



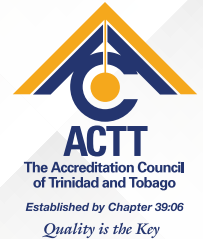
Guyana attachment, pg 4



YTEPP, pg 12



QuiTE Awardees, centrespread



Established by Chapter 39:06  
Quality is the Key

# ACTT NOW

A Publication of The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago

2018: Iss. 1

## Who We Are

The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago (ACTT) was established by Chapter 39:06 as the principal body in Trinidad and Tobago for conducting and advising on the accreditation and recognition of post secondary and tertiary education training institutions, programmes and awards, whether local and foreign and for the promotion of quality and standards for post secondary and tertiary education and training in Trinidad and Tobago.

## What We Do

- » Conferment of Institutional Titles
- » Registration of Post Secondary and Tertiary Education Institutions
- » Accreditation of Post Secondary and Tertiary Education Institutions and Programmes
- » Recognition of Foreign Awarding Bodies and Institutions
- » Recognition of Transnational Programmes
- » Issuance of Statements on Recognition and Equivalence Assessments
- » Approval of Programmes

The past year (2017) and the first four (4) months of 2018 have been a dynamic period for The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago, with challenges, opportunities and successes. The Council continues to work steadfastly, despite decreasing financial resources.

In June 2017, the Council welcomed a new Board of Directors chaired by Dr John Prince. Other members include Dr Ruby Alleyne (Deputy Chairperson), Dr Alvin Ashton, Dr Naseem Koylass, Dr Sandra Reid, Prof. Emeritus Funso Aiyejina, Mr Archibald Prime, Prof. Emeritus Winston Mellowes, Dr Gaynelle Holdip, Dr Dave Seerattan and Mrs Lennon Ballah-Lashley. The new Board members represent diverse sectors and bring a wide range of knowledge and experience in higher education and quality assurance to the Council.

In 2017, the Council continued to focus on its core business. The UWI School of Business and Applied Studies Limited (UWI-ROYTEC) was granted accredited status. Preparations were also being made for site visits for continuing accreditation to COSTAATT, UWI, UTT and Cipriani College of Labour and Cooperative Studies; these statuses were all conferred in early 2018.

Outreach to the younger population remained one of ACTT's activities this past year and our annual competitions for students at the



Michael Bradshaw  
Executive Director

## In The Know

Executive Director, continued on pg 2 >

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and visit  
[www.actt.org.tt](http://www.actt.org.tt)

secondary and tertiary levels continued. There was increased participation in the National Quiz on Quality Assurance in Higher Education and Training and sustained participation in the Essay Competition. ACTT's engagement of students is important as it is viewed as sowing seeds to produce a well-informed student population. ACTT will continue to educate our young students on quality education issues and guide them towards making wise decisions to fulfil their education and training needs so that they become productive members of the workforce.

ACTT's staff is to be commended on their response to the challenges they faced in the workplace over this past year. I am extremely appreciative of the quantity and quality of work done by the staff. They displayed a team spirit and maintained productivity regardless of the challenges.

In life, it's not how you start that's important but how you finish. I am happy and proud to say that we finished 2017 strong. I thank the management and staff for yet another year of good work. We triumphed amid all our challenges and began the new year with a strong foundation that we will continue to leverage and strengthen. ■

## Student initiatives

As the principal body responsible for the quality assurance of higher education and training institutions and programmes in Trinidad and Tobago, ACTT is committed to providing platforms through which students at secondary schools, post secondary and tertiary institutions throughout the nation learn about quality assurance in education and its impact on their choice of institutions and programmes of study.

ACTT's **National Quiz on Quality Assurance in Higher Education and Training** targets secondary school students. Its objective is to increase awareness of the importance and benefits of quality assurance in higher education and training among students and other related stakeholders. The Council was pleased to award cash prizes to each team member, Unit Trust Corporation vouchers for the coaches/teachers, trophies for the top four schools and an additional cash prize for the victorious school.

In addition to the Quiz, ACTT hosted its **National Essay and Poster Competition 2017**, with the goal of guiding students to make informed decisions when pursuing higher education and training. The target audiences for this initiative were secondary school students and students pursuing undergraduate programmes at registered and accredited higher education institutions. The 2017 winners of the Essay Component received iPads, book vouchers and complimentary Statements on Recognition from ACTT.

The Council views these competitions as an investment that would redound to great benefit of the nation's students, as they become more conscious of their educational options and the importance of quality in the higher education and training sector. ■



**Congratulations to our new Champs...**



THE ACCREDITATION COUNCIL OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO  
**Essay//POSTER**  
COMPETITION 2017

**Essay Component:** **1st** – Ruqayya Juman, Naparima Girls' High School  
**5th form** **2nd** – Dipak Balladin, Naparima College  
**School Prize** – Naparima Girls' High School

**Essay Component:** **1st** – Khaleem Ali, Bishop Anstey High School East  
**6th form** and Trinity College East  
**2nd** – Emily Toolsieram-Maharaj, Naparima Girls'  
High School  
**3rd (tied)** – Kerneka Waldron, El Dorado East  
Secondary School *and* Amy Ramdath,  
Naparima Girls' High School  
**Honourable Mention** – Mary-Anna Boodhram,  
Naparima Girls' High School  
**School Prize** – Bishop Anstey High School East and  
Trinity College East

**Essay Component:** **1st** – Lisa Thomas, UWI  
**Undergraduates** **2nd** – Sheryl-Lyn Ali, UWI  
**3rd** – Deborah Subran-Ganesh, UWI  
**Honourable Mention** – Renuka Singh, UWI

Pictured below:  
Essay Component –  
Sixth Form Category  
winners



**5<sup>th</sup> Annual National**  
**SQUIZ**  
**2017**

**1st** – St Mary's College  
**2nd** – Cowen Hamilton Secondary School  
**3rd** – Bishop's High School, Tobago  
**4th** – Shiva Boys' Hindu College

... and thank you to all our participating Schools! See you next time!



