



# 5

## Improved Student Services





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### **Online Application, Registration and Access to Prospectuses, Timetables, Supplementary Materials**

A survey carried out during the academic year by the Office of the Board for Undergraduate Studies (OBUS) solicited feedback on the admission, registration and orientation services on the Campus and established a base from which this assessment exercise, which is intended to be conducted annually, may be refined and strengthened in order to better serve the student body. Results from the 2003 study will assist administrators, faculty members, student leaders and others to improve the conditions that contribute to the students' learning and development. The consensus was that although improved, the University administration remains largely unresponsive to student needs. This was corroborated by another study commissioned by OBUS, where Registry and Bursary services received 2.89 and 2.54 satisfaction rating respectively on a 5-point scale, by a 13.6% sample size of 2003/04 final year students.

Undoubtedly, there was much progress towards advancing student centredness on the Campus. In order



Mr. Philip Rose of the Student Records Unit, guides students through the online registration process.

to improve customer service, communication with and guidance for students, reduce the bureaucracy, and refine the registration process, the administration instituted some improved systems and processes over the past academic year. The student registration activities were enhanced by the introduction of a Help Desk in the Assembly Hall to assist with invoicing problems and general registration issues. Online application and registration were put in place, enabled by online timetables, prospectuses and supporting materials. Mona Information Technology Services (MITS) provided a central Help Desk to support all ICT user service needs. The Help Desk operates Mondays to Fridays from 7 a.m. to 7 p. m. and is accessible by phone, facsimile transmission and email.

MITS also began a comprehensive review of the Registry's business processes, to facilitate seamless integration of the ICT support systems and smoother interface with the bursarial processes. Additionally, the Student Administrative System has been undergoing implementation on a phased basis.



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### Flexibility in Choice of Major Subjects, Scheduling and Cross-faculty Enrolment Growth

There was noticeable increase in cross-faculty double majors especially between the Faculties of Social Sciences and Humanities and Education, allowing students access to greater variety of courses that cut across disciplines in order to enrich their academic experience and to give more meaning to the educational experience. A number of new programmes were introduced in 2003/2004 academic year, including:

- in the Faculty of Humanities and Education, two M.A. programmes in *Philosophy and Communication Studies* and *Behavioural and Social Change*, and an M.Ed. in *Leadership in Early Childhood Education Development*;
- in the Faculty of Medical Sciences, the *Health Education option in the MPH*; the *PhD in Psychiatry*; the *DM in Haematology* and the *MSc in Clinical Psychology* in collaboration with the Faculty of Social Sciences;
- in the Faculty of Pure and Applied Sciences, four M.Sc. programmes, one in *Plant Production and Protection*, one in *Water Resource Management: Tropical Ecosystem Management*, one in *Natural Resources Management: Water Resources*, and a fourth in *Computer Science* – delivered by the Mona Institute of Applied Sciences (MIAS), and two Graduate Diplomas, one in *Plant Production* and the other in *Plant Protection*; and
- in the Faculty of Social Sciences, a *B.Sc. in Labour and Employment Relations* and an *M.Sc. in International Law and Economics*.

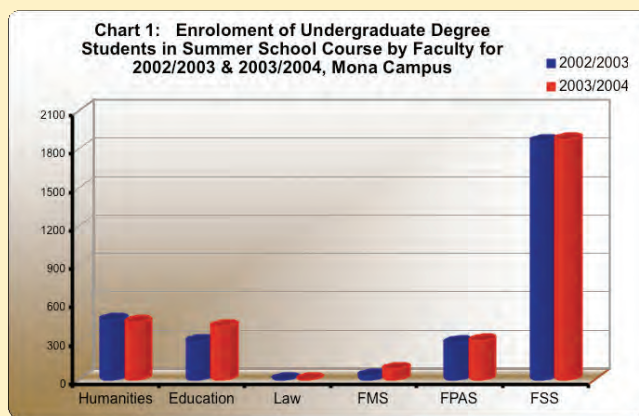
According to the findings of the initial survey of the Wellness Task Force that was established from the Office of the Deputy Principal, part-time students generally

agreed that the Campus needed to do a better job of facilitating their education by ensuring that more evening classes were offered across the faculties. *Apropos* fulfilling this requirement for more flexible teaching time, more summer programmes were introduced (see Table 6). The Mona School of Business expanded its programme to include the new Sunday offering of the MBA. This was in response to the growing demand of persons who could not fit comfortably into the regular weekly schedule.

