A Challenging But Hopeful First Year for the Open Campus

The year 2008 was a significant milestone for the University of the West Indies. Not only did the institution celebrate its sixtieth anniversary but it also expanded its service to the Caribbean region by establishing the Open Campus. The official launch of the Open Campus took place in June 2008 in Antigua & Barbuda during the annual Conference of the CARICOM Heads of Government. Since the Open Campus concept was approved by the University Council we have had a challenging but exciting time as we worked to design an administrative and operational structure for the Open Campus. Many have contributed to this effort and we appreciate in particular the assistance we received from our colleagues on all the campuses during the first phase of establishment. We begin this year with the awareness that we have a long way to go and still face many challenges as we seek to achieve our strategic objectives. Nevertheless, we are optimistic that with unwavering focus and concerted effort we will continue to make significant progress in this regard.

Despite the uncertainties of the global economic climate and the potential threat to our region, we forge ahead to meet our targets for course production and delivery, and we continue to build our HR services to migrate outreach staff into the Open Campus. We also continue to introduce initiatives to increase our income generation capabilities, a major one being the development of an increased number of short courses and programmes that are in demand across the region. During this year we will continue to work closely with our colleagues on sister campuses of the University to offer an enhanced slate of undergraduate and postgraduate courses and programmes via Distance. We have already begun consultations with other tertiary level institutions, public and private organisations, to expand opportunities for increased access to higher education for the people of our region and we will continue to schedule meetings throughout the year.

As we work assiduously to build efficiencies in all aspects of our endeavour, we will use the experiences and the lessons learned in the past year to improve the learning environments for our students and to support them in their quest to achieve academic excellence. In this regard, we will seek to further improve the technical, academic and administrative frameworks already established to ensure that we continue to create a solid foundation on which all of the UWI’s campuses can rely.
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I sincerely hope that our continuing cooperation and hard work will enable us not only to overcome the challenges we will encounter during the course of the year but will also lead to many successes. On behalf of all colleagues in the Open Campus, I thank you, our readers and well-wishers for the support you gave us in 2008. We look forward to your continued interest and we welcome your constructive criticism in 2009. We also wish you the very best this year. Do contact us if you have questions or would like additional information on the topics covered in this issue of the Open Letter.

The Jamaica Constabulary Force Collaborates with the UWI Open Campus

In pursuance of the excellent educational collaboration forged over the years between The University of the West Indies (UWI) and various public and private sector entities, the Statistics Department of the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF), and The University of the West Indies, Open Campus, Jamaica Eastern at Camp Road, recently held an Electronic Database Seminar on 24 – 28 November 2008 in Jamaica.

The seminar was opened by Assistant Commissioner of Police, Mr. Leslie Green, who is in charge of Serious and Organised Crime and Criminal Investigation Branch of the JCF. Forty-five (45) police officers, who came from Police divisions across Jamaica, participated in the week-long seminar.

The UWI Open Campus site at Camp Road in Kingston, Jamaica, has been working together with several public and private sector entities in delivery of courses and programmes demanded by these sectors. The Camp Road site embarked on the training of over 500 public sector workers through a Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Jamaican Government and local trade unions.

In addition to the training of the JCF, the Open Campus at Camp Road also held training sessions for members of the Jamaica Defence Force (JDF), as well as training and retooling of just over 200 teachers and administrators in a joint project between the Government of Jamaica and Microsoft.

Adjustments within the Open Campus Country Sites (OCCS) Division in Jamaica

Mrs. Gillian Glean-Walker will now head and have administrative responsibility for all former SCS and DEC sites in the eastern region of Jamaica. These are: Camp Road, Denbigh, Mandeville, Vere, Morant Bay and Port Antonio.

Mrs. Jerome Miller-Vaz will head and have administrative responsibility for all former DEC sites in the western region of Jamaica. These are: Ocho Rios, Brown’s Town and Savanna-la-Mar.

Ms. Vilma Clarke continues to have responsibility for the Montego Bay site.

Showcasing the Open Campus at the Cave Hill Campus Graduate Fair

On November 5, 2008, The University of the West Indies Open Campus Barbados participated in the graduate fair, which was organised by The University of the West Indies Cave Hill Campus. In addition to the faculties of the Cave Hill Campus, the graduate fair included personnel from the financial sector who advised prospective students on funding options. The session also featured representatives from various sectors, who discussed career opportunities.

Despite the fact that the fair was geared towards prospective graduate students, the Open Campus Barbados opted to participate at the fair in order to gain more recognition within the community, and to further educate the public about the operations of the Campus. The booth of the Open Campus attracted many patrons who eagerly approached it probing for information on the Campus. The name “Open Campus”, actually appealed to the visitors of the booth. The majority of the patrons expressed astonishment and admiration at the operations of the Campus, since many said they were not cognisant of the multiplicity of courses and the programmes that are offered by the Open Campus.
Domestic Violence Workshop on Nevis
Source: Nevis Island Administration - http://www.sknvibes.com/News/NewsDetails.cfm/7016

The community must find a way to ensure that it nurtures a culture of open communication, of tolerance for different shades of opinion and one in which people are seen as equal. That was the sentiment of Minister of Social Affairs, Hon. Hensley Daniel when he spoke to front line workers on October 22, at a sensitisation workshop to address issues of violence against women on Nevis.

