

## DEPARTMENT OF LITERATURES IN ENGLISH

Norval Edwards, BA *UWI*, MA, PhD *York* – Head of Department

### WORK OF THE DEPARTMENT

The academic year under review was a particularly challenging one for the department, as it sought to maintain high scholarly and pedagogical standards in the face of staffing problems and fiscal deficits. Despite the numerous challenges it managed to maintain its core teaching objectives and scholarly research and outreach. The department also obtained excellent student assessment ratings for its teaching and student-friendliness.



### Teaching and Learning

The department continued prior initiatives to have an online component for all taught courses. Currently all three Level I core courses (LITS1001, LITS1002, and LITS10C), six level II courses (E23A, E23D, E25C, E25D, E25K, and E27F), three level III courses (E35D, E33P, and E33Q), and two graduate courses (E60A and E60D) have OURVLE course sites which have facilitated the delivery of course content to students and provided innovative and useful modes of discussion and feedback. No new undergraduate programmes were introduced in the 2009 /2010 academic year. It was agreed at a departmental meeting that level II and Level III courses should have a minimum of 5-6 prescribed texts on the syllabus. The revised LITS2304 course, evaluated on a 100% course work basis was taught in Semester II, and the students appreciated the new assessment model. In terms of internships and work /study schemes, the department accepted a proposal for setting up an internship

scheme in collaboration with public relations and publishing firms, and that a 2<sup>nd</sup>/ 3<sup>rd</sup> year course be offered as part of the internship scheme. With regard to graduate students, the department sought to strengthen research and supervision, by working with Graduate Studies and Research to ensure more effective throughput of graduate students. Effective supervision, timely submission of supervisor's reports, and the weeding out of non-performing graduate students who had exceeded their registration time limit were the three areas identified as central to this task. The department also addressed the issue of bringing its M.A credit requirements in line with the University's minimum credit requirements for a Masters degree. The department's lack of personnel prevented the introduction of new courses, but increasing the number of taught M.A courses was identified as a priority for enhancing the quality of the graduate programme. In this light, the Department agreed to explore the feasibility of introducing a self-financing M.F.A programme in Creative Writing. It was agreed that M.A students should be required to present their ongoing research for the M.A research paper at the Departmental Seminar. The department strongly recommended that supervisors should actively encourage their students to present papers at local, regional, and international conferences, and three of our graduate students, Mrs. Nicole Cameron, Mr. Donald Cleary, and Mrs. Aisha Spencer presented well-received papers at the 29<sup>th</sup> Annual West Indian Literature Conference which was held at the Mona Campus, April 29 – May 1. The department helped to fund Ms. Trenea Balds' visit to the University of Texas, Austin, to do research on her M.Phil thesis. Ms. Balds also presented a paper at the Tenth Annual Africa Conference hosted by the History Department at the University of Texas, Austin, March 26-28, 2010.

### **Student-Oriented Activities**

On February 5, the department convened a seminar with level III students to discuss their performance in semester I. Lecturers and students had a productive dialogue about the factors behind students' poor performance and the strategies for improving research and communications skills. Two primary factors cited by students for their poor performance were (a) financial issues and (b) lack of motivation due to their sense of being

conscripted into programmes that were not their primary choices. The department's annual Career Seminar talk was given on April 15 by a 1996 graduate, Mrs. Sherrone Blake Lobban, Chief Executive Officer of Development Partners and Management International, who gave a fascinating talk that enthralled the students as she blended tips about planning, focus, time management, and the cultivation of analytical and communications skills with anecdotes about her experiences as a UN development consultant in Iraq, Sudan, and Lebanon. Her emphasis on the first degree as an opportunity to acquire critical skills and knowledge that can be transferred to a wide range of career paths was timely and well received by the students. The department actively encouraged and benefitted from the activities of the Creative Writing students who staged two well-attended readings of poetry and prose during semesters 1 and 2 respectively.

### **Scholarly Activities and Outreach**

The 2009-10 academic year saw the department maintaining its strong tradition of promoting and participating in local and regional activities related to literary and cultural studies. Below is a summary of the highlights:

- November 29, 2009: the department hosted the Third in the Edward Baugh Distinguished Lecture Series, which was delivered by Professor Diana Brydon, Canada Research Chair in Globalization and Cultural Studies and Director of the Research Centre for Globalization and Cultural Studies at the University of Manitoba. Professor Brydon gave a particularly intellectually provocative and insightful lecture on “Metaphors that disturb and inspire: the challenge of reading across cultures”.
- April 29 – May 1, 2010: The department hosted the 29th Annual West Indian Literature Conference at the Mona Visitors' Lodge on the UWI, Mona campus from April 29-May 1, 2010. This conference, an important forum for the discussion of West Indian literature, is hosted from year to year by different campuses of the UWI and other regional institutions. The theme

of the 29th Conference was “Caribbeanscapes: The Vistas of Caribbean Literature”, and sixty panelists from regional and international institutions presented papers over the three days. Two members of the department (Carolyn Cooper and Harold McDermott) and three graduate students presented papers at the conference. Members of the department and graduate students also planned and coordinated the conference and related events. The feedback from conference participants was overwhelmingly positive regarding the high intellectual standards of the presentations. Two highlights of the conference were the launch of Professor Emeritus Edward Baugh’s book, *Frank Collymore: A Biography* on April 29, and a highly successful literary reading, “The Festival of the Word” on April 30 (in association with CPTC, CTV, and *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism*).

