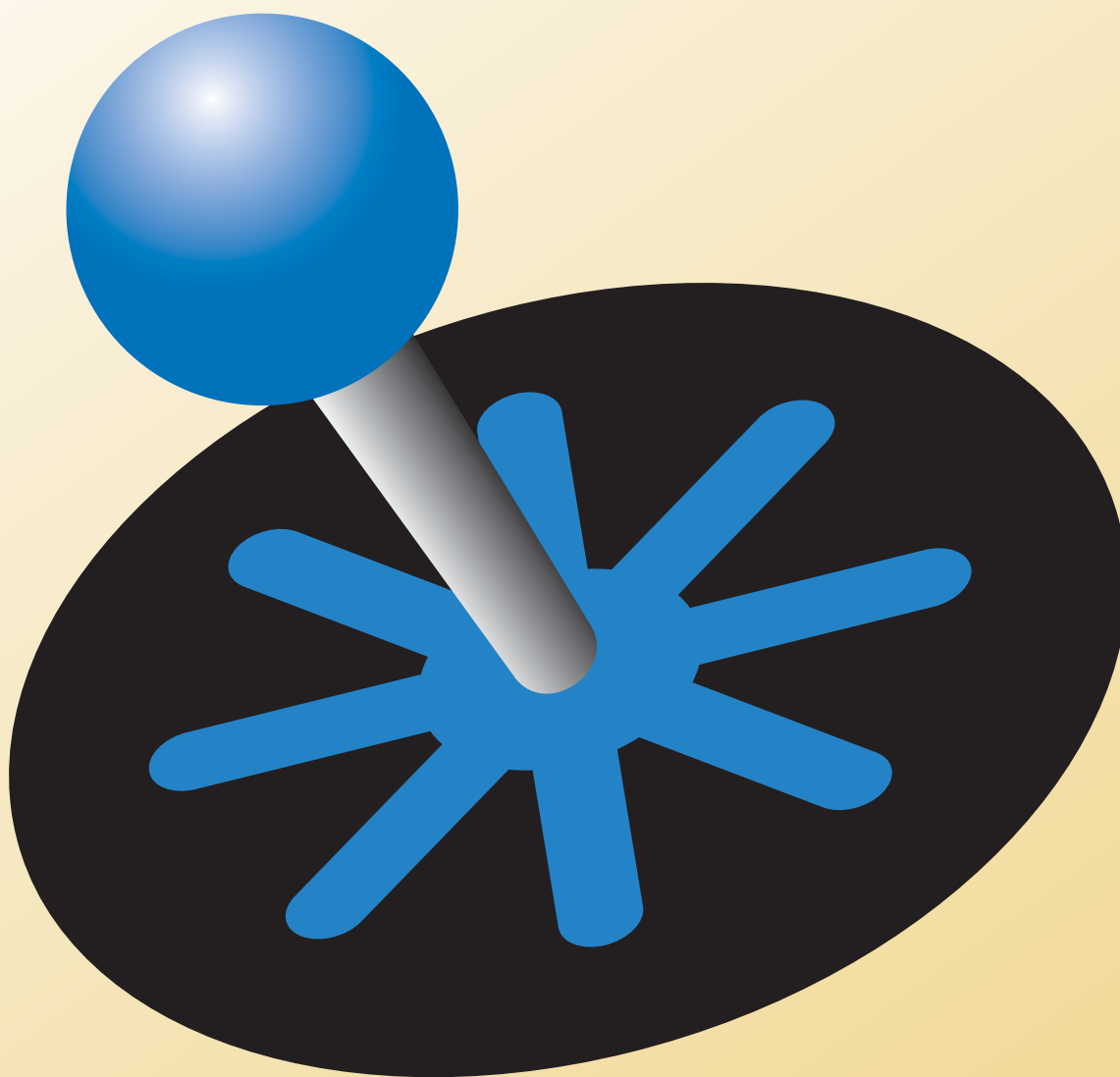




THE UWI QUALITY CIRCLE

VOLUME 10, MAY 2008



**Shifting Gears:
New Policy Directions
for The UWI**

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QUALITY HERITAGE



Photo courtesy: Ms. Sonja Dumas

The old power station in Roseau, Dominica, originally built in 1929, has been refurbished to house the new offices of The UWI School of Continuing Studies in that island.

MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

This issue marks a milestone in the life of The Quality Circle; it is the tenth issue since the newsletter's inception in May 2003. We are fortunate to have had the input of so many fine minds from the staff and students of The UWI to help us maintain the level of quality in the message of each issue. As editor, I would also like to thank the OBUS team, the assistant editor, Sonja Dumas and the graphic designer, Gabby Woodham for their support and invaluable inputs that have made the achievement of this milestone possible.

