandemic still poses a real threat to all, and as such we have placed top priority on the safety of our students and staff. For our students, we’ll be offering teaching in what we refer to as a “hybrid mode”. This means that the programmes that can be delivered online will be sustained virtually, while the courses or modules that cannot, will be delivered in adherence to the safety guidelines put in place by the Government.

For those that need to attend laboratories for instance, we will ensure students are properly spaced, the laboratories are cleaned after use and so forth. The same will apply to our staff. Hand washing stations, as well as sanitisers, will be very present at our campus, and masks are to be worn at all times. Provisions will also be made for those students who lack the means to access learning resources while off campus. This includes the loaning of tablets or PCs and limited reserved seating in on-site delivery.

Even though this crisis has had negative effects on this institution and higher education in general, it has served as a catalyst for a much talked about digital transformation and its potential for realising efficiencies in our various primary and secondary business processes. This is long overdue, but, happily, we have already been developing strategies for this transformation.

COVID-19 has opened up this opportunity by catalysing UWI’s digital transformation. Apart from



*COVID-19 has brought the future to our doorstep. I can say that the rapid transition The UWI has made in delivery of online classes and remote work, speaks to a level of agility that is in keeping with our Triple A Strategic Plan.*

service delivery to our campus community, it is key to achieving our goal of expanding into the global education market. To meet this new challenge, we will need to upgrade our ICT facilities to provide the level of reliability and speed that the international market expects. Further, ensuring quality delivery to this expanded market necessitates more than technology, but also appropriately crafted and pedagogically sound modules specifically designed for online delivery. These modules must be complemented by strong and effective academic and administrative support systems.

Indeed, if done well, online or blended teaching can be more effective than the traditional face-to-face method. The best example I have seen is where lectures are delivered in an asynchronous way by the educator posting a prerecorded lecture online which the student can access at almost any

time, and as often as they like. Students can replay sections to view material as needed. This would be almost impossible in a typical classroom setting. Scheduled sessions, whether online or face-to-face, are reserved for class discussions on the lecture topic. This is clearly a much richer engagement than what would have obtained in the “old days” and the studies I have seen demonstrate that this technique has resulted in a definite improvement in class performance.

Undoubtedly, there is a need for our local education system to better utilise the technology. COVID-19 has forced institutions out of their comfort zones and made us reconsider the way in which we interact with our students. In mid-February, I was informed that the Chinese government directed approximately a quarter of a billion full-time students to resume their studies through online platforms, while another university placed more than 5,000 courses online in just two weeks. I think what is happening globally is an example of what must happen in our region in relatively short order.

As a precursor to this COVID-induced, region-wide digital transformation, we must seize the opportunity to rethink and re-engineer our entire national education systems. It would be a pity if we lost the opportunity to engage in this long overdue overhaul of what are essentially variations of systems that were designed for another purpose. This, however, is a discussion for another issue.

*Brian Copeland*

**PROFESSOR BRIAN COPELAND**

*Campus Principal*

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## ■ OUR PEOPLE

Nicole Taylor says she first came to Trinidad “to work on my English”. But it was the teaching of her native tongue over three decades that has won the French language instructor at UWI St Augustine’s Centre for Language Learning (CLL) international recognition.

Taylor was awarded the *Ordre des Palmes Académiques* (French for “Order of Academic Palms”), a prestigious French national award, similar to a knighthood, for distinguished academic service in propagating the language and culture of France.

When French Ambassador to Trinidad and Tobago Serge Lavroff was first petitioned to nominate Taylor for the award, he had to ask who she was. Having arrived in T&T in 2018, he had no way of knowing the impact that this down-to-earth educator has had within the French-learning community since the early 1970s.

It was Dr Beverly-Anne Carter, Director of CLL, who nominated Taylor to be recognised for her efforts, having worked closely with her for many years.

“It wasn’t a heavy CV,” Carter said. “She is not an academic researcher with a lot of publications.”

But when Lavroff asked his staff to tell him about “Madame Taylor”, they couldn’t say enough about her, characterising her as a warm and dedicated teacher who goes above and beyond to touch the lives of her students and the French-speaking community.

“By the time the staff had finished singing her praises,” Carter said, “there was no doubt in his mind that she was a deserving candidate.”

Born in Martinique, Taylor is a native French speaker. She learned French Creole/*Kweyol* as well, though she says, “you would never dare to speak it at home to your parents”. It was a language of “the street”, to be spoken as slang “with your friends at school”. But although she never studied it, she is fluent.

For this reason, to this day, she advises her students that the best way to achieve fluency in a language is immersion.

“I make sure, I tell them, as soon as you enter the car park at the CLL, all English is gone. Make an effort to speak French only. We only have four hours a week. It’s not sufficient. But we have to make the most of it.”

She has certainly made the most of her time on this island, arriving shortly after completing the equivalent of A’ Levels in Martinique.

She describes herself as “a very outgoing, extroverted person. I like to be around people” — a trait that has served her well in her career.

“When I first came, I didn’t know anybody.” She would go to the *Alliance Française*, a French international language, arts and culture organisation, where she soon started giving conversation classes.

“I had no experience at all, but I used to discuss things and talk to the students. I was there almost every day.”

Participating in events at *Alliance*, as well as at the French Embassy, she became part of the community. It was not long before a friend, a teacher at St Augustine Girls’ High School, asked her to come in to assist students with their conversation practice.

She taught conversation classes at the secondary level at several other schools, including Bishop Anstey High School, St George’s College, Holy Name Convent, and St Joseph’s Convent, Port of Spain.

Her very first teaching assignment at UWI was not in language, but International Relations, where she “helped students to understand written articles, not so much to speak — it was more of a reading course”.

Taylor has also taught French at COSTAATT’s School of Language, where she met “another public, a lot of government employees, a lot of public servants, and medical practitioners”.

She has even helped students at the Trinidad and Tobago Hospitality and Tourism Institute to learn the language for culinary purposes, as well as for hospitality.



PHOTO: WAZI CONCEPTS

# Language, Culture and Heart

BY GILLIAN MOORE

## CLL’s Nicole Taylor is awarded the prestigious *Ordre des Palmes Académiques* for her dynamic teaching career

She recalls her early days teaching French: “I was in my 20s, some of my students were almost the same age. I saw them as my peers, and they saw me also as somebody they could relate to. We spoke a lot and I participated in their social activities.”

She even invited them to her home. “I would cook and prepare some French dishes”.

She left UWI but returned to join the CLL in 1999, where Dr Carter says she has brought “warmth and generosity to her interactions with students”.

“I admire her. She is empathetic, warm and patient. All her students love her,” says Carter, adding, “She is a very strong teacher who goes beyond. She’s student-focused, student-centred. At each end-of-year concert, you can bet your life there will be at least one item in French, she always encourages her students to participate.”

Dr Carter continues, “every three years at our open house, she would volunteer to make crêpes and be very involved. Even with the move to remote learning, where people aren’t used to learning online and find it is more demanding cognitively, we said we would reduce the length of sessions. But Nicole’s classes went over time. All her students wanted to continue the conversation.”

Taylor, she says, has tutored and trained countless scholarship winners:

“Over a 30-plus year career, she has maintained that kind of role as an anchor, an important person in French on campus.”

Taylor was Acting Coordinator of the CLL in 2016. But as of last year, she has retired.

“I will miss them,” she says of her students, but does not dwell on any sadness. Instead, she says, “I am a very active person. I like to read and I like art.”

And having studied for translation and interpreting, she knows she can stay busy doing translation work for organisations she has worked for in the past, such as CARIFORUM, Rotary Club International and the Trinidad and Tobago Football Association.

Carter says she “felt that coming to the formal end of her career, we needed to recognise and acknowledge her contribution, and say a very public ‘thank you’. That’s why I thought of nominating her.”

Because of COVID-19’s restrictions, the French Embassy has had to postpone the award-giving ceremony. Ambassador Lavroff has promised to do the formal affair once conditions allow.

Receiving the honour came as a complete surprise, Taylor recalls. Even though CLL had been notified, it remained a “well-guarded secret”.

“One day I was checking my email and I saw the subject line ‘*Palmes Académiques*’. I saw it was the Ambassador writing, congratulating me and telling me I had been granted the knighthood. I was so shocked it took me almost a week to tell my son.”

Taylor is the mother of actor-director-producer Paul Robert Pryce, who is pursuing a career in New York, having attained an MFA from Yale University.

She is sure to have earned, along with her *Ordre des Palmes*, an enduring place in the hearts of hundreds of French students.



