



UWI TODAY

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES • ST. AUGUSTINE CAMPUS

SUNDAY 1 JULY, 2018



West Side Story comes to Town



This is a rehearsal scene from the recently presented musical **West Side Story**, which lit up the stage at Queen's Hall from Thursday, June 21 through Sunday, June 24. The production of **West Side Story** was a presentation of **Must Come See Productions** in collaboration with the **Department of Creative and Festival Arts (DCFA)**, UWI. For more on this, please see **page 16**. PHOTO: ATIBA CUDJOE

NEWS - 07

An Award for Mikhail

■ Keeping the campus secure



SOCIAL OUTREACH - 08

Lending a Helping Hand

■ Social work in St Joseph



LIFE SCIENCES - 20

Guppy "cut-eye"

■ Prof Ramnarine comments on research

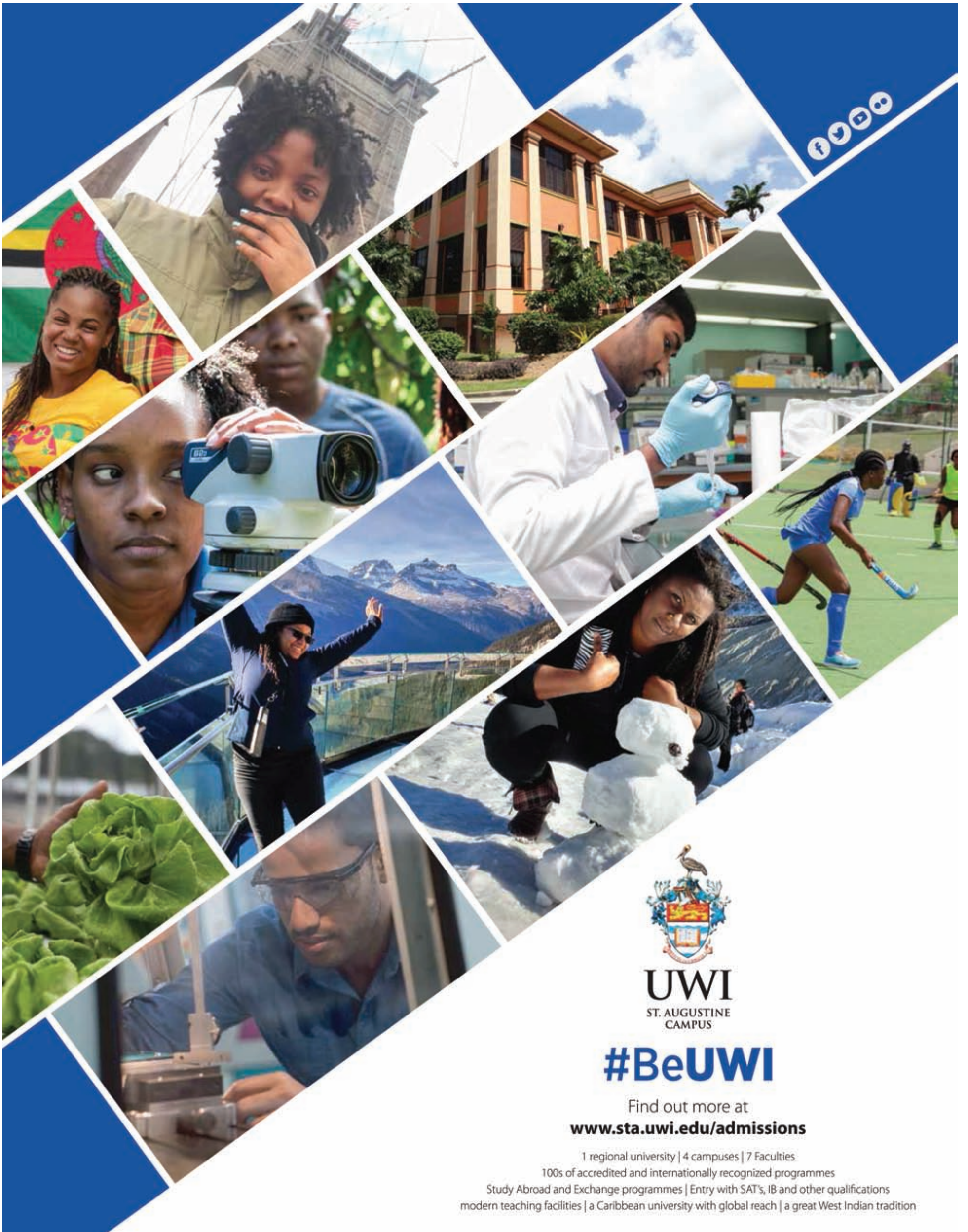


PROFILES - 23

Language on the Margins

■ Dr Renée Figuera





UWI
ST. AUGUSTINE
CAMPUS

#BeUWI

Find out more at
www.sta.uwi.edu/admissions

1 regional university | 4 campuses | 7 Faculties
100s of accredited and internationally recognized programmes
Study Abroad and Exchange programmes | Entry with SAT's, IB and other qualifications
modern teaching facilities | a Caribbean university with global reach | a great West Indian tradition

FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Preparing for the Best and the Worst



In Biblical terms, three score and ten signals the end of a person's natural lifespan. For The University of the West Indies, a 70th anniversary is a milestone that marks a re-committal to service and leadership in and for the Caribbean.

Our first generation of scholars and statesmen had a dream of a better life for the people of this region. In 1968, then Barbados Prime Minister Errol Barrow cogently captured this sentiment at the Cave Hill graduation ceremony when he declared that the citizens of the region should be encouraged to regard the University as their most important asset; he suggested the efficient growth of this University was almost their only path to prosperity.

That mission remains true for The UWI although, for the most part and against the odds, the dream of these pioneer scholars and statesmen has become a reality. Over the years, The UWI has grown a network of more than 120,000 alumni. These men and women have contributed to Caribbean growth and development at the highest level of government, in the corporate world, and in professional life. Twenty-six of our graduates have been Heads of Government or President; one is a Nobel Laureate. Moreover, The UWI remains a major source for research, advice and consultancy on Caribbean issues.

The very existence of The University of the West Indies is symbolic of Caribbean independence and our resurgence as arbiters of our own destiny. For those of us in the leadership capacity at this Institution, the struggle to keep the dream alive and vibrant for the benefit of thousands of Caribbean citizens is very real and often challenging. Still, we persist because we are true to our mandate to be a University for the people.

At a time when our regional societies, ecologies, and economies are delicately poised, the question now is: "What next?" How does The UWI up its game to ensure that the Caribbean is placed on a robust trajectory, one that leads to sustainable development? Achieving this goal is at the very essence of The UWI Triple-A Strategic Plan for the quinquennium 2017-2022.

The contribution of the St Augustine Campus to the Triple-A strategy is based on UWI's supportive role in preparing Caribbean citizens for a spectrum of future realities.

This spectrum is bounded at one extreme by a worst-case scenario that is undeniably total societal collapse, caused by catastrophic natural disasters or by man-made disasters such as overpopulation, escalating crime, or even economic stratification. Of note is the fact that history has shown that the divide between rich and poor, if left unchecked, ultimately results in societal collapse.

I suggest that at the other extreme lies the best case – almost Utopian – scenario in which our "Caribbea"

would have achieved the UN Sustainable Development Goals. These goals are pegged on initiatives that build sustainability in the societal, ecological, and economic domains of society. In that future state, governance and culture would have evolved to all but eliminate the possibility of the kind of man-made disasters seen in Venezuela or in the crime-stricken countries of the Caribbean.

In the aftermath of natural disasters, such as those we faced from the super hurricanes of 2017, our citizens would be able to survive, and go on to rebuild and maintain resilient communities that would grow into flourishing societies. Citizens would understand, respect, and protect the ecology for future generations. Our economies would be strong and robust, buoyed by foreign exchange earned by a mix of large companies and an extremely healthy network of innovation-driven, export-oriented SMEs. As alluded to below, we cherish the thought of our graduates creating these new SMEs, thus growing what many consider to be an important sector for the development of Caribbean economies.

We, on the St Augustine Campus, have identified two major initiatives for immediate implementation in support of the Triple-A strategic plan.

The first seeks to reform our core education processes to become more efficient and more relevant to society and the workplace, and to increase access to a wider range of individuals, significantly the underserved. The target is a holistically trained graduate who is a model citizen of the "Caribbea" as characterised by the best-case scenario, but who is also prepared for the eventuality of society falling far short of the ideal.

The second initiative seeks to address what our St Augustine team calls the "Innovation Imperative" that will enable the creation of an innovation ecosystem, one that provides all that is necessary to move potentially viable original ideas and concepts to commercial reality.

Of great note is the fact that we have broadened our focus beyond just economic innovation to include ecological and social innovation for the near-Utopian scenario.

Indeed, this last strategic initiative is of the highest priority for the simple reason that it represents a

significant departure in UWI business and culture. From an economic perspective, its output will be two-fold: creating spin-off companies that will enter national and regional economic spaces; and strengthening the international competitiveness of existing companies, all to increase the foreign exchange earning potential of "Caribbea". A significant by-product will be the creation of a culture of innovation.

All of the above is within the scope of The UWI and its St Augustine Campus. Yet, the challenge of preparing Caribbean peoples for the best- and worst-case scenarios described above, and the spectrum of possibilities that lie in between, is really a responsibility for Caribbean governments, the private sector, NGOs as well as education institutions.

The Campus therefore sees the need to take the lead in working with governments and the private sector to build the national and regional frameworks that will support and drive the robust national innovation ecosystems required to strengthen Caribbean economies and enable the best possible future scenario. Furthermore, the challenge of preparing citizens for the worst-case future scenario really requires a re-engineering of national education agendas across the Caribbean. In particular, it requires that all citizens should possess basic survival skills, complemented by a high level of physical literacy.

So, 70 years on, the mission of The UWI continues. The revitalisation of the Caribbean is placed at the highest priority in the UWI Triple A Strategic Plan. It requires nothing less than a significant culture shift among the people and institutions of "Caribbea" even as it faces the increasingly dynamic changes in global economics, society, politics, ecology and technology.

As we look to the next 70 years beyond this anniversary, the St Augustine Campus stands ready and eager to play its part in helping The UWI and "Caribbea" successfully rise to the ongoing challenge.

Brian Copeland

PROFESSOR BRIAN COPELAND
Campus Principal

EDITORIAL TEAM

CAMPUS PRINCIPAL
Professor Brian Copeland

DIRECTOR OF MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS
Dr Dawn-Marie De Four-Gill

EDITOR: Vaneisa Baksh • email: vaneisa.baksh@sta.uwi.edu
AG. EDITOR: Shereen Ann Ali • email: ann.ali@sta.uwi.edu

CONTACT US

The UWI Marketing and Communications Office
Tel: (868) 662-2002, exts. 82013 / 83997 or email: uwitoday@sta.uwi.edu

SIR GEORGE ALLEYNE LAUNCHES HIS NEW BOOK

These are excerpts from a talk by historian Professor Emerita Bridget Brereton on June 4, 2018 at the formal book launch of *The Grooming of a Chancellor*, a memoir by medical researcher, Professor of Medicine, former PAHO Director and UWI Chancellor Emeritus Sir George Alleyne. For the full speech, please see the online version of UWI Today.

The trajectory of Sir George's career and achievements in many ways constitutes a classic Caribbean story of the twentieth century.

There is the theme of mobility and migration. Sir George spent his first 18 years in his native Barbados; but then, apart from a short stint in 1960/61 working as a junior doctor at the then Barbados General Hospital, he never lived there again. (Of course, he still talks like a Bajan.) He was in the UK in 1961/62 for postgraduate training, but he spent the rest of his life in Jamaica and in the USA. He is a transnational man, but he has never ceased to be of and for the Caribbean.

Consider the social class origins which produced this engaged Caribbean intellectual, teacher and international public servant. Born in 1932, he was the first child of a primary school teacher: how many of this region's distinguished sons and daughters born in the last century had teacher parents? His father, Clinton Alleyne, never went to a secondary school, far less a tertiary institution; he began as a pupil teacher and became a certified teacher in an Anglican primary school. Young George attended his father's school and was coached for a government scholarship by him.

Sir George's mother Eileen, in another classic pattern, never worked outside the home while her husband was alive (he died aged only 45 when his first son was in Jamaica), but she sewed and baked to earn extra cash. Eric Williams' mother did the same, and so did thousands of other 'respectable' mothers of large families whose husbands had white-collar but ill-paid jobs. Like CLR James' mother, Eileen read a lot and visited the public library in Bridgetown weekly. The young George read everything he could get his hands on and the Carnegie Public Library became a 'second home' to him.

Sir George grew up in a classic upwardly mobile, lower-middle-class, nuclear Bajan family. There were seven siblings who all reached adulthood, no mean achievement, as he notes, in a Barbados which "had some of the worse social conditions in the Caribbean", including a very high infant mortality rate in the 1930s and 1940s.

Sir George was the classic "scholarship boy". On his second attempt, and helped by his father's coaching, he won a coveted scholarship to Harrison College, the "first grade" school, in 1944. Like QRC here, or Queen's College in Georgetown, Harrison was an English grammar school, with many British staff members, though by the 1940s they were increasingly being replaced by Barbadians.

Young George did the classics, including Greek, and he became conscious, for the first time, of racial discrimination; he made no white friends at college. After a brilliant career, he won one of the four Barbados Scholarships in 1950.

At this point, Sir George deviated from the classic pattern: he could have gone to a British university but



Campus Principal Brian Copeland with author and UWI Chancellor Emeritus George Alleyne at the launch of Alleyne's memoir, *"Grooming of a Chancellor"*, on June 4 at the Campus Principal's office, The UWI, St Augustine. PHOTO: KEYON MITCHELL

chose the very new UCWI at Mona. He says that his main reason was a "nascent West Indian nationalism" and the likelihood of the Federation coming into being soon. And having discovered the extent of discrimination and prejudice in Barbados—he quotes Keith Hunte in describing it as "apartheid practiced by consenting adults"—he had no desire to spend his university years in another white-dominated country.

