



ACTT
The Accreditation Council
of Trinidad and Tobago

Established by Chapter 39:06

Quality is the Key

ACTT NOW

A Publication of The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago
A Project of the Office of the Executive Director

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 Title
- Registration of Higher Education Institutions
- Accreditation of Higher Education Programmes and Institutions
- Recognition of Foreign Programmes and Awards
- Institutional Development
- Programme Approval

A list of our functions may be found in our Act on the website

www.actt.org.tt

WHERE WE ARE LOCATED

TRINIDAD

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Pan American Life Plaza
#91-93 St. Vincent Street
Port of Spain
Tel: (868) 623-2500/5282/8389
Fax: (868) 624-5711

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TOBAGO

Tobago Technology Center
79 Milford Road, Canaan
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From the Desk of the Executive Director

Michael Bradshaw



Following its establishment over 10 years ago, The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago (ACTT) continues its work as one of the leading quality assurance bodies in the region. ACTT's achievements over the ten (10) years include the registration of 100 institutions, twelve (12) of which are now accredited; sixty-one (61) institutions continue to hold registered status. Those institutions that no longer hold registered status are those that either did not continue to meet ACTT's stringent quality assurance standards for registration or had opted out.

ACTT has also made great strides in formalising links with several local and international bodies that all share the same interest in the advancement of higher education and training. These include Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) and Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA).

ACTT continues to introduce strategies to encourage institutions to continually improve and is so doing to improve the quality of the higher education sector in Trinidad and Tobago. The Quality Institute (TQI) launched by ACTT early last year is one such strategy through which the Council's institutional development initiatives are executed. The hosting of Conferences such as the International Conferences on Higher Education and Training is another strategy used to foster a culture of quality in the higher education training sector.

The Quality in Tertiary Education (QuiTE) Awards is another fine example. These awards are designed to highlight and celebrate the exemplary work in which institutions are engaged. Past winners include:

- UWI School of Business and Applied Studies Limited (trading as ROYTEC) in the Excellence for an Established Quality Management System category;
- Trinidad and Tobago Hospitality and Tourism Institute (THTI) and University of the Southern Caribbean (USC) in the Excellence in Student

Support Services in Tertiary Education category;

- Kenson, School of Production Technology, Arthur Lok Jack Graduate School of Business and the University of the Southern Caribbean (USC) in the Excellence in Teaching and Learning category.

This year ACTT will host its 8th Annual Quality Assurance Month in October and, as part of the month's activities, will host the QuiTE Awards Ceremony at which awards will be presented in the following categories:

Institutions

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

Individuals

- Research

I take this opportunity to extend best wishes to those institutions that have submitted proposals to be considered during this year's competition and to say congratulations again to those past winners. Their models are truly positive examples of what good practises in quality management and control could be.

See inside pages for more details on ACTT's QuiTE Awards, National Quiz and National Essay competition!

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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**REALISE YOUR
DREAM –
AND PROTECT YOUR
INVESTMENT.**



**Minister of State, Ministry of Education,
Dr The Honourable Lovell Francis**

Introductory Message from the Minister of State in the Ministry of Education Dr The Honourable Lovell Francis

No society that aspires to develop fundamentally can do so in the absence of significant investments in systems of schooling and education. The aforementioned statement is a cliché, which of course conveys both that it is often repeated and also widely understood to be so. Bromides like these are often interpreted to be devoid of real meaning; however therein resides a noticeable misnomer because it is no intellectual stretch to underscore that statements only get to become clichéd when they are repeatable because they contain reasonable amounts of conventional wisdom or truth, and this missive on education falls easily into this category.

If one accepts that schooling and education present the most meaningful pathways to national development open to a nation, one can assert that Trinidad and Tobago has been very fortunate in its post-independence history. On one hand this resource-rich island benefitted from significant periods of increased revenues based on elevated international oil and natural gas prices and conversely it parlayed the incoming largesse into major expansions in the educational sector. This saw a number of significant education centred interventions beginning in the late 1960s, including the opening up of secondary schooling, once the sole purview of the elite to much wider cross-sections of the populace, the growth of a tertiary education sector, and more recently widespread secondary schooling and the movement towards providing universal Early Childhood Education. Our post-independence history has thus been characterised both quantitatively and qualitatively by

our willingness to invest in education for everyone.

The system that this has bequeathed is not perfect. In fact it has a number of fault lines. However, it has been emancipating.

And arguably nowhere is this starker than in the ever expanding tertiary education sector. In fact in just a generation Trinidad and Tobago has gone from a society within which most could only dream of accessing university level education to one in which it is open to a majority of citizens. This is important to the nation and its future.

Trinidad and Tobago's ambitious and ever expanding tertiary education sector remains critical to the present and future prospects of the nation. In a twenty first century globalised world our nation needs, now more than ever, a thriving tertiary eco-system that does far more than certify citizens. It is imperative instead that our institutions either public or private churn out not just students, but citizens who are thoughtful and innovative problem solvers. With economic recession in the air globally, and a severe hit being delivered on the oil and gas sector that has become too much of a lifeline our nation requires people of all ages who see opportunities where those before them have often only seen problems. There is another developmental threshold awaiting our nation we need to produce the thinkers to take us there.

Engaging Stakeholders towards Continuous Improvement

Dr Ronald Brunton, Director Recognition and Qualifications, ACTT

The success of higher education institutions often depends on their relationship with the community. Institutions that contribute to the long term prosperity of the local, national and even regional communities are likely to be considered as relevant or even indispensable to the broadest range of stakeholders. As such, institutional leaders, academics, staff and quality assurance personnel need to understand how important stakeholder engagement is in delivering educational programmes that are matched to the needs of students, graduates and employers, industry, all levels of government and local communities.

Meeting stakeholder needs is intricately tied to the continuous improvement processes where institutions respond to the changing needs of key stakeholders. Effective quality systems include processes that encourage stakeholder engagement as a key feature of continuous improvement.

