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PRO VICE-CHANCELLOR, GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

For the 2015-2016 academic year, the School for Graduate Studies and Research continued its focus on the strategic initiatives identified in the current Strategic Plan 2012-2017, with a view to improving the overall student experience as well as the research environment at The UWI. Effective October 2015, the research portfolio of the School was merged with graduate studies and the Pro Vice-Chancellor, Graduate Studies assumed responsibility for Research. Important initiatives undertaken in this regard include operationalisation of the research clusters identified in the strategic plan, as well as the alignment of the work of the centre-funded research institutes and centres with these clusters to meet the needs of the region. The completion of a UWI research database was identified as being critical to these initiatives, and work is continuing to develop and populate the database.

TEACHING, LEARNING AND STUDENT DEVELOPMENT Graduate Programmes

For the 2015-2016 academic year, the Board approved 19 new graduate programmes, including the *MEd Educational Planning and Policy*, *MSc Logistics and Supply Chain Management* and *DM Medical Oncology*. Twenty-five revised programmes with restructured content, modified titles and delivery modes, and additional specialisations, were also approved. These included *MBA Sustainable Energy Management* and *MPhil/PhD Applied Physics* with specialisations in *Climate Studies*, *Medical Physics* and *Alternative Energy*.

Graduate Student Registration

Enrolment in graduate programmes for the 2015-2016 academic year was 10,307, representing a 5% growth over the previous year, largely due to the increased number of Open Campus' programme offerings, including a suite of Management programmes as well as an online *Doctor of Education (EdD) in Educational Leadership*.

Scholarships

There was a significant increase in the *UWI graduate scholarships* allocation for the 2015-2016 academic year to BDS\$1,403,590, allowing for 42 full awards to research students across the campuses.

Two scholarships have been awarded under the *UWI12+2 scholarship* scheme to students from St. Lucia and The Bahamas and arrangements are being finalised for two others from St. Vincent and the Grenadines and the British Virgin Islands. The scholarships are available to each of the UWI non-residential campus countries for students pursuing a PhD degree in research priority areas identified by their governments.

Three students were awarded *CCRIF scholarships*, valued at US\$11,000 each, to pursue studies at the Mona Campus.

Under a Memorandum of Understanding signed between The UWI and the OAS, ten partial scholarships valued at US\$7,000 each, were awarded to students from OAS Member States registered for select graduate degree programmes at all UWI campuses.

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The Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) scholarship tenable at The UWI to citizens of low/middle income Commonwealth countries was awarded to a candidate from Ghana, who will be pursuing an MSc Economics at the St. Augustine Campus in the 2016-2017 academic year.

The School hosted a *Donor and Awardee Recognition* session for its regional and international postgraduate donors and scholars in January 2016 to engage postgraduate donor entities and to introduce them to the students to whom they were providing valuable support. Further commitments to the continued development of UWI students were realised in this inaugural meeting.

Capacity Development Workshops/Seminars

As in previous years, the Campus Coordinators, Graduate Studies and Research, continued to undertake various initiatives and developmental activities to improve throughput and foster the all-round development of graduate students. Workshops and seminars were held to cover such topics as research skills, succeeding in a graduate thesis seminar, thesis writing, plagiarism, as well as interview techniques and stress management. Proposal clinics were also introduced on one campus to assist departments, faculties and staff members with the process of developing new graduate programmes or revising existing ones.

Quality Assurance

The Quality Assurance Unit organised and coordinated 17 disciplinary reviews during the 2015-2016 academic year. These included reviews of research and taught graduate programmes in those disciplines/departments in which these programmes are offered. A review of the Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) on the three residential campuses was also undertaken in this period. The School also operationalised the *Quality Assurance Review Follow-Up Committee for Centre-funded Centres and Institutes* to oversee the implementation of recommendations arising out of the quality assurance reviews of UWI-wide institutes, centres, units and schools, i.e., entities not linked to an academic department. Review reports and action plans were considered for the Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies (SALISES), Institute for Gender and Development Studies (IGDS), Seismic Research Centre (SRC) and the Institute for Sustainable Development (ISD).

INTERNAL OPERATIONAL PROCESSES

Thesis and Progress Tracker

The Thesis Tracker is an electronic system being developed in collaboration with the Office of the University Chief Information Officer (UCIO) which will help to track the thesis examination process. Workshops to demonstrate the capabilities and use of the system have already been held on all the campuses. Implementation of the system was at varying stages on each campus, with Mona being closest to final production and use. Testing was completed at Cave Hill, whilst the St. Augustine Campus experienced a number

of delays which impacted its testing phase. It is hoped that examination of Taught Master's research projects will be included in this system in the near future. The Progress Tracker system was conceptualised to address the poor throughput levels of graduate students, especially those registered in research programmes, by allowing students and their supervisors to construct a timeline for their activities throughout their sojourn as graduate students and to have a record of their progress along this timeline. There was a delay in this project due to resource and time constraints.

