

September opening for UWI South campus

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After a two year delay, the University of the West Indies South Campus is finally ready to be opened for the September 2020 academic term.

Principal Brian Copeland made this revelation in a letter sent to Oropouche East MP Dr Roodal Moonilal on Wednesday.

Moonilal had written to Copeland since September last year requesting details on when the campus will be opening.

In response, Copeland said the UWI is well-positioned to begin operations from September 2020.

"There will be an initial mix of programme offerings from the Faculty of Humanities and Education, Science and Technology, Food and Agriculture and Medical Sciences. The UWI Roytech will also be operating its south-based programmes from the UWISC beginning in September 2020," Copeland added.

He explained that the team responsible for operations at the UWISCC has been working closely with the Penal/Debe Regional Corporation and the Penal/Debe Chamber to engage with key stakeholders in the area and identify opportunities for public/private partnerships.

"In fact, this year we presented the PDRC with a draft MOU which we hope can be signed in short order. The MOU will reflect discussions held with the chairman, chief executive officer and other members of the PDRC on areas of collaboration including areas of technical/functional co-operation and capacity building," Copeland added.

He said a similar MOU will be presented to the Chamber for its consideration and "that MOU will also reflect the spirit and scope of ongoing discussions between the UWISC and the Chamber President."

"It is my hope that you would accept our invitation to tour the UWISC at a mutually convenient date in the near future," Copeland said.

Contacted for comment, Moonilal said he was looking forward to the campus opening.

"I have received the letter dated Feb 26 but remain cautious since the UWI has promised to open this facility since September 2018. The academic programmes keep changing and now there is a planned relocation of Roytec programmes for the UWI. I will believe it when I see it—a graduating class could have left that campus by now had they completed the facility in 2017 as proposed," Moonilal said.

Chairman of the Corporation Dr Allen Sammy, also weighed in.

He said several promises were made in the past about the campus opening and none had materialized.

"I am not holding my breath. When it's done, I will believe it," Sammy declared.

He said the campus had the potential to revitalize economic and social activities in the southern region.

Bagatelle rocked by another murder

RHONDOR DOWLAT-ROSTANT

A man was gunned down in Diego Martin on Carnival Tuesday night.

According to a police report, at about 10 pm Daniel Marcano, also known as Danny Boy was shot multiple times about the body while at Bagatelle Road. He was found lying at the side of the road.

Marcano was taken to the St James Hospital but was pronounced dead on arrival.

A motive was yet to be determined for this murder.

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Garcia: Ash Wednesday absenteeism promoting indiscipline

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There is often an unofficial holiday after a public holiday in this country depending on the day of the week it is given.

It's not sanctioned by authorities but it has become a cultural norm to abstain from work or school the day after the holiday.

If the public holiday falls on a Thursday or the day before or even on a Tuesday some give themselves "ah long weekend" by staying at home.

However, according to Minister Anthony Garcia, who was speaking to Guardian Media about yesterday's Ash Wednesday turnout at the nation's schools, parents who condone such practices with their children are not only depriving them of an education but also fostering in them a sense of indiscipline.

"In the school system, there are rules and one would expect that those rules are obeyed by the students and they (the rules) should be supported by the parents. When parents deliberately...keep their children away from school (they) are being disciplined and they are fostering that idea of being indiscipline because the children are flouting the rules of the school," he said.

He added that the indiscipline is further encouraged when parents write an excuse which is a student is required to present to teachers when absent from school.

"What is the excuse that the parent would write for the child? That the child was tired? They played too much mas? The child jump up too much?" he asked.

Garcia indicated that the attendance of teachers and students at schools nationwide yesterday was slightly lower than last year's figures except for primary school students which saw a 10 per cent increase.

He explained that this year 79.75 and 75.62 per cent of teachers at the primary and secondary schools respectively showed up for work yesterday. This is compared to 82 and 76 per cent last year.

The figure for student attendance is notably lower than that of teachers with 29 and 18 per cent showing up at the primary and secondary schools respectively yesterday.

Last year 19 and 31 per cent of students showed up at the primary and secondary school level respectively.

Garcia also noted that trends indicate there is a lower teacher turnout in the smaller, more rural education districts on Ash Wednesday.

"The larger educational districts- St George East, Port-of-Spain, Victoria- their attendance of teachers is higher than the attendance of teachers in the rural areas. In areas like South East and North Eastern districts and even Caroni, for some reason, both teachers and students stayed away in larger numbers," he said.