Stakeholder engagement forms important bonds between the institution and its communities and gives an assurance that the institution will consider the needs of the community through its operations and governance. Institutions that embrace stakeholder engagement are more likely to:

- identify and track community perceptions and attitudes about the institution
- develop courses that employers need and students want
- utilise local curriculum content, data and case studies that are relevant to students' experiences
- establish the institutions' brands within an often crowded and competitive higher education marketplace
- provide feedback on specific planned developments



- identify ways in which alumni can help
 - conduct relevant research targeting community needs
 - attract grant and research funding
 - produce graduates that meet community and stakeholder expectations
- Most universities and colleges these days strive towards being inclusive, supportive, responsive and focussed on making higher education more relevant and accessible to a broad cross-section of society. While these aspirations are indeed laudable, many higher education institutions lack systematic processes for engaging stakeholders in meaningful ways so as to build and sustain long-term positive community relationships. Successful institutions recognise the need to develop a planned and ongoing process to systematically review and improve policies, procedures and programmes through analysis of relevant information and collection of data from key stakeholders, including internal stakeholders.

Stakeholder consultation by tertiary institutions often involves using methods commonly employed by market and academic researchers. Qualitative research approaches such as focus groups, individual interviews and observation are common methods used

to tease out in-depth views of community stakeholders. Quantitative methods such as tracer studies, questionnaires and e-surveys can collect data on larger numbers of persons, utilising more standardised measurement tools. Many institutions combine both approaches to get both in-depth insights into stakeholder views as well as broad understanding of trends and patterns amongst community groups.

Public meetings are often used by institutions to build relationships with stakeholders and provide a forum whereby stakeholders are encouraged to exchange views and opinions. In addition to large public meetings, institutions today also utilise online platforms and discussion fora that allow open discussion and the publication of stakeholder views. It is important that expectations raised during consultation processes are actually met; that institutional representatives do not over-promise what cannot be delivered.

Another form of consultation is the establishment of advisory bodies through which industry representatives, subject matter experts, community groups, NGOs and other specific stakeholder groups are invited to smaller, more intimate meetings to advise on specific programmes, research projects, community outreach and other issues. Such advisory bodies are critical in soliciting expert views from the targeted stakeholders.

Whichever method or approach is eventually adopted, institutions need to actually apply the information, views and data from stakeholder consultations to make informed decisions that would continue to improve quality at the institution. It is only through genuine stakeholder engagement that institutions can realise the benefits through continuous improvement.

THE VALUE OF QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

by Miguel Carillo,
Executive Director

Arthur Lok Jack Graduate School of Business



ARTHUR LOK JACK

Higher education institutions are often criticized as being less concerned about the processes of teaching and learning than schools at the primary and secondary levels. This perception is also fuelled by the belief that the academic is a master of his subject and classroom and it would be almost sacrilege to suggest improvements. Such a stance flies in the face of findings from andragogy research which guides us to recognize that adult learners need to make sense of their prior experiences and gain comfort in solving problems. Since learning is considered to be a permanent change in behaviour and teaching is the mechanism to facilitate the change, teaching and learning strategies must be carefully crafted to recognize and respond to inputs and needs of the learner as well as the behavior of the facilitator. Behavioural change, at any level, requires both a mental and emotional connection to what is learned and, in no small way, to the person facilitating the adoption of knowledge. It requires much more mindfulness and humility on the part of the academic to address the motivations of adult learners and facilitate learning in the higher education environment.

The Arthur Lok Jack Graduate School of Business has built a distinctive teaching and learning model that aligns with the

purpose of the school. The School has defined its purpose as follows:

“The UWI-ALJGSB will educate extraordinary innovative leaders who positively reshape business and society while constantly challenge the status quo of human development”.

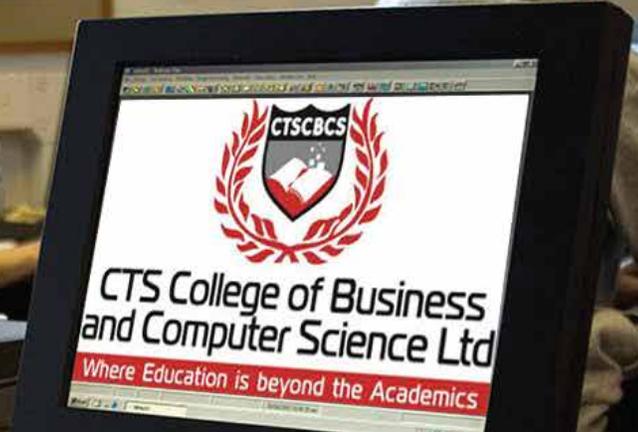
The Authentic Teaching and Learning Model guides faculty and students to engage in the teaching and learning process such that life experiences are central and the classroom is a stage for student performance. Rigour and relevance are primary determinants of academic quality and the student is guided to produce solutions that synthesise multiple experiences and leverage academic theories. Their performances must have impact, both on the organisations they serve and on themselves as leaders. Faculty are guided to engage in development activities that relate to both their discipline and teaching practices such that they are better able to advance practices that connect students to the world.

The UWI-ALJGSB has entered the QuiTE Awards in the category of Excellence in Teaching and Learning since the inception of the category in 2014 and has consistently secured first place in this category. This accolade helps to communicate the School’s primary focus on teaching and learning to the wider public. Despite the fact that consumers of graduate education rarely understand the importance of high quality teaching and learning methodologies at this level, the School continues to place emphasis on teaching and learning, ultimately supporting the graduates’ ability to differentiate themselves positively in the market. Overt testimonies of the quality of teaching and learning experiences and the impact of the School’s graduates have been featured in the Employer Studies and Tracer Studies. The reputation of the UWI-ALJGSB as a high quality teaching institution has helped the School’s internationalization efforts and has attracted support and funding for many projects. It is evident that high quality, authentic teaching and learning is the most important factor in the transformation of students to extraordinary, innovative leaders.

Promoting a Culture of Student Support Excellence!

by Ravi Ragoonath

Academic Director, CTS College of Business and Computer Science



It is often said that customer service excellence is at the heart of most successful companies today. CTS College of Business and Computer Science over the years has earned a reputation for student support excellence, a reputation that is reflected in our simple but powerful motto "Education Beyond Academics". The college has left a lasting memory in the hearts of students who attend and graduate each year because of the support provided to them. What is our secret to student support success? It is quite simple - genuine care for students and genuine effort to facilitate their learning and development are the critical components which drives the culture of student support excellence at our institution.

