



SATISFYING EMPLOYER NEEDS

Satisfying Employer Needs

Increasingly, the Mona Campus seeks to work with employers to create the kind of graduates that are readily adaptable to the industrial environment.

In the 2008–09 academic year we sought more active participation of industry practitioners in designing new programmes. In designing the BA Programmes in Journalism and Digital Media Production, the Caribbean Institute of Media & Communication (CARIMAC) sought inputs from media and communication training institutions and the media and communication services. For benchmarking purposes, CARIMAC also examined other institutions, including the National Council for the Training of Journalists in the United Kingdom, the School of Journalism and Communication at the University of Queensland, Australia, the School of Media Arts and Studies at the Scripps College of Communication, Ohio University, USA, and the Department of Journalism Studies, University of Sheffield. This process resulted in a restructured curriculum that responds to the changing demands for media and communication skills that no longer require discrete entities – radio, newspaper, television – but skills that can be applied in the converged media communication platforms.

CARIMAC'S work in the past academic year to improve the quality of its graduates has been supported by efforts to improve work experience for students through internship programmes. The internships also serve to introduce students to the application of critical thinking and content creation skills to the practice of media and communication disciplines. Students were interned in the past year with regional media and communication houses in Barbados, Jamaica, St Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago. Interns were also placed in the United States and the United Kingdom. Debriefings with interns indicated that the practice continues to provide valuable insights into professional media and communication practices that sig-

nificantly assist in improving the quality of the graduates.

Internship opportunities were also provided in other disciplines, including Archaeology, Education, Communication, Library Studies, Social Work, Government and Modern Languages. Two recent graduates were selected to participate in a six-week internship with a leading Costa Rican IT company, Avantica. A student from the industrial chemistry undergraduate course was selected for an internship in the 2009 summer, at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin (in the Chemical Analysis laboratory of the Department of Crop and Animal Sciences). The International Association for the Exchange of Students for Technical Experience (IAESTE) sponsored this initiative.

The Mona Campus itself employs student interns. Most notably, Mona Institute of Technology (MITS), in providing internship experience, ensures students' acquisition of state-of-the-art working-world skills.

In responding to employers' demand for graduates who are entrepreneurial in their orientation to work, the Campus added new offerings geared towards achieving this end. The Entertainment and Cultural Enterprise Management (ECEM) undergraduate programme, delivered through the Institute of Caribbean Studies, and which is into its second year, is an example of a course of study aimed at preparing a reflective UWI graduate with entrepreneurial skills. In the 2008–09 year, the ECEM complemented its practice of simulating cultural industry practices in the classroom with its first Summer Internship programme, involving various local businesses that provided the students with the opportunity to experience and apply industry practices in a real-world setting.



Professor Gordon Shirley and Ambassador Saunders signing the Memorandum of Understanding to signal partnership in the Public Sector Management (PSM) Internship Pilot Programme

On launching the BSc Entrepreneurship programme, Mona and the Jamaica Business Development Centre (JBDC) signed a Memorandum of Understanding that will enable the Campus to provide a programme that is grounded in the best practices of entrepreneurship. The students will be exposed to the products, services, publications and expert referrals that the JBDC provides.

Through the Department of Government and the Government of Jamaica, the Campus launched the Public Sector Management (PSM) Internship Pilot Programme. Speaking at the programme's launch, Cabinet Secretary in the Office of the Prime Minister, Ambassador Douglas Saunders noted that the internship programme, both theory-led and practice-driven, will help to build management capabilities and improve the job readiness skills of public sector management entrants. Nine UWI students pursuing a major in Public Sector Management were part of the first cohort to participate in the six week 2009 summer PSM Internship Programme in the Ministries of Transport and Works, Health, Justice and Youth, Sports and Culture.

The UWI Venture Challenge (UWIVC) competition and the Vincent Ho-Sang Programme comprise the

entrepreneurship activities in the Mona School of Business. The UWIVC competition took place in January 2009 and team GEOPRO360 was declared the winner. GEOPRO360 is a fully integrated suite of web-based Geographic Information Systems applications. Team GEOPRO360 benefited from coaching sessions and workshops in preparing to compete in the Opportunity Funding Challenge (OFVC) for traditionally Black Colleges and Universities held in Atlanta in April 2009. The project received a positive response from the judges and the team was highly praised for their effective presentation. Since the inception of the UWIVC programme in 2002, the UWI entrants to the OFVC competition have been the only non-American university to enter this competition.

The Vincent Ho-Sang Entrepreneurship Programme operates as an incubation model, nurturing the germ of new ideas for products and markets until they can be matured into a profitable operation. Participants benefit from mentoring workshops to help with the development of the business plan, and coaching in oral presentation for the round where teams present their ventures to a number of investors. The programme currently has three projects in the incubator: Ellington Foods, a project involving the rearing of rabbits intended for marketing as vacuum-packed smoked rabbit meat; GEOPRO360, a fully integrated suite of web-based Geographic Information System (GIS) applications which provides users with useful GIS data, maps, and powerful spatial analytical tools; and SDMS (Student Development Management System), a project that seeks to identify university students who are likely to fail in their academic programmes and to provide recommendations for improving their performance. SDMS does this by mining the record data of thousands of students and building a predictive model which can then be applied to current students.



Social Skills Development

Complementing the programmes that develop the work-ready technical skills are those that seek to develop the social skills required for successful integration into the world of work. The 2008–09 academic year saw a fifty percent increase in the number of students participating in the First Year Experience Programme, attesting to its success in developing and honing the softer skills. Students also participated in other co-curricula programmes such as the Annual Students' Leadership Work-

shop, the popular UWI Quality Leadership Programme, the America College Personnel "Next Generation Programme" and the International Leadership Organization (ILO) seminar – all geared at developing leadership, communication and team-working skills. We continued to place emphasis on improving students' debating skills both in and out of classroom settings, acknowledging in this way, the premium placed on one's ability to clearly and precisely present ideas on the local and international fronts.

EXCELLING INTERNATIONALLY

Debating Championships

Students from Mona again entered the World Universities Debating Championships ("Worlds"), seen as the Olympics of debating, hosted in the 2008–09 academic year by the University College Cork in Ireland. One hundred and seventy five (175) universities, from 42 countries on all five-continents participated in the Championships. There were 316 teams and 632 speakers. **The UWI, Mona team placed first among the seven teams from the Caribbean and Latin America and the two speakers placed first and second.**