



**The Accreditation Council  
of Trinidad and Tobago**

*Established by Chapter 39:06*

*Quality is the Key*

**THE ACCREDITATION COUNCIL OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

# Quality Assurance Month

Quality Assurance in Higher Education:  
Fostering Accountability and Continual Improvement  
within Institutions

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## Calendar of Events

**October 2 –  
November 6, 2015**  
*3rd National Quiz*

**October 21-22, 2015**  
*Team Chair Workshop*

**October 27-28, 2015**  
Forensics of Credential and CV Fraud  
Workshop

**October 29, 2015**  
Excellence in Higher Education  
Awards Ceremony



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*The Accreditation Council of Trinidad  
and Tobago (ACTT) welcomes the  
recently appointed  
**Honourable Anthony Garcia**  
Minister of Education  
and the  
**Honourable Dr Lovell Francis**  
Minister of State in the Ministry of Education*

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## Vision

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ACTT will be the principal authority in Trinidad and Tobago for quality assurance and continuous improvement in higher education and a leader in innovation and best practice

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## Mission

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To assure the quality and integrity of higher education primarily through recognition, registration and accreditation as well as public education and related activities, while ensuring the efficiency and transparency of our operations and demonstrating commitment to national development and global competitiveness

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## Core Values

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- Accountability
- Customer Focus
- Integrity
- Commitment to Personal Growth and Development
- Teamwork
- Trust



## A Vision for Higher Education in Tobago

Assemblyman Huey N. Cadette  
Secretary of Education, Youth Affairs and Sport

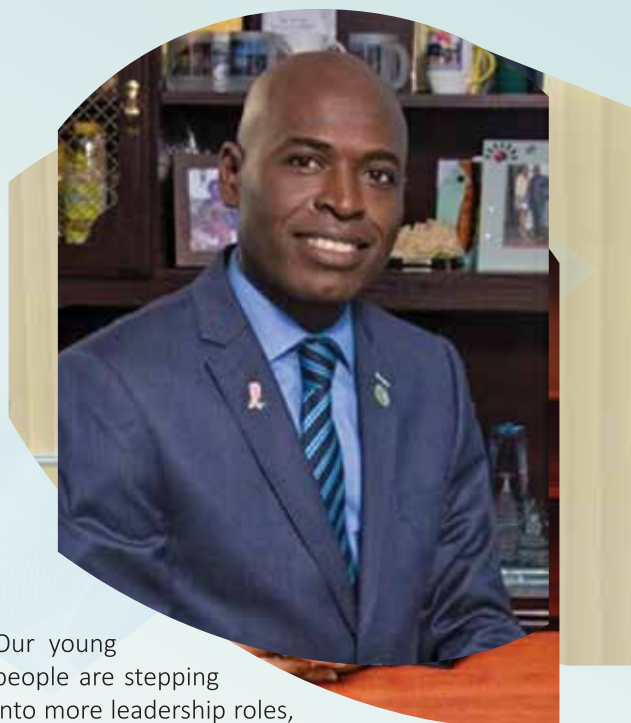
***The sustainable development of Tobago and the development of its human capital are inextricably linked. The Tobago House of Assembly has streamlined its development efforts in accordance with the Comprehensive Economic Development Plan (CEDP 2.0) to ensure all aspects of the island's growth are complementary and connected, from tourism to business development, agriculture to entrepreneurship and from culture to infrastructure.***

This development can only be achieved through the consistent growth of Tobagonians in higher education and through the provision of opportunities, which when combined, will allow our young people to fill any gaps identified and contribute to the island's economy.

Higher education can enhance the quality of life for every resident in Tobago, and the Division of Education, Youth Affairs and Sport is both encouraged and excited by that potential. The rapid development of educational technologies means the quality of education can only improve in the future in terms of access, the way students interact, the curricula and how they are taught.

While issues such as financing, inefficiency, relevance of programmes and the employability of graduates will not be easily surmounted, Tobago has already seen much improvement in these areas. The level of tertiary education on the island has nearly doubled in the last 14 years, and there is an unparalleled demand for higher education and increased awareness of its importance to personal, sociocultural and economic development, and for equipping the youth with new skills, knowledge and ideas.

It is hardly coincidental that the Division's mandate is for the combined responsibility of education, youth affairs and sport. These areas are all interconnected and all serve to invest in our youth and prepare them for the future. To this end, the Division has put policies in place to aid development, both within the schoolyard and beyond it. These strategies are already bearing fruit; our SEA, CSEC and CAPE results continue to improve each year.



Our young people are stepping into more leadership roles, expanding their businesses and are generally more productive; this was evidenced by our winning performances at the 2015 National Youth Awards, where Tobago copped seven accolades. It is the Division's obligation to build on these successes, and higher education that is targeted, relevant and beneficial to Tobago's unique needs will fuel our journey to a more productive and sustainable future.

The Assembly's commitment to education means that youth are our primary focus, but a vision for higher education must incorporate all ages and spaces as well. It means linking the current education opportunities to training and taking learning beyond the classroom.

It requires expanding the community approach to development in Tobago by partnering with other Divisions, so that citizens not inclined to tertiary education will also have opportunities to grow, including our senior citizens, who have taken full advantage of our computer literacy classes, which are currently oversubscribed.

The Division's vision is to consistently be "an effective and professional organisation committed to the optimal intellectual, physical and social development of its clientele". Higher education is integral to achieving this goal.