He had heard that Jamaica was "much more open" than Barbados—class was important there but race prejudice was less oppressive. (What he doesn't explain, however, is why he chose medicine despite not having done the sciences in school.) And so he departed for Jamaica, by air, in October 1951, a huge event for the family; neither parent had ever left Barbados.

Sir George's account of his time at Mona as a medical student and intern is a valuable source for the history of UCWI in the 1950s. It was here he "became West Indian", just as so many others did at British universities in the post-war period. It was peer group friendships which made him and his classmates West Indians, he writes, along with the federal debates on campus and in the media; nor did the end of Federation lead to any renouncing of the West Indian idea among his contemporaries.

He was a predictably brilliant student, but there was time for a full undergraduate life. Most important, there was time to court a young Jamaican nurse at the University hospital, and he and Sylvan Chen were married in 1958 after he completed his internship.

After his brief stint at the hospital in Barbados, and his postgraduate training in London, Sir George returned to Mona in 1962, and soon joined the TMRU under John Waterlow. Here he became a medical researcher, and was, as he writes, a driven and competitive young scientist, keen to make his mark and to prove his competence as a West Indian. He participated in the ground-breaking work on renal and cardiac function in malnourished children, research which became internationally famous and helped to improve the lives of countless youngsters in developing countries. Waterlow was a great mentor, "the doyen of mentors", responsible not only for his scientific development but for his personal growth, Sir George writes, and his model as a manager and boss.

In 1972, aged 40, Sir George succeeded another important mentor, his undergraduate Professor of Medicine, Eric Cruickshank, in that prestigious post: from junior doctor to professor in just ten years. As Professor, and then Head of the Department of

Continues on **page 5**

SCIENCE & ENGINEERING



UWI STUDENTS IN CHINA: Five UWI students were recently in China on a two-week Huawei-sponsored work-study programme called Telecom Seeds for the Future. The programme develops skills and talents in the information, communications and technology field. The UWI students were: Nicholas Mitchell, Qarun Bissoondial, Tristan Sankar, Rachel Peters and David Orr. Photo shows students meeting with Prime Minister Rowley and other officials on Saturday, May 19 at Huawei Headquarters in Shenzhen, China. **Back Row** (from left): Zhaobo, General Manager, Huawei Technologies (T&T) Ltd; Song Yumin, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to the Republic of T&T; Stephen Ma, CEO Huawei Caribbean region; Detlef Eckert, Huawei Global Government Affairs Dept; Dennis Moses, Minister of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs; Keith Rowley, Prime Minister; Stuart Young; Steven Yi Xiang, Huawei Member of the Supervisory; Steven Seedansingh Jr, Ambassador of the Republic of T&T to China; Commodore Hayden Pritchard, T&T Chief of Defence Staff; Wang Chunxiang, Vice President of Latin America and Caribbean Public Affairs and Communication. **Front Row:** Students from UWI and UTT.

A life well lived

Continued from page 4

Medicine, he helped to build up the Mona Faculty, at a time when it was UWI's sole full-fledged provider of medical education and oversaw the clinical teaching being carried out in Trinidad and Barbados.

The second half of the book deals with Sir George's "international odyssey", beginning when he left Mona in 1981. He felt the time had come to take on new challenges. So began his eventful career with PAHO in Washington, as (in succession) Head of the Research Coordinating Unit, Director of Health Programmes, Assistant Director, and finally Director for two terms (1995-2003). (He had to acquire Spanish in a hurry, and here the Latin helped).

In this section of the book (chapters 6 to 10), he discusses the challenges of working out the relations between the CARICOM Health Desk, Caribbean governments, and PAHO, which was the inter-American arm of the WHO. Chapter 7 includes a frank account of the diplomacy, politicking and intrigue involved in the campaign that led to his election as PAHO Director, the first non-Latin, English-speaking, black person to hold the post.

Chapter 11 is well titled "the myth of retirement". He went on to be the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS in the Caribbean and a driving force behind PANCAP. He is possibly best known in the region for his tireless campaigns against the "lifestyle" or non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and their impact on human development in the region. His advocacy helped to bring about the 2007

CARICOM Summit on NCDs in Port of Spain, for which he gives credit to former PM Patrick Manning and Eddie Greene of CARICOM. He participated in the Special UN General Assembly on NCDs in 2011, and continues to be very active in the region and globally through his many presentations on the NCD crisis.

He became Chancellor of The UWI from 2003 to 2017. He will always be remembered for his inspiring graduation addresses, different each year for each campus, and for his insistence on shaking hands with every single graduate, which is so meaningful for them and their family.

When he became Chancellor, overall enrollment was 22,577 (2002/03); by 2015/15, it was just over 49,000.

This is a record of a life well and usefully lived.



70th
ANNIVERSARY
1948-2018

Chancellor's WEEK

JULY 23-29, 2018



Eight Exciting Events!

**BOOK YOUR TICKETS
AND PACKAGES NOW!**

70@alumni.uwi.edu | 876-970-0967
uwi.edu/alumni/online/uwi-chancellors-week
 Follow Us:      @uwialumnonline
 #UWChancellorsWeek #UWICelebrates70



UWI
ST. AUGUSTINE
CAMPUS

Scientists discover the oasis of life off Trinidad and Tobago

La Diabliesse and Mama D'Leau, names out of folklore but now given to two newly discovered cold seeps, 1,000 to 1,650 metres in the deep sea off Trinidad and Tobago. The local scientists who discovered the seeps say they're the oases of life, revealing our wondrous biodiversity.

Fluids rich in hydrogen sulphide and methane leak from the seafloor, providing energy to sustain large communities of life in harsh conditions – darkness, 4°C, and more than 100 atmospheres of pressure.

Dr. Judith Gobin of The University of the West Indies and Dr. Diva Amon, Postdoctorate Researcher, found 83 deep-sea species - several new to science and 85 more cold seeps off the east coast of Trinidad.

Visit: <https://sta.uwi.edu/fst/lifesciences>

E: Judith.Gobin@sta.uwi.edu for more information

#BeUWI
f t y o



Award for Brave UWI Cop

BY SHEREEN ANNA LI



UWI Estate Constable Mikhail Nicholson with his award for Outstanding Performance from the T&T National Security Officers Foundation. PHOTO: ANEEL KARIM

When UWI Estate Constable Mikhail Nicholson was dispatched one evening with two colleagues to investigate a robbery on campus, little did he know that he would soon find himself grappling with a cutlass-armed bandit near a ditch in Curepe.

He recalls the incident last October involved two students at the Faculty of Engineering Undercroft. A man armed with a cutlass took their wallets and cellphones around 6.15 pm. The students promptly informed Campus Security.

“Two officers and I went to investigate. We saw a short, stocky man matching the students’ description by UWI Doubles... He was carrying a black and yellow bookbag. We approached him, asking if we could search his bookbag. He said no. Then he ran, jumping into a big drain. His machete was stuck down in the middle of the back of his pants – I didn’t know he had it, actually.”

“I had a baton, the two other UWI Estate Police officers had firearms. I jumped in behind him, and as I was gaining on him, like he realized I was catching up, and he started to pull out the cutlass. But I was too close to him so I grabbed the hand reaching for the cutlass. I ended up dropping him on the ground, removing the cutlass, and holding him there until another officer brought the handcuffs. We searched his bag and found two wallets, two cellphones, and some cash. One of the IDs in the wallet matched one

of the students who’d been robbed. So we carried him to the UWI Estate Charge Room, fingerprinted him, and then took him to the St Joseph Police Station.”

By the very next day, the robber was in the Tunapuna Magistrate’s First Court, pleading guilty to the robbery, and he is now serving a sentence of six years in jail.

For his bravery and good work that night, as well as his diligent and energetic work ethic throughout the year, Nicholson recently received an award for Outstanding Performance from the T&T National Security Officers Foundation – an award usually given only to State-employed officers. Nicholson received his award on Thursday, May 26 at City Hall, Port of Spain.

The award was launched in 2012 to honour Protective Services staff who have served with distinction as members of the Defence Force, police officers including Municipal, Special Reserve and Supplemental Police, prisons officers, fire officers, immigration officers, Customs and Excise officers, transport officers and traffic or game wardens.

“I am elated about the award. I was not expecting it,” said Nicholson at an interview at the UWI Today office.

A tall, athletic young man in his early 30s, Nicholson first became part of The UWI family in 2005 as a watchman. In 2009, he became a precepted constable with The UWI Estate Police. A precepted officer has the powers of any T&T Police Officer within the estate where he or she works – he can arrest felons, and take them before the courts to be charged.

It’s clear that Nicholson takes pride in his work and he says that working at The UWI St Augustine campus is generally safe, although crimes do happen. He says robbers may often tend to target students or staff when they are walking to and from UWI, especially at night, so students should take advantage of the 24-hour shuttle service which the campus provides.

He enjoys working at a university because he says life on campus is more like a little village or shared community where security officers often get to know the people who work there and have the chance to practice some friendly community policing – doing helpful things like assisting if someone has car trouble, for instance.

Estate Sergeant Colin Sealy of the Campus Security Services says campus security involves providing services to students, staff and others, as well as doing guard and patrol duties, responding to reports, conducting investigations, and apprehending, charging and helping with the prosecution of offenders. He says the most common campus crime is larceny – theft of property with no violence or threat to the owner. This often involves items that students leave unguarded, like their bookbags, cellphones or even laptops.

“Last year, while crime went up in the police Northern Division, crime on campus went down significantly due to strategies implemented by the UWI Campus Security Services, including joint patrols with the T&T Police Service, regular checking for

Rhoda Reddock on UN Committee



Professor Rhoda Reddock

Professor Rhoda Reddock was elected on June 7 to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the first ever candidate presented by the T&T Government and the recipient of 158 out of 185 votes – the highest number of votes received among the candidates. She will serve from 2019 to 2022.

CEDAW provides a universal standard for women’s human rights. It addresses discrimination in areas such as education, employment, marriage and family relations, health care, politics, finance and law. For states party to the agreement, the Committee monitors and assists them to improve their human rights record and to provide women and girls with equal access to opportunities for growth and development.

UWI Professor Indar Ramnarine said the sweeping of the field was no surprise to the Faculty and Staff of the St Augustine Campus. He said: “Professor Reddock’s pioneering work and activism, her achievements as Head of the Institute for Gender and Development Studies, and later as Deputy Campus Principal at St Augustine, are well documented and internationally lauded. We wish her and her colleagues on CEDAW every success in this critical area of social transformation and justice.”

UWI IDs and enforcing the UWI ‘No Thoroughfare Policy’. Campus surveillance cameras help us solve many crimes, too,” says Sealy.

Meanwhile Nicholson is philosophical about his encounter with an armed robber. When he’s not running down robbers or doing patrols, he enjoys keeping fit by playing basketball, going to the gym, and doing his own workout of push-ups, sit-ups, squats and other exercises. He also enjoys road cycling. His advice to young people considering a security career is straightforward:

“Be sure it is something you want to do. You are coming out to protect people when there may be no one else around to protect them. Your training would give you a certain responsibility, because people would be looking to you to make a difference when a problem arises.”

For more information
Campus Security UWI, St Augustine
 Tel: 662-2002, ext. 82120
 Website: www.sta.uwi.edu/campus-security

Lending a Helping Hand

UWI-Farm Road Collaborative Project is listening to what people want, and helping some children in an underprivileged area of St Joseph

BY JOEL HENRY



Children came together to enjoy games and a Friday afternoon picnic on June 8 as part of an ongoing social work project in Farm Road, St Joseph, focussed on helping children to complete high school and providing a safe space for life skills learning and play. PHOTO: ANN ALI

It was a Friday evening at Farm Road, the first Friday after Carnival, movie night. At least that was the plan. But members of the community were yet to show.

Movie night was a way for the UWI team that had spent months gaining the acceptance of the people of Farm Road to reintroduce themselves after the lull of Carnival. Like almost every other part of the Farm Road project, the plan was created with the people themselves.

The St Joseph Police Youth Club had loaned them the equipment. A community member offered electric power. One of the UWI students had designed and printed movie tickets, and the entire UWI team, accompanied by community liaison, went from house to house, inviting the people to come. But they had not come.

For social workers, whose strategy is always partnership with the community, it's the risk they face. The invitation from the community, once given, can be taken away. "We set up but there was nobody there," recalls Samantha Mendoza, one of the project coordinators. But suddenly, as the sun went down, residents, young and old, began trickling in, carrying their lawn chairs, blankets and mattresses. Then the cars started pulling up. As the Savannah filled up, members of the community made popcorn and shared it around.

Movie night was a success. It was one of many successes that are making up the slow, momentum-building initiative known as the "UWI-Farm Road Collaborative Project". Although officially launched in May of 2018, for over a year now the project has been making gains built on innovative social work community intervention methods.

Dr Cheryl-Ann Boodram, Project Lead and Lecturer, Department of Behavioural Sciences, views this as just one example of how citizen-driven initiatives can be organized through partnerships with the university.

On the fenceline

For most people, Farm Road St Joseph is little more than a name from the news reports. It's a strip of land you see when coming up the bus route, sandwiched between the WASA Head Office and the Valsayn Water Works. Houses painted pale blue or yellow, girded by walls of corrugated sheets, peak out from between the trees. Farm Road is a community built in a forest, surrounded by a concrete jungle.

The road itself winds its way past fields and schools, until it emerges at the Southern Main Rd in Curepe. One of Farm Road's most prominent neighbours is the Eric Williams Medical Sciences Complex (EWMSC), home to UWI's Faculty of Medical Sciences.