At higher education institutions, student support is an important service which must be formalised and embedded in the operational framework. It is an aspect which is quite often overlooked or which is limited in terms of the amount of services provided to students. It is traditionally regarded as just registration and teaching and learning. Ideally however it should comprise of services which support the students from enrolment through to graduation and even post-graduation. The importance of student support services directly impacts the learning capabilities and development of the student both academically and functionally in their places of employment and occupation. Hence the importance and the level of student support services provided cannot be overstated.

At CTS College, student support is a way of life and it is part of the institution's culture. While there are established policies and procedures which guide and govern the student support service delivery, it is also vital that all stakeholders providing student support services are literally on the floor and in the classrooms providing face to face and personal support for each and every student. All staff members including the academic head make themselves readily available to students to assist with their queries and academic progress. Each course offered also has an assigned programme manager; a dedicated staff member who acts as a personal liaison for each student enrolled in the programme. Students have access to their respective programme manager seven days a week at any time

and the services include (but not limited to) assisting with queries, orientation and academic training and development, administrative queries and services, academic review and feedback, counselling and career advisory, academic advisory, class scheduling, lecturer feedback, assessment advisory and much more.

Other administrative and academic staff are also involved in ensuring that the students are comprehensively supported. Our lecturers are willing to assist students outside the classroom through various ways such as extra sessions, skype calls, emails and phone calls. Student support often comes in the form of assisting students with studying by arranging study sessions and discussing study strategies with them. Numerous students would testify that the family oriented nature has made them comfortable, and that they can think of CTS as a second home. Perhaps it is because of the family oriented atmosphere the college has gained a positive reputation. The motto 'Education Beyond Academics' is reflected in the various non-academic events involving students and staff, some of these include beach trips and cleanups, hikes, tours, Tobago trips, celebrations, Christmas dinners, sports days, cricket and football competitions and much more.

Placing 1st in the medium category for Student Support Services in Tertiary Education at the ACTT's 2015 QuiTE Awards function is a befitting accolade and accomplishment for CTS College. This marks the fifth straight year the college has won at the QuiTE awards but winning in the Student Support Services category is always a special achievement for the institution as it is testament to the student support culture and quality the college has always strived to promote. This milestone and achievement serves as a humble reminder that the students are our greatest asset.

In closing we also wish to congratulate ACTT on its dedicated promotion and successful hosting of the QuiTE awards each year. It is not only an opportunity to win an award but it allows institutions to implement best practice and standards and strive for continuous improvement.

Are you applying for a Scholarship or Funding from the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to pursue a Higher Education qualification?

Did you know that, in Trinidad and Tobago, qualifications awarded by local and foreign institutions MUST be recognised by The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago (ACTT)?

Contact ACTT at:
623-2500 (Port of Spain)
652-0729 (San Fernando)
639-1333 (Tobago)

E-mail: info@actt.org.tt
Website: www.actt.org.tt

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.

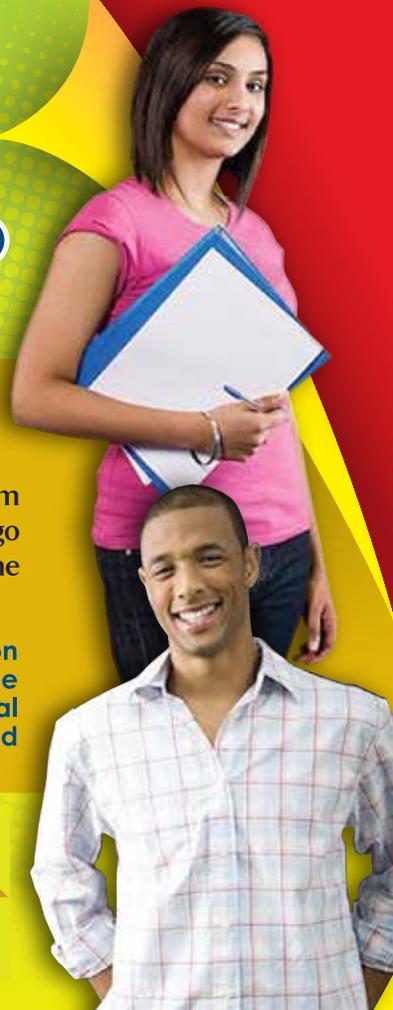
Make an informed decision; contact The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago to learn about the accreditation and recognition status of local, regional and international higher education institutions and programmes.



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THE QUALITY INSTITUTE

The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago

The Secret to Success in the 21st Century: **Continuous Learning**

Be the most successful institution! Call ACTT at **623-2500**

PROFESSIONAL AND INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OFFERED:

- Preparing the Self-Study for Registration
- Guiding the Self-Study Process for Institutional Accreditation
- Recognition of Transnational Programmes
- Institutional Governance and Administration Workshop
- Managing Institutional Finances
- Strategic Planning for Higher Education and Training Institutions
- Quality Management Systems for Institutional Effectiveness
- Developing Policies for Higher Education Institutions
- Effective Teaching and Learning
- Designing Student Assessment
- Programme Design and Development
- The Forensics of Academic Credential and CV Fraud
- Calculating Credits and Determining the Level of Academic Programmes
- External Evaluator Training
- Report Writing for Team Chairs
- Professional Development for External Evaluators
- Quality in Tertiary Education (QuiTE) Awards Workshops for Institutional and Individual Applications



The Role Of Leaders In Higher Education

by Dr. Kamla Mungal,
Director, Academic Development and Accreditation,
Arthur Lok Jack Graduate School of Business



Leaders of higher education institutions are at the interface of formal education and social action. They are therefore positioned to attract both recognition and blame for the competencies and behaviours of their graduates. The higher education institution is seen to be a source of promise for the advancement of society and the leader is recognized as the main orchestrator in the environment. In such positions of high expectation, higher education leaders are required to establish a clear vision and profile of the graduate and then build a complete system that will produce the associated competencies. This requires leadership traits and competencies such as clarity of purpose and vision as well as charisma - the ability to inspire others to work together to achieve that vision.