DIVISION OF EDUCATION, YOUTH AFFAIRS & SPORT  
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# Message from the Executive Director

Michael Bradshaw, Executive Director, ACTT



This year, The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago (ACTT) adopted the theme “Quality Assurance in Higher Education: Fostering Accountability and Continual Improvement within Institutions” for its Quality Assurance Month. This is another response to ACTT’s mandate of the promotion and sustainability of quality assurance in the higher education and training sectors. In this regard, the Council is committed to providing high level quality assurance services in the sector. With the increase in student enrolment to sixty five percent (65%) in the higher education sector in Trinidad and Tobago, more emphasis must be placed on the issue of quality assurance in institutions.

To date, ACTT has quality assured eighty one (81) higher education and training institutions and will continue to implement initiatives to ensure that the quality of these institutions is sustained.

In February this year, the Council launched The Quality Institute (TQI). TQI seeks to streamline ACTT’s quality enhancement and institutional development activities through the consolidation of training offered to higher education institutions, institutional personnel, quality assurance professionals and other stakeholders. This initiative in particular is dedicated towards facilitating high quality, relevant training to support the higher education and training institutions.

The Council recently hosted its 2nd International Conference in Higher Education and Training, under the theme “Thinking Global, Acting Local: The Changing Realities of Higher Education and Training”, another initiative utilised to

promote and boost quality in higher education and training. The Conference provided a forum to share international best practices, present research findings and review recent developments impacting on higher education and skills development, all of which institutions can learn from and adopt to improve their own quality management systems.

With the rapid internationalisation of higher education, opportunities have been extended across borders. Quality assurance continues to play a critical role, with the Council focussing its initiatives on safeguarding students and other stakeholders.

Further, as the Council continues to foster a culture of quality and continual improvement, we look forward to the implementation of the National Qualifications and Credit Framework (NQCF). This framework is designed to interface with other education systems or frameworks regionally and internationally. The framework will include descriptors of learning outcomes, guidelines for assessment, the classification of programmes and rules for calculating credit value and the level of programmes, and units of learning. The implementation of the NQCF will result in major benefits to students as it will allow access by students of all levels of the education and training system to information on academic, vocational and professional qualifications to make informed decisions.

On behalf of the Council, I express immense gratitude and thanks for your support during 2014-2015 and invite you to participate in this month’s activities. We look forward to your continued involvement in the Council’s upcoming activities in 2015- 2016 and beyond.



#### ACTT's Management Team:

Back Row (l-r): Curtis Floyd - Director Accreditation and Quality Enhancement, Emily Pascal - Director Finance and Administration and Dr Ronald Brunton - Director Qualifications and Recognition.

Front Row (l-r): Karel Stephen - Corporate Communications Specialist, Michael Bradshaw - Executive Director and Jane Murray - Corporate Secretary/Legal Officer





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### Thinking of higher education?

While at secondary school, I knew what career path I wanted to take. Before embarking on my tertiary education, I requested a **Statement on Recognition** from ACTT to **ensure that my programme of choice was quality assured and recognised in Trinidad and Tobago**. Now, I am a graduate with a recognised degree from a legitimate higher education institution, pursuing my dream.

### Benefits of a Statement on Recognition

- It is a requirement for scholarships and financial aid from the Government of Trinidad and Tobago
- It states whether the programme has met the required specialised accreditation necessary for practice or membership in a professional body (where applicable)
- It states that the institution is quality assured

**Contact ACTT today for your Statement on Recognition!**

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DREAM –  
AND PROTECT YOUR  
INVESTMENT.**

## Quality Assuring Institutions through Registration and Accreditation

Ziann K. Baird and Keith Dick, Assessment Officers, ACTT



As the gatekeeper of the higher education sector in Trinidad and Tobago, The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago (ACTT), through its Registration and Accreditation activities, plays a critical role in assuring the quality and continual improvement of higher education institutions and their programmes. The impact of quality assurance in higher education has increased significantly with the establishment of the Council through an Act of Parliament, Chapter 39:06, which stipulates Registration as a mandatory activity with Accreditation being voluntary, for institutions operating in the higher education sector.

The crucial role of quality assurance is to support higher education systems and institutions, thus ensuring that the qualifications earned by students and their experiences at the higher education level, remain at the forefront of an institution's mission and goals. Higher education institutions aspire to a high level of autonomy with the need for minimal external regulation. However, quality assurance bodies, like ACTT, require these institutions to be publicly accountable and have adopted an external peer review system to increase transparency and inclusivity,

which redound to the acceptance and the building of trust by stakeholders. This is achieved through frequent monitoring and evaluation activities.

Registration, which is referred to as state authorisation or pre-accreditation in other international jurisdictions, is mandatory in Trinidad and Tobago. Registration is a unique concept and was introduced to facilitate and develop many of the higher education institutions to reach a level of readiness, by assisting them to develop and implement a Quality Management System (QMS), to facilitate the effective delivery of higher education. ►9

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## Quality Assuring Institutions through Registration and Accreditation

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Successful attainment of the registration status signals that higher education institutions operating in Trinidad and Tobago have met the requirements to offer quality education and training to the public. Institutional Accreditation is voluntary and requires the institution to critically analyse its internal systems and operations after which a Self-Study Report is produced. Accreditation is both a process and a status. As a process, it utilises a multistep approach, guided by criteria and standards, to regulate the effectiveness and efficiency of programme delivery and student learning outcomes. As a status, Accreditation is the formal recognition which is conferred on an institution demonstrating its capacity to develop and deliver quality educational programmes. It goes beyond this however, as an institution displays its ability to adapt to environmental changes.

