

UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES

Student Representation on the APC

Background

It has always been envisaged that there should be student representation on the UWIDEC Academic Programme Committee. But no process has yet been found for identifying a representative.

One issue that has entered these discussions concerns the relation of distance education students to the University's formal structures for the representation of students. This was controversial when DEC students were notionally registered at different campuses – it is difficult to see why a Belizean student should contribute to student facilities on the Mona campus. But however that is resolved, the new structure for the DEC (where registration will be via the DEC and not a campus) implies that its students form a collectivity parallel to the three groups of campus students, so that they should be represented on the APC in the same way as on-campus students are represented at Academic Board and other committees.

The scattered and increasingly asynchronous nature of DEC students' interaction with the University makes traditional ways of selecting representatives virtually irrelevant. However, DEC students are for the most part in touch with a DEC site; students normally related to a site constitute then a group that may be about as coherent as students registered on a campus.

Proposal

Site spokesperson

It is proposed that at each DEC site, the DEC students be invited to identify among themselves a representative spokesperson. It is strongly recommended that that spokesperson be easily accessible via e-mail, so that he or she can gather ideas and issues from the group at the site and transmit these issues to other spokespeople and in particular the student representative on the APC.

APC representative

Two possibilities suggest themselves for selecting the actual student representative on the APC.

1. A random selection is made from among the names of all DEC site spokespersons. The 'winner' is then the person who will be invited to APC meetings.

If this were to be adopted as the procedure, another issue that each site's students would need to take into consideration would be the availability of their spokesperson to travel to meetings. (Spokespeople could elect, perhaps, not to be entered into the lottery.)

2. The spokesperson at the nearest location to the APC meeting would become the student representative for that particular meeting. This would save a little money, but at the cost of debarring NCC and non-campus representatives (unless the APC decides to meet elsewhere in future) and of losing continuity of student representation (though it is expected that there will be extensive networking among all site spokespersons).
3. A compromise third scenario might be suggested – a lottery restricted to sites associated with the north-western Caribbean or the OECS and southern Caribbean.

*Office of the Board for NCC/DE
October 22, 2004*