In higher education organisations, leadership is demonstrated when those in charge are able to create a culture of personal and professional growth for all. In such organisations, there exists a bedrock of contestations that challenge their potential success. For instance, when there is misalignment between the curriculum and the expected graduate profile in terms of knowledge and behaviours, there is a failure of leadership. Those responsible for curriculum must drive the institution to constantly review the relationship between the curriculum and the graduate profile. Leadership is therefore an institutionalized mindset that drives impact. It has little to do with position and more with the person enacting the role. While position provides one with an opportunity to be recognized, it is only those who are able to gain the respect, trust and admiration of the people at large that are granted leadership. When the impact of the graduates of education institutions is felt and valued by the society at large, leadership is granted to those at the helm of the institution. At all stages of one's career,

performance in the role and the strength of the individual are examined by those inside and outside of the organisation. We are admired and trusted more as we develop and demonstrate principled behavior, a strong sense of purpose, emotional mastery, a clear understanding of how change occurs and the knowledge to advance our purpose. Each role and position held in an institution is an opportunity to demonstrate leadership. Advancement occurs naturally when leadership traits and behaviours are seen and valued by others.

The UWI-ALJGSB is known globally as a leadership development institution. The School has transitioned its motto from "Where Leaders Come to Learn" to "Innovartus Ars Ducendi" which means innovating the art of leadership. The School's legitimacy as a provider of business and leadership education is affirmed by its graduates, but also by its organisational innovation and success. Recognition by peers is one of the most affirming tributes and receipt of the Leadership in Tertiary Education (LiTE) award at the ACTT QuITE awards in the last two years positions the School quite positively within the tertiary education environment. It enhances public confidence in the School's ability to achieve its purpose and sustain itself in the long run. Moreover, it provides further impetus for the institution to develop and demonstrate leadership competencies and behaviours amongst its stakeholders, creating an ecosystem that is values-driven and inspirational to all. The popular statement that "with great power comes great responsibility" is certainly upheld in the tertiary education environment where those at the helm are expected to be the best leaders and role models within and outside of their organisations.



Engendering the Practice of Continuous Quality Improvement in Higher Education and Training

by Ziann K. Baird – Assessment Officer

Accreditation and Quality Enhancement Department, ACTT

The positive impact of quality assurance practices on higher education and training in Trinidad and Tobago has increased significantly within the last ten (10) years. This is a result of the intervention of The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago (ACTT) as a quality assurance agency, as well as the changing educational landscape. Recent developments in information technology (Online Distance Learning, MOOCs), increasing competition (new institutions operating in the sector), the adult learner (working adults) and government policies (Government Assistance for Tuition Expenses, GATE) have intensified the need for higher education institutions to not only implement and improve its processes but introduce innovative methods to sustain student achievement and satisfaction. In other words, practice effective quality management.

“Continuous quality improvement (CQI) is one approach to quality management that builds upon traditional quality assurance methods by emphasising the organisation and systems: it focuses on “process” rather than the individual; it recognizes both internal and external “customers”; it promotes the need for objective data to analyze and improve processes” (Iowa State University, 2016, <https://www.fpm.iastate.edu/worldclass/cqi.asp>). “Continuous Improvement as purported by Dew and Nearing (2004), is the body of knowledge that helps us learn how to better facilitate the learning that occurs through teaching and research. It addresses learning processes as well as all the administrative processes necessary to support students, faculty, alumni and other stakeholders in the higher education setting”.

ACTT views attainment of quality as a process rather than just an end result. This view is premised on the belief that higher education and training institutions must continually strive to improve their operations and surpass set standards. Similarly, The Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (HLC), one of six regional institutional accreditors in the United States, states that “Regional accreditation assures quality by verifying that an institution meets threshold standards and is engaged in continuous improvement”. Likewise, the UK Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), an independent body entrusted with monitoring and advising on standards and quality in higher education in the United Kingdom, defines quality assurance as the “systematic monitoring and evaluation of learning and teaching, and the processes that support them, to make sure that the standards of academic awards meet UK expectations, and that the quality of the student learning experience is being safeguarded and improved” (www.essex.ac.uk/quality/).

It is evident that there is a common belief among external quality assurance bodies that the incorporation of ‘a continuous improvement element’ is an integral part of assuring the quality of higher education institutions. Therefore, continuous quality improvement (CQI) may be viewed as an essential component of a quality assurance system which institutions can incorporate in order to meet and/or surpass educational standards of excellence. This will serve to enhance the quality of the teaching and learning experiences, as well as student support mechanisms.

ACTT, through its criteria and standards for registration, accreditation and recognition of programmes, facilitates the development, maintenance and improvement of quality assurance systems at higher education institutions. It is imperative that higher education institutions in Trinidad and Tobago consider internal quality assurance mechanisms such as the development and implementation of policies and procedures,

particularly in the areas of internal programme approval, monitoring and review, student support and ethical problem solving. Further, higher education institutions should demonstrate a commitment to continuous improvement by monitoring, reviewing and improving their QMS through effective planning and evaluation, sustained effort and commitment to quality.

ACTT’s Quality in Tertiary Education (QuiTE) awards and The Quality Institute (TQI) initiatives are mechanisms which encourage the adoption of best practice and continuous improvement within institutions and can be compared with other initiatives internationally. For example, the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award (MBNQA) which was established by the US Congress in 1987 to raise awareness of quality management and recognise organisations that have successfully implemented quality management systems. Similarly, QuiTE like the MBNQA programme includes criteria for educational institutions and can be used as a framework to guide institutions when developing an internal quality management system.

The Higher Learning Commission (HLC), Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) model of accreditation for continuous improvement has been adopted by several universities and colleges. AQIP is premised on the principles of CQI and its methods and requirements are intended to assist institutions not only to achieve accredited status but, more importantly, to achieve quality improvement. Participating institutions are encouraged to have three (3) action projects at all times (on-going continuous improvement initiatives) that inculcate the principles of continuous improvement into the culture of the institution and highlight its benefits.

Underpinning this philosophy of continuous improvement are various models such as plan-do-check-act (PDCA) cycle, Six Sigma, Lean and Total Quality Management which have been influenced by the various publications of early quality management gurus such as Demming, Crosby and Juran. Institutions can adopt and apply these models as a part of a cycle of continuous improvement. Dew and Nearing (2004) noted that “one of the myths concerning continuous improvement is that the concepts originated within the business community and carry cultural connotations that are inappropriate for the academy”. However, these models are all techniques that emphasise employee involvement, teamwork and empowerment and may serve as guides or developmental tools for higher education institutions.