## Collaboration

# Report on the attachment of members of the National Accreditation Council – Guyana

ACTT hosted an attachment of a ten-member delegation from the National Accreditation Council Guyana (NAC-G) during the period July 01 to 05, 2017. The delegation comprised the following individuals who represented the Board of Directors, entire technical staff including its Executive Director and senior External Evaluators:

Vincent Alexander – Chairman, Board of Directors  
 Deborah Jack – Executive Director  
 Simone Gonsalves – Accreditation Officer  
 Natasha Persaud – Quality Assurance Officer  
 Ryan Serieux – Research Officer  
 Suelle Findlay-Williams – Corporate Communications Specialist  
 Leandar Singh – External Evaluator  
 Theodosius M. Velloza – External Evaluator  
 Kenneth Bentinck – External Evaluator  
 Chandrawantie Persaud – External Evaluator

During the attachment, the participants were involved in several activities. These activities were designed to:

- Expose members to the operations of ACTT
- Immerse participants in the practices employed at Site Visits
- Broaden their knowledge of the types of interpersonal interactions between the institution and the Evaluations Team

### Comprehensive Site Visit for Continuing Institutional Accreditation

As registered institutions in Guyana continue to develop and graduate students from locally developed programmes, they have begun to look towards deepening their external quality assurance interactions with the NAC-G. Therefore, the agency has found it necessary to strategically prepare its Board members, staff and External Evaluator Corps for enactment of its Institutional Accreditation policy. In so doing, it requested to view the ACTT practices in action. The Comprehensive Site Visit for Continuing Institutional Accreditation of the College of Science Technology and Applied Arts of Trinidad and Tobago (COSTAATT) was used as the location for the practice in situ. Members of the delegation were able to witness the meeting of the External Evaluation Team, the opening and closing meetings, site tour and the interviews with various

Vincent Alexander (Chairman, NAC-G), Deborah Jack (Executive Director, NAC-G) and Michael Bradshaw (Executive Director, ACTT) with the contingent from Guyana after a productive session. Also present: Curtis Floyd (Director – Accreditation & Quality Enhancement, ACTT) and Sharon Delochan (Assessment Officer, Qualifications & Recognition department, ACTT).



On November 8-10, 2017, the Caribbean Area Network for Quality Assurance in Tertiary Education (CANQATE) held its 14th Annual Conference in Paramaribo, Suriname, in collaboration with Natioaal Orgaan Voor Accreditatie (NOVA) and Ministerie van Onderwijs Wetenschap en Cultuur. The theme chosen for last year's conference was "Promoting Regional Cooperation in Tertiary Education Quality Assurance: Strength in Sustainable Development and Harmony in Action." Papers were presented under six (6) sub themes:

- Applying ICT Towards Greater Collaboration among Quality Assurance Stakeholders
- Convergence of External Quality Assurance Policies, Processes and Standards
- Models for Partnerships Aimed at Enhancing Quality of Tertiary Education
- Building a Culture of Quality Assurance at Institutions of Tertiary Education
- Developing Effective Quality Review processes for Improving Quality in Tertiary Education
- Applying Institutional Research for the Development of Continuous Improvement Strategies



Michael Bradshaw, Executive Director at ACTT, delivers his presentation at CANQATE's 14th Annual Conference. Also on the panel are Drs Ronald Brunton (left) and Ruby Alleyne (right).

Presentations were made by fifteen (15) persons, including Michael Bradshaw, Executive Director of ACTT, and Dr Ruby Alleyne, Deputy Chairperson, ACTT Board of Directors. Mr Bradshaw presented on the topic 'Convergence of External Quality Assurance Policies, Processes and Standards' and Dr Alleyne on 'Challenges Institutions Face with Regard to Self-assessment and Possible Solutions'. The presentations were well received by participants.

Chairman of CANQATE, Dr Ronald Brunton, praised the efforts of the organising committee stating that the conference was a "tremendous success." CANQATE is looking forward to its 15th Conference which is proposed for Tobago. Further details and dates will be announced later this year. Interested persons can check the organisation's website [www.canqate.org](http://www.canqate.org) for this and other information on the 2018 Conference. ■

## Regional highlights

# CANQATE Conference 2017

## Principals!

Request a visit from ACTT's **Students Caravan** Team to participate in your school's career fairs and other fora!