Volume 10 of The Quality Circle summarizes, for the benefit of the wider University community, some of the key policies introduced by the Board for Undergraduate Studies (BUS) that are designed to assure the quality of UWI undergraduate programmes and thus of UWI graduates. Established in July 1996, the BUS has responsibility, inter alia, for "...formulating general policy on the nature of undergraduate education."¹ While some of the policies are quite new, for example, Co-Curricular Credits and Academic Support for Co-Curricular Competitors; the Preparation of the Distinctive UWI Graduate; Exit Surveys and The UWI Certificate in University Teaching and Learning, others are more long-standing policies that are being revised in the light of current concerns for enhancing the quality of education at The UWI. These include Matriculation; Assessment Practices; Grade Point Average; Foundation Courses and the Roles of the Board for Undergraduate Studies and Academic Boards in the Approval Processes of UWI Undergraduate Programmes. The Quality Circle revisits these policies to focus on their rationale.

*Dr. Sandra Gift, Senior Programme Officer
Quality Assurance Unit, St. Augustine Campus,
Office of the Board for Undergraduate Studies*

¹ The 1994 UWI Chancellor's Commission on Governance cited in OBUS (2000/2001). The University of the West Indies Quality Assurance Strategy: The System in Action. (p.149).

WELCOME... TIMES 2!

Professor Alvin Wint



Professor Alvin Wint was appointed Pro-Vice Chancellor, Undergraduate Studies and Chair of the Board for Undergraduate Studies at the start of the 2007-2008 academic year. This is the first issue of the Quality Circle since Professor Wint assumed duties as Chair of the BUS, and The Quality Circle takes this opportunity to welcome him and to wish him all success in his leadership of the Board. Professor Wint's vision statement for the BUS is as follows:

The Board for Undergraduate Studies, supported by the Office of the Board, needs to continue to play a strategically active role within the University which would include a focus on the activities listed below.

- Leading the implementation of the teaching and learning component of The UWI 2007-2012 strategic plan.
- Managing the monitoring of programme and departmental quality through quality assurance and accreditation processes.
- Assisting in the development of internal quality management and enhancement processes.
- Advocating, and assisting in the implementation of, appropriate process and programmatic changes geared toward transforming undergraduate students and improving the quality of their University experience.
- Liaising with key external groups, particularly in critical matters affecting undergraduate students.
- Authorizing the introduction of new programmes.
- Generating and disseminating relevant information and research relating to the experience of undergraduate students.

Dr. John Campbell



Dr. John F. Campbell joined the Office of the Board for Undergraduate Studies (OBUS) as Senior Programme Officer at the start of the 2007-2008 academic year. He has responsibility for the revision of Foundation Courses and is based at the St. Augustine Campus. Dr. Campbell was originally a lecturer in Caribbean Civilisation and Gender Studies at the Mona Campus and later at the St. Augustine Campus. He completed his PhD at the University of Cambridge in 1999 after having completed MPhils in Intellectual History and Historical Studies at Cambridge and at The UWI, St. Augustine Campus. He has published widely in his areas of interest which

include West African Enslavement in the British Caribbean, Gender Studies and Historiography. He is also a recipient of the Vice Chancellor's award for excellence in the area of teaching. His current interests are basketball (watching) and running from chocolate cakes (his passion).

Grade Point Average

The introduction of the University-wide Grade Point Average (GPA) policy in the academic year 2003/2004 was one of the most significant decisions taken by the Board for Undergraduate Studies (BUS) since its establishment in 1996. For almost four years, the Office of the Board for Undergraduate Studies (OBUS) engaged the entire University of the West Indies academic community in discussions, deliberations, and workshops on various grade point schemes that could be considered suitable for the University. At the heart of the discourse, at the time, was the concern that the University should retain the prevailing grading scheme and classification of degrees within the grade point scheme being devised. The path taken was strongly influenced by what was taking place outside of the region, where grade point average had been viewed as an objective and transparent method of degree classification. There was an indication that consideration was being given to using GPA in some British Universities because the 'old' classification system that The UWI inherited might no longer serve its purpose. Another argument was that most of the graduates of The UWI pursue graduate programmes in the United States, where The UWIs grading system and degree classification are not easily interpreted. Persuasive arguments used in support of the introduction of GPA included: (i) it allowed students to keep track of their performance; (ii) the determination of class of degree would be more objective and transparent and (iii) GPA would also provide both the regional and international communities with information having international currency and meaning.

GPA transformed the way in which The UWI provided its students with information about their performance from semester to semester, year to year. Further, it allowed students to calculate their class of degree with the support of the online services.

The UWI community has now settled down into a GPA culture, though not without some challenges experienced by academics, administrators and students. The University is committed to a review of the entire process even as it begins to consider the introduction of GPA for taught master's programmes.

Foundation Courses



Ms. Christine Randle of Ian Randle Publishers presents to Mrs. Norma Amenu-Kpodo Campus Librarian (Mona) a copy of one of the books to be used to support Foundation Courses. Looking on is PVC Wint (Chair, BUS).