- May 9, 2010: The department hosted a reading at the Sir Philip Sherlock Centre for the Creative Arts by Nigerian writer, Niyi Osundare, and Jamaican poet, Frances Coke.
- The department continued its outreach to high schools and the wider public in the 2009 / 2010 academic year. Mawuena Logan gave a guest lectures at Church Teachers’ College and Hillel Academy in November 2009 and January 2010 respectively, and Harold McDermott and Tanya Shirley presented lectures at a seminar put on by the National Association of Teachers of English on April 26.
- On January 28, 2010, Professor Carolyn Cooper spearheaded the department’s contribution to this year’s Research Day activities with a lively lecture on “Roots, Rock, Reggae Poetry”.
- On April 23, 2010, Dr. Erna Brodber hosted her annual public reading of fiction by her creative writing students.

The department had a rather packed and interesting Staff/Postgraduate Seminar Series for the 2009 / 2010 academic year, which saw a range of presentations from staff, graduate students, and visiting academics. The contributions by visiting academics are listed below:

- On April 23, 2010, Dr Berndt Clavier, Associate Professor, International Migration and Ethnic Relations, Malmö University, Sweden, delivered a public lecture “To be or not to be...a Citizen: Core Values, Liberal Racism and Europe’s New Dilemma”.
- On March 5, 2010, Sean X. Goudie, Associate Professor of English, Pennsylvania State University, gave a presentation on “North American Regionalist Authors in a Caribbean American Regionalist Framework: The Cases of Sarah Orne Jewett and Sui Sin Far”, March 5, 2010.
- Professor Daniel Coleman, Canada Research Chair in Critical Ethnicity and Race Studies, Department of English and Cultural Studies, McMaster University presented “Epistemological Cross-Talk: Between Melancholia and Spiritual Cosmology in David Chariandy’s *Soucouyant* and Lee Maracle’s *Daughters Are Forever*”
- Marc Ismail, A Swiss historian and reggae scholar and producer, delivered a well-received public lecture, “Reggae Inna Switzerland”, on October 16, 2009.

Staff and graduate students made the following presentations:

- October 30, 2009: Celia Sykes, M.A. Graduate: “‘I Am the Bastard Child of Empire and I will Have My Day’: Family, Diaspora and British Identity in the Novels of Andrea Levy”
- November 13, 2009: Treena Balds, MPhil. Candidate: “Catachthonia: Will and the Aesthetics of Negation in Wole Soyinka’s *Death and the King’s Horseman*”
- December 4, 2009: Shala Alert, MPhil. Candidate: “Lacan, Fanon and Caribbean Masculinity”
- February, 19, 2010: Dr. Anthea Morrison, Senior Lecturer: “Changing Voices/Sea Changes in the Work of Edwidge Danticat: *‘We have not heard your voice in so long’*”
- February 26, 2010: Dr. Harold McDermott, Adjunct Lecturer: “The Mulatto of Criticism: Walcott and Literary Theory”

- March 12, 2010: Treena Balds, MPhil. Candidate: “Barbarian Language: Linguistic Negation in J. M. Coetzee’s *Waiting for the Barbarians*.”
- March 19, 2010: Shala Alert, MPhil. Candidate: “Myth, Simulation, and the Cinematic Representations of Jewish Nationalist Ideology in *Cast a Giant Shadow*”
- March 26, 2010: Donald Cleary, M.A. Candidate: “Satirical Dialect in *Shakespeare’s Sonnets*.”
- April 9, 2010: Eddie Whyte, MPhil. Graduate: “(Un) Manacled Sexuality: Shani Mootoo’s *Cereus Blooms at Night* as a Queer Bildungsroman?”
- April 16, 2010: Dr. Rachel Moseley-Wood, Adjunct Lecturer, Department of Literatures in English and Institute of Caribbean Studies: “Privileging the Local: Disturbing Paradigms of the External Graze in *Rockers*”

With regards to international collaboration, the department continued the exchange programme with Malmö University in Sweden. In the fourth year of the exchange, Mawuena Logan spent three weeks at Malmö in the first semester, where he lectured in the undergraduate programme. The department welcomed Dr. Berndt Clavier from Malmö University, who spent three weeks at Mona in April 2010, guest lecturing in LITS2304: Key Issues in Literary Criticism and LITS3402: Classic American Fiction. He also presented a seminar on citizenship and liberal racism in Europe. Unfortunately, none of our majors went on the exchange, but Petter Ramnemo, an exchange student from Malmö University, came to Mona in the second semester. Two of our majors, Tricia Wint and Damian René, will visit Malmö in semester I of the 2010/2011 academic year.

