“We’re committed to Cave Hill’s success...”

2008 Alumni Leaders
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Facing the future with confidence

As the 21st Century unfolds, it is already evident that universities in developing countries must be nimble, responsive and generally inventive in order to remain relevant. Nowhere is this shown more clearly than in the various positions adopted by the University of the West Indies in respect of the challenges in the economic, trade and financial conditions facing the Caribbean.

As a partner in the process towards development, we at the Cave Hill Campus of the UWI see our role as that of facilitator, and sometimes projector, in assisting the country and wider region to meet their goals.

In 2008 we took many important decisions, but particularly significant were two taken in September that signaled the coming of age of the institution. Together they leave no doubt that the university is in tune with the people it serves.

The first of these relates to the expansion of the Faculty of Medical Sciences. It took in its first cohort of more than 40 Barbadian, Caribbean and international students when the semester opened just six weeks ago.

After offering programmes that covered years four and five of the full MBBS degree for 40 years, in a country that celebrates an exemplary medical health system, the expansion seemed long overdue.

Also in September, we unveiled the Student Entrepreneurial Empowerment Development (SEED), programme to the campus community. This development demonstrates an awareness that the campus administration and faculty, responsible for fashioning the future of thousands of young minds, recognise clearly that creating an entrepreneurial ethos among graduates represents the way forward.

We believe that countries which are able to fashion their young people into a new class of vibrant, forward-thinking individuals, equipped with what they need to make their own way in the world, will be able to offer their citizens a better standard of living in the new globalised economy.

Co-incidentally, it was just a few weeks ahead of SEED’s unveiling that Prime Minister David Thompson disclosed that it was his Government’s intention to move the number of self-employed entrepreneurs from the current ten per cent of the working population to 20 per cent by 2016. This should be viewed against the background that more than 70 per cent of all new jobs created worldwide over the past decade were by small businesses.

By clearly understanding its developmental role in the economies of the region, Cave Hill is now well placed to partner with Government and the private sector in this initiative.

We could not agree more with Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance, Senator Darcy Boyce when he said at the opening of SEED: “Stimulating entrepreneurship is a critical dimension in the development of business and industry. Our education system therefore has a role to play in fashioning behaviours while promoting the capability to be creative.”

Similarly, we cannot but endorse the comments of Professor Henry Fraser, Dean of the Faculty of Medical Sciences when he said there was a need for the medical faculty in Barbados to address local medical requirements and also to cater to the demand for more trained doctors to serve in the countries of the region.

“We want to build on (our) reputation … to project the UWI as the best quality university in the developing world…,” he said.

As more of the development programmes for Cave Hill are unveiled in the coming months, we assure our partners, supporters and most of all the students whom we serve that the campus will continue to illustrate its relevance to the local and regional developmental agenda.
The Cave Hill Campus has introduced a new way of saluting the achievements of some of its most illustrious graduates.

In April, the Campus heralded the start of its Alumnus of the Month Award, with Prime Minister of Barbados, the Hon. David Thompson, copping the inaugural accolade.

Thompson, a 1984 graduate of the Faculty of Law and a founding member of the Cave Hill’s Alumni Circle, became his country’s sixth Prime Minister following general elections last January.

Since then honourees have included Prime Minister of Belize, the Hon. Dean Barrow, his Grenadian counterpart, the Hon. Tillman Thomas, Deputy Principal and former Head of the Centre for Gender Studies at the Cave Hill Campus, Professor Eudine Barriteau, Barbadian senator Kerry-Ann Ifill, veteran business executive Dodridge Miller and Chief Justice Hugh Rawlins of the Eastern Caribbean Court of Justice.

The awardees have been recognised for their respective achievements of excellence which have brought prestige to their tertiary alma mater and their local, regional or international community in a manner which now renders them role models for current students of UWI. Photographs of these distinguished graduates are hung on the Alumni Wall of Honour in the lobby of the main administrative building of the Campus.

The Alumni of the Month awardees are chosen from those UWI graduates who have received outstanding recognition in their career field or sporting endeavour, have performed noteworthy, compassionate, humanitarian or community service that enriched the lives of others, or who have shown exceptional personal or professional contribution and dedication to the goals and objectives of UWI.

Nominations should be sent to the selection committee via the UWI Office of Alumni Association at UWI Cave Hill, Barbados.
The 2008 Cave Hill graduation will include the presence of African royalty and British peerage when it comes off on October 25.

Five persons will receive honorary degrees at the Cave Hill ceremony slated for the Garfield Sobers Gymnasium, as a record 16 illustrious citizens have honorary doctorates conferred on them at the University of the West Indies (UWI) graduation ceremonies in October and November this year. St Augustine campus will also award five honorary degrees and Mona six in the annual ritual of recognising outstanding contributors to the region and the wider diaspora.

At Cave Hill an Asante King, a Baroness, a physicist, a philanthropist and a prominent entrepreneur will be honoured. They are Asantehene, Otumfuo Nana Osei Tutu II, Baroness Patricia Scotland, Dr Cardinal Warde, Sir Peter Moores and Mr Dodridge Miller.

Asantehene, Otumfuo Osei Tutu II of Ghana, will receive an honorary Doctor of Laws degree for his tireless work in support of the development and survival of African universities. The Asantehene – which is the title of the ruler of the Asante people – is Chancellor of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science & Technology in Ghana.

A native Dominican and the first black female Queen’s Counsel in Britain, Baroness Patricia Scotland, will receive an honorary Doctor of Laws (LLD) degree in recognition of her stellar legal career. Baroness Scotland of Asthal scored another first when she was named England’s first female Attorney General.

Barbadian physicist, Dr Cardinal Warde will have an honorary Doctor of Sciences (DSc) conferred on him for his contribution to the development of compact optoelectronic neural network processors. Dr Warde is a prolific researcher and inventor and holds nearly one dozen patents on spatial light modulators and optical processing systems.

Sir Peter Moores, visual arts educator and philanthropist will have a Doctor of Letters honoris causa (DLitt), conferred on him. An Englishman, Sir Peter is patron and founder of the Peter Moores Barbados Trust, through which he channels his charitable endeavours in support of the arts and for environmental and social causes.

Barbadian business leader and entrepreneur, Mr Dodridge Miller, will receive an honorary Doctor of Laws degree in recognition of his exemplary leadership in the financial sector. Mr Miller is President and CEO of one of the largest financial institutions in the region, Sagicor Financial Corporation, which he has also introduced into the financial markets of Europe and the USA.

The five honourees at the St Augustine ceremonies will include two women – Mrs Angela Cropper, an environmentalist and Professor Kari Polanyi Levitt, an economist and scholar. Others are Trinidadian curator and art historian Mr Kynaston McShine; Bahamian public servant and statesman, His Excellency, the Hon Arthur D. Hanna, and Mr Leroy Calliste, the Trinidadian calypsonian known as The Black Stalin.

The Mona graduation ceremonies, which for the first time will be staged in three sessions, will see the conferral of honorary degrees on Guyanese national and former international civil servant, now international consultant, Mr Havelock Brewster, Jamaican health care professional Dame Karlene C. Davis, Brazilian musician the Hon Gilbert Passos Gil Moreira, Jamaican/Canadian entrepreneur extraordinaire, Mr Michael Lee-Chin; outstanding Jamaican entrepreneur and head of the Grace Kennedy Group of Companies, Mr Douglas Orane and Mr Roderick Rainford, a former Governor of the Central Bank of Jamaica and former Deputy Secretary-General and Secretary General of CARICOM.
Barbadian students attending the University of the West Indies (UWI) can remain focused on their studies without worrying about having to pay fees.

Shortly after he took office earlier this year, Prime Minister of Barbados, the Hon. David Thompson, visited the Cave Hill Campus and assured compatriots attending the institution that his Government would continue the long-standing financial commitment to undergraduates.

“The Barbados Government remains committed to meeting the tuition and related costs for each Barbadian attending UWI and ensuring that the Cave Hill Campus enjoys the supporting amenities that are deserving of an institution of its calibre,” he told the 2008 Cave Hill Campus Benefactors Awards.

The Prime Minister who was the featured speaker at the triennial event which was held at the Errol Barrow Centre for Creative Imagination, said Government was fully supportive of UWI and the realisation of the potential of each student and that of the University as a whole.

Lauding UWI’s administration and Campus benefactors for their work in transforming the institution, he disclosed that Government intends to create a new industrial development and innovation fund through several partnerships with the University, in order to vigorously promote research and development activities.

Thompson pledged to encourage the University and other entrepreneurial organisations to continue research and development on solar power and other alternative sources of energy. He also promised that the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development will embark on a fundamental reform of the educational system in order to create an educated workforce while converting the economy into a knowledge-based society.

“Tertiary education institutions such as the UWI constitute the backbone of a country’s information infrastructure,” noted the Prime Minister.

The ceremony recognised and honoured the contributions of more than 50 government agencies, local, regional and international foundations, development and donor agencies, private individuals and private companies. These contributions supported the Cave Hill campus’ academic research, outreach and capital development programmes over the past three years.

Barbados National Bank, Scotiabank Barbados and Sagicor, each with a contribution of a million dollars or more, headed the list of awardees.
When it launched its consulting business in Barbados earlier this year, the University of the West Indies demonstrated a zest to practise what it preaches – the doctrine of self-reliance.

Known as UWI Consulting Incorporated, this subsidiary will be drawing on expertise at the University and will provide advisory and capacity-building services across the region and internationally.

UWI Consulting Incorporated will offer strategic advice, consultancy and related services on all aspects of management, development and innovation to businesses, government, international agencies and community organisations.