## ■ OUR CAMPUS

# Virtual Open Days give prospective students a portal to campus programmes, life

BY JOEL HENRY

The 2020/2021 academic year is approaching and many prospective students are contemplating what university to attend, or, in some cases, if to invest in their tertiary education at all. COVID-19 has had a major impact on educational institutions worldwide - how they operate, deliver services, and attract new students. Seeking to better communicate with potential students, parents and guardians, UWI St Augustine held its second annual round of Virtual Open Days from June 22 to July 6, to provide an online, open house experience of the campus, its programmes and personnel.

"A Virtual Open Day provides an opportunity for prospective students and their parents to learn more about the university application process, programmes of study, student life, student support services," says Shanelle Glasgow, Team Lead of Projects and Events within the Marketing and Communications Office.

Glasgow adds, "It has great reach. Anyone from anywhere in the world can participate once they have an internet connection. It is especially useful for prospective students as they also get the chance to have questions answered in real-time."

The UWI Virtual Open Days were first held in 2019. This year, there were 10 open days - Undergraduate Admissions, Postgraduate Admissions and sessions for the Campus' eight faculties.

"[The open days] received a fair amount of interest," says Glasgow. "We had people logged on from islands throughout the region, the US and even the UK. The benefit of these virtual events is that the sessions are recorded and uploaded to YouTube. So that even after the live event, within a matter of days each session had hundreds of views. We had in one instance over 500 prospective students registered for a session."

This year's Virtual Open Days were particularly important as UWI, like most other universities, is forced to contend with the fallout from COVID-19. Glasgow says, "Universities and institutions of higher learning across the world are looking at ways to survive the pandemic" and people, including prospective students and their guardians, "are interested but trying to navigate tough financial times with job losses and high levels of job insecurity".

However, there is a bright side for universities as the need to adapt spurs them to make better use of processes and technology for online learning and student recruitment. In any case, despite the post pandemic environment, education will continue to give graduates not only a competitive advantage in the job market, but also a greater opportunity to contribute to the repair of society after the damage of COVID-19.

Campus Principal Professor Brian Copeland told attendees to the undergraduate open day just this. "[At UWI] you will begin the process of applying new knowledge to world problems," he said, "at a time when the need for the voices of the Caribbean has never been greater."

The Virtual Open Days can be viewed at the UWI St Augustine YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/uwistaugustine>.



A Virtual Open Day flyer.

*Universities and institutions of higher learning across the world are looking at ways to survive the pandemic*



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## ■ EDUCATION

**Coastal erosion, the loss of land in coastal areas** caused by the force of waves, tides and currents, has been eating up land, displacing communities and in some cases washing away whole towns over the long stretch of human history. For island states, disappearing coastlines can have a profound impact on work, habitation and even culture. The need to measure and mitigate the effects of coastal erosion are the driving force behind the Carib-Coast project.

Carib-Coast is an international initiative that focuses on coastal risks linked to climate change in the Caribbean. Dr Deborah Villarroel-Lamb, Lecturer in Coastal Engineering and Management at UWI St Augustine's Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, is one of the local researchers on the project.

"Carib-Coast is vital to Trinidad and Tobago," says Villarroel-Lamb, "like many islands in the Caribbean, because we suffer from the same climate change risks. This project will be of benefit to our islands and we can share our information through UWI."

The study, officially launched in January 2019, is managed by the *Bureau de Recherches Géologiques et Minières (BRGM)*, a French geological institution which seeks to mitigate the effects of climate change.

BRGM's Yann Balouin says the project stemmed "from the observation that almost all the islands of the Caribbean are subject to major natural risks, so there is a need for establishing networks of experts from all over the Caribbean who can work together to solve coastal management issues."

The project, which also collects satellite imaging data on mangroves and coral reefs, focuses on Guadeloupe, Martinique, Saint-Martin, Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica and Puerto-Rico.

### Measuring in Manzanilla and Mayaro

Villarroel-Lamb and her team have been measuring coastal conditions along the Manzanilla-Mayaro coast (the eastern edge of Trinidad). She said Carib-Coast aimed "mainly to solve the problem of the paucity of data readily available for decision making" in the region."

"What drew me to the project was not just finding data on coastal issues," the coastal engineer explained, but to see "what we can do in a collaborative effort" to solve those issues.

Villarroel-Lamb is part of a small team at UWI that includes Dr Junior Darsan and Dr Kegan Farrick of the Geography Department, as well as her student Shani Brathwaite, who is conducting research for her PhD in Civil Engineering. The Faculties of Engineering and Geography have together been monitoring the effects of hydrodynamics on Trinidad's eastern coast.

Brathwaite says, "Coastal erosion should be a great concern to small island developing states like Trinidad and Tobago, as we depend on the coast for tourism, among other things. Our beaches play an important role, culturally, socially and economically."

BRGM reached out to the Civil and Environmental Engineering Department, requesting to partner with them. For Villarroel-Lamb it was a natural fit, as she was already involved with coastal data collection, including a video camera system established at Mayaro which was funded by The UWI Trinidad and Tobago Research and Development Impact (RDI) Fund, and had already had experience working in conjunction with entities like the Institute of Marine Affairs (IMA) and the Coastal Protection Unit. IMA is also one of the partners on the Carib-Coast project.

IMA biologist Lester Doodnath says the organisation also has a lot to contribute to Carib-Coast: "We have been monitoring the coast for almost 40 years and we have a wealth of data. In terms of logistic support... we can provide trained personnel, facilities and a fleet of vessels."



A member of the research team in Manzanilla.

## International project to monitor and mitigate the damage to our coastlines



Workers installing the camera system in Mayaro.



Screenshots of the coast from the camera system.

As part of the project, UWI received more than US\$60,000 to purchase equipment, including another camera system, a location device (a pinger) for the wave gauge or the Acoustic Doppler Current Profiler (ADCP), and a wave transmission device which will facilitate the retrieval of data remotely from instruments placed out at sea off the coast of Mayaro. The wave gauge can stay out at sea for up to eight weeks, fitted with a pinger to help track and locate it in case of storms. The video data collected in Mayaro will now be part of the input into the Carib-Coast project along with another similar video system to be funded by the Carib-Coast project in Manzanilla.

The project, says Brathwaite, involved spending "entire days at the beach, from 6am to 6pm," capturing video data. Her research looks at the impact of wave run-up on beachfront properties.

"It's challenging, fun, but a lot of work," she says.

Her days at the beach however, have come to a temporary halt due to COVID-19. The project has experienced several delays.

Villarroel-Lamb says "filling gaps with science-driven data is fundamental. Once we address the data issues we can use it to look at solutions to coastal flooding, erosion and hazard mitigation."

She says the next stage will involve a PhD candidate joining the team to help collate, process and disseminate their findings under her supervision. This, she says, "will afford us access to everybody's data sets, because he will be pooling data from the whole region, tracking changes and trends."

"The main idea is to pool resources across the Caribbean and put all the data into a central repository." It can then be accessed for research, and used to create models for decision making," says Villarroel-Lamb. "The only way we can go forward is through collaboration. We can't do it on our own."

She wants people to understand the consequences of coastal threats, including effects on property, fishermen's livelihoods, the agricultural sector, pollution and the ongoing risks to reef and mangrove barriers.

"Data analysis is quite academic, she points out, "but it's important to put it in a human perspective."





# CORPORATE BONDING

## A NEW FINANCIAL FRONTIER FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES



The state-of-the-art Couva Medical and Multi-Training Facility in Trinidad and Tobago.

**T**he University of the West Indies [UWI] is in high gear despite COVID-19 to expand its growth horizon by taking its celebrated global academic brand to the private market. After five years of intensifying and centering the importance of academic-industry partnerships in order to drive institutional and regional economic growth, it is preparing to test equity and debt options with bankable projects.

In a recent report to The UWI Council, Vice-Chancellor Professor Sir Hilary Beckles and the five Campus Principals outlined a private sector engagement roadmap including a roster of projects to be offered for private investment including bonds and Initial Public Offerings. He told the Council that “corporate bonding is the new financial frontier as we plan to take The UWI to market”.

Among the proposed projects are an offshore international medical school targeting global students, a hotel and conferencing complex and sports stadia—All for-profit initiatives to be developed and managed by The UWI-owned companies, operated by private sector managers.

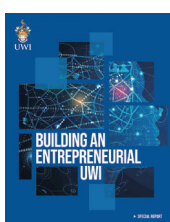
Sir Hilary commended the Government of Trinidad and Tobago for making available to the university, the state-of-the-art Debe campus for The UWI Global School of Medicine and Couva Medical and Multi-Training Facility Limited (CMMFL) to house the modern, innovative and IT-driven Schools of Optometry, Pharmacy and Nursing, which will be primarily focused on the recruitment of international students. He also pointed to plans for the establishment in Jamaica, of an international School of Nursing to produce thousands of nurses for export.

Noting that currently the governments of the region contribute 48 per cent of The UWI's total operational budget, down from 75 per cent just 25 years ago, Sir Hilary said that “the university's future growth and modernisation will require private investment in modern, for-profit facilities that will generate net income to support future capitalisation”.