There has been a significant increase in the number of students accessing higher education, as well as a corresponding increase in the number of post secondary and tertiary level institutions operating in the sector since 2009. These increases are attributed mainly to the introduction of Government Assistance for Tuition Expenses (GATE) which seeks to provide financial assistance to entrants/participants in the higher education sector. The student participation rate in Trinidad and Tobago increased from approximately 7% in 2001, to 15% in 2004, to 40% in 2008. According to 'The Future of Tertiary Education and Skills Training-A National Policy Framework 2015-2025', the participation rate was 65.23% in 2013, surpassing the 60% target identified to be achieved by 2015. As a result, greater emphasis on ACTT's role is required. Quality Assurance of institutions and programmes is

a key determinant for students choosing an institution to attend and pursue a course of study. Institutions are implementing Quality Management Systems as a mechanism for improving their operations, achieving competitive advantage and increasing student enrolment. Accreditation, although voluntary, can be used as a strategy for institutions desirous of improving their internal systems and thus creating a competitive advantage.

The main aim of both registration and accreditation is to foster the development of a culture of quality within educational institutions. As a consequence, institutions are encouraged to develop, implement and maintain formal strategies, policies and procedures for the continuous enhancement of quality.

## Innovating the Art of Leadership



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- MBA in Sustainable Energy Management
- International Master of Business Development & Innovation
- Master of Small & Medium Enterprise Management (online)

## Making the Right Choice through ACTT's Recognition Service

Dr Ronald Brunton,  
Director Qualifications and Recognition



Young and adult learners interested in pursuing higher education are often concerned that they are choosing the right institution or programme. The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago (ACTT) has been a valuable resource to guide the prospective student in choosing the right programme and the right institution. Through the issuance of Statements on Recognition, the ACTT provides authoritative advice on the recognition status of local, foreign and transnational programmes from around the world. A Statement on Recognition provides an assurance that the institution through which the programme was or will be

delivered is duly accredited or quality assured by a recognised quality assurance agency.

ACTT conducts in-depth and extensive research to support each Statement on Recognition. At the programme level, the Council ensures that the programme is an approved programme. ACTT also ensures that the institution has been approved by the relevant authorities to award qualifications at the appropriate level that corresponds to the level of the programme. For instance, if you are interested in pursuing a Master's degree programme, ACTT will ensure that the institution has been granted approval to offer programmes

at the Master's degree level. ACTT will also ensure that the institution has the appropriate approval to offer on-line and distance learning programmes where such modalities are utilised for the delivery of the programme.

ACTT also provides authoritative advice on whether the programme has received specialised or professional accreditation required by the respective professional body. Such programme level accreditation is applicable to a growing number of professions such as medicine, law, engineering, as well as many other professions.

► 11



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## Making The Right Choice Through ACTT's Recognition Service

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ACTT is well equipped to guide prospective students on the professional requirements for many occupations in Trinidad and Tobago and will refer clients to the respective agency when necessary.

In terms of the institution, whether it is a University, College, Institute, Academy or any other type of higher education institution, ACTT will ensure that it has been quality assured by the legitimate quality assurance agency in that country. ACTT will also ensure that the institution's status is not about to expire and that the institution is not affected by any negative sanctions that pose a threat to its recognition.

ACTT's research is critical as the increase of diploma mills continues to

plague authorities. Diploma mills are essentially illegitimate organisations that have been set up by unscrupulous persons to sell fraudulent qualifications to unsuspecting persons. Such qualifications are not recognised in Trinidad and Tobago or in any other part of the world. While some progress has been made in the fight against diploma mills, the internet has made it easier for such organisations to target unwitting persons through aggressive marketing and promises of an easy route to becoming qualified. The web has also made it more difficult to locate diploma mills that can maintain their operations on-line, while easily moving from one jurisdiction to the next, practically over night.

In order to ensure that ACTT gets it right each and every time, ACTT has established strategic relationships with

the National Recognition Information Centre for the United Kingdom (UKNARIC) and the Educational Credential Evaluators (ECE) of the United States. ACTT's partnerships with these leading international recognition agencies allow ACTT to verify its findings, corroborate evidence and seek advice from these trusted sources.

As you can see, ACTT's Recognition Services are designed to provide prospective students with the peace of mind that their choice of study is with a quality institution and will be recognised by employers, higher education institutions and other stakeholders. Before a decision is made on which programme to pursue, or which institution to attend, *"check with the ACTT first"*.

OCTOBER 27 & 28, 2015

8:30am – 4:00pm

HYATT REGENCY TRINIDAD

1 Wrightson Road, Port of Spain



**Registration deadline: October 12, 2015**  
**Registration fee: \$2,500**  
**Group rate (4+ persons): \$2,200 (ea.)**

**Late Registration Fee: \$2,800**  
*effective October 13, 2015*

The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago (ACTT)  
 Employers' Consultative Association  
 and Educational Credential Evaluators, Inc. (USA)

# CREDENTIAL AND CV FRAUD

A two-day workshop on techniques for detecting counterfeit certificates, fraudulent credentials, diploma mills and curriculum vitae misrepresentation for employers, human resource professionals, academic administrators and fraud detection professionals.