The workshop was funded by MATCH International Canada, and was hosted by the Change Centre on Nevis in collaboration with the Women and Development Unit (WAND) of the Open Campus, The University of the West Indies (UWI). The two day workshop was the first in a six part series entitled: “Sensitisation of front line workers on violence against women on the island of Nevis”.

It will conclude in April 2009. The series is intended to address a critical issue and to explore ways in which the risk of violence and abuse could be prevented, minimised and treated.

The Minister, who was also a former Director of Social Services on Nevis, said the workshop was critical to the orderly development of the island and pointed to the cost associated with domestic violence. Given the global financial issues, Mr. Daniel said the need existed for investigations into the root of anti-social behaviour which had caused ever greater financial challenges for all the islands of the Caribbean, and by extension, Nevis.

The Minister urged the participants to speak of the realities at the community level so that people understood that domestic violence had created additional pressures on the island’s limited financial resources.

Mr. Daniel also called on the participants to find a way to build a connection with the community so that people would feel at ease to report to them and maintain a high level of confidentiality. He said too, there was the need for evidenced-based programming which would provide a platform for specific targeted intervention. The Minister contended that it would allow government to address critical issues on the island and said the Administration would welcome UWI’s assistance in that area.

Dr. Judith Soares, Tutor/Coordinator of the Women and Development Unit of the UWI said the workshops were part of a continuing relationship with the women of Nevis through the Change Centre. She said the Centre with its history of social work, worked with women who had been violated and abused by their male partners. The Centre had provided for them alternatives in social life and social living so that the women could exist in an independent way.

New Appointments in the Open Campus
As of January 1, 2009, the following persons will assume duties in the Open Campus:

The Office of the Principal

Mrs. Jasmine Babb, Director of Human Resources

The Office of the Deputy Principal

Mr. Richard Barth, Web Coordinator

The Office of the Chief Information Officer, Computer and Technical Services (CATS)

Mr. Anil Ramnanan, Learning Management System (LMS) Administrator, Mr. McColin Fontenelle, Database Administrator (DBA) and Mr. Sacha Beharry, Software Developer

Caribbean Tertiary Level Personnel Conference

The Caribbean Tertiary Level Personnel Association will host its 12th annual conference from 22nd to 25th June 2009. The conference will be held at the Grafton Beach Resort & Le Gran Courland, Tobago. The theme of this conference is “The Power to Imagine, The Courage to Act: New Directions in Caribbean Higher Education Development.” For more information please contact CTLPA’s Public Relations Officer, Mr. Chandar Gupta Supersad at 1868 662-2002 Ext 2360. Or email: Chandar.Supersad@sta.uwi.edu. Or check the website at www.ctlp.org.

The Open Campus Regional Highlights 2008

Anguilla

Mrs. Carla Harris-Pascal, Head, Open Campus, Anguilla, shows off the new computer room.

Antigua & Barbuda

The Vice Chancellor, Professor E. Nigel Harris and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor & Principal of the Open Campus, Professor Hazel Simmons-McDonald at the official press conference to launch the Open Campus on July 4, 2008.
4. Open Campus Regional Highlights in 2008

Bahamas


Regional

Minister of Education, the Hon. Carl W. Bethel (centre) receives a copy of the Open Campus book, “Breaking Down the Walls,” from Professor Howard Spencer. Mrs. Elma Garraway, Permanent Secretary looks on.

Barbados

The OAS Democracy Project Team. UWI 60th anniversary celebrations-Belize.

Belize

New Open Campus signs identify local Open Campus sites.

British Virgin Islands

Cayman Islands

Dominica

Presentation of 2008 Graduates

Grenada

Open Campus public lectures and performances continue at Marryshow House.

Jamaica

Research Day at Mona in January 2008 – The Open Campus booth where ERIIC, APAD, OCCS & the Consortium all participated for the first time as the UWI Open Campus.

Montserrat

Partnering with Parenting Partners

Development in Montserrat.

St. Kitts & Nevis

The inaugural UWI Open Campus Council Meeting in March 2008.

Saint Lucia

Sir K. Dwight Venner, Chairman of the UWI Open Campus, welcomes guests to a distinguished lecture.

St. Vincent & the Grenadines

Launch of the UWI-60 Stamp in SVG

Trinidad & Tobago

The PVC and Principal and other Open Campus team members tour the construction site for new offices in Tobago.

Your Feedback is Welcome

We welcome your comments on the Open Campus, UWI, and encourage you to send your comments on the Open Letter to us via e-mail @ marketing@open.uwi.edu.