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TOPIC: DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP AND MANAGERIAL COMPETENCIES FOR BUILDING EFFECTIVE QUALITY SYSTEMS IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS: THE CASE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES

Abstract

Developing quality assurance leadership and managerial competencies among senior and middle managers in higher education institutions is critically important for building and maintaining effective quality assurance systems. At the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus a pilot project was launched which entailed training quality assurance leaders and managers across all academic and professional units on the campus. This project also seeks to establish a cadre of quality enhancement leaders who support further training and development of other leaders across the entire university system.

To firmly establish the quality enhancement leadership programme, a preliminary workshop was held with 26 professionals and senior and middle managers on campus who were consulted about what leadership and management competencies would be applicable for quality assurance and enhancement leaders within the campus. Arising out of this a campus-wide faculty and staff survey was conducted to solicit feedback on the competencies. This paper presents the case of the Cave Hill campus within the University of the West Indies system for establishing a quality assurance leadership and management programme. It shows how the findings of the survey are applicable to development of the UWI system and higher education institutions across the Caribbean region.

1.0. BUILDING EFFECTIVE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEMS

A global environment of uncertainty characterized by increasing national debt, reducing public and private sector investment funds, increasing unemployment and burdensome social pressures have become critical challenges for higher education policy makers, planners and administrators. This has implications for modernization of higher education institutions (HEIs). Remaining fiercely competitive within an effectively governed higher education system becomes absolutely essential and accordingly HEIs are to respond to competitiveness models to their benefit. Since the beginning of this century according to the OECD, HEIs need to manage their own sustainability against their external conditions. The OECD reported:

> 'The implications of the dynamics between globalization, regionalism and localization have yet to be addressed by most HEIs. Responding to this changing external environment requires the establishment of management interfaces to steer HEIs in new ways" (OECD, 1999).

One can argue that for many HEIs this issue still remains true till today. Institutions can only do so if they build effective systems within an effective and competitive HE sector. Effective external higher education quality assurance systems are predicated on having effective institutions which lead and manage their own internal systems. No organization which manages an accreditation and evaluation system can claim to ensure that the country systems which it has responsibility for are effective unless the standards and processes it uses can be effectively established by the institutions themselves. A hallmark of success in external QA systems is based on the established philosophy and practice of continuous quality enhancement (CQE) strategies. Central to this CQE is a mechanism for staff/faculty professional development that is carefully linked to the enhancement of quality systems available at the HEI.

An assessment of the accreditation and related standards by accreditation agencies within the Caribbean region can be summed up as requiring that institutions seeking evaluation by agencies demonstrate a number of key actions. The agencies should ensure that the institution:

- develops an internal mechanism for self-regulation which includes establishing a quality assurance culture for academic and non-academic provisions;
- has a strong leadership that champions and sustains this QA culture and practice and propels the organization into enhancement mode;
- engages its leadership and management to build and coordinate cross-functional teams to engage in self-study for accreditation;

- analyses its plans and delivery with a conscious view on managing quality enhancement at all levels in the organization's administrative and academic systems.

It is these actions and outcomes that make institutions effective and by extension the higher education systems. Committed and capable leadership and management teams of an HEI is what will transform the organization into institutions having well-budgeted, lean and productive academic centres for teaching, research and outreach. The quality assurance leadership capacity of the organization can provide the basis for change and organization development within a quality assurance culture.

2.0. LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

It was Bennis's research (1984) which led to the popular emphasis: *"Leaders are people who do the right thing; managers are people who do things right. Both roles are critical but they differ profoundly…Part of the fault lies with our schools of management; we teach people how to be good technicians and good staff people, but we don't train for leadership"*. Bennis further identifies the leadership competencies which major United States businesses expected from a survey of 90 corporations. In his research, he pointed to the role of empowering others and so defined four main competencies for effective leadership:

- management of attention;
- management of meaning;
- management of trust;
- management of self.

Clarifying what else may be needed, in his text on Extraordinary Leadership, Reed (2003) suggests that every leader has to sell two fundamental things: solutions and positive feelings. He argues that leadership is about 'selling need for solutions', 'enabling teams to be innovative', 'managing performance', managing uncertainty', 'managing organizational discomfort' and 'supporting change and growth'. Reed also points to total quality as being a model to effect good leadership. He says that five enablers and four results areas impact improvement, benchmarking, performance results and service delivery where leadership is concerned. They were:

Enablers	*Results*
Leadership	*key performance results*
Policy and strategy	*customer results (satisfaction)*
Processes	*people results (employee satisfaction)*
Partnerships and resources	*society results (impact on society)*
People (human resource management)	

It is known that all of these enablers and results impact on the quality of organizations and leadership programmes have been known to facilitate organizational improvements. Higher education institutions are no different in their quality quest. Within the USA and the UK for example, institutions of higher learning have established a wide range of quality enhancement strategies all of which have as a key component, specific leadership development programmes. Pennsylvania State University established the "Excellence in Leadership and Management Program" to support development of leaders who enable growth of campus resources and systems while the University of Wisconsin-Stout's "Leadership Development Action Project" was meant to satisfy the university's quality improvements for accreditation. Similarly, Liverpool John Moores University established a single course in "Developing Professional Practice" using the UK Staff and Educational Development Association's professional standards for improving staff leadership and management performance.

It is expected that quality enhancement leadership development programmes would provide for training of quality leaders who are not only concerned with the assurance of quality but drive processes for continuous quality enhancement within their organizations. The intention is to develop a range of competencies among key personnel so that they can contribute to the development of their academic and administrative 'spaces' but also support key related 'spaces' within their organizations.

3.0. UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES: STRENGTHS AND GAPS FOR BUILDING QUALITY SYSTEMS

For as many as 10 years, the University of the West Indies has established an internal academic quality assurance system which develops standards and processes for maintaining quality. The quality assurance system was based on a disciplinary approach which involves cycles of audits, evaluations and reviews, all geared to assure and improve quality. Of itself the system has strong merits. It has built strong emphasis on

feedback within the university system and has encouraged shared appreciation for collecting empirical evidence that satisfies stakeholders on what is needed for educational quality. The system has impacted the way in which planning, monitoring and evaluation of curriculum, teaching and learning are managed. Furthermore, this system has provided tools and resources to faculty to prepare their own academic audit and evaluation reports for review by external persons, particularly through workshops with staff.

