

Dominican Employers' Perceptions of Graduates of the UWI: The Ramifications for the University in an Entrepreneurial Era in Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

In 1998, the Office of the Board for Undergraduate Studies (OBUS) commissioned a pilot study to ascertain Dominican employers' perceptions of UWI graduates. That seminal investigation was the forerunner of a later, more extensive, survey of both UWI graduates and their employers in the Non-Campus Countries (NCCs). Utilizing structured open-ended interviews and Likert scales for employers, and closed and open-ended questionnaires for graduates, respondents were questioned on diverse aspects of their UWI on-campus education, including the breadth and depth of knowledge base, collaborative and teamwork skills, technical and communicative competence, the relevance of graduates' training to the respective organisations and the community at large, critical limitations and weaknesses, among others. While employers and graduates appeared to be generally satisfied with the depth, more than the breadth, of the knowledge base, critical reservations were raised with regard to graduates' suitability to the needs of the NCC markets. The anxieties of respondents, engendered by the regional University which had not yet managed to move beyond the frontiers of Cave Hill, Mona and St. Augustine, were apparent.

This paper reappraises the results of both the pilot study and the Dominica phase of the bigger NCC study with a view to examining the implications for entrepreneurial practice yielded by those results, and against the backdrop of the worldwide entrepreneurial trend in higher education (HE). It begins by tracing the international developments in entrepreneurship in HE, glancing at what universities are doing entrepreneurwise. Viewing the Dominica pilot and NCCs studies as a novel and refreshing venture by the UWI to find out the needs of its customers or target market, and an eschewal of its ivory tower caste, the author places this in the context of the UWI's acceptance of not only the need to become entrepreneurial, but also to attend to the needs of its market (the 'relevance issue') in the NCCs. The paper draws on marketing theory and principles to show how the UWI can recapture any lost grounds in Dominica and the NCCs. It concludes with some practical recommendations with regard to the role of the UWI and its centres in the new paradigm.

Introduction

The year 1998 marked fifty years since teaching commenced at what then was the University College of the West Indies (UCWI), located at Mona, and just about thirty-six years after "the designated regional University" received the sanction, by Royal Charter, to confer degrees in its own right. Its name was to be recast into The University of the West Indies (UWI), with all the connotations this conveyed.

The Office of the Board for Undergraduate Studies (OBUS), one of the new creations of 'Governance' (July 1994),¹ commissioned two studies in 1998: The first was a pilot study in Dominica to ascertain employers' perceptions of UWI graduates in terms of the latter's handling of their jobs, on a number of counts. As with most exploratory studies, it also aimed at evaluating methodology and the feasibility of expanding the investigation to the other Non-Campus Countries (NCCs). Having agreed on its feasibility, the second and major one, the 'NCCs Employers' Perception of UWI Graduates' survey, was undertaken in 10 NCCs;² in addition to seeking employers' perceptions, it also sought to determine from the graduates themselves, their views of the extent to which the UWI education had prepared them for their respective jobs. To the present author's knowledge, the two studies were

unprecedented for the UWI and English-speaking Caribbean region and, *ipso facto*, one might well argue that the University, in practical terms, signalled during its 50th year that it was acknowledging calls, some muted, for relevance.

Why is all of this momentous? In general terms, concern with the relationship between higher education (HE) and work or the labour market is not a recent occurrence. In 1982, for instance, the Development Services Unit of the Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA) commissioned a project which sought to determine the employment experiences of a sample of CNAA graduates in the United Kingdom (UK) (Brennan & McGeevor, 1988). Brennan and McGeevor (1988) contended, quite fittingly, that there are at least four discernible groups of people who would be concerned with the issue of employment of graduates, namely:

- Ministry of Education policy makers and officials whose role it is to plan the system of HE as a whole;³
- University senior administrators, lecturers, and generally personnel at all levels of HE institutions who have a vested interest in the future performance of their current students as well as their graduates now in employment;
- The rapidly expanding number of employers who are recruiting graduates in their businesses, institutions, etc.;
- Students themselves who are the ones making the complex choices, very often unaided; these choices are made before, during and after HE.

Brennan and McGeevor (1988) went on to consider the now perennial debate of the perceived role of HE in a country's economic growth and performance. They drew upon the theme of the 1985 Green Paper in the UK which saw HE's role as producing more graduates with the requisite economically productive skills (especially qualified scientists, engineers, technologists and technicians) and more of the right attitudes, like 'entrepreneurial spirit' and 'positive attitudes to work'. They however quickly warned of the dangers of overworking this rigid correlation between HE and the labour market. Such a view was often adopted by those who sought to preserve the holistic integrity of HE, there being, the argument continued, intrinsic values and ethos to be derived from the very experience of HE.

Hence, HE ought to be valued for its own sake as well, since there was often the distinct possibility that even when engineers and technologists entered occupations for which they were trained, they made little use of that "formal science or engineering education" or there appeared to be a "dichotomy between the academic education they received and the skills and knowledge they required for their jobs" (Bosworth in Brennan & McGeevor, 1988, p. 2). More interestingly and germanely perhaps, is the point that the very production of graduates could bring about unforeseen and probably beneficial modifications in occupational roles, flag new possibilities and permutations, and raise awareness of hitherto overlooked needs (Teichler et al. in Brennan & McGeevor, 1988). It therefore seems prudent to argue that to tailor HE to existing or perceived job demands might be self-defeating in the sense that a ceiling is installed, at the very outset, on the gamut of HE and its courses. Writing much later, Marshall (2000) expressed concern about the 'relevance problem' in respect of the UWI, and its social sciences faculties in particular:

... the charge that the university is irrelevant to society unless it could compete or join with other governmental agencies as problem solver for the respective countries' immediate concerns, remains a powerful and dangerously seductive one. It can lead to academics abrogating their intellectual responsibilities by giving identity to the immediate realms of the policy process. The consequence is one that not so much brings an appropriate education to public affairs, as infiltrates the academy with the unreflective imperatives of state bureaucracies (p. 62).

If not vigilant, the argument suggests, the UWI may well find that it dilutes its degrees with perceived societal relevance, vague in nature, and tending to negate the academic motif. What one expects, notwithstanding, is that once university graduates begin to occupy positions which were once filled by non-graduates, a distinct possibility in a region in flux, the character of those jobs will or should be altered (Brennan & McGeevor, 1988). This is probably what employers unwittingly intended by 'flexibility', 'adaptability' and 'initiative' on the job.

Another caveat is important here. Labour market needs are difficult to identify, and what HE institutions should do in order to achieve them is even less clear (*ibid.*). Brennan and McGeevor (1988) cited a study by Roizen and Jepson (1985) which painstakingly showed that the signals coming from employers were ambiguous and therefore typically difficult to unravel. Two of their conclusions were that employers:

were not particularly interested in, or au fait with, the range of university courses and their differences

- felt there were shortages in what they considered 'high quality' graduates.

With the foregoing in mind, Brennan and McGeevor (1988) observed that, "the success of different courses in preparing students for working life is largely a matter of conjecture" (p. 5). Having said all of this, the present author believes that there was much to gain substantively, in terms of informing the UWI's curricula, but also politically, in having conducted the studies in the NCCs. Fundamentally, they:

- provided empirical evidence, as opposed to instinctive feelings, of the extent to which the UWI was satisfying the needs of its major stakeholders, that is, employers and graduates
- bridged the gap between the UWI and employers as well as prospective employers in the NCCs
- served as an overture to societies which deemed the UWI to be aloof and hidden away in its ivory tower
- tempered to some extent the enduring complaint that the UWI was not particularly interested in the affairs of the NCCs
- served as indicators, if general, of how the UWI was doing in the NCCs
- in the case of the sometimes alienated graduates, hinted that the UWI was not altogether remote and dispassionate.