**Facilitator: Majka Drewitz**

**Majka Drewitz** is an Educational Credential Evaluators, Inc. Senior Evaluator and a Research and Knowledge Management Evaluator. She specialises in various systems of education including Eastern and Western Europe, the former Soviet Union, China, Canada, India, Latin America, Caribbean, Syria, and the francophone systems. Majka is also versed in document forensics.



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# Applied Research, Innovation and Entrepreneurship

Prof. Nicole Smith  
Research Professor and Senior Economist  
Georgetown University



For much of the developed world, the bulk of productivity growth in the past forty years has come from the interaction between education, innovation and entrepreneurship. Creativity, ambition, drive, grit, determination coupled with the smart use of new technology seems to be the recipe for economic success for many societies. It is for this reason almost every nation has set education attainment and training goals as a priority for its citizens.

Irrevocable connections between education, technology, innovation and output lead to productivity increases that generate social and economic advancement. It is now a foregone conclusion that human capital, education and skills are complementary to technological capital and fundamental to the adequate functioning of a knowledge economy. In fact, human capital, education and skills interact with technology in a way that boosts output and reinforces the demand for more skill and education. Computer technology over the last few decades has generated many high paying jobs for workers with these in-demand skills-sets. That same technological change has also transformed blue-collar occupations so radically that there are few high-growth sectors remaining that do not require education and training beyond high school in order to function efficiently.

Even resource rich economies like Trinidad and Tobago can find benefit from a trained labor force that can appropriately use its knowledge, skills and abilities to improve productivity and increase output. Moretti (2004) finds that “productivity of plants in cities that experience large increases in the share of college graduates rises more than the productivity of similar plants in cities that experience small increases in the share of college graduates.”

Trinidad and Tobago has an additional concern of high unemployment rates for a youthful population. This is reason enough to seek out new prospects for growth and development. Make-work programs that artificially hold down official unemployment statistics are anachronistic and unsustainable. Indeed Keynes’ call for governments

to “...pay people to dig holes in the ground and then fill them up,” was specifically intended as a short-term fiscal response to the Great Depression. Today, government’s responsibility should be to provide citizens with the education, training and knowledge tools required to engage productively with the 21st century.

The OECD claims twelve benefits to higher education outside of its ability to generate a job. In this capacity therefore, advanced human capital becomes a public good, with tangible positive spillovers such as non-inflationary growth in wages and increased output; and also intangible ones such as improved healthcare and a civil society. Though the value of education far exceeds labor market contributions, the connection to a job – whether as an employee or entrepreneur- is paramount.

A perennial problem for many governments remains how to find the skilled workers required to compete. This means governments must find the best way to develop the full potential of its greatest assets: its people. To do this, one must begin by connecting well-defined career pathways to meaningful satisfying, well paying work as a priority. Here’s how:

1. Engage employers to determine local workforce needs and design training programs that are responsive to those needs;
2. Create adequate performance-based metrics that hold universities and postsecondary institutions accountable not only for the numbers of people they graduate, but also for the opportunities that their graduates create for themselves and others;
3. Offer work-based learning opportunities for both middle-skills and advanced workers;
4. Generate incubator programs for budding entrepreneurs.



# Tips on Choosing Your Tertiary Education Provider

Kassandra Mano, Research Officer (Ag.), ACTT

## Thinking about your career?

With a vast number of institutions offering suites of programmes locally, regionally and internationally, choosing a higher education institution and programme in which to enrol may be a difficult decision for a prospective student. Here are a few tips on what you should consider before choosing a career path:

- **The accreditation or recognition status of the institution:** It is important to ensure that the institution you are attending is quality assured by a legitimate quality assurance agency thereby meeting the requirements to offer programmes
- **Modalities of the programme offered by the institution:** Many institutions offer programmes that are either full-time or part-time or which can be done via blended learning. Choose an institution that is able to meet the

demands of your schedule. (whether full-time or part-time).

- **Pre-requisite subjects:** Research the career in which you are interested to determine the entry requirements for the programme and if any particular subjects are needed prior to your enrollment.
- **Specialised accreditation:** Some career fields, such as Engineering and Medicine, require a licence to practise. It is important to familiarise yourself with the different disciplines which require specialised programme accreditation and the accrediting bodies which accredit these programmes.



## Success begins with the right Institution

At SBCS, achieving and maintaining the highest quality in higher education is vital to the successful execution of our mission. As such, we are pleased to be associated with **ACTT's Quality Assurance Month 2015.**

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# Quality Higher Education in an Ever-Changing Global Environment

Ruby S. Alleyne PhD

Vice-President, Quality Assurance & Institutional Effectiveness,  
The University of Trinidad and Tobago



Rapid developments in science and technology are changing the way in which we interact with others and with our environment. Every aspect of human life has been transformed over the last century: communication, transportation, business and commerce, medicine, manufacturing, entertainment and of course, education.

Universities and other education and training institutions are major contributors to scientific and technological progress. As producers as well as transmitters of knowledge, institutions of higher learning contribute to human development and economic and social progress. In today's dynamic and complex global environment, higher education institutions have a responsibility to be socially relevant. Not only should they respond to labour market demands but they must also contribute to shaping that demand as they

engage communities of interest in social and economic transformation.