There appears to be a general perception that quality assurance in higher education is primarily concerned with institutions having to meet stated criteria or standards set by external quality assurance agencies rather than seeking continuous improvement. Further, quality assurance is also perceived as conforming to external requirements and maintaining existing quality management systems instead of continuously striving for excellence. CQI, when incorporated as part of a robust quality management system, may be used as a management strategy which could lead to improved services for students and other stakeholders, efficient internal processes and effective institutional outcomes. These outcomes cannot be achieved if institutions engage in one-off quality improvement initiatives. Instead, a culture of continuous improvement should be infused into day-to-day work activities.

“Be obnoxious about what is Quality. Don’t let the conversation rest.”



ACTT
The Accreditation Council
of Trinidad and Tobago

Established by Chapter 39:06

Quality is the Key

Celebrates Excellence at QuiTE Awards Ceremony 2015

The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago (ACTT) hosted its annual Excellence in Higher Education Quality in Tertiary Education (QuiTE) Awards Ceremony on Thursday October 29, 2015 at the Hyatt Regency, Trinidad. At this memorable event, awards were presented to exemplary institutions 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 tertiary education sector in the following categories:

- Excellence in Applied and Academic Research
- Leadership in Tertiary Education (LITE)

In addition, ACTT presented the Lifetime Achievement Quality Assurance Award to Dr Lynn Priddy, Provost and Chief Academic Officer of National American University, (formerly Vice President, North Central Association-Higher Learning Commission (NCA-HLC). Dr Priddy has over several decades made sterling contributions to the development and advancement of quality assurance systems, policies and processes for tertiary education. She is a frequent national and international speaker and large-group facilitator on assessment and improvement of student learning, student persistence and completion, institutional accountability and effectiveness, accreditation, and higher education. Dr Priddy also played an integral role when ACTT was initiating its operations in 2005 and was responsible for the initial training of ACTT's External Peer Evaluators.

Dr Priddy was also the keynote speaker at the awards ceremony, where she addressed Quality as being both accountability and innovation. Dr Priddy explained that Quality begins with the question of whether or not an institution is fit for purpose in achieving its mission and goals for its students. She applauded ACTT for its innovation in creating and hosting the QuiTE awards as this is absent in North American Quality Assurance systems. She challenged the Council to continue to inspire institutions to be better than they are at present and urged institutions to 'become evaluators, board members, be joiners and be obnoxious about what is Quality. Don't let the conversation rest. Become advocates... "become a student of quality and keep a watchful eye and sound the alarm as soon as you recognise you aren't about quality."



Natasha Barrow, Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education presents the LITE Award to Dr Kamla Mungal, ALJGSB

Dr Lynn Priddy – Feature speaker at ACTT's QuiTE Awards 2015



Winner of ACTT's Excellence in Applied and Academic Research Award - Dr Zaffar Khan, ALJGSB

1st place - ACTT's Excellence for an Established Quality Management System Award – University of the Southern Caribbean



Awardees of ACTT's Excellence for an Established Quality Management System Award

Winner of ACTT's Lifetime Achievement for Excellence in Quality Assurance in Higher Education Award – Dr Lynn Priddy, Provost and Chief Academic Officer, National American University



Winners of ACTT's Excellence in Student Support Services in Tertiary Education Award

Michael Bradshaw, Executive Director, ACTT, presents the Council's 10th Anniversary Book

Winners of ACTT's Excellence in Teaching and Learning Award

WINNERS - INSTITUTIONAL AWARDS

Excellence in Quality Management Systems

- 1st place: University of the Southern Caribbean
- 2nd place (tie): Arthur Lok Jack Graduate School of Business and UWI School of Business and Applied Studies Limited, trading as ROYTEC

Excellence in Student Support Services

Large Category

- 1st place: University of the Southern Caribbean
- 2nd place: Arthur Lok Jack Graduate School of Business

Medium Category

- 1st place: CTS College of Business and Computer Science Ltd.

Excellence in Teaching and Learning

Large Category

- 1st place: Arthur Lok Jack Graduate School of Business
- 2nd place: University of the Southern Caribbean

Medium Category

- 1st place: CTS College of Business and Computer Science Ltd

Small Category

- 1st place: KENSON School of Production Technology

WINNERS - INDIVIDUAL AWARDS

Lifetime Achievement Award - Excellence in Higher Education Quality
Dr Lynn Priddy, Provost and Chief Academic Officer of the National American University

Leadership in Tertiary Education (LITE)

Dr Kamla Mungal, Director, Academic Development and Accreditation and Director of the Leadership Institute, Arthur Lok Jack Graduate School of Business

Excellence in Applied and Academic Research

Dr Zaffar Khan, Programme Director of the MBA in Sustainable Energy Management, Arthur Lok Jack Graduate School of Business

The QuiTE Awards ceremony was the culmination of ACTT's Quality Assurance Month for the duration of October, 2015. During this month, ACTT hosted several activities aimed at promoting quality assurance in tertiary education and training which included a, Team Chair Workshop, Forensics of Credential and CV Fraud workshop, National Quiz on Quality Assurance and an Essay Competition.



Curtis Floyd – Director Accreditation and Quality Enhancement speaks to participants during the Team Chair Workshop

Majka Drewitz, Senior Evaluator, Education Credential Evaluators Inc. - Facilitator of ACTT's Forensics of Credential & CV Fraud Workshops



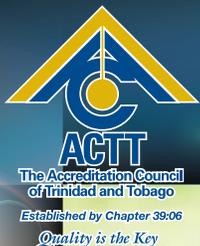
Wendell Constantine serenades the guests at the ACTT QuiTE Awards

Michael Bradshaw, Executive Director, ACTT presents the Council's 10th Anniversary Book



Representatives from the University of London at ACTT's QuiTE Awards

Michael Bradshaw, Executive Director, ACTT and Dr Lynn Priddy, Feature speaker, converse with guests at the QuiTE Awards



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Quality Management Systems (QMS)

by Clinton Valley,
former President, University of the Southern Caribbean



Introduction

The University of the Southern Caribbean is a faith-based private university, established first as a post secondary training school in 1927. Like its counterparts in the tertiary education sector, USC has long adopted the "Fitness for Purpose", concept of quality. Compliance with the highest standards for the governance and administration of tertiary level institutions, along with continuous improvement of its existing offerings have been the underlying theme of all that is done at the University. It is no wonder then that at USC the establishment and maintenance of a robust Quality Management System is the underlying focus of the University's operations in both the academic and non-academic divisions. The QMS stands out at USC because of three salient factors: our plan, our policies and our people.