Despite these benefits, the system has not been able to reach and impact all levels of the university system and all personnel. The system assumed that the faculty and staff would have the requisite competencies for managing and leading quality within their environments. Any improvements desired in the operations of quality and that required training by academic units would be left up to them to do as needed. This meant that deans, heads of departments, professors, senior lecturers, programme coordinators and others who have strategic roles in faculties through managing committees and courses would be required to interpret what competencies would be needed to inform their operational quality and so engage in self-development. The overall quality of a faculty or department would not be enhanced when only certain members assume that they are competent leaders and managers and have not been engaged in team building to improve their leadership and managerial capacity. As is done by other universities, UWI was no university-wide or campus-based initiative to provide strategic leadership development for senior and middle managers of the institution that could effectively assure and enhance the quality of the systems available. This presents an opportunity for UWI particularly in the wake of a Strategic Plan (2007-2012) that has as one of its enabling aims to ensure that the leadership and administrative culture are transformed.

4.0. CAVE HILL'S APPROACH TO QUALITY ENHANCEMENT LEADERSHIP

To transform a leadership and managerial culture there must be a business model that makes organizational sense. The UWI intends to achieve a number of strategic goals in relation to enhancing leadership transformation. These are documented as follows:

- developing and establishing a people-centred, culture-change process;
- instituting a quality assurance mechanism to set people-centred standards for the functioning of the University and the service output;
- reforming the administrative structures and systems towards implementing and supporting the vision and aspirations of UWI;
- strengthening the structure and processes for University-wide planning.

To achieve these goals, the Cave Hill campus undertook to review the existing campus-based systems for quality assurance and enhancement and established a Campus Quality Management System (CQMS) that is criterion- and standards- based and responsive to accreditation standards in the region. The CQMS provides the campus with an opportunity to manage its leadership and management processes to attain desirable outputs and outcomes measured against the UWI Strategic Plan. Diagrams 1 and 2 together show the business model for the CQMS. The system seeks stakeholder feedback on these plans, processes and functions. The main criteria are:

1) **Leadership and Change**: *Campus management is committed to effective leadership by ensuring that all senior managers implement the QMS in their respective departments, units and work flow processes and give opportunities for organizational and social change*

2) **Strategic Planning and Improvement***: Campus management commits to and engages in a democratic process of strategic planning and improvement which uses institutionally-generated evidence. In the case of continuous improvement, corrective measures arising out of customer and stakeholder satisfaction feedback are documented and actioned*

3) **Customer, Stakeholder and Market Focus**: *Needs analyses and market research, which pertain to students, alumni, government, private industries and employment sectors, guide the development of business, educational programmes and disciplinary/inter-disciplinary research at the campus*

4) **Knowledge Management, Measurement and Analysis**: *Institutionally-generated and managed priority documents and data from all quarters of the campus community are collected, stored, measured, analyzed, reviewed and disseminated to assure student achievement, improve organizational performance and develop the external communities*

5) **Faculty and Staff Management and Development**: *Campus management, faculty and staff are committed to effective human resource management practices which includes effectively training faculty and staff in their work and educating them about approaches in performance and quality improvement in relation to their duties*

6) **Educational and Business Process Management**: *All functional areas develop their educational and business plans and execute them to achieve maximum performance output. To achieve this, key work processes and resource policies are documented and implemented*

7) **Educational and Business Results-Based Management**: *All functional areas plan and measure how they attain their documented goals, outcomes and actions to ensure that they meet their targets*