The company, which is headquartered in St. Lucia and has offices at Mona, St. Augustine and Cave Hill, focuses on policy analysis and development as well as project implementation, governance and organisation management in a wide range of disciplines.

Chairman of the Board of UWI Consulting Incorporated is Professor Nigel Harris, who is also UWI Vice Chancellor. Other Board members include CEO, Carleen Gardner; Cave Hill Principal and Pro-Vice Chancellor, Sir Hilary Beckles; Mona Principal and Pro-Vice Chancellor, Professor Gordon Shirley; St. Augustine Principal and Pro-Vice Chancellor, Clement Sankat; Pro-Vice Chancellor, Research Professor Wayne Hunte; Pro-Vice Chancellor & Principal, Open Campus, Professor Hazel Simmons-McDonald; UWI Director of Finance & Bursar, Winston Bayley; Vice President of Sagicor Life, Dodridge Miller; Retired Partner, KPMG Caribbean, Gregory Shirley; and CEO, Millsquare Group of Consultants, New Rochelle, NY, Margaret Young.

“We want to be the first point of call for Caribbean businesses, governments and agencies that need in-depth expertise and advice on management, planning and development issues,” envisioned Professor Harris, speaking at the launch at the Barbados Hilton.

UWI, he noted, has produced most of the region’s prime ministers and has helped to shape the politics, culture and identity of the Caribbean. It also boasts thousands of graduates who are influential in every walk of life throughout the region and the diasporas.

Representatives of the Barbados Government as well as those of regional and international organisations attended the launch which was also addressed by Minister of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, the Hon. Donville Inniss (on behalf of Minister of Education, the Hon. Ronald Jones); Cave Hill Principal, Sir Hilary; President of the Caribbean Development Bank, Dr. Compton Bourne; and Winston Cox, The Inter-American Development Bank’s Alternate Executive Director for The Bahamas, Barbados, Jamaica, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago.
Leadership Summit: Creativity and Innovation

It will be ‘strictly business’ when the three campuses of The University of the West Indies combine in November to present the second annual Caribbean International Leadership Summit (CILS) in Barbados.

Following an enthusiastic response to the inaugural event which catered to more than 275 participants last year, Cave Hill School of Business, Mona School of Business and the Arthur Lok Jack Graduate School of Business (at St. Augustine) will host the second installment on November 10-11 at the Hilton, Barbados.

Themed Creativity, Innovation and Global Success, this year’s conference offers registrants exposure to a cross-section of brilliant regional and international minds and business personalities. Robert Crandall, former CEO of American Airlines, will speak on ‘Succeeding in Challenging Times’ while former VP of Marketing at the Harley Davidson Motor Company, Clyde Fessler, shares his insight on ‘Building the Global Brand’ and Hiayan Wang, founder of the China India Institute, addresses the ‘Quest for Global Dominance’. Regional presenters include Dr. Kenny Anthony, former Prime Minister of St. Lucia; Ann Gittens, CEO of the Nation Publishing Company; and Peter Minshall, internationally-acclaimed designer, artiste and mas, man.

Speaking at the launch for CILS at 3Ws Oval on September 4, Dr. Jeannine Comma, CEO of the Cave Hill School of Business said this year’s focus was influenced by “the current economic realities”.

“We believe that for Caribbean organisations to be successful, they need to be creative and innovative in what they do and how they do it,” she reasoned, addressing an audience that included several business leaders and government officials.

As a result, the summit will focus on key issues and problems facing both international and regional businesses with a view to inspiring them to employ novel and ingenious ways of securing market dominance and
global success.

Guest speaker for the summit and Minister in the Prime Minister’s Office, Senator Maxine McClean, noted that “participation in this summit will give leaders in the private and public sectors the opportunity to hear first-hand and dialogue with an excellent mix of speakers from across the private sector and public sector, internationally.”

Participants in CILS will be able to learn from and question these successful business leaders and make linkages with key decision makers of regional organisations. Last year, CEOs, managers and public-sector officials listened with rapt attention to a stellar cast of presenters – with more than 150 years of combined leadership experience – at the first-ever summit of its kind in the Caribbean. The line-up included Jack Welch, former CEO of General Electric and Fortune’s Manager of the Century, as well as other household names such as Denis O’Brien, Arthur Lok Jack and Sir Allen Stanford.


From top to bottom: Keynote speakers include Robert Crandall, Hiayan Wang, Clyde Fessler and Dr. Kenny Anthony

EEC on regional initiatives

The Education Evaluation Centre (EEC) at Cave Hill Campus and UNICEF, through the United Nations Children’s Fund Office for Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean, has entered into a contract for the EEC to provide technical support for the Adolescent Development Programme in Grenada.

The EEC’s responsibilities will include:

1. assisting the Non-governmental Organisations’ (NGOs) involved in the programme with developing format-specific proposals
2. collaborating with UNICEF and the NGOs to provide technical support for the monitoring and evaluation of the sub-programmes and
3. providing guidance for the collection of relevant baseline data and quality monitoring data.

To date, the research team has travelled to Grenada and met with the UNICEF representatives and relevant NGOs.

The EEC is also embarking on a project with the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB). This includes four countries (one of which is Barbados) and examines the impact of the IADB-funded technology integration programmes in the schools and communities.

This scope of work represents an intensifying of EEC’s mandate to promote educational excellence in Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean.
The University of the West Indies has signed an historic agreement with a leading African university that will expose students from both sides of the Atlantic to fresh and exciting learning opportunities.

Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the Cave Hill Campus, Sir Hilary Beckles, and Rector of Universidade Agostinho Neto, the national university of Angola, Dr Joao Teto, initialled the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) at the Cave Hill Campus.

The execution of this agreement is expected to produce tangible results from the shared historical ties, DNA, and commitment to guaranteed university education for citizens in the two countries.

Sir Hilary explained that the MOU between UWI and Universidade Agostinho Neto came at an important time in the collective history of Africa and the West Indies as it coincided with the bicentennial celebration of the end of the British slave trade.

Joint teaching and supervision of students, staging of joint seminars, conferences and academic meetings; special academic programmes; undergraduate and graduate student exchanges and internships are among the areas of cooperation that stakeholders at both universities should benefit from shortly. Additionally, the Cave Hill principal noted that the MOU had laid the groundwork for significant collaboration between the two universities on joint research activities (including exchange of faculty members and research students), electives and practicum; exchange of academic materials and other information; academic programmes that may involve cultural activities and a strong field visit component; as well as on grant proposals.

Already a select number of students from the Universidade Agostinho Neto are slated to receive medical education and training at Cave Hill’s new Faculty of Medical Sciences. Other areas of possible collaboration for research or teaching identified during the visit by Dr Teto and his delegation include arts and culture, history, linguistics, food science, Portuguese and English language teaching, and tourism development.

The signing of the MOU with the Angolan university marked a further strengthening of ties between the UWI and its African counterparts as it followed a recent agreement with the University of Ghana to deliver a joint masters programme in African history.
An office for Arthur

Former Barbados Prime Minister Owen Arthur is aiming to make a greater contribution to Caribbean development and to stimulate intellectual capital in his renewed association with the UWI.

Describing his new association with the UWI as a “homecoming of sorts”, Arthur expressed eagerness to rejoin the academy “because the business of the Caribbean today, in the post-Independence era, is about development”.

“Our core business really is about the practice of development and we have come to a stage in the Caribbean where we still must focus on development, but the intellectual tool-kit that we can call upon to deal with development issues has not been as rich in recent times as it should be,” he said.

The UWI economics graduate, made the comments while being introduced to his new office at the Canicom Research Park, in a newly constructed building which Principal Sir Hilary Beckles said hosts several UWI units engaged in scholarship and research.

He explained that Arthur’s association with the UWI was along similar arrangements to those of former Barbados Prime Minister Erskine Sandiford, former Jamaica Prime Minister Edward Seaga and former Jamaica Minister of Finance Omar Davies. However, as a sitting member of parliament, Arthur cannot receive a salary from UWI or be employed by the institution.

Sir Hilary also promised to formally launch the building later this year to coincide with the 50th anniversary of the Federation, noting that it will be a centre for finding solutions to Caribbean challenges.

Speaking about plans for the new office, Arthur said: “I intend to use these premises to create the foundation for development and to centre a lot of the academic work that I want to become involved in – not just writing memoirs and editing speeches but dealing with fundamental issues of development at an intellectual level.”

Arthur said he had already asked distinguished persons to assist in creating a foundation which would provide a series of publications to revisit fundamental issues of development. The former Prime Minister said he also intended to establish a Forum for Public Policy, mainly because the region at this time lacked the clarity of purpose on many of the things it wanted to achieve.

“Spirit of Enterprise”

A strategic move to engender greater self reliance among future University graduates has received the full endorsement of the David Thompson administration.

Noting it’s time Barbadians return to being resourceful people who can overcome adversity and challenges, minister in the Prime Minister’s Office, Senator Maxine McClean has applauded The University of the West Indies – in particular, the Cave Hill Campus – for its “enlightened leadership” in helping “take Barbados and the region to the next level of development”.

Addressing the fifth cohort of the Masters in International Trade Policy at the start of the 2008-09 academic year. The minister, who has responsibility for Management, Administration and Training, reminded graduates that the Campus has publicly declared its mission to have a graduate in every Barbadian household by 2020, to pursue excellence in all its endeavours, to engrain a problem-solving approach in the curriculum and to transform this institution into a highly efficient and effective tool for development.

She cautioned, however, that while the increased number of graduates would have a positive and catalytic effect on households, “we cannot focus only on numbers. Quality must always be the watchword”.

Senator McClean stressed that the University’s “creative, expansionary thrust resonates with the philosophy and policies of this government” which wants to double the number of self employed Barbadians from ten to twenty per cent of the workforce by 2016. She also called for the promotion of principle-centred leadership founded on three tenets - innovation, partnership and reciprocity.