Contact ACTT at 623-2500 OR [studentcaravan@actt.org.tt](mailto:studentcaravan@actt.org.tt)



**Organisational development**

# Achieving quality, efficiency and alignment in organisations

BY **WENDY H. LEWIS**  
SENIOR ADVISOR – ALJGSB



As business environments evolve and the demands for organisational success on a workforce increase, organisations have had to transition from traditional Human Resource models to new ways of engendering creativity and innovation. Changes in both the private and public sectors are being effected at a rapid pace. With the added challenges of complexity, globalisation and economic uncertainty, the need for structural developmental initiatives has become critical.

UWI Arthur Lok Jack Graduate School of Business (UWI-ALJGSB) is a quality institution that delivers innovative products and services that have been impacting on organisations across the globe. At UWI-ALJGSB, the Organisational Development and Assessment Centre (ODAC) has considered new perspectives with our HR solutions as we adopt varying models to create a wider organisational impact that will consider factors such as culture, processes, systems and technology. Our optimisation solutions aim to address challenges that impact on organisational efficiency and productivity. ODAC has been partnering with companies of diverse size and complexity, from various sectors, in order to implement transformational initiatives.

In this season of economic downturn, when companies are exploring ways to survive and take advantage of opportunities, how firms react to the current economical environment and the distribution of resources is critical. Organisational Optimisation is the name of the game! ODAC's **Business Process Re-Engineering** service is one of the solutions on offer to assist companies wanting to remain competitive and agile. Re-engineering the way in which employees approach work, along with the supporting technology and systems, can result in dramatic improvements in performance and cost containment, better quality outputs and increased responsiveness. The key success factors for consideration would be a clearly defined company vision and an alignment of each department's objectives and goals.

### What we offer our clients



Too often, firms have their organisation's strategy documented but neither communicated nor implemented. Business Process Re-engineering enables an organisation to focus on its goals and objectives, define its strategy and document methodologies. Detailed insights and research into benchmark industry standards, regulations and strategic considerations factor highly in this progressive method of organisational success. Once developed, teams across the organisation will be armed with the required frameworks that measure efficiency and allow for recalibration to remain competitive.



It is undeniable that, as a country, our ability to be innovative is less than ideal and requires significant improvements. This fact has been well ventilated in successive Global Competitiveness Reports, the most recent of which ranked T&T at 105 out of 138 countries for this metric, even though the country ranked at 54 and 77 for the availability of scientists and engineers and the quality of scientific research institutions, respectively. One of the most glaring deficiencies in this sub-index was that of private sector spending on research and development initiatives. Furthermore, a January 2017 publication of the Inter-American Development Bank concluded that this sector *“is not up to the challenge of supporting economic growth, creating employment, contributing to government revenues in a significant way...”* (Khadan, 2017, p. 124).

The Employers Consultative Association of Trinidad and Tobago (ECA) contends that, before a firm can confidently take the quantum leap necessary to invest in such activities, it must first engender an environment conducive to an efficient and globally competitive organisation. American business consultant and author, Scott Edinger, alluded to this concept in a 2012 contribution to Forbes Magazine where he wrote, *“While many organizations focus on addressing problems, the most successful focus on raising the bar. One of the ways they do this is by creating a culture where innovation thrives. When this organizational strength is magnified, it can become a source of competitive advantage”* (Edinger, 2012).

It is in this regard that the Employers Consultative Association introduced its Champion Employer of the Year Award (CEYA). While the ECA appreciates the need for a more innovative private sector, this competition is part of the ECA’s contribution to “raising the bar” and creating exemplary employers.

The CEYA is an annual competition which seeks to recognise employers who have demonstrated excellence in business administration and management, progressive and proactive human resource management with a proven commitment to healthy employee relations, maintain best practice industrial relations standards, and most importantly, who support the communities in which they operate. Even companies who are not at that exemplary level benefit immensely from the competition since completion of the application form acts as a form of self-audit, allowing companies to identify deficiencies and implement corrective measures.

The 2017 awards ceremony, which took place at the Hyatt Regency earlier this year, centred on the theme *“Unleash your Potential: Embracing Opportunities for Business Growth”*. In his feature address, Regional President of bpTT, Norman Christie, challenged those in attendance to consider four important themes pertinent to achieving maximum potential, even in times of uncertainty: having a dream, taking wise risks, engaging in continual learning and giving back.

[ECA, continued on pg 17 >](#)

## Accolades

# Creating champion employers and future innovators




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**The most successful [organizations] focus on raising the bar »**

**Milestones**

# The USC: Celebrating 90 and forging beyond!

BY **PETRA PIERRE-ROBERTSON**  
LIBRARY DIRECTOR



The origin of the University of the Southern Caribbean dates back to August 27, 1927, with the arrival of Principal C. J. Boyd at La Realista, the lone building on the sprawling estate where the campus is located. In 1928, after appropriate preparation of the two-storey wooden building with the size and design of a “great house”, courses were administered to 26 students at the then East Caribbean Training School, by 5 staff members. The school offered the Caribbean region a rich, holistic mix of education, which caters to the head, heart and hand – intellectual, psychological, spiritual, social and physical. The foundation and philosophy of the teaching and learning process was the integration of faith with learning.