Diagram 1: Cave Hill Campus Quality Management System: Structures

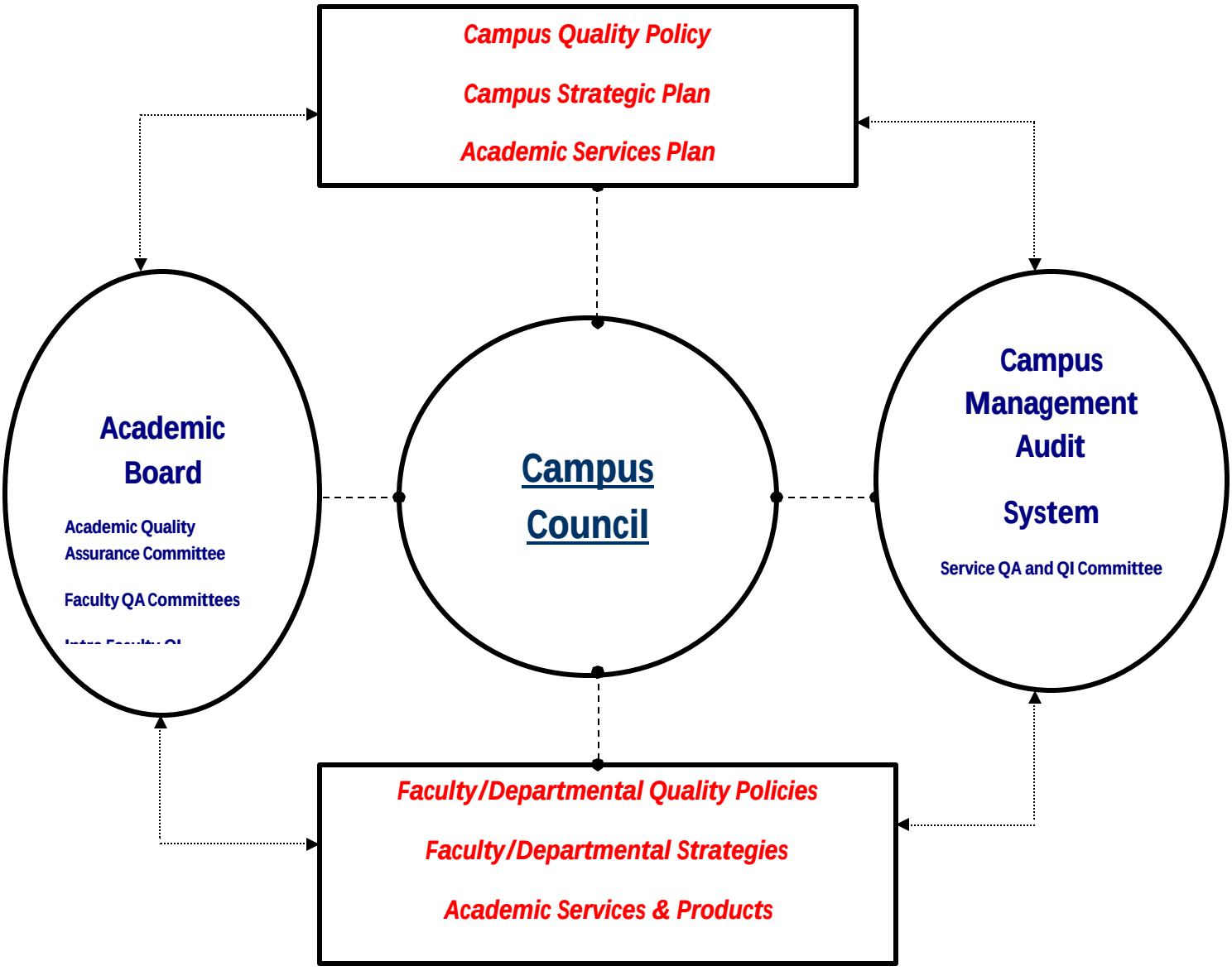
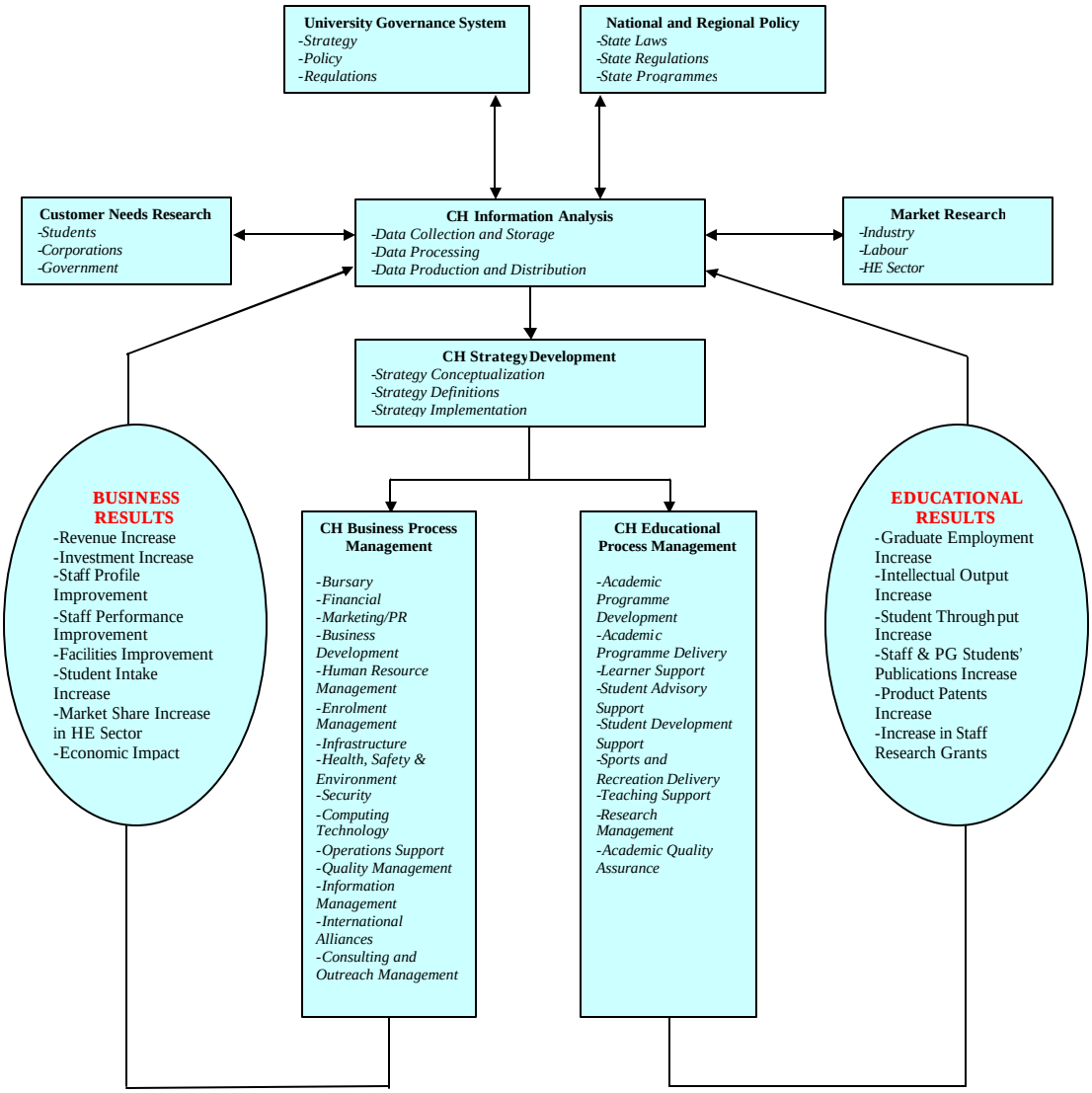


Diagram 2: Cave Hill Campus Quality Management System: Processes



Being the first within the UWI system, this innovation was established on the premise that senior and middle level faculty and staff would now need to acquire the skills and competencies to lead and manage the system within their academic and administrative environments. The system training would also provide the context by which lower level staff appointed at the lecturer, assistant lecturer and administrative positions would have training and development sessions hopefully providing them with career growth possibilities within a total quality institution. By developing a cadre of leaders from junior to senior management, the quality assurance and enhancement practices would develop over time to cater to a change culture. The selected competency model for improving organizational performance within a quality culture must be carefully aligned to organizational norms and expectations. The competencies should be based on ideal organizational norms for performance but should also be established based on existing practices elsewhere. They should be generic and not specific; outcomes based and developmental. In this regard, at a recent quality enhancement leadership development workshop for piloting the CQMS, a list of 35 possible leadership and management competencies were presented for discussion and 26 members of senior staff assessed their current competency levels. These competencies were:

Table 1: Competency Areas for Leading and Managing Cave Hill Academic/Administrative Units

Knowledge	Attitudes	Skills
-University Administration -Leadership & Management -Academic Culture -Organization Systems -Quality Assurance Policies, Processes & Procedures -Quality Systems -Accreditation Systems -Documentation Systems -Evaluation Methods -Peer Review Methods -Disciplines	-Organization commitment -Values-Centred -Honesty -Integrity -Transparency -Adaptability -People-Focused -Business Savvy -Customer-Needs Awareness -Stakeholder Interest -Commitment to continuous improvement -Results-Oriented -Teamwork Professionalism	-Creativity -Innovation -Project Management -Evidence/Data Management -Organization Development -Human Relations -Customer Service -Evaluation Methods -Peer Review Methods -Research Leadership -Teaching Leadership

This activity culminated in a re-definition of the leadership and managerial competencies to clearly document what expectations were needed for measuring human performance in a total quality environment. This increased the number of competencies from 35 to 49. These competencies were to be further quantitatively analyzed to determine whether the competencies were appropriate and could help implement the CQMS.

Cave Hill's approach to quality is one which emphasizes quality enhancement rather than assurance. The underpinning philosophy caters to the development of the organization whilst ensuring that it achieves its purpose. Thus quality assurance will be achieved when structured enhancement is being fulfilled. In essence, the university desires to establish and build leadership teams that maximize their full capabilities to the benefit of the institution. To this end, each unit and office has established quality enhancement leadership teams whilst Cave Hill campus inaugurated a Campus Quality Enhancement Leadership Corps which is the official body of campus personnel who are trained and deemed effective to lead quality within the organization.

