Keynote Address: Defining Best Practice in Higher Education: Contextual Relevance in the Caribbean.
KEY TERMS IN THE CALL FOR PAPERS

- “culture of best practice”
- “embedding best practice principles in institutional systems, processes and procedures”
- “institutional transformation”
- “the pursuit of excellence”
“UWI must be a global university for our Region, unrelenting in its commitment to internationally respected standards of excellence in all that it does”.

(UWI Vice Chancellor, Professor Hillary Beckles, Inaugural Address, 2015:5)
Survey of Best Practice: Coverage

- 48 Global Practices
- 5 Geopolitical Regions
- 28 Countries
- 2 Multi Country Initiatives
- 43 Higher Education Institutions
Survey of Best Practice: Countries Surveyed

Figure 1: Global Distribution of Higher Education Best Practices Recorded
From Harvey, 2012 p 22
Best Practice Symbiosis

Figure 1. Major findings/principles: Symbiosis fosters a culture of best practice.

(Harvey 2012)
‘An intervention, process or approach, which has contextual relevance for the University of the West Indies; is exemplary in its ability to produce superior results when assessed against the goals set and/or against similar practice in the relevant core area; engages internal and external stakeholders; is efficient in terms of resources (human, time, financial); is well documented; has utility and is recognized beyond the practice site’. Harvey, 2012, p 17.
Emergent Definition of Best Practice: National, Regional Impact Levels

**Best practice interventions:**

- Must be exemplary in their ability to produce superior results in addressing critical developmental issues for the region

- Must be efficient in terms of the use of resources

- Effective in terms of the engagement of a wide group of stakeholders

- Must be well documented
Results Based Management

Results at three levels:

- Outputs
- Outcomes
- Impacts

Source: United Nations Development Group, 2010
Vision for the CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (CARICOM)

- A Caribbean Community that is integrated, inclusive and resilient; driven by knowledge, excellence, innovation and productivity.

- A Community where every citizen is secure and has the opportunity to realise his or her potential with guaranteed human rights and social justice; and can contribute to, and share in, its economic, social and cultural prosperity. A Community which is a unified and competitive force in the global arena.

CARICOM, 2014 p7)
Resilience Model for Caribbean Development (CARICOM, 2014:7)

Facilitated by coordinated foreign policy and research, development and innovation.
Best Practice in Higher Education in Cuba

- **Exemplary Results:** doctors; vaccine; teachers
- **Efficient Resource Use:** despite blockade, special time
- **Engaged Stakeholders:** policy makers; academics; funders; students etc.
- **Well documented:** we can hear the story today because it has been so well recorded
IMPLICATIONS 1: Integrally Linking Curriculum, Research and Outreach to Sustainable Development

- Innovation and Productivity
- Independent and Critical Thinking
- Practical Choices and Radical Alternatives
- Relevant Classroom and out of Classroom Practice
- Appropriate Assessment Mechanisms
- Content and Methods Must have Direct Links to the Development Agenda, bearing in mind the CARICOM Resilience
IMPLICATIONS 2: Effective Management of Higher Education Institutions

Symbiotic Links among:

- Leadership
- Employee Engagement
- Student Engagement
- Internal Processes
IMPLICATIONS 3:

Harmonisation of State Funded Higher Education Institutions?

- Avoiding Duplication
- Coordinated Research Agendas
- Making Best Use of Available Talent

Can we achieve the above outcomes by a University System of the West Indies?

(Source: The Human Resource Cluster of CARICOM Jules, 2014)
IMPLICATIONS 4: Harmonisation of External Quality Assurance Mechanisms?

- If we have such a coordinated University System, will this have to be matched by a similarly coordinated external quality assurance mechanism?

(Source: IICCHE, 2014)
Embedding a Culture of Best Practice

- **Mission:** National and Regional Purpose (Ref: Appendix 1: CARICOM Strategic Plan)

- **Strategy:** Direction, Passion, Focus, Tactics (Ref: Appendix 2: Checklists for Planning and Nurturing Best Practice)

- **Socialization and Renewal**

- **Engagement:** Staff, Students, Other Stakeholders (Ref: Appendix 4: A Foreign Student’s Perspective on Cuban Medical Education)

- **Rewards and Sanctions**
Embedding a Culture of Best Practice (cont’d)

Enablers:

- Evidence
- Documentation
- Measurement and Evaluation

(Source: Ref Appendix 3: Sample Best Practice Record)
Embedding a Culture of Best Practice (cont’d)

Leadership: each of us a leader - each of us an instrument of change. (Former UWI VC, *UWI Strategic Plan*, 2012)

Communication - the oil that nourishes the system and smooths the flow
Best Practice in Higher Education in the Caribbean Context is:

- Exemplary in addressing and producing superior results for critical developmental issues of the region (as encapsulated in the CARICOM Strategic Plan)

- Efficient in terms of the use of resources

- Effective in terms of the engagement (direction, passion, tactics) of a wide group of stakeholders

- Well documented and disseminated
Thank you!