A rethinking and revision of the teaching/learning culture of Foundation Courses (FD courses) is currently underway, led by Dr. John Campbell, Senior Programme Officer, Office of the Board for Undergraduate Studies (OBUS). A report of the revisions being considered presented to the Board for Undergraduate Studies (BUS) in January 2008 noted that a new approach ought to be adopted in the teaching/learning experiences of students. The report suggested ways in which the Foundation Courses could be improved in the context of The UWI strategic plan 2007-2012 and especially since these courses have had mixed reviews from students and staff.

The recommendations tabled address the need to, among other things, (i) conduct a quality assurance review of all FD courses; (ii) allow on-campus students to access FD courses that are offered online; (iii) ensure that FD courses are normally completed at Levels 1 and/or 2; (iv) allow students to do the FD course(s) offered from within their faculty; (v) review all readers for these courses and (vi) standardise the course materials across the University.

Co-Curricular Credits



Minding SPEC student Kervin Jean (centre) going over strategies for the afternoon's volleyball match at the St. Augustine campus.

Based on the premise that the learning experience of students goes well beyond the confines of the lecture rooms and laboratories, the University approved the award of credits for a number of co-curricular programmes across the three campuses. This allows undergraduates to participate in selected programmes approved and certified by the offices responsible for Student Services, to receive three credits and request that co-curricular activities be recorded on their transcripts.

Co-curricular activities available at Cave Hill, Mona and St. Augustine include sports, debating, leadership, photography and steelpan music.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT FOR CO-CURRICULAR COMPETITORS

A policy paper addressing the issue of the co-curricular competitor, an aspect of co-curricular credits not previously considered, was submitted for the consideration of the Board for Undergraduate Studies (BUS) at its January 2008 meeting. The

policy outlines the special academic support to be provided to students participating in these activities and who become co-curricular competitors at the national, regional or international level. Those participating at the intercampus level with legitimate concerns could also avail themselves of these special provisions. The support falls into the following four categories:

- Flexible Assessment – Students who, because of time and travel commitments, find it difficult to hand in course assignments on time, will be able to work out with their lecturers alternative arrangements that seek to retain the validity of the assessment process. All relevant information pertaining to these arrangements must be provided in advance to the department and lecturer by the student competitor and the relevant campus office or officer.
- Flexible Tutorial Support – Students will be provided with flexible tutorial support which will be paid for from a special central campus co-curricular competition fund established by each campus.
- Alternative Final Examinations – Efforts will be made to schedule alternative final examinations for students who are involved in important competitive meets that clash with final examinations. Any attendant costs will be met from the campus co-curricular competition fund.
- Access to Summer School – Students will be allowed to participate in summer school programmes in faculties that offer such programmes without paying tuition fees. This will allow them to maintain progress with their academic cohorts. The tuition costs will be met from the campus co-curricular competition fund. The implementation of this policy will further emphasize the importance that The UWI places on the holistic educational experience of its students.

The Preparation of the Distinctive UWI Graduate



Strategic Aim 1 of the UWI 2007-2012 strategic plan is the preparation of the distinctive UWI graduate for the 21st Century. A central focus of the activities of The UWI, therefore, is to produce functional graduates, equipped with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to provide strong leadership for the Caribbean region. It is expected that UWI graduates will be problem-solvers; open and receptive to the mass of information available from a variety of sources; advanced, higher order cognitive thinkers; creators of new forms of knowledge which can advance the development of the human race; effective communicators and responsive to social needs. The development of these characteristics in students requires the creation of a learning environment at The UWI that supports students in becoming independent learners, able to initiate and manage change; to rely on their intellectual resources, emotional intelligence and resourcefulness to achieve their work and community objectives and goals. The success of this goal requires that these characteristics be also embraced by academics and administrators.

The curriculum is the avenue along which students are guided to the learning outcomes which are expected and the current on-going exercise of curriculum reform is, therefore, supportive of the attainment of this priority strategic aim. The Board for Undergraduate Studies (BUS) spearheads the implementation of the teaching and learning component of the 2007-2012 strategic plan and, consequently, plays a critical role in supporting the preparation of the distinctive UWI graduate.

In support of the curriculum reform process, the Office of the Board for Undergraduate Studies (OBUS) has prepared two papers: *Curricula Reform at UWI: Perspectives of Quality Assurance Reviewers, and Curricula Reform at UWI: Insights from Departmental Plans*. This programme of curriculum reform has also been supported by the Instructional Development Units (IDUs). The three IDUs have collaborated on a paper, *Guidelines for a Review of the Curriculum*, that serves to assist departments as they engage in their curriculum reform efforts.

Embedding Good Assessment Practices at The UWI



The recognition by institutions of higher education that assessment forms an integral part of the learning experience of students has led to the development of codes of practice such as those developed by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, in the United Kingdom, in 2000. These codes of practice encourage innovation and diversity in assessment and assessment practices.