5.0. ONLINE SURVEY ON QUALITY ASSURANCE LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Having managed the results of the quality enhancement leadership workshop, the Campus Quality Assurance Office designed an online survey to capture data on staff competencies and to gauge the levels and kinds of training needed. The introduction of a campus-wide survey designed for senior and middle managers, senior faculty and professional staff will enable the campus administration to have a key sense of the level of capability of staff and their ability to manage and improve quality on the campus. More importantly it will provide the leadership of the campus to train and develop their staff to enhance the campus and university systems.

5.1. Survey Methodology

The survey was designed to perform staff competency and training needs assessments. In the first instance, the survey attempted to obtain feedback through self-assessment/appraisal by staff of their knowledge, skills and attitudinal competencies. The objective was to perform a statistical analysis of how staff view themselves as leaders and managers of quality. The training needs component focused on staff reviewing their competencies and giving information about training they need to help them enhance quality at the campus. While this survey was conducted at Cave Hill, the intention is to do similar surveys across other campuses in the UWI system so as to provide training for enhancement.

The questionnaire was designed in 3 parts. The first part enabled staff to document information about their employment situation at Cave Hill. The second part provided the self-assessment component where staff rated themselves on a likert scale against 13 knowledge competencies, 18 attitudinal competencies and 18 skills competencies. Staff was also asked to include any additional competencies which in their analysis would be practical for leading and managing quality. The final part of the questionnaire involved the training needs assessment component where staff gave feedback on the type and level of training they felt useful to build, lead and manage quality systems.

Prior to embarking on the survey, an e-focus group of persons representing 4 different organizational tiers was convened and feedback on the design consulted. There were editorial changes made to the text at this stage. The questionnaire was then converted to online modality using LimeSurvey (www.limesurvey.org) developed by Carsten Schmitz (2006). The survey instrument was initially emailed out to all staff at the UWI Cave Hill campus and then further emails were sent to remind potential participants of the survey over a period of three (3) weeks. This represented a total of 1,000 mailboxes with 95% being personal email accounts and 5% group email accounts. The 950 personal mailboxes were from a complement of close to 1,300 permanent, contract and temporary staff. Given LimeSurvey features, one designated staff member of the Campus Quality Assurance Office monitored feedback levels to ensure that a reliable sample size of respondents was received to make reliable statistical judgments. From the feedback a total of 123 responses were received. 88 responses were complete questionnaires and 35 incomplete questionnaires. Data from parts of the incomplete questionnaires were also used in the analysis. LimeSurvey provided easy online export of data for statistical and graphical analysis using LimeSurvey's Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The data was then produced for review and reporting.

5.2. Results and Discussions

5.2.1. Staff Profile

The survey recorded participation by 48.9% junior professionals and administrative staff, 38.7% mid level professional and academic personnel and just about 11.4% senior professionals and academics. These statistics are not exactly representative of the ratios of such personnel within the campus community in that the mid-level professionals comprise the majority of the campus population. However, this sample may be due largely to those who had an interest in completing the survey for whatever reasons, whether because of their availability at the time or general willingness to participate in a survey of this kind. The majority of personnel who are permanent or tenured are within the junior rank while higher level personnel and academic staff have reported that they

are only on contract and so not tenured faculty. The profile of the personnel was also important to note when conducting the survey. In terms of their work experience the following data was collected (some of the data eliminated were for unreported information by respondents):

Table 2 (a): Campus Personnel: No. Years Work Experience

No. Years Work Experience	Percentage
0-3 years	9.1
4-8 years	13.6
9-15 years	19.3
Over 15 years	53.4

Table 2 (b): Campus Personnel : No. Years UWI Experience

No. Years Work Experience	Percentage
0-3 years	23.86
4-8 years	29.54
9-15 years	22.73
Over 15 years	22.73

Table 2 (c) Campus Personnel: No. Years Quality Systems Experience

No. Years Work Experience	Percentage
0-3 years	43.2
4-8 years	21.6
9-15 years	20.45
Over 15 years	7.95

The data shows that more than half the sample in the survey has been working for more than 15 years with the smallest percentage been employed for periods between 0-3 years. Interestingly, the data shows that an equal proportion of the sample have been employed by the university across all working periods. This represents a good mix of personnel from all employment experiences. However, although not showed by the table, the actual data points to a relatively higher proportion of persons within the 9 to above 15 year employment periods being from the rank of junior professional staff. Simply put these are employees at the level of clerical, junior administrative and technical personnel. Even more interestingly, the data reveals that the majority of persons who have experience with quality systems, through engaging with them at some level, have less than 3 years experience which is in contrast to then staffs' employment history or number of years experience with UWI since greater than 75% of staff have worked at UWI for more than 4 years and about 48% have worked for over 9 years.

5.2.2. Staff Exposure, Competence and Training

5.2.2.1. Quality Systems Exposure

Figure 1 (a) and (b) show examples of the staff responses with exposure to quality systems. Similar bar chart reports were obtained for all other levels.