By 1947 it had become a Junior College and, 7 years later, in 1954, it was recognised as a Teacher Training School. In 1956, the name of the institution was changed to Caribbean Union College. By 1958, along with secondary education, 6 professional courses were offered in the following areas: Ministerial, Business, Secretarial, Teacher Training, Music and Liberal Arts. Ninety years later, now a university accredited by both local and international associations (renamed the University of the Southern Caribbean in 2006), the single building of 1927 has expanded to include 5 schools and 4 sites in the Caribbean region, which cater to a diverse student population from over 43 countries. Programme offerings include 28 bachelor’s degrees, 9 master’s degrees, 3 postgraduate diplomas, 4 associate degrees and 2 certificates. Graduates of the USC occupy top positions in government and private sectors locally, regionally and internationally.

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## ***...a rich, holistic mix of education, which caters to the head, heart and hand »***

At the USC, academic and non-academic departments work towards a common cause – a positive learning experience that ultimately leads to student success. Lecturers engage in ingenious teaching strategies such as Peer Think and Reflective Journaling, which encourage students to become engaged in their own learning. Course delivery includes the use of movie and video clips, current news items and trending issues in technology to capture the essence of the theory found in the textbooks. Students are also introduced to and encouraged to utilise Google Drive, Google Docs and Wikis for group assignments.

Training and support of Lecturers in the provision of blended courses is provided by The Institute of Educational Technology. Blended courses allow students to work at their own pace and receive instruction that takes different learning styles into account. The USC has bought into and taken advantage of the constantly evolving, highly technological educational milieu, which facilitates collaboration and interaction in the teaching and learning process. The use of technology in learning is complemented by online library resources that not only provide supplemental resources for students, but plug-ins for the incorporation of course content into online learning management systems by lecturers.

The service component is also a critical part of the teaching and learning strategies of the University. It is built into the curriculum. For example, as part of their course requirement, students in the School of Family and

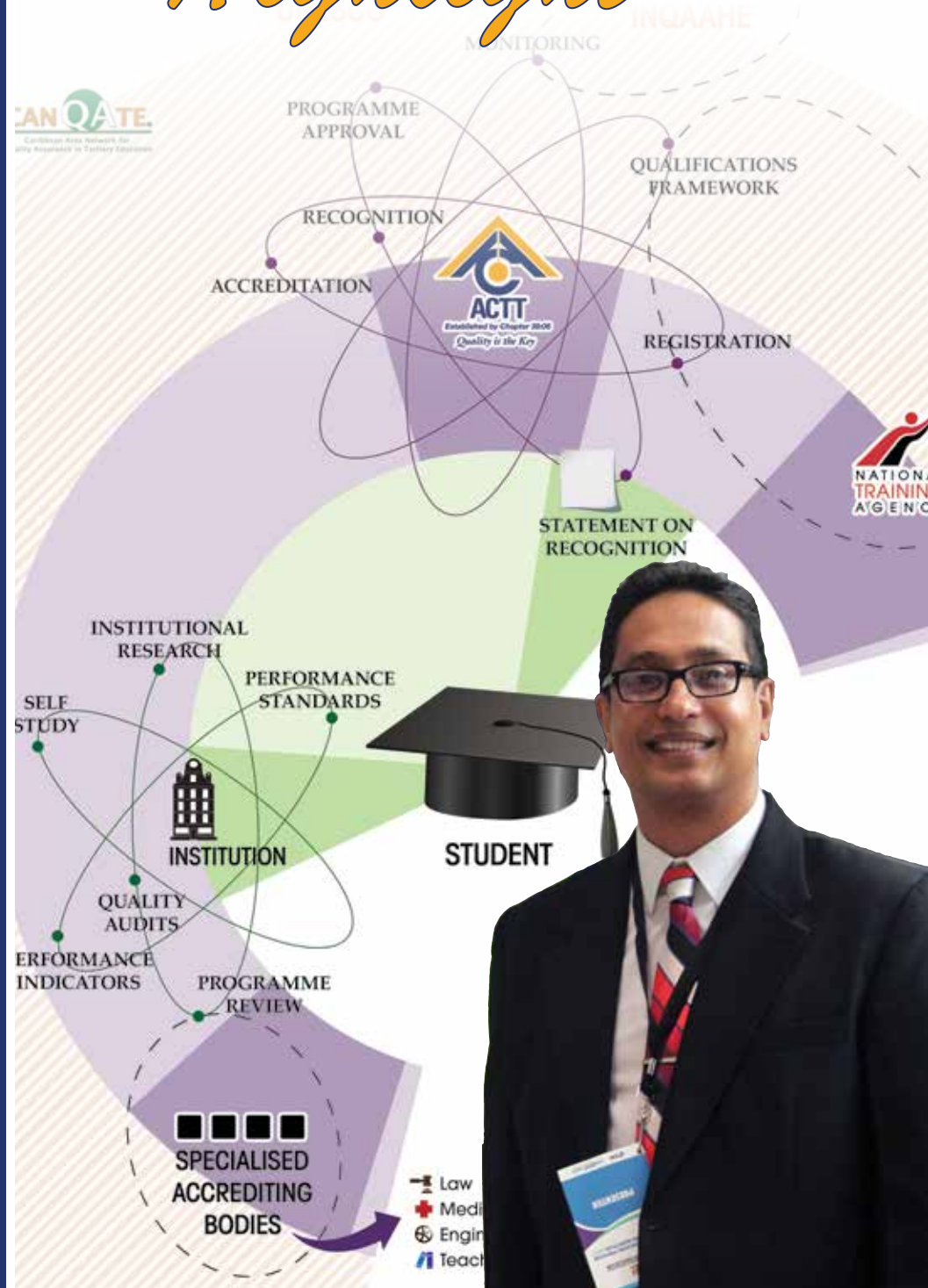


Consumer Sciences are required to go into the schools and community to educate the public on the importance of living a healthy lifestyle. It is noteworthy that, in May 2017, one student of this School completed the Registered Dietitian (RD) exam in the United States, qualifying her to practice Dietetics in the US.