In keeping with this trend to implement best practices in assessment, in April 2005 a Committee to review the Examination processes of The University of the West Indies (UWI) was established by the Vice Chancellor. Three of the Committee's tasks were to:

- Identify the major problems affecting the examination process;
- Review "best practices" within The UWI and at other institutions with a semester system and large classes of students;
- Make succinct, clear and specific recommendations for change.

One of the problems identified by this Committee was "Inadequate knowledge, among academic staff, of the purpose of student assessment, its integral role in curriculum development and delivery and the need for considerations of reliability and validity in designing and using appropriate assessment methods to test for specific outcomes."

In its July 2005 report, the Committee therefore recommended, among other things, that:

- Faculties should develop their own curriculum development policy and assessment guidelines;
- Departments should assume more responsibility for the examination/assessment process;
- Academic staff should undergo training in curriculum development and review with particular emphasis on the importance of assessment in the curriculum development process.

A Task Force was commissioned in September 2005 to implement the recommendations of this report. The Task Force's Report to Council in April 2007 indicated that several important initiatives had been undertaken. These included:

- The publication and dissemination of a resource booklet entitled Student Essentials Handbook prepared by the managers of the Instructional Development Units (IDUs) of the three campuses;
- The introduction of team marking for large classes;
- The training of academic staff by the IDU.

The development of a curriculum development philosophy as well as the establishment of monitoring mechanisms to ensure the efficient functioning of the examination/assessment processes are ongoing. However, the Board for Undergraduate Studies (BUS) recognised that the regulations of the existing examination system were restricting the use of innovative assessment practices. It therefore decided to change the University examination regulations to place the responsibility for determining how courses were to be assessed with faculties.

Embedding Good Assessment Practices at The UWI cont'd

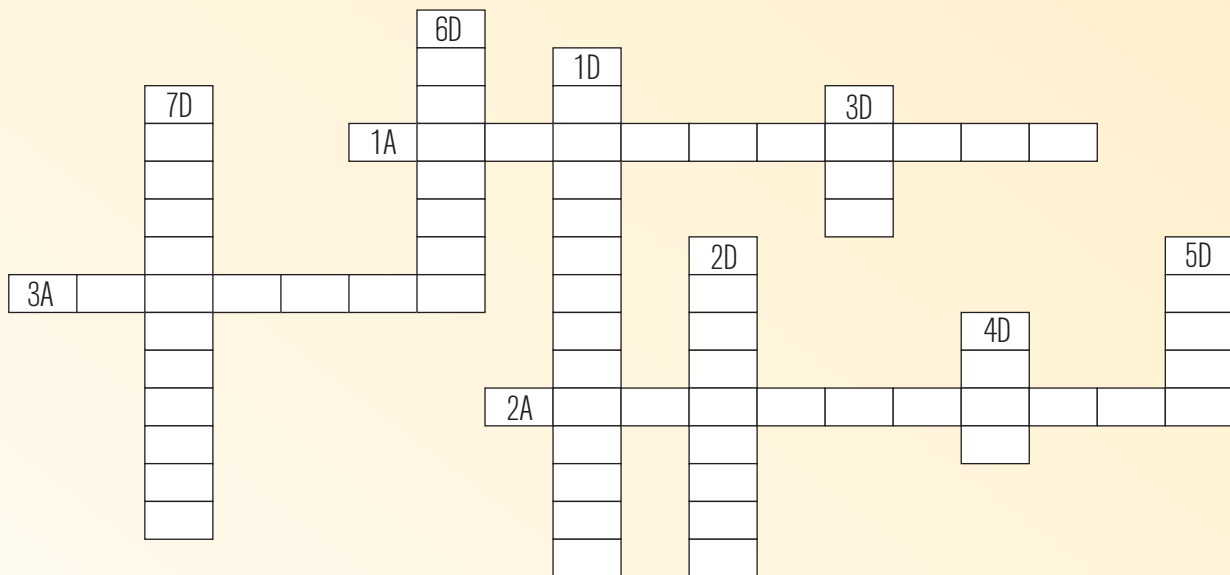
This means that the proportion of assessment allocated to various types of course work and to final examinations would be determined at the faculty level. The Board also determined that all approved faculty assessment structures should be submitted to Campus Academic Quality Assurance Committees (AQACs) and that AQACs should routinely check a random sample of course outlines to ensure consonance with approved structures.

Once assessment strategies have been approved by faculties for courses and programmes, these should be communicated to students in course outlines and therefore would serve as contracts between academic staff and students. Students would be made aware of their rights to expect staff to comply with these decisions. As such no changes should be made to agreed assessment strategies

without resubmission for approval to the Chairman of AQAC on the campus or, in the case of regional courses such as Foundation courses, to the Office of the Board for Undergraduate Studies (OBUS).

In addition to changing examination regulations to allow faculties to decide on the proportion of assessment to be allocated to course work, BUS approved changes to examination regulations that would facilitate assessment of the ability of students to work in teams, allow for a more liberal process of assessing the communication skills of students, and facilitate greater use of calculators in examinations so that additional focus can be placed on testing the analytical and reasoning skills of students.