Our Plan

Our strategic plan affirms that USC's mission is to transform ordinary people into extraordinary servants of God to humanity. This mission is operationalised in the development of the "USCian" Man/Woman - a clear statement of values that should be reflected in our graduates. We continuously strive to ensure that our graduates go "beyond excellence" through USC's holistic educational experience. Our Quality Management System (QMS) is geared towards achieving this excellence and assures that our graduates serve with competence and compassion wherever they go.

Our Policies

In keeping with our plan for life transformation through a holistic tertiary educational experience, USC has developed a robust QMS that is built on effective policies, systems and structures to assure effectiveness in our operations. The main elements include:

- The USC Quality Council
- Documentation System consisting of policies, procedures, and regulations.
- Department Quality Manuals
- Internal Audit and Department Review Process
- Institutional Research Agenda

Additionally, there is a strong emphasis at USC on instilling quality principles in every area of University operations which is monitored and evaluated through an effective stakeholder satisfaction survey system.

Our People

The third critical factor in the success of our QMS is our people. One may have a great overarching plan and robust policies but effectiveness has to do with the "people" factor.

At USC, stakeholder engagement begins with our unified commitment to the core values of the university. Employees are generally supportive of the culture of excellence and this is pivotal to our success. In addition, stakeholder development in measures for best practice occurs through meetings, evaluations, training sessions, newsletters and the USC website. Broad-based staff involvement in the decision making process is evident and well supported through our committee structure of governance. Staff, faculty, students and administrators all participate in the annual Quality Awareness Week which is geared towards training and building awareness on issues pertaining to Quality Assurance.

What does it mean for USC to place first in the QMS Category?

The QMS category is the premier indicator that the institution excels in having effective systems to assure excellence. We are thankful to the ACTT for the guidance and support given to the University during this process. The journey, though challenging, was a tremendous learning experience. We anticipate other benefits emerging from this award including the following:

1. Recognition as a quality leader both in Seventh-day Adventist Christian education and the local Tertiary Education Sector
2. Marketing advantage to attract new students
3. A willingness by other TLIs to partner with USC on quality and other initiatives.
4. Attractiveness to donors in the public and private sectors since support tends to follow excellence



The Importance of Academic and Applied Research: The Case of Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency

by Zaffar Khan,
Programme Director, ALJGSB



This paper provides a perspective on the importance of academic and applied research using renewable energy and energy efficiency as an example. It defines energy efficiency and emphasises the importance and need for that research. Additionally, the paper identifies the barriers to the promotion of energy efficiency. Moreover, it outlines a list of top institutions that are engaged in the research and includes the initiatives of the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries in balancing the country's energy needs.

Academic research refers to authentic and scholarly papers that are published by peer reviewed journals. The aim is to add to the body of knowledge in a particular field. Applied research aims testing the derived theories in addressing issues and problems facing a region or a country as for example energy security and energy efficiency.

The energy efficiency of an energy conversion device is defined as the useful energy output divided by the energy input. The amount of energy inputted into a system is typically less than its energy output due to losses. These occur for many reasons including frictional, thermal and electrical resistance. (Duffy et al) Countries in the Caribbean are faced with high energy costs since most of their energy is imported. These countries are currently exploring domestic renewable energy opportunities especially in the areas of geothermal and wind. The Abu Dhabi Fund for Development is providing funding to qualifying small island states for research in this regard. Trinidad and Tobago currently imports oil in an effort to supplement its domestic production in order to meet the country's fuel needs especially in a subsidised environment. In addition, the country is faced with natural gas curtailment issues especially with regard to supply to the country's petrochemical sector. One view is to promote the use of renewable energy for its electrical power requirements and use its natural gas for further downstream plants. Thus there is need for applied research in the context of reducing the capital costs of renewable energy projects.

However there are several barriers to the promotion of Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency. These essentially though not exclusively include the following:

TABLE 1:
Main barriers to RE Development in Trinidad and Tobago

Type of Barrier	Description
Institutional	Limitations (Research and development), demonstration and implementation.
Market	Small size of market, limited access to markets, limited involvement of private sector.
Awareness/Information	Lack of awareness, lack of access to information on RE and EE.
Financial	Inadequate financing available (local, national, international) for RE projects.
Economic	Unfavourable costs, taxes (local and import) Government subsidies offer cheap electricity and fuel.
Technical	Lack of access to technology and inadequate maintenance facilities.
Capacity	Lack of skilled labour force and training facilities.
Social	Lack of social acceptance and local interest and participation.
Legislative	Lack of formal policy, regulatory and legal frameworks necessary for RE development.

As a demonstration of the importance of academic (rigor) and applied (relevance) research, the following are some of the top local and international institutions that are engaged in research papers and peer reviewed journals in the sphere of renewable Energy, Energy Efficiency and Climate Change:

- The International Renewable Energy Agency
- MIT Energy Initiative
- Association of Energy Engineers
- The Energy Institute of the UK
- The Oxford Business Group
- The National Renewable Energy Laboratory of the US
- The University of Texas
- The Massachusetts Clean Energy Center
- The Arthur Lok Jack Graduate School of Business, UWI

The above institutions are engaged in providing internships, scholarships and employment opportunities in several fields including scientists in the sphere of RE and EE. In addition they issue daily newsletters and periodicals.



Essay

5th National Essay Competition for Secondary Schools and Tertiary Institutions

The Essay Competition targets the upper forms of competition and education drive is aimed at positioning secondary schools and undergraduate students of local ACTT as the authority in higher education with respect to registered and accredited institutions to foster an issues related to registration, recognition and appreciation for issues related to quality assurance in accreditation. In 2015, the theme for the competition higher education and the impact on and benefit to was 'The role of indigenous programmes in the students, institutions, society and the economy. This development of society.'

