

**THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES**

**Matters from a Meeting of the Board for Non-Campus Countries and Distance  
Education**

**Held on May 8, 2004 at the Heritage Hotel, Antigua,  
to the UWI Distance Education Centre Academic Programme Committee**

The APC is asked to note the following matters:

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:**

*Director of UWIDEC and other staff matters*

48. The Chair noted that Professor Stewart Marshall had begun work as Director of the UWIDEC on March 22, 2004 and is based at the Cave Hill Campus like his predecessor Professor Badri Koul.
49. The Chair reported with regret the resignation of Dr. Krishnapillai Murugan, Curriculum Specialist of the UWIDEC, who would be leaving on May 18<sup>th</sup>. He would return to India to rejoin his family and to take up a post at a new open university there.
50. The process of selection of persons to fill the posts of Senior Assistant Registrar, Assistant Registrar, Finance Officer and Programme Coordinator of the Distance Education Centre had been completed. Agreement had also been reached with the Campus on extension work to the Outreach Building to accommodate the new staff. Offers had been made and responses were awaited.

*Meeting with Antigua Minister of Education*

51. The Chair reported that on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> March, he, together with Professor Stewart Marshall and Mr Ed Brandon had met with the Minister of Education, the Honourable Mr. Bertrand Joseph. There was some discussion on collaboration with the Government of Antigua and Barbuda on the advancement of the tertiary sector through the amalgamation of Antigua's institutions under a single umbrella. The Minister also expressed interest in the development of video-teleconferencing as part of the expansion of distance education, in the improvement of national library services, and in the issue of accreditation, certification and the portability of credentials in the Caribbean Single Market and Economy.

*Caribbean Knowledge and Learning Network (CKLN)*

64. The Chair reported that in February, Grenada was host to the inaugural meeting of the Caribbean Knowledge and Learning Network (CKLN), a venture being promoted by the World Bank with strong support by the governments of the OECS. Representatives of UWI attended the meeting and the University had subsequently expressed a strong interest in the development of the project. The Chairman cautioned that no money has yet been provided for actual hardware and systems but only for project development. It is anticipated that the TLIs in the region will be linked by satellite via the E-Link Americas project.

*Matriculation matter for BUS (Min.17)*

66. The Chair observed that this matter had been sent to the Board for Undergraduate Studies and its acceptance by that Board was reported in the Minutes of the Academic Programme Committee (APC.P.11) which would be considered later.

*E-mail submission of assignments (Min. 24)*

67. The Chair noted that this suggestion too had been accepted by the two Boards to which it had been sent and they had asked that regulations be adjusted to accommodate it. Mrs Pilgrim reported that a meeting to consider examination regulations in general but with a specific concern for the consequences of digital texts would be held soon at Cave Hill.

*Membership of APC (Min.29)*

68. The Chair indicated that he had not revised the membership of the APC as he wished to give the new Director time to become familiar with its operation.

*MOU for Nevis (Min.39)*

69. The Chair observed that progress on this item should now await consideration of a wider policy paper (BNCC/DE.P. 12), to be taken later in the meeting.

**Minutes of the UWIDEC Academic Programme Committee held on April 2, 2004**

72. The Chair introduced BNCC/DE. P. 11, Minutes of the UWIDEC Academic Programme Committee held on April 2. The Board noted in particular:

- #63 consideration of revised membership of the APC.
- #64 action to allow students to benefit from changes in "double counting" rules.
- #65 a request to arrange for necessary regulations to be formulated to give the UWIDEC authority for registrations, etc.
- #66 assurance from the Board for Undergraduate Studies that it had approved a request for provisional registration and that this would be communicated to relevant officers.
- #67 agreement of other Boards to proposed changes to Examination regulations to allow for e-mail submission of coursework.
- #68 implementation of a decision to provide on-line access to the Committee's documents.
- #69 imminent meeting with the University Librarian on the use of funds for library staff in the non-campus countries.
- #70 The Chair noted that Mr Ken Sylvester had been appointed project manager of the CKLN.

- #72 The Chair reported that the planned computer upgrade should be completed by the new academic year.
- #78 Professor Chevannes recorded his dismay at the unintentional short-changing of students in the DEC version of SY32E, since they had not been required to pass the usual pre-requisites. Dr Osoba reported that these students were also disadvantaged by the non-arrival of course materials.
- #79 The Chair asked Dr Ghany to consult with colleagues on the decision of Academic Board, St Augustine, to check students' employment status if they registered as full-time distance education students. In discussion the problems of students registering full-time while also in full-time employment was aired and the new circumstances created by on-line access were noted. It was agreed that a paper should be prepared for University Finance and General Purposes Committee that should be sent simultaneously to the Academic Boards setting out suggestions for a comprehensive rethinking of regulations on this matter.  
**Action: Office of the Board and DEC.**
- #80 Mrs Pilgrim reported that a small committee would be presenting a recommendation to BUS on movement between certificates, diplomas and degree programmes. It was noted that these recommendations should cohere with the various articulation arrangements designed by the TLIU.
- #81 An "Evening University" launched the previous day by the Principal, St Augustine. Mrs Pilgrim outlined the discussions leading up to the launch and the regulatory changes required. PVC Hamilton compared the proposal with current practice at the other campuses, particularly Cave Hill, and it was noted that elsewhere facilities for students attending after normal working hours were minimal or non-existent. Ms Bellot observed that the operation of the DEC similarly short-changed students. Professor Young suggested that the St Augustine initiative provided an opportune moment to look closely at current practice throughout the University. **Action: Office of the Board**
- #93 on proposals to establish representation for UWIDEC students. PVC Hamilton observed that the Deputy Principals should be involved in these discussions.