The latest initiative at the USC is the Wellness Program, which has arisen as a result of the changing economic, health and social climate in the country, as well as in the wider Caribbean. Its primary focus groups are faculty and staff. The USC is cognisant of the benefits to be gained from such a programme, having previously introduced one in 2011. Such a programme reduces absenteeism due to illness, improves motivation and encourages a better work attitude. It empowers individual employees to utilise a holistic approach to enhance their health and improve the quality of their lives. The departments involved in this programme are: the Sports and Physical Education Department (SPED), the Dietetics arm of the Family and Consumer Sciences Faculty, the Rehabilitation Sciences Department, the Health Services Department, Counselling Department and Campus Ministries – Pastoral Care.

As we celebrate 90 years, the University of the Southern Caribbean has come a long way from its humble beginnings as the East Caribbean Training School, the Caribbean Training College and the Caribbean Union College. The USC continues to make its mark on the local and international landscapes by adapting and adjusting to the changing face of education, without losing its distinctive philosophy of Christian Education upon which it was founded. ■

# STAFF Highlight



**"Sustainability of Higher Education through Quality Assurance and Quality Enhancement":** a Poster presentation for the Ministry of Education's 2017 Research in Education Symposium & Knowledge Marketplace by **Dr Ronald Brunton**, Director – Qualifications and Recognition.

# *The QuiTE Awards Ceremony*

The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago (ACTT) hosted its annual Excellence in Higher Education Awards Ceremony on Tuesday, October 31, 2017. Through the Quality in Tertiary Education (QuiTE) Awards that are presented at this ceremony, ACTT recognises the achievements of institutions and professionals in the sector. These Awards aim to promote quality in the operations of registered and accredited post secondary and tertiary level institutions in Trinidad and Tobago.

Awards were presented to institutions that demonstrated excellence in the implementation of quality assurance systems, student monitoring and tracking systems, institutional research capacity and overall improvement. Institutions were grouped based on student enrolment levels, with awards being presented to exemplars in the following categories:

- Excellence for an Established Quality Management System
- Excellence for Student Support Services in Tertiary Education
- Excellence in Teaching and Learning

ACTT also presented awards to individuals in the higher education sector in the following categories:

- Excellence in Applied and Academic Research
- Excellence in Teaching

The Excellence in Higher Education Awards Ceremony and Cocktail Reception also concluded ACTT's Quality Assurance Month 2017, which included outreach initiatives at schools across Trinidad and Tobago. ■

## **AWARDEES: Institutional Categories**

### **Excellence for an Established Quality Management System**

**1st place:** National Energy Skills Center  
**Honourable mention:** Arthur Lok Jack Graduate School of Business

### **Excellence in Student Support Services**

#### *Large Category*

**1st place:** UWI School of Business and Applied Studies Limited

#### *Medium Category*

**1st place:** Trinidad and Tobago Hospitality and Tourism Institute  
**Honourable mention:** CTS College of Business and Computer Science Ltd

### **Excellence in Teaching and Learning**

**1st place:** Arthur Lok Jack Graduate School of Business

## **AWARDEES: Individual Categories**

### **Excellence in Applied and Academic Research**

Dr Laurette Bristol  
Director of Academic Services, UWI School of Business and Applied Studies Limited

### **Excellence in Teaching**

Alana Jameson  
Course Director and Tutor, Council of Legal Education, Hugh Wooding Law School





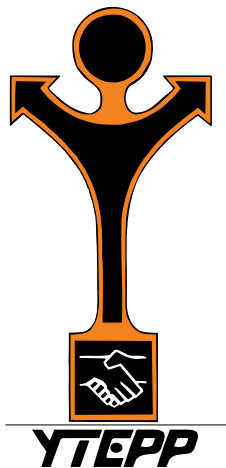
From left to right: Nyron Seaton (QuiTE Committee Chair, ACTT), Kern Dass (NESC), Ravi Ragoonath (CTS CBCS), Michael Bradshaw (Executive Director, ACTT), Dr the Honourable Lovell Francis (Minister of State in the Ministry of Education), Alana Jameson (Hugh Wooding), Dr Kamla Mungal (ALJGSB), Dr John Prince (Chairman, ACTT), Brian Frontin (TTHTI).



**Training**

## YTEPP's success with industrial partners

BY **NATALIE BISHOP, BEDE WILLIAMS, LYNDEN MAHON AND LISA JOHNSON**



YTEPP's training successfully produces qualified and industry-ready trainees. The organisation partners with leading industry professionals to provide rich, hands-on, practical learning environments for its participants, allowing them to work with seasoned professionals and top-class performers in live settings and working conditions. At the end, they are able to transition easily into meaningful jobs based on the training received.