Table 6: Undergraduate and Postgraduate Student Enrolment in Summer School Programmes by Faculty for 2002/2003 & 2003/2004, Mona Campus

ON- & OFF-CAMPUS Faculty	Undergraduate			Postgraduate		
	2002/2003	2003/2004	% Change	2002/2003	2003/2004	% Change
Humanities & Humanities						
- Humanities	465	448	-3.7	7	43	514.3
- Education	300	418	39.3	21	36	71.4
Medical Sciences	30	83	176.7	107	131	22.4
Pure & Applied Sciences	288	304	5.6	44	63	43.2
Social Sciences	1864	1877	0.7	101	82	-18.8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2947</b>	<b>3130</b>	<b>6.2</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>355</b>	<b>26.8</b>

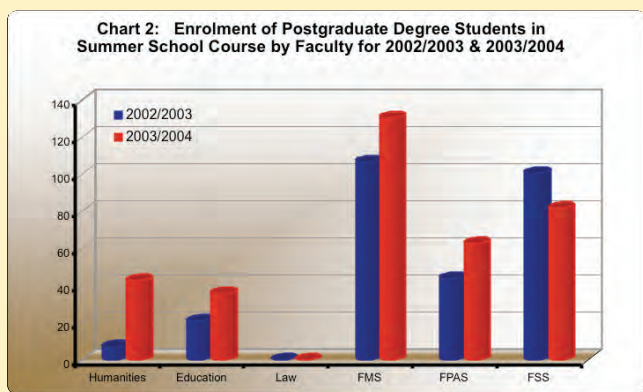
Source: Student Information System as at November 3, 2004.





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### Technology-enriched Learning Environment

Mona Information Technology Services (MITS) provided more than 1270 computers to units across the Campus. Network-attached computers are located in the libraries. Faculty-based computer labs are fully equipped and computers are now accessible to students in the Halls of Residence. At 1 computer to 14 students, the Campus is nearing its targeted 1:10 computer/student ratio. All network-attached computers provide 'always-on' internet access. Wireless hotspots facilitate access to the network by student-owned computing devices in the Library, several lecture theatres and in the vicinity of the Faculty of Social Sciences. All registered students are provided with an email account and full-service internet access from the Campus and dial-up internet services are available using a cost-recovery model from off-Campus. Electronic databases licensed to the Campus and libraries are available via the Campus portal. Laboratory facilities were upgraded with multimedia equipment sufficient for demonstrations, simulation and direct internet access, though progress in this area has been stymied by lack of funds. These facilities are available for use Mondays through Fridays up to 9.00 p.m. Fifteen (15) major lecture theatres and teaching



1-3 : Multimedia equipment being used in lecture theatres



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spaces were fully multimedia-enabled with video output, capture and streaming capabilities, electronic document reading, electronic whiteboards, and direct internet access. Additionally, there is continuous training and support for instructors in the use of multimedia assets for teaching.

Bearing in mind that remote access to electronic resources is a vital service to students enrolled in distance programmes, access was provided to these students to the electronic databases and the library's On-line Public Access Catalogue ((OPAC). The distance librarian paid site visits to nine of the ten intra-Jamaican sites and trained students and staff to efficiently access the Library's full text databases as well as its Online Public Access Catalogue and other bibliographic databases. Students and administrative assistants at the UWIDEC centres were especially grateful for the demonstrations of remote access to electronic resources and their enthusiasm and use of these resources have been reflected in the reduction of queries addressed to the distance librarian. Special orientation and information literacy classes were arranged for the new cohorts of the new B.Ed. Secondary Distance Programme.

The Library's web portal was revised and developed to facilitate user searches for information and services from library resources and those available on the Internet. It has been designed to reduce the learning burden and make it easy for users to recognize where they are and where they can go when navigating a large information space.

In order to meet the overwhelming student demand on the Reserve Book collection, the library expanded its electronic reserve pilot project, whereby photocopies in the collection were digitized within the provision of national and international copyright convention for

easier and wider access by students. The Library's opening hours were also extended during 2003/2004 to facilitate the research needs of the increased number of students pursuing courses during the summer. The facility now opens from 8:30 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., Mondays to Fridays.