"Farm Road was chosen because of its unique characteristics and geographical positioning as one of UWI, St Augustine's immediate fenceline communities" says Dr Boodram. The UWI/ Farm Road Collaborative Project comes out of the Office of the Deputy Principal through the Careers, Co-curricular and Community Engagement Unit. In 2017, a campus-wide committee was established to plan a university-supported community initiative. The goal was to promote the professional and personal development of UWI students, as well as increase the relevance and impact of the university's work in ways that provided direct benefit to communities. "The Farm Road Collaborative is what UWI is about and what social sciences are about," says Professor Ann-Marie Bissessar, Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences (FSS). "We want our work to go beyond theory. What action can we take to make communities better?"

The project is university-led but has been developed, coordinated and implemented by a very small team from within the Social Work Unit – Dr Boodram, Mendoza and (initially) two graduate students, Fidel Sanatan and Avenida Stewart-Nanton. Dr Boodram is quick to point out the enormous support of Lynette Joseph-Brown, Programme and Research Officer in the Office of the Deputy Principal and Kathy-Ann Lewis, Manager of Careers, Co-curricular and Community Engagement.

■ SOCIAL OUTREACH

The Invitation

The project coordinators are careful when they discuss Farm Road. As social workers their focus is on building people and the communities. They are laser-like in intercepting anything that could be seen as disempowering.

Dr Boodram points out, “A big part of the process is using shared values of mutual respect and validation of community knowledge”.

“In our profession we recognise that people are the experts of their communities. They are the architects of their future,” says Dr Boodram. “So the community’s invitation to partner with them is important. We want to support and enhance, but not take over.”

The team went into Farm Road, house by house, meeting people. They asked residents what they wanted for themselves.

“They were very excited and enthusiastic,” recalls Mendoza. “They were really willing to share. One of the things I remember them saying was: ‘You know a lot of people come and go. Will you stay?’ We were always guided by that.”

Based on these meetings they decided that helping the children to complete high school was an achievable goal with great benefit to the community.

Community work

During the 2017 mid-year vacation, the clubhouse of UWI’s Sports and Physical Education Centre (SPEC) was filled with the sound of laughter and play. Twenty-five children from Farm Road took part in a week-long, all-expenses-paid, vacation camp courtesy of the collaborative project.

“We focused on a lot of the issues raised by the community,” Mendoza says, “things like conflict management, etiquette, diligence and empathy.”

To the children and their families, it was much more than an exercise in behavioural improvement.

“They really bought in. Thanks to the support of the Deputy Principal we were able to send a shuttle to pick them up. Every day the children would be well-dressed, well-groomed and waiting with their family.”

With little dedicated funds for the project, the UWI team had to be extremely resourceful in putting the camp together. The project relied on support from



This hula hoop game was one of several trust-building games at the Farm Road social work project on the afternoon of June 8.

PHOTO: ANN ALI

individuals, community-based organisations and businesses who were seeking to make a difference in communities. They asked family members for assistance. They reached out to companies like Sunshine Snacks, Vemco, Nestle, Prestige Holdings, Mario’s Pizzeria and UWI staff, friends and family. The support they received was enormous.

“We delivered a quality camp and sports day, and had a field trip to the zoo,” says Mendoza.

Dr Boodram adds, “Everybody was able to give what they could. It wasn’t a huge amount but when you put it all together we were able to have a camp for a week for 25 children that did not lack for anything.”

One week before the camp, the project held a drapery and linen sewing skills training course at the request of the women of Farm Road under the auspices of the School of Education.

Consistency

The centrepiece of the collaboration is the White Tent Project. Every Friday, from 4 pm to 6 pm, the

social work team sets up a white tent at the edge of the savannah in Farm Road. They help the children with homework, play games with them and administer short 15- to 30-minute life skills sessions.

“One of the keys to our success is consistency,” says Dr Boodram. “We have to be there all the time. So we have basically dedicated our Friday evenings to the project. The community does not have a central area or community centre. So we put up the tent and invite the children to come.”

There’s a resolute power in both Dr Boodram and Mendoza, matched by their genuine concern for people. Both see social work as their life’s calling.

“Social work chose me,” Mendoza laughs. “I grew up in deep South, Palo Seco. We were a small village but there was always a sense of community. We learned that if the neighbour doesn’t have something, you share.”

It’s the kind of commitment necessary to venture deep into a community like Farm Road that faces many challenges.

Dr Boodram says: “Every Friday people in the community come and help us put up the tent. And at six o’clock when they see us wrapping up, they come and take down the tent.”

The members of the UWI project team say that the people of Farm Road are good people, who like everyone else have legitimate goals and ambitions, love their family and want their community to prosper.

“When we went into Farm Road we met people who genuinely wanted to do well. We saw people who got up every morning and worked. We met people who coped. We saw parents genuinely interested in children’s school performance but not being able to guide the child through homework,” Dr Boodram said.

Now that the project has been established, they are looking ahead towards its expansion. The team has identified three areas of focus – health equity, education and life skills. The team wants to support voluntarism and in-service learning from other Faculties such as Food and Agriculture, Medicine and Education.

The objective, they say, is for “young people to have better life chances so the community becomes more resilient.”

Homework and reading help is all part of the ongoing UWI-Farm Road Collaborative Project.



AS THE HURRICANE SEASON GETS UNDER WAY, RESEARCHERS FIND:

The poor suffer more from NATURAL DISASTERS

UWI Geography department represents Caribbean at Columbia University conference on political economy



Invited speakers of the Frontiers of Debt conference held at Columbia University in April, 2018. Front row, from left: David Schalliol (St Olaf College); Rima Brusi-Gil de la Madrid (Lehman College); Greg Guannel (University of the Virgin Islands); Hilda Lloréns (University of Rhode Island); Sarah Muir (CUNY); Frances Negrón-Muntaner (Columbia University); Ed Morales (independent journalist); Sarabel Santos (independent artist); Joel Cintrón Arbasetti (Centro de Periodismo Investigativo); Gabrielle Thongs (University of the West Indies); Kristen Buras (Georgia State University); Levi Gahman (University of the West Indies). Back row, from left (the three men on the right side of the group): Matan Cohen (Columbia University); Jason Wozniak (San José University); Westenley Alcenat (Fordham University). PHOTO: FRANCES NEGRÓN-MUNTANER

In late April, UWI Geographers Dr Gabrielle Thongs and Dr Levi Gahman were invited to Columbia University in New York to present their Caribbean-centred research on the nexus of disaster vulnerability, social inequality, colonial underdevelopment and global capitalism. The conference was held at the Columbia Law School and organized by the Unpayable Debt: Capital, Violence, and the New Global Economy working group of Columbia University's Centre for the Study of Social Difference. The aim of the gathering was to bring together scholars, journalists, activists and artists to illustrate how new forms of extraction and debt are operating in the region, generating poverty and increasing risk.

Professor Sir Hilary Beckles, Vice-Chancellor of The UWI, delivered the opening keynote speech. He spoke of the historical damages caused by dispossession and slavery, current movements for global reparations, and the efforts of The UWI's Centre for Reparation Research.

Dr Thongs spoke about factors that produce both social vulnerability and resilience as a way to determine the most effective disaster risk reduction strategies for the Caribbean. Dr Thongs said what were once predictable shifts in the wet and dry months are now erratic patterns of atmospheric tumult. She said

Professor Sir Hilary Beckles spoke of the historical damages caused by dispossession and slavery, current movements for global reparations, and the efforts of The UWI's Centre for Reparation Research.

there are more serious weather events, which demands more funding, resources, and labour to prevent escalations in damage and harm.

Pointing to widespread agreement based upon both meteorological data and lived experience, Dr Thongs said the Caribbean region's seasons are changing, with consequences being increased coastal

erosion, habitat devastation, wildlife loss, crop destruction, food import bills, and emotional distress. Rising sea levels, torrential rain, recurrent flooding and intensified hardships in the face of these things have become a "new normal," she said.

One key finding offered by Dr Thongs' combined society-environment approach is the significant role poverty plays in disaster survival. Her evidence showed that across the region, in most instances, hazard exposure may be relatively the same, but being poor drastically increases one's exposure to a disaster and increases one's potential harm.

Dr Thongs said impoverished people across region, to a disproportionate degree, must live in the most disaster-prone areas as these are appreciably cheaper than those of more protected backdrops. Such susceptible areas become more unsafe during and after extreme events because of how inaccessible they are for emergency service vehicles and first responders.

Dr Gahman gave an overview of how political structures and social orders, as well as certain cultural norms and economic relationships established via colonialism, are linked to and perpetuated by global capitalism and the state. Through an integrated focus on gender, class, race, and political ecology, Dr Gahman highlighted how debt, dependency, and vulnerability

How is this "Geography"? Geographers try to understand, explain, and sometimes even change, the processes and forces that shape and organize Earth. From the environmental and ecological to the cultural and social, geographers are concerned with contexts and connectedness, as well as influence and power. Geographers are forever preoccupied with why the world is arranged the way it is, how it is changing, and how relationships tie everything together – be they geophysical or geopolitical. The above work thus represents one small joint contribution to these broad efforts. Dr Thongs' research on risk reduction demonstrates how disaster planning and spatial modeling can be used to reduce social vulnerability, while Dr Gahman's work on development justice illustrates how colonialism, capitalism, and taken-for-granted gender norms continue to reverberate politically, materially, and even psychologically. Dr Gahman says: "Natural disasters are never immune to social, economic, and cultural forces and values, i.e. they are always political."

■ GEOGRAPHY

in the region are the products of imperialism.

To display the limitations of mainstream media accounts of disasters in the Caribbean, Gahman contended that what is often left out of the discussion regarding disaster narratives is the centuries-long, resiliency-eroding colonial extractions of the region's resources and wealth, which could have otherwise been used to fund prevention and protection efforts for differing communities and ecosystems.

One present-day example he mentioned is how free trade policies, often including conditionalities of “adjustment” loans from institutions like the IMF, open the door for multinational corporations that undercut local businesses, siphon profits out of the region, and pollute the region more (most often in areas where poor communities live). He noted it is then not uncommon for people whose small businesses “fail” under this scheme, to later be heavily exploited inside the new foreign factories and hotels, where workplace abuse and sexual harassment occur more frequently.

Dr Gahman also detailed how social vulnerability is sustained and aggravated by state institutions and government ministries that continue to rely upon pre-independence administrative hierarchies and the logics of capitalism.

In linking these dynamics to “natural” disasters, Dr Gahman showed how women are exposed to more post-event contaminated water than anyone else, because they are generally tasked with performing unfair amounts of work related to care-taking, family hygiene, harvesting, cooking, cleaning, washing, and so on – a result of regressive notions about “women’s



Storm damage from Hurricane Irma is seen in St Martin, Sept. 7, 2017 PHOTO: THE DUTCH DEFENSE MINISTRY

Dr Thongs said the Caribbean region’s seasons are changing, with consequences being increases in coastal erosion, habitat devastation, wildlife loss, crop destruction, food import bills, and emotional distress. And impoverished people must live in the most disaster-prone areas as these are appreciably cheaper.

work” and inflexible gendered divisions of labour. He said women are further exposed to risk because of their lack of self-care due to their regular responsibility for the safety of children and the elderly. Women are also consistently the last to leave when disasters do strike, Gahman added.

Dr Thongs and Dr Gahman said their socio-geographical and political-ecological research reveals that in the Caribbean, risk, vulnerability, and the afflictions of disaster be they “natural,” debt, or austerity-related disasters), are:

- spatialized (i.e. arranged and ordered in particular and uncoincidental ways);
- overdetermined by both gender and race;
- lethally classist (i.e. on the whole, wealthier people can afford to live in safer places and live longer, consequently meaning poor people live in more hazardous areas and die sooner).

Thongs and Gahman ended by suggesting that more State support for work on poverty eradication, structural violence (defined as “exposure to premature death”), and slow violence (i.e. the chronic and seemingly imperceptible degradation of communities and ecosystems due to things like large-scale extraction, fossil fuel burning, deforestation, toxic dumping, and fallout from purportedly “natural” disasters) is vital for the wellbeing of all Caribbean societies and ecologies.

The two also said discernable university commitments to (and institutional backing for) research and teaching about disaster preparedness, gender equity, class consciousness, and development justice are necessary and urgent.



Community members in Dominica go through destruction levied by Hurricane Maria, the worst natural disaster on record to affect Dominica and Puerto Rico. The hurricane system lasted from Sept. 16 – Oct. 2, 2017, and caused catastrophic damage and many deaths across the northeastern Caribbean, compounding recovery efforts in the areas of the Leeward Islands already struck by Hurricane Irma two weeks before (Irma system ran from Aug. 30 – Sept. 13). PHOTO: ROOSEVELT SKERRIT, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=62690583>

Mora Valley Buffalypso to be slaughtered?

BY SHEREEN ANNA LI

The tragic plight and immense promise of T&T buffalypso were two driving themes of a recent UWI conference on June 1 and 2 called: “Revitalizing the buffalypso: Our national treasure.” A unique collaboration between the UWI School of Veterinary Medicine (Faculty of Medical Sciences) and the Faculty of Food and Agriculture, the conference was a lively mix of current academic research, veterinary medical insights and successful water buffalo farming experiences grounded in practical, real world, very profitable water buffalo industries being run in many other nations right now.

Respected experts from both Italy and Venezuela came to share their own experiences of successful water buffalo farming. They spoke of the need to routinely minimize the brucellosis disease through active, continual herd management, and the many delicious and profitable spin-off food industries that can arise from water buffalo farming, urging Trinidad to not squander a great opportunity.

Film documentary arts were also part of the mix as an early version of the film “The Last Stand” educated conference participants about our valuable buffalypso heritage, the food security role it can play, and the problems facing buffalypso in T&T today. A work in progress, the short film is being directed by Vishal Rangersammy and Akilah Stewart, with Stewart also writing the screenplay and producing the documentary.

Conference participants expressed grave concerns about the future of the Mora Valley buffalypso herd at Guayaguayare Road, Rio Claro. Some were also troubled that a long history of State neglect might lead to decline of even the small numbers of healthy buffalypso kept at Aripo, and urged that we conserve and expand the healthy stock.