BGSR-OGSR Decisions SharePoint Repository

With the merger of the graduate studies and research portfolios, there was now one Pro Vice-Chancellor responsible for the consideration and approval of graduate student and programme related matters for the four campuses. Consequently, the *BGSR-OGSR Decisions SharePoint Repository* was developed in collaboration with the Office of the UCIO and launched in April 2016, and was designed to streamline the approval processes to maintain efficiency and timeliness. Several training documents, including a manual to access and use SharePoint, along with a Document Naming Convention Guide, were developed and used to support the authorised users.

Research and Innovation Policies and Procedures

In support of Research and Innovation, the principal procedural document produced during the reporting period was entitled *Summary Guide for Managing Proposal Development and Submission at The University of the West Indies*.

The *UWI Policy and Procedures on Research Ethics* which was approved in February 2011 was recently operationalised through the establishment of the *UWI Committee on Research Ethics* which is responsible for developing, coordinating and ensuring the implementation of the University's policies and procedures for the ethical conduct of research. The Committee met and considered reports from all the fully functional Campus Committees. Over the 2015-2016 period, 614 applications were received, reviewed and processed (94 from Cave Hill, 259 from Mona and 261 from St. Augustine) from a wide range of research disciplines. The minutes of the meetings at each campus and the Registry have been reviewed by the UWI Ethics Committee, which is satisfied that research at The UWI is being carried out in an ethically sound manner. Issues of exemptions and graduate student research provide areas for continued discussions.

Research Clusters

The Pro Vice-Chancellor, Graduate Studies and Research convened a meeting with representatives from Cultural Studies across the Cave Hill, Mona and St. Augustine campuses, signalling the formal establishment of the first research cluster on the Cultural and Entertainment Industries. Discussions were held about possible initiatives which could add visibility to the work of the cluster, and plans were also put in place for the staging of the Reggae Conference in February 2017. Discussions have also been held with the Mona and Cave Hill campuses to operationalise the research cluster which focuses primarily on Crime, Security and Justice, and future discussions will be held to expand it to the other campuses.

Institutional Strengthening and Collaboration with Campus Offices of Research

This included enhanced collaboration and capacity development with the Office of Research, Development and Knowledge Transfer (ORDKT) at St. Augustine, the Office of Research and Innovation at Mona and the Research Development Initiative in the Office of the Campus Principal at Cave Hill.

Research Funding and International Partnerships

The Office of Research/Office of Global Affairs undertook a number of activities in order to maintain and develop The UWI's competitiveness in winning externally-funded research grants, managing and reporting on these grants, as well as working to influence future funding opportunities.

Improving UWI's Competitiveness for Winning Research Grants from External Agencies

This included selection of appropriate funding programmes; coordination of proposal development and submission across The UWI; identification of the cross-campus human resources needed to prepare the proposals; and direct support of and participation in proposal preparation.

Some examples of proposals submitted and grants subsequently won during the reporting period that involved the Office included:

- 'Giving Focus to the Cultural Scientific and Social Dimensions of EU-CELAC Relations' (Donor: Horizon 2020, EU; Lead: University of Barcelona; Total Project Value: €2.5M)

- 'Support to the Marijuana Decriminalisation Commission' (Donor: Open Society Foundations; Lead: UWI; Total Project Value: US\$403,405)
- 'Museums and Community: Concepts, Experiences and Sustainability in Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean' (Donor: Horizon 2020, EU; Lead: St. Andrew's University; Total Project Value: €2.4M)
- 'The Caribbean in the Partnership EU-CELAC' (Donor: EU-LAC Foundation; Lead: UWI; Total Project Value: €21,000)
- 'Guiding the Resettlement Process in Dominica following Hurricane Erika' (Donor: Japan-Caribbean Climate Change Partnership; Lead: UWI; Total Project Value US\$240,000)
- 'ZIKAction: Preparedness, research and action network on maternal-paediatric axis of ZIKV infection in Latin America and the Caribbean' (Donor: Horizon 2020, EU; Lead: PENTA Foundation; Total Project Value €6.9M)

There has been a positive trend in income generated at The UWI from international research grants over the past decade, but the sums won in 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 were lower than in 2013-2014. This reflects the fact that 2014-2015 was a period of transition in international funding programmes. The United Nations was transitioning its UN Millennium Development Goals into UN Sustainable Development Goals; The 10th EDF Programme was completed, and the 11th EDF Programme was being developed and operationalised;

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The European Commission was phasing out its 7th Framework Programme (FP7) and replacing it with Erasmus+ and Horizon 2020; and the Intra-ACP Research Funding Programme was being re-designed.

Assisting with or Managing the Implementation and Reporting on Large Research Grants

This activity included vetting the agreements signed between The UWI and research partners; serving as conduit between UWI researchers, the Bursary and the Human Resources sections of the Registry in designing project proposals; facilitating or taking responsibility for project implementation; serving as The UWI contact point with the funding agencies in resolving issues relating to project implementation and reporting; liaising with researchers and the Bursary and facilitating researchers and the Bursary in meeting the reporting requirements of the funding agencies.