She also suggested that “we can only solve our problems in partnership with other stakeholders” and noted that the social partnership between government, employers, the trade unions and civil society organizations was being strengthened as a means of resolving disputes and peacefully pursuing our objectives. She lauded the fruitful partnership between the private sector, government and The University of the West Indies, which she said has resulted in “spectacular expansion” of the Campus.

Addressing the principle of reciprocity – “giving something back to your community and the wider society” – she said, “We believe that the cornerstone of our resilience has been the willingness of resourceful and successful people to make a contribution in cash or kind to helping others. In recent years a mercenary culture has emerged in Barbados in which the powerful, and indeed others, demand payment for every service provided and the powerless are reduced to a state of mendicancy. It is for this reason that we are promoting volunteerism wherever possible.”
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Research will soon have easier access to some of the insights that have helped shape the Caribbean.

A project to acquire, preserve, protect and make the personal papers of national and regional political leaders available to the public for research, has received major private-sector support in an agreement signed between University of the West Indies (UWI), Cave Hill Campus, and Barbados Business Machines Limited (BBM) in June.

Principal of Cave Hill, Professor Sir Hilary Beckles and BBM general manager, George Connolly, initialled a Memorandum of Understanding worth some BDS $300 000 under which BBM has gifted UWI with Xerox DocuShare, document-management software worth $23 000 and a 20-user licence free of cost. The company will also make additional equipment and human resources available during a 30-day period over two years to convert 500 000 images from hard copy to digital format. BBM will also provide a number of internship opportunities for students.

Cave Hill, which is managing this project through its Federal Archives Centre and main library, already has the papers of the late Dame Eugenia Charles and the late Dame Nita Barrow – former Prime Minister of Dominica and former Barbados Governor-General respectively – in its possession. The institution is at present in discussions about acquiring the papers of former Barbados Prime Ministers Errol Barrow and Owen Arthur.

Noting that the UWI/BBM partnership spanned 30 years, Connolly said his company was happy to help the University preserve and increase the availability of information.

“It gives us the opportunity to continue to offer to the University of the West Indies business technology that allows them to be more efficient in the way that they operate. They will be able to share information in a way that is seamless across the campuses and also enable them to glean income from revenue sources that weren’t there before. This is our intention for building a relationship with the University of the West Indies,” he told UWI representatives who witnessed the signing ceremony in the Shell Suite.

“DocuShare will allow you to electronically manage, in a controlled environment, any source of data that you have. You can look at your transcripts and the way that you manage your transcripts right now. One of the major challenges with anyone who tries to write is the ability to get that book to market and the costs associated with it. We can offer a solution where you print books on-demand and control inventory, (thus) reducing your costs and making it accessible to all.”

Sir Hilary said recognising it was fully into the information age, UWI’s renewed focus was on management, movement and mobilisation of information, and the converging of information into products for economic development.

“We are aware as a university that we are situated in an environment that has access directly to all kinds of information that require modification for public access and for income generation – and this is something which will be at the centre of our strategic thinking in the years ahead. [We will focus on] how to use this database, how to make available access to it, how to organise it in packages for easy access and how to place it within the market for consumption. This is really what we are concerned about at this time,” he elaborated.

The principal added that UWI intended to establish a research environment at Cave Hill that scholars from all over the world could access.

“This is a unique opportunity to brand the Campus in the research culture of this region and therefore this interaction is going to be vital in enabling us to do it in modern and effective ways.”

BBM boosts Campus research
BUSINESS SECTOR FUNDS UWI

The University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus, has received a grant of $165 000 for the next five years from the Barbados International Business Association (BIBA).

The two organisations signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in June to create a platform for a closer working relationship and to bring major developments to the international business sector. BIBA will seek to promote the advancement of knowledge and the understanding of issues affecting the international business sector through an annual research grant of $8 000. The MOU is also expected to provide scholarship funding for students and internship programmes.

In his remarks at the signing, President of BIBA, Ricardo Knight, explained that the new agreement represents the importance of creating a wholesome bond between UWI and BIBA which will facilitate the necessary research of international business and its contributions to the economy.

Tools for Science and Maths teaching

Physics and mathematics students of the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill, are having their classroom experience enhanced through a recent donation of multi-media teaching aids.

This generous gift to the Faculty of Pure and Applied Sciences, donated by the US Embassy in Barbados, features a selection of educational DVDs from The Teaching Company in Virginia.

The DVDs are based on the classroom teachings of professors from Ivy League colleges in the United States and include Joy of Science, The Joy of Thinking: The Beauty and Power of Classical Mathematical Ideas, Change and Motion: Calculus made Clear, and Einstein’s Relativity and the Quantum Revolution: Modern Physics for Non-scientists.

The DVDs were received on behalf of UWI by (former) Deputy Principal, Professor Leo Moseley, and Dean of the Faculty of Pure and Applied Sciences, Professor Sean Carrington. Professor Moseley expressed appreciation for the range of titles provided and assured the representatives from the Embassy that the DVDs would be of great interest in the Faculty.

John Roberts, Public Affairs Officer at the Embassy, said the donation was made in an effort to increase collaboration between UWI and the Embassy and to facilitate academic exchange for mutual benefit.

"Education and the pursuit of excellence are values which Americans and Caribbean people hold common. It is important that every generation has a sound knowledge of science and is able to build on that knowledge," he said.
The University of the West Indies Vice-Chancellor’s XI suffered a defeat against Australia when the tourists visited the 3Ws Oval for the annual match on June 21.

More than 1,200 spectators witnessed Australia winning the day/night match by 211 runs, but the Vice-Chancellor’s XI would have benefited from the opportunity to play against world-class opponents.

Ruthless Australia marched to an imposing total of 337 for five off 50 overs and were clinical in rolling over the hosts for a meagre 126.

The performance by the Aussies was a dress-rehearsal for five-match One-Day International Series against West Indies in which the tourists romped to a whitewash.

The Vice-Chancellor’s XI, which comprised six UWI students and five players with international experience for the West Indies team, were unable to contain the rampaging Aussies.

Opener Shane Watson led the assault with 95 and there were also half-centuries for David Hussey (55), acting captain Michael Clarke (53) and Mike Hussey (50).

Amidst the onslaught, left-arm spinner Kavesh Kantasingh bowled tidily. Kantasingh, a student of the St Augustine Campus who played a key role in helping UWI win the Sagicor General Super Cup in Barbados last year, bowled with good control in ten overs that cost 41 runs.

When the Vice-Chancellor’s XI responded under lights, the tone for the innings was set when they failed to score a run from the first two overs.

Only West Indies wicket-keeper/batsman Denesh Ramdin carried the fight with a measured 42. No other player reached 15 against an attack in which left-arm fast bowler Nathan Bracken was the best of the bowlers. Bracken took three for 25 from eight overs and was assisted by David Hussey and Mitchell Johnson, who collected two wickets each.

As is customary, UWI used the match to honour an individual who made an outstanding contribution to the sport and this year’s honouree was Roger Harper, a former West Indies player and team coach.

“Roger Harper is a very distinguished West Indian cricketer, an all-round cricketer, coach and administrator whose contribution to West Indies cricket has been quite substantial,” said Cave Hill Campus Principal Sir Hilary Beckles.

“We believe that he is a very appropriate person to honour. In our judgment, he represents some of the finest values we have always expected of cricketers.

“Roger’s style of play, his method, his approach, his attitude represent those values we wish to keep at the centre of our cricket.”
The hub of the new WICB Cricket Academy, with the objective of developing and improving West Indies cricket, is being established at the Cave Hill Campus.

The West Indies Cricket Board has reached an agreement with The University of the West Indies for the setting up of a hub of the West Indies Cricket Academy at Cave Hill in Barbados to serve the region. The Academy will have satellite offices in a number of member territories.

The launch of the Academy is subject to the completion of negotiations for a sponsorship agreement to cover financing of the programme and the implementation of critical infrastructure.

Cave Hill, already equipped with indoor practice facilities and the internationally recognised 3Ws Oval, has been playing a critical part in the development of West Indies cricketers in recent years, with the staging of confidence-building seminars, coaching and other structured programmes.

The 3Ws Oval has also been a practice venue for West Indies and touring teams. When it is up and running, the academy will cover all aspects of the regional development programme for selected young cricketers and its work will be monitored by the development committee of the WICB.

A West Indies player and one of the experienced members of the UWI cricket team has inscribed his name among the elite band of cricketers to hit six sixes in one over.

Left-handed batsman Floyd Reifer created his own piece of history at the 3Ws Oval in September when he smashed Wanderers club spinner, Simon Steel, to all parts of the ground in a Sagicor 20/20 League match.

Reifer eventually made 88 not out off just 26 balls, with nine sixes and five fours, in a blow-out win for the University of the West Indies.

Significantly, the performance for the UWI team by the 36-year-old Reifer came 40 years after the legendary Sir Garfield Sobers became the first to perform the amazing feat in first-class cricket.

Batting for Nottinghamshire against Glamorgan at Swansea in the English County Championship, Sir Garry stunned the world as he dispatched Malcolm Nash for a six off each ball.

“One thing I always wanted to do in my cricket career was to hit six sixes in an over and I made it. Then to hear that I did it on the anniversary of Sir Garry’s achievement is even more amazing. I have the greatest respect and admiration for Sir Garry. This feels really, really great!” said Reifer, a player, coach and mentor to many in the UWI team.

“I was in a groove and everything just worked in my favour. When I came in we only had five overs left, so I had to have a go. The first ball went straight and the second went straight. I went to Simon and told him ‘I think this over will go for six sixes . . . You or me’.