Leela Rastogi, who has studied animal science, breeding and genetics at McGill University, said at the conference that T&T currently has 2,200 head of buffalypso, down from 3,600 in 2009. The largest herd is in Mora Valley, numbering an estimated 800 to 900-plus animals deemed to be brucellosis-infected and roaming freely through the beautiful green Mora Valley. But none have been recently tested, so we don’t really know their status. The last time some of them were tested was in 2013 by agriculture ministry workers for a project which subsequently never got the necessary staff or resources to carry through to meaningful results. So Mora Valley buffalypsoes have been virtually abandoned by any systematic agricultural policy to manage them well or encourage good health. State-controlled buffalypsoes are supposed to be managed by the Ministry of Agriculture which inherited the herd after the demise of Caroni (1975) Ltd in 2003.

From innovation to State neglect: Dr Steve Bennett’s legacy ignored

TT veterinarian Dr Steve Bennett, a former jockey and dedicated believer in local food security (he died in 2011 at the age of 89), is the person whose vision, passion and talent developed our unique buffalypso

breed through innovative selective breeding of several hardy and productive imported Indian water buffalo breeds during his time working at Caroni Limited in the late 1950s and 1960s. Through his own selected breeding and his improvement of their living, feeding, and health conditions, Dr Bennett succeeded in creating a healthy, well-maintained herd of unique buffalypso cows, calves and bulls by 1967, a great starting point for a flourishing local food sector.

But flash forward to today, some 60 years later, and you can see the descendants of Steve Bennett’s once-thriving buffalypso herd looking depleted and sadly neglected, while other countries have made great strides with buffalypsoes they imported from T&T decades ago. How did it come to this?

As Vaneisa Baksh reported in the April 2018 issue of UWI Today, some local buffalypsos contracted brucellosis and this was detected in 1998. We don’t know for sure where the disease came from; perhaps from infected cattle imported from the US in the late 90s, or perhaps, as veterinarian and livestock consultant Mahfouz Aziz suggested at the conference, brucellosis came to these shores much earlier, from infected cows imported via Carriacou.

Baksh quoted an April 2017 status report on the buffalypso industry published in Tropical Agriculture (Trinidad), which used 2012 data and said: “A test and slaughter brucellosis eradication programme, instituted by the Government, resulted in the three large WB (water buffalo) producers selling their stock and closing their WB production operations. Based on annual reports, 3,255 WB were slaughtered due to a positive brucellosis status from 1998 to 2008.”

Baksh reported that in 1999, the Animal Health Division tried limited vaccination with the brucella abortus vaccine strain RB51, which had been very effective in cattle; but it did not seem to work on local buffalypso. So the animals believed to be infected were confined to the Mora Valley Estate in Rio Claro in 2003 and left to run wild. And not much more was done after that.

The importance of herd management

The apparent failure of RB51 vaccination, however, is not surprising if that is all that is done, according to one expert. Valerie Ragan is Director of the Center for Public and Corporate Veterinary Medicine at the Virginia Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine. In a contribution to the UWI buffalypso conference booklet, she says: “Vaccination alone will not rid this herd of brucellosis, but may be an additional tool to interrupt transmission. Herd management will play the most important role.”

That means a whole range of measures, including vaccination. A regular testing schedule for all the animals; facilities for cows to calve individually or in small groups (brucellosis is spread at time of abortion or calving, so pregnant animals should be carefully managed); removal and slaughter of animals that test positive for brucellosis;



International experts urge that we test all buffalypso to preserve healthy animals, and actively manage all buffalypso and interbreeding healthy stock with productive buffalypso to produce better quality animals for future food security (the lucrative dairy products sector). But the TT Ministry of Lands and Fisheries wants to get out of the buffalypso

The agriculture ministry’s long-standing ‘test and slaughter’ policy for brucellosis-infected buffalypso evades the need to actively manage herds all the time for any health issues. The buffalypso food industry to develop – something that many different governments, has spectacularly failed

Local stakeholders want to prevent eradication of buffalypso to preserve valuable genetic stock, and are seeking government initiatives to assess, heal, finance and build a TT buffalypso to help supply good local sources of protein.

Who will pay for this, though? The current agricultural leadership says it will not, because, it says, the government lacks the skills, efficiencies, money and desire to do it. It should have done decades ago, instead of allowing a once-healthy buffalypso to be lost through two generations of official indifference

separation and testing of very young animals before sexual maturity; and setting up a cleaning and disinfection plan are all measures she mentions.

One can also set up positive and negative farms for gradual depopulation and repopulation, she says. The negative herd would be the seed stock to repopulate the herd, ideally relocated to another location, vaccinated with RB51, with heifers and calving intensely managed, regular tests, and prompt removal/slaughter of any animals found to be incubating brucellosis before they can spread it. When breeds of buffalo herds are managed with plans like this, the incidence of brucellosis can be dramatically reduced.

None of these measures are revelations. It's just that TT hasn't done them. The neglect of buffalypso reflects the decline of the country's entire agricultural sector, which no TT government has done much to remedy. "If we were to do an agricultural census now, we would see that production in every area has declined by maybe 60-70 percent, with the exception of poultry production," noted Leela Rastogi after Minister Rambharat's speech on June 1.

Two years ago (in 2016), workers at Mora Valley Farm complained of bad working conditions there, and alleged there was even a lack of enough food for the struggling buffalypso herd, especially during the dry season when there is not enough grass. There are now fears the current Ministry of Agriculture may slaughter all Mora Valley buffalypso without prior testing or considering other (admittedly much more expensive) options.

Agriculture Minister Clarence Rambharat stated to writer Vaneisa Baksh in an April 2018 UWI Today article that "We cannot develop buffalypso without addressing the high level of brucellosis positives in the largest herd [at Mora Valley]. So the Ministry will cull the herd while at the same time preserving the brucellosis-free genetic material we have at Aripo."

State says no to financial support

On June 1 at the UWI buffalypso conference, Rambharat made it clear the State no longer wants to be directly involved in the buffalypso industry, and said financial support for the industry "will not happen under my watch."

He admitted his ministry has never had the capacity to manage any buffalypso herd properly, and said that "no modern Government" should be in the business of "minding livestock" or "selling milk", which he believed should be left to farmers with the interest and passion for producing food. He said: "Maybe a differently shaped ministry, in particular, livestock, will make those (State buffalypso) farms available to the private sector for participation." He said he would welcome news of any private sector investors today willing to invest in T&T buffalypso, and said that any committee planning to revitalize the local buffalypso industry should have financial planners on it.

He conceded that there may be local prospects for a buffalypso industry, but seemed to prefer locally-grown chicken as the main protein source, because he said "chicken currently creates 12,000 direct jobs." And he noted that any country except Brazil can send meat to T&T for sale. A conference participant later noted that any outbreak of bird flu in T&T could wipe out all our chickens, so investing in other protein sources (like buffalypso) still makes a lot of sense.

Unlike the current Agriculture Minister, Professor Brinsley Samaroo is a passionate advocate for investing in buffalypso to help us feed ourselves. He reminds us that Trinidad exported buffalypso in the 1970s and 1980s to many countries including Venezuela, Colombia, Argentina, Costa Rica, Miami, Mexico and Italy. He states: "By 2004 buffalypso milk was being used for the making of yoghurt, ice cream, ghee, and cheeses such as mozzarella, queso blanco and queso de mano. In the countries to which the animal has been exported, there are thriving herds, gene banks, profitable meat, milk and hide industries, all attesting to the genetic engineering pioneered by Steve Bennett."

Indeed, according to figures collated by Leela Rastogi, Argentina currently has 100,000 head of water buffalo; Brazil has 3,500,000; Cuba has 67,300, Venezuela has 350,000, Mexico has 10,000, Colombia has 400,000 while T&T has 2,200. In those other countries, there are now thriving buffalo and related food industries.

Meanwhile, what has Trinidad done to advance its own buffalypso sector? Nothing at all.

That may change if buffalypso industry stakeholders and interested entrepreneurs figure out some ways forward after the in-depth sharing at the June 1 and 2 UWI buffalypso conference. Conference organizers are inviting all interested parties to contact them at buffalypso.tnt@gmail.com to share information and ideas to preserve the buffalypso and develop the industry in T&T.

As Leela Rastogi put it: "At the end of the day, we say: we cannot drink oil and smell gas. We have to feed ourselves. Can't we?"

The Secret is in the Cheese

Italian buffalo expert says farmers have grown rich from making and selling distinctive, quality cheeses from buffalo milk



Dr Antonio Borghese

It has an amazingly soft, creamy texture, and melts in your mouth so easily. Mozzarella di bufala (or buffalo mozzarella) is named quite literally — it's cheese made from water buffalo milk, specifically the milk of *Mediterranea Italiana* buffalo. It is both delicious and healthy, and it's often called "white gold" or "the pearl of the table." Perhaps, some day, we can make our own T&T "pearl of the table" — from homegrown buffalypso milk.

This was part of the message from Dr Antonio Borghese, the guest speaker at the opening night of the Buffalypso Conference on June 1. Dr Borghese is an Italian veterinarian with more than 50 years of experience in animal production and health, and has travelled the world to help other countries improve different aspects of their buffalo industries.

Dr Borghese talked about how the Italian-made Mozzarella cheese known as "Mozzarella di Bufala Campana" has had DOC — "Controlled Designation of Origin" — status in Italy since 1993, which means that it may only be produced with a traditional recipe in select locations. Mozzarella di Bufala Campana DOP is one of Italy's gastronomic products par excellence, and is known and exported throughout the world. According to Wikipedia, Buffalo mozzarella is a €300m (US\$330m) a year industry in Italy, which produces around 33,000 tonnes of it every year, with 16 percent sold abroad (mostly in the European Union).

In addition to being the author of the international bible on buffalo rearing, "Buffalo Production and Research," Dr Borghese coordinates the Food and Agriculture Organization Inter-Regional Cooperative Research Network on Buffalo. And he is the General Secretary of the International Buffalo Federation (IBF), which organizes a World Buffalo Congress every three years. In this latter capacity, he actively coordinates and promotes buffalo development projects in countries which follow international agreements, including Pakistan, Bangladesh, Hungary, Turkey, Iran, China and Indonesia.

Dr Borghese came to T&T at his own expense, and his enthusiasm for the food potential of the buffalo was infectious and backed up by many anecdotes as well as statistics on how invaluable buffaloes have been in fighting hunger and providing valuable food — especially from dairy products — all over the world. He said according to FAO figures, buffalo milk is now 13% of milk sold in the world, and milk demand is increasing annually by 10%.

Despite its higher butterfat content than cow's milk, water buffalo milk is healthier in many ways than traditional cow's milk. Water buffalo milk has 11 percent higher protein than cow's milk, as well as 9 percent more calcium and 37 percent more iron, says writer Brittany Shoot writing about the water buffalo dairy industry which is growing in the US (<https://modernfarmer.com/2014/03>). Water buffalo milk is also lower in cholesterol, say food experts. Its creamier texture makes it good for making cheeses.

Dr Borghese said that in neighbouring Cuba, which imported T&T buffalypso many years ago, there are now 67,246 head of Cuban buffalypso, a breed developed from crossbreeding T&T buffalypso with Italian buffalo breeds. And he urged T&T to do something similar: to create a T&T local dairy buffalypso breed through cross-breeding, using semen from breeds best known for producing animals with excellent milk yield and quality.

Dr Borghese cheerfully challenged T&T to develop a new economy based on the agribusiness of cheese production — not only cheeses from buffalypso, but also cheeses from goats and sheep, because growing and making our own high quality, high value food products makes a lot of food security sense. (*Shereen Ann Ali*)

For more information or to contact buffalypso-related food industry advocates and stakeholders, contact: **buffalypso.tnt@gmail.com**

■ PANEL DISCUSSION

PROGRESS AT WHAT COST?

Panel discusses impacts of austerity policies

BY SCOTT TIMCKE & LEVI GAHMAN



Featured panelists of the public forum on austerity. From left, back row: Meghan Cleghorn; Adaeze Greenridge; Ian Dhanooolal; Trina Halfhide; Anne Marie Pouchet; Dylan Kerrigan. Front row, from left: Cheryl-Ann Boodram; Daren Conrad; Sunity Maharaj.

Over half a century ago, the Caribbean's own postcolonial theorist Frantz Fanon asserted that capitalism would create "geographies of hunger" and "shrunk bellies" across the Global South. Sadly, we believe this bleak prediction and picture of the future remains valid in the present day. For this reason, the Departments of Literary, Cultural, and Communication Studies and Geography recently assembled a panel to publicly discuss the causes and consequences of austerity, a government policy not coincidentally associated with the all too familiar phrases: "tighten your belt" and "band your belly."

But under austerity policies, who exactly has to tighten their belts? And who is making such a demand? Panelists raised these and many other issues. The discussions took place on the evening of April 18 at the UWI Teaching and Learning Complex at 27 Circular Road, St Augustine.

Daren Conrad led the session, noting that real GDP has declined since 2013, which he attributed to poor fiscal management. Suggesting this needed urgent attention given declining energy revenues, he said targeted spending, slight currency devaluation, and more effective public services were needed. Conrad also said orienting consumption patterns towards domestically produced goods was equally important, arguing that public policy choices like this can ease hardships for the general public, but only if management structures change. His final recommendation was that TT's economy ultimately needs to shift to knowledge- and service-based society.

Inverting expectations, Sunity Maharaj highlighted T&T's uneven prosperity, and how such imbalances of privilege are detrimental to society. For example, the expansion of private health care is connected with the degradation of the public health sector. She noted a similar dynamic is at play in both security and education, among other things. In illustrating

her points, Maharaj queried whether it was worth aspiring to a privatized conception of prosperity. For her, the recession provides an opportunity to transform Caribbean society by experimenting with alternative models of "development."