### ***Academic and Support Services***

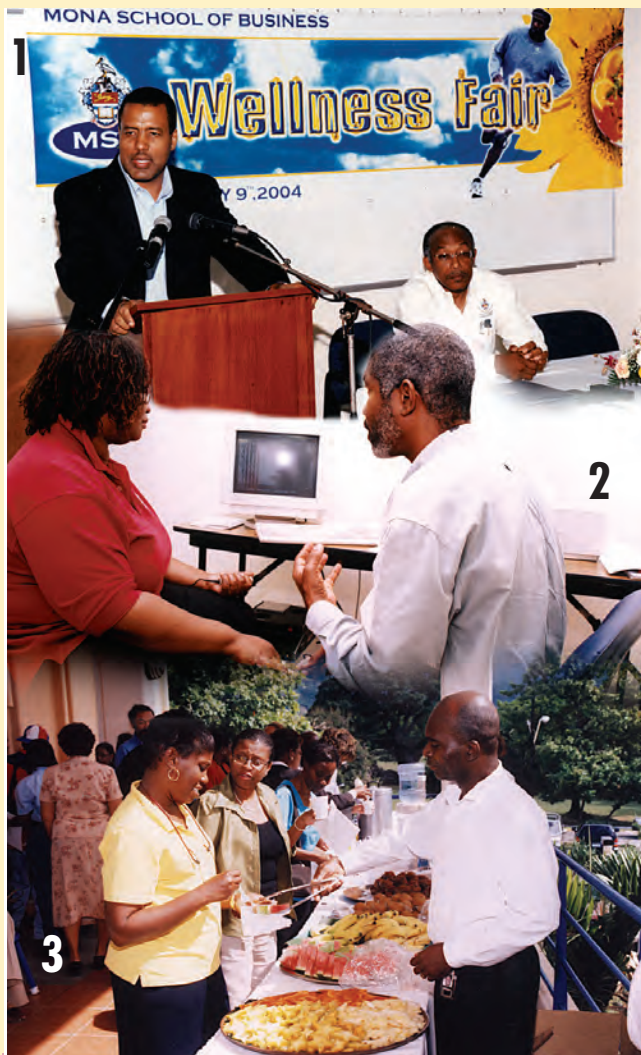
Mechanisms for student support and development, including academic counselling services, remedial tutorial support, and opportunities to build skills such as technical support and research methodology, were expanded. There were initiatives also to increase opportunities for interaction with faculty on academic matters. In the Faculty of Humanities and Education a dedicated student advisor was appointed, and help desks set up in the faculty to assist students wishing to access student services. The Faculty also introduced the Writing Centre to assist students with their writing skills in response to the need to improve the language skills of students entering the Campus.

In the Faculty of Medical Sciences a student mentorship programme was established, though the Faculty expressed disappointment with the level of use of this programme by both the students and the mentors. Additionally, a formal Staff-Student Liaison Committee with representatives from the MBBS and DANE programmes met monthly to discuss student concerns and the Dean put aside one day per week to facilitate an open door policy for students. The rest of the week was open to students on an appointment basis. There is a quarterly meeting with representatives of the Medical Students Association to discuss their concerns and the Faculty Board also accommodates presentations from the Medical Students Association upon request.



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1. Ambassador Gordon Shirley, then Executive Director of the Mona School of Business (MSB), addresses the audience at the 2004 Wellness Fair hosted by MSB
2. Computerised diagnostics testing machine being used on a patron at the 2004 MSB Wellness Fair.
3. Participants at the 2004 MSB Wellness Fair being treated to samples of different foods selected around the general theme of wellness.

In recognition of the importance of physical and mental well-being as a factor in the learning process, the Mona School of Business hosted its first wellness fair to familiarize participants with the issues, concepts and strategies which are important in maintaining good health. Issues dealt with included nutrition, stress management, physical fitness and work-life balance. In addition, there were exhibitions by suppliers of products and services designed to assist in maintaining personal well-being.