The Vice-Chancellor and Campus Principals have established a Corporate Investment Unit, comprising finance and capital market specialists, to provide market intelligence in respect of the feasibility of projects, and to assist with the preparation of business plans.

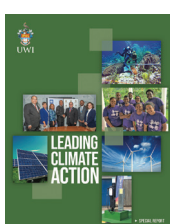
The UWI Vice-Chancellor said that the university is well-positioned at this time to attract corporate partnerships. Pointing to its standing as the number 1 ranked university in the Caribbean and the top 4 per cent of 28,000 universities globally, he said “We have been successful in building the global reputation of the university, now we can convert that reputation to revenue and that will be our focus for the next two years, capitalising our teaching, learning and researching facilities into income generating streams”.

“Corporate bonding is the new financial frontier for The University of the West Indies”, Sir Hilary asserted.



### Building an Entrepreneurial UWI

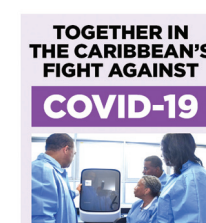
In addition to fulfilling its core business of education and conducting research in service to the region, The UWI is now pursuing a third major goal—innovation and entrepreneurship—as part of its overall developmental agenda. Each of The UWI's five campuses has begun establishing facilities and services in support of this focus. This special report highlights the initiatives underway as the university vigorously pursues this exciting programme of becoming more entrepreneurial. As a developmental university, The UWI is determined to disrupt the historical constructs that have disadvantaged Caribbean economies. Entrepreneurship holds the promise to increase diversification, strengthen resilience, and enhance financial inclusion opportunities for the more than six million people across the 17 English-speaking Caribbean countries served by The UWI.



### Leading Climate Action

Never before have universities been so central to the global agenda of sustainable development and particularly the science behind an urgent response to climate change. Addressing climate change has long been a priority for The UWI and over its seven decades of existence, this priority has resulted in a number of initiatives with global impact. The UWI is also now recognised by the International

Association of Universities (IAU) as the global leader in the mobilisation of research and advocacy for a climate smart world. This special report features the university's research, teaching, advocacy, sustainable practices, and regional and international partnerships as part of its work in support of the climate action agenda.



### The UWI's COVID-19 and Post-COVID-19 response

Over the past few months, The UWI has been working intimately with regional governments in shaping public health policy and anti-COVID-19 strategies. During his presentation to the Council, Vice-Chancellor Beckles acknowledged the work of “UWI Science” and “UWI Medicine” as well as other contributions from the University's staff and students to the current COVID-19 and Post-COVID-19 response in the Caribbean context.



To read more on the Vice-Chancellor's Report to Council and the special reports visit [www.uwi.edu/vcreport](http://www.uwi.edu/vcreport)



Following the church service marking the inauguration of the Five Islands Campus in Antigua September 1, 2019 (L-R front): Professor Sir Hilary Beckles, Vice-Chancellor; Professor The Most Hon. V. Eudine Barthelemy, Pro Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Cave Hill Campus; Professor Brian Copeland, Pro Vice-Chancellor and Principal, St Augustine Campus; Dr Luz Longworth, Pro Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Open Campus; Professor Stafford Griffith, Interim Pro Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Five Islands Campus; Professor Dale Webber, Pro Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Mona Campus. Inset is Professor Densil Williams, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Planning who assumes the position of Pro Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Five Islands Campus, effective August 1, 2020.



## ■ OUR CAMPUS

# Adaptation

*COVID-19 threatened to lay waste to education as we know it, UWI responded*

BY AMY LI BAKSH

Over the past few months, the education sector has had to make drastic changes to the way it functions. From early March, the Vice Chancellor of The University of the West Indies Professor Sir Hilary Beckles stressed the importance of the internet in adapting to the new normal, saying “We are going to be investing resources in online training, online technology.”

Three months on, the Head of the Committee of Deans (and Dean of the Faculty of Law) at UWI St Augustine Professor Rose-Marie Belle Antoine, reflects on how the crisis has been handled thus far. “From the very beginning, the university was quite proactive,” she says. “A big concern was how to ensure students could complete their courses.”

In the early stages of the process, there was some back and forth over whether the semester should even continue with online classes, as no one at the time knew how long the pandemic and restrictions would last. There were intense discussions at every level on the best way to move forward in the different faculties.

“What I have recognised throughout the university is the very high level of cooperation and collaboration, with the academic community in particular, as much of the strain was on them to finish the courses,” says Prof Antoine.

As staff did their best to transition to the new environment, all of the faculties were able to resume teaching within a week of the official closure of the physical campus facilities. At the core of this was the widespread implementation of online systems unlike ever before. “We had the online systems before, but they were used in a more supplementary way,” the Deans’ Committee Head says.

Although the myElearning platform and other online tools have been within The UWI’s arsenal for many years, the events of the past few months have shed light on how essential access to this technology really is, and how many students who do not have this access are at a disadvantage. As staff and student representatives tried to assess which students were in need, they found that a much larger percentage of the student population had either no computer access or limited internet access than previously thought.

“Internet access can be very uneven, depending on the area someone is living in. This shows a larger problem in education



and how we live in Trinidad and Tobago in terms of equity,” says Prof Antoine.

Liaising with organisations willing to donate computers or facilitate internet access helped in resolving this issue. “It is something that we have to think of in the future because our university is committed to increasing access to the underserved, those who are disadvantaged. This computer/internet access is one component,” she adds.

Both Professor Antoine and the Assistant Registrar for Examinations Mrs Nardia Thomas-Allain agree that the most complex aspect of the process has been negotiating an all-new examination process. According to Prof Antoine: “It was a bit of a nightmare, for both students and lecturers”, because of the difficulties in managing the longer exam times to address access

issues. But although the undertaking was difficult, Mrs Thomas-Allain feels that “we were able to be agile and to respond in ways to allow our students to continue, both in teaching and then on final assessments. We were able to maintain our standard of quality and the integrity of the examination process.”

Although staff were engaged in discussions from a very early stage on what these exams might look like, ultimately the structure was decided by the Board for Undergraduate Studies of The University of the West Indies. Students lobbied for longer exam times, and there was a period of rough adjustment as staff and students alike hastened to adapt to the new exam experience.

“There was a high level of stress and mental anxiety on the part of the students and some critical decisions were taken to address these. For example, if anyone fails during this period there will be no penalty towards their GPA,” says Prof Antoine. Mrs Thomas-Allain also stresses that the staff tried “to be fair, understanding and compassionate to our students.”

For Mrs Thomas-Allain, examinations were an extremely high priority in ensuring that students were able to continue their academic journey. “The credibility of a tertiary level institution rests in the integrity of its examination process, so I was happy that we were able to uphold that process. Across the region, we worked together to re-engineer our examination process so that we could maintain integrity in the virtual format.”

She also expresses her gratitude for the way staff was able to adapt to a crisis, even though there were some challenges faced. Her Conduct of Exams Team: Lisa Hernandez, Lynette Dookhran, Prudence Cato, Barry Greaves and Barry Hazel, worked tirelessly to find the best solutions possible in a short period of time.

“We will tweak our processes moving forward, because now we have a roadmap to guide us through such events, pandemics or any sort of natural or social disaster,” she promises.

While the COVID-19 learning curve has been steep for us all, it has taught some valuable lessons for The UWI moving forward—and any learning institution must be ready to learn.



‘What I have recognised throughout the university is the very high level of cooperation and collaboration, with the academic community in particular, as much of the strain was on them to finish the courses.’

**Head of the Committee of Deans  
and Dean of the Faculty of Law  
Professor Rose-Marie Belle Antoine**



‘The credibility of a tertiary level institution rests in the integrity of its examination process, so I was happy that we were able to uphold that process. Across the region, we worked together to re-engineer our examination process so that we could maintain integrity in the virtual format.’

**Assistant Registrar  
for Examinations  
Mrs Nardia Thomas-Allain**

Members of staff wearing  
UWI-branded face masks.  
PHOTOS: ATIBA CUDJOE



## ■ OUR CAMPUS



Shanelle Glasgow, Team Lead of Projects and Events.  
PHOTO: ATIBA CUDJOE

# More than a Meeting

## An interview on the campus shift to virtual events with Shanelle Glasgow

**Like most universities,** UWI is a centre for all kinds of events and activities, as many as 200 a year on the St Augustine Campus alone. This regular part of campus life was suddenly stopped in March because of COVID-19 and the official lockdown that followed.

Yet UWI St Augustine did not go silent. Campus events have made the move from the physical to the virtual space. And even though virtual events are not new, the scale of the transition has been challenging. Challenging but also rewarding, says **Shanelle Glasgow**. As Team Lead of Projects and Events within the Marketing and Communications Office, Glasgow is one of the key persons involved in planning, coordinating and executing events at UWI St Augustine.