QUALITY WORD-O-GRAM



Clues

DOWN

- 1D Documents where UWI wants to be in 2012 (9, 4)
- 2D 2nd half of dynamic duo (8)
- 3D Board Chairman (3)
- 4D Board for all undergraduate matters (3)
- 5D **T**ogether **E**veryone **A**chieves **M**ore
- 6D BUS focus 1 (7)
- 7D BUS focus 3 (11)

ACROSS

- 1A Prepared after a Review (6, 4)
- 2A All Departments currently reviewing this (10)
- 3A BUS focus (6)

THE APPROVAL OF UWI UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMMES

A policy paper submitted for the consideration of the Board for Undergraduate Studies (BUS) in October, 2007 clarified the roles of BUS and Academic Boards in the processes of the approval of undergraduate programmes. This policy paper was set against the background of the continuing concern to reduce the level of bureaucracy and delay in The UWI's decision-making processes.

THE ROLE OF THE CAMPUS

Campus Academic Boards are to be responsible for approving all courses and the syllabi and curricula associated with new programmes or changes to existing programmes. Academic Quality Assurance Committees are to continue to provide the appropriate scrutiny to proposals for new academic programmes or changes to existing programmes. Once syllabi and courses associated with programmes have been approved by Academic Boards there would be no need for these syllabi or other elements of curricula to be forwarded to BUS. Although this differs from current practice, it requires no change in the University's Ordinances since Ordinance 28 provides for an Academic Board to have the functions of considering and approving curricula and syllabi for courses of study at its campus, other than postgraduate courses of study.

THE ROLE OF BUS

At the same time, in fulfilling its mandate "to direct and regulate teaching and instruction of undergraduate studies at UWI", BUS should continue to be the sole agent of the University with responsibility for authorizing the introduction of new undergraduate programmes or major changes to existing programmes. In fulfilling this mandate, however, BUS should not seek to replicate the course, syllabi and curricula approval roles of the Academic Boards. BUS' responsibility is to ensure that new programmes strengthen the University as a regional institution. It will do this by ensuring that new programmes, or major changes to existing programmes, benefit from inter-campus peer review and acceptance prior to implementation.

Proposals to BUS for the introduction of new undergraduate programmes, or major changes to existing programmes, should be accompanied by evidence that the programmes have been considered by the relevant peer departments. The document to be submitted to BUS for authorization should, therefore, include a report of the Academic Board (and AQAC)'s consideration of the programme, the responses from peer departments on other campuses, and a report indicating how the suggestions emanating from these responses have been incorporated into the new programme design, or a defence as to why they have not been incorporated, if there are differences of views among departments. It is on the basis of this documentation that BUS will authorize the introduction of new programmes. Since BUS will not itself be conducting a peer review of the programme, there is no requirement for syllabi or curricula in relation to the programme to be submitted to BUS as part of the authorization process. As is provided for in the statutes, BUS can delegate its authority in these matters to the Chair of BUS in order to ensure that there are no undue delays in the authorization process.

MATRICULATION



Since the adoption of the 'mature student' clause as a matriculation policy, the University continues to review its admissions policy to ensure that it attracts high performing students. The Review of Admissions Process and Practice at The UWI 2006/2007, commissioned by the Vice Chancellor, chaired by the University Registrar and supported by the Office of the Board for Undergraduate Studies (OBUS), considered the recruitment, marketing and admissions strategies at other institutions that attract the region's 'best and brightest'. The Report of that review will help to inform and influence matriculation policy at The UWI.

Matriculation requirements at The UWI are constantly reviewed. As new qualifications and programmes from tertiary level institutions are submitted to The UWI to be considered for matriculation purposes and students seek exemptions and credit for University level courses, the Board for Undergraduate Studies (BUS) has had to re-examine The UWI's admissions policy to reflect the changes in higher education taking place in the region and elsewhere.

EXIT SURVEYS



Ms. Jacqueline Moniquette, Senior Programme Officer, Quality Assurance Unit, presents a laptop computer to Tara Hinds of the Faculty of Social Sciences, Cave Hill Campus, winner of the 2007 Student Exit Survey lottery. Also in the photograph are Dr. Anna Perkins, Programme Officer, OBUS; Mrs. Harriet Yearwood, Director of Student Services and Mr. Luke Brown, former president of the Student Guild.
Photo courtesy: Mr. Anthony Perry, Senior Programme Officer, OBUS



PVC, Professor Alvin Wint presents a laptop computer to Chavanie Hilory Clarke of the Faculty of Social Sciences, Mona Campus, winner of the 2007 Student Exit Survey lottery.
Photo courtesy: Mr. Anthony Perry, Senior Programme Officer, OBUS



Professor Gurmohan Kochhar, Deputy Principal, St Augustine Campus presents a laptop computer to Kevon S. Ramjohn, of the Faculty of Engineering, winner of the 2007 Student Exit Survey lottery. Looking on are (l-r) Dr. Sandra Gift, Ms. Alysha Deonanan, and Ms. Nalini Deyalsingh, Senior Secretary, Deputy Principal's Office.
Photo courtesy: Mr. Richard Spence, Medical Photographer, Faculty of Medical Sciences, St Augustine Campus