### **Policy on non-UWI sites**

73. The Chair asked Mr Brandon to present BNCC/DE. P.12, Policy on non-UWI sites, that had been passed on for consideration from the APC. The Chair added details of the practical difficulties of jurisdiction and of extra-budgetary expenditures that had resulted from existing practice.

74. In discussion, Professor Young observed that it appeared the University was caught on the wrong foot, responsive rather than taking the initiative, unable to engage in hard bargaining with other groups. There was need for a more entrepreneurial approach, with serious attempts to discover what the market demands. Dr Peters stressed the variety of providers with which the DEC is involved. The Chair drew attention to the disaggregation of the costs of distance education required by the proposal; it was noted that much work had already been done on these issues in general.

75. The Board endorsed the general direction outlined in the paper and agreed that a follow-up paper should be produced. **Action: Office of the Board and DEC.**

### **Open access to research**

76. The Chair invited Mr Brandon to present BNCC/DE. P.13, Open access to research, which had also been sent on from the APC. It proposed:

- Provisions for the electronic submission and examination of theses.
- Activity to focus on and recognise the value of Internet material in teaching and research.
- Suggestions for a policy to require open access dissemination of UWI-funded research and a move to open access Web publication for UWI journals.

77. Professor Young observed that much of what was set out in the paper was now inevitable. He warned, however, that there is considerable expense involved, and that as a consequence much Internet material eventually becomes ephemeral. Policies on archiving need to be formulated.

78. Mrs Pilgrim noted that the Board for Graduate Studies had already moved on the first issue, and is currently revising its Thesis Guide appropriately.

79. Dr Ghany expressed reservations about shifting all research work or UWI journals to open access. Professor Chevannes pointed out that the refereed on-line publication of books was a difficult matter at the moment.

80. The Board endorsed most of the ideas in the paper, while noting concerns for intellectual property issues, the considerable costs involved, and the impact on journals that are currently under-prepared for moving in this direction. It suggested that it was up to the UWIDEC to encourage the University more generally to move in these directions.

## **MATTERS FROM THE UNITS**

### **Distance Education Centre**

81. The Chair invited Professor Marshall to introduce BNCC/DE. P. 12, a Report from the UWIDEC. Professor Marshall indicated that P. 12 represented a combination of the Reports received by the APC on activity at the three campus sites. In future he would present a report organised functionally. He remarked that the contents of the Report were simply for noting; he added that the timeframe given by the CKLN was such that no changes in operation could be expected for at least one year.

82. He observed that his initial impression was that the original *modus operandi* of the DEC was an attempt to use technology to replicate face-to-face activity, in effect a deficit model of distance education, whereas it ought to provide substantive distance and adult education, reinforcing student learning rather than dependence on a teacher. He vigorously endorsed the intended shift to asynchronous learning. He would present a vision paper after there had been a retreat of the DEC staff so that a shared position could emerge.

83. Professor Young remarked that his own experience of UWIDEC teaching showed it to be generally unsatisfactory: too much time is wasted checking sites; capabilities at different

sites vary; participants are not instructed how to use the facilities that do exist. Mr William added that students are often unable to prepare as intended for teleconferences because of the late arrival of materials.

84. In discussion, the poor enrolments in the Jamaican B.Ed. programmes and in Family Medicine were queried. The Chair noted that there had been management faults in the case of Family Medicine and the programme had started prematurely.
85. The Honourable Idabelle Meade enquired about the aims of the Caribbean Association for Distance and Open Learning. Professor Marshall replied that it was to promote professional activity among those engaged in the field; it might sponsor a journal, and would be the appropriate body to bid to hold the next pan-Commonwealth forum on Open Learning.
86. PVC Hamilton asked why the Mona School of Education had been asked to prepare proposals for two projects in the Eastern Caribbean. The Chair indicated that in one case it was because Mona had been responsible for a Certificate in Adult Education, which was the focus of interest. He did not know why Mona had been approached in the other case. He suggested that it was incumbent on the Schools of Education to communicate among themselves.

### **OTHER MATTERS**

#### *B.Ed. Students*

107. Ms Bellot enquired about the progress of matters concerning with the OECS B.Ed students who should have completed in 2002. The Chair noted that Dr Welch was trying hard to clear up remaining problems.

#### *English for Academic Purposes*

108. Ms Bellot raised the problem of numbers of students likely to enrol in the English for Academic Purposes course. It was suggested that the topic be discussed at the SCS Staff conference.

#### *Lapse of Credit*

109. Ms Bellot raised the question of how students who withdraw from a programme would be treated on re-entry. It was noted that if they had been given leave of absence the rule for lapsing credit ought not to apply, but the issue deserved further investigation with the Board for Undergraduate Studies. **Action: Office of the Board.**

#### *Rule on number of attempts at an examination*

110. It was observed that the DEC may not have been applying such rules as exist on this matter with much rigour.

The meeting ended.

**Office of Administration**  
**June 25, 2004**