



Open Letter

The e-newsletter of the Open Campus, UWI

Open Campus Developments

Regional Launch of the Open Campus



Professor E. Nigel Harris, Vice Chancellor of the University of the West Indies and Professor Hazel Simmons-McDonald, Pro-Vice-Chancellor & Principal of the UWI Open Campus, address regional journalists at the formal launch of the UWI Open Campus on July 2, 2008 at the Jolly Beach Resort in Antigua & Barbuda.

July 2, 2008, Antigua & Barbuda, W.I. The official regional launch of the University of the West Indies (UWI) newest campus, the Open Campus, took place during the 29th meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of the CARICOM Community (CARICOM) in Antigua and Barbuda. Vice Chancellor of the University, Professor E. Nigel Harris formally launched the Open Campus during an official news conference with the international, regional and local media on Wednesday, July 2, 2008.

Professor Harris stated that the University deliberately chose that moment to announce this initiative when the Heads of Government of the Caribbean were gathered, to reiterate the University's continued dynamic response to broaden and enhance the reach of the institution to the people of the Caribbean. He spoke of the little-known fact that, for over 60 years, the University has been offering considerable knowledge, scholarship, culture and enriched discourse to the Caribbean Community through the Extra-Mural Department, which evolved into the School of Continuing Studies and which now forms a part of the new campus.

The Vice Chancellor observed that "(In) 1948, the UWI initiated an Extra-Mural Department, which established sites in all of the participating countries of the fledgling institution...intended to educate and enlighten populations of Caribbean people living well outside the walls of the University...In the 1980s, the UWI established the Distance Education Unit utilising telecommunications systems long before distance education became a popular means for North American universities, to provide instruction using online technologies."

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June-July 2008

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The Vice-Chancellor revealed that the UWI's Open Campus is an amalgamation of the previous Office of the Board for Non-Campus Countries & Distance Education (BNNCDE), the School of Continuing Studies (SCS), the UWI Distance Education Centre (UWIDEC), and the Tertiary Level Institutions Unit (TLIU).

"This entity is designed to capitalise on advances in online technologies and on the platform of over 50 sites... to advance a more student-friendly, much broader basket of degree, diploma and certificate programmes for Caribbean people who live beyond the immediate vicinity of our established campuses... For more than two years, we have been offering nursing degree programmes, bachelors in education programmes and other courses designed to enhance the opportunities of the working public to uplift themselves educationally, without necessarily enrolling on one of the three campuses of the University."

The Vice-Chancellor also spoke to the development of the Open Campus as an essential strategic element of the University's ongoing five-year strategic plan to transform its curricula and education systems, as well as to enhance the postgraduate programmes and research productivity. He stated that "the Open Campus will insist on quality education relevant to the region, student-centredness, student-friendly services, and the creation of knowledge and outreach to the Caribbean Community outside the walls of the University, particularly in the Eastern Caribbean, Belize, the Cayman Islands and in rural areas in campus countries."

Also speaking at the official news conference was the Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the Open Campus, Professor Hazel Simmons-McDonald, who referred to the new entity as 'a campus for the times and a campus for the future.' Professor Simmons-McDonald stated that the Open Campus has the same level of autonomy as other UWI campuses with its own Academic Board, financial management, registry, administrative and student support systems.

She said that "the Open Campus currently utilises a wide variety of distance and mixed-mode delivery methods and has a staff of almost 400 professionals to support its growing student population across the region. We work very closely with faculty on the three other UWI campuses, as well as with other tertiary institutions and development agencies throughout the Caribbean to design, develop and deliver quality programmes by distance to meet the learning needs of the people of the Caribbean."

The Open Campus will formally begin to offer its services across the region on August 1, 2008 to coincide with the year-long celebrations of the 60th anniversary of the UWI. The Chairman of the Open Campus Council is the Governor of the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank, Sir K. Dwight Venner.

Highlights from UWI's Participation at the 29th Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government in Antigua & Barbuda



The Secretary-General of the Caribbean Community, His Excellency, Dr. Edwin Carrington addresses the Heads of Government and guests at the Opening Ceremony on July 1, 2008.



The Pro-Vice-Chancellor & Principal of the Open Campus, Professor Hazel Simmons-McDonald (2nd left) at the Opening ceremony with the Chancellor of the University, Sir George Alleyne (far left), the Chairman of the Open Campus Council, Sir, K. Dwight Venner (3rd left) and Professor E. Nigel Harris, Vice-Chancellor of the UWI (far right).



Sir K. Dwight Venner and Professor Hazel Simmons-McDonald congratulate Professor, the Hon. Rex Nettleford, who was one of the evening's recipients of the Order of the Caribbean Community (OCC). The other persons who received the OCC that evening, were H.E. Dr. Nicholson Liverpool, the Hon. George Lamming and Mr. Brian Lara.



Professor Hazel Simmons-McDonald speaks with the Hon. Bruce Golding, Prime Minister of Jamaica, at the cocktail reception after the Opening Ceremony.

UWI Open Campus Extends Reach into St. Lucia



From The Voice, St. Lucia, June 21, 2008

http://www.thevoiceslu.com/features/2008/june/21_06_08/UWI_Open_Campus_a_reality.htm

Senior management of the UWI Open Campus brought home the reality of the new Campus when they visited St. Lucia last week. Professor Hazel Simmons-McDonald, Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the Open Campus, Dr. Vivienne Roberts, Deputy Principal and Mrs. Luz Longworth, Director of Open Campus Country Sites, met with a variety of persons and groups including Distance Education students and other persons interested in ways in which they could access and collaborate with UWI's newest campus.