Winners of ACTT's Essay Competition

CATEGORY

- Form 5, 1st place
- Form 5, 2nd place
- Form 6, 1st place
- Form 6, 2nd place
- Form 6, 3rd place

NAME OF WINNERS

Rendell Ryan Ramdath
 Ferraz Nashan Khan
 Nerissa Changa
 Joshua Antonio Parris
 Faith Matamoro

SCHOOL

ASJA Boys' School
 ASJA Boys' School
 Holy Faith Convent, Couva
 St Stephen's College
 Miracle Ministries Pentecostal High

- Undergraduate, 1st place

Avelana Phillip

College of Science, Technology &
 Applied Arts of Trinidad and Tobago
 (COSTAATT)

- Undergraduate, 2nd place
- Undergraduate, 3rd place

Deirdre Zoe Subran-Ganesh
 Akhim Alexis

The University of the West Indies (UWI)
 The University of the West Indies (UWI)

Honourable Mention

HONOURABLE MENTION

- Form 6, Special prize
- Undergraduate, Special prize

NAME OF WINNERS

Meagan Gopaulsingh
 Lisa Cindy Thomas

SCHOOL

Naparima Girls' High School
 The University of the West Indies (UWI)

School Prize:

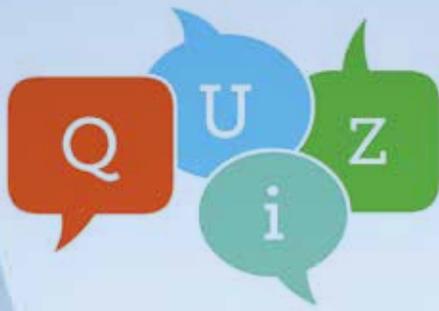
PRIZE

- Form 5
- Form 6

SCHOOL

ASJA Boys' School
 Holy Faith Convent, Couva





3rd National Quiz on Quality Assurance in Higher Education and Training

ACTT hosted its 3rd annual National Quiz for secondary school students from October 2 to November 6, 2015. This competition was conceptualised to inform students, their parents and teachers about the importance of pursuing programmes at quality assured higher education and training institutions. A total of twenty-nine (29) schools participated, with Cowen Hamilton Secondary School, emerging as winners. The top four schools in the 3rd National Quiz were as follows:

Winners of ACTT's National Quiz

1st Place

Cowen Hamilton Secondary School

2nd Place

Bishop's High School, Tobago

3rd Place

St Joseph's Convent, San Fernando

4th Place

Fyzabad Anglican Secondary School



Dr The Honourable Lovell Francis, Minister of State, Ministry of Education, presents the first place trophy to Natalie Small, Principal, Cowen Hamilton Secondary School



Top four schools



2nd place - Bishop's High School, Tobago



1st place - Cowen Hamilton Secondary School



3rd place - St Joseph's Convent, San Fernando



4th place - Fyzabad Anglican Secondary School



Research Training

On February 23, 2016, as part of the Council's thrust to develop research competencies among staff members, the Council hosted a workshop entitled 'Action Research within your Organisation'. Facilitated by Dr Jerome De Lisle, Deputy Dean, Graduate Studies and Research, The University of the West Indies, the workshop focused on the following key areas:

- An overview of the research process
- Identifying research topics
- Creating Research questions
- Identifying data sources



Dr Jerome De Lisle, Deputy Dean, Graduate Studies and Research, The University of the West Indies conducts the Research workshop.



Lesley-Ann Brathwaite, Senior Assessment Officer, presents findings on behalf of her group for the brainstorming exercise.



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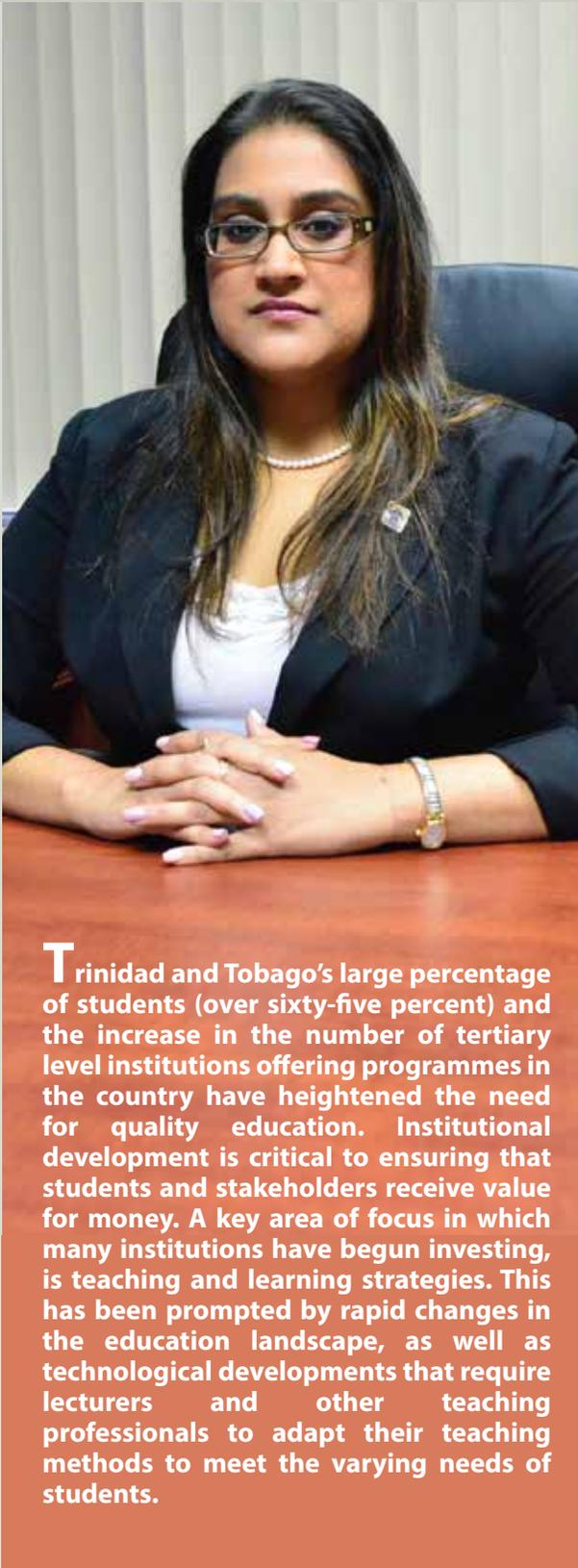
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Trinidad and Tobago's large percentage of students (over sixty-five percent) and the increase in the number of tertiary level institutions offering programmes in the country have heightened the need for quality education. Institutional development is critical to ensuring that students and stakeholders receive value for money. A key area of focus in which many institutions have begun investing, is teaching and learning strategies. This has been prompted by rapid changes in the education landscape, as well as technological developments that require lecturers and other teaching professionals to adapt their teaching methods to meet the varying needs of students.