Against that backdrop, it is a short step to agreeing with Robotham (2000) that the many complaints usually emanating from the UWI's customers were "trying to point us to some really serious issues that it is our duty to address" and "it would be the height of folly to disregard what ... [they] have been saying to us, sometimes not so politely..." (p. 239). There are some practical reasons also why they should not go unheeded.

Developments in Entrepreneurism

There were some specific politico-economic circumstances, albeit not peculiar to this region, which suggested that the UWI,⁴ in carrying out these studies, was responding to the 'relevance call' by governments/policy-makers and customers (including students, graduates, employers, parents, sponsors, supporters). It was also discharging the recommendations of 'Governance' and meeting the objectives and spirit of its 'Strategic Plan, 1997-2002'. The following were particularly pertinent to developing and transitional countries, where HE institutions were most vulnerable:

- decreasing financial support from public coffers as a result of the dire economic crises governments faced, resulting from the globalisation of international markets for goods, services and capital; the disintegration of socialism and the Cold War, diverted attention - and finance - away from many developing countries (Clayton, 2000; Bernal, 2000a, 2000b)
- rapid technological innovation in communications and informatics (the 'death of distance' - Bernal, 2000b, quoting Frances Cairncross (1997)) which placed the least financially endowed institutions of HE at a distinct disadvantage
- reductions in scholarships/bursaries to would-be students or customers
- increased penetration and competition from extra-regional/international universities
- the sometimes cheaper cost in accessing overseas institutions of HE - the question of cost and affordability.

There was also a recognition that this region needs far more of its human resources educated at the tertiary level. Indeed, Miller (2000) has clearly shown how far behind the Commonwealth Caribbean is with regard to meeting its very own target of providing tertiary education opportunities to 20% of the 18- to 24-year age group by about 2007 (p. 126ff). Having to meet the 'relevance problem' and, simultaneously, the increasing demands to expand enrolment has inevitably led to what Robotham (2000) views as the dilemma of reconciling quantity and quality. As he pertinently asserted, "it is quantity of a high quality that counts and not quantity by itself" (p. 238).

Such constraints have led universities in both developing and developed regions to actively seek ways and means

of reconciling academic integrity, and some may add purity, with economic pragmatism leading to the phenomenon, 'entrepreneurial university'. This may be understood by considering Bannock and his colleague's (1992) definition of the term entrepreneur, "an economic agent who perceives market opportunities and assembles the factors of production to exploit them...The essence of the entrepreneur, therefore, is that he is alert to gaps in the market which others do not see and is able to raise the finance and other resources ... to exploit the market that he initiates" (p. 135). Hence, the entrepreneurial university must adopt the marketing concept by attempting to be more effective than its competitors "in creating, delivering, and communicating customer value to its chosen target market " (Kotler, 2000, p. 19). This also implies that universities today cannot presume what is best for the prospective customer or consumer, as they or their architects arrogantly did in the past. In today's HE climate, such decisions must reasonably be left to the free market.

The issue of human capital and its pivotal role in the knowledge economy (Hersh in Fairweather, 1988) has come to the fore. Universities must be seen by the societies in which they operate as actively assisting in resolving economic ailments. This is contrary to the concept of aloof and detached universities, "the concept of colleges and universities as ivory towers removed from external pressures" (Fairweather, 1988, p. 16). The ivory tower image, critics contend, is "nonproductive and, in reality, a myth" (*ibid.*, p. 16). A closer look at some of the advantages of industry-university partnerships underscores the urgency of this phenomenon for the UWI and the region:

- heightened faculty and student understanding and acquaintance with "real world" problems and issues; associated with this is the attraction of universities which improve students' chances of job experience during their studies, and enhanced employment prospects after graduation (Schutte, n.d.).
- increased access by faculty and students to state-of-the-art technology which universities may not control, due to their financial circumstances
- means of accessing industry personnel who may augment teaching faculty on part-time bases
- enhanced university revenue as a result of commercialization of faculty research breakthroughs (may result in improvement of decaying physical plants and facilities); spin-off companies are the instruments linking university research to final products (Schutte, n.d.)
- supposedly improved public image and funding for universities which are perceived to be relevant to their respective countries' or regions' economies (Fairweather, 1988)
- increased recruitment by universities which are viewed as more politically and socially eligible (Schutte, n.d.)

Against this background, the following, by no means complete, are broad entrepreneurial practices:

- engaging in contracted or sponsored research projects or training programmes
- providing consultancy expertise/services
- inter-university arrangements involving hybrid or co-operative programmes/agreements (also called "twinning programmes" or "articulation programmes") (Dos Santos, 2000, p. 6)
- establishing spin-off companies or industrial parks/incubators to supply their own products (testing and sales of the products by incubators within Science Parks)
- teaching and research support from industry taking the form of endowments for chairs and fellowships and royalties related to intellectual property
- designing, developing, delivering, and marketing of innovative credit and non-credit offerings; customers include, for example, members of the public and private sectors in need of gaining skills specifically tailored for their jobs
- using nontraditional time periods for innovative, creative, and financially rewarding programmes
- modernising and consolidating campuses/university estates in collaboration with private sector interests in order to attract world-class research groups with the lure of comparable first class teaching and research facilities
- patenting/licensing/franchising -- the HE institution (franchiser) grants another institution (franchisee) the right to provide the franchiser's programmes/qualifications in the franchisee's host country (Dos

The Survey Results and Entrepreneurial Practice

With regard to Dominica and the NCCs on a whole, the term "entrepreneurship," as understood in the conventional sense might be a misnomer, since they are not industrial societies, properly speaking. Rather than consider entrepreneurship in the restricted sense of 'industry-university partnership', therefore, it is more convenient and pertinent to speak of 'business-university partnership', 'corporate-university partnership', or, 'adaptive university' (Davies in Schutte, n.d.). In certain instances, it is also possible to substitute the term 'relationship' for 'partnership' to connote a looser arrangement. Another caution is that, in the case of Dominica and the NCCs, entrepreneurship may have more to do with the long-term goal of developing human capital, as opposed to partnerships which result in product development and profit (Fairweather, 1988).

Revisiting the UWI's past sheds some light on two historical perceptions which, arguably, the Dominica Pilot and NCC studies sought to redress:

1. The university intellectual community was isolated, by choice, in its ivory tower, first at Mona, and then at St. Augustine and Cave Hill, apparently indifferent to the concerns and dreams of the people of the region, particularly, no doubt, the NCCs.
2. The marked centralized nature of the UWI - the UWI in the 'big' islands - leading to pressures for decentralization: the result was the establishment of the St. Augustine and Cave Hill campuses; the matter did not end there, however, since the NCCs:

... demanded an increased physical presence by the university in their territories, not only in order to broaden access to higher education locally, but also to ensure that the financial and other benefits accruing to the campus territories as a result of their association with the university would be shared more equitably with the other islands (Cobley, 2000, p. 19).

