



# Open Letter

The e-newsletter of the Open Campus, UWI

## Open Campus Developments

### The Open Campus Pays Tribute to Dr. the Hon. Phyllis Macpherson-Russell, O.J.



*Human Resource Development Consultant, Open Campus, The University of the West Indies*

The staff and students of the Open Campus of the University of the West Indies (UWI) wish to extend our very deepest sympathy to the family and friends of the late Dr. the Hon. Phyllis Claire Macpherson-Russell, O.J., who died on Saturday, April 19, 2008. Despite her petite stature, she was a towering Caribbean intellect, a visionary who displayed the highest ideals, a humanitarian with sterling qualities, a trailblazer for women everywhere and a committed educator with an unswerving commitment to the development of our human resources.

Dr. Macpherson-Russell's accomplishments throughout her lifetime were exceptional and she received many awards and recognition from national, regional and international bodies. She was one of the few chosen to represent the Caribbean at the World Federation of Democratic Youth in London after the end of the Second World War while pursuing her studies in Mathematics at the University of London from 1945 to 1948. Dr. Macpherson-Russell was awarded the prestigious Issa Scholarship from Jamaica and later won the Grace Dodge Fellowship to Columbia University, where she graduated with a doctorate in Education in 1961.

In August 1978, she was appointed the Minister of Education in Jamaica and she was also recognised at the highest levels for her invaluable contribution to the development of mathematics education in Jamaica. In 1991, she was conferred with the Commander of the Order of Distinction for services to Education in Jamaica, followed by the Order of Jamaica in 2002. In 1993, she was also honoured by the University of the West Indies with the Pelican Award of the Guild of Graduates for her pioneering service to the institution in the field of human resources development. For her outstanding work in fostering a mathematics project between Jamaica and the Central Connecticut State University, Dr. Macpherson-Russell was presented with the degree Doctor of Science *honoris causa* by the Connecticut State University in 1999.

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As a veteran Staff Tutor and Consultant in human resources development with the School of Continuing Studies (formerly the Extra-Mural Department) of the UWI, Dr. Macpherson-Russell was still very active in the Department at the time of her death. The worth of the work that she accomplished with the Department since 1977, is immeasurable. Her work in Jamaica extended significantly into other Caribbean countries served by the University, many times using resources that she herself had raised. Her unselfish commitment to social and economic development throughout the Caribbean region is one of the many strong and sustainable legacies that she has left to the region. Her recent work over the past five years with other departments at UWI, including the Advanced Training and Research in Fertility Management and the HIV/AIDS Response Programme (UWI HARP), will also continue to have significant impact in the future.



*Professor Emeritus, the Hon. Rex Nettleford, reads the citation of the Pelican Award of the Guild of Graduates, bestowed on Dr. the Hon. Phyllis Macpherson-Russell in 1993.*

Pro-Vice Chancellor and Principal of the Open Campus, Professor Hazel Simmons-McDonald in noting the sad passing of Dr. Macpherson-Russell, says " She was an outstanding member of the new UWI Open Campus community; during our several meetings in recent months, I was always impressed by her tremendous energy and abundant ideas for developing our HRD unit within the Consortium for Social Development and Research. Her promise to continue working with us to build the research unit even though she had retired was typical of the passionate zeal with which she contributed to the people of Jamaica, to the region and to the University. As Honorary Consultant for the University, she worked singlehandedly for the most part on projects that changed the lives of many. She was a woman of ideas and action and I continue to be amazed at how much she accomplished. I will miss the conversations we had, and I know that we will all miss her in our Open Campus family. We will honour her memory and work over the past 30 years in a most fitting way. May she be at rest and may her achievements continue to inspire us."



*In procession at UWI's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations in 1998.*



*With Caribbean trade union participants at a human resources development workshop in 2003.*

### **Phyllis' Legacy**

In the recent (2007) publication of the School of Continuing Studies (SCS), *Breaking Down the Walls, an Evolution of the Extra-Mural Department of the University of the West Indies, 1947-2000*, the Human Resources Development Unit (HRDU) of the School, is credited to be the sole creation of Dr. Phyllis Macpherson-Russell. The mathematics educator, who joined the staff of The UWI's Faculty of Education in 1964, was given the job to monitor, serve and assess the work of the island's teachers' colleges. The book goes on to reveal that back then was a time when the ideas and practice of Human Resources Development (HRD) were new to Jamaica and the Caribbean. Dr. Macpherson-Russell, who had just returned from Columbia, became concerned with people's ability or capacity to effect behaviour change in order to enhance their performance within their institutions, the workplace and in their own lives.

The book further reveals that this concern "led the mathematician to experiment with the principles and concepts of mathematics as they related to the Applied Behavioural Sciences which provide an almost perfect backdrop for study and work in the field of HRD. HRD involves processes of ensuring that skills, knowledge, abilities and performance of the workforce meet the current and future needs of both the organisation and the individual through developing, implementing and assessing activities and programmes designed to address employee training and development, performance and change management as well as the specific needs of particular individuals or groups of workers."