The Office of Student Services (OSS) sought to develop and train its staff through attendance at related training programmes to better meet the needs of students and prepare staff for their roles and functions in student learning and development. The OSS also drafted instruments for assessing resident / commuting student advisors. Several programmes under the umbrella of the OSS contributed significantly to student support during the year. The Peer Advisors Programme initiated by the Office of Placement and Career Services enabled students to access peer counselling services by trained peer counsellors, while the peer advisors themselves benefited by way of building their personal, social and leadership skills as they served.

In the Halls of Residence the programme, Living Learning Communities, sought to identify the needs of the students in residential communities and provided opportunities for students at risk and those with specialized needs, be these the acquisition of academic proficiency skills, or skills to manoeuvre in the academic environment. The Living Learning Communities programme also fostered collaboration between the faculties and the Office of Student Services to facilitate: training in computer applications; tutorials for students at risk; and problem solving workshops to assist students in preparing for foundation courses in Chemistry and Statistics.



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The UWI Quality Leadership Programme that was established in 1993, provided students with opportunities to develop entrepreneurial attitudes and skills, through participation in co-curricular activities. During academic year 2003/04 students participated in seminars / workshops on budgeting, proposal writing, process management and public speaking, identification of community needs, drafting proposals, effecting fundraising activities and implementing the sustainable proposals for demonstrable community benefits. At the end of the academic year some 229 students received completion certificates from the programme. The introduction of a co-curricular credit programme represented a milestone achievement for the Quality Leadership Programme.



Persons in attendance at the Closing Ceremony of the 2003/2004 UWI Quality Leadership Programme



Mrs. Paula Llewellyn, Guest Speaker at the Closing Ceremony of the 2003/2004 UWI Quality Leadership Programme assists with the presentation of Certificates to participants. Also presenting (in the background) is Dr. Thelora Reynolds, Director of Student Services, assisted by Ms. Marcia Bishop of the Office of Student Services.



Mr. Patrick Anderson, Finance and Administrative Manager, Petroleum Corporation of Jamaica, presenting Certificates of Participation to 'mentee' at the Closing Ceremony of the 2003/2004 UWI Mentorship Programme.



Mr. Rion Hall, Former General Manager for Human Resources, Bank of Nova Scotia, presents Mr. Wilfred 'Freddie' Green, mentor, with his Certificate of Participation at the Closing Ceremony of the 2003/2004 UWI Mentorship Programme



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The Mona Campus also sought to attend to the needs of students for placement on suitable career paths by providing opportunities for career development and job placements. At its annual celebration of Career Awareness Month under the theme, "Life-Long Learning: The Way Forward", the Office of Placement and Career Services held orientation seminars where students were counselled and advised on making relevant subject choices, and identifying and focusing on career objectives. Resource persons for the orientation seminars were drawn from the university community and the private and public sectors. Staff and peer counsellors provided personal counselling and assessments on an individual basis for students and graduates throughout the year, and the Placement Services facilitated 528 students in accessing job placements overseas, in summer employment, or work/study/travel programmes.

That student satisfaction with support services offered on the Campus had significantly improved over the year is borne out by a study undertaken by the Wellness Taskforce. The study confirmed that students generally agree that the physical plant has been much improved over the years and is meeting the needs of the student population in most areas. The single most important issue facing students among all levels of the student population, according to the data from the study, revolves around the issue of financing their university education.

The Campus has made some strides during the year in addressing this pressing problem. It repeatedly lobbied for government-funded student financing arrangements, and has recently made this publicly known in the *Mona Declaration on Tertiary Education* published during the year in the major Sunday newspapers. The Campus, through its scholarships, bursaries and special funds increased its contribution to student financing. A single



Students enjoying the facilities and activities of the recently renovated Student Union complex during Orientation 2003/2004.

administrative unit, the Office of Student Financing (OSF), which brings together all the functions associated with the financing of students' university education was established in academic year 1996/97 with the aim of bringing together all operations related to student financing, and to extend them as needed and thus be better placed to make readily available to the administration and to students, information and assistance relating to students' scholarships, bursaries, grants, loans and other sources of funding. In addition, the OSF generates the data needed to work closely with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Culture (MOEYC), the Ministry of Finance and Planning and the Students' Loan Bureau as well as other financial institutions, and so is in a position to make a valuable input in policy