Figure 1 (a)- ATS Staff Exposure to Quality Systems

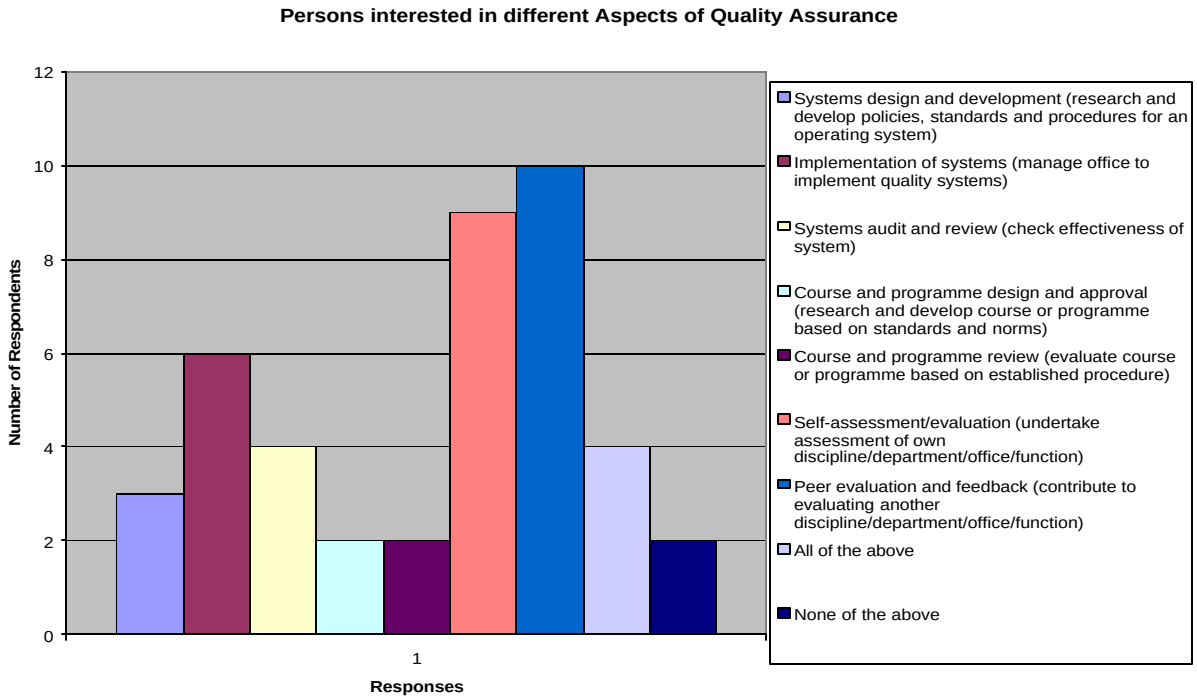
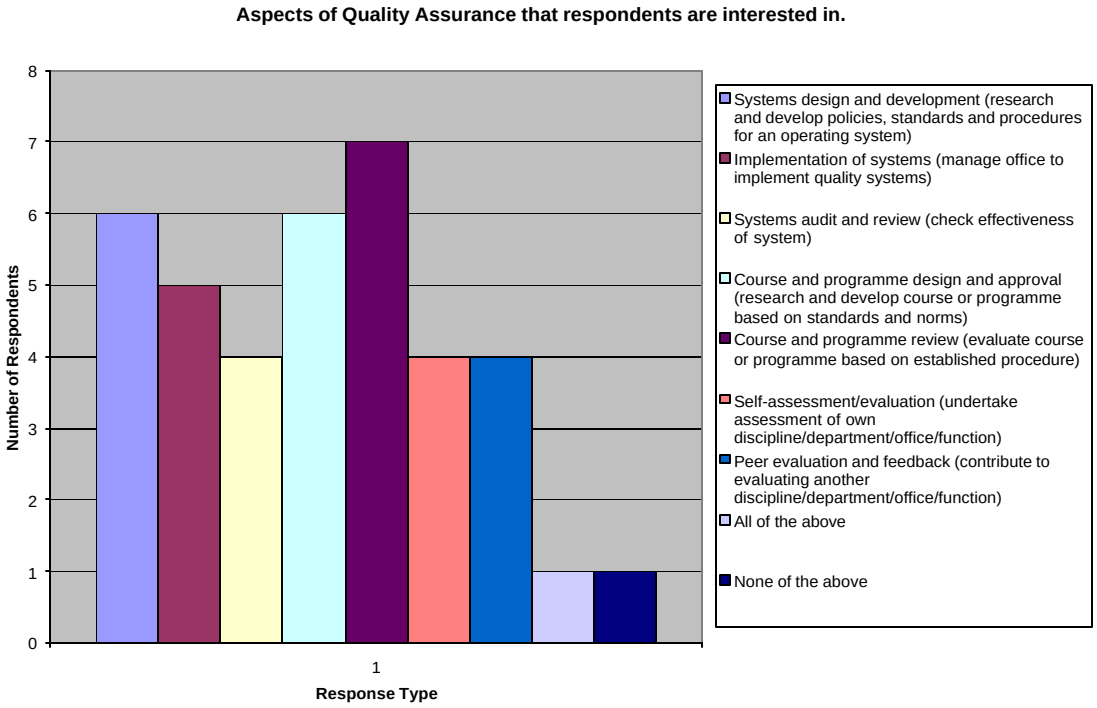


Figure 1 (b)- Lecturer/Asst. Lecturer Staff Exposure to Quality Systems



The data generally showed that the majority of staff at all levels had varying degrees of interest in quality assurance and enhancement. Senior managers who comprised about 11.4% of the survey sample (deans, directors and heads of units and departments) were primarily interested in designing quality systems, implementation of such systems or audit and review of them. What was interesting from this group was that persons ranked at the level of professor (only 5% of respondents) were very concerned about their capacity to develop and implement quality systems more so than other senior managerial ranks. Mid-level professionals and academics who were the second highest in the sample population had different expectations of quality systems exposure depending on their work orientation. Senior professional staff that have quasi-academic roles seemed to have an equal interest in all areas but with main concern in doing self-assessments and peer evaluation and feedback mechanisms. This seems natural for this group of employees whose functions straddle between doing academic-type work and administrative duties. On the other hand senior administrative staff, like senior managers, were concerned with design and implementation of quality systems. Academic personnel that comprise over 40% of the sample population and ranked between assistant lecturer and lecturer levels were largely concerned with developing proposals for courses and programmes, developing quality systems and implementing them in their departments. Junior administrative and technical staff (referred to as the ATS category) and who comprised about 48.9% of respondents in the survey were oriented to thinking about self assessment

and peer evaluation feedback. This was rated well above all other categories. The question as to how this level of staff views both is necessary for discussion. The impression is that most see self assessment as "individual job performance assessment" as opposed to assessing or evaluating a unit's work and perhaps they view peer evaluation as "other employees' assessment of their performance" and not peer evaluation of a quality system or sub-system. These assumptions were not tested in this survey but some kind of feedback from this category of staff as to what their understanding is of these issues would prove useful.

What was striking about the feedback from staff was that the majority of respondents for all levels did not see all areas of quality exposure being equally necessary for their advancements nor did they see them all enhancing the quality of their departments or offices or the campus for that matter. This may have been a matter of people's perception of quality based on their own narrow tasks that have to be fulfilled in their job descriptions. More interestingly, persons who were ranked at higher levels or whose jobs required them to perform universal roles that impacted multiple departments within the campus seemed to be more 'systems oriented' in their thinking and approaches to improving quality. This notion is quite expected given the nature of their jobs.

5.2.2.2. Assessment of Competence

Given the diversity of responses to the 49 knowledge, attitudes and skills competencies, the data from the questionnaire was thematicized and stratified into four key competency areas. These were:

1. Organization, Culture and Practices- knowledge, attitudes and skills as they relate to university organization systems, academic traditions, corporate culture, policies and practices;

2. Information Management- knowledge, attitudes and skills as they relate to designing, managing or using information management systems such as document management and data storage systems;

3. Quality Systems, Academic Evaluation and Accreditation- knowledge, attitudes and skills as they relate to academic course and programme quality, quality systems, peer evaluation and accreditation systems;

4. Project Management- knowledge, attitudes and skills as they relate to developing, monitoring and implementing projects).