The book also lauds Macpherson-Russell's ideas and approach, which it said "could be considered 'revolutionary' at the time, had relevance for the work of all departments of the UWI and the public and private sectors...Through a number of programmes designed to meet the specific needs of the particular organization, Macpherson-Russell worked with a wide variety of business enterprises which indicated the appropriateness of HRD as a dynamic tool of transformation...to develop staff and introduce programmes which would ensure the continued development and preservation of the social capital of these enterprises...The HRDU was so named because Macpherson-Russell felt that since the term 'Human Resources Development' was new to Jamaica and the Caribbean, its use in naming the Unit would sensitise people to a concept and practice of human development which ought to be embraced by all within the UWI and beyond".



*Showing her joyful and fun-loving side dancing at a function with Dr. Lennox Bernard in 2007.*

## Open Campus Prospects Excite Belizeans

Sourced from the website *The Reporter* @ [www.reporter.bz](http://www.reporter.bz)  
by William Ysaguirre - Freelance Writer

Monday, 31 March 2008



From left: UWI- Mrs. Jane Bennett Belize, Acting Resident Tutor, UWI, Belize; Mrs. Luz Longworth, Director, Office of the Open Campus Sites, Mona; and Professor Hazel Simmons-McDonald, Pro Vice Chancellor & Principal, Open Campus, UWI.

Ever wanted to get a university education, but did not have the time or the money for full time tuition? Well, now with a computer and internet access, you can study at your own pace and pay tuition as your time and/or budget allows. The University of the West Indies has reached out to the growing demand for a university education by introducing its Open Campus, starting with the 2008-09 academic year.

As Pro Vice Chancellor Professor Hazel Simmons-Mc Donald, Principal of the Open Campus explained, the Open Campus builds on and unites three existing outreach sectors of the university: the School of Continuing Studies Sites (SCS), of which UWI has 42 throughout the Caribbean, the UWI Distance Education Centres (UWIDEC) along with many strong face-to-face full-time programmes.

The Open Campus morphs the three instructional arrangements to become a virtual campus, accessible anywhere you have Internet access: with a laptop or desktop computer from your bedroom. If you can't afford your own computer, all you need is some computer time from an Internet cafe, community computer centre, one of UWI's distance education centres or an Open Campus Site.

Simmons-McDonald added that the object is to make education affordable for single mothers, anyone who might be working and not have the time to attend full time, or not be near a UWI Open Campus Site. Typically, you would earn 3 credits per course, which will cost around US\$300. Ninety credits or 30 courses are normally required for a Bachelors degree.

The Open Campus offers undergraduate degrees, as well as masters and doctoral programmes, and is open to mid-career professionals who might not have a strong academic background. The Campus offers counselling and assessment of the experience and skills the candidate has acquired through job experience and advises on what course(s) should be taken to achieve a professional certificate or to matriculate for a degree.

The Director of the Open Campus Country Sites, Mrs. Luz Longworth, explained that the Open Campus is being set up with a 24-hour help desk, so that students will be able to call in any hour of any day of the week and get a human response to a query, about a course, assignment or exam.

Readers wishing to know more may log on to the university site at [www.dec.uwi.edu](http://www.dec.uwi.edu). Mrs. Longworth said that applications are already in for the 2008-09 academic year beginning in September. However, you may apply at any time and the site will inform you of the next date at which you may commence your programme of study. Open Campus is set up so you can tailor your programme of study to be compatible with your time/job commitments and your ability to carry the course load.

At present, the University is in the process of training lecturers and instructors to become tutors. Some of the tutoring will be synchronous where all students in a given course will be online at the same time. Students will also be able to access resources and make contact with students at other campuses in other Open Campus countries through video conferencing at identified sites. Professor Simmons-McDonald said the UWI also has funds for students to be able to spend a semester or even a year at another campus to enrich their university experience

The UWI officials' visit to Belize coincided with a series of lectures on Caribbean Union Women presented by the Hugh Lawson Shearer Trade Union Education Institute in Jamaica.

## The Consortium for Social Development and Research's HLSTUEI Holds Regional Lecture Series on Caribbean Union Women



Miss Marva A. Phillips, HLSTUEI, CSDR, Open Campus

As a part of its activities as a member of the newly-formed Consortium for Social Development and Research (CSDR), a division of the Open Campus, the Hugh Lawson Shearer Trade Union Education Institute (HLSTUEI) is hosting a regional lecture series under the theme, *Forever Indebted to Women*.