“The third ball was a lovely hit over midwicket, the next went over long-off, fifth over ‘cow corner’ and the last went straight and far.”

Reifer, who played four Tests and two ODIs for the West Indies, said what he enjoyed the most was that he did not swipe but played good cricket shots.
UWI Pelicans InterParish Champs

UWI Pelicans lifted the second annual UWI/C.O. Williams Construction-sponsored Inter-Parish 30/30 Night Cricket championship Cup with a thrilling 17-run victory over the Christ Church Dolphins in August.

In the third and decisive match of the best-of-three finals at the 3Ws Oval, the Pelicans scored 192 for nine off their 30 overs and then restricted the Dolphins to 175.

For their performance, UWI Pelicans also grabbed a cash prize of Bds $10,000 while the Christ Church team, as losing finalists, took $6000.

In a compelling encounter, the Pelicans overcame controversy and a middle-order batting collapse to pull-off a commendable victory.

Openers Miles Bascombe (55) and Chadwick Walton (29) launched the UWI innings in spectacular fashion, as Bascombe dominated a 76-run stand with crisp boundaries, and by the fifteen over, the Pelicans were 114 for two.

However, the Pelicans struggled in the second half of their innings, losing five wickets for just 19 runs, including the run-out of key batsman Floyd Reifer who was involved in an unfortunate mix-up involving captain Omar Phillips, and both players ended up at the striker’s end.

However, a combination of smart batting by Armani Best (33 not out) and Gilford Moore (29) and sloppy fielding by the Dolphins, enabled the Pelicans to rally to 192.

When the Dolphins batted, early strikes by pacers Rashid O’Neal and Moore provided the ideal start for the Pelicans as the openers were back in the pavilion by the fifth over.

Roston Chase (41) and Kyle Hope (25) attempted to repair the innings for the Dolphins, putting on 54 for the fourth wicket, but the effort was in vain as off-spinner Rommel Currency, with three for 31, removed Chase and later the experienced former West Indies player Ian Bradshaw, to swing the match in favour of the UWI team permanently.

The 2008 UWI/C.O. Williams Inter Parish 30/30 cricket tournament was held from June 24 – August 6 with 12 teams in competition, before the finalists met in a best-of-three play-off.

Match 1
Christ Church Dolphins vs UWI Pelicans.


The Dolphins won by three wickets as West Indies player Sulieman Benn and Nicolai Charles struck the required 15 runs off the final over bowled by UWI Pelican fast bowler Gilford Moore.

Match 2
Christ Church Dolphins vs UWI Pelicans.

Dolphins 164 in 30 overs (Eric Batson 20, Winslow Harris 24 and Shane Browne 23 not out). UWI Pelicans 166 for 6 (Floyd Reifer 78 not out, Nekoli Parris 29, Chadwick Walton 20).

Pelicans won by 4 wickets.
When Professor Eudine Barritteau assumed her new role as Deputy Principal of the Cave Hill Campus on August 1, 2008, many who followed her career would have considered the appointment as simply - natural progression.

Not counted among them, however, would have been Professor Barritteau, who explained: “It would seem a natural progression for those looking on from the outside, but I honestly did not see this position in my future.”

Quick to point out that she was “not being shy and retiring”, the energetic UWI academic said throughout her career her aspirations had been focused on being a very good scholar, academic, and contributor to Caribbean intellectual thought and analysis. She succeeds Professor Leo Moseley, who is on pre-retirement leave.

Propelled by these aspirations, Barritteau stands out among her peers as a renowned scholar in gender studies with an outstanding academic career that boasts numerous scholarly publications, including her most recent book *Enjoying Power – Eugenia Charles and Political Leadership in the Commonwealth Caribbean*, which she co-authored.

However, the professor of gender and development studies has not led a cloistered academic career, having sought to remain connected to student affairs through her teaching and other activities. Her insights into student issues in her last role as Coordinator for Graduate Studies have offered important lessons as she now has oversight of all curricular and extra-curricular student activities on the Campus.

“With the students, I am going to be fair and firm. I am going to defend their interests fully, but I will also hold them accountable fully …,” said Barritteau. It is clear that her new role in shaping the lives of Cave Hill’s 10000-plus students is one to which she has given much thought.

“I want our students to have a greater sense of civic mindedness; to see themselves first as part of the Caribbean Community. The Caribbean is a very fragile space, very open to cultural penetration from the North and I want our students to understand the need to preserve their Caribbean cultural identity. My goal is to create students who are proud of the Caribbean and who combine their academic pursuits with a willingness to engage in matters that concern the Caribbean – be it history, culture, traditions, etc.”

Barritteau said she is proud to see that such Caribbean unity is already being exhibited by the student associations on campus.

“I want a Cave Hill ‘can do’ approach to define who we are, “ the deputy principal said while expressing pleasure with a student initiative to provide emergency relief for Haiti. “I don’t want our students to ever inculcate a mentality of complaining and victimhood.”

However, the new deputy principal knows that there are aspects of the Cave Hill Campus that can be altered to improve student life. She pledged to try to make UWI Cave Hill responsive to its students’ needs in the way a 21st century university should be. One “symbol” of this that she would like to see actualised is the creation of a care facility where student parents – both male and female – can leave their children while pursuing their studies. And, while she is pleased with the work that the Student Services department is doing, Barritteau said she would like to see the support services offered expanded and for co-curricular credit activities to gain greater prominence on the campus.

“The university is a way station for life. We have to prepare our students with all the academic qualifications and skills that that life requires, and the UWI is a training ground for that,” she added.

Barritteau serves on the board of International Association for Feminist Economics and will take up its presidency in 2009, a year after serving as president-elect. She was also recently appointed to the board of directors at Cave Shepherd and the newly created Governance Advisory Board in Barbados, an independent body set up to advise on integrity legislation and other Governance issues. Under the previous government she served on the board of directors of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.
Director of Sport at Cave Hill, Roland Butcher, has been inducted into a new Sporting Hall of Fame in the English town of Stevenage, Hertfordshire where he grew up.

A former England cricketer, Butcher was one of only two cricketers recently recognised for his contribution among an outstanding list of sporting personalities, including Formula One driver Lewis Hamilton, former Arsenal footballer Ian Allinson and former Premier League and World Cup Football referee Graham Paul.

Butcher, who was unable to attend the ceremony but was represented by his father Robert and son, Paul, said it was a special feeling.

“It really is a great honour to be recognised by the city you grew up in for your achievements. As a sportsman, or anyone who pursues any endeavour, you always hope that your accomplishments will serve to inspire others, so to be included among a group of persons of such sporting prominence in a gesture that is intended to encourage generations to come gives me enormous pleasure. ”

Butcher, who was born in Barbados but moved to England at a young age, made his cricket debut for England against Australia in a one-day international in 1980 and played his first test against West Indies in Barbados in 1981. His first-class career spanned 1970 to 1990.

Sport Stevenage chairman, Grahame Bowles, said he hoped the creation of the Hall of Fame would give a good feeling and serve to inspire the town’s young sportsmen and women to greater achievements.

“We are very proud of the exploits of these Stevenage sports people. The purpose of the exhibition is to share that pride with all and we hope to inspire the next generations of our youngsters to become stars of the future,” said Bowles.
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Former Dean of the School of Clinical Medicine and Research, Professor Emeritus E. R. “Mickey” Walrond, is truly a cut above the rest.

His outstanding contribution to the field of surgical medicine and general medical knowledge recently earned him the prestigious accolade of Honorary Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons of England – the first such distinction bestowed by that institution on a medical practitioner from the University of the West Indies and the Caribbean.

Head of the Royal College’s Membership and Events Department, Judith Mitchell, noted that to qualify for this signal recognition, the recipient had to be “internationally renowned”.

Dean of the Faculty of Medical Sciences, Professor Henry Fraser, said Walrond’s achievement “obviously reflects both on his own brilliant career and his association with UWI where he has been an outstanding leader.” Walrond received similar recognition from the Caribbean College of Surgeons at their conference in June.

Fraser pointed to Walrond’s stellar work as a surgeon and his leadership of the national efforts against HIV/AIDS as the first chairman of the National HIV/AIDS Commission in Barbados. He noted also that the surgeon served first as vice dean and later dean of the Faculty of Clinical Medicine and Research (the precursor to the Faculty of Medical Sciences) for almost three decades at the Cave Hill Campus, in an outstanding administrative career which culminated in his appointment as acting deputy principal of the Campus.

Acknowledging the strong medical foundation laid by Walrond, on which his successors have continued building, Fraser hailed his colleague’s latest accomplishment as a “timely” one, given recent strides at UWI.

“This comes at a time when the University has not only upgraded to a full medical faculty but has also introduced a number of exciting courses such as the new graduate diploma in Health Services Management and the Master of Public Health/Health Services Management.”

Walrond accepted the honorary fellowship during a conferment at Edward Lumley Hall of the College in London in July where he was also invited to deliver the feature address at the graduation ceremony for new surgeons in a speech that reflected on the changing practise of medicine and surgery over the past four decades, he cautioned those now joining his profession against rushing to “cut” purely on the basis that they had passed their examinations.

“Surgical skills are like playing a musical instrument, some are gifted but none can succeed without learning and practice. Forty to fifty years ago we practised knots whilst waiting to go on stage in the theatre and got a lot of practice by working long hours, and by being overly aggressive with things like diagnosing appendicitis,” he stated, reminiscing about his own admission to practise surgery 44 years ago.

“...You will not be allowed the joys of sleepless nights followed by a full working day or a society which views your tired decisions or unskilled errors as having tried your best. It is a stage where your opinions are no longer largely unchallenged as they were 40 to 50 years ago. Your opinions will be measured against the medical section filling up time in the 24-hour news channels, information obtained from the Internet and even pub conversations.”