For Anne-Marie Pouchet, austerity policies primarily benefit lending institutions, as well as capitalists who continue to extract from the Caribbean. She stated that while restructuring public spending sounds neutral, in practice these measures compromise the already economically marginalized. Citing the IMF's admittance in 2017 that austerity policies do more harm than good and consistently fail to achieve their own objectives, Pouchet proposed members of the public to "consider the source" when credit rating agencies like Moody's offer restructuring recommendations.



Co-conveners of the public forum on austerity in T&T, from left, Levi Gahman, (Lecturer of Political Geography and Critical Development Studies) and Scott Timcke (Lecturer of Communications Studies).

One way to identify the social disparities of austerity, Dylan Kerrigan suggested, is to enroll the idea of "the sociological imagination." This approach seeks to analyze the context of the individual. Taking the example of poverty, culture is the way people react and develop ways to live with a situation, which oftentimes may be illegal. This points to poverty being human-induced, and hints at larger and more complex social explanations. Kerrigan ended by noting that, unfortunately, austerity policies are clouded in modes of thinking contaminated by biases that blame individuals, rather than seek explanations that look at the larger circumstances people are living in.

With regard to gender relations, Meghan Cleghorn argued that austerity policies may encourage repressive mores. She cited austere attitudes to sex education in the public school system, one result of which has been a high prevalence of HIV in young girls, which she said hints at patriarchal and parochial currents in society. For Cleghorn, outdated syllabi require overhauls and should go along with progressive instruction. She said in an economic downturn, domestic violence increases as women tend to stay with their abusers because the social services are down-scaled. For Cleghorn, true development should consider psychological, sexual, and gender issues.

Cheryl-Ann Boodram believed social workers were seeing the ground-truth of a crisis situation caused by neoliberal financialization and resulting in the erosion of social norms. She said austerity was not new to post-colonial societies where class hierarchies have long caused unequal distribution and maladaptive access to resources. She said although there is a rhetoric that people must "tighten their belts" and adopt stringent measures, this does little more than increase social inequality, as cuts to public services

Continues on page 15

Progress at what cost?

Continued from page 14

hit the most vulnerable comparatively harder than the rich. Empirically, as a group, women disproportionately pay the price for austerity, she said. Austerity policies present women with a triple jeopardy, she said: women work in occupations that carry the bulk of the cuts, they do the majority of care-work for children and families, and this often comes at the expense of their own health.

Also testifying to inequalities, Ian Dhanoolal spoke about the experience of the deaf community. Due to communication barriers, many deaf adults are unemployed or do poorly remunerated work. And although many depend on social benefits, this does not keep up with the cost of living. Dhanoolal said public awareness on this issue is paramount, yet the T&T Association for the Hearing Impaired has inadequate government funding, meaning their advocacy effectiveness is reduced. Elsewhere, the government has stopped funding sign language translations on newscasts for deaf persons, who like other people, have a right to know about events happening around them, he noted.

Trina Halfhide emphasised that relations to the environment need to be re-thought, especially around wastage. For instance, food and organic material make up 30% of the waste in landfills. This is unsustainable given the high food import bill. For Halfhide, we need to think about where we can make a change and the environment is an excellent starting point.

On issues of ecological justice, Adaeze Greenidge took to task what she saw as the government's one-dimensional conception of "development," which for her provides insufficient attention to the different ways value can be ascribed to the environment, culture, and social relations. Arguing capitalism has an outsized role in our notions of growth, Greenidge laid out evidence for how austerity policies damage ecosystems, wildlife habitats, and human wellbeing as a result of overemphasizing the bottom line. For example, Buccoo Reef in Tobago is a Ramsar Site and an Environmentally Sensitive Area. The cost of the Sandals hotel project there may remove mangrove, displace animals, and deposit waste into the sea and coral reefs, she said. She fears local workers and business-owners who also rely on the bay may be undercut, disadvantaged, and exploited, yet high level political pressures continues to push for the project even as widespread local support is non-existent. Greenidge wrapped up the panel discussion by asking: "What is the price we are willing to pay for 'progress?'"

Opinions expressed here are those of individual lecturers and guests, and not necessarily those of The UWI. Dr Scott Timcke is a lecturer in Communication Theory in the UWI Department of Literary, Cultural, and Communication Studies. Levi Gahman is a lecturer in Social, Cultural and Political Geography at the Department of Geography.

■ UWI NEWS

REYNALDO GOES TO RUSSIA



REPRESENTING TT IN RUSSIA: UWI Student Reynaldo Christie (at far right, wearing cap with T&T flag) here takes a selfie with colleagues he met in Kazan, Russia at the 2018 FISU Volunteer Leaders Academy last month. PHOTO: REYNALDO CHRISTIE

It's not every day you get a chance to go to Russia. But this came true for UWI student Reynaldo Christie, whose activism in helping to organize campus sports got him selected as a sports ambassador to participate in this year's FISU Volunteer Leaders Academy in the city of Kazan, the Sports Capital of Russia, from June 11-24. He was one of several representatives from the Tertiary Sport Association of T&T to represent this country at the event in Kazan, where 96 countries were expected to be represented.

FISU stands for Fédération Internationale du Sport Universitaire (International University Sports Federation). It is an organization which formed in 1949, but its origin goes back to the 1920s when Frenchman Jean Petitjean organised the first World Student Games in Paris in May 1923. FISU organizes both a summer and a winter

Universiade, which are large international sporting and cultural festivals held every two years in a different city.

Reynaldo Christie is delighted at the opportunity to participate in the 2018 FISU Volunteer Leaders Academy, which aims to develop skills and exposure for student sports ambassadors, and to promote the value of sports and a healthy lifestyle. It is the second such Academy to take place, and all participants are 18-27-year-old university students with experience in volunteering and organizing sports in their universities.

Reynaldo Christie's passions are diverse: he loves animals and plants, which is why he is pursuing an undergraduate double major degree in Agriculture and Tropical Landscaping at UWI. He is now in year three of that degree. From the age of 13, he was also a huge fan of boxing and mixed martial arts, and he won a gold medal in January 2014 as the Youth Welterweight Boxing Champion at that sport's National Championship event. When he was in high school, he even won King of Calypso two years in a row at the Trillium International School Calypso Contest.

Since coming to UWI, he has worked hard to earn the Head of Department prize (2015/2016) for best performance in Tropical Landscaping (Level 1). And although he gave martial arts a rest to focus on his studies, he found himself involved in organizing sports events on campus in his role as Games Committee Chairman for UWI's Guild of Students during 2017/2018. In that role, he liaised between the Student Guild and the University Sports Department, and coordinated all campus games and sporting activities. It gave him invaluable experience in a wide variety of practical matters: from organising logistics for sports events to marketing, budgets, sourcing sports sponsorship, and liaising with vendors, students, and administrators.

Christie says he is especially interested in issues of accountability in sports funding, as well as in generating more enthusiasm for sports and general fitness activities among university students. He's also keen on helping to develop better systems and programmes for sports training.

So what is Christie's personal motto? That's simple: he says: "Be the change you want to see." (Shereen Ann Ali)



Reynaldo Christie draped in a TT flag during his sports volunteer training trip in Russia last month. PHOTO: REYNALDO CHRISTIE

ARTS

West Side Story comes to town

A stirring story of star-crossed young lovers, warring gangs and passionate dancing, music and song entertained local theatre-goers recently at the June 21-24 production of *West Side Story* at Queen's Hall in Port of Spain. Must Come See Productions (MCS) brought some authentic Broadway to the local theatre world, and co-producer Jessel Murray said he was delighted to have MCS return to the stage after four years with this landmark work of music theatre.

West Side Story is a classic of American musical theatre, based on a story by playwright and screenwriter Arthur Laurents, with original music by Leonard Bernstein and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim. Writer Laurents was inspired by William Shakespeare's play *Romeo and Juliet* when he penned *West Side Story*.

The original story was set in the Upper West Side neighbourhood in New York City in the mid-1950s, an ethnic, blue-collar neighbourhood. The musical explored the rivalry between the Jets and the Sharks, two teenage street gangs of different ethnic backgrounds. The members of the Sharks, from Puerto Rico, are taunted by the Jets, a white gang. The young protagonist, Tony, a former member of the Jets and best friend of the gang's leader, Riff, falls in love with Maria, the sister of Bernardo, the leader of the Sharks. The dark theme, sophisticated music, extended dance scenes, and focus on social problems marked a turning point in American musical theatre.

The recent Trinidad production of *West Side Story* was a presentation of MCS Productions in collaboration with the Department of Creative and Festival Arts (DCFA), UWI. It was licensed under Music Theatre International.

The character of Maria was played by Zayna McDonald, and Tony was played by Kyle Richardson. Other actors included Michalean Taylor as Riff; newcomer Albert Smith as Bernardo; Syntyche Bishop of the National Theatre Arts Company as Anita; and Chris Smith as Doc. The MCS-produced *West Side Story* was directed by Louis Mc Williams, lecturer and Coordinator of Theatre Arts at the DCFA. Jessel Murray was music director as well as conductor of the live band. Sally Crawford-Shepherd, the Coordinator of Dance at the DCFA, choreographed, and Dara Jordan-Brown was the scenic designer. Donna Bertrand and Asha Stewart were the stage managers.

Jessel Murray, Chairman of Must Come See Productions, commented:

"This production is a catharsis of sorts for me. It is the depiction of two idealistic people who were trying to bridge the artificial divides that society imposes. The story asks real questions of who owns a space, and what are our perceived reactions to people who choose to inhabit our space."



Here are rehearsal scenes from the recent successful *West Side Story* musical which lit up the stage at Queen's Hall from Thursday, June 21 through Sunday, June 24. PHOTOS: ATIBA CUDJOE



Marsha Pearce curates British Council project



The British Council and the UK National Portrait Gallery have developed the Americas IN Britain arts project and selected UWI's Marsha Pearce as Caribbean curator. Pearce will collaborate with two UK-based curators to showcase images from Caribbean artists through an Instagram residency. The images will appear on the National Portrait Gallery's and British Council's Instagram platforms from June through October. Pearce is a Visual Arts lecturer at the Department for Creative and Festival Arts, UWI.

ELECTIONEERING in a Digital World

BY JOEL HENRY

If you are a follower of progressive politics in the United States, you may have heard of Shaun King. More than likely, you have seen his work. King is part journalist, part activist and even part political strategist and campaigner.

He worked with NFL player Colin Kaepernick on his protest against police brutality. Many of the videos you see on the mainstream US media that depict police violence or racism came through his hands first. When a group of white supremacists badly beat a black counter protester at the protest in Charlottesville in August 2017, it was King who coordinated the manhunt to find and capture them. Three of them are in jail today. For several years King has campaigned for candidates at the city, state and national level on the left wing of the Democratic Party and disseminated ideas on political strategy and action to the public.

King is one of an emerging breed of political actor, occupying a new but growing space. He is able to do so because of one reason – social media. On Twitter he has nearly one million followers, including politicians, party operatives, mainstream journalists, academics and activists. His power is the power of social media and it can be felt throughout the political process, including elections.

But what of Trinidad and Tobago? What kind of impact do social media have in our politics? How have platforms such as Twitter, Facebook and YouTube affected our elections? And what are the benefits and dangers of this potential disruptive technology, to our political process, traditional media, and society itself?

These were some of the questions asked and answered at a recent forum hosted by the Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies (SALISES) of UWI. Entitled “The Role of Social Media in National Elections in Trinidad and Tobago”, the forum looked both at the international picture and the national election in 2015.

“In 2015 both parties used social media to target the undecided, especially youth,” Dr Indrani Bachan-Persad said in her presentation at the June 6 forum. Dr Bachan-Persad is the author of “Mediatised Political Campaigns: A Caribbean Perspective”. Speaking to an audience at the Centre for Language Learning (CLL) Auditorium that included veteran journalists, activists, politicians and UWI students and staff, she presented findings from her new research.

Dr Bachan-Persad’s research led her to the conclusion that the People’s National Movement’s (PNM’s) more targeted approach social media approach to win young and undecided voters, contributed to their victory over the United National Congress (UNC)/People’s Partnership (PP) in 2015.

“The UNC was not as targeted as the PNM,” she said, pointing to the PNM’s use of Vestige Services, a Washington-based digital strategist firm. The UNC, on the other hand, used several firms and as a consequence suffered from “mixed messaging”.

Dr Bachan-Persad described a social media environment in which the PNM, its activists and



How is digital marketing and social media affecting politics?

community groups created a barrage of content on sites such as Facebook, content such as music videos and campaigns that spoke directly to the youth (such as 3 Canal’s “Beat Out 2015”). In contrast, the UNC content was longer form and documentary-style, appealing to an older audience - an audience that could not determine the election.

In her presentation, Dr Bachan-Persad spoke about the dangers of social media in a country such as Trinidad and Tobago where political divisions can also be racial divisions. The media, she said, is “crucial in managing issues such as race” to prevent them from becoming “the dominant themes of the campaigns”. And while she saw traditional media taking up that role responsibly, “in the absence of equivalent gatekeepers in social media, the floodgates of unfettered opinion” could be opened.

The danger of media without gatekeepers, particularly in an environment of extreme wealth and power, was one of the themes of Dr Scott Timcke’s presentation. Dr Timcke is a Lecturer in UWI St Augustine’s Department of Literary Cultural and Communications Studies.

Looking at the US in the era of President Donald Trump, a prolific user of Twitter, Dr Timcke says, “for Trump social media is the only way to get the truth out. The Trump administration routinely coordinates efforts to delegitimize news organisations like Time and CNN.”

Even more worrying, Trump and his followers have used social media to encourage the growth of

far right groups that have nationalist and bigoted ideas, such as the “Alt-Right”. Alt-Right leader Richard Spencer was one of the architects of the demonstrations in Charlottesville that culminated in the killing of Heather Heyer, an activist.

“For totalitarian leaders, truth is simply a matter of power,” Dr Timcke says, speaking of how powerful actors operating in bad faith can misuse social media platforms. “(So they can put out prejudiced messages such as) African Americans are gang members; Mexicans are rapists; Muslims are planning to overthrow the government.”