The Live Sound Engineering (Cycle 30) training experience can be summed up in one word: "synergistic". This programme fosters creativity, critical thinking, team spirit and personal development in every learner. This year, the programme included set-up of sound equipment for popular carnival events like *Kes Tuesday on the Rocks*, *Machel Monday*, *Soca in the Square* and *Ultimate ONE*.

Opportunities were created for the trainees to function within real-world industry standard environments by working closely with major industry service and equipment providers like *Rent-A-Amp*, *Johnny Q*, and *Audio Works*. One such opportunity was creating the stage plot and input list for the concert of international Gospel artiste, Todd Dulaney. (See "*Todd Dulaney – Live in Trinidad*" on YouTube.) In addition, the rigging of theatrical equipment for the epic Decibel 2017 at Queen's Hall was undertaken by the participants as one of the assessments required for their certification.

### Turning theory into practice

YTEPP's cohort of Television and Video Production comprised students of mixed ages, genders and learning abilities. Under this programme, they were challenged to turn theory into practice as interns at Caribbean New Media Group (CNMG). Their responsibilities included studio camera setup for the 6:00 a.m. and midday news programmes, working the news prompter and news editing.

Osagie Skinner, diagnosed low on the autism spectrum, demonstrates YTEPP's equal opportunity policy in action. Supportive team relationships were fostered to ensure that Osagie was included in all activities and gained authentic experiences to achieve his certification.

### 21st century learning

A new partnership, initiated by Caribbean Dockyard and Engineering Services Limited (CDESL), was established by the Certified Welders and Fabricators Project (CWFP). The programme includes a Ship and Industrial Marine Repair course with welding, fabricating and machining as its nucleus.

To navigate its 21st century learners, YTEPP's training methodology reinforces the concepts of creative *social practice* that facilitate learning. This is evident at the class located at the Caridoc Compound. The training programme includes a three-month internship to ensure knowledge transfer from skilled industry workers to trainees. Future marine sector training classes will include Diesel Mechanics & Millwrights.

YTEPP responds to the needs of industry and stands committed to partner with entities in any sector to develop a cadre of qualified and trained workers to support their operations and growth. ■





- 1: Live Sound Engineering (Cycle 30) participants capturing the moment with Kes Dieffenthaler at the set-up for *Tuesday on the Rocks* 2017
- 2: Ship and Industrial Marine Repair trainees
- 3: A trainee welding pipe fittings
- 4: Live Sound Engineering (Cycle 30) trainees putting their hands to the plow at O2 Park, setting up the line array PA for Kes the Band's *Tuesday on the Rocks* 2017
- 5: Trainees during internship at CNMG studio



**Points of view****Reflections on the Caribbean**

A PERSPECTIVE FROM THE  
ASSOCIATION OF BUSINESS  
EXECUTIVE'S (ABE) NEW CEO,  
**ROB MAY**



On a recent visit to the Caribbean, I was deeply impressed with the quality and diversity of vocational training being offered in the region, and the 'outcomes-based' approach adopted by the regulator, The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago (ACTT).

The training capacity in the Caribbean has increased significantly, and this investment in skills is vital to the Caribbean being able to diversify its economy and take its place as a major player in the global economy. In fact, the colleges I visited during my trip, including UWI-ROYTEC, SITAL College of Tertiary Education Ltd, CTS College of Business and Computer Science Ltd, Arthur Lok Jack Graduate Business School and the School of Business and Computer Science Ltd in Trinidad are already truly world class.

Qualifications are a global currency, and as tradeable source of economic advantage, they require robust regulation. But the vocational education and training sector's continued relevance depends on how responsive it can be to new learner requirements, evolving industry needs, technological innovations and sea-changes in pedagogy and learning delivery models. Alongside developing a national education infrastructure that has global credibility and integrity, the regulator and policy makers in the region also face fundamental challenges which require flexibility and innovation.

**Fundamental challenges need to be overcome**

Students are entering into vocational education at an earlier age, as well as at a later stage in life. Pathways to learning are becoming more diverse, from early-age entrepreneurs to later-life re-trainers, so it is vitally important to accommodate these varied routes to learning so that the economy can benefit from a diverse skills base. Sequential learning routes run the risk of disenfranchising learners who do not fit the requirements of typical 'jump on' points in traditional pathways, and I would urge all progressive countries to actively address this challenge through lifelong learning policies and promoting flexible access.

Traditional boundaries between educational sectors are blurring. Globally, learners are distinguishing less between types of providers and expect to seamlessly move between sectors and learning experiences, which challenges established funding models, recognition of prior learning and articulation frameworks.

With cost pressures, and with difficulty forecasting future skills needs, institutions themselves are thinking differently about delivery and infrastructure requirements and seeking to minimise investment through the use of new technologies. Learning delivery is now multi-channel and immersive. Online and blended learning and assessment have seen significant global uptake over the past 10 years, but, more recently, there has been a distinct move away from simply replicating face-to-face pedagogy towards developing new pedagogies that make full use of digital tools. In fact, many awarding organisations are now developing learning resources 'smartphone first'.