Professor Walrond noted that he started his career “in an era of paternalism when the doctor knew and did what was best”; while surgeons today were having their results reviewed and challenged, a practice which he felt they should welcome since it would help to refine their work and ensure it was grounded in solid evidence.

He also urged the newcomers to be prepared to challenge dogmas; an endeavour which though “not easy... can be stimulating and may even succeed at times.”

“Over 30 years ago I wrote a paper challenging the use of T-tubes and long term stents in bile duct surgery. This was both ignored and politely ridiculed except by those who worked with me. Now with the advent of minimally invasive and endoscopic techniques those dogmas are on their last legs,” he stated.

The honouree also stressed the need for surgeons to keep abreast of the latest developments in medical care, noting that “knowledge mastered for an exam can quickly fade if it is not reinforced and used.” Even errors, he added, provide an opportunity for new discoveries, as proper analysis of how and why they occur is “a most valuable learning tool.”
The Cave Hill Campus of the University of the West Indies unveiled a new seedling in September 2008 with the potential to dramatically alter the entrepreneurial landscape of Barbados and the wider Caribbean, once students consume its developing fruit.

Titled SEED, an acronym for Student Entrepreneurial Empowerment Development project, it was established to provide “participants with the tools to become empowered as students, graduates and Caribbean people to reach their full potential and make a difference in the world”.

Through practical, hands-on activities that will include seminars, workshops, individual consultations, business plan support, opportunities to network with other young entrepreneurs, persons utilising the facilities of SEED will be assisted in conceptualising, starting and growing their own businesses.

In fact, Pro-vice Chancellor of UWI and Principal of the Cave Hill Campus, Sir Hilary Beckles, while welcoming guests to the official launch at the 3Ws Pavilion noted that vibrant entrepreneurship had the potential to add significant value to Caribbean economies.

“We are aware that our graduates increasingly must look to themselves, to their own inner resources, to create their own future,” Sir Hilary said. “We recognise that the economy (as currently constituted) can absorb only so many of our graduates…”

Stressing that SEED was established with this aim, the principal added: “We intend to engage our students, while they are here with us, in a series of workshops and seminars to enable them … to acquire the skills to establish their own businesses, … to read the markets, to … engage the banks and lending institutions, to establish their own portfolios, to build and analyse equity systems so they can be self reliant and self employed.”

Cave Hill, he added, had embarked on a path to revolutionise higher education and create at least one graduate in every household, in the process contributing to the alleviation of poverty through self-employment. He expects that this process will lead to successful graduates giving back handsomely to the university.

Offering strong support to the SEED concept, Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance, Senator Darcy Boyce, in delivering the feature address, said: “Stimulating entrepreneurship is a critical dimension in the development of business and industry. Our education system therefore has a role to play in fashioning behaviours which promote the capability to be creative.”

Making Dreams a reality

Earlier the minister told guest that institutions such as UWI “must think of ways to make dreams and visions a reality”.

“There must be collaboration between our many different institutions to pave the way for those with the fighting qualities to venture forth and create a new way of doing things. This collaboration must not be limited to Government and the banks or venture capital organisations. It must also include our major firms and leading citizens as mentors and supporters of good ideas.”

SEED chair, Dr. Justin Robinson, admonished stakeholders to assist the project through mentoring, the facilitation of internships...
“Controlling one’s own destiny provides a real sense of stability, ... true entrepreneurs are those who have a vision, who are innovators, who have originality and a sense of daring…”
The University of the West Indies (UWI) continued to celebrate its 60th birthday in fine style with a Convocation Week in Jamaica to mark the halfway stage of the year-long festivities.

Showing its true diversity, the regional institution hosted a variety of events – including a reception hosted by UWI Chancellor, Sir George Alleyne, an inter-faith church service, a jazz concert, a gala awards banquet, a “memories breakfast” and a UWI couples’ luncheon (for those who met at the UWI) – from July 12 to 19. Thousands of UWI graduates from across the world made the trip to Mona in salute of their alma mater’s golden anniversary.

UWI started as the University College of the West Indies 60 years ago with its first campus in Jamaica and today boasts two other campuses at Cave Hill (Barbados) and St. Augustine (Trinidad) while also servicing another 12 countries via its “Open Campus”. UWI’s Vice Chancellor, Professor E. Nigel Harris, noted “there is much to celebrate not least of all UWI’s rich bounty of research, innovation and creative thinking that has enriched the lives of our people.”

“We are living in an era in which education and knowledge are the ultimate currency, and are increasingly being demonstrated as sources of competitive advantage. At the University of the West Indies we have determined that it is not sufficient only to educate, but we must also play a central role in research that can drive creation of new products and services as well as devise ways of addressing our most challenging problems,” said Harris.

He pointed out that UWI has produced graduates who lead in all sectors of Caribbean life and “through the creation of The UWI Consulting Company and other like ventures, we are mobilizing expertise in our academic community to address specific policy and strategic planning needs of governments, regional and national agencies, the private sector and other organisations.”

UWI, he added, has also created university-wide centres which address areas of vulnerability in the Caribbean such as disaster preparedness, sustainable development for small island states and crime and social justice.

Pointing to “daunting challenges” facing the region and the world, including “precipitously rising prices in food, oil and other commodities and the impending loss of preferential trading arrangements with traditional trading partners (Europe and the United States), Prof. Harris said that “UWI has been positioning itself through the courses we teach and in the research and advisory services we provide, to become an integral part of the solutions our region needs.”
As Cave Hill grows its student enrolment, Campus administration is ensuring that the information technology (IT) infrastructure keeps pace with the rapid growth.

With the Campus anticipating a near doubling of its student growth, from the existing population of 8,000 to 15,000 by the year 2015, the development of a new data centre became critical as part of the institution’s expansion plans.

Director of Information Technology at the Campus, Patrick Gill, said the centre should be operational in about a year, adding that a scalable H.P. Blade Server System has been implemented in association with a leading Information, Communications and Technology (ICT) company.

“We wanted to get a platform that is going to be reliable, scalable to match the anticipated growth and that is going to be easier to manage,” he said, noting that the new server has already supported recent student registration.

Rather than having several servers of different types and varying compatibility located in departments across the Campus, there is now a consolidation of servers at the data centre. Gill pointed out that server consolidation has also brought a cost benefit.

Gill also reported that the University would be expanding its wireless network to accommodate an expected growth in student needs. Wireless access provides the mobility and flexibility for students to access information systems from any location on the Campus.

‘Open Campus’ serving all

The University of the West Indies (UWI) is now more accessible to students from across the region and is also working to strengthen national institutions to produce the human resources required by each island.

Addressing patrons at UWI’s 60th anniversary concert in August, “A Belizean Night of Performing Arts” – which was presented by the UWI Open Campus in Belize – UWI Chancellor, Sir George Alleyne, told the gathering that the University with campuses in Jamaica, Barbados and Trinidad “has expanded in a more formal way in the other 12 countries served by UWI with the launch in July of the Open Campus.”

The Open Campus is an amalgamation of the previous Office of the Board for Non-Campus Countries & Distance Education, the School of Continuing Studies, the UWI Distance Education Centre, and the Tertiary Level Institutions Unit and is designed to capitalise on online technologies utilizing the platform of over 50 sites to deliver degree, diploma and certificate programmes beyond the initial three campuses.

The Open Campus has the same level autonomy as the campuses in Cave Hill, Barbados; Mona, Jamaica and St. Augustine, Trinidad, with its own Academic Board, financial management, registry, administrative and student support systems.

Sir George said that UWI’s 60th anniversary events, taking place across the region, offered opportunities “to celebrate UWI’s achievements, to reminisce, to look back at where we came from - at how the little acorn has grown into a huge oak tree.”

Praising Belize as “one of the original financial supporters of UWI with representatives on the Early Council”, Sir George said that UWI is not just about education but “also has a responsibility to help a country display its culture”.

“The 60th anniversary is a time to celebrate what we have achieved in art, literature, science – the various disciplines in which Caribbean people have excelled," he declared.

IT on top

Campus Focus
The contribution and legacy of late Antiguan ‘all-rounder’, Tim Hector, to his country, to the Caribbean and to cricket has been immortalised by the University of the West Indies at the Cave Hill Campus.

At a ceremony in June, the media centre at the 3Ws Oval was christened after this well-known and versatile personality who left such an enduring mark on the region in education, journalism, politics and sport that he was saluted as “a man for all seasons”.

Paying tribute to Hector – who died in 2002 at age 59 – Principal of Cave Hill, Professor Sir Hilary Beckles noted that the honouree was “not just the kind of journalist who reported cricket scores, or described events in a cricket match. He was into the sociology of cricket. He was into the political theory behind the development of cricket. He was into the art and the artistry of performance,” Sir Hilary said.

“He was into the political theory behind the development of cricket. He was into the art and the artistry of performance,” Sir Hilary said.

The high point of the evening was the unveiling of a plaque bearing Hector’s name by his widow, Jennifer Hector, in the presence of Professor Sir Hilary Beckles and Managing Director of Barbados National Bank, Robert LeHunte.

An “overwhelmed and delighted” Mrs Hector thanked UWI and BNB for the tribute to her late husband while LeHunte, whose bank is ranked No.1 in Barbados, expressed pleasure at being able to assist UWI in providing the high-quality media facilities.

“...overwhelmed and delighted” Mrs Hector thanked UWI and BNB for the tribute to her late husband while LeHunte, whose bank is ranked No.1 in Barbados, expressed pleasure at being able to assist UWI in providing the high-quality media facilities.