Perhaps the most positive speaker on the role of social media in elections was the one whose profession is being most affected by it. Journalist Curtis Williams, speaking on behalf of the Media Association of Trinidad and Tobago (MATT) acknowledged the enormous changes taking place in the media landscape today.

“The rise of social media has been accompanied by increased connectivity,” Williams said, citing data from the Telecommunications Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (TATT) showing fixed line Internet penetration was as high as 76.9 percent in the last quarter of 2017 and mobile penetration at 52 percent.

Trinidad and Tobago is now a wired society and with deep digital penetration comes deep social media usage. This has major consequences for traditional media.

“Traditional media are no longer the gatekeeper of news,” Williams said. “Gone are the days when what we saw and heard was determined by traditional media. This is because people now have the power to post their thoughts, pictures and video, and tell their stories without having to go through traditional media.”

The MATT representative used the recent examples of Nafesa Nakhid, the teacher who was told she could not wear her hijab at the Lakshmi Girls Hindu College, and Ajay Aberdeen, the young boy who posted a video of himself explaining his decision to farm and sell peppers. In both instances, stories generated and shared on social media determined the traditional media news cycle.

Williams said social media was not only driving news, it was also taking advertising away from traditional media. However, he believed there was an opportunity for the traditional media to carve out an important space by providing the kind of verification and attention to journalistic standards that social media does not have.

But he cautioned that traditional media was not immune to bad actors or practices.

“Propaganda is not new,” he said. “We have seen political parties or political operatives putting out information that is clearly incorrect and has not been fact checked, and some of it is making its way into the mainstream media.”

For the traditional media to maintain its relevance it should offer what social media does not - verified, trustworthy information.

■ WORLD OCEANS DAY

Coral Reefs, Climate Change and People



Part of a coral reef off Castara in Tobago.
PHOTO: JAHSON ALEMU I.

This is an excerpt of a speech by Professor John Agard on the occasion of World Oceans Day on June 8, when the International Year of the Reef T&T was launched. For the full speech, please see the online version of UWI Today.

World Oceans Day. Why should we care? Well, because the oceans cover about 70 percent of the earth. They are also the source of 80 percent of the air we breathe and the world's largest source of protein. So, human beings can't survive without the ecosystem services that the oceans provide. It therefore makes perfect sense for us to protect the oceans and the life in them.

Unfortunately, the evidence so far is that we are not doing a good job, as almost 40 percent of the oceans are impacted by pollution from land, and millions of marine creatures have died from ingesting or being entangled in plastic waste. So in line with this year's World Ocean Day theme of preventing plastic pollution and encouraging solutions for a healthy ocean, I challenge you to stop using disposable plastic bags, bottles and straws to help save our oceans.

Using Tobago as an example, most people don't realise the high value of the ecosystem service benefits provided by coral reefs to the economy. That is why these values are frequently overlooked or underappreciated in coastal investment, development and policy decisions, resulting in short-sighted decisions that do not maximize the long-term economic potential of coastal areas. The extent of this started to dawn on me as an undergraduate student of the late coral reef biologist Professor Julian Kenny at UWI; and later working along with my recently deceased friend Richard Laydoo on our first job at IMA when we were in our 20s. He spent those years surveying and mapping the reefs of Tobago. He was the hard-bottom coral reef specialist and I was the soft-bottom benthic ecologist. The real eye-opener, though, came many years later with the key work done in Tobago by Laureta Burke from the World Resources Institute in the Reefs at Risk Project done along with IMA. So here is what she found:

Tourism and Recreation

The valuation focused on tourists visiting at least in part due to coral reefs, estimated at 40 percent of visitors to Tobago. Direct economic impacts from visitor spending on accommodation, reef

recreation, and miscellaneous expenditures in 2006 were estimated at US\$43.5 million. At the time, this comprised 15 percent of GDP in Tobago.

But there were additional indirect economic impacts, driven by the need for goods to support tourism (such as boats, towels and beverages) and they contributed another US\$58–86 million to the national economy in T&T. The resulting combined direct and indirect impacts from coral reef-associated tourism amounted to an estimated US\$101–130 million for Tobago.

The study also produced rough estimates of two values not currently captured within the economy. These include the annual value of local residents' use of the reefs and coralline beaches—estimated at US\$13–44 million in Tobago—as well as consumer surplus from reef recreation (i.e. the additional satisfaction derived by participants above what they paid for dive and snorkel trips). Consumer surplus was estimated at \$1 million for Tobago.

Recently my new teacher Dr Jahson Alemu and recent PhD student advanced my knowledge further on this topic. I am singling out one surprising finding that was marginal to his main mathematical modelling PhD studies on optimising the delivery of ecosystem services from coral reefs. In his work on evaluating visitor responses to marginal changes in reef quality, he discovered that by linking ecosystem services to the economy, we were able to demonstrate a preference of recreational users for improved coral reef management expressed as willingness-to-pay. The mean willingness-to-pay for improved coral reef ecosystem management by T&T residents (US\$72) is greater than international visitors (US\$61). This knowledge is an important factor in determining future management possibilities of coral reefs in Tobago since people apparently accept the idea of payment for ecosystem services (PES). This then is the justification for marine park fees from which the revenues can be used to fund environmental protection. Do you know that there are no Park Rangers patrolling reefs in Tobago? Not even Buccoo Reef!

Fisheries

Coral reef-associated fisheries have a much smaller economic impact, but provide other important values including jobs, cultural value, and a social safety net. The annual direct economic impact of coral reef associated fisheries is estimated at US\$0.7 – 1.1 million for Tobago. Additional indirect impacts from the need for boats, fuel, nets, etc. were estimated at about US\$0.1 – 0.2 million for both islands, resulting in a total economic impact of about US\$0.8 – 1.1 million per year in Tobago. I take this data with a grain of salt because it sounds too conservative to me, because no one has yet figured out a way to properly value the nursery function of coral reefs. I am handing solving this problem over to Dr Farahnaz Solomon who is an expert on fisheries biology management and protected areas.

Shoreline Protection

Coral reefs play a vital role protecting the shorelines of Tobago. This project developed an innovative method for estimating the monetary value of coral reefs in protecting the shoreline. It was noted that the erosion rate on the shoreline is less when there is a coral reef offshore and greater when there is not. The difference can then be used to estimate land saved from erosion by coral reefs and the land price in that area can be used to convert land saved into dollars.

It was found that coral reefs contribute to the protection of about 50 percent of the shoreline of Tobago from wave-induced erosion. The annual value of shoreline protection services due to potentially avoided land erosion damages was estimated to be between US\$18 and 33 million for Tobago.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

International Year of the Reef (IYOR)

www.iyor2018.org

Trinidad & Tobago IYOR FaceBook

www.facebook.com/IYORTT

English classes help refugees

BY SHEREEN ANN ALI

A unique eight-week long English language course for speakers of other languages began in June, and will continue this month, to help some refugees and asylum-seekers in Trinidad learn essential English language survival skills. The project is teaching about 60 students. This is the second year that it is being done, with some generous support from community volunteers, a few local businesses and teachers who all wish to lend a helping hand to a compassionate cause.

The project began last year as a small UWI collaborative outreach project to help refugees struggling to survive in T&T as well as to provide a good learning experience for UWI TESOL Diploma students. This year the programme continues with the addition of a new faith-based partner in a Curepe-based church, the St Augustine Evangelical Bible Church, which is generously providing some resources.

On June 4, an evening workshop at the church brought some community and academic stakeholders together to hear about the project, called “The Urban Refugee in Come-Unity Spaces.” With the atmosphere of a town meeting, participants included Dr Nicole Roberts, Head of the UWI Department of Modern Languages and Linguistics, and immigration consultant Dr Jehad Qudourah, who shared anecdotes highlighting how refugees are treated within an immigration system that does not yet cater to their situation. There is a 2014 policy that has not yet been implemented. Also present were Dr Cheryl-Ann Boodram, UWI lecturer in Social Work, who spoke about the need for empowering marginalized, vulnerable refugees to help them rebuild their lives; and Michelle Timothy Ellis, a UWI Adjunct Lecturer in the TESOL Programme, who spoke about the specially designed intensive English classes developed with real-world tasks in mind, to develop immediate and practical English skills for literacy, living and future learning.

Shinelle Hills, urban planner and architect, pointed the audience’s attention to the potential of green spaces that are already open to the public, as a pragmatic way of responding and helping refugees and migrants recover their sense of cultural identity, integration and sense of place, despite an absent legal framework for their integration in Trinidad and Tobago.

UWI Today spoke with UWI Linguistics lecturer and the Coordinator of the TESOL Programme, Dr Renee Figuera, to find out more about “The Urban Refugee in Come-Unity Spaces” project, which was her brainchild.

“The teachers are actually doing a teaching practicum of 48 hours over eight Saturdays. It is the final ‘hands-on’ practical course in a series of more academic postgraduate courses to prepare them to teach English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). The practicum experience is the culminating course in a one-year Diploma in TESOL. The practicum is superimposed on part of a project. We only accept documented migrants. This means they must have a UNHCR Asylum-Seeker Certificate or Refugee Certificate. Their ages range from children to older adults, and most are Spanish speakers. Their



THE TESOL-COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TEAM with the Faculty of Humanities and Education, Department of Modern Languages and Linguistics and St Augustine Evangelical Bible Church. Back Row (from left): Jerry Martin, Bicultural Interpreter, English-Spanish, SAEBC; Joe Caterson, Board of SAEBC; Pastor Owen Boyce, Hageion Ministries International; Dr Martin Hughes, Board of SAEBC; Darren Beckles, Final Year-Civil Engineering Student, UWI, St Augustine. Front Row (from left): Dr Jo-anne Bridge, Lecturer Mechanical Engineering/Board of SAEBC; Jeanne-Alexie Elias, Ministry of Education; Anna Levi, Postgraduate Student in Cultural Studies; Dr Renée Figuera, Coordinator TESOL Programmes and U, We and Refugees, Project Team Leader; Pastor Francis Warner, SAEBC Team Leader; Sahodra-Ann Mangaroo, Early Childhood Educator; Michelle Timothy-Ellis; Adjunct Lecturer, TESOL, UWI, St Augustine; Jeleana Griffith, MA student, TESOL, University of the West Indies/SAEBC.

ages have ranged from 18 months to 59 years old – children may come along with their parents. Last year, 57 migrants graduated from the programme, and this year, we expect about the same – about 60.”

Dr Figuera says the migrants are a mix of refugees and asylum seekers, many of whom have well-founded fears of threats to their safety in their own countries. They are here not by choice, but through desperate circumstances beyond their control. Their English-language speaking levels are often nonexistent – or “zero to basico,” as Dr Figuera says.

The TESOL department this year is funding one master teacher’s services for supervising the work of the pre-service teachers who are conducting teaching on behalf of the refugees and asylum-seekers. Nine other people, all graduates from the UWI TESOL Diploma programme, are also volunteering their services free. And some local business sponsors have stepped up to help in providing meals and other needs. Sponsors this year include the Living Water Community, the Glorious Bodies Glorious Minds health and beauty spa, Sacha Cosmetics, Xtra Foods grocery store, Bryden PI Ltd, Kiss Baking Company Ltd, and Blue Waters Products Ltd. Massy Stores have also provided help.

Dr Figuera said several of the TESOL Diploma students subsequently decide to upgrade to a Masters in TESOL after participation in the outreach programme. UWI students also gain ideas for new lines of research, such as one UWI student who is doing a project exploring how refugees or forced migrants learn English in an informal context. Learning a second language in a conventional classroom setting is a very different process from learning English in outside informal settings in the context of survival in a strange land and culture.

The unique partnership with a church arose precisely because of the church’s existing commitment to social welfare and providing outreach community services in a non-judgmental, caring way. Several UWI lecturers also attend the church, whose congregation is drawn from all social classes, ethnicities and backgrounds who come to share a space of peaceful prayer and community fellowship and sharing.

Dr Figuera says that church volunteers are very interested in doing a good job and are open-minded and tolerant; they often ask her: “What can we do to improve?” Congregation members have given help in translation and interpretation services, and are keen about linking their help to the English language services outreach Practicum course in useful ways that marry with their own desire for helping in social welfare projects.

The actual English classes emphasize survival issues, such as how to fill forms, how to speak to access any social services that might be available, and developing basic skills in active listening, speaking, and understanding English. Classes can involve role-playing, task-based assignments, drills in vocabulary and pronunciation, and assignments to develop reading and writing skills. How to learn English in a creole-speaking island is also a part of the course, because learning to understand and negotiate different T&T language codes and registers can be very tricky for newcomers.

Says Dr Figuera, “The TESOL summer programme for refugees and asylum seekers is about empowerment, and about creating a bridge to survival through language skills. And we are happy to extend the UWI brand out into the community.”

FOR MORE INFORMATION on UWI TESOL courses and programmes
UWI TESOL Diploma web page: <https://sta.uwi.edu/fhe/dml/DipTESOL.asp>
Dr Renée Figuera, UWI TESOL Coordinator: (868) 645-3232, Ext. 83493

Guppy 'Cut-Eye'

Trinidad guppies turn their eyes from silver to black when they're ready for a fight

BY SHERREEN ANNA LI

Suppose you meet a mortal enemy and combat seems imminent. What if, then, your eyes suddenly turned an inky-black colour, to signal to the enemy that you're a powerful warrior who can easily whip him in a fight?

That, in a nutshell, is what the humble Trinidad guppy does when it's getting ready to rumble, especially if other guppies or other fish are threatening to steal its valuable food. A study led by the University of Exeter, in collaboration with the University of the West Indies, found that when facing a rival, guppies rapidly turn their irises from silver to black before attacking their adversary. In TT creole culture, you could humorously say it's like the guppy version of "cut-eye." It's a built-in biological mechanism that helps the tiny fish communicate its aggression.