Since 2004, the Office of the Board for Undergraduate Studies (OBUS) has conducted an Exit Survey to obtain feedback on the perceptions of students, expected to complete their degree, of their UWI undergraduate experience. The Survey is administered on each campus, through face-to-face and online questionnaires, and with the help of undergraduate and postgraduate students. For the past two years, the Offices of the Deputy Principal on each campus have supported the efforts of the OBUS to motivate students to complete the questionnaires by offering an incentive. In 2007, a laptop was given to a lucky student who completed the questionnaire and whose name was entered in a draw.

While overall satisfaction with The UWI experience showed a steady improvement over the years, students indicate dissatisfaction with some aspects of the academic and administrative systems and resources that support teaching and learning. Since 2005, the Survey findings have revealed that graduating students feel that there should be more practical

courses – linking theory to the working environment; improvement in the quality of teaching and academic advising, revised course loads, improved customer service and expanded student facilities. Concerns about parking, food service, security, and classroom space have also been raised.

Despite recommended improvements, some bad experiences, the theoretical nature of some courses and the absence of a student-centered environment, described by some students, a majority of students continue to indicate that The UWI is the 'best university in the Caribbean'; is a 'good institution (despite the drawbacks)'. They feel that they had a 'good academic and social experience'; that The UWI made them well-rounded and built their maturity.

The Exit Survey is now entrenched in the culture of the University and OBUS will continue to provide the University community with the information necessary to inform policy and practice in all areas of the undergraduate experience.

Certificate in University Teaching and Learning

At its January 2008 meeting, the Board for Undergraduate Studies (BUS) received and approved a paper proposing the establishing of a UWI Certificate in Teaching and Learning, subject to editorial amendments; greater specificity about the way in which the proposal would be articulated with the Masters/Diploma in Tertiary Level Teaching; a clearer indication of how prior learning would be assessed, and a more fulsome outlining of the modules. The Certificate programme which will be offered through the IDUs, requires 15 credits for completion (84 contact hours, plus directed readings

and structured experiential and reflective learning). Academic staff can receive exemptions from modules based upon a structured process of prior learning assessment. The BUS proposed that all newly-appointed academic staff be required to begin the programme by the time they come up for first consideration for normal contract extension and complete the programme prior to consideration for tenure or promotion to senior lecturer. New staff will therefore be given priority in the programme, but any interested member of The UWI academic staff will be eligible and is encouraged to participate.



St. Augustine Campus Registered!

The Board of Directors of the Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago (ACTT) has registered the University of the West Indies (UWI), St. Augustine Campus for a period of three years. This registration took effect on 27th March, 2008 and will terminate on 26th March, 2011. The Campus is, consequently, now listed on the National Register of Post-Secondary and Tertiary Institutions of Trinidad and Tobago.

The team of external evaluators for the registration exercise comprised Dr. John Randall (Chairman), formerly of the Quality Assurance Agency in the United Kingdom, Professor Frederick Emshousen of Purdue University and Dr. Trevor Gardner of the University of the Southern Caribbean. The external evaluators found that "...all criteria for registration were fully met."² They were impressed by the overall approach to quality assurance, including the role played by the Instructional Development Unit (IDU). They reported that many "...academic staff spoke positively of the process of quality assurance reviews, and the systems are

clearly well embedded".³ Overall, they found The UWI, St Augustine to be "...a mature, high quality institution."⁴

They noted amongst teaching staff a "...willing acceptance that the quality of teaching and learning services delivered to students is the responsibility of teachers themselves".⁵ They also commented that the responsibility for quality was well balanced between academic staff and the Campus' Quality Management System. The team was impressed with the engagement of teaching staff in the on-going curriculum review exercise and, in particular, validated the efforts being made to link curricula not only to specific learning outcomes of disciplines and programmes but also to the attributes expected of the ideal UWI graduate.

The investment by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago in the St. Augustine Campus was viewed as a significant contributing factor to the Campus "...being developed to a standard that matches equivalent higher education facilities in the developed world."⁶

In terms of institutional advancement, the team offered some suggestions as a contribution to the discourse within The UWI. They suggested that (i) the Campus should plan for a future in which current levels of public investment may no longer be possible; (ii) attention must be given to the systematic quality assurance of administrative and support services; and (iii) The UWI should reflect on the benefits of professional, peer judgement of teaching and the role of classroom observation in this.