Promoting Institutional Development Through Teaching and Learning

by *Kassandra Mano, ACTT*

A major phenomenon that has had an impact on teaching modalities is 'blended learning'. Blended learning involves combining traditional teaching methods with the use of technology to deliver materials. Educators now use different mechanisms to deliver information. They utilise online quizzes, upload videos and lecture notes and even engage students in online discussion fora. The strategies which teachers must now adopt differ from those of a decade ago and teachers are expected to adapt in order to keep abreast with their students' needs. In this regard, the relationships that students and teachers share have also been changing since communication is no longer solely face-to-face.

There are many advantages to be gained from institutions that incorporate blended learning modalities. It is flexible enough to afford students the convenience of participating in online activities from home or any place where they can access the internet. Students also have access to much more information via the internet and can enhance their research and critical thinking skills while making contributions to online fora. When in the classroom, students benefit from greater student/teacher interaction as well as greater interaction with their peers which enhances their learning experience.

Another trend in the higher education sector which has impacted teaching and learning methods is mobile learning. Mobile learning, or "M-Learning", involves the use of mobile technology, either alone or in combination with other information communication technology to enable learning anywhere at any time. M-Learning holds many benefits for institutions and students, as it is relatively inexpensive when compared with personal computers. Students are encouraged to be innovative, as they have many options to create visuals to support their assignments.

Institutions in Trinidad and Tobago offer full-time and part-time study, as well as blended and online learning, in order to cater to the diverse student population. ACTT remains committed to institutional development through initiatives such as The Quality Institute (TQI), which facilitates high-quality and relevant training to support higher education institutions and institutional personnel.

ACTT is committed to providing technical support and guidance through its Quality in Tertiary Education (QuiTE) initiative. The QuiTE initiative recognises and rewards institutions that design and successfully implement innovative quality improvement projects. The award for, 'Excellence in Teaching and Learning', is designed to encourage administrators to develop effective teaching and learning modalities for their institutions. This area has been useful in developing educators who then ensure that teaching styles facilitate the desired learning outcomes.

In the fulfilment of its mandate to all its stakeholders – which include institutions, students and the general public – ACTT has adopted a facilitative model of quality assurance, which caters for institutional strengthening by building capacity within institutions.

QuiTE WORKSHOP

Quality Assurance regulators cannot maintain or improve quality by only relying on monitoring and compliance by institutions. This is according to the 2012 speech by Dr Carol Nicoll, Former Chief Commissioner and CEO, Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) at the International Management of Higher Education in Australia, 2012. She further postulated that what was needed was "An organisation which is resilient, dynamic and responsive..." "identifying and implementing new areas for improvement and innovation." The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago (ACTT) has, through its quality enhancement services, designed to bring about continual improvement in institutions. ACTT encourages institutions to adopt well-planned strategic approaches to quality improvement and supports the institutions in their endeavours.

In 2009, ACTT embarked on a journey of quality improvement with institutions operating in Trinidad and Tobago. The Council established an awards scheme, called the Quality in Tertiary Education (QuiTE) awards which was designed to encourage institutions to innovate and create new and improve facets of their quality management systems. In October 2016, the Council will host the prestigious Excellence in Higher Education Awards Ceremony to announce the names of those institutions that that have demonstrated:

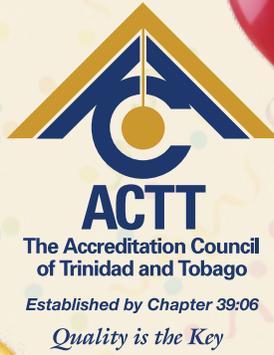
- ★ Excellence for an Established Quality Management System (QMS)
- ★ Excellence in Student Support Services in Tertiary Education (SSSiTE)
- ★ Excellence in Teaching and Learning

In addition, ACTT will present awards to outstanding individuals who have contributed to the body of knowledge in their respective fields. These persons will be presented with the Award for Excellence in Applied and Academic Research and Excellence in Teaching.

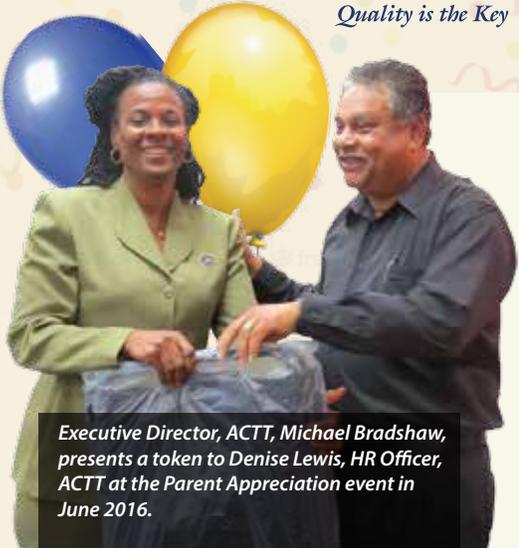
On May 17, 2016 at the University of Trinidad and Tobago's Agora Campus in Charlieville ACTT hosted a Workshop to ensure that all institutions were apprised of the new requirements of the various categories of the QuiTE Awards. At the workshop, the judging criteria was distributed and explained; in addition, all questions and concerns were addressed by members of the QuiTE Committee.

Look out for past winners in this issue and good luck to all 2016 participants.





STAFF INITIATIVES



Executive Director, ACTT, Michael Bradshaw, presents a token to Denise Lewis, HR Officer, ACTT at the Parent Appreciation event in June 2016.



Staff at ACTT's Head Office adorn African wear in commemoration of Emancipation Day 2016



CAREER FAIRS

Sharon Delochan, Assessment Officer, ACTT speaks to residents of the Moruga Constituency during a Community Outreach event.



Lesley Ann Brathwaite, Senior Assessment Officer speaks to students of Naparima College at their Career Fair in February of this year



Director, Accreditation and Quality Enhancement, ACTT Curtis Floyd, speaks to the residents of the Moruga Constituency during a Community Outreach event held earlier this year

Esther Ward, Assessment Officer, ACTT speaks to students of the SWAHA Hindu College in Sangre Grande during a Student Caravan visit in January of this year



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