The guppy eye colour change makes their eyes more conspicuous and is an "honest" signal of aggression – larger guppies do it to smaller ones whom they can beat in a fight, but smaller ones do not return the gesture, say University of Exeter researchers.

Our own UWI St Augustine Deputy Principal, Professor Indar Ramnarine, was part of this research team and co-author of the recently published paper on the guppy eye change, called "Dynamic eye colour as an honest signal of aggression", and published in the journal *Current Biology*. The Exeter team is one of several research teams from different universities around the world with whom Prof Ramnarine works, pursuing different projects. Ramnarine is Professor of Fisheries and Aquaculture at the UWI Department of Life Sciences.

In a recent interview with UWI Today, he said:

"I've been collaborating with Professor Darren Croft from the University of Exeter for the past 15 years. Dr Robert Heathcote, lead author of the study and from the University of Exeter, joined the research group about four years ago. The fascinating characteristic about guppies is that they are an ideal model to study evolution. Females mature in just 10 weeks while males take seven weeks. And they can live for about four years. That means there is a quick turnover, with lots of generations to study."

"Guppies are native to North-East South America and Trinidad, with the males being smaller and more colourful than the females. In Trinidad's Northern Range,

A recently published study shows that guppies can change their eye colour from silver to black to signal aggression. Guppies are model species for studying evolution in the wild. The rivers in the Northern Range have natural barriers such as cascades and waterfalls which prevent major guppy predators from inhabiting upstream areas. This has resulted in guppies living upstream (low predation sites) being quite different from guppies living downstream (high predation sites) in terms of life history, morphology and behaviour.



Robert Heathcote, Associate Research Fellow, University of Exeter



Darren Croft, Professor of Animal Behaviour, University of Exeter



Safi Darden, Lecturer, University of Exeter



Indar Ramnarine, Professor of Fisheries and Aquaculture, UWI

there are natural barriers such as cascades, and these separate two distinct guppy populations that behave differently. Above the cascade barriers, there are hardly any natural predators, and guppies here mature later in life, have fewer baby guppies per pregnancy, and these young are large. Below the natural barriers, the guppies encounter many more predators – mainly the matawal or pike cichlid, and the guabine or wolf-fish – and these guppies mature much earlier in life, and have large numbers of live young which are smaller in size than guppies in the safer waters upstream."

"Darren (Croft) and I were in the lab one day and we noticed the iris colour change from silver to black and thought, there must be a reason. Then Dr Robert Heathcote joined the team and led this study."

Heathcote with his colleague Jolyon Troscianko had the idea to build latex models of guppies. Troscianko studies animal camouflage. Science writer Ed Young clearly describes the process of building the simulated guppies in his lively June 4 article in *The Atlantic* magazine:

"The team pressed a dead fish into some resin to make a silicon mold that could churn out model guppies. They then photographed live fish with black and silver eyes, recalibrated the images for guppy vision, and printed them onto sheets of clingfilm. They stretched the coloured sheets over the silicone models, which they attached to a fishing line on a motor."

And just like that, they had great imitation guppies which could be made to defend and thrash over a bit of food.

Dr Robert Heathcote said of the study: "Experimentally showing that animals use their eye coloration to communicate with each other can be very difficult, so we made realistic-looking fish with differing eye colours and observed the reaction of real fish.... Trinidadian guppies can change their iris colour within a few seconds, and our research shows they do this to honestly communicate their aggressive motivation to other guppies."

Professor Darren Croft added: "Eyes are one of the most easily recognised structures in the natural world and many species go to great lengths to conceal and camouflage their eyes to avoid unwanted attention from predators or rivals. However, some species have noticeable or prominent eyes and, for the most part, it has remained a mystery as to why this would be. This research gives a new insight into the reasons behind why some animals have such 'conspicuous' eyes."

Dr Safi Darden co-author on the study added: "It is well known that in humans the white sclera of the eye is used to signal gaze direction – it provides others with information on what we are looking at. Our work shows that just like humans, these little fish pay attention to the eyes of their group members and that the eyes provide important information to other rival fish".

Prof Ramnarine comments: "Different animals respond differently to threats. A pufferfish, for instance, takes in water or air to make itself seem huge; other animals also make themselves seem larger or fierce. It's an important strategy in the animal kingdom when creatures come into conflict with each other. This guppy study shows that fish can evolve a complex behavioural strategy to communicate with other fish that they are willing to fight."

The research paper "Dynamic eye colour as an honest signal of aggression" was published in the journal Current Biology, Volume 28, Issue 11, on June 4, 2018, and was based on research done in 2016 and 2017. Its authors are Robert J.P. Heathcote, Safi K. Darden, Jolyon Troscianko, Michael R.M. Lawson, Antony M. Brown, Philippa R. Laker, Lewis C. Naisbett-Jones, Hannah E.A. MacGregor, Indar W. Ramnarine, and Darren P. Croft.

‘Bots that see and do’

Robotics and computing are featured in this month’s Computing Boot Camp: What’s not to love?

BY DR PHAEDRA MOHAMMED

If computing and robotics fascinate you, then you will enjoy the upcoming fourth annual Computing Boot Camp being organised by UWI’s Department of Computing and Information Technology (DCIT).

The camp will be held from July 9-13 with the theme: “Bots that See and Bots that Do”. Robotics, extended sensor applications, vision and voice applications are planned together with traditional camp elements (career guidance, campus tours, social events). Guest speakers are confirmed from Google and Virtana.

These camps have proved very successful, as last year’s experience shows. Last year’s Computing Boot Camp began on July 17, 2017 and was held for five days at the UWI, St Augustine Campus with the theme “Code: The Glue that Connects Everything”. Twenty-two secondary school students from Forms 4 to 6 attended and were introduced to the foundational aspects of Computer Science (CS) and Information Technology (IT) using the Raspberry PI microcomputer and programmable robots.

Several schools across Trinidad were represented last year, such as San Fernando Secondary, St Anthony’s College, St Augustine Girls’ High School, Hillview College, Holy Faith Convent – Couva, Northeastern College, Trinity College East, and Vishnu Boys’ Hindu College among others. The camp was supported by corporate sponsors TTNIC and Republic Bank; philanthropic business sponsors Shami’s Variety, Jazfan Trading and Ardis Limited, and individuals who contributed scholarships for students.

The 2017 Boot Camp was chaired by Dr Permanand Mohan, the current Head of Department. A core team of research students and staff at the DCIT, led by Dr Phaedra Mohammed, coordinated the event with the help of several postgraduate and undergraduate CS student volunteers.

The 2017 camp was designed with a highly interactive, hands-on approach where the teaching sessions involved direct manipulation of the robot code using the Raspberry PI from the first day with an incremental increase in complexity for three days. This approach seemed to promote positive perceptions of CS. When asked to describe the camp in five words, the top responses included “Fun”, “Interesting”, and “Challenging” along with many positive variants. One participant commented, “The programming of the robot was super fun, whether it was the music or the dancing or just making the robot move forward.”

The participants were assigned to teams and used sensors connected to the robots to solve problems ranging from simple movements, to obstacle detection and avoidance, to complicated maze-solving. Throughout the camp, each team was mentored by individual volunteers. The rest of days were allocated to free-form work and mentoring on projects which were also effective in stimulating creativity, building camaraderie and encouraging a fun experience. Overall, the teams produced impressive solutions such that the final maze challenge had to be extended with an advanced stage.



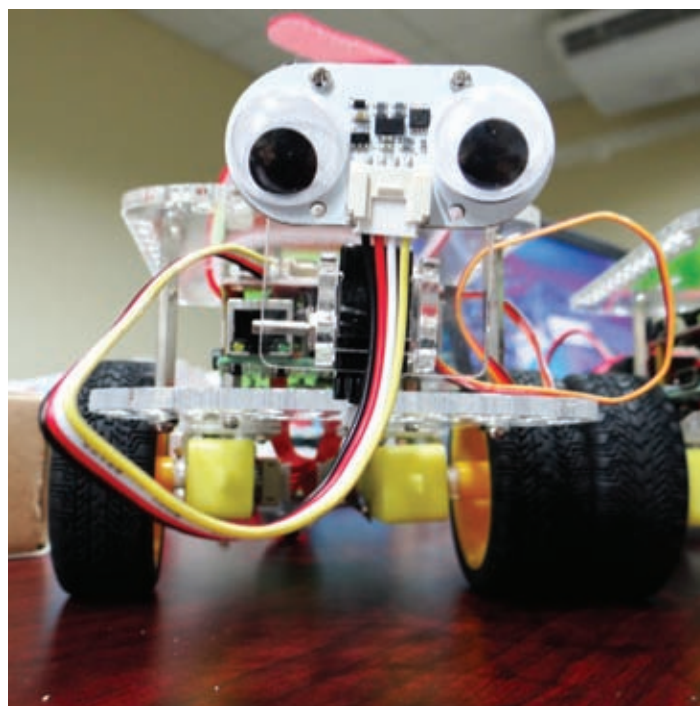
2017 Computing Boot Camp Participants (light blue), Mentors (royal blue) and Committee Mentors (dark blue)

One of the motivating factors for the camp, which started in 2011, is to encourage students to choose CS/IT as future career paths. Several former participants have gone on to pursue various degrees in CS, IT locally at UWI and internationally at the University of Waterloo, and University of Ontario Institute of Technology.

Half of the 2017 bootcampers indicated that they are more likely to pursue CS degrees than when they started the camp, despite having other career paths in mind. All of them said that they now feel more confident to be able to handle a degree in CS.

In fact, one former bootcamper completed a BSc

CS undergraduate degree at UWI this year and intends to enroll in a CS postgraduate degree at the DCIT in September 2018. He commented, “The DCIT boot camp taught me a lot about the fields of CS and IT, but in a very fun and interactive way. By the end of the camp I had learnt enough to confidently decide to pursue computer science further.” Another former bootcamper, who is currently enrolled in a BSc CS and Math degree at the University of Pennsylvania, commented, “I really enjoyed it, so much that I wanted to volunteer this year (2018).” He will be joining our slate of 2018 mentors in the next edition of the camp this month.



Closeup of Robot



Teams working on programming code for various problems

Language and Social Justice in T&T

BY JO-ANNE FERREIRA

In Barcelona in June 1996, writers and NGOs drafted the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights to protect and promote the individual, societal and national linguistic rights of users of endangered and marginalised languages.

The idea originated with Francisco Gomes de Matos of the Federal University of Pernambuco (Recife, Brazil) in 1984. Trained in linguistics, language teaching and law, he is now Professor Emeritus, and a core member of Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies. Gomes de Matos has long been concerned with the rights and responsibilities of language users, the legal implications for education, and applied peace linguistics.

Article 10.2 of the Declaration “considers discrimination against language communities to be inadmissible, whether it be based on their degree of political sovereignty, their situation defined in social, economic or other terms, the extent to which their languages have been codified, updated or modernized, or on any other criterion.”

In the Caribbean where English is the official language, there has been relatively little focus on language rights outside of education. However, in Haiti, Kreyòl became co-official with French in 1987, and in Aruba, Papiamentu became official in 2003. The point to note is that there are many speakers of non-official languages who possess a special, rich heritage precisely because of the cultural uniqueness of their language. Yet too many of them are discriminated against or casually excluded from easy access to their own country’s services or opportunities because they do not speak the mainstream official tongue.

The UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity (Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity) includes the culture and language of the Maroon Heritage of Moore Town (Jamaica), and the Language, Dance and Music of the Garifuna (Belize, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua). UNESCO has supported the UWI Caribbean Indigenous and Endangered Languages project, and the RDI Fund supports the Digital Documentation of Heritage Languages of Trinidad & Tobago.

The Society for Caribbean Linguistics (SCL) has championed Caribbean linguistic rights for many years. Prof Hubert Devonish, former SCL President and Director of the Jamaican Language Unit (JLU) and the International Centre for Caribbean Language Research (ICCLR), was the principal organizer of the Charter on Language Policy and Language Rights in the Creole-Speaking Caribbean (Kingston 2011), bringing together governors-general, educators and more to discuss language rights, language policy and planning.

In 2013, the Hilo Resolution (Hawai’i) focused on the rights of native speakers and signers of languages everywhere, and the need for proper representation before governments. Many languages are minority or minoritised languages, that is, they are in either in the numerical or sociopolitical minority. The latter are even majority languages, but marginalised. The users of these languages are usually less socioeconomically powerful than the speakers of their countries’ official languages that usually have world status. The native speakers of official languages are often in the numerical



minority yet have disproportionate privilege in postcolonial countries.

The HiLo resolution and TT language groups

In T&T, there are historically four groups who fall into the categories mentioned in the Hilo Resolution: 1) our autochthonous or indigenous peoples; 2) the many monolingual (or varilingual) T&T English Creole speakers (even if they are passively competent and passively bilingual in Standard(ised) English); 3) monolingual or bilingual speakers of our immigrant heritage languages, and their descendants, and 4) the deaf community.

The ancestors of all these groups have historically been or are currently socio-economically subordinate and underrepresented in terms of power sharing. The Anglicisation Policy of the mid-19th century, and other less obvious policies, contributed in no small measure to these issues, and to problems in education, the pathway to economic sustainability and stability. Some such language speakers and their descendants were able to overcome these difficulties, but many others have not. For some, their languages and cultures are still being disrespected and belittled, misunderstood and mishandled, or eroded and forgotten.

UNESCO celebrates International Mother Language Day (IMLD) every 21 February. The 2018 theme was “Linguistic Diversity and Multilingualism Count for Sustainable Development”. In his IMLD address, Dr Michel Kenmogne of Cameroon, Director of SIL International, poignantly noted:

“Over the years, I had the painful experience of needing to deny myself and the language I spoke at home in order to access education and to enjoy better socioeconomic status. This is the tragedy of the speakers of many of the lesser-known languages of the world... However, the large majority of these people end up living in the margins of society. They drop out of the school system. They are the casual labour workforce in their nations.”