The world around us is changing and so too are notions of quality. Higher education institutions must respond to economic, social and technological changes and transform themselves to meet the learning needs of the future. UTT, with its mission *"to be an entrepreneurial university designed to discover and develop entrepreneurs, commercialise research and development, and spawn companies for wealth generation and sustainable job creation towards the equitable enhancement of the quality of life of all individuals, families and communities of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and the Caribbean"*, is well on its way to doing just this.

There are some basic tenets of quality higher education in this context:

- It creates opportunities that enhance personal growth, employability and professional advancement through wider access to education and lifelong learning.
- It places greater emphasis on problem-based and experiential learning, and adopts interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches that leverage the interdependence of areas of knowledge and experience, to support innovation and problem solving.
- It enhances equity and social cohesion by making educational opportunities equally accessible to all on the basis of merit and by offering curricular experiences that promote social responsibility and good citizenship.



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2. Special Needs Education (Primary)  
3. Natural Science (Secondary)  
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5. Primary Education  
6. Technical/Vocational Education (Secondary)  
• Business Education  
• Food & Nutrition and Family Management  
• Fashion, Textiles & Family Management  
• Vocational & Technical Education  
7. Early Childhood Care and Education (Primary)  
8. Language and Literature (Secondary)  
9. Mathematics (Secondary)  
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2. Technical/Vocational Education  
3. Early Childhood Care and Education  
4. Special Needs

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# The Role of Community Colleges in Society

Gillian Paul PhD  
President, COSTAATT



## *History of the Community College -*

The community college, a distinctly American invention, has emerged as one of the most transformative institutions in the history of educational development over the last century. It has played an important role in cementing global understanding of the United States as the land of opportunity, having served as the pre-eminent higher education institution in the highly diversified US education system for the integration of diverse groups into the mainstream of educational opportunity and economic development. Today, approximately 1,300 community colleges enrol almost half of the students pursuing higher education in the United States. The continuous growth of student enrolment in community colleges since the 1960s can be traced to the fundamental role that these institutions play in driving economic development and promoting a robust democracy.

## *Function of the Community College -*

A comprehensive community college serves four key functions: career education, transfer education, developmental education and community education. The primary role of community colleges is to prepare students for jobs at technician, technologist, para-professional and mid-managerial level. They dominate the higher education sector in the training of first-responders such as police, firemen, paramedics and nurses; they are key to rapid training and re-training in the manufacturing sector, and are the most cost-effective option for training more and more workers for a knowledge-driven economy. Community colleges offer primarily associate degrees which differ from traditional diploma programmes in that they include a general education component that prepares students for further study at baccalaureate level. Community

colleges are also known for their ability to strengthen students' academic foundations and readiness for college-level study through their developmental education programmes. These programmes offer many adults and traditional age students a second chance to realise their dreams of obtaining a college degree.

For countries that are committed to equality of opportunity for all of its citizens, community colleges are therefore a key resource for development. They enable students from challenged social or economic circumstances to acquire the knowledge and skills that will move them from low-skill, low wage jobs to more lucrative and sustainable employment that can have a generational impact on poverty and perceived social exclusion. ▶17

## Promoting Quality in Higher Education

The Student outreach initiative began in 2007 as a public education programme, whereby, ACTT visited secondary schools in Trinidad and Tobago. At these schools, 4th, 5th, and 6th formers were engaged and advised on the importance of making informed choices about post secondary and tertiary institutions and programmes. In May 2011, ACTT launched its first Student Caravan at the Iere High School in Siparia to meet the goal of expanding the reach of the Council to educate stakeholders in making informed choices in their pursuit of higher education and training.

ACTT introduced the initiative in Tobago in May 2012, with the aim of reaching students in the furthest point of the island. The procurement of a new, larger bus, launched in February 2014, ensured that ACTT connected on a one-on-one level with even more stakeholders; providing a vibrant, open and collaborative space for understanding more about higher education, creating new possibilities to support learning and to provide a window into quality assuring Trinidad and Tobago's higher education sector. Since inception, ACTT's Students Caravan has visited over two hundred (200) schools, institutions and almost all the communities' across Trinidad and Tobago.

The Students Caravan provides information on:

- the quality of higher education institutions and programmes
- the risk of enrolling in a programme leading to a fraudulent qualification



**Interested in having ACTT's Students Caravan visit your school or community?**  
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## The Role of Community Colleges in Society

continued from page 16

Community colleges are the primary mechanism for expanding the middle class and promoting social cohesion, as their very existence telegraphs to a country's citizens that notwithstanding their performance at primary or secondary level, they too have the possibility of achieving real social and occupational mobility for themselves and their families, if they apply themselves diligently to their studies.

### *Community Colleges: A Global Phenomenon -*

These are some of the reasons that the community college model has been adopted by countries as diverse as South Africa, Japan and Chile. In the English-speaking Caribbean, community colleges have been part of the development of the higher education infrastructure since the 1960s. Today, Jamaica boasts a network of community colleges criss-crossing the island.

Barbados Community College dates back to 1968 and community colleges in the Eastern Caribbean States, where there was no UWI campus or presence, played the key role in human resource development for both state organisations and the private sector for decades. In 2000, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago recognised the key role that community colleges can play in expanding tertiary education and established the College of Science, Technology and Applied Arts of Trinidad and Tobago (COSTAATT) in October 2000 to serve as the country's first comprehensive community college, with a specific mandate to expand access to tertiary education for previously marginalized groups, including the financially disadvantaged, the academically under-prepared, the geographically remote and the differently-abled.