At a press conference held at the UWI Open Campus St. Lucia site, Professor Simmons-McDonald indicated that the Open Campus is 'based on the idea that high quality university education, research and services available at UWI should be open and available to all people who wish to reach their full potential inside and outside of the Caribbean.'



Head of the Open Campus St. Lucia Site, Mrs. Veronica Simon, explained that this week's visit was meant to give a face to the Open Campus so that persons would be able to interact directly with Senior Management who would be instrumental in developing the new campus and maintaining its services.

During the visit, the team held talks with the Sir Arthur Lewis Community College Board of Governors, Academic Board and Senior Management, on ways in which the UWI can use its considerable experience and position as a world respected, accredited institution to assist the College in its development. Possibilities include staff training and upgrading, further accreditation of College programmes, course development and extension of current franchise arrangements under which the SALCC offers selected UWI programmes or courses.

A meeting with the St. Lucia Chamber of Commerce representatives yielded fruitful discussion on how the Open Campus could provide the necessary training and upgrading of professional skills of private sector employees.

The UWI team pointed out that the Open Campus concept was particularly useful to such persons who would be able to build credits by doing courses in modular format. This would enable them to use their credits for further study should they wish to pursue specific degrees after their initial short-term training.

A similar focus characterized the discussions with the public sector personnel responsible for staff development. A major area of interest was the possibility of the provision of a larger number of scholarships and other forms of financial assistance for students who chose the option of distance and online education.

UWI Reaches Consensus on Policy for Online, Distance and Multimode Learning



An important milestone was reached late last month at the University of the West Indies with the acceptance of a common UWI standard for offering online courses and programmes. This is a critical step in the advancement of cross-campus collaboration in the adherence to common standards for the development of online learning opportunities across the UWI. With this approach, it will be possible to ensure that learning objects developed on any campus are transferable across all campuses and are available for the development of modules, courses and programmes to be delivered elsewhere in the UWI system.

Given the convergence between different learning modalities and the need to avoid duplication of effort and maximise the use of available resources on all campuses, the policy for online, distance and multimode learning seeks to build the maximum level of cooperation among the campuses to rapidly develop new programmes. In addition, the policy ensures that the delivery to students away from the pre-existing campuses is carried out in a coherent manner, utilising a common standard that brings credit to the UWI.

To achieve the level of coherence desired, as of Academic year 2008/2009, the Open Campus shall be the vehicle through which online programmes are delivered to students not studying at or attending one of the pre-existing campuses. Thereafter, all new courses and programmes delivered to these students shall be developed by and/or in conjunction with the Open Campus. The process and timeframe within which existing online courses and programmes delivered to these students shall be brought under the ambit of this policy shall be mutually agreed to by the parties concerned.

Open Campus People



Professor Julie Meeks Gardner

The Open Campus is very pleased to announce that the current Director of its Consortium for Social Development and Research, Dr. Julie Meeks Gardner, was recently promoted to the rank of Professor by the University of the West Indies. Professor Meeks Gardner is the first to achieve this distinction within the new Open Campus. Professor Meeks Gardner was featured in the last issue of the *Open Letter*, and we congratulate her on this stellar achievement.

Call for Papers – eLearn 2009

The University of the West Indies will host the E-Learn 2009 Conference from June 8 -11, 2009 under the theme "Bridging the development gap through innovative e-learning environments". Proposals are invited for the conference under the following topics:

- * Best Practices in e-learning
- * Professional Development in the e-learning environment
- * Enabling e-learning environments
- * Ethics and equity in the e-learning environment
- * Literacy for the Information/Creative Age
- * Innovative e-learning

Accepted proposals will be included in the conference programme and proceedings. Selected authors will be invited to either submit their papers to the International Journal of Education and Development using Information and Communication Technology (IJEDICT- <http://ijedict.dec.uwi.edu/>) or for publication as a chapter in a forthcoming book on e-learning in the Caribbean.

All submissions must be original and must not be under consideration for publication or presentation elsewhere. To avoid scheduling conflicts, presenters are limited to one formal paper as primary author; however, a presenter may also contribute as a joint author of another paper.

E-learn 2009 comes some 10 years after the Educational Technology Conference held at the University in March 1999. Since 1999, there have been many technological innovations that are now a critical part of teaching and learning. The 2009 conference will serve to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and information on the creative use of e-learning in development.

For further information please email idu@sta.uwi.edu.



The 4th International Conference on Interactive Mobile and Computer Aided Learning, IMCL20

Amman, Jordan, 22-24 April 2009

The 4th International Conference on Interactive Mobile and Computer Aided Learning, IMCL2009, is part of an international initiative to promote technology-enhanced learning and online engineering world-wide. The IMCL2009 conference will cover all aspects of mobile learning, mobile business, mobile government, mobile society as well as the emergence of mobile technologies, services, implementation and implications for education, business, governments and society.

The IMCL2009 actually aims to promote the development of Mobile Learning in the Middle East, provide a forum for education and knowledge transfer, expose students to latest ICT technologies and encourage the study and implementation of mobile applications in teaching and learning. The conference will also present an opportunity for educators to develop new skills and to stimulate critical debate on theories, approaches, principles and applications of e-learning, hence facilitate dialogue, sharing and networking between diverse cultures with regard to the optimal use of emerging technologies.

Important Dates

Submission of Full Paper - October 15, 2008
 Notification of Acceptance - December 15, 2008
 Author Registration Deadline - January 15, 2009
 Camera-Ready Papers - February 15, 2009
 IMCL2009 Conference - April 22-24, 2009

info@imcl-conference.org
www.imcl-conference.org

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.

