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Introduction

Re-positioning the University of the West Indies, Mona Campus

In 1996, it was agreed that the Mona Campus of the University of the West Indies should build on its nearly 50 years of excellence in the development and delivery of academic programmes, teaching, research and services to the community. To do so successfully, the Campus needed to re-define its vision of itself to meet the challenges of the rapidly changing environment and to re-position itself so that it could retain a position of leadership in providing relevant programmes for an increasing number of students.

Re-definition of this vision was directed to enable the institution to achieve a number of objectives. These were to:

- (i) increase access to a quality education
- (ii) manage the transition from a selective to a mass institution
- (iii) manage the transition from a faculty teaching oriented institution to a student-centred institution with its consequential change in modes of delivery of programmes, governance and the provision of services

- (iv) maintain autonomy while being accountable to its stakeholders
- (v) maintain effectiveness while conducting its operations efficiently
- (vi) focus on its role as a partner in economic and cultural development of the community in addition to teaching, research and service
- (vii) emphasize its principal mission as a knowledge-based institution through the discovery of new knowledge (research), the dissemination of knowledge (teaching) and the application of knowledge (service)
- (viii) diversify its sources of financing with the addition of new income generating activities
- (ix) maintain its position as the premier University in Jamaica and the region through enhancement of its reputation and engagement in policy formulation and implementation in the public and private sectors.

This vision of the University found expression in the 50th Anniversary theme: "Celebrating the Past and Charting the Future." It was the perception of the future that provided the driving force behind this new conception and the urgency that was felt in



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implementing strategies to realise that vision.

Among the issues that informed the perception of the future was the awareness that universities all over the world were undergoing radical changes as a result of their perceived importance in the new globalised, knowledge-based economies. The relevant stakeholders had radically altered their perception of the university and universities were now expected to be significant players in economic development, social transformation and cultural leadership.

In addition, the anticipated reduction in available resources to universities provided a powerful stimulus in the search for new sources of revenue as well as the effective and efficient use of available resources.

A critical factor was the end of the monopoly of the University of the West Indies in the tertiary sector of the education system with the presence of two new universities in Jamaica, over 40 tertiary level institutions and a significant number of offshore institutions offering degrees. In addition, the

increased recruitment of some of the brightest students by overseas institutions presented an additional challenge to what was the monopoly of the UWI in attracting the best and the brightest.

In this new environment, the University of the West Indies, Mona Campus was challenged to re-position itself without compromising its tradition of scholarship, social and cultural involvement and its reputation for providing the largest number of graduates for the public and private sectors of Jamaica and the Caribbean.

The Mona Campus therefore decided to engage in an urgent programme of internal transformation in governance, in programmes, in research, in the services it provided and in its relationship with its stakeholders. Such an internal transformation was one component of the overall strategy to engage the external community by providing leadership in areas of knowledge, and involvement and participation of the wider community in assisting the Mona Campus to successfully participate in the evolving but radically altered circumstances.

It is against this background that the following areas of action were identified :

- (a) increase access to the institution
- (b) continue curriculum reform
- (c) modernise the institution
- (d) disseminate and share research with members of the non-university community
- (e) develop a stronger sense of community among all groups on the Campus
- (f) encourage leadership in all issues at national and regional levels and
- (g) balance the need for accountability with autonomy.