Thus, the number of resident tutors was increased from two to seven, university centres having been established in Antigua, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, St. Kitts, St. Lucia and St. Vincent (*ibid.*, p. 19). Observing the four objectives of the UWI's 'Strategic Plan', it is also possible to find some motivation for the studies:

1. To enhance its role as a development reservoir for the region's country and people by equipping more of the young people in disciplines important for realizing international competitiveness, giving particular emphasis to Science and Technology, Management and International Business; and by continuously updating the professional capability of the graduates in the work force by way of opportunities for postgraduate training and continuing education.
2. To fully participate in improving and expanding the capability of the region's Tertiary Level Institutions (TLIs) so that, together and in partnership, UWI and the TLIs can more effectively meet the human resource needs of the region and better position its people to achieve much higher incomes and standards of living against the backdrop of 'wide open' economies which deregulation, the technological revolution, the knowledge economy, and the globalisation process have generated.
3. To be a student friendly university, providing high quality instruction and a pleasant climate for students in their pursuit of academic and other university activities.
4. To make the UWI more financially self-reliant by increasing its internal efficiency, positioning itself to secure additional income and actively competing for grant funds from national and international institutions and other private benefactors.

The foregoing might be summarized thus, "to more effectively meet the human resource needs of the region and better position its people to achieve much higher incomes and standards of living." To achieve this, therefore, it was necessary for the UWI to do some marketing research: It needed to assess its customer satisfaction, preferences, attitudes, goodwill, and even future buying behaviour (Kotler, 2000; Kotler & Armstrong, 2000). It was not merely a fact-finding mission, having been undertaken against the backdrop of a specific problem: the 'relevance problem'.

Dessler (2000) defined human capital as, "the knowledge, education, training, skills, and expertise of a firm's workers" (p. 11). He asserted that human capital is more important now than it has ever been. He also noted that, "organizations today must grapple with revolutionary trends -- accelerating product and technological change,

globalized competition, deregulation, demographic changes, and trends towards a service society and the information age. These trends have dramatically increased the degree of competition in virtually all industries ... Companies in such an environment either become competitive high-performers or they die " (p. 13). With regard to the knowledge society, Bernal (2000a) pointed out that by 2000, approximately 70 per cent of all jobs in Europe and the USA will demand cerebral deftness rather than manual skill. Half of such abstract-skill occupations, he maintained, required university-trained personnel or the equivalent professional qualifications. It seems, therefore, that the UWI has a full timetable as the designated regional university.

With this in mind, did the survey findings contain implications for the 'relevance problem' and for entrepreneurial practice? Whether expressed as strengths or weaknesses, it is possible to detect eight distinct issues or themes, from the comments of the Dominican graduates:

- opportunities for real-world working experience/training through job-placements or internships during the course of studies - the balance between theory and practice
- teamwork or collaborative endeavours in the execution of projects or problem-solving
- the extent to which Caribbean material/literature generally, and the NCC's context in particular, were embodied in the UWI courses/lectures
- the modernity and scope of the library stock
- opportunities for formal learning of computer skills
- the impact of the semester system on learning
- the quality of interaction between students and lecturers
- the physical learning environment, specifically the classroom/laboratory sizes in relation to number of students.

Before assessing the graduate findings, two observations are necessary:

- the sample is small ($n = 30$) so that what is revealed is merely indicative; however, it must be noted that the Dominican results were more or less consistent with the NCCs results as a whole, particularly in terms of responses to the open-ended questions, which means that one may have confidence in the trends they yielded;
- graduates' responses to the closed-ended questions revealed a more positive estimation of the UWI than their responses to the open-ended questions suggested; hence, there were sometimes contradictions between quantitative and qualitative results.

Some caution is therefore urged in reading the results although one should by no means treat indifferently the opinions expressed by graduates since it might be assumed that responding to open-ended questions is a more active and deliberate exercise compared to closed-ended questions where the problem of the 'response set' or 'bias' is possible.

In general, the majority of graduates believed that the academic content of their degrees was relevant to their intended career (97%), their current job (90%), and was up-to-date (76%). The majority also indicated that their learning experiences honed their research (78%), communication (66%), teamwork (79%), and leadership (54%) skills, and provided them with a Caribbean outlook (70%). Most were agreed also that classroom space (72%), library stock (63%), and interaction between students and lecturers (62%) were conducive to learning.

Notwithstanding, there were consequential minorities who were either not satisfied or could not determine the modernity/recency (24%) of the academic content of their courses, the research (22%), communication (35%), and leadership (46%) skills acquired in the pursuit of their degrees. In terms of inculcating a Caribbean perspective, 30% had reservations. With regard to aspects conducive to learning, it must be noted that 28% were dissatisfied with the classroom space, 37% with the library stock, and 38% with interaction with lecturers.

Perhaps most enlightening were the findings in terms of the opportunity to develop computer skills, the skill felt to be an indispensable part of human capital development in contemporary society. The majority (62%) judged that they did not acquire computer skills while pursuing their degrees. The remarks by graduates later will enhance readers' understanding of the indications yielded by the quantitative results. It will also be noted that some of the

anxieties expressed by the graduates coincided with those of their employers as well.

Bearing all those issues in mind, a look at some of the actual comments by the graduates is illuminating. Once again, whether positive or negative, they indicate what the graduates saw as important in their education and job experiences. **Table 1** provides some examples of the comments by graduates on the academic content of their degrees.

Table 1

Examples of Graduates' Comments on Academic Content of Degrees

Graduates' Comments on Academic Content of Degrees
"The academic content of my degree was highly theoretical and was geared more towards students tending towards postgraduate/research work. It lacked practicality and in this regard has left a feeling of inadequacy in the first few years of the working life" (Civil Engineering graduate)
"I find my present job not anywhere as challenging as I was prepared for at UWI. However it was essential to my total career development...Most importantly my studies educated me about business not just regionally but internationally -- a solid background was obtained at UWI." (Management Studies graduate)
"In Computer Science a network module was not offered. That is not in keeping with current work places where almost all large offices are networked." (Mathematics & Computer Science graduate)
"Emphasis should be placed on current programming languages (what is in demand)." (Mathematics & Computer Science graduate)
"The University should seriously consider increasing the number of majors available (e.g., B.Sc in Marketing, Masters in New Venture Management). On-the-job training at various organisations or companies throughout the region should also be considered (e.g., one month Summer attachments on the job)." (Management Studies graduate)
"The topics covered in all modules are very relevant to my current job. I do believe however, that a period of internship could prepare us even better particularly with regards to budget preparations and practical leadership skills and stress management." (Management Studies graduate)
"There should be an opportunity to gain practical experience since too much emphasis was placed on theory." (Management Studies graduate)
"The academic content was satisfactory. However I believe that the semester system makes it difficult to really absorb and properly analyse the areas covered. There [was] never enough time. Furthermore, some of the topics/subjects should be more practical; for example, Operations Management, Industrial Relations, where there should have been some field work." (Management Studies graduate)
"The degree programme because of its intensity allowed for a superficial appreciation of

the courses rather than the profound understanding I would have preferred." (History & Education graduate)

"Some of the latest technology sadly is lacking." (Medical graduate)

"The academic content of my degree was very specific to the subject area. However, more time could have been spent exposing students to the situations and experiences which may be encountered in the field of work." (Civil Engineering graduate)

"The academic content should be complemented strongly by practicals and attachment to relevant institutions or organisations in order for one to develop fully in the subject area." (Agronomy graduate)

"Generally, the academic content was good but I think that greater emphasis should be placed on making the courses more meaningful to the Caribbean, e.g., the Genetics part of the course could concentrate on applications in agriculture, medicine and the environment." (Biology & Chemistry graduate)

From **Table 1**, it is clear that graduates hoped for:

- course content which was relevant to what they might encounter in the labour market
- formal opportunities/openings for attachments to industry/corporations pertinent to the degrees they undertook so that, at graduation, they would be able to claim practical experience as part of their degree training
- more up-to-date and higher demand computing programmes/languages, especially in computer science degree programmes where graduates would be expected to 'hit the ground running'
- proficiency in the use and understanding of the computer as a foundation in all degree programmes
- an appreciation for regional and international contexts, especially in courses in management, international business, trade, politics, and so on
- broader coverage in their courses
- familiarity with state-of-the-art technology in scientifically- and technologically-based fields.