This presents considerable challenges for the regulator to gain assurances that e-assessment is secure, e-certificates are authentic and e-proctoring is reliable. For the UK regulator, OfQual, this has been achieved through a

risk-based approach to regulation that sets out clear conditions and positive indicators based around ensuring that learners are not adversely affected and malpractice can be avoided or quickly acted upon. Awarding bodies can then apply these conditions to their own development of digital learning tools without the need for the regulator to be constantly acting as ‘gatekeeper’. The result is a dynamic learning environment of diverse, affordable, and accessible learning experiences, with integrity at the core.

### **Education is transforming the lives of young people**

I also visited Guyana whilst in the region. Vocational education in the developing world is a game-changer, transforming lives, whole communities, and even whole countries. Guyana, a firmly established market for ABE, is where the recent offshore discovery of oil is creating excitement and trepidation. Global investment in developing this resource could boost Guyana’s income and growth for many years to come and increase public spending on education and public services, as well as attract an influx of supportive industries requiring a diverse labour market, just as it did in neighbouring Trinidad and Tobago.

Over the last 40 years, ABE has built up a unique global experience by paying more attention to low-income, ‘high-risk’ countries as specific markets for vocational education. Many, like Guyana, are home to the world’s largest untapped sources of minerals and metals, but also to untapped sources of talent. I left in no doubt about how important education and qualifications are for social mobility across the whole CARICOM region.

### **This is the Caribbean’s time to shine**

With the balance of global economic power starting to shift, the region is poised to be transformed as local governments pull out of institutional weaknesses, legal system inefficiencies, and racial fractures in society, and seek to diversify their economic and educational landscape, decreasing the dependency on oil and gas and agriculture revenues. Already, new industries such as Information and Communications Technology, manufacturing, outsourcing and healthcare are springing up, but at the same time exposing a local skills gap that desperately needs filling.

I visited a number of schools, colleges and universities including Nations, Business School and Accountancy Training Centre and heard first-hand how many young people dream of starting up their own venture, or travel all day long through the sweltering Guyanese interior just to attend night school in the capital, Georgetown. Encouragingly, a large proportion of these learners are young women, which promises better gender parity in the future.

Back home, the UK vocational education sector is currently seen as volatile and ambiguous as it undergoes a wave of significant reforms. Change is inevitable, and in fact necessary, but colleges and awarding bodies are reeling from the constantly shifting aspirations and the dubious planning of policy makers (3 different Secretaries of State for education in 3 years... and possibly a fourth on the way!). The biggest criticism levelled at the UK government by the sector is its unwillingness to consult with assessment and delivery experts, leading to a fundamental lack of understanding about the timetable for implementing changes, or the unplanned outcomes.

Such a refreshing change, then, to be so warmly received by Mr Michael Bradshaw, Executive Director of ACTT; and Dr Ronald Brunton, Director of Qualifications and Recognition. I sincerely hope that as the region’s education sector booms, its regulators and policy makers remain open to consulting with the bodies that are doing the actual teaching and examining. We need to work together to ensure that young people across the Caribbean reach their full potential! ■

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*ABE is an awarding organisation offering qualifications from Level 2 to Level 6 in business-related subjects throughout the world.*

**Innovation**

# Formula for success: Focussed research + Innovation → Societal growth

BY **PROFESSOR BRIAN COPELAND**  
PRO VICE-CHANCELLOR AND  
PRINCIPAL, ST AUGUSTINE  
CAMPUS – UWI



The 1948 Royal Charter that gave life to the original incarnation of The University of the West Indies (The UWI) states that its purpose is *“To provide ... for research and instruction in the humanities and sciences and other spheres of learning and knowledge of a standard and thoroughness required and expected of a university of the highest standing ...”*

Over the past 70 years, The UWI has lived up to this mandate. It has produced over 120,000 graduates, including 18 current or past regional heads of state, one Nobel Laureate, dozens of Rhodes Scholars and leaders of society and industry. Its research and scholarly activities have covered a plethora of topics in health, agriculture, science, engineering, social sciences, law and the humanities. It is the “go to” regional institution for contract research. However, after 70 years, it is clearly time for The UWI to change its trajectory.

Given the current state of the Caribbean, The University of the West Indies has decided that its mandate now has to be expanded to include a lead role in the revitalisation of Caribbean societies. It now has to align its teaching and its research to more directly and more meaningfully address the myriad challenges facing the region. It sees that the missing critical component, one that serves as a complement to the 70-year-old research paradigm, is innovation – the realisation of new concepts that benefit our Caribbean peoples.

The UWI sees the nexus between its research and innovation as a key differentiator, not just for its international reputation, but much more importantly, as one means by which the Caribbean can achieve the much touted UN Sustainable

Development Goals (SDGs) in a “near Utopia” state. These SDGs require focussed and purposeful research on and development of the economic, social and ecological spheres.

The endgame is the creation of a citizenry in this “near Utopia” in which social challenges are few and manageable, a society virtually free of the current ills, such as crime and all discrimination. Citizens would understand, respect and protect the ecology. They would have established an economy made robust by a structure that includes large and middle-income companies, and a well-populated network of innovation-driven, export-oriented Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs). In the face of natural disasters, survivors would be resourceful in rebuilding resilient communities that can grow to re-establish societies.