### **Awards Received by Staff**

Professor Emeritus Mervyn Morris received the **Order of Merit**, the third highest honour, at the National Awards Ceremony on Heroes Day, Monday, October 19, 2009 for his contribution to West Indian and Caribbean Literature.

Professor Emerita Maureen Warner-Lewis received a **Gold Musgrave Medal** from the Institute of Jamaica, for Literature, at an award ceremony held at the Institute on Wednesday, October 14, 2009.

## **Staffing and Administrative Matters**

This was a rather challenging academic year for the department which had to deal with numerous issues attendant on a change of headship, the death of Mr. Wayne Brown who had been slated to teach a Creative Writing course, Dr. Victor Chang's absence due to illness and subsequent pre-retirement leave, the pedagogical and curricular constraints caused by staff shortage (as the vacant lectureships in Film Studies and Renaissance Literature have not been filled so far), and an uncertain administrative situation due to the impending departure of Miss Mary Gray, the department's Administrative Secretary of twenty-six years. Additionally, the department's limited budget presented a formidable challenge in its efforts to host a major regional literary conference. The request by the previous Head in 2008/09 for a \$200,000.00 increase in the operating budget has not been granted, but the current Head strongly reiterates this request even while cognizant of the adverse fiscal realities. The department hopes that increased funding will facilitate the publication of the three excellent lectures delivered so far in the Edward Baugh Lecture Series. Despite the challenges, the department has managed to weather the major storms, and it gratefully acknowledges the generosity of the Principal's Office and the Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Education in funding our two marquee events for 2009/ 2010, The Edward Baugh Distinguished Lecture and the 29<sup>th</sup> Annual West Indian Literature Conference. In terms of staffing, Ms. Carolyn Allen (Semester I only), Ms. Lisa Brown, Dr. Harold McDermott and Ms. Tanya Shirley were employed as temporary lecturers to fill the vacancies left by the loss of three staff members and Dr. Anthea Morrison's absence on Fellowship leave. Norval Edwards and Michael Bucknor returned from sabbatical leave and Fellowship leave respectively, but the attrition of the teaching staff continued as Dr. Chang took early retirement. Colleagues rallied to fill the teaching gap, and Miss Lisa Brown and Mrs. Shala Alert, a MPhil student, did sterling work in filling in for Dr. Chang at extremely short

notice. The department also benefited from the teaching of Professor Emeriti Edward Baugh and Dr. Erna Brodber, and we are grateful for their exemplary contributions. We remain optimistic and determined to maintain high academic and professional standards despite the challenges of being an underfunded and undermanned department.

## **PAPERS PRESENTED**

### **Dr Michael Bucknor**

- “‘The Current Unbroken, The Circuits Kept Open’: Caribbean Strokes Across Culture and its Counterpoints” Plenary Presentation at ACLALS Triennial Conference, June 11, 2010, the University of Cyprus. (10 pages)
- “Audience Authority: The Question of Context and Credibility in the Reception of Jamaican Diasporic Novels – Andrea Levy’s *Small Island* and Zadie Smith’s *White Teeth*.” Seminar: “Postcolonial Audiences,” May 12, 2010, Newcastle University, UK. (12 pages)
- “Rites of Belonging: Performing Possession in Two Caribbean/Canadian Migration Narratives” College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Massachusetts, November 6, 2009.

### **Professor Carolyn Cooper**

- “Caribbean Fashion Week: Creolising Beauty in ‘Out of Many One Jamaica,’” Duke University/UWI Symposium, “States of Freedom: Freedom of States,” UWI, Mona, June 2010, (28 pages).
- “The Melody of Africa and the Rhythm of Europe: Cultural Subversion in Rex Nettleford’s *Mirror Mirror*, The Hugh Lawson Shearer Trade Union Education Institute Symposium, “The Sage Has Come of Age,” UWI, Mona, April 2010, (12 pages).
- “‘No Matter Where You Come From’: Pan-African Consciousness in Caribbean Popular Music,” National Bank of



Dominica/UWI Open Campus Distinguished Lecture, May 2010, (20 pages).