**UWI TODAY** spoke with her about the transition to virtual.

**UT: Prior to COVID-19, could you tell me what events were like on campus?**

**SG:** Event management in higher education is very dynamic and that has been the experience at the St Augustine Campus. Each semester we are involved in the planning of conferences, symposia, statutory meetings, workshops and open days. For annual signature events such as Graduation, Matriculation and new student orientation programmes, we typically are part of a committee of stakeholders. Roughly, over an academic year we are involved in 150-200 events.

**UT: How was the plan for virtual events developed? What were the major considerations?**

**SG:** One thing for sure is that the principles of event management still apply to virtual events. It really happened pretty organically and evolved day-to-day. We started sharing what we learned and how we could apply it to what we do at the university. We asked ourselves:

1. Can the agenda for this event be translated to a virtual setting?
2. Do we have staff who can support and manage the technical aspects of a virtual event?
3. What virtual solutions does the university use already that we can tap into to host virtual events?

**UT: How many virtual events have taken place?**

**SG:** We got back into a groove and started planning events in April. To date we have executed over 20 virtual events, the majority of them have been topical and related to the work the university is doing in different areas as it relates to the pandemic.

I anticipate however that the number of events will continue to increase as we fall into the new norm, get more acquainted with the technology and adapt our programmes to an online audience.

**UT: What does it take to put on a virtual event and how is it different to a physical event?**

**SG:** When producing an event, you need to first know the purpose. To be impactful, you have to think about your attendees and the experience you are trying to create for them. What do you want them to know or feel after they leave your event? It's the same thing online.

For in person events, rehearsals, pre event setup and briefings are held. This is required online as well and is a more involved process. As presenters/speakers are joining from remote locations you have to work with them to test their audio/visual, lighting and presentations. You don't have an audio/visual provider on site who can set this up for you. So you have to work with people using whatever they have available to



The Marketing and Communications Office Projects and Events Team (from left), Wendy Maynard, Shanelle Glasgow and Shereen Ali.  
PHOTO: ATIBA CUDJOE

provide production value. You also have to ensure presenters understand how to navigate the platform being used.

**UT: What are the specific benefits of virtual events?**

**SG:** What I must say is that virtual events aren't new. Due to the current landscape however they have become more prominent. Virtual events have several benefits but for us at the university I think we benefit from the fact that they are sustainable and environmentally friendly, allow for unlimited participants, have a potentially global audience, are more cost effective, and make it easier to collect feedback.

**UT: As COVID-19 restrictions are loosened, what is going to happen with events in the future?**

**SG:** For now we are still in the realm of executing virtual events and I hope we can certainly do more. On campus in the months to come we may explore hosting hybrid events which is something we have been doing already, for example the annual graduation ceremonies are held at [the Sport and Physical Education Centre] but streamed to a wider viewing audience. We will utilise our event spaces, though not at full capacity due to physical distancing.

**UT: As an events professional, what has this experience of moving to virtual been like for you?**

**SG:** At first, it was a bit daunting. Seeing the downturn in events, knowing that a lot of the suppliers and peers we work with were out of work. It was scary, wondering about job security in an industry where you are literally restricted from hosting gatherings.



An advertisement for one of the campus' virtual events.

Three months later though I would say it has been rewarding. Through coordinating virtual events, I was called to interact more closely with my colleagues across the campus. I have learned how to apply my skills in a different way. And to be able to have a part in the university adding to the conversation on COVID-19 with the events we've held over the period gave me a renewed sense of purpose.

**UT: Is there anything you would like to add?**

**SG:** People tend to take virtual events for granted. This is not your average online meeting. These activities are live event productions so we need to treat them as such. It is the only way we will be relevant and keep our audiences engaged.

Also, we could not transition into the virtual space without the support and technical expertise of the Campus Information Technology Services (CITS) team.



## ■ 2020/2021 GUILD OF STUDENTS



# LEADERSHIP in uncertain times

*An interview with 2020/2021  
Student Guild President Warren Anderson*

Warren Anderson, President of the 2020/2021 Guild of Students.  
PHOTOS: VISHANI RAGOBEER

BY VISHANI RAGOBEER

Warren Anderson, the 2019/2020 Evening and Part-time Representative on the Guild of Students Council clinched a mere eight votes more than his closest competitor at The UWI's Guild Elections in March. These eight votes won the 35-year-old Management student the presidency for the Council for the 2020/2021 academic year.

Months after that election, after he was sworn into the position on June 1, Warren visited the Student Activity Centre or "SAC" as it is more commonly called. This area usually buzzes with activity. It is a cacophony of chatter, a collage of social interactions, rounds of All Fours and students with their heads buried in lecture slides. But when Warren took a stroll through, he had to dust off the bench before sitting. SAC was empty.

This is the reality with which he has to contend – at least for the first few months of his tenure as Guild President. Student life on the St Augustine campus will not be the same; meetings and engagements with students may change into Zoom sessions and email threads.

UWI TODAY interviewed Warren to hear about his plans for the year ahead.

**UT: Why did you decide to run for President of The UWI's Guild of Students?**

**WA:** I never had any ambitions of doing so as a UWI student. I was really urged by the prompts of other students. People put trust in me based on my performance as Evening and Part-time Representative because I tended to dig deep into the constitution to find inefficiencies in the way the Guild was operating. Wherever I am, as long as I see improvements can be made, changes can be made, I offer a hand. It just so happened to be in this form at this time.

**UT: How do you intend to improve the operations of the Guild, then?**

**WA:** It's a simple matter of materialising two buzzwords that people often say but the output surrounding them we don't often see – accountability and transparency. The way we intend to do that is by publicising our strategic plan at the beginning of the semester, which will be accompanied by a calendar. So just like how we advertise the social aspects – Guild Fest and the parties – we are bringing relevance to these things, and from the earliest, we are saying to the student population "these are the things that are important and we are going to work towards them".



**Adapting to COVID-19 takes empathy, a lot of empathy, because we are students at the end of the day as well, and all of the issues affecting the students also affect us as councillors.**

**UT: What does this strategic plan entail?**

**WA:** Councillors have already been engaged with this strategic plan and we're working to release the plan at the start of the new semester for the consumption of all the students so that they are aware of the functions of the Guild. This would lead to more buy-in from the students, which should empower them to hold us accountable and necessitate us holding ourselves accountable. The proper running of the Student Senate, which is mandated by the constitution, is another thing. We are going to impress upon the students the importance of the Student Senate and that will be a major leap in terms of disciplining and ensuring the functioning of the Council. Consistent training of the guild councillors is another aspect. As leaders, we ought to strengthen our own administration and we must expose and repair our inefficiencies to improve our delivery of services.

**UT: How do you also intend on navigating the COVID-19 pandemic and its ramifications?**

**WA:** Adapting to COVID-19 takes empathy, a lot of empathy, because we are students at the end of the day as well, and all of the issues affecting the students also affect us as councillors. Organisations have reached out and offered assistance and we have been able to streamline this through the Guild's National Affairs Committee. We

will continue working with The UWI's administration to aid students in their personal situations.

For students outside of Trinidad and Tobago, we intend to add our voice to the conversation with governments, through The UWI administration, to accommodate those students' return to [the campus]. There will be a cost factor to consider, but we are prepared for those conversations.

Also, we are prepared to act on behalf of students and advocate for just fees that match the experience. And in our advocacy, we would expect the campus to respond with justifications for those fees. In the worst-case scenario, we don't want students to be put in a position to take leaves of absence.

**UT: Finally, what do you think makes you the person for the job?**

**WA:** I grew up in a community where when the going gets tough, we become creative and we get it done, so I am not fazed by difficulties. I have lived through the challenges that many students are facing themselves, and I can appreciate the serenity of an exam room as compared to being at home, bargaining for space. Being adaptable augurs well for me but I need to be able to lend that power to my team, and I believe I can do that.



## ■ 2020/2021 GUILD OF STUDENTS

On March 5, students of The UWI went into one of three polling stations to vote for their student representatives for the 2020/2021 Academic Year. Leading up to that day, the cadre of student representatives, whose names were printed on the ballot papers, outlined their proposals for advancing students' interest. At that time, COVID-19 was a distant consideration.

"This pandemic has forced us to rethink what student engagement would look like for this upcoming year and rapidly adjust our means of doing such," says Kareem Charles, newly-elected Vice-President of the Guild of Students Council.

Usually, the elected guild councillors would begin their engagements around the time of their inauguration, at the beginning of June. This year, however, these students had to hit the ground running as merely a week after the election results were made known, the first case of the novel coronavirus was recorded in Trinidad, and The UWI's modus operandi was forced to change.