² The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago (ACTT) (2008). External Evaluators' Site Visit Report for the Application for Registration by the University of the West Indies, St Augustine Campus, p. 6

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid, p.11

⁶ Ibid, p.14

QUALITY WORD-O-GRAM

Solution

QUALITY FORA QUALITY FORA

Mona Campus

The Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) on the Mona campus has organized two quality fora for the academic year 2007-08. In Semester I, the forum was entitled "Supervising Quality Theses" and was aimed at members of staff who were supervising both undergraduate dissertations and postgraduate theses. Twenty-eight staff members gathered to share experiences, learn from best practices, and identify potential problems and possible solutions. Most of the participants found the forum very interesting or interesting. Presenters included Professor Anthony Clayton (Institute of Sustainable Development), Dr. Karen Carpenter (Jamaica Language Unit), Professor Yvette Jackson (Chemistry/Graduate Studies) and Dr. Mervin Chisholm (IDU). The forum was well received and some of the evaluation comments included: "great", "congratulations", "very good start to what might become a more focused follow up forum", "we can see the light at the end of the tunnel", "good job", etc. The key complaint was that it was too short ("more time and depth," "longer interactive sessions", "insufficient time to discuss the student-learning approach"). It was clear that they felt a session was needed just to work on the role of the supervisor itself, which the IDU promised to organise.

In March of Semester II, a second forum was held in collaboration with the Office for Graduate Studies. Postgraduate students were the target audience. It was entitled "Preparing a Quality Thesis" and had the intent also to provide an opportunity for postgraduate students who are writing dissertations to share experiences, learn from best practices, and identify potential problems and possible solutions. This was done through conversations, presentations and discussions with present students (Ms. Angella Stephens (OBUS and Bath University) and UWI graduates (Dr. Norman Townsend and Dr. Earl Green) as well as current supervisors of graduate students (Professor Paul Reese (Chemistry), Professor

Yvette Jackson (Chemistry/Graduate Studies), Dr. Tomlin Paul (Medical Sciences), Professor Anthony Clayton (Institute of Sustainable Development), and Dr. Karen Carpenter (Jamaica Language Unit). Sixty-two postgraduate students ranging from MA to PhD candidates attended. Most found the session interesting and useful. Key recommendations included: giving more time to discussing the issues, having more persons from administration present and careful follow up to ensure that the suggestions made by students are implemented.

Cave Hill Campus

The Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) at Cave Hill held its sixth Quality Forum on November 26th 2007. The theme of the Forum was "Post Graduate Students – No Short Cut to Excellence." There were 16 participants representing the Faculty of Law; the Faculty of Social Sciences; the Faculty of Science and Technology and postgraduate students.

Ms. Jacqueline Moniquette, Senior Programme Officer of the QAU, welcomed participants. She informed them that the UWI strategic plan for the period 2007-2012 explicitly stated that "the future success of UWI requires both the growth and quality enhancement of graduate studies". It was in this context that the QAU had decided to provide this opportunity for students and staff to engage in a dialogue about the state of play of graduate studies at the Cave Hill campus.

Ms. Moniquette's presentation outlined some of the compelling reasons driving the demand for high quality postgraduate education, The UWI's response to this demand and the challenges of globalization. She defined the attributes of a quality postgraduate student, identified some of the challenges that The UWI was facing and examined how well it was measuring up in terms of creating the kind of environment in which postgraduate students could flourish. She ended by offering some suggestions that would assist the University to achieve its goals.

Presentations were also made by Dr. Pearson Bromes, Lecturer in Political Science, Faculty of Social Sciences and Mr. Leroy Mc Clean, President of the Cave Hill Association of Postgraduate Students. Dr. Broome's presentation gave his perspective of the expectations and challenges encountered in trying to deliver quality postgraduate programmes from the point of view of the lecturer as well as the students. He emphasized the need for aiming for excellence of output, indicating that this required readiness on the part of students so that the transition from undergraduate to postgraduate education would be less stressful.

Mr. Mc Clean set out the rules governing both the administrative and academic aspects of postgraduate education. Participants took the opportunity to seek clarification on a number of issues relating to the implementation of these rules.



Quality Forum Participant reading a copy of *The Quality Circle* at UWI Mona Campus.

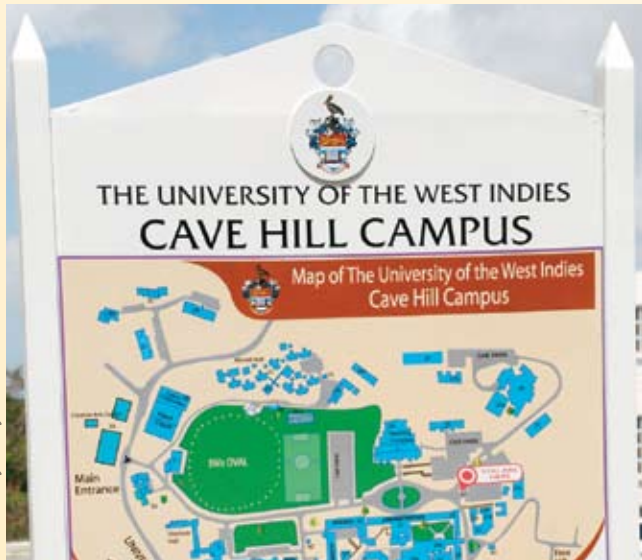


Photo courtesy: Gabby Woodham

Site map at The UWI, Cave Hill Campus.