Table 2 presents some examples of the comments by graduates on the learning experiences which they encountered while pursuing their degrees. It is quite possible to argue that the learning experience⁵ and the circumstances surrounding that experience are as much a part of the degree as the actual content per se. Indeed, some may claim it might even be more important and its effects more enduring in terms of graduates' preparation for life.

Table 2

Examples of Graduates' Comments on Learning Experiences while pursuing Degrees

Graduates' Comments on Learning Experiences while pursuing Degrees

"Heavy emphasis was placed on computer skills and teamwork. One of the major advantages was the ability to relate different theories to a Caribbean perspective. As part of our programme, there were two internship periods, which began the process for the work [*sic*] world of tourism." (Tourism Management graduate)

"Group work, through labs and assignments encouraged teamwork as well as individual assignments which helped one to work independently. Computer skills were not emphasised ... although one was forced to develop some basic skills. I think interaction with other Caribbean students on a social level in particular contributed towards learning experiences." (Civil Engineering graduate)

"Too much emphasis placed on Trinidad, Barbados and Jamaica. Not enough examples [are] used from smaller Caribbean islands. Not enough is known about smaller Caribbean islands." (Social Sciences graduate)

"Concentrated exclusively on the theories of Law. Failed to give attention to the development of other aspects which would make one a well-rounded individual." (Law graduate)

"Programme was focused too strongly on academics; not enough practicals e.g., hardware maintenance." (Mathematics & Computer Science graduate)

"The extensive use of group work enabled me to learn from the experiences of other persons as well as be able to express myself verbally." (Management & Public Sector Management graduate)

"I believe there is still much to be desired from acquiring a Caribbean perspective on management issues. Much of the material were [sic] from outside of the region - even the case studies as well." (Management Studies graduate)

"The programme offered no opportunities for computer skills...In addition I felt that there was not much information on the Caribbean situation and trade issues, the unique economic and social situation in each island." (Management Studies graduate)

"I was very disappointed with my learning experience through the computer which is an integral part of an accounting career. I was only exposed to the computer perhaps for one week. The Management Information System course was more theoretical than practical." (Accounting graduate)

"I have become a more mature and analytical person and realise more forcefully that management means taking decisions which affect people...Additionally, I became more aware of the issues and problems faced by Caribbean people; the importance of working together as a team to improve our future and in general, the realization that we need each other to make organisations more efficient and effective. Very important also is the whole issue of being proactive. Our success depends heavily on this attitude." (Management Studies graduate)

"There is a need to increase exposure to computer skills -- this was very limited and optional. As well, the practical hands-on experience was sadly lacking and grossly inadequate. It in fact only prepared one for embarrassment by farmers in the world of work." (Agronomy graduate)

From their comments, graduates once again placed a premium on,

- the computer as a pedagogical tool, facility in its use being viewed as a boon for their future working

lives

- pedagogy which emphasized analysis and critical thinking
- the ability to work competently in teams, but also, when necessary, the ability to work on individual tasks
- interaction with other Caribbean students, not only in an informal way, but in an organized and systematic fashion
- a pan-Caribbean perspective in teaching and examinations rather than a provincial campus country approach
- broad experiences which engendered well-rounded individuals.

In **Table 3**, some examples of the comments by graduates in respect of the factors they deemed conducive to learning are presented.

Table 3

Examples of Graduates' Comments on factors Conducive to Learning

Graduates' Comments on factors Conducive to Learning
"The computer lab needs to be more available to students doing research papers or project papers. The programmes also need to be more up-to-date. The library facility is adequate if books are there when one needs them." (Economics & Management graduate)
"The need has arisen for the University to be more student friendly coupled with a further increase in student/lecturer interaction and quality and quantity of feedback....Workshops/seminars on resume/CV writing and job interviewing skills must be introduced." (Management Studies graduate)
"There is a need for more computer facilities and more [<i>sic</i>] book stock."
"The computer facilities leave much room for improvement. These need to be updated both in software and in quantity to match the needs of students." (Civil Engineering graduate)
"My experience at Cave Hill along with many ... others was a traumatic and frightful one. The more I speak to my colleagues scattered throughout the Caribbean is the more we get flashbacks of a period in our lives not worth remembering. We must, as Caribbean people, do something to let our people think of their university days as happy ones, not sad ones." (Law graduate)
"Computers should be made available to students. A lot of things that should be done in labs are not done because either it is too expensive or not available. I think that these excuses are unacceptable." (Biology & Chemistry graduate)
"We were reminded daily of the dedication and commitment required to work in the Tourism Industry, which mentally prepared me for the pressures of the Industry." (Tourism Management graduate)

Evidently, there were four major themes emerging here, namely:

- greater accessibility to computers and computer laboratories
- up-to-date computer hardware and software
- a more student-friendly and caring institution
- larger and more up-to-date book and periodical stock.

[Appendix A](#) presents five tables with comments by Dominican employer respondents⁶ on the following aspects of the UWI graduates' competencies:

- breadth and depth of knowledge base (**Table A1**)
- collaborative/teamwork skills (**Table A2**)
- technical competencies (**Table A3**)
- flexibility and adaptiveness (**Table A4**)
- leadership qualities (**Table A5**).

From the Dominican employers' remarks, the main themes emerging, and which seemed important attributes for graduates to possess, were:

- analytical and problem-solving skills
- a business/entrepreneurial sense
- comprehension or grasp of matters relating to their areas of competence
- ability to take the initiative and assume responsibility
- ability to work in teams without feeling their sense of identity or independence threatened
- brief learning (experience) curve
- ability to adjust quickly when transferred to new departments, tasks etc., or in circumstances of job rotation
- conflict resolution skills.

Additionally, the 21 respondents in the pilot study pointed to some critical areas which they thought the UWI ought to give some attention to with regard to its graduates.

- Engagement in current pan-Caribbean and international issues and a regional, rather than provincial, outlook.
- Ample experience prior to graduates' entry into the labour market which will enhance their ability to bridge the gap between theory and practice.
- Systematic interface with computers, computer systems and state-of-the-art technology generally, thus minimizing the marked computer shyness and 'technophobia' noted in graduates.
- The inculcation of a business or entrepreneurial sense as well as a professional ethos and positive work ethic; assertiveness and buoyancy were other necessary work characteristics which needed to be honed.