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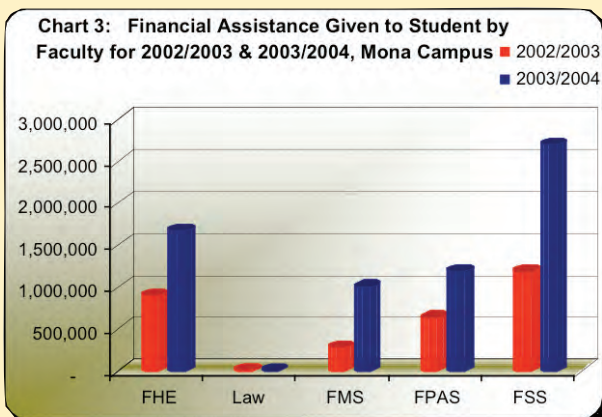
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formulation. It is also proactive in terms of working with financial institutions to identify and design new instruments that can assist students in planning for, and financing their education.

Whereas in the 2002/2003 academic year the OSF has disbursed some \$3M in grants, loans, meal subsidies, transportation fees, books, guild fees and bursaries, it increased these subsidies to students by more than 100% in 2003/2004 and, in taking over responsibility for management of scholarships in that academic year, disbursed some \$51M in scholarship funds, representing approximately 5% of the total financing costs borne by students.

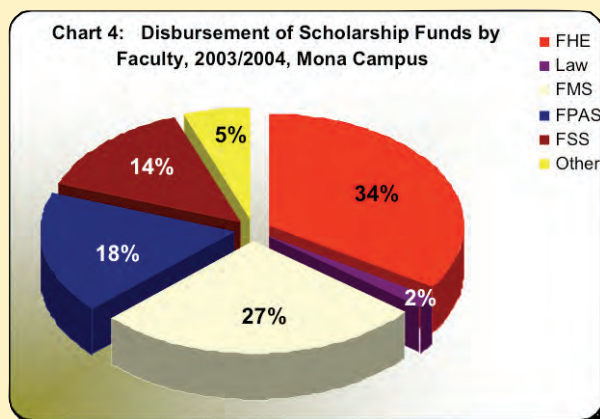
**Table 7: Financial Assistance Disbursed to Students, by Faculty, During 2002/2003 & 2003/2004, Mona Campus**

FACULTY	2002/2003	2003/2004
Humanities & Education	\$ 898,223	\$1,673,104
Law	\$ 15,000	0
Medical Sciences	\$ 285,844	\$1,005,822
Pure & Applied Sciences	\$ 638,090	\$1,186,104
Social Sciences	\$1,181,520	\$2,701,727
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$3,018,677</b>	<b>\$6,566,757</b>



**Table 8: Disbursement of Scholarship Funds by Faculty, 2003/2004**

FACULTY	2003/2004
Humanities & Education	\$17,394,302
Law	\$ 812,957
Medical Sciences	\$13,777,181
Pure & Applied Sciences	\$ 8,903,214
Social Sciences	\$ 7,098,721
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$50,745,692</b>



The "One-Stop Graduation Centre" introduced in the previous academic year was further developed, resulting in exponential improvement in services to graduands. The service received rave reviews and at the Centre, as many as 570 graduates signed up as members of the Alumni Association, suggesting a high level of satisfaction with not only the services at the Centre but also with the level of services on the Campus in general. The Registry continues to spearhead activities that will drive student centredness on the Campus and to this end will implement the Customer Service Charter and Standards that were developed during the 2003/04 academic year.



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To quote from the OBUS *Survey of the Perceptions of Final Year Students of the UWI...*, "notwithstanding weaknesses identified in certain aspects of their university experiences, students gave ratings to their departments / faculties, and their image of the UWI as their *alma mater*, that ranged from moderate to high satisfaction"



Graduate making enquiries at the Information Desk at the 2004 One Stop Graduation Centre



Gown collection area at the 2004 One Stop Graduation Centre



The Alumni Desk where some 500 graduates submitted contact information.



Make-up and photograph section of the 2004 One Stop Graduation Centre



The Placement and Career Services Desk at the 2004 One Stop Graduation Centre, where graduates made queries about available job opportunities and also submitted applications to be considered for future job openings.