The data was arranged into those who agreed (from strongly agreed and agreed responses), disagreed (from strongly disagreed and agreed responses) or were unsure. It is reported in the following charts in Figure 2 (a) to (l).

5.2.2.2.1. Organization, Culture and Practices

Figure 2 (a): Organization, Culture and Practices- ATS Staff

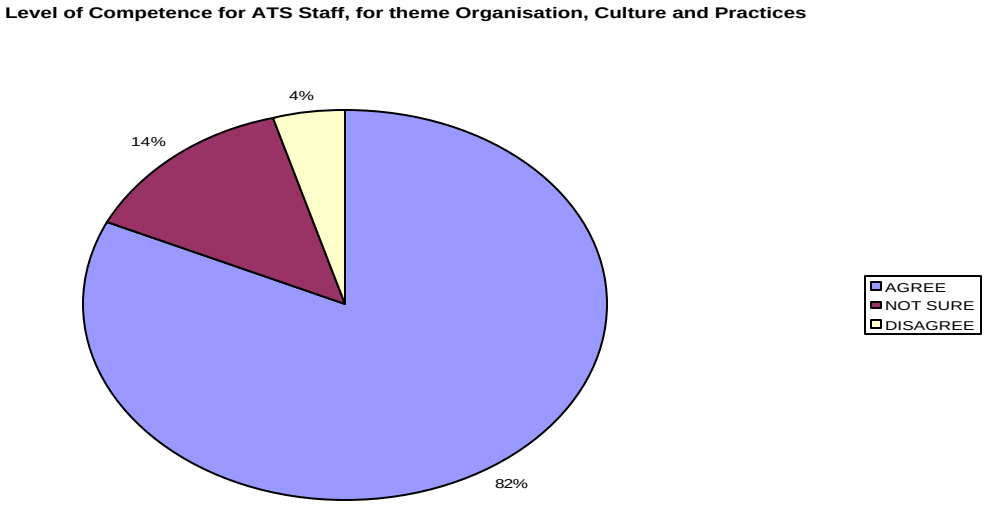


Figure 2 (b): Organization, Culture and Practices- All Academic Staff

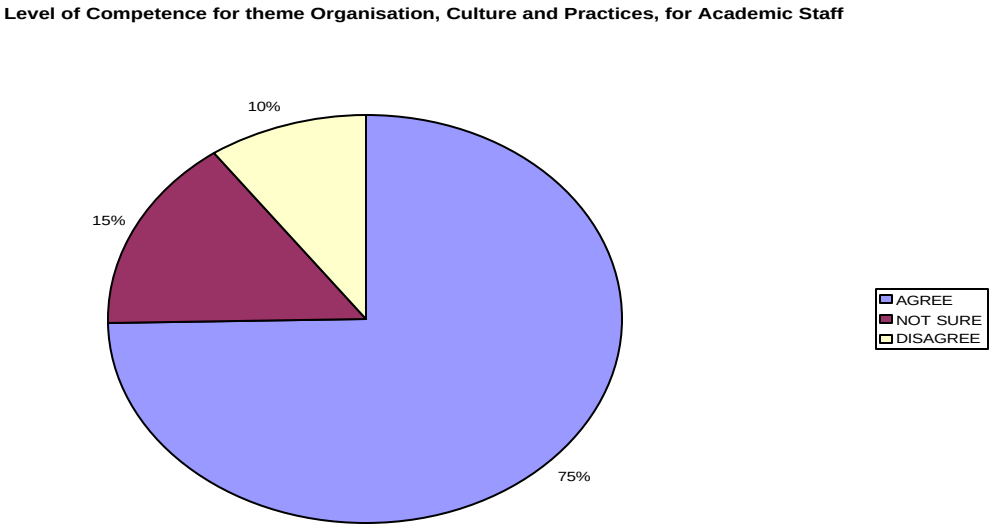
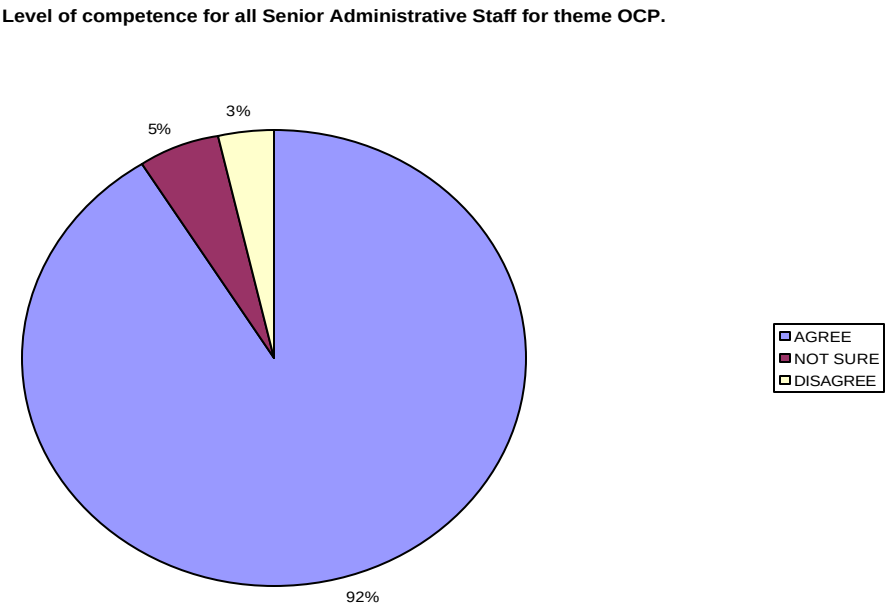


Figure 2 (c): Organization, Culture and Practices- All Senior Admin/Professional Staff



The data generally reports all levels of staff having agreed that they are fairly competent at understanding and implementing corporate culture, policies, procedures and academic issues in the university. However despite this fact, a significant percentage of staff rated that they generally agreed as opposed to strongly agreed. The information also showed that for senior appointed posts more than 50% who agreed, actually just 'agreed' and did not 'strongly agree' implying that they were not as competent in this area as expected. Referring to this point some interesting comments were made:

Dean- "30 years management experience counts for a lot!"

Senior Lecturer- "I do not know where UWI wants to go"

Lecturer- "I believe my goals and objectives should match that of UWI"

Many of the academic staff have reported in the survey that they have over 9 years experience working with quality systems and that they were employed at the university for more than 4 years. What is remarkable is the fact that there are varying perceptions of quality from the academic staff member who views it as 'something personal'. Academic staff, like many other staff, see quality as linked to their professional practice as much as it relates to their career goals and experience. While viewing quality as a personal endeavour is good, there is quite perhaps a limited view that quality is based on personal/professional standards and not so much on the broader academic standards related to international models of operational efficiency.