Since its establishment 15 years ago, the College has graduated over 13,000 students into the workforce in almost every sector of the economy, and thousands of these alumni have gone on to successfully pursue graduate level studies at local and international universities. As in the United States, our national community college has become an integral player in our nation's quest for expanded opportunities and an improved quality of life for our citizenry.



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# Education Tourism: New Opportunities

Angela Lee Loy  
President, Trinidad and Tobago Coalition of Services Industries  
Limited (TTCSI)



***In today's epoch of mass tourism, the segment of education tourism or Edutourism is growing fast. But what exactly is Edutourism?***

According to an *European Journal of Business and Management on Edutourism: International Student's Decision Making Process In Selecting A Host University In Malaysia*, it says, Edutourism refers to the activity of plugging into any formal or informal tourism program or product offering, in which participants travel to a location with the primary purpose of engaging in a learning experience. This includes general tourism and adult study tours, international university studies, secondary school students' travel, and exchange programmes.

Edutourism is viewed along a continuum ranging from 'general interest while travelling' to 'purposeful learning and travelling'.

Thus, the idea of actually being a tourist but also learning something about a particular skill set or a certain activity found locally in the destination, thrills many and has given rise to greater attention, is being given to the Edutourism nowadays. It has been prevailing in developed countries and is considered to be a crucial part of modern education. "It is knowledge intensive, high value added and offers long term socio-economic benefits."

Moreover, the emergence of the knowledge economy has significantly influenced internalisation of higher education globally. The popularity and prominence of higher education in providing quality human capital capable of contributing to the world economy is on the increase.

Today, there is rising knowledge intensity in the world economy system with educational institutions producing the knowledge, while edutourism is acting as the agent of knowledge transfer and distribution. Thus, affirming the link between education, tourism and economy.

College graduates who have travelled for extended times will tell you they learned far more on the road than they ever did at the university. Politics, history, geography, religion, architecture all present themselves in everyday case studies. Such students make a significant contribu-

tion to tourism industries by travelling for non-educational purposes domestically and engaging in tourist activities. This directly benefits the local economy, enriches the local population and at the same time, educates.

***Some key features of EDU-TOURISM are as follows:***

- ***The general level of education for workers increases, resulting i higher productivity and overall job satisfaction.***
- ***The revenue opportunities for suppliers in the geographic area, required to satisfy the demands of the traveler, also increases.***
- ***The awareness of local history and culture is spread globally.***
- ***The reach to partner/collaborate and trade, increases EDU-TOURISM has the power to change the entire world and provide opportunity for a better and brighter future to everyone it touches.***

The need for people to develop some key global skills, knowledge and right attitude necessary to keep them prepared, productive, innovative, and competitive in the contemporary global business environment is widely recognised. Resultantly, this need has increased international students' search for quality higher education around the world with students being more careful in their universities choice decision-making process. Edutourism services providers and marketers are by large becoming more aware of the underlying factors being considered by the international student in making a choice of university of study.

This popularity of traveling for the purpose of education, by large, is only expected to increase. Therefore, addressing key policy implications such as Accreditation, Marketing, Infrastructure and Security / utilities should be placed high on the national tertiary agenda, as we seek to export and brand our education services internationally!

# Funding Higher Education in Trinidad and Tobago

Nievel Niles, Education Research Specialist, GATE

At the World Education Forum held in Senegal in 2000, 164 governments, including the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (GORTT), pledged that, by 2015, they would achieve the six (6) goals outlined under the "Education for All" (EFA) movement. The GORTT focussed on meeting the EFA Goals 3 and 6, which deal with equitable access to learning, life-skills programmes and improving the quality of education.

Prior to 2001, the GORTT recognised that, in order to expand higher education participation from below 10%<sup>1</sup> to rates comparable with that of the industrialised countries, it would need to make significant investments of public financing. In this regard, the Government instituted major higher education funding programmes designed specifically to address the EFA goals. One of the main programmes that emerged out of the Government's pursuit of the EFA goals was the Government Assistance for Tuition Expenses (GATE) Programme.

Introduced in 2004, the GATE Programme was mandated to ensure the affordability of higher education for all citizens, access to education in support of economic development and social equity, and the develop-

ment of a quality higher education sector. One of the ultimate objectives of the GATE Programme was to increase student participation to 60% by 2015.

In September 2014, the GATE Programme celebrated a decade of operation. This year, 2015, marks the year by which the EFA goals agreed to at the World Education Forum in 2000, are to be realised. It is, therefore, a most appropriate time to review the quality of the performance of public funding in higher education in Trinidad and Tobago. Indeed, the views of many stakeholders have already been expressed in the public domain.

Though diverse, views on national funding of higher education could generally be placed into three (3) categories:

1. Input (e.g. expenditure);
2. Process (e.g. monitoring and evaluation); and
3. Outputs (e.g. student participation, graduates, employment).

These categories were borrowed from a page from scholarly discourses in the area of 'Quality'. Cheng and Tam in their 1997 publication, described quality in education as:

*"... inputs, process and output of the*

*education system that provide services that completely satisfy both internal and external stakeholders by meeting their implicit and explicit expectation" (Cheng & Tam, 1997)<sup>2</sup>.*

This can be used here as a very fitting review model.