Intangible linguo-cultural heritage should be documented before the users of these languages suffer or disappear. Like ecological loss, language loss and

culture loss are often irreparable. On the other hand, like a balanced ecology where all species should be protected if possible, all of our languages should be treated respectfully, and documented for posterity.

It is important that all language groups be researched and understood. This is so that every citizen can be afforded the best of educational and professional opportunities, and be fully assisted in the health and legal systems.

Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights

The Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights supports the equal rights of all language users (speakers and signers) throughout the world, especially those users of endangered languages. All languages are covered covered by the Declaration, including ancestral and ritual languages.

Articles 23-30 of the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights are of particular interest to the Faculty of Humanities and Education of The UWI (particularly Linguistics and Education). Article 25 focuses on “properly trained teachers, appropriate teaching methods, textbooks, finance, buildings and equipment, traditional and innovative technology”. Article 26 notes that “All language communities are entitled to an education which will enable their members to acquire a full command of their own language ... as well as the most extensive possible command of any other language they may wish to know.”

Article 27 includes our indigenous peoples and a number of ethno-religious groups, and states that “All language communities are entitled to an education which will enable their members to acquire knowledge of any languages related to their own cultural tradition, such as literary or sacred languages which were formerly habitual languages of the community.”

Our heritage languages are not only of the past; they offer insight into who we are as a people today, how we think, function and see the world. Our languacultures, then and now, must be part of the call for reparations, as they at the very heart of our nationhood and selfhood.



Dr Renée Figuera

RENÉE FIGUERA: Language on the Margins

BY JEANETTE AWAI

When you think of the kind of person who interviews local gang members to gain hidden insights, a soft-spoken linguistics lecturer probably doesn't come to mind. But that's exactly what Dr Renée Figuera did with the help of one of her former students.

Figuera is Linguistics Lecturer and coordinator of the Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) programme at UWI. Figuera has a lifelong obsession with how language is represented and its ability to empower and disempower people who are often overlooked by our society. Who gets to tell the prevailing narrative, and who doesn't?

The first language Figuera learnt was Hindi, thanks to her time at Rio Claro Hindu School. It is here where she fell in love with language and later went on to do her Bachelor of Arts in French and Spanish at The UWI, St Augustine. Her PhD in Applied Linguistics enabled her to do studies in critical discourse analysis, specifically looking at inequality as represented through language. This training combined with her years of teaching students in the tertiary, secondary and adult continuing education sector, opened her up to worlds she didn't know existed.

The span of her research projects are too long to list here, but her focus on needs-based curricula and programmes stems from her desire to always be socially relevant. So it's no surprise that right now she's passionate about some of the most misunderstood and talked about minority populations – gang members, migrants and refugees.

UWI Today interviewed Dr Figuera on the top floor of UWI's Faculty of Humanities and Education Building in Figuera's stomping ground, the Department of Modern Languages and Linguistics (DMLL). She remembered a seminal moment for her: the time she assigned a rudimentary business writing essay to her students at the UWI Applied School of Business. The homework she got back eventually changed the course of her academic career.

"They were using language about gangs that they couldn't have known unless they were an insider. I wanted them to know that their world view was important."

Figuera encouraged the student to write about the experience, even becoming so invested that when the student dropped out, Figuera helped them get back in school and continue with education. Emerging from this, Figuera began research on language and gang culture. The specific study analysed the conversations of members of gang culture, exploring the sense of shared "moral agency" among seasoned gang players between the ages of 25 and 41 in the community context of the Patna-River Estate and the Northern Blue Basin community of Diego Martin.

Figuera was able to directly interview gang players and hear in their own words how they viewed gang culture and their role within it. The study honed in on the language used by six key people to provide a much-needed context on how in their own world, they legitimised violent crimes.

Figuera was able to directly interview gang players and hear in their own words how they viewed gang culture and their role within it.

The study, playfully titled "Doh go Dey", was one of the first of its kind to actually "go dey". According to Figuera, "I had not previously come across studies done with an adult population, and more specifically, gang players, whose economic livelihoods were intertwined with gang activity and violence."

By asking a series of questions in creole such as, "Okay... so what would you say is your role an function in de brodahhood?" and "Do you think dat gangsters are misunderstood an if yes or if no, wha would you like people tuh understand?" resulted in gang members giving micro-narratives about their upbringing and education, their routes into gang life, their roles as members within the gang fraternity and their experiences as gang players.

Figuera says the route to gang membership often defies predominant narratives echoed in daily newspapers. "People think that people get into gangs because they didn't like school or wanted to go the easy route, but a lot of gang members are smart. They like school, they like to play chess, they like strategy."

Just looking at the pseudonyms of the interviewed gang players, it's surprising to see the name "Keyser Soze" – a character made famous by Kevin Spacey in the 1995 movie *The Usual Suspects*. (Movie spoiler alert: the character Keyser Soze plays the role of an unlikely suspect.) Gang players refer to giving the police a "keyser" or "hitting them a shot" or ruse, which is usually orchestrated by a cunning, intelligent playmaker.

Figuera also interviewed a female gang member dubbed "Barbie" (ironic as her role as a gang player is anything but light-hearted or frivolous). In Barbie's words, "Practically I come like de moddah uh de broderhood, I deal all financial an lawyers an whatnot, am, basically I like de queen on de board, I cover all ovah an basically dais it."

The study doesn't glamorize or judge these gang players' behaviour. It asks them to look at themselves, and puts Figuera in the role of an empathetic linguist closely analysing the language of their responses.

When the gang players were asked, "If yuh had to describe yuhself growin' up, what would you say about yuhself?" – all six subjects seemed to tone down the matter of involvement in crime by pointing either to the nurturing life conditions of positive parenting, or to schooling and religion, which they used to construct their sense of self as inherently moral and law-abiding community residents. Here's Keyser Soze: "Family was okay, moddah treat meh good, faddah dey fuh meh, sistahs, no broddahs."

Most players also discussed their experience with being "failed by the system" thus resulting in a distancing of themselves as active participants or "deagentialisation." They saw themselves as people who had "ended up in crime" as opposed to actively seeking out a criminal lifestyle from the outset.

Figuera finds this kind of insider perspective invaluable and a cornerstone for reexamining the sociocultural rationale for crime. She is working to develop this project (on gang language) into a paper which will be co-authored by one of her students involved in the project. It is possible that lawmakers, researchers and other groups interested in curtailing crime may follow Figuera's example of "going dey" and use existing intermediary resources between insider and outsider groups to gain new information.

Looking at language critically is something Figuera doesn't just practice; she demands it. As coordinator of The UWI St Augustine's TESOL programme, she trains teachers to look at their position in the world as Caribbean English speakers teaching English to non-native English speakers. For example, what does being a Caribbean English speaker bring to the table? How is your perspective different when you are a yardie teaching in the JET (Japanese Exchange and Teaching) programme? By looking at our own Caribbean varieties of English and accents, she aims to empower Caribbean English teachers to legitimise their brand of teaching and continue to make it in demand regionally and internationally.

The ability to look at how language affects groups on the margins of the mainstream is Figuera's main obsession. "My students will tell you that I always say – 'It's not what you want to research, it's why you want to research. What is your end goal? Whose lives will your research impact?'" There is no doubt that under Figuera's tutelage, the research coming from UWI's linguistics students will matter to the people that most need to be heard.

UWI Calendar of Events

JULY 2018

DCIT Computing Bootcamp

July 9 – 13

The UWI, St Augustine Campus, Trinidad

The Department of Computing and Information Technology (DCIT) at The UWI, St Augustine invites secondary school students in Forms 4, 5, and 6 as well as incoming undergraduate students to register for its Fourth Annual Computing Boot Camp. The camp aims to increase student interest in learning and applying Computing and Information Technology to improving the region. Activities will include: Python programming, robot car programming, web design, campus tours, career guidance and games. Registration is open until July 6 and costs \$1,299 which includes camp materials, a t-shirt and meals.

For more information, visit <http://sta.uwi.edu/fst/dcit/bootcamp> or email dcit@sta.uwi.edu

UWI SPEC Football Camp

July 9 – 13

Sport and Physical Education Center

The UWI, St Augustine Campus, Trinidad

The UWI Sport and Physical Education Center (SPEC) invites young footballers seven to 17 years old (boys & girls) to sign up for its Vacation Football Camp. The camp runs from July 9 – 13 at UWI SPEC from 9:00am – 3:00pm, with pick-up by 4:30pm. It costs \$650 with a discount of \$25 off per sibling of registered camper. The camp will be run by qualified coaches from Football IQ Academy and participants will benefit from small side games, the World Cup competition, skills contests, quality training, and indoor futsal.

For more information on registration, contact: Christian Roberts: specinfo@sta.uwi.edu; 662-2002, ext. 84380

Arts in Action Discovery Camp

July 9 – 27 & August 6 – 18

The DCFA, The UWI, St Augustine Campus, Trinidad

The Arts in Action Discovery Camp for children 5 – 18 years old provides creative and exciting vacation activities 9am – 3pm daily at the Department of Creative and Festival Arts (DCFA), Gordon Street, St Augustine. It runs in two cycles: **July 9 – 27** and **August 6 – 18**. This year campers and tutors will work toward hosting a children's theatre production titled Jumbie Birds on July 28 and 29. Registration costs are \$1,500 (July) and \$850 (August).

For more information, email email@artsinaction.org or call 289-4242 | 384-9565

Rainforest to Reef

July 25 – 27

Teaching and Learning Complex

The UWI, St Augustine Campus, Trinidad

The Latin America and Caribbean Section (LACA) of the Society for Conservation Biology in collaboration with The UWI hosts the inaugural Latin America and Caribbean Congress for Conservation Biology (LACCCB 2018) under the theme Rainforest to Reef: Strengthening Connections between the Caribbean and the Americas. It runs 8am – 6pm on July 25 – 27.

For conference rates and registration information, = visit <https://laccb2018.org/registration/>.



Chancellor's Week – The UWI 70th Anniversary Celebration

July 23 – 29

The UWI, Mona Campus, Jamaica

For one week in July, thousands of alumni, students, staff and guests from across the Caribbean and beyond will come to Jamaica to The UWI's Mona Campus for a week of activities hosted by Chancellor Robert Bermudez. Chancellor's Week, from July 23 – 29, is a highlight of a year-long celebration of the University's legacy of "70 years of service, 70 years of leadership".

There will be a diverse, exciting programme of free and paid events to include academic gatherings, an awards function, parties and other entertainment.

Noting that the week-long celebration specially reaches out to The UWI's vast alumni network inviting them to reconnect, share their success stories and re-engage with the University, Chancellor Bermudez says: "The UWI's success has been each one of the graduates who has left our campuses to form the fabric of the West Indian society, in every field of endeavour. Chancellor's Week is intended to bring back thousands of graduates to jointly celebrate their success and our success."

Chancellor's Week begins on **Monday, July 23** with a **Welcome Gala Reception** hosted by Prime Minister of Jamaica, the Most Honourable Andrew Holness, MP, at Jamaica House.

On **July 24, Nostalgic Conversations**, an interactive public forum hosted at The UWI Regional Headquarters, will feature distinguished alumni reflecting on the history, contributions and achievements of The UWI and their shared experiences.

On **July 25**, at the Mona Visitors Lodge and Conference Centre, seven alumni selected by their peers and representing each decade from 1948 to present, will be honoured for their contributions at **The 70th Anniversary Pelican Awards**.

Come **July 26**, the four campuses' Guilds of Students will stage **Pelican Projections: A University for the Future – UWI then, UWI now, UWI to come**. This forum at The UWI Mona's Faculty of Law Lecture Theatre promises to be a thought-provoking panel discussion targeting students and the public.

The **One UWI Festival** and **T-20 Cricket Match** scheduled for **July 27** will bring together past and current alumni from the various campuses. Free and open to the public, this event will feature pavilions showcasing the cuisine and culture of all The UWI campuses, competitions, entertainment and an exciting cricket match between a student team and a special Chancellor's XI team at The UWI Mona Bowl.

Chancellor's Week culminates with a weekend-long celebration of the music, colour and culture of the Caribbean. An all-inclusive **Pelican All White Breakfast Party** in collaboration with party promoters Sunnation, rolls out the festivities on **July 28** at the Oriental Gardens on The UWI Mona Campus and will precede the **UWI B4 Independence Party**, also on the campus that evening, targeting party fans, and especially current and incoming students.

The week closes with the **Chancellor's Jazz Farewell** on **July 29**. Dynamic jazz/reggae saxophonist and recording artiste from Barbados, **Arturo Tappin** will headline a cavalcade of some of the region's most accomplished performers under the stars at the Oriental Gardens.

The special week of activities has already attracted partnership with notable sponsors, such as the Carrera's Group, Phase 3, RJR Gleaner Communications Group, Sagicor, Tastee Ltd., and WISYNCO. Other corporate entities are invited to be part of this unique opportunity as Chancellor's Platinum, Golden Pelican, Silver Scholar or One UWI Bronze partners.

Proceeds from Chancellor's Week will go to **The UWI Regional Endowment Fund** to support undergraduate and graduate students, research and other developmental projects based on merit and financial need. Officially launched in July 2008 as part of the University's 60th Anniversary celebrations, the Fund has since presented over 180 scholarships worth over US\$1.1 million.

You can see a short **YouTube video** of Chancellor Robert Bermudez talking about the **July 23 – 29 events** here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SsUE_Ad5tiw&feature=youtu.be

For more details on the events, ticket/package purchases, and sponsorships, visit the website www.uwi.edu/alumnionline/uwi-chancellors-week, find @UWIAlumnionline on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, email at 70@alumni.uwi.edu or call 1-876-970-0967.

**UWI TODAY WANTS
TO HEAR FROM YOU**

UWI TODAY welcomes submissions by staff and students for publication in the paper. Please send your suggestions, comments, or articles for consideration to uwitoday@sta.uwi.edu