Employers and graduates also made definite recommendations, in addition to those which might be gleaned from their various comments. For instance, they suggested that the UWI needed to:

- systematically and formally work closely with regional governments in order to determine priority areas which would form the basis for curricula planning and development

- develop short courses, refresher courses and the like, as part of its CE and DE programmes, particularly tailored to the needs (time-tabling, convenience, content) of businesses and their professional staff (graduates and non-graduates alike)
- increasingly emphasize the distance mode and do everything possible to ensure efficient delivery, maintaining the academic integrity and standard of courses pursued by distance so that those participating in such courses did not feel they were receiving an inferior product
- undertake more political, economic and social research in the NCCs as a matter of policy
- in the absence of campuses, empower its centres (Schools of Continuing Studies) in the NCCs to take the lead in critically leading debate, resolutions etc. to critical issues in the political, social and economic lives of the people
- require its graduates, irrespective of their discipline, to do management and business courses which will better prepare them for the labour market since most, they argued, commenced their graduate working lives at the middle-management level; further, the courses in management and business should inculcate an entrepreneurial sense in graduates.

It is thus possible to recognize, in the observations, criticisms, reflections and recommendations by both graduates and their employers, several concerns which, perhaps unwittingly, correspond to the benefits which may be derived from business-university partnerships or relationships. Further, it is quite logical to argue that many of the above-mentioned submissions would be implausible unless the UWI and businesses in the NCCs, as well as the campus countries, were willing to bridge the 'distance' between academe and the business world.

One of the benefits of business-university partnerships, for instance, is that universities will become increasingly aware of "real world" problems. Employers and graduates alike have alluded to this in their comments. If internship or job attachment arrangements are institutionalised as part of the degree courses, then businesses will not only feel that their input and circumstances are valued, but they will soon recognize that they will be contributing towards the training of the well-rounded, adaptable, trained and trainable future employees they hanker for. The UWI itself will benefit from a good image which can result from the knowledge and perception by society of UWI graduates (its products) who are au fait with what is happening in the "real world." In science and technology-based disciplines, such as Engineering, Agronomy and Applied Chemistry, the likely impact of a successful breakthrough by UWI students in resolving a problem while on (say) summer attachment might well be imagined. The benefits will redound to students, business, the UWI, and lest we forget, the region.

But not only undergraduates and graduates need be involved in such arrangements. When employers spoke of the UWI becoming involved in research in the NCCs, they were also alluding to faculty becoming more accessible to business, even in advisory roles. This must of course be something which is systematic and institutional rather than random and individual. Additionally, the UWI could benefit, especially through its distance education, by deliberately using professionals/practitioners as local tutors. Employers were also asking for CE courses in areas specific to their particular areas of business, for instance, social security, credit union, and banking. In the absence of such local avenues, they argued, many dollars were being spent in sending employees to overseas institutions to access such courses.

In respect of CE, employers suggested that the UWI find ways of making this more accessible to employees without the latter having to leave their families, jobs and countries. This is important to an NCC like Dominica. The UWI will need to think of ways of getting businesses to see the benefits to be gained through investment in endeavours such as computer-based training (CBT), training via CD-ROM and the Internet, teletraining, and other technologically related learning modes. The UWI has shown through developments in its DE programmes that it is prepared to move further in that direction. CBT programmes can be very cost effective once designed and produced; they may reduce learning time by an average of 50%; there is instructional dependability (humans, unlike computers have good and bad days); increased retention and trainee motivation (Dessler, 2000).

But even in the shorter term, a project by the Canadian Honeywell manufacturing plant is a fitting model and has particular relevance to an NCC like Dominica. That plant formed a partnership with a local community college in Canada to deliver college-level courses to all factory employees, giving them an opportunity to earn college diplomas and certificates (*ibid.*). The UWI, for instance, may want to consider a franchise arrangement with the Clifton Dupigny Community College in that regard. Summarizing the rationale for business-university partnerships, Fairweather (1988) says that:

The primary motivation for [business] to form partnerships with institutions of higher education is to

fulfill requirements for human capital. For [business]-university liaisons, considerations involving human capital include access to undergraduate and graduate students who may become future employees, access to faculty who are experts in relevant technical fields, and provision of continuing education for professionals. (p. 20)

He adds that utilizing part-time faculty from industry can enhance instructional quality at universities. They could bring their 'real world' experience to bear on the theoretical aspects of the subject. Marshall's (2000) concern about the heavy emphasis on mathematics in economics at the UWI, driven by an abiding preoccupation with "science as empiricism and formulae", rather than training economics undergraduates in the substantive logic and 'art' of economics, must be noted. Practitioners as tutors can promote the latter with their intuitive real world experiences and may even be able to contribute to curricula change.

Businesses can also, for instance, endow chairs and thereby increase the UWI's chances of attracting outstanding and experienced professionals to its faculty. This happens in the campus countries but, arguably, the UWI will need to be more visible in the NCCs before businesses will wholeheartedly adopt such an approach. All of this would contribute to addressing the 'relevance problem'. Specifically, such qualities as analytical/problem-solving skills, business/entrepreneurial ethos, ability to take the initiative and assume responsibility, and acquiring vocational experience, will all be derived from a closer union between the UWI and businesses in the NCCs. From their comments, it appears that the employers would like to see the UWI become the natural destination for continuously upgrading the technical and professional skills of its present employees and training future ones.

There appears to be an abiding concern with the 'techno-savvy' of the UWI graduates. Evidently, this concern cannot be ignored. Here again is a call for relevance. Employers and graduates are expressing the need for computer skills to be treated as a fundamental aspect of the training of every graduate. In particular, students in areas such as Accounting, Economics (and Econometrics), Statistics and Demography, should be conversant with the specialised computer software in these areas. All in all, one hears the call by employers for employees who will give their organisations the competitive edge. Beyond computers per se is the aspect of information technology (IT), an area which many Caribbean countries are viewing as a possible beneficial sphere of economic activity (Reichgelt, 2000). Employers thus appear to be looking to the UWI for training potential employees in this universally lucrative area.

In the short run, all of the above will not bring a financial windfall for the UWI, or indeed for business. Indeed, it is quite easy to become skeptical about the entire endeavour. Governments in the NCCs may claim that there are no additional funds available to accommodate new ideas; the private sector may claim that they do not have sufficiently large numbers of employees to warrant large financial investments, and they may wish to see at the outset some evidence of the benefits to be derived from partnership with the UWI. Why the UWI, they may ask. Put otherwise, there is a cultural barrier to traverse. In spite of the very useful and enthusiastic suggestions of employers, Nettleford's (2000) distress regarding the entrepreneurial spirit of private sectors in developing countries is worth repeating here:

[Our] private sectors are more often than not dependent, powerless, manipulable and remain the commission agents that history has recommended them to be, with no long-lasting traditions of or real experience in innovative risk taking ...Making the private sector the engine of economic growth is therefore a far more difficult task in developing countries. And the universities, if divested or deregulated by the state power, are not likely to receive competent or willing tenders from among [the] private sector... (p. 28)

With a very small industrial base in the Caribbean in general and the NCCs and Dominica in particular, the UWI finds itself with very limited options. The fact is that many of its graduates are employed in the public and quasi-public sectors - these will therefore continue to be its main customers for the foreseeable future - and *ipso facto*, entrepreneurship will be of a different nature compared to what obtains in developed countries. As emphasised above, the objective is, in the long run, to add value to human capital in Dominica and the NCCs. The UWI will have to sell all of this to its target market in Dominica and the NCCs. How can it approach this task?