By the time the 26 student leaders on the Warren Anderson-led Guild of Students Council officially took office on June 1, they were already working to ensure that students were catered for, and well-represented.

Charles, who was the International Affairs Committee (IAC) Chairperson on the previous Guild Council, related that his committee provided some tangible relief to students just before final examinations began on May 25. This included supplying students in the halls of residence, many of whom are regional students affected by the closure of borders, with groceries and other essential items.

In addition to providing this relief for the students, these student leaders were the nexus between students and their lecturers, as they navigated the new online learning and assessment platform (and the associated challenges that may have arisen).

Khaleem Ali, the Faculty of Law Representative, emphasises that there must be cognisance of the varying socio-economic realities of each student. And, that a concerted effort must be made to empower even the most vulnerable student. A fundamental principle, he said, must be empathy.

"Student Leadership is more now than ever a people-focused exercise," Ali posits.

Over the past few weeks, Ali has worked along with the 2020/2021 National Affairs Committee (NAC) Chairperson, Kobe Sandy to craft a food assistance programme for students. Support came from an unnamed but generous donor, and through this programme, non-perishable food supplies will be given to students facing financial constraints, as well as the regional students at the Sir Arthur Lewis Hall of Residence. The NAC is also organising face-masks from the Ministry of Health, for students, and aims to engage supermarkets on providing them with vouchers, even when the university reopens.

"Being a student leader has taken up an entirely new meaning within this COVID-19 environment," Khaleem says, adding, "We have to constantly remind ourselves that we must not only lead our students, but we must also comfort them."

The online final examinations experience illustrates this. For Faculty Representatives like Khaleem, panicked students flooded their emails as they encountered whatever challenges arose. And what could those representatives possibly do, but email lecturers in turn and make representation for the students?

Beyond the leaders' current endeavours and responsibilities, their plans for the rest of their tenure now have to be adjusted to the new social dynamics.

The NAC, for example, is charged with promoting student welfare and facilitating the development of their

# The Work starts Early

*New Guild contends with the pandemic to support students in need*



Executive Members of the Students Guild Council (from left), Vice President Kareem Charles, Postgraduate President Matthew Sealy, President Warren Anderson, Treasurer Nikolai Chin Hong, and Secretary Afiya James. PHOTO: ATIBA CUDJOE



Kareem Charles, Vice President of the Guild of Students Council 2020/2021 (left) helps to organise relief items for students affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. PHOTO: SHARDIA MURRAY

*The National Affairs Committee is also organising face-masks from the Ministry of Health, for students, and aims to engage supermarkets on providing them with vouchers, even when the university reopens.*

physical and mental health. Sandy would have outlined a myriad of plans he had for fulfilling the NAC's mandate over his tenure, but now, these plans have to be adapted to the physical and social barriers in place due to the pandemic. He has to rethink the various fora he envisioned on the LRC Greens for the promotion of mental health, or the aerobic exercise activities he wanted to host at the Sport and Physical education Centre (SPEC) field.

Similarly, Kareem's plans for the much-anticipated Guild Fest, one of the bigger orientation activities at the beginning of the academic year, have been affected. This year, Guild Fest will be done virtually alongside the UWI's other orientation activities.

The work of these leaders has just begun, though. While they have been responding to immediate needs, the policies and programmes they articulated while campaigning are yet to be executed. The task ahead, at least for the conceivable future, lies in navigating their respective mandates and agendas virtually, without that physical contact with their fellow students.

The upcoming academic year will be interesting for all at The UWI. These young leaders have an even more critical role in advancing the interest and welfare of the students they represent.

(Vishani Ragobeer)



## ■ OUR CAMPUS

The COVID-19 pandemic brought the curtain down hard on the performing arts. But with 2020 marking two decades since the founding of The UWI Arts Chorale (UAC), the choir has been commemorating the milestone via social media, most recently hosting an online panel discussion entitled “Twenty Years, One Voice - the Legacy of the UAC”, on June 9.

The choir’s repertoire of major choral classic works, stage musicals and regional folk songs has made them a stand-out in the local landscape, and brought them ovations on international tours. Known for their stirring performances, the unit is made up of some 50 singers, drawn from current and past students of The UWI, as well as members of the public who audition for places.

The online discussion brought together former presidents and the current leader of the UAC, to share insights into their collective journey.

The first president was the charismatic Jessel Murray, Deputy Dean for Distance and Outreach at the Department of Creative and Festival Arts (DCFA). Murray has been the director and conductor for the last 20 years.

Back in 2000, he had just returned to Trinidad and Tobago from the US, taking the reins of Head of the DCFA from Lecturer in Music Satanand Sharma.

An ad-hoc version of the choir had existed under the late voice teacher, Nariman Hosein, performing festive selections around Christmas. It was established on paper as a choral ensemble in 2000 by the late Dr Anne Osbourne (coordinator of the DCFA and creator of its Music Unit), whom Murray called “our guru, our hero”, recalling “her wit and wisdom”.

With regard to the choir’s outlook in the wake of COVID-19, Murray said, “The arts are in grave danger.” He said it was necessary to evolve “to remain valuable and relevant”.

He and the other presidents used the opportunity to look back and tell their history, with each panellist speaking on his or her initiatives while in office.

They started out with 25 people and with Murray as accompanist for the first year, rehearsing in a chilly computer lab they nicknamed “Siberia”. They now practice at DCFA’s Studio Four, and have been accompanied by musician and teacher Jerome Dinchong since year two.

Dressed in striking costumes, often in bright jewel tones, they performed first on campus, moving on to appear at concerts around Trinidad. They branched out into producing musical theatre in 2005, and have won several Cacique awards. When they added movement to their folk pieces, they drafted dancer and choreographer Adele Bynoe — and subsequently others — for their performances.

They started doing international performances in 2008, and have taken their music to foreign lands like Mexico, Panama and Belize.

Over the last 17 years the UAC has performed 11 full-length musicals, including *Crazy for You*, *West Side Story*, *Beauty and the Beast* and *Oliver*.

Murray said while the UAC is not as well-known in T&T as some other community choirs, “we have carved out standards of excellence and productivity”, with students trained in music and “a level of professionalism that must be sustained”.

He said “a choir at the university level must have a standard set of classical masterworks, done in the original language”. The chorale has presented such challenging pieces as Mozart’s *Coronation Mass and Requiem*, Bernstein’s *Chichester Psalms* in Hebrew, Latin Masses, and Schubert’s works.

Murray expressed gratitude to the other presidents who have shared the journey, and all the choir members “who have lived the dream”.

Longest-serving president Evette Graham, who is the acting Curriculum Coordinator for Visual and Performing Arts at the Ministry of Education, was only 21 when she joined the choir.

She recounted some of the thrills and challenges of their first tour to Massachusetts, including a dramatic transport mix-up and an emotional reception for their rendition of the unofficial African American anthem, *Lift Every Voice and Sing*.

She said, through her role, she had “learned a lot about management”, and about having the strength to overcome and deal with problems as they arise.

Music teacher and member of the Trinbago Woodwind

# UWI Arts Chorale CELEBRATES 20 YEARS

BY GILLIAN MOORE



and Brass Orchestra Sheldon McShine led UAC from 2013 to 2015. He had presided over sister company Must Come See Productions, and also served as librarian, among other roles. He said his term gave him insight into the intricacies of dealing with people of all ages and dispositions, and augured well for his teaching career.

McShine focused on raising funds to offset their major expenses, like photocopying music and costuming for performance. “People think everything we do is covered because we are affiliated with the university,” he said, “but we have to raise funds ourselves.”

Pannist and music teacher at Preysal Secondary School Andre Frederick was president from 2015 to 2017. He saw “all this talent, yet even on campus people didn’t know about us”. He decided to broaden the UAC’s social media presence, working alongside the gifted young actor Chris Smith, who died in 2019.

“We made fun little videos, memes, etc, showing the type of music we performed, upcoming shows, and short interviews with members,” he recounted.

The initiative bore fruit, he said: “People on campus especially started showing more interest.”

Past president and Linguistics PhD candidate Ronald Francis was first captivated when he heard the chorale perform accompanied by UWI Arts Steel, its partner ensemble. He compared the UAC to his other choral experiences, both in his native Saint Lucia and in T&T, concluding that the difference was “university level, professional training for the real world”.

“Every rehearsal is a lesson,” Francis said.

Music Teacher at St James Secondary School Renelle Grant (2018 -2019) chose to focus on team-building, realising members were mainly acquainted with others in their sections: “I wanted members to see each other’s strengths and values.”

She initiated activities like fundraising fun days, birthday celebrations and Christmas dinners.

Grant is returning to the choir after a hiatus, having recently given birth to a son.