Let us begin with the end – outputs. The GATE Programme has been primarily credited for the exponential increase in student participation in higher education. The aim to increase the student participation rate to 60% by 2015 was achieved by 2013 with a rate of 65.23%. While essential graduation and employment data are still being collated, this new pattern of wide-spread student participation marked the transition of the higher education sector from an elite education system to an egalitarian system. In this regard, funding through the GATE Programme has met its intended target. As some output data is still being organised, the complete picture of outputs is not yet available to fully measure the extent to which expectations have been met.

With respect to process, one of the major concerns emerging from reviews of higher education funding in

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- **Brigitte Joseph, Executive Chef - NOME Café**



## Funding Higher Education in Trinidad and Tobago

continued from page 20

Trinidad and Tobago is that of monitoring and evaluation. It is noted that mechanisms to improve value for money spent via the GATE Programme have been established. Student performance is monitored with administrative rigour, compliance policies are being enforced and both students and institutions are being held to account.

In the case of input as it pertains to expenditure, it is noted that the average percentage of public expenditure on tertiary education relative to GDP in Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries was 1.1% in 2011, while private sources accounted for 0.5%<sup>3</sup>. In Trinidad and Tobago, the local GDP was projected to increase from \$175,608.5 million in 2013 to \$179,842.0 million in 2014<sup>4</sup>. With total funding within the higher education sector at \$3.638.9 million, it is estimated that the ratio of funding relative to GDP is estimated at 2% over the last fiscal period.<sup>5</sup> National public funding in higher education has therefore surpassed average public funding among OECD countries.

While these figures can be celebrated for the anticipated returns they may bring in social and economic development, rising concerns with the changing national economic environment have thrown doubt over the sustainability of current expenditure levels, particularly under the GATE Programme. This has been a key point of discussion among policy makers,

economists and stakeholders. As the primary source of our national income continues to decline, policy makers are engaged in establishing that delicate balance between sustainable public funding in higher education and continued access to education for all.

Some have suggested a modification of the funding model to involve more private sources of funding. Others have suggested that funding be streamlined into identified areas of national socio-economic priority areas and human resource needs in various sectors.

At the end of the day, the clarion call for data is made. It is difficult to make quality decisions without quality data; it is near impossible to obtain quality data without quality data collection. Funding in higher education in Trinidad and Tobago has certainly sown the seeds of progress. In order to sustain this effort and continue this much needed investment into our human capital, data (such as graduate, employment, areas of need, and detailed indicators of success) must be relied on to inform the next move, especially in these times of economic uncertainty.

### References:

<sup>1</sup> Trinidad & Tobago: Economic Growth in a Dual Economy (p.18)-<https://sta.uwi.edu/salises/pubs/workingpapers/16.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Cheng, Y. C., and Tam, W. M. (1997), "Multi-models of quality in education", *Quality Assurance in Education*, Vol. 5 No. 1., pp. 22-32

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.oecd.org/edu/Education-at-a-Glance-2014.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Review of the Economy: Empowering Our People through Sustained Economic Growth and Prosperity, 2014 <http://finance.gov.tt/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/ROTE-2014.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> This figure represents total public funding in higher education inclusive of the GATE Programme and recurrent expenses to public higher education institutions.



The National Energy Skills Center (NESC) was established in 1997 out of a Trust Deed between the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and Atlantic (formerly known as Atlantic LNG). The objective was to create a skills-development centre which would produce skilled labour consistent with the industrial needs of the country. The NESC has 11 Campuses across Trinidad and Tobago, providing training to over 1700 students annually. We offer over 17 courses in various skill areas. In developing our course offerings we continue to be responsive to the needs of Industry.

Apart from training for the general public, the NESC also provides customized corporate training solutions through its Business Development Department. The NESC has within recent years developed a reputation at the international level with the ongoing training on Nigerian Nationals and Training Agreements signed with Public and Private Sector Companies in other parts of the world.



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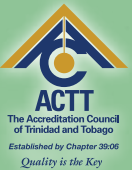


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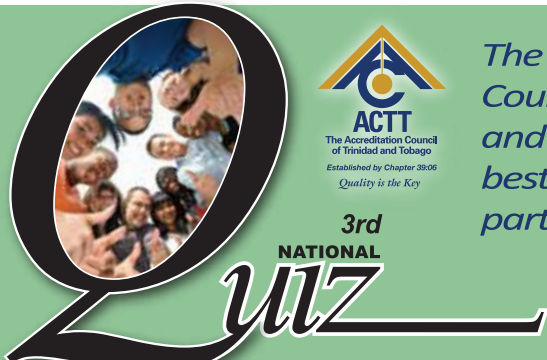
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**The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago extends best wishes to all participating teams.**



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# ACTT - Providing quality service to the people of Tobago, focusing on higher education

From the Tobago Office

ACTT, the governing body for all post secondary and tertiary institutions, serves a vital role in the development of the tertiary education and training sector in Tobago. Students should always be equipped with information on quality higher education to ensure that informed decisions are made when selecting a higher education institution and programme of study. Students in Tobago, as anywhere else, should enrol in registered or accredited tertiary institutions and be assured that programmes of choice are recognised. The ACTT office in Tobago provides students with the facility to check the status of their institutions via a Statement on Recognition.

Students can access application forms at the office, or online, apply for and collect their official Statements in Tobago without travelling to Trinidad. ACTT's Compendium of Registered, Accredited and Recognised Institutions, Awarding Bodies and Programmes is also a useful resource for those seeking information on the status of local institutions. This publication lists all ACTT registered and accredited institutions, recognised foreign awarding institutions and awarding bodies and the programmes they are approved to offer.