Conclusion: Marketing Implications for the UWI

In carrying out the surveys in the NCCs, the UWI adopted the marketing concept⁷ which maintains that the achievement of organisational goals depends upon ascertaining the needs and wants of target markets and delivering what customers want, more effectively and efficiently than competitors (Kotler, 2000; Kotler & Armstrong, 2001; Kotler, Bowen & Makens, 1999). Indeed, given the region's financial constraints, the competition between essential social services for funding, and rising demand for HE, the UWI ought to go a step further and

adopt the 'societal marketing concept' which, in addition to the philosophy of the marketing concept, maintains that the customer's and society's well-being must not be compromised (*ibid.*).

In order to actualize the societal marketing concept, the UWI must bridge the gap between quality and quantity referred to earlier, and, importantly, respond to the signals of its graduates and their employers in designing its product. The issues which the Strategic Plan's four objectives (see Strategic Plan, 1997-2002, p.1ff) address appear to correspond to the 'marketing mix', the mechanisms - product, price, promotion, and place (the four Ps) - a firm employs in order to accomplish its marketing objectives in its target market (Kotler, 2000; Kotler & Armstrong, 2001). Gingrich (1996) has fittingly applied the four Ps to HE institutions. In [Appendix B](#) the present author has tabulated a comparison between the four objectives of the Strategic Plan, the four Ps, and Gingrich's questions regarding the four Ps (Severin, 2000). It is obvious from the table that, in order to accomplish the objectives of its 'Strategic Plan' and consequently meet the needs of its customers in Dominica and the NCCs, the UWI should be conscious of the fact that, in customers' minds, the products' quality and price are not treated separately; additionally, they place much emphasis these days on logistics such as delivery mode, scheduling, locations (place factors). Importantly, the UWI must inform its target customers in attractive ways, about its offerings in the face of rising competition.

Such competition (see [Appendix C](#) for foreign tertiary level providers in the Caribbean) also has marketing implications for another aspect of the UWI, namely its image. Much of what the Dominican employers and graduates expressed went beyond actual experience. It reflected their beliefs, ideas and impressions of the UWI. These are inextricably bound to employers' experience of the performance of their graduate employees and, from the point of view of the latter, their UWI learning experience. It also derives from a general impression of the impact or presence of the UWI in the NCCs. Put otherwise, the UWI's **brand image** is dependent upon the experiences of employers, graduates and the society at large of its product attributes "as filtered by the effects of selective perception, selective distortion, and selective retention" (Kotler, 2000, p. 180).

To the potential buyer, the UWI Coat of Arms is basically its "promise to deliver a specific set of features, benefits, and services consistently to the buyers" (Kotler, 2000, p. 404). Brands can convey up to six levels of meaning - attitudes, benefits, values, culture, personality, user (*ibid.*). Ideally, a brand must be promoted on several levels. Its values, culture and personality will outlast its attributes, benefits and (very possibly) its users. The present author has attempted in **Table 4** to customize the six levels of meaning inherent in brands to the UWI's circumstances by posing questions which are useful for analysing how the UWI is proceeding. In the first column, Kotler's (2000) illustration of the Mercedes is retained so that readers may make their own comparisons (Severin, 2000).

Table 4. Six Levels of Meaning inherent in Brands and the Implications for the UWI

Brand Levels of Meaning	Self-test Questions for the UWI
<p>Attributes - expensive, well-built, well-engineered, durable, high-prestige automobiles</p>	<p>Is a UWI qualification viewed as prestigious? Is it much sought after in comparison to that of other institutions? Is the UWI itself high profile? Are there outstanding UWI alumni in my community, in my country, in the region, outside the region? Are UWI degrees quickly invalidated at the workplace? Do UWI graduates <i>hit the ground running</i>? Do employers seek out UWI graduates? Are UWI graduates technologically savvy?</p>
<p>Benefits - attributes are translated into functional and emotional benefits e.g., "durable" could be translated into the functional benefit "I won't have to buy another car for several years;" the attribute "expensive" into the emotional benefit "The car makes me feel important and admired."</p>	<p>Do UWI graduates fear that the UWI will fold up due to financial crisis making their degrees worthless in a few years time? Will they have to scurry to get other degrees elsewhere? Does the UWI degree make them feel important and part of an admired and envied (in the positive sense) group?</p>
<p>Values - says something about the producer's values; Mercedes stands for high performance, safety, and prestige.</p>	<p>Does the UWI stand for high calibre, quality, and distinction? Does the UWI Coat of Arms conjure up positive images in the mind? Does it have that awe-inspiring effect on people? Is the UWI seen by</p>

	graduates and others as an international centre for learning and research? Does the Caribbean public perceive the UWI as a place where useful and relevant research is done?
Culture - may represent a certain culture; the Mercedes represents German culture: organized, efficient, high quality.	Does the UWI graduate personify the positive aspects of Caribbean culture and ethos: buoyant, competitive, fighting spirit, determination? Does the UWI degree give one a globalizing outlook, i.e., both "think global' and 'act local'?" (Kotler, 2000, p. 680)
Personality - project a certain personality; Mercedes may suggest a no-nonsense boss (person), a reigning lion (animal), or an austere palace (object).	Does the UWI graduate characterize a business-like, professional, serious employer or employee?
User - the kind of consumer who buys or uses the product; we expect to see a 55-year-old top executive behind the wheel of a Mercedes, not a 20-year-old secretary.	What are the characteristics of the graduates and potential graduates? (This question is fundamental to carrying out market segmentation.)

The issues contained in **Table 4** have ramifications for the UWI in Dominica and the NCCs:

- graduates with first degrees from the UWI may not be inclined to pursue postgraduate degrees if they were disappointed with their first experience, academically and otherwise;
- potential customers may or may not be disposed to attend the UWI depending on their perceptions of the quality of education there, which they invariably would receive from graduates and competitor propaganda;
- employers' decisions to hire graduates of the UWI or to partner with it in terms of sandwich or industrial courses might be closely related to their perceptions of the quality of its training and degrees;
- industry's/business's motivation to partner with the University is closely linked to the former's perceptions of the relevance, applicability, quality, and tradition of the latter's research (Severin, 2000).

With the foregoing in mind, this paper recommends that the UWI:

1. Establishes a formal structure for keeping employers informed of course offerings, the employment benefits/skills of such courses, and other such matters.
2. Creates a more formal structure for consultancy services in the form of a consultancy "firm". Its role, among other things, will be to utilize the expertise of UWI staff. It will also be the structure which ensures that the rules governing consultancies by staff are adhered to, even if formal sanctions have to come from the relevant university committee(s). The consultancy firm within the UWI will be the formal link between the UWI and business or industry.
3. Develops an office with responsibility for the UWI's international and regional marketing and customer service. This office will be run by a marketing communications director - what Kotler and Armstrong (2001) refer to as a 'marcom' manager, who, with his/her department, will implement integrated marketing communications (IMC) ⁸ and have overall responsibility for the University's marketing efforts. Such an office will have formal links to the university centres so that it does not become a Mona, Cave Hill or St. Augustine affair. The office will also embrace functions such as marketing research, marketing public relations, marketing audit, international links, and co-operative programmes.
4. Ensures as much as possible that curricula reflects the contemporary market's requirement for multi-skilled graduates who will very likely have to fill several jobs in the course of their working lives. On the basis of research in the target market, the UWI can find out the more pressing areas of need in terms of short courses as well as programmes geared to upgrade the skills of graduates (and others) in their respective jobs.
5. Draws upon students in resolving practical problems in the work place. For instance, there is no

reason why, as part of the training of computer science students, the latter should not be able to write programmes for businesses or corporations. This has the benefit of keeping lecturers and students up-to-date and practical. The example can be extended to other areas/disciplines. For instance, the business departments could set up small/medium business development incubators which, as the name implies, will be geared towards solving the real problems of small to medium businesses in the region. Such businesses usually have problems in accounting, writing business plans, and the like. This is an opportunity for the UWI to lend its expertise, train its students, and earn money.