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**The endgame is the creation of a citizenry in this “near Utopia”»**

The UWI has to play its part in getting the Caribbean society to this “near Utopia” state. However, it must first direct its attention to helping our societies rise above the immediate social and economic challenges. Given its limited resources, The UWI must focus most of its research on areas of highest priority. It must then create an innovation ecosystem that utilises research output and



At the end of the night, and with much celebration, JSL International – a Houston, Texas-based logistical and project support services company – overcame all contenders to emerge as the 2017 Champion Employer of the Year.

In his acceptance speech, Managing Director, Javid Ramcharitar, thanked the ECA for bestowing this “hallmark of excellence” on what was a small fledgling company 7 years ago, with 5 employees in a 300 square foot office space, and which now boasts an employee base of over 650, with operations in 12 countries, including T&T. Ramcharitar added, “This moment is bigger than me; it is for all those employees who believed, who stayed, who walked and who fell, who rose again. To all those who trusted, those who believed in some way that we had a chance to be seen for what we believe in our hearts that we represent and what we deliver; which is now our brand.”

For this first time this year, the ECA added a new award to recognise small companies and family businesses with less than 15 employees: the inaugural Micro Champion of the Year award, which went to Manuchar Trinidad Limited.

A full list of winners is as follows:

**2017 Champion Employer of the Year**

JSL International

**2017 Micro Champion Employer of the Year**

Winner – Manuchar Trinidad Limited

2nd Place – Yellow Umbrella Valet Parking Services

**Employer of the Year – Large**

Winner – JSL International

2nd Place – Hyatt Regency

3rd Place – Scotiabank Trinidad Limited

**Employer of the Year – Medium**

Winner – Crews Inn Hotel and Yacht Club

2nd Place – West Indian Tobacco Company Limited

**Employer of the Year – Small Winner** – RHS Marketing Limited  
 2nd Place – KCL Capital Market Brokers  
 3rd Place – exporTT

**Award for Excellence in Staff Development and Industrial Relations**  
 Scotiabank Trinidad Limited

**Award for Excellence in Corporate Social Responsibility and Community Engagement**  
 RHS Marketing Limited

*References*

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### » Guyana attachment, cont'd

constituents at the Chaguanas and City campuses.

### Registration and Recognition

Similarly, participants were engaged in a Site Visit for Registration as well as Recognition of an institution. They were able to observe the interviews with participants and be part of the site tour.

### Training

As part of the attachment, ACTT staff made presentations to the participants on ACTT services. These presentations were done in a workshop style as the information that was gleaned on the site visits was interrogated. In such a manner, participants were able to deepen their knowledge of the theoretical framework that was being enacted at the visits. This knowledge included: questioning skills; interpersonal interactions and scheduling. ■

### » ALJGSB, cont'd

### Key Lesson

Taking your eyes off the strategic intent of your organisation can lead to issues, in some cases, HR matters such as disengaged employees, cultural misfit and missed business targets. Running a 'tight' operation, underpinned by a solid strategic direction to respond to these uncertain economic times, is what is needed.

Our team of qualified experts has over 55 years combined experience in providing consulting and developmental solutions. We apply scientific assessment tools and frameworks to diagnose root causes and measure the impact of solutions provided. ■

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### » UWI, cont'd

collaboration with the private and public sectors to create solutions that have a meaningful impact on society.

In the economic sphere, for example, this would result in the enhancement of the productive capabilities of existing enterprises, and the creation of new companies, spin-offs that produce internationally

competitive products and processes. Essentially, The UWI will be contributing to the diversification of the Caribbean economic space. The long-term, very conservative target is for UWI St. Augustine to spin-off one new company every two years.

A splendid example of social innovation exists at The UWI Mona Campus. Through its adoption of the nearby August Town, an at-risk community, Mona facilitated the reduction in the murder rate to zero in the first year of the initiative. The UWI at St. Augustine has started a similar initiative with the Bangladesh community in nearby St Joseph.

The mobilisation of The UWI to meet this new innovation imperative requires significant internal transformation, a task it has set itself as part of its 2017-2022 Strategic Plan. Significantly, teaching delivery has to be modified to nurture the innovative and entrepreneurial capabilities of students. They must play a significant role in the innovation ecosystem as the learning experience will – better than any classroom experience – well prepare them to lead the companies that will form the network of SMEs in “near Utopia.”

Evidence shows that students are keenly interested in this new thrust. Some students in the Faculty of Engineering and the Faculty of Science and Technology are selecting final-year projects with commercial potential. Furthermore, according to the Campus Office of Planning and Institutional Research 2015 survey of prospective students, while just 8% of respondents came from homes where the main income earner was “self-employed,” 49% said they wanted and expected to acquire entrepreneurial skills as UWI students.

Universities worldwide are engine rooms for game-changing technologies and processes. The UWI at St. Augustine is poised to do the same by taking up the challenge of being a major catalyst in economic diversification and societal growth through strategic transformation of our teaching, research, outreach and engagement programmes. Collaboration with industry, other tertiary level institutions, NGOs and government is key to our success.

In 1968, some 20 years after the issue of UWI's first Charter, Barbadian Prime Minister Errol Barrow declared that Caribbean citizens must accept that “... the efficient growth of this University is almost their only path to prosperity.” The new thrust of The UWI can finally make this a sustainable reality. ■



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