UAC’s current president is music teacher at the University School Latisha McSween Griffith. She said her experience had been “bittersweet” so far, lamenting that their 20th anniversary plans, such as performing on a celebratory ocean cruise, had been postponed.

She thanked Murray for his influence, and commended the elder members — “the ‘mummies’ who foster love and keep us in check” — for their guidance.

While studying music at UWI, she served as UAC librarian and secretary. She said, through the group, she had learned music and languages, but also found love when she met her future husband, a young man in the tenor section.

“The UWI Chorale brought us together!”

Murray joked that they had seen several births and the blossoming of at least four couples, “but don’t join for that reason, I can’t make guarantees”.

**Information on joining The UWI Arts Chorale** is available on their Facebook page or by emailing [uwi.arts.chorale@gmail.com](mailto:uwi.arts.chorale@gmail.com).



## ■ LAW AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Although Black Lives Matter protests have dwindled, the spotlight on dismantling systemic racism still shines brightly, thanks to the collective demands of the international community.

Naturally though, some have chosen to ignore the positivity in favour of highlighting the lawlessness that marred several protests, but the simple response is this: property can be replaced; people cannot. Furthermore, there are those who believe that 'Black Lives Matter' is racist ideology; however, it is entirely farcical to believe that all lives matter when mass murderers like Dylann Roof are peacefully arrested after a racially motivated massacre, whilst unarmed black men, from Amadou Diallo to George Floyd, are instead murdered by the police. It is painfully obvious that although all other lives matter to the police, black lives do not.

George Floyd was a 46-year-old African-American man who died on May 25, 2020 in Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA after police officer Derek Chauvin knelt on his neck while he was already handcuffed and lying face down on the street. As a result of the incident, Chauvin has since been fired and charged with **murder in the second degree** and **manslaughter in the second degree**.

### Charge #1: 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree Manslaughter

**Minnesota Statute 609.205** – there are five categories of 2<sup>nd</sup> degree manslaughter, all of which carry a maximum prison sentence of 10 years or a \$20,000 fine; however, this post will only focus on the offence applicable to the killing of George Floyd:

- A person who causes the death of another by any of the following means is guilty of manslaughter in the second degree...
  - (1) by the person's **culpable negligence** whereby the person creates an unreasonable risk, and consciously takes chances of causing death or great bodily harm to another...

As highlighted above, to prove this charge, the prosecution must establish:

1. **"Culpable negligence"** – was there disregard for Floyd's safety, rights or welfare? The Supreme Court of Minnesota in the case of **State v Beilke** (1964) explains that "[culpable negligence] is intentional conduct which the actor may not intend to be harmful but which an ordinary and reasonably prudent man would recognise as involving a strong probability of injury to others."
2. **"Creates an unreasonable risk"** – this is also a question of negligence, which seeks to determine if Chauvin failed to take reasonable precautions to ensure that his actions did not endanger the safety or reasonable treatment of Floyd.
3. **"Consciously takes chances"** – To answer this question, consider the fact that Floyd repeatedly said "I can't breathe" yet Chauvin's knee remained on his neck for 8 minutes and 46 seconds.

### Charge #2: 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree Murder

(upgraded from 3<sup>rd</sup> degree murder)

**Minnesota Statute 609.19** - there are two types of 2<sup>nd</sup> degree murder, both of which carry a maximum prison sentence of 40 years:

- Intentional second degree murder by drive-by shooting is exactly as it sounds.
- Unintentional second degree murder has two subcategories, only one of which applies to the killing of George Floyd:



## Justice for George Floyd?

*A look at the case against the police officer who took his life*

BY DR JAMILLE BROOME

- (1) causes the death of a human being, without intent to effect the death of any person, while committing or attempting to commit a **felony offense**\*\* other than criminal sexual conduct in the first or second degree with force or violence or a drive-by shooting...
- \*\*If the felony offence of "manslaughter" is established, there should be no difficulty in proving this charge.**

### Former charge: 3<sup>rd</sup> Degree Murder

**Minnesota Statute 609.195** – there are two categories of 3<sup>rd</sup> degree murder, both of which carry a maximum prison sentence of 25 years; however, this post will only focus on the offence applicable to the killing of George Floyd:

- (a) Whoever, without intent to effect the death of any person, causes the death of another by perpetrating an act eminently dangerous to others and evincing a depraved mind, without regard for human life...

The issue with the 3<sup>rd</sup> degree murder charge is proving that the defendant was, at the time of the incident, "evincing a depraved mind".

What exactly does this term mean?

Well, in the Supreme Court of Minnesota case of **State v Mytych** (1972), it was defined as "a mind which has become inflamed by emotions, disappointments, and hurt to such degree that it ceases to care for human life and safety is a depraved mind."

From what is known about the case, it seems impossible to prove this aspect of the charge for Chauvin, although there have been comparisons to the 2019 conviction of former Minneapolis police officer Mohamed Noor for 3<sup>rd</sup> degree murder and 2<sup>nd</sup> degree manslaughter in the 2017 shooting death of Australian-born Justine Ruszczyk a month before her wedding. Be that as it may, both cases are significantly different.

Based on the clarity of the law, it may seem obvious that a conviction for Chauvin on both charges should be the only outcome, but please remember that the police officer who murdered Eric Garner in 2014 is still a free man.

**#JusticeForGeorgeFloyd**

**#BlackLivesMatter**



HEALTH

Cancer is the second leading cause of death worldwide, with almost 2,000 deaths in Trinidad and Tobago in 2018. Glaucoma is the leading cause of blindness worldwide, with the Caribbean region having the highest prevalence globally.

Many patients in Trinidad and Tobago use “natural” remedies, including marijuana, to treat cancer and glaucoma. Marijuana is believed to alleviate cancer pain, chemotherapy-induced nausea and vomiting, as well as reduce intraocular (inside of the eye) pressure in glaucoma. Several cannabinoids in marijuana, such as THC (tetrahydrocannabinol) and CBD (cannabidiol), are responsible for its psychoactive properties and proposed medicinal effects.

In June and July 2019, a team of students from the Pharmacology Unit conducted two surveys on cancer and glaucoma patients related to the use of marijuana. At that time, there were legislative overtures in Trinidad and Tobago to decriminalise marijuana for medicinal, recreational and religious use. Therefore, we sought to determine among these patients:

- (i) the percentage who previously used marijuana,
- (ii) their reasons for marijuana use,
- (iii) the factors associated with marijuana use,
- (iv) their knowledge regarding marijuana,
- (v) the percentage who believed that marijuana was effective for medicinal use, and
- (vi) the percentage willing to use marijuana, should it become decriminalised.

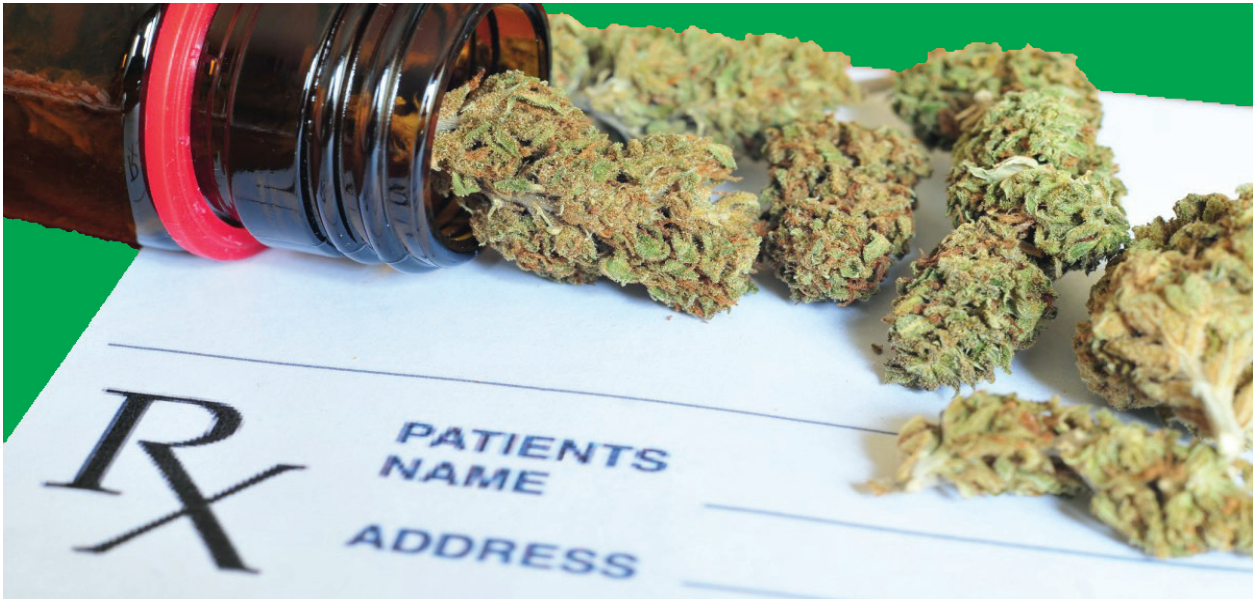
These studies were approved by The UWI Campus Ethics Committee and the respective Regional Health Authorities Ethics Committees. Patients were asked to sign their informed consent before agreeing to participate.