- Semesterizes Summer School so that it becomes a third semester. This gives the programme more clout and educational value and therefore will bring in more international students and foreign revenue. There is also the advantage of allowing students to complete their degree programmes more rapidly. The latter would be beneficial to both the University and its customers in the sense that the option of completing one's programme sooner makes the programme more attractive and therefore increases enrolment; but it also is more cost-effective for the students who are away from home and who wish to complete their programmes sooner so that they can get on with their lives. This would be particularly beneficial for students in the NCCs (Severin, 2000).⁹

Appendix A

Comments by Dominican Employers on UWI Graduates' Competencies

Table A1

Comments by Employers on the Breadth/Depth of Graduates' Knowledge Base

The Breadth/Depth of General Knowledge Base
"The analytical skills of the graduates might be lacking."
"They seem to run into problems because the quantity of work done at UWI is such that, it is difficult for them to retain much so that in the end they seem to have vague ideas of many things but not sufficient details..."
"[They] do not possess a business sense."
"It might be difficult to say for sure because these people have been with us prior to leaving for study at UWI so they have had some experience with the Bank. However, it can be said that their confidence has increased as a result of the acquisition of more knowledge."
"It is satisfactory but the question of whether it is enough for jobs undertaken, the answer will be NO. [We have] always had to complement training done at UWI with training for certain job-specific functions."

Table A2

Comments by Employers on the Collaborative/Teamwork Skills or abilities of Graduates.

Collaborative teamwork skills or abilities
"Collaboration can be a bit of a problem. There is a feeling by each graduate that he/she must be at the top and this can sometimes hinder teamwork. They are interested in

getting on personally."

"This is a bit weak. There is too much competition now among graduates. There is a tendency to keep information etc. to themselves. There is a tendency to want to keep things to one's self. There is a feeling that passing on information/knowledge will result in a loss to one's self. You have to pry to get them to share ideas, thoughts etc. with each other."

"The profession of Medicine depends on teamwork. The doctor interns do the basic work and communicate any problems encountered with the registrar or consultant. I found that they co-operated quite well and also followed instructions."

"They were okay in terms of understanding what I had asked them to do. The law graduates had a very good relationship with each other and this was not unexpected since they lived together at Cave Hill. Collaborative skills are in fact a *sine qua non* in law. They live up to this. "

"This is okay. There is ... an example where a graduate in the Human Resource Department came up with suggestions for enhancing teamwork at the Bank."

Table A3

Comments by Employers on the Technical Competencies of Graduates.

Technical Competencies

"Sometimes the course has no application to the job. There is no particular management position for instance where a graduate with a degree in Management Studies can fit into and apply everything he/she knows. In this small department you ought to be an all-rounder, must be 'captain and cook'! I find they lack some depth in terms of analytical skills. They do not always display the level of maturity that you would expect in a graduate."

"It takes some time to build up technical competencies. As an intern, you do not know everything at the beginning. Once they have been taught, though, and have gained some experience, they seem quite competent and can manage on their own."

"Anyone who succeeds at Cave Hill would have an ability to do legal research and have a grasp of the law. The law graduates were competent in the area of research (they had the research and analytical tools)."

"Generally good although it may possibly be an individual thing in terms of how the individual might apply himself/herself. Also, some people might have been placed in areas where their qualifications may not have fitted so have had to have further training, e.g., if you have an Accounting degree and were placed in Human Resources, you would need further training."

Table A4

Comments by Employers on the Graduates' Flexibility & Adaptiveness

Flexibility & Adaptiveness

"I would have to say excellent. There are times when they have to go beyond the usual call of duty. I have found the UWI graduates very co-operative under difficult circumstances, e.g., when there is a shortage of staff or when there is an unusually heavy patient workload. Whereas others might become impatient, most UWI graduates will accept the additional workload."

"I have a problem with this. They have difficulty in adapting and changing things around to suit a particular environment. They tend to say to you, "this is how I learnt it and this is the only way I can do it." They don't always seem willing to adapt to different ways of doing things. For example, in working out a math problem, the children may come up with alternative suggestions but the teacher insists that his/her way is the only way and he/she sticks to it. When an alternative method is pointed out to the teacher concerned, he/she tends to be amazed and may sometimes admit that this alternative way was never thought of."

"They have to be able to adapt to being shifted around to different departments e.g., from the ward to the casualty. In being shifted around, they encounter new management, new systems, new protocols. Have performed adequately"

"The economics graduate was able to read certain conference papers and make appropriate comments in areas unrelated to her technical expertise. In terms of the law graduates, they have shown an ability to move from the position of State Attorney to the bench and also to handle administrative work at the Registry."

"They have shown the ability to adapt e.g., a graduate with an Accounting degree was moved to the Human Resources Department and fitted quite well."

Table A5

Comments by Employers on the Leadership Capabilities of Graduates

Leadership Capabilities

"Excellent. I see leadership as going to the front of the pack and leading from [there]. Leadership involves an ability to size up the situation and being able to keep the staff calm and focused until situation is resolved. It involves assessing a situation and providing solutions. It also encompasses defusing a potentially volatile situation and presenting positive and workable solutions. These are critical areas within the primary health care context where UWI graduates have shown much capabilities."

"There are no significant changes in leadership skills after studying. There is one who does not know, for instance, what the junior officer in department is doing. Another operates quite alright. Can do work but cannot seem to supervise."

"This depends on personality and the person's employment background, e.g., if the graduate was a teacher prior to studying and working in this department, you tend to find that (s)he demonstrates greater leadership skills, (s)he can organise better compared to if (s)he was (say) a clerical officer before."

"Have shown this quality especially in terms of taking initiatives and making suggestions for improvements."

Appendix B

The Parallel between the Four Objectives of the Strategic Plan, the Four Ps, and Gingrich's Questions regarding the Four Ps.