According to Miss Marva Phillips, Head of the HLSTUEI, the lecture series is dedicated to the Caribbean women who have left an indelible hallmark on trade union development throughout the region. This particular series complements other symposia that have previously been held in honour of trade union men throughout the region. The series was launched on November 1, 2007 and is expected to end in November 2008.

The islands selected for the series are St. Kitts & Nevis, the Bahamas, Belize, Dominica, Montserrat, Bahamas, Cayman Islands, Grenada, British Virgin Islands, Antigua & Barbuda, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Saint Lucia and St. Maarten. So far the lecture series has been held in St. Kitts & Nevis, the Bahamas, Belize and Dominica.



Dr. Judith Soares, WAND, CSDR, Open Campus

Guest speakers that have presented include Dr. Judith Soares (in St. Kitts & Nevis), Professor Lynn Bolles (in the Bahamas), June Ann Castello (in Belize), and Professor Pat Mohammed (in Dominica). The regional success of the HLSTUEI lecture series has provided a foundation for which the HLSTUEI can further contribute to the sensitisation of trade union members in areas relating to gender, industrial relations and development studies.

The accomplishments of the series so far can be credited to the full participation of members of the Open Campus and tri-partite groups from the region. It is clear from the sessions held that trade union education still plays a critical role in labour studies throughout the region and serves a vital role in the maintenance and continuous development of regional workers. Furthermore, with the advent of globalisation throughout the region, it is inevitable that events such as this play a crucial role in integrating regional workers in a more dynamic labour economy.

## Open Campus People



Miss Joan Thomas, CCDC, CSDR

Congratulations to Joan Thomas, Junior Research Fellow at the Caribbean Child Development Centre (CCDC) in the Consortium for Social Development and Research (CSDR) of the Open Campus, who has had her abstract to the XVII International AIDS Conference accepted for presentation.

In addition, she has been awarded a scholarship by the conference organisers to attend the conference. This will cover air travel, accommodation, and a modest living allowance. The conference will be held 3-8 August 2008 in Mexico City. The abstract is entitled "***Inventory of HIV programmes for children in Jamaica and the development of a database***". Her paper will present the recently completed work funded by the IDB on this inventory and database which describes all the projects and programmes addressing children and HIV in Jamaica.

Head of the CCDC and present Director of the CSDR, Dr. Julie Meeks-Gardner, says, "I am especially pleased about this, as it disseminates products of our work in the area of children and HIV, which is a growing area of research for the CCDC." Dr. Meeks-Gardner also describes Miss Thomas as a hard-working, dedicated staff member and a key team player who has made many inroads in the development and implementation of recent research projects on Caribbean children.



Dr. Julie Meeks-Gardner, Director, CDSR, Open Campus

## Call for papers – Journal of Information, Communication and Ethics in Society

The Journal of Information, Communication and Ethics in Society is an international, refereed journal that aims to provide interdisciplinary perspectives on the social and ethical impacts of new media and information and communication technologies on society, organisations, the environment and individuals. This special issue will be on 'ICTs and Social Inclusion'.

Submissions may be made to: Cathy Urquhart on [c.urquhart@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:c.urquhart@auckland.ac.nz) or Yvonne Underhill-Sem on [y.underhill-sem@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:y.underhill-sem@auckland.ac.nz).

The final date for submission is **June 15 2008**. For more information please see the journal website at: <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/jices.htm>

## Open Campus Quick Facts

The University of the West Indies (UWI) is established to provide tertiary level education to the fifteen English speaking countries scattered throughout the Caribbean and Central America. The countries supported by UWI include:

Anguilla	Antigua and Barbuda
The Bahamas	Barbados
Belize	British Virgin Islands
Cayman Islands	Dominica
Grenada	Jamaica
Montserrat	St. Kitts and Nevis
St Lucia	St Vincent and the Grenadines
Trinidad and Tobago	Turks & Caicos (a non-contributing country)

The University has an undergraduate and graduate population of 39,000 students scattered throughout the Caribbean, although the majority of the students are located on the three main campuses at Mona in Jamaica, Cave Hill in Barbados, and St. Augustine in Trinidad & Tobago.

In addition, the UWI currently has 31 Distance Education Centres, 23 School of Continuing Studies Centres, five (5) specialised units and at least eight (8) satellite sites scattered throughout the 16 participating countries. These regional centres support a current student population of about 6,800 undergraduate and graduate students and approximately 13,000 continuing studies students each year.

## About the Open Letter

This e-newsletter of the Open Campus of the University of the West Indies is intended to provide our colleagues and clients with an up-to-date source of news and information about the developments of the Open Campus. The page, which is maintained by the Office of the Deputy Principal of the Open Campus, will be updated regularly, as new developments occur.

## Your Feedback is Welcome

We welcome your comments on the Open Campus, UWI, and encourage you to send your comments on the *Open Letter* to us via e-mail @ [marketing@open.uwi.edu](mailto:marketing@open.uwi.edu).