5.2.2.2.2. Information Management

Figure 2 (d): Information Management- ATS Staff

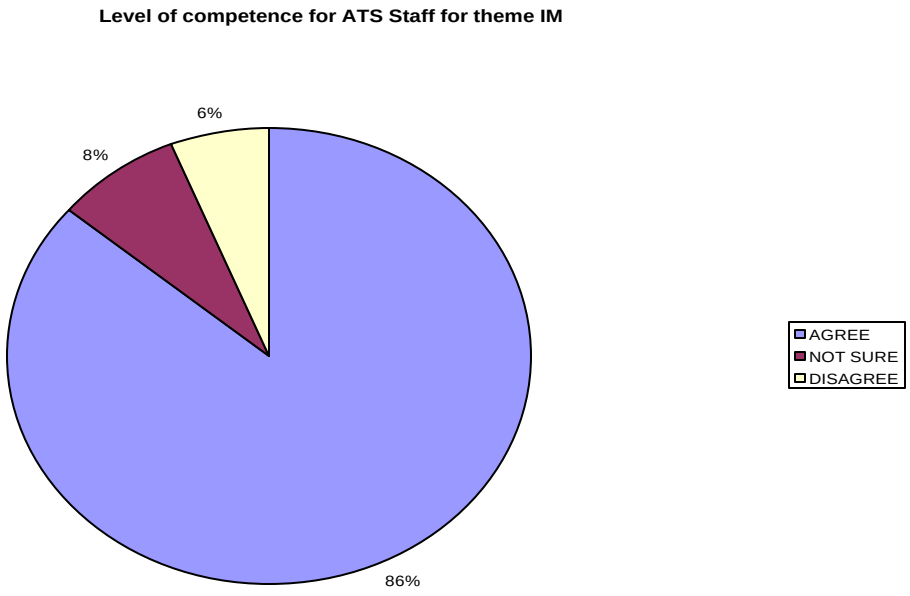


Figure 2 (e): Information Management- All Academic Staff

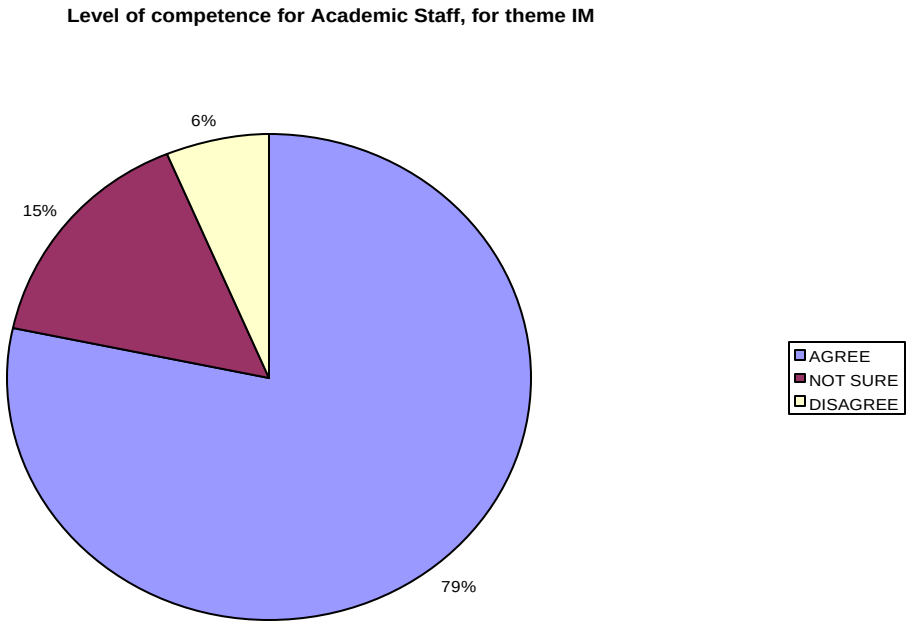
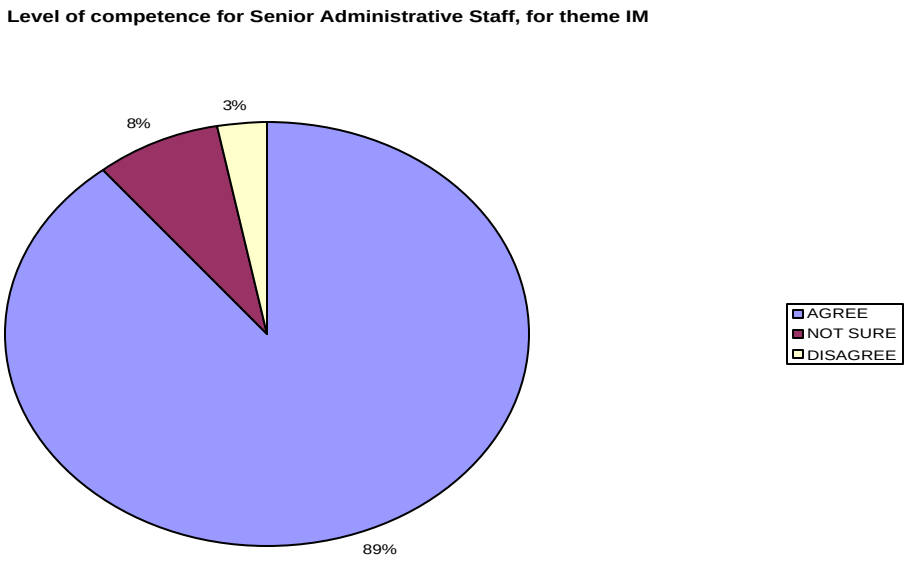


Figure 2 (f): Information Management- All Senior Admin/Professional Staff



Like the previous category, information management has shown a similar trend among academic, senior administrative/professional and ATS staff. Information management related to the ability of staff to interface competently with mostly document and data management systems and not networks, web or software. Over 79% indicated that they agreed they were competent information managers. It was interesting that ATS and senior administrative/professional staff reported having greater levels of competence with information management than academic personnel. This may be related to the frequent use of multiple kinds of document and data management systems which these employee categories are exposed to. However, there were some general comments of importance related to information management. These are reported below:

Dean- "UWI needs to use more integrated mobile communication systems and video conferencing and shed a load of other stuff"

Lecturer- "Not sure if UWI wants to be managed here. Leadership is needed"

ATS- "It is as good as it gets now"

The contrast in perceptions of information management as documented above is indicative of the level of exposure and experience of the employee. While there is general agreement of being competent, the perception of the level of competence expected differs given the knowledge of the institution both in terms of current resources available and strategic direction.