Objectives of the UWI Strategic Plan	Marketing Mix (<i>Kotler, 2000; Kotler & Armstrong, 2001</i>)	Gingrich's Questions related to the four Ps
<p>(1) "To enhance its role as a development resource for the peoples and countries of the region through training more of the young people in disciplines which are critical for achieving international competitiveness, giving particular emphasis to Science and Technology, Management and International Business; and by upgrading the professional capability of the graduates in the work force through offering opportunities for postgraduate training and continuing education.... to increase the proportion of students in Science and Technology from 34% in 1995/1996 to closer to 50% by the end of the planning period and to have 20% of its students studying for postgraduate degrees."</p>	<p>Product (variety, quality, design, features, brand name, packaging, services)</p>	<p><i>Product</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is the product? - How does the product compare with that of other institutions? - How can we more effectively market the curriculum, faculty, facilities, and the quality of our students? - How can we market our social, physical and spiritual products? - Is our product, i.e., our programmes, in demand? - Will students overcome real and imagined barriers to take advantage of our product? - What are the demonstrated outcomes of our product?
<p>(2) "To participate fully in upgrading and enlarging the capability of the region's Tertiary Level Institutions (TLIs) so that, together and in partnership, UWI and the TLIs can respond more effectively to the human resource needs of the region and satisfy the aspirations of the citizens to equip themselves to earn improving standards of living in the face of the highly competitive conditions which the technological revolution and the globalisation process have created."</p>	<p>Product (variety, quality, design, features, brand name, packaging, services)</p> <p>Price (list price, discounts, allowances, payment period, credit terms)¶</p> <p>Place (channels, coverage, assortments, locations, inventory, transportation, logistics)</p>	<p>See "product" above</p> <p><i>Price</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How much do we charge for our product? - How does the price compare with our competition? - What are the nondollar costs of attending from the perspective of the student? - How effective is our financial aid programme? - How do we package financial aid? <p><i>Place</i></p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Where are our programmes offered? - Are these places attractive, convenient, safe? - What segments of our target market perceive our location as a positive: what segments perceive it as a negative? - Are people willing to take classes in these places? -What other places might serve us better? - What alternate delivery modes are available? - Are our programmes offered at a time that prospective students find attractive? - Does this time compete with other potential conflicts, family obligations, traffic patterns?
<p>(3) "To be a student friendly University which provides high quality instruction and a congenial atmosphere for students to pursue their academic and other University activities."</p>	<p>Product (variety, quality, design, features, brand name, packaging, services)</p> <p>Place (channels, coverage, assortments, locations, inventory, transportation, logistics)</p>	<p>See "product" and "place" above</p>
<p>(4) "To make the University more financially self-reliant through increasing its internal efficiency, structuring itself to earn additional income and competing actively for grant funds from national and international institutions and other private benefactors."</p>	<p>Promotion (advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations) - activities which publicize the merits of the product, price, and place and persuade target customers (students, employers, industry, government) to buy it.</p>	<p>See "product", "price" and "place" above</p> <p><i>Promotion</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To what mediums (TV, radio, direct mail, multimedia) are our audiences most likely to respond? - What mediums are available in our target locations? - How do our promotional activities compare with those used by the competition? - What mediums can give us an edge?

¶ Though not explicitly related, the Strategic objectives have ramifications for specified P.

Sources. (1) Office of the Vice Chancellery. (1997) Strategic Plan 1997-2002: The University of the West Indies. Barbados, Jamaica, T & T: Canoe Press (2) Larry R. Gingrich (1996). Session 10 Marketing: No longer a dirty word, but what the heck is it? In *33rd Annual Conference of the North American Association of Summer Sessions (Session 10)*. November 17-20, 1996 Vol. 33, 32-42 (3) Phillip Kotler (2000) *Marketing management*. (Millennium ed.) New Jersey: Prentice-Hall (4) Phillip Kotler & Gary Armstrong (2001). *Principles of marketing* (9th ed.). New Jersey: Prentice-Hall. Source refers to the information contained in the table. The table was formulated by author.

Appendix C

Foreign Tertiary Education Providers and their Locations in the Caribbean

Location	University
Bahamas	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Douglas University 2. Nova Southeastern University 3. St. Thomas Moore University 4. University of Miami
Barbados	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. BIMAP (in collaboration with the University of Surrey) 2. BIMAP (in collaboration with the Civil Service College of Singapore & Commonwealth Secretariat)
British Virgin Islands	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Commonwealth Open University 2. SUNY University 3. University of the Virgin Islands 4. Wright State University
Dominica	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CDESP - degree programmes by three Canadian universities (Athabasca, Mount St. Vincent and Memorial) 2. Ross University School of Medicine 3. University of New Orleans
Grenada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St. Georges University
Jamaica	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CDESP - degree programmes by three Canadian universities (Athabasca, Mount St. Vincent and Memorial) 2. Florida State University 3. Nova Southeastern University 4. University of New Orleans 5. University of Wales and Manchester (in collaboration with the Jamaica Institute of Bankers)
Montserrat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • American University of the Caribbean
Saba	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saba University School of Medicine
St. Kitts & Nevis	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Berne University 2. Eastern Caribbean University 3. Grace University

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. International University of the Health Sciences 5. Medical University of the Americas 6. Ross University School of Veterinary Medicine 7. Windsor University School of Medicine
St. Lucia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spartan Health Sciences University
St. Maarten	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • American University of the Caribbean
St. Vincent & the Grenadines	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CDESP - degree programmes by three Canadian universities (Athabasca, Mount St. Vincent and Memorial) 2. Kingstown Medical School
Trinidad & Tobago	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Grace University School of Medicine[¶] 2. Institute of Tertiary Tutors 3. School of Accounting and Management 4. School of Business and Computer Science 5. Omadeen School of Accountancy Limited 6. University of New Brunswick
Region-wide/several regional sites	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ICS Learning Systems 2. Ryerson 3. University of Sheffield,

Sources: Tertiary Level Institution Unit, Mona; Office of the Board for Non-Campus Countries and Distance Education; Project Officer, International Summer School.

¶ At the time of writing, it was not certain whether this university had received approval for operations.

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Footnotes

1Nicholls, N. V., & Head, I. L. (Co-Chairmen). (1994). *A new structure: The regional university in the 1990s and beyond*. Report of the Chancellor's Commission on the Governance of UWI, July 1994. Mona: UWI.

2Antigua & Barbuda, the Bahamas, Belize, Cayman Islands, Dominica, Grenada, St Kitts & Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent & the Grenadines, and the Turks & Caicos. All 12 NCCs were invited to participate.

3Although modifying somewhat their terminology and nomenclature to take into account the differences between the UK and the West Indies, I have tried to maintain the content.

4In this and some other instances, one could substitute OBUS for UWI but the author believes this would cause some unnecessary ambiguity. UWI will be used except where OBUS ought to be specifically mentioned for clarity, as is the case earlier in the paper.

5It is important to note that the UWI has implemented its distinctive Quality Assurance Model, responding to the need to enhance "its academic integrity and reputation as a locally relevant and globally competitive intellectual force" says Pro-Vice Chancellor Hilary Beckles. Dr Peter Whiteley observes that, "the Quality Audit and Assurance system now has the aim of maintaining and raising the quality of the learning experience of the students at UWI as well as providing assurance to the stakeholders, such as students, parents, employers and governments, of the continuing high standards of UWI." See Whiteley, P. (1999/2000). *Quality assurance & audit at the University of the West Indies: Procedures and practices*. OBUS: Mona (pp. ii & 2)

6Since 21 respondents were already interviewed in the pilot study, an additional 10 were interviewed in Dominica during the NCCs Employers' Survey.

7This concept has been variously expressed as "finding needs and filling them"; "making what you can sell instead of trying to sell what you can make"; "have it your way" (Burger King); "partners for profit" and "meeting needs profitably". (United Airlines) (Kotler, 2000; Kotler & Armstrong, 2001; Kotler, Bowen & Makens, 1999).

8According to Kotler and Armstrong (2001), this is the "concept under which a company carefully integrates and coordinates its many communications channels to deliver a clear, consistent, and compelling message about the organization and its products." (p. 515)

9Some of these ideas were formulated from constant discussions and exchanges between Carolyn Hayle, Senior Project Officer, OASIs, and myself. I therefore acknowledge her invaluable suggestions, hints and cues, and sometimes, downright threats.

URL <http://www.uwichill.edu.bb/bnccde/dominica/conference/papers/Severin.html>

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