Specific examples of large grants managed over the reporting period included:

- International Fine Cocoa Innovation Centre (IFCIC) funded by the EU
- Regional Biosafety Project funded by GEF and UNEP
- Global Local Caribbean Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Scenarios funded by the EU
- Climate Change Adaptation Strategies for Water Resources and Human Livelihoods in the Coastal Zones of Small Island Developing States funded by the EU
- Mainstreaming Energy Efficiency and Climate Change in Built Environment Training and Research in the Caribbean funded by the EU

- The Caribbean Regional Entrepreneurial Asset Commercialisation Hub (REACH) funded by the IDB
- Knowledge Transfer Capacity Building for Enhanced Energy Access and Efficiency in the Caribbean (CAP4INNO) funded by EDULINK (EU)
- Empowering Knowledge Transfer in the Caribbean through Effective IPR and KT Regimes (IPICA) funded by ACP Science and Technology (EU)
- Building Capacity and Regional Integration for the Development of a Generation of Entrepreneurs (BRIDGE) funded by the IDB

Increasing the Number of Research Partnerships between The UWI and other Universities and Institutions in the Development and Execution of Research Projects

This included the identification of the appropriate universities/institutions for The UWI to collaborate with in research proposal preparation and implementation, with The UWI either as lead or partner; continuous engagement with partners to ensure collegial and harmonious relationships in the execution of research projects and in the narrative and financial reporting required.

New partnerships with institutions in the following countries were developed during the reporting period: Spain, Germany, Italy, the UK, France, The Netherlands, Mexico, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rico, El Salvador, Portugal, Argentina and Ecuador. The number of partnerships in which UWI is involved for the implementation of research projects has increased steadily over the 2014-2016 period of the Strategic Plan. In 2015-2016, The UWI collaborated with 109 different organisations from 53 different countries in the execution of research projects.

Activities Oriented to Influencing Future Research Funding Opportunities

This activity continued over the reporting period with emphasis on serving as a member of the Management Committee for the 11th EDF Regional Funding Programme; clarifying and attempting to influence the EU's Horizon 2020 Funding Programme and the Post-2015 Intra-ACP Funding Programme; working to develop new avenues of support with the IDB; exploring funding probabilities with new donors or new funding programmes not previously used by The UWI. During the reporting period, The UWI won its first research grants from the EU's new Horizon 2020 programme, won its first grant from the EU's new Erasmus+ programme, and won a grant from the Open Society Foundations for the first time.

Commercialisation of Research Products at The UWI

Considerable emphasis was placed on this activity during the reporting period through two principal approaches:

- i. Building technology transfer capacity at The UWI through a series of workshops financed by two of the projects currently being implemented— 'The Caribbean Regional Entrepreneurial Asset Commercialisation Hub' funded by the IDB, and 'Empowering Knowledge Transfer in the Caribbean through Effective IPR and KT Regimes' funded by the ACP Science and Technology Programme (EU).

- ii. The development of partnership agreements with business or industry aimed at the commercialisation of UWI research products. The most advanced of these is the collaborative agreement between Lake Asphalt Limited in Trinidad and The UWI to manufacture and sell four asphalt-based products whose prototypes were made at the St. Augustine Campus. This initiative has advanced to the stage where there is agreement that Lake Asphalt Limited will start manufacturing one of the four products (Plastic Cement), and three sub-committees, with membership from both Lake Asphalt Limited and The UWI, have been established to operationalise this.

Other UWI research products whose commercial value is being explored include the 'PHI' pan (an electronic steel pan), a Brushless DC Motor Controller, several novel cocoa products, and new pepper, anthurium and hibiscus varieties.

Management of Centres and Institutes

The School continued to oversee the operations of centre-funded institutes and centres on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor.

OUTREACH

Support for Regional Governments

Dominica: The Office continued to coordinate The UWI's response to the impact of Hurricane Erika in Dominica. The UWI team consists of four engineers and three environmental scientists who made several trips to Dominica at the request of the Government. The UWI's work in Dominica is supported by the winning of a grant of approximately US\$240,000 from the Japan-Caribbean Climate Change Partnership.

Trinidad and Tobago: The Office is working with the Ministry of Planning and Development in Trinidad and Tobago in the preparation of a project entitled 'Support for Building a Competitive and Innovative Economy', which is supported by the European Commission through the National Component of the 11th European Development Fund.

Barbados: The Office assisted the UK Law Firm, Volterra Fietta, in preparing the defence for the Government of Barbados in the matter of an arbitration between the Graeme Hall Nature Sanctuary and the Government of Barbados. The case was heard by an International Tribunal in New York in December 2015.

CARICOM: The 11th Regional EDF Programme was signed by the European Union and CARIFORUM in June 2015 in Brussels. The Office represents The UWI on both the Thematic Task Forces and the Management Committee of the 11th Regional EDF Programme. There have been regular meetings of both the Thematic Task Forces and the Management Committee throughout the reporting period at which proposals are assessed for possible funding under the 11th Regional EDF. The UWI is now well positioned to obtain funding through the 11th EDF in academic year 2016-2017. The UWI was not a member of the Management Committee for any of the previous 10 Regional EDF Programmes.