The first survey consisted of 194 cancer patients at the Oncology Unit at the St James Medical Complex. Almost three-quarters of the cancer patients were female, with an average age of about 60 years old. Breast cancer (80 of 142 women) and prostate cancer (22 of 52 men) were the most common cancers, and about half of the patients were at either Stage III or IV. Most patients had already undergone surgery, chemotherapy and radiation therapy and were satisfied with conventional treatment. However, almost 80 percent reported having experienced side effects with conventional treatments.

# Open to Medical Marijuana

*Surveys show cancer and glaucoma patients willing to use the natural remedy for treatment, but lacking knowledge of the plant and its side effects*

BY PROFESSOR YURI CLEMENT



In these patients, knowledge about marijuana was generally low with an average score of less than three out of 10. Few patients were able to identify one or more cannabinoids found in marijuana or its medicinal use. However, many patients recognised that marijuana could cause paranoia, hallucinations and memory impairment.

About one-third of cancer patients reported previous marijuana use for recreational, medicinal or religious purposes (Figures 1 & 2). Interestingly, about two-thirds of marijuana users did so for recreation. Significantly, marijuana use among this group was most prevalent among those who were male, of African descent, and experiencing side effects to conventional anticancer treatments.

Cancer patients who used marijuana for anxiety, insomnia, nausea and pain believed that it was very effective, that these benefits outweighed the risks, and that it was not addictive. Almost 90 percent of cancer patients indicated that they would use marijuana to treat their condition should it become legally available.

In the second survey, 201 glaucoma patients were recruited, with almost equal numbers of men and women with the average age of about 69 years old. Most patients were diagnosed with glaucoma for about eight years and were mostly satisfied with their medical treatment. Only a small number of patients reported having side effects related to their glaucoma medications.



Professor Clement (right) with some of the students who were part of the survey team.

FIGURE 1. MARIJUANA USE AMONG CANCER PATIENTS

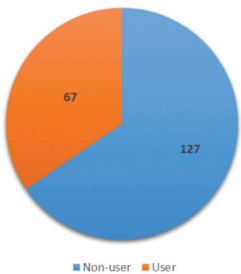


FIGURE 2. REASONS FOR MARIJUANA USE AMONG CANCER PATIENTS

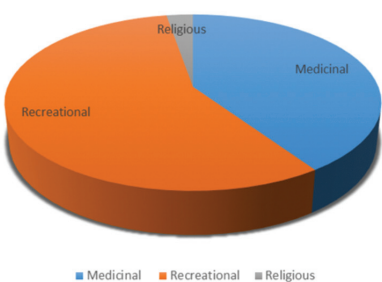


FIGURE 3. MARIJUANA USE AMONG GLAUCOMA PATIENTS

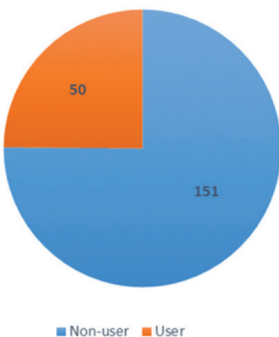
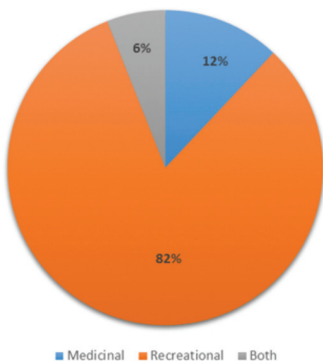


FIGURE 4. REASONS FOR MARIJUANA USE AMONG GLAUCOMA PATIENTS





## ■ OUR STUDENTS

# ANSAAR ALI TAKES 2nd PLACE in highly competitive Capstone Business Simulation Challenge

In May 2020, in the midst of a global pandemic, lockdowns and restrictions, Ansaar Ali took on international competitors from universities across the globe and made his way to 2nd place in the 2020 Capstone Business Simulation Spring (Capsim) Challenge.

As part of the course Advanced Strategic Management Simulation (part of the Management Studies programme within the Faculty of Social Sciences), students can choose to take on the Challenge, where they test some of the business skills they have acquired against their peers in a eight-round tournament. Although three students from The UWI completed the first round in the top ten, the rules only allow one student per university to move forward. The two students who also performed highly in the first round were Simon Supersad, who placed sixth and Alfayad Ali, who placed tenth.

Ansaar went on to represent UWI all the way to the finals, competing against students from countries such as Australia, Austria, Brazil, Canada, Hong Kong, India, Israel, Jamaica, Poland, Thailand, Turkey and the United States. Impressively, he did so while dealing with a limitation that the other finalists did not have:

“The rest of the competitors in the final were actually groups. I was the only solo competitor,” he says. But even though he had no formal team on his side, he had the support of his teachers, Lecturer in Information Systems, E-commerce and Business Strategy Simon Fraser, and Christopher Marshall a UWI graduate and tutor with the Management Studies Department. Marshall placed in the top ten in a previous Capsim Challenge. Ansaar was also supported by his colleagues Alfayad, Amirah John and Kimberly Sookdeo.

Fraser, who first introduced the course to UWI almost 10 years ago, says that it teaches students in a more hands-on way. “It’s unlike any other class they’ve done, because there are no lectures.”

For Ansaar, this was a part of the appeal— practicing skills they had learned in an engaging format. “This course wasn’t about learning new things, but about implementing what we had learned in a practical way,” he says. And although the word “success” in business often makes people think of profits, the process of winning a simulation deals with all areas of business, not just the money.

“You’re not just being graded on how you perform profit-wise. You are being graded on a lot of different areas of a company that we do not always consider here in Trinidad. The first thing that comes to mind when we think of companies is who makes the most profit, but this simulation offers beyond that—for example, if there is a high employee turnover rate, that means the company is not doing well in terms of how you are treating your employees,” says Ansaar.

The Capsim Challenge is open to students across the globe who have used a Capsim simulation in the previous 12 months, and gives young minds an opportunity to test their business acumen in realistic conditions while competing against the rest of the world.

The competition is fierce, but Fraser says there is one thing that students such as Ansaar and others from the Management Studies programme need to remember:

**“Be brave.”**

(Amy Li Baksh)

## Marijuana is believed to alleviate cancer pain, chemotherapy-induced nausea and vomiting, as well as reduce intraocular (inside of the eye) pressure in glaucoma.

They were concerned that public education was inadequate, and that increased accessibility following decriminalisation would escalate the potential for recreational use and drug abuse. The general consensus was that tight regulation of medical marijuana should be instituted to include patients’ substance abuse and social history, in addition to controlled dispensing by licensed healthcare professionals or pharmacies.