“He believe strongly that this university should be a place of excellence and, as such, that anything that they choose to get themselves involved in, must be done with a certain amount of pride and class because the University to us stands as a beacon as to what is possible,” stated LeHunte.

“...when we heard what was happening, I seize the opportunity to contribute, in keeping with my own view that the university must always stand for class and set a standard that must be heads above everything else that prevails in the society.”
Veera’s Vim

“Before you can even think about fitting in, you have to accept yourself – who you are – despite the challenges you might be faced with. No matter what, whether you’re disabled or not, don’t give up on what you really want to do and don’t let anyone keep you back.”

– Veera Bhajan, Nation newspaper, December 16, 2007

The above quote could easily apply to anyone grappling with the constant ebbs and flows of life, but in Veera Bhajan’s own case it has a particular poignancy.

The even greater irony is that if you enquire about her uncommon circumstances, the easy going Trinidadian would probably shrug and reply that she’s just an average student trying to cope with “tough” law studies while figuring out her future in an increasingly complicated world. However, some might consider such things the easy part; given the barriers this young woman – possessed of a quiet yet steely resilience – has already overcome.

Despite having no arms – a medically-inexplicable birth defect – this student of the University of the West Indies Cave Hill Campus has seized every opportunity to enjoy as normal a life as possible. In Veera’s opinion, her countless achievements are simply par for the course; yet others – including relatives, teachers, peers and even complete strangers – are continually astounded and, no doubt, inspired by the tough challenges she has stared down and fearlessly conquered.

Yes, she does things uniquely – most often using her toes as ‘hands’ to eat, write, type etc. – and she requires assistance or a little extra time to complete various tasks, including exams.

One of the defining factors in her success to date has been her dexterity with her feet. It’s something she began instinctively as a toddler and it proved a priceless asset when she entered the classroom.

“I just started picking up things with my feet. I had no special training, it just came naturally. I would pick up pencils and then other things as a little girl. Everything others can do with their hands, I can do with my feet,” she declared proudly.

The 20-year-old can manoeuvre forks, knives and spoons with her toes to feed herself, comfortably answer the phone and is adept at typing on her laptop. Those who have seen her penmanship attest that it’s better than that of some who have the benefit of two hands.

Given her self-confidence, it was no surprise that Veera attained seven CXC and four CAPE passes, she attended St. Augustine Campus for her first year of law studies and subsequently relocated to Barbados for the final two at Cave Hill.

“I just wanted to be a lawyer,” she said of her career ambitions.

Moving away from her comfort zone in Trinidad was another hurdle but, with the solid support of her family, she has taken it on. Her mother, Rahdai Bhajan, also came to Barbados to help her through this experience.

“She stays with me because I need assistance and getting lunch, but I can feed myself.”

Once Veera is on campus, friends assume that caring role.

“They help me out with things like photocopying and getting lunch, but I can feed myself.”

Transcribing the copious notes that are a hallmark of law studies is facilitated by the use of a special desk she brought from home. It has been built low enough so she can write on it comfortably with her left foot. During exams, UWI accommodates Veera by allotting her a special room and additional time in which to complete her papers.

Blessed with a bubbly spirit, this avid West Indies cricket fan has made lots of friends in Campus circles and this has helped her settle into the groove of life at Cave Hill. She has been spared the cruel barbs and teasing that she suffered in the past and that has been a welcome relief.

“I’ve fitted in well in classes; I’m not singled out. I find everyone here is friendly. They ask questions, but that is natural. And, everyone at the UWI, Cave Hill, makes sure that I’m comfortable.”

“I don’t remember a moment when I thought I was different from everyone else. I’ve always thought of myself as pretty normal and the people around me have always treated me as such. I don’t really see myself [as being] at a disadvantage,” Veera explained. She has been hailed by her country’s government as a role model with the award of the Humming Bird Silver medal for youth inspiration and development following her academic triumph at CXC level.

While her hobbies include partying, watching sport, going to movies and hanging out with friends, this lawyer-to-be is currently focused on her professional goals and says that even the desire to get married and have a family will have to wait. Now in the final year of her studies, another milestone looms large – a Bachelor’s degree next May; then back home to Hugh Wooding Law School.

Still undecided about an area of specialisation, she hinted that corporate law might win her over.

Whatever her decision, one thing is certain, Veera will give it her best shot and tackle it as she has done most other challenges – feet first!
E
fforts to reposition the University of the West Indies as a research-oriented graduate institution are bearing fruit with a record number of postgraduate students this year.

Over 250 postgrads are eligible to accept scrolls this year as compared to 213 in 2007. Among the 2008 cohort, the number earning doctoral degrees almost tripled the roll for last year with 19 students awarded PhDs in comparison to seven in 2007.

All told about 1450 students are eligible to receive their scrolls at the two graduation ceremonies scheduled for October 25.

While the number of postgrads has reached an unprecedented level, the overall number of graduates in the Class of 2008 is down slightly from the 1526 who graduated in 2007.

However the class size still tops the 1422 who completed their degrees with the Cave Hill campus in 2006. Commensurate with this year’s overall decline in numbers, the First Class Honour roll is also showing fewer students – 65 compared to last year’s 79.

Joining the graduating class on stage this year are five outstanding recipients of the Campus’ honorary degrees – Baroness Patricia Scotland, Dr. Cardinal Warde, Sir Peter Moores, Mr Dodridge Miller, and the Asante King of the Golden Stool Otumfo Osei Tutu II. The conferral of these degrees represents the bestowal of the university’s highest honours on persons who have achieved eminence in their chosen fields and are widely recognised for the excellence of their endeavours.

The exchange agreement allows students from the Faculty of Humanities and Education and Faculty of Social Sciences to study for up to one year at the partner Campus, with their grades being recognized in the University of origin. Like pioneering Joy, future Cave Hill participants will be enrolled in a combination of tailor-made Spanish-language classes and regular offerings in other subjects – all in Spanish – at the Humacao Campus, located forty five minutes outside San Juan.

Cave Hill liaison and lecturer in Spanish Dr. Ian Craig, stressed the importance of diversifying the Campus’ linkages outside the Anglophone world. “Language students are the future cultural – and therefore commercial – mediators of the region, which can no longer rely on its historical affinities with the purely English-speaking world. "Language students are the future cultural – and therefore commercial – mediators of the region, which can no longer rely on its historical affinities with the purely English-speaking world. We already have flourishing immersion programs with Colombia and France; this is an opportunity to strengthen ongoing cultural ties with a Caribbean partner that is strategically linked to both Latin America and North America.”

There is, however, work to be done in persuading students, even those pursuing language degrees, of the manifold benefits of immersion overseas. Though study abroad programs are recognized in many regions of the world as life-changing experiences and keenly sought after, there are still financial and psychological hurdles to be overcome in the Caribbean. Craig noted: “Language students say they are interested in immersion in principle, but when you actually lay out the options, many seem intimidated by the idea. This is hardly surprising, since for many it is the first time they leave home unaccompanied and have to get their own life in order in a new environment. It is precisely that challenge, however, that causes them to engage meaningfully with the host culture and truly understand it. By the end, the overwhelming majority of such experiences are deemed very positive. We’ll be encouraging as many language students as possible to take advantage of these opportunities in future – and we hope to find growing financial support for those who need it – because it’s the only way to get genuinely fluent and to become a true intercultural communicator.”

For more information on the Exchange, log on to www1.uprh.edu/piehw/index_eng.htm or contact Dr. Ian Craig at ian.craig@cavehill.uwi.edu
Students in HIV and AIDS Response

Peer pressure can be positive – just ask the UWIHARP Peer Educators at the Cave Hill Campus.

Following through on its plan to foster student-to-student education, the University of the West Indies HIV and AIDS Response Programme (UWIHARP) has trained over 80 peer educators during the last five years, all of whom have been actively involved in student-centered initiatives on Campus, interacting with and helping fellow students understand and grapple with issues of sexuality, reproductive health and sexually transmitted infections. These volunteers are enjoying their role and have had to field many questions on HIV and AIDS. Additionally, plans are on track to offer Peer Education Training, during this academic year with the new UWIHARP Project Officer, Ms. Monique Springer.

One of the ventures in which their newly-acquired skills have been utilized has been the Voluntary Counselling and Testing (VCT) for HIV which UWI staff and students have been offered on several occasions. This joint initiative of UWIHARP and the Barbados Ministry of Health has met with great approval with over 300 persons having been counselled and tested during the past academic year. In fact, students have called for more testing days to accommodate Cave Hill’s sizeable population and for consideration to be given to part-time students who attend evening classes.

Regarding the advent and impact of peer education, UWIHARP Chair, Professor Christine Barrow, said that “as a less formal supplement to the teaching curriculum, peer education is internationally recognised as a critical-intervention strategy for communication and behaviour change among youth, and is well established as a core element in UWIHARP at the Cave Hill Campus.

“During testing sessions our peer educators shared information, answered questions and distributed condoms,” she added. “Through well-informed role models, information can reach other youth and UWIHARP is seeking to organise innovative ways to share information on the devastating effects of HIV and AIDS, and to increase the capacity of all members of the Cave Hill Campus to advocate for the rights of people living with HIV by implementing the UWI Policy on HIV and AIDS, and by reducing stigma and discrimination.”

Cricket Scholarship for Corbin

Another talented regional cricketer is getting the opportunity to excel at the sport without having to sacrifice his dream of attaining education at the highest level.

Barbados and West Indies youth cricketer Kyle Corbin, 17, has been awarded a full scholarship at the Cave Hill Campus.

The teenage batsman, who scored successive double-centuries for The Lodge School in the Barbados Cricket Association’s Intermediate competition last season, has already enrolled in the Faculty of Social Sciences will also be part of the UWI’s cricket programme.

