

The UWI Open Campus "Leading the Access Revolution," Professor Sir Hilary Beckles



Professor Sir Hilary Beckles, Vice-Chancellor of The University of the West Indies

Vice-Chancellor of The University of the West Indies, Professor Sir Hilary Beckles has congratulated The University of the West Indies Open Campus on increasing its wide range of programmes being offered to learners from across the Caribbean and internationally. The kudos came as Sir Hilary delivered remarks at the Open Campus Council Meeting held on Friday, March 20, 2020.

This year's Open Campus Council Meeting was the first to be held online and was presided over by Ambassador Dr June Soomer, Secretary-General of the Association of Caribbean States and Chair of the Open Campus Council. "I want to congratulate the Campus on offering these programmes," Sir Hilary commented. Referring to the Triple-A Strategy of The UWI – Access, Alignment and Agility – the Vice-Chan-

cellor stated, "The Open Campus is leading the access revolution."

Sir Hilary's comments followed the presentation of the Principal's Report to Council in which Pro Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the Open Campus, Dr Luz Longworth outlined several new programmes introduced during the year under review. Among those introduced during the last academic year were three BSc programmes in Sport: Sport Coaching, Sport Management and Leadership and Sport Kinetics; a Postgraduate Diploma in Leadership for Sustainable Development in conjunction with Emperor State College, State University of New York (SUNY); a postgraduate diploma in Healthcare Research and Epidemiology, MPhil in Child, Adolescent and Youth Studies, PhD in Child, Adolescent and Youth Studies, MSc in Management - Management Information Systems, and a Postgraduate Diploma, Masters and Doctorate in Teaching and Learning with Emerging Technologies (TLET).

The Campus also reported an increase in student population to over 20,000 students, of which 6,788 students were in Senate-approved programmes and 14,029 students in Continuing and Professional Education (CPE) programmes.

Principal Longworth also reported on the implementation of a Campus Honour Roll System in the Open Campus. Students that achieve a minimum cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.6 at the end of each semester would qualify for the Honour Roll. The names of stu-



Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the Open Campus, Dr Luz Longworth

dents that have achieved the required GPA will be published on the Open Campus website and each student will receive a personalized letter of commendation from the Director of the Academic Programming and Delivery Division. The Council also heard that during the period under review, the Campus' physical presence in three countries was enhanced. These include the re-opening of a Site on Providenciales, Turks and Caicos Islands, completion of the refurbished Site in St Vincent and the Grenadines and the completion of the Site in Chaguanas in Trinidad and Tobago.

During the year under review, the Campus completed a re-accreditation exercise and was granted institutional re-accreditation for the maximum of seven years by the Barbados Accreditation Council (BAC). The campus has been granted mutual recognition from 14 Open Campus countries either through the external quality assurance agency or the relevant ministry of education. Mutual recognition signifies that the external quality assurance agency or ministry of education has accepted the institu-

tional accreditation decision of the BAC, and as such the campus does not have to undergo a separate institutional accreditation process in the respective country. Among the highlights of the Principal's Report was the number of partnership agreements the Campus brokered in the last academic year. These include agreements with the West Indies Rum and Spirits Producers Association (WIRSPA), the Jamaica Defence Force, Consular Corps of Jamaica, Organisation of American States (OAS), the Caribbean Institute of Health Research (CAIHR), and the Ministry of Culture, Gender and Sport in Jamaica.

Campus Response to COVID-19 Principal Longworth gave the Council meeting an update of the Open Campus' response to COVID-19. Among the measures implemented by the Campus for staff and students include Home-Based Work Arrangement (HBWA), counselling for both students and staff, provision of daily updates to staff and students including wellness tips, flexible payment arrangements for fees, and the facilitation of the online submission of sup-

porting documents via e-mail.

In addition, the Campus moved swiftly to transition the Continuing and Professional Education (CPE) courses from face-to-face to online delivery. In this process, over 900 persons were trained including tutors and lecturers from the Open Campus and other campuses of The University of the West Indies.

The Campus has also extended its online course delivery expertise to other regional education stakeholders by leading professional development training on alternative ways of continuing education for students.

During the week of March 30 to April 3, 2020, training is being conducted for community colleges academic staff, primary and secondary school teachers, principals and education and curriculum officers from ministries of education across the region.

Participants from St Vincent and the Grenadines, Grenada, Saint Lucia, the British Virgin Islands, St Kitts and Nevis, Barbados and Anguilla are being trained on topics such as using web conferencing tools to facilitate online delivery of content, basics for use of the Moodle Learning Management System, and how to engage students in the online environment.

The Council meeting included a public session and a press conference, which were broadcast live on UWI tv and on the Open Campus Facebook page, and a closed session. The next Open Campus Council meeting will be held in March 2021.

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