- “Haiti: The Price of Freedom,” National Bank of Dominica/UWI Open Campus Distinguished Lecture, May 2010, (18 pages). (Co-authored with Cecil Gutzmore)
- “Cross Talk: Jamaican Popular Music and the Politics of Translation,” 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference of the New Literatures in English, Bayreuth University, May 2010, (20 pages).
- “Dancehall Fictions: Macka Diamond’s ‘Roots’ Novels,” 29<sup>th</sup> Annual West Indian Literature Conference, UWI, Mona, April 2010, (12 pages).
- “‘Reggae University’: Rototom Sunsplash and the Politics of Globalising Jamaican Popular Culture,” International Reggae Conference, University of the West Indies, Mona, February 2010, (25 pages).
- “Sweet and Sour Sauce: Sexual Politics in Jamaican Dancehall Culture,” UWI Open Campus, Montserrat, November 2009, (20 pages).

### **Dr Harold McDermott**

- “The Mulatto of Criticism: Walcott and Literary Theory.” Walcott Conference 2010, January 12-15, 2010, University of the West Indies, St Augustine, Trinidad W.I.

### **Dr Anthea Morrison**

- “Stubborn Voices in the Work of Edwidge Danticat: From ‘Water Child’ to *Brother, I’m Dying*”. Conference on “The Francophone Caribbean and North America”, Florida State University, February 24-26, 2010. 16 p.

## PUBLICATIONS

### Professor Carolyn Cooper

#### *Books and Monographs*

- \* “African Diaspora Studies in the Creole-Anglophone Caribbean: A Perspective from the University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica” in Tejumola Olaniyan and James H. Sweet, eds. The African Diaspora and the Disciplines, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2010, 279-297.

#### *Non-refereed*

- \* “Word, Image, Rhythm to Shape Our World’: Gathering Stones With Esther Phillips,” *Bim*, Vol. 3 No 1, Nov. 2009-Feb. 2010, 94-101.
- \* Review of *Who Am I? The Untold Story of Beenie Man* by Milton Wray, *Jamaica Journal*, 32, 2&3 (2009): 127-129.

### Dr Michael Bucknor

#### *Refereed Journal Article*

- \* “Sounding Off: Performing Ritual Revolt in Olive Senior’s ‘Meditation on Yellow’” Special Issue on “Sound”, *Mosaic*. 42.2 (June 2009). 54-71.

### Dr Harold McDermott

- \* *CAPE Communication Studies*, Caribbean Educational Publishers, Port of Spain, 2008.

### Dr Anthea Morrison

- \* Edited volume: *Gendering the African Diaspora: Women, Culture and Historical Change in the Caribbean and Nigerian Hinterland*. Co-editor (with Judith Byfield and LaRay Denzer). Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2010.

## **PUBLIC SERVICE**

### **Ms Lisa Brown**

- Chairman, Valedictory Selection Committee

### **Dr Michael Bucknor**

- Editor, *Journal of West Indian Literature* (Regional Journal)
- Chief Examiner, CAPE Literatures in English, Caribbean Examinations Council
- Chair, Association of Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies

### **Dr Victor L. Chang**

- Treasurer, West Indian Association of Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies (WIACLALS).
- Chief Editor, *Journal of West Indian Literature* (JWIL).
- Editor, Pathways

### **Professor Carolyn Cooper**

- Member, Board of Directors, Development Partners and Management International Limited, Kingston
- Regional Editor (Caribbean), *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies*, Routledge.

### **Dr Norval Edwards**

- Chair, Coordinating Committee for 29<sup>th</sup> Annual West Indian Literature Conference, UWI, Mona, 2010
- Review editor, Northern Caribbean University's peer-reviewed journal, *International Review of Humanities*
- Member, Advisory Board, Issues in Critical Investigation, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee),
- Associate Editor, *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism*
- Editorial Board Member, *Postcolonial Text*
- Manuscript Reviewer, Duke University Press

- Manuscript Reviewer, Broadview Press

**Dr Harold McDermott**

- Adjudicator, Jamaica Cultural Development Commission  
Drama competition

**Tanya Shirley**

- Member, Fundraising Committee of Special Olympics, Jamaica

**Mr David Williams**

- Member, Executive Committee of the Jamaica Association for  
Mentally Retarded Persons.

**CATEGORIES OF STUDENTS**

**Undergraduate**

*Number Registered*

|               |                     |                     |
|---------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Year I        | 78 (majors)         | 164 (minors)        |
| Year II       | 209 (majors)        | 251 (minors)        |
| Year III      | 83 (majors)         | 55 (minors)         |
| <b>TOTAL:</b> | <b>370 (majors)</b> | <b>470 (minors)</b> |

**First Class Honours**

Mark-Paul Cowan

Roberta Miller

Shaniece Lindsay

Jodi-Ann Stephenson

**Postgraduate**

*Registration*

|       |    |
|-------|----|
| PhD   | 2  |
| MPhil | 20 |
| MA    | 24 |

**Award of Degrees**

MPhil – Lavern Kerr-Harvey

MPhil – Eddie Whyte

MA – Jacqueline Smith-Mott