“As a young sportsperson, I think it is a good opportunity for me. It is also important to have something to fall back on if you can get the balance, it will serve you well for the future,” Corbin said.

Corbin’s outstanding run in domestic competitions last season earned him a place in the Barbados youth team for the TCL Under-19 Championships and he was later selected for the West Indies team for the ICC Youth World Cup in Malaysia last February.

He recently captained The Lodge School team which won the 2008 Sagicor Shield competition.

Cave Hill Campus Principal Sir Hilary Beckles said Corbin was clearly an outstanding talent whom he was happy to embrace in the UWI family.

“He is clearly one of the best young cricketers in the world. You don’t score runs like that without a genius somewhere inside of you,” Sir Hilary said. “We will empower him with all the facilities and resources and hope that he can translate this youthful genius into adult excellence.”
Internationally-recognised scientific researcher, Professor Anselm Hennis, and highly-regarded computer science lecturer, Dr. Colin Depradine, join four other UWI peers – three from Mona and one from St. Augustine – as winners of the Vice-Chancellor’s Award for Excellence. Their inclusion on this honour roll is worth US $5000 each.

Professor Hennis, who is Director of the Chronic Disease Research Centre (CDRC), is a previous winner of the Principal’s Award for Excellence at Cave Hill. Now, he is being recognised by Vice-Chancellor, E. Nigel Harris, for his excellence in research accomplishments. He began his UWI career in 1996 as a temporary lecturer in the School of Clinical Medicine and Research, and joined the CDRC in 1997. He was promoted to senior lecturer in 2002 and became Director of the Barbados Eye Studies project. His research output is outstanding with more than 60 articles in peer-reviewed scholarly publications. He has also secured over US$20 million in research grants.

Dr. Depradine, who was one of the first two recipients of the UWI/Guardian Life Teaching Award from the Cave Hill Campus in 2005, is being recognised for excellence in teaching. A lecturer in computer science since 1995, Dr. Depradine is held in high esteem by his students as well as by his colleagues for his teaching skills, particularly for his application of web-based technologies in the classroom.

Professor Celia Christie from the Department of Paediatrics (Child Health), Mona Campus, is one of the other recipients of this award. She is being recognised for Research Accomplishments while Professor Archibald McDonald, Dean of the Faculty of Medical Sciences, Mona, has been selected for Service to the University Community. The award for all-round performance in a combination of two or more areas has gone to Professor Kit Fai Pun, Professor of Industrial Engineering in the Department of Mechanical & Manufacturing Engineering, St Augustine, for all-round excellent performance in teaching and research and Dr Hermi Hewitt, Head of the UWI School of Nursing, Mona, for all-round excellent performance in teaching and service to the University community.

The awardees will be honoured at a special ceremony on October 30, 2008, in the Learning Resource Centre at St. Augustine during that Campus’ graduation week.
Professor Emeritus E.R. Mickey Walrond, former Dean of the School for Clinical Medicine and Research at Cave Hill campus took the award for Outstanding Book in Medical Studies; Professor Alvin Thompson a special prize; and Cave Hill campus bookshop captured the top prize for Outstanding Retail Service when UWI Press held its 15th anniversary and Author Awards ceremony in June.

Manager of UWI Press Linda Speth described the 2007 publishing year as a “very successful one” for the UWI Press in terms of net sales, international awards and the successful completion of its five-year strategic plan, 2002-2007. To date UWI Press has published more than 250 peer-reviewed books which, Speth said, have sold well in the international marketplace and made major intellectual impacts in their disciplines.

“The Press (last year) posted an amazing sales growth rate of 77%, following three continuous years of double-digit growth; published the most books and reprints in its fifteen-year history, and garnered the most scholarly, national, regional and international book awards,” she told the awards ceremony at the Errol Barrow Centre for Creative Imagination. “We were particularly pleased with the explosive international sales growth, testifying to the strong global interest in Caribbean studies.”

This year’s winners received an honorarium of US$1,000 for the awards which covered the period 2004-07.
UWI Press awards 2008
... and the winners are:

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<th>Award Type</th>
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<td>Vice Chancellor's Personal Award</td>
<td>Maureen Warner-Lewis, <em>Central Africa in the Caribbean: Transcending Time, Transforming Cultures</em></td>
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<td>Bestselling Scholarly Monograph</td>
<td>Brian L. Moore and Michele A. Johnson, <em>Neither Led nor Driven: Contesting British Cultural Imperialism in Jamaica, 1865–1920</em></td>
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<td>Bestselling Textbook</td>
<td>Rhoda Reddock, ed., <em>Interrogating Caribbean Masculinities: Theoretical and Empirical Analyses</em></td>
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<td>B. W. Higman, <em>Plantation Jamaica, 1750–1850: Capital and Control in a Colonial Economy</em></td>
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<td>Barbara Lalla, <em>Postcolonialisms: Caribbean Rereading of Medieval English Discourse</em></td>
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<td>Serwan M. J. Baban, <em>Enduring Geohazards in the Caribbean: Moving from the Reactive to the Proactive</em></td>
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<td>Outstanding Commitment to Scholarly Publishing</td>
<td>Winston Bayley, University Bursar, Director of Finance and UWI Press Board of Directors</td>
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<td>Outstanding Retail Service</td>
<td>Cave Hill, University of the West Indies Bookshop</td>
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<td>Special Award</td>
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The Final Chapter?

Leaving his audience to ponder the proverbial ‘price of progress’, former University of the West Indies (UWI) history lecturer, Professor James Millette, has cautioned that books may be an endangered species.

Delivering the keynote address at the 15th Anniversary and Author Awards Ceremony of the UWI Press – an institution which he conceptualised – the Trinidadian scholar listed a number of technological advancements that threaten the existence of the traditional book. Such ‘threats’ include the computer, cell phone, books on-demand and cyberspace as well as the processes of digitalisation and miniaturisation.

“These days books are more talked about than read; and even in the field of education, the e-book, the audio book and the thousands of Internet sites offering information on any item imaginable raises significant questions about the future viability of publishing houses,” the man credited with proposing the establishment of UWI Press told a gathering at the Cave Hill Campus in May.

Now Chair in African American Studies at Oberlin College, Millette noted that rising costs are affecting the publishing industry and the affordability of books. Publishing houses, he cautioned, need to adapt to changing times in order to survive.

He also expressed concern about the reported destruction or intended destruction of several hundred copies of each volume of The General History of the Caribbean; an action attributed to the high cost of warehousing.

Urging UWI and UWI Press to investigate this development, Millette pleaded for the latter to undertake the publication of Caribbean literature in its broadest sense. The mission of UWI Press, he said, was “to inhabit the intellectual space previously dominated and monopolised by European scholarship.”

“The Caribbean, by location and by history, occupies a unique place in the Americas and in the world... The major international languages are almost, with few exceptions, represented in the lexicon of the peoples of the Caribbean and circum-Caribbean,” he said.
Heralding what he deemed an inextricable link between politics and culture, world-renowned author, George Lamming, has called for a joint, annual commemoration of the anniversary of the 1937 riots and BIM magazine.

This suggestion came as the iconic Barbadian writer addressed a gathering of mostly female writers at The University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus, on July 26 – the date on which the 1937 riots started.

Speaking to the forum in the 3Ws Pavilion, he said a literary symposium to be hosted on that date each year would be a fitting commemoration of what he termed “year one” for democracy in Barbados. Lamming, who has been attached to the Cave Hill Campus as writer-in-residence during the past academic year, urged Pro-Vice Chancellor of UWI and Cave Hill Principal, Professor Sir Hilary Beckles’ support for the idea.

Further, he challenged the notion that culture should be apolitical, asserting instead that there could be no culture unless it was political. In this regard, he observed that BIM magazine had always served as a barometer for the political leanings of this region through the writings of those who contributed to it.

The veteran writer also called for the magazine to continue bridging the gap between what is considered “literature” and the “average literate person walking up and down this Caribbean”. He lamented that the “man on the street” often felt no connection to the few Caribbean “classics” that were the subject of numerous university theses and dissertations. He stressed that literary works could only remain “alive” when the texts were embraced as national literature. “The text has to become familiar and an ordinary part of daily conversation. Books stay alive only when they are talked about in a variety of situations by people who recognise that the book is talking about them and may have originated with them,” he told the audience.

Lamming also spoke of the many instances over the decades when BIM seemed to be on its way out, only to again be resurrected. He challenged the writers to ensure that this generation of the “BIM family” multiplied to the point where another obituary need not be written on the magazine.
Two researchers at Cave Hill Campus believe greater use of the “team” approach could boost productivity in the workplace.

Examining the issue of how one can “gain productivity” in the public sector, Professor Jamal Khan and Dr. Wayne Soverall in their most recent publication – “Gaining Productivity” – argue that first management has to “bring subordinates into the mix” and outline for them exactly how their work feeds into the overall productive picture of the economy’s gross domestic product (GDP).

Dr. Soverall said he would like line staff in the civil service informed that when they go to work, they are representing “Barbados Inc.” He said unless public sector employees recognised that their work added value and contributed to Barbados’ competitiveness, its GDP, and gross national product then productivity would always be an issue.

“The public service numbers around 26,000 persons and contributes 25% of GDP, if they’re not productive you can understand what will happen to the economy,” he stated.

Since publication of the book, Khan and Soverall have been on a mission to place it in the hands of permanent secretaries and government agency managers in Barbados and across the region.

Although the text is based primarily on research of Barbados’ public sector system, Dr. Soverall believes it provides valuable lessons for civil service managers across the Caribbean.