Of the eleven participants who completed the evaluation questionnaire, 64% found it very interesting or interesting, indicated that their expectations were met to some extent and that the duration was just right. For the remainder, the Forum met their expectations sufficiently, was somewhat interesting but too long. The written comments indicated that though the Forum was considered a great idea, unless certain fundamental challenges were addressed, it would have little effect. It was noted that there was inadequate representation from the entire campus as six participants came from the department of biological and chemical sciences and that senior administrative and academic staff should have attended.

St. Augustine Campus

The Quality Assurance Unit (QAU), St Augustine Campus, held its sixth Quality Forum on April 17th, 2008. Designed for Administrative Assistants, the theme of the Forum was "Developing the Quality Manual". The objectives of the Forum were to:

- (i) review the indicators of quality at departmental level;
- (ii) discuss the importance of a departmental Quality Manual and
- (iii) explore with Administrative Assistants the ways in which they could support the preparation of departmental Quality Manuals.

The Senior Programme Officer of the QAU, Dr. Sandra Gift, in her opening remarks, highlighted the importance of documenting systems and procedures to monitor quality at departmental level, both as a tool for institutional quality enhancement and to ensure compliance with the requirements of relevant national, regional and international accreditation bodies. She discussed with participants guidelines for developing the Quality Manual using

the following quality indicators:

- (i) mission/aims/objectives/strategic plan/operational plan;
- (ii) course/programme development and review;
- (iii) delivery and management of courses;
- (iv) course/programme assessment;
- (v) learning outcomes;
- (vi) staff meetings;
- (vii) student feedback and data;
- (viii) external opinion;
- (ix) student profile;
- (x) student support;
- (xi) resources to support student learning;
- (xii) staffing and staff development;
- (xiii) relationship between research and undergraduate training;
- (xiv) quality assurance and enhancement.

Twenty-seven persons participated in the Forum representing all faculties, the Arthur Lok Jack Graduate School of Business, the Office of the Campus Registrar, and the Campus Information Technology Services. All of the participants found the Forum to be very useful or useful and that it helped them to understand the processes involved in developing a Quality Manual. Ninety-six percent stated that they would benefit from further training to support their departments in developing a Quality Manual and 88% indicated that they planned to initiate the preparation of a Quality Manual in their department. Fifty-two percent felt that they could prepare a first draft of the Quality Manual by the end of Semester 1 of the 2008-2009 academic year, albeit with support from the QAU. The most frequently occurring comments on the evaluation questionnaires related to the timeliness of the workshop and the need to have it over a longer period of time. Generally, the response to the Forum is indicative of the enthusiasm of those who participated to become key players in the deepening of the culture of quality at The UWI, St Augustine Campus.



Dr. Sandra Gift discusses with participants the importance of the departmental Quality Manual.

NEWS OF REVIEWS, QUALITY EVALUATIONS & SURVEYS

QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEWS 2007 - 2008

CAVE HILL

- Law
- Psychology
- Economics
- French

MONA

- Biotechnology Centre
- French

ST. AUGUSTINE

- Chemical Engineering
- Department of Agricultural Economics & Extension
- Department of Food Production

QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEWS 2008 - 2009

CAVE HILL

- Chemistry
- History
- Literatures in English
- Cave Hill School of Business
- Clinical Medical Sciences

MONA

- UTech-UWI Hospitality Joint Degree
- Psychology
- Social Work
- Sociology
- Theology (St. Michael's and United Theological College)
- BBMedSci
- Instructional Development Unit
- Institute of Caribbean Studies

ST. AUGUSTINE

- Theology (Regional Seminary)
- Mechanical Engineering
- Health Services Unit
- School of Nursing
- Public Health and Primary Care
- Pharmacology

QUALITY EVALUATIONS 2007 - 2008

CAVE HILL

- Social Work
- Gender Studies
- History
- Literatures in English
- Biology
- Chemistry
- Law

MONA

- Educational Studies
- Library and Information Studies
- French
- Theology
- Government

ST. AUGUSTINE

- Centre for Creative and Festival Arts
- Social Work
- Literatures in English
- Pharmacy

QUALITY EVALUATIONS 2008 - 2009

CAVE HILL

- Sociology
- Physics
- Philosophy
- Linguistics
- Spanish
- Management Studies

MONA

- Institute of Caribbean Studies
- Chemistry
- Computer Science

ST. AUGUSTINE

- Chemistry
- Physics
- Electrical & Computer Engineering
- Clinical Medical Sciences
- Management Studies & Accounting
- School of Dentistry
- Centre for Gender & Development Studies

SURVEYS 2008

- Exit Survey 2008

EDITOR'S NOTE: Quality Evaluations at The UWI are also referred to as Quality Audits: a review of systems and procedures in place to monitor quality.