At the office, Tobagonians can sit and view the Compendium with the assistance of staff or visit the website.

ACTT, via its Tobago staff, is present at open days, career fairs and job fairs to ensure that persons in Tobago align their career goals and degree choices with relevant quality assured programmes. Participation in career fairs and community outreach programmes are also facilitated by the *"Tobago Student Caravan"*.

ACTT continues to be innovative in reaching its stakeholders, especially students transitioning from secondary school to higher education. The office has expanded its reach and accessibility across Tobago as the Student Caravan is the physical means to promote ACTT and the services it offers.

Institutions in Tobago that offer programmes at the post secondary and tertiary levels have access to ACTT's services too. Institutions can visit the office to discuss their registered or accreditation status, get advice on quality enhancement, and apply for ACTT training programmes via The Quality Institute of ACTT. Institutions may submit documents and apply for other ACTT services such as Conferment of Institutional Title, Programme Approval,

and Recognition of a Transnational Programme. Additionally, anyone seeking to establish a new post secondary or tertiary institution in Tobago can visit ACTT's Tobago office to obtain guidance on the registration process.

Providing the best quality service means partnering with other stakeholders to ensure the development of the higher education and training sectors in Tobago. ACTT, through the Tobago office, establishes relationships with other agencies to ensure effective support for its citizenry with regard, to making informed decisions about tertiary education. In this regard ACTT offers opportunities for educators, professionals, practitioners, researchers and policy makers in Tobago to participate in various fora where discussions can be held to determine higher education needs in Tobago and gather feedback on ways to improve it.

ACTT remains committed to both Trinidad and Tobago by ensuring the best quality service is provided to all its stakeholders.

*To visit or contact ACTT's Tobago Office:*

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*The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago (ACTT) is the regulatory body responsible for assuring the quality of post secondary and tertiary education and training in Trinidad and Tobago. The following is a list of institutions that have been quality assured by ACTT as at October 15, 2015:*

### List of Accredited Institutions (12)

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Cipriani College of Labour and Co-operative  
Studies  
College of Science, Technology and Applied  
Arts of Trinidad and Tobago  
MIC Institute of Technology  
St. Andrew's Theological College  
The University of Trinidad and Tobago  
The University of the West Indies (UWI), St  
Augustine  
Tobago Hospitality and Tourism Institute  
Trinidad and Tobago Hospitality and Tourism  
Institute  
University of the Southern Caribbean  
West Indies School of Theology

### List of Registered Institutions (48)

Academy of Tertiary Studies (ATS) Limited  
Automation Technology College Limited  
Briko Air Services Ltd  
Caribbean College of the Bible International  
Limited  
Caribbean Corporate Governance Institute  
Caribbean Institute of Forensic Accounting  
Limited  
Catholic Religious Education Development  
Institute (CREDI)  
College of Health Environmental & Safety  
Studies Limited  
College of Legal Studies Limited  
College of Ultrasound Sciences Limited  
CTS College of Business and Computer Science  
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School of Higher Education Limited  
School of Practical Accounting and Accounting  
Services  
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SHEQ Institute Limited  
Streamline Management and Engineering  
Solutions Limited  
Students Accountancy Centre Limited  
Summa Cum Laude Educational Institution  
(SCL) Limited  
TechSafe Training and Consulting Limited  
The Institute of Medical Education Limited  
The Trinidad and Tobago Association of  
Insurance and Financial Advisers  
(T.T.A.I.F.A.) Limited  
Tobago Technical School

Trinidad and Tobago Civil Aviation Authority  
Trinidad and Tobago College of Therapeutic  
Massage and Beauty Culture Limited  
(TTCOTM&BCL)  
Trinizuela Technical & Vocational College  
(TTVC) Limited  
UWI School of Business and Applied Studies  
Limited (Trading as ROYTEC)

### Recognised Awarding Bodies and Institutions (20)

#### (a) Local Awarding Bodies

Institute of Banking and Finance of Trinidad and  
Tobago

#### (b) Foreign Awarding Bodies and Institutions

Anglia Ruskin University  
Association of Business Executives (ABE)  
Association of Business Managers and  
Administrators (ABMA)  
Association of Chartered Certified Accountants  
(ACCA)  
Australian Institute of Business (AIB)  
Certified Management Accountants (CMA)  
Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM)  
Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply (CIPS)  
City and Guilds of London Institute  
EDEXCEL International  
Education Development International (EDI)  
Heriot-Watt University  
University of Glamorgan  
University of Greenwich  
University of London International Programmes  
University of New Brunswick  
University of Reading – Henley Business School  
University of Sunderland

#### (c) Recognised Institutions

The University of the West Indies – Open Campus

*The public is advised that ACTT is in receipt of applications for registration and continuing registration from institutions. Further details on these institutions can be obtained from ACTT.*

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All applications for scholarships and financial assistance from the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago must be accompanied by a statement from ACTT on the status of the institution and programme of choice.

Make an informed decision; contact The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago to learn about the accreditation and recognition status of local, regional and international higher education institutions and programmes.



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- Report Writing for Team Chairs
- **Professional Development for External Evaluators**
- Quality in Tertiary Education (QuiTE) Awards Workshops for Institutional and Individual Applications