He pointed to the valuable insights contained in measuring productivity, establishing productivity indicators, managing productivity focused on resources and time; and performance management, which could be learning tools for those in authority over the region’s public sector machinery.

Dr. Soverall noted that public sector reform was a process of continuous improvement. Hence an important lesson for civil service managers was the need to empower subordinates to make decisions and find solutions to problems that arise, which would lead to greater efficiencies.

He added that the bureaucratic structure of the traditional top-down approach was hindering the responsiveness of public offices and if managers could be encouraged to adopt a “project approach” to strategic planning then more could be achieved. By this, Dr. Soverall said, he meant that management and staff should exhibit a “team” mentality toward tackling issues and engage in the sort of dialogue that keeps workers involved and aware of the “big picture”.

The UWI Faculty of Law is celebrating its most recent publication, a 1,149-page book titled European Union Law, by Professor Alina Kaczorowska, Professor of EU and International Law. Dean of the faculty, Professor Simeon McIntosh, has described the work as “a magnificent tome”.

Professor Kaczorowska, who once held the Jean Monet Chair in European Law in the United Kingdom, examines the administrative, constitutional and institutional law of the European Union, as well as the substantive rules relating to the free movement of persons, goods, services and capital in the light of European Union Competition Law in its internal market. In addition, the book reviews the history of the European Union and considers the future of that body in light of the groundbreaking Treaty of Lisbon, which was rejected by the Irish in a recent referendum.

Professor Kaczorowska’s book will be a required text for her course on European Union Law, which is offered by the Faculty of Law. More important, the work provides a badly needed critical comparative law perspective on Caribbean Integration Law, and Advanced Caribbean Integration Law, courses that are offered both at the LLB and the Masters Levels. It is expected that academics and policy advisors across the region will find the work an excellent reference when addressing issues relating to the Caribbean Single Market and Economy and the Caribbean Court of Justice.

Professor McIntosh said he anticipates this major work would further enhance the international profile of the Faculty of Law with its expected use in such places as Africa, Canada, Europe, Israel, the United Kingdom and the United States. Overall, he said, the world would know that, by this work, there is an expert on European Law at the Faculty of Law of the University of the West Indies.

The book was published by Routledge-Cavendish Press of the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States.
The Caribbean could well be charting a course for the rest of the world to follow with regards to ocean governance.

Earlier this year, The University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus and Dalhousie University in Nova Scotia, Canada, signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOU) on a two-year project entitled, Strengthening Principled Ocean Governance Networks: Transferring Lessons from the Caribbean to the Wider Ocean Governance Community. The linkage between these two institutions will see the three main educational and research pillars in ocean governance at Dalhousie (the Marine Affairs program, the Marine & Environmental Law Institute and IOI-Canada) cooperating and working with Cave Hill counterparts, at the Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies (CERMES) and the Caribbean Law Institute Centre.

The region will be used as a pilot study and it is hoped that lessons and findings from this undertaking can be utilised to improve ocean governance globally. The project’s most significant output is expected to be the development of a framework for a Caribbean ocean-governance network that could be used elsewhere. It is also anticipated that the study will strengthen principled ocean governance in the region. Another way in which the Caribbean is expected to benefit is from the availability of shared marine resources in putting key sustainability principles – for example, integrated coastal and ocean management principles – into national and regional practice.

Numerical weather prediction (NWP) activities are also a part of the process. Currently, daily 48-hour weather forecasts from two NWP models are provided by CIMH which is the only institution in the English-speaking Caribbean to provide the region with such service. These outputs provide forecast tracks and related weather for tropical storms during the hurricane season and are continuously used for research and daily monitoring of Caribbean weather.

Looking ahead, CIMH is formally integrating disaster management into its training programmes to better equip students to become part of disaster-management teams. In the near future, the Caribbean Doppler Radar Network will be established, comprising four new Doppler radars; one each in Guyana, Trinidad, Barbados, and Belize. These will network with existing Doppler radars in the region and the collective data will significantly enhance the efforts in tropical meteorology at CIMH and across the region.

A ‘STORM’ OF A TIME FOR CIMH DURING HURRICANE SEASON

Each year as the Caribbean prepares for the dreaded North Atlantic hurricane season, which runs from June 1 to November 30, staff at the Caribbean Institute for Meteorology and Hydrology (CIMH) ready themselves for a rush of activity.

CIMH’s mandate is to improve meteorological and hydrological services in the Caribbean and to assist in promoting awareness of the benefits of these services for the economic well-being of these countries. This is achieved through training, research and investigation, and the provision of specialised services and advice. Therefore, while it is not a forecasting institution and thus cannot issue warnings, CIMH can monitor the atmosphere, advise directors of meteorological services of ensuing bad weather and engage in tropical meteorology research and meso-scale modeling. In addition, many of its products, including storm-surge maps, are useful to disaster managers and they are encouraged to utilize them.

An effective method of monitoring the regional weather is via discussions with the regional operational forecaster experts. The Caribbean Weekly Weather Discussions (CWWD) is a collaborative effort between CIMH and the Cooperative Institute for Research in the Atmosphere (CIRA) a satellite work group, to provide a bi-weekly online weather discussion among the regional forecast offices. Discussions surround three main themes: current weather, forecasts and outputs of numerical weather models. In the event of a tropical storm in the area, CWWD takes place more frequently, sometimes daily.
Three pan-Caribbean companies are diving into their corporate pockets to support sustainable marine governance across the Eastern Caribbean.

The energy company Sol Group; Cayman-based insurers, Island Heritage; and the Caribbean Media Corporation’s television channel, CaribVision, are providing over BDS$30,000 to assist efforts by the Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies (CERMES) at The University of the West Indies, Cave Hill, to raise public awareness on this important issue.

Sol and Island Heritage have given BDS$30,000 in cash for the first year of public outreach efforts by CERMES’ four-year Marine Resource Governance in the Eastern Caribbean (MarGov) Project, while CaribVision, as official broadcast media partner to the project, will provide MarGov with an avenue to reach its 1.2 million viewers in 23 countries, including continental Europe.

CERMES director Professor Robin Mahon, says this initiative sends a message to all stakeholders that if they network and are informed, then they can collaborate to devise governance practices that are resilient and can adapt readily to different marine issues as they arise.

He added that by aligning themselves with the MarGov Project, the three companies were in fact contributing to the sustained economic viability of the 20-plus territories in which they collectively operate.

This, Mahon explained, was because marine activity directly and indirectly employs more than 200,000 people in the Eastern Caribbean; not only through small-scale fisheries (which plays a critical role in food security and poverty alleviation) but tourism, which depends almost exclusively on high-quality marine products in these territories.

Dale Miller, regional sales and marketing manager for CaribVision, echoed Mahon’s sentiment that the Caribbean Sea was the lifeblood of the entire region and said his company was pleased to partner with any initiative that promoted sustainable use of coastal and marine life.

Roger Bryan, Sol’s southern Caribbean general manager, said his company recognised the value of a regional project that seeks to strengthen the networking capacity of fisheries stakeholders and coastal marine resource users across communities and territorial waters, which would lead to more effective and efficient collaborations in response to marine resource issues.

Island Heritage’s chief operating officer, Paul Inniss, said his company recognised the need to enhance the regional fishing industries through organisation and education in order to build the capacity, of those involved to play a more meaningful and proactive role in marine-resource governance.

MarGov communications assistant Carmel Haynes – who will coordinate the public outreach efforts – thanked the three companies. She said their involvement signalled to all stakeholders, whether regional companies or the public, that the responsibility of managing our marine resources is a collective one that should not be placed squarely on governments’ shoulders.
A new scientific study in Barbados is casting doubt on the widely held belief that an annual peak in the incidence of asthma symptoms on the island is caused mainly or directly by a seasonal increased prevalence of African dust. The study carried out by a team of six scientists from the University of the West Indies, University of Miami and the Queen Elizabeth Hospital over the two year period 1996 and 1997 suggested that a link between asthma and the dust which causes hazy atmospheric conditions in Barbados in early summer “is based largely on anecdotal evidence.” “We could not find any obvious relationship although they may be more subtle linkages between dust and asthma,” the authors said in a recently released paper.

They warned that the African dust carried in Barbados Trade Winds “may constitute a health threat of a different nature, producing symptoms less obvious than those of asthma.”

The team comprised Profs George Mathison and Marc Lavoie of the Department of Biological and Chemical Sciences in the Faculty of Pure and Applied Sciences at the UWI, Cave Hill campus; Drs. Raana Naidu and Haresh Thani of the campus’s Faculty of Medical Sciences and QEH; Edmund Blades of the Winston Scott Polyclinic and QEH and Prof. Joseph M. Prospero of the Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science, University of Miami.

The study was partially motivated by the observations of Dr. Naidu, who in his role as chief of the Accident and Emergency Department (AED) established an asthma bay to deal with the often heavy case load. Attendance to the bay seemed “especially brisk” on days when there was a noticeable dust haze on the island.

The study concentrated on children 18 years and younger who comprised 63 per cent of the total attendees to the clinic that complained of “wheezing”, “tightness in the chest” and “shortness of breath.”

The scientists found no substantial changes in pediatric asthma attendances that could be linked to short-term surges in dust concentration. “Thus, our data do not provide any support for the broadly accepted anecdotal association of African dust and asthma.”

The scientists argued that about one third of the earth’s land surface was arid and frequently impacted by high concentrations of dust; therefore “if arid-region dust were to be a significant factor in asthma, it could play a major role on a global scale.”

“In Riyadh and Brisbane dust storms have been associated with an increase in asthma prevalence but it is not clear that the dust itself is the causative agent,” they stated.

They also suggested that scientists should look for causes other than African dust for asthma.
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