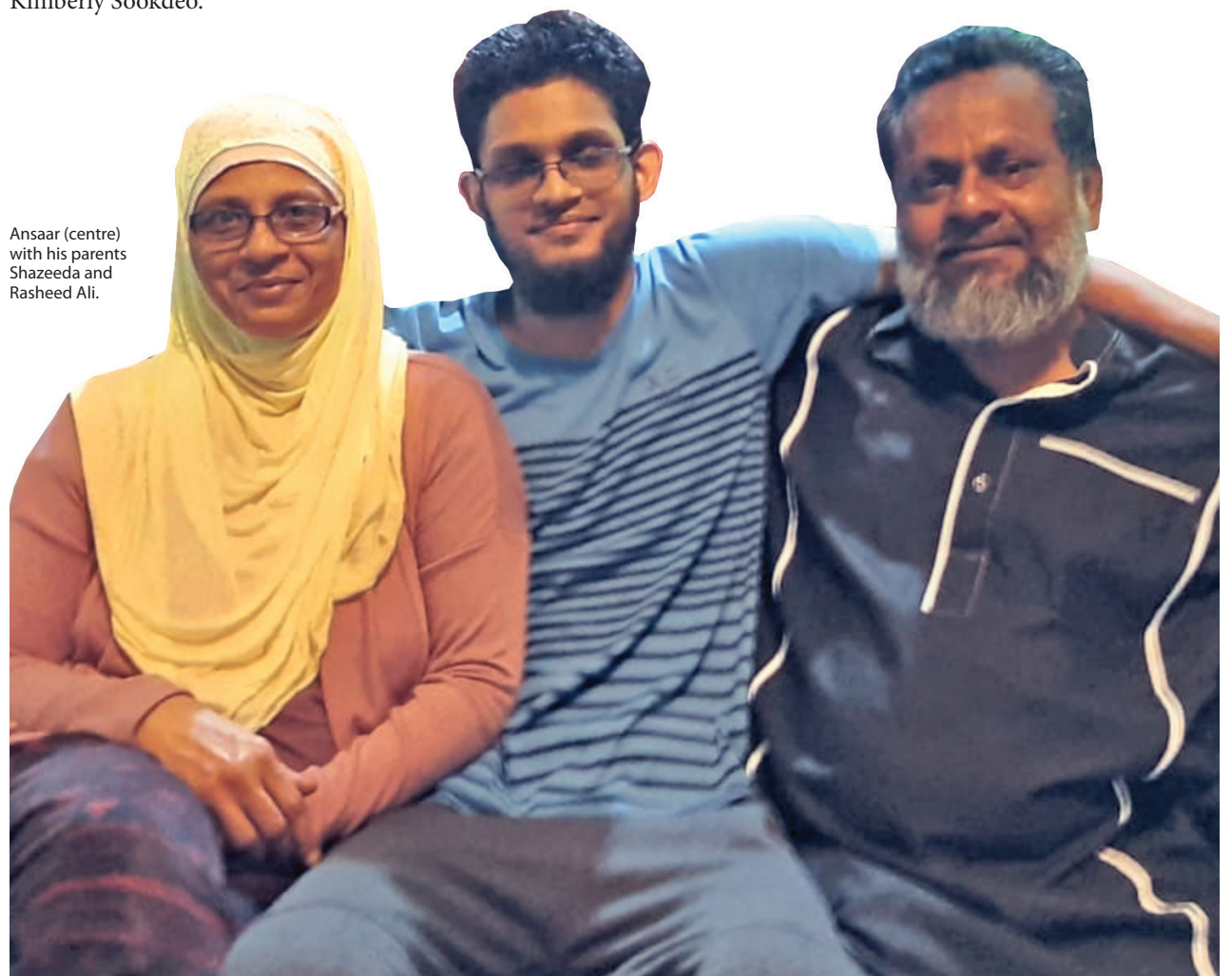
From these surveys, we found that significant numbers of cancer and glaucoma patients had a history of marijuana use, and most did so for recreational purposes. Despite having little knowledge, most patients were willing to use marijuana in the environment of decriminalisation.

There is an urgent need to address the impending increased use of marijuana among these and other subsets of patients in an environment of decriminalisation. A policy framework must be established to guide the use of medical marijuana and its derivatives in the clinical setting. Additionally, an immediate educational drive is warranted to fill the significant gaps in knowledge in both patients and physicians.

The surveys were conducted by Year 2 Pharmacology students Ann Marie Ming Hon, Alexia Mitcham, Adil Mohammed, Ahamad Mohammed, Inayah Mohammed, Raheema Mohammed, Saeed Mohammed, Sameer Mohammed, Tanuja Armaday, Kavya Avula, Samara Ali, Aqeela Allie, Lhonda Archer, Tariq Ali and Alviero Alvada.

*Yuri Clement is Professor of Pharmacology and Coordinator of the Pharmacology Unit in the Faculty of Medical Sciences at UWI St Augustine.*

Ansaar (centre) with his parents Shazeeda and Rasheed Ali.





## ■ OUR CAMPUS

**Deciding where to live during your university years** can be an overwhelming decision. Concerns about safety, comfort, affordability and location are on students' minds when considering their housing options. It's not as daunting as it seems.

"I have stayed on hall for my entire university life and my experience has been nothing more than laughter and smiles," says Shaquana Osorio, a third year Agribusiness and Entrepreneurship student from St Vincent and the Grenadines currently residing on Sir Arthur Lewis Hall (SAL).

Shaquana is one of many students at UWI St Augustine that have had an enjoyable and enriching experience living on campus. Staying at a hall of residence has many advantages – personal, social, and professional – that enhance university life.

There are five halls of residence – SAL, Canada Hall, Freedom Hall, Joyce Gibson-Inniss Hall and Trinity Hall. They offer students safe, clean, affordable and comfortable living options. But many hall residents see the benefits as much deeper.

"Hall life has been part of one of the most eye-opening life experiences.... For the last two years, I have been able to explore aspects of my personality while undergoing extreme personal growth as I move towards completing my degree," says undergraduate Psychology student Akarshini Singh.

Akarshini, a native of Guyana residing on Freedom Hall, now calls her hall mates "family", and says the bonds they formed helped her to "not only survive, but thrive" during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Several regional students stayed on hall during the lockdown period and campus closure. While it was challenging, they credit the hall management and other campus student services staff with supporting them.

"I must say that the hall did its best to ensure that our stay was comfortable regardless of the unfortunate circumstances we were facing," says Civil Engineering student Edward Martindal. "I absolutely cannot complain. The hall even provided hampers for students to ensure that we were well equipped and had food to eat."

Two members of staff moved into halls and an open-door policy was maintained to reassure students of their safety. Additionally, arrangements were made for students to be taken for groceries and other supplies, and merchants were engaged to provide discounted items for them. A free pantry was also set up for students who were low on day-to-day items, and recreational activities were organised to encourage students and break the monotony of the lockdown.



# New Experiences, New Family

## Hall Life at UWI St Augustine

BY ADUKE WILLIAMS



PHOTOS: VISHANI RAGOBEER

Stanley Louis, a third year Geomatics student from Dominica says the "accommodation was fine as we were offered upgraded rooms, an in-house shopping facility and use of their computer room".

As the campus thaws with the gradual lifting of lockdown restrictions, the approaching summer semester and then academic year 2020/2021, UWI St Augustine's halls of residence will once more become hubs of student life. Whether students are transitioning to university living, acclimatising to a different culture, seeking to become a mentor or to be mentored, have an interest in regionalism, in need of community support or a safe and affordable living option, on-campus housing is one of the best opportunities available to them.

As Akarshini says of her time on hall during the lockdown, "I have been lucky to experience individuals who put the students' needs before their own in order to make this period bearable and I am aware that many of these opportunities would not have been available to me if I had not registered to live on a hall... the experiences over the last few months has allowed me the benefits of living comfortably while transitioning to online schooling and I will forever be thankful for them."

**For more information about halls of residence or on-campus residence** life contact the Student Accommodation Office, Division of Student Services and Development at [UWIHalls@sta.uwi.edu](mailto:UWIHalls@sta.uwi.edu).

### Benefits of Halls of Residence

- **Safe and Secure Environment** – Campus halls are safe. The security system for halls is part of the larger campus security services system, making it a well-protected environment. Routine patrols are conducted by the UWI Estate Police and porters are stationed at the front offices of halls round the clock.
- **Strong Support Culture** – There is a strong support culture. This includes a 24-hour student help desk and resident assistant support. Each hall is run by a manager and a supervisor, who guide the day-to-day operations as well as activities of the hall. Additionally, a student hall committee is elected annually for each hall by student residents, and represents the affairs of the halls and its residents at the Guild council level.
- **Continued Holistic Development** – Campus halls of residence are holistically beneficial for student development. Students live in a community with their peers and receive additional opportunities for engagement and learning.
- **Close Proximity to Campus and its Resources** – Halls of residence are located on the main campus or within close proximity to campus. Students remain close to the campus' resources and other necessary amenities such as supermarkets, hospitals and shopping facilities.
- **Payment Plan Option** – There is a student payment plan option that makes it possible to pay hall fees in monthly instalments per semester.



*Aduke Williams is a Student Services Assistant in the Office of the Director, Division of Student Services and Development.*

## UWI Calendar of Events | AUGUST 2020

### Learn about Database Concepts August 10 to 14 and August 17 to 21 Online

The Department of Computing and Information Technology (DCIT), Faculty of Science and Technology (FST) hosts the Database Concepts Boot Camp. This Boot Camp is targeted towards Form 4, 5 and 6 secondary school students and prospective undergraduate students interested in database foundations, design and application development within computing and information technology. All classes are online. Cost: TT\$800. Registration Deadline: July 29.

**For more information, please call 740-6013 or email [DCIT.bootcamp@sta.uwi.edu](mailto:DCIT.bootcamp@sta.uwi.edu).**

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**GLOBAL**  
[www.uwitv.org](http://www.uwitv.org)

**Save the Dates  
UWI Must-See  
Launches  
August  
Online**

Mark your calendars for the following launches that will be shown live on UWI TV:

**August 1** | Launch of The UWI, Cave Hill's Faculty of Culture, Creative and Performing Arts  
**August 2** | Launch of Global Giving Week 2020

Tune in to UWI TV at <https://uwitv.org/> or on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/UWITV>.

**For information on upcoming virtual events, webinars, forums and more, visit the Campus Events Calendar at <https://sta.uwi.edu/news/ecalendar>.**