5.2.2.2.3. Quality Systems, Academic Evaluation and Accreditation (QSAEA)

Figure 2 (g): QSAEA- ATS Staff

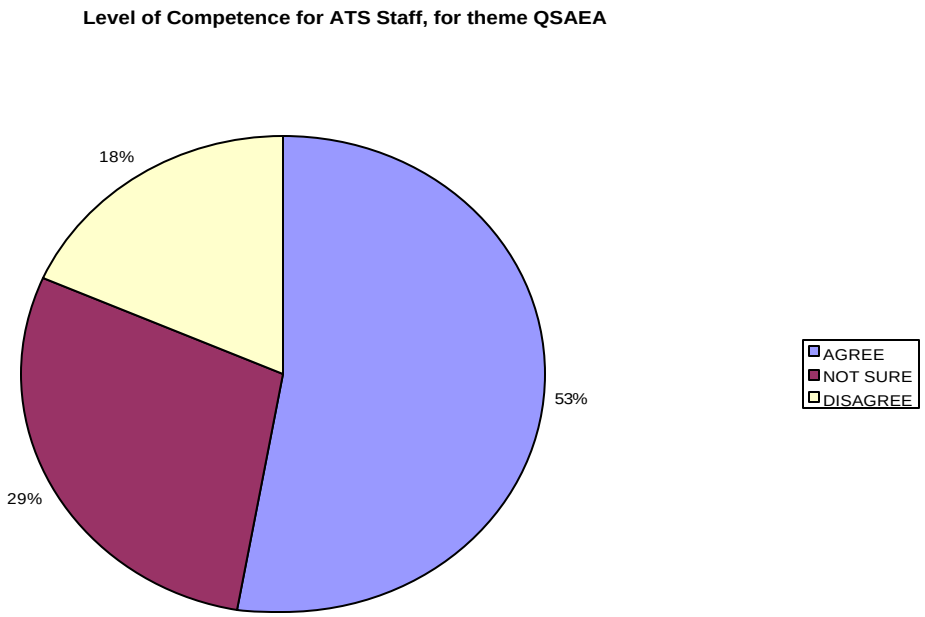


Figure 2 (h): QSAEA- All Academic Staff

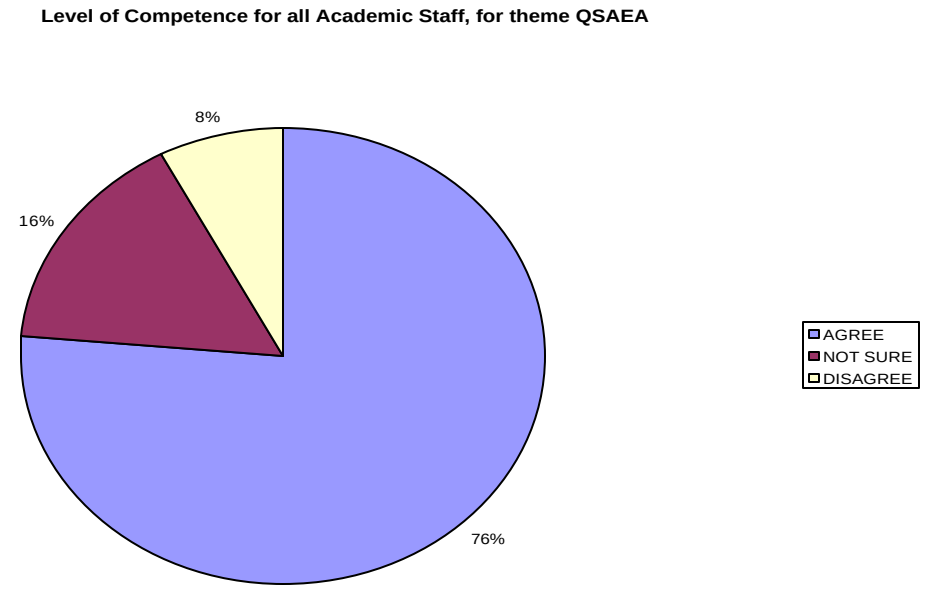
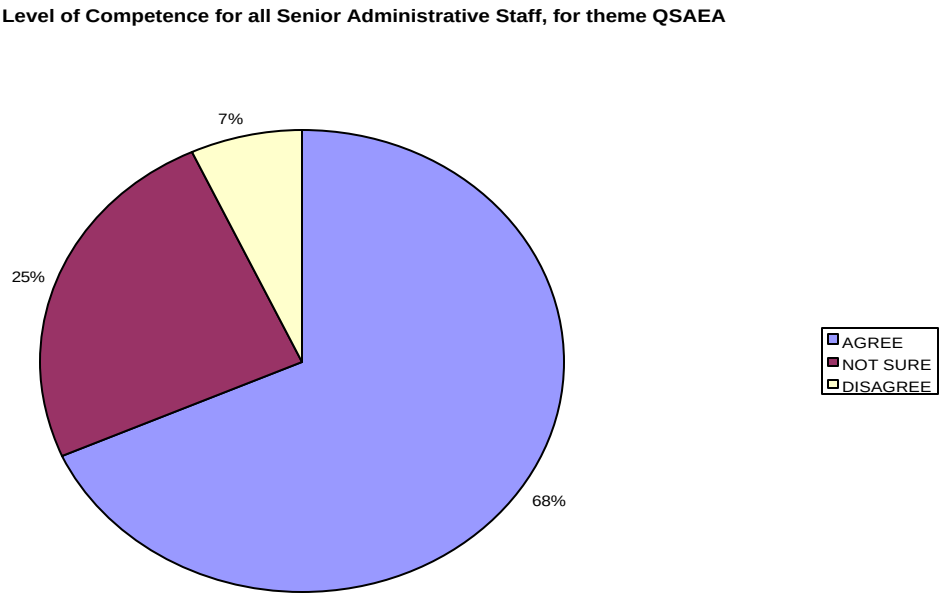


Figure 2 (i): QSAEA- All Senior Admin/Professional Staff



While the level of competence reported seems relatively high, that is, above 50% in all cases, the level reported for academic staff was highest (76%). This was expected given the fact that over the past 6 years, Cave Hill has been engaged in an academic quality culture through the Quality Assurance Unit, Board for Undergraduate Studies. QAU has worked steadfastly with the disciplines to introduce course and programme approvals as well as disciplinary quality audits, evaluations and reviews. Most disciplines have benefited from this over the years. However, many ATS and senior administrative and professional staff may not have been so fortunate. Like before some useful comments were posed in the survey. Key among them were:

Senior Lecturer- "Now is time to decentralize academic decision-making to individual departments and faculties"

Senior Lecturer- "More transparent criteria and processes for faculty recruitment and promotion is needed for quality assurance"

5.2.2.2.3. Project Management

Figure 2 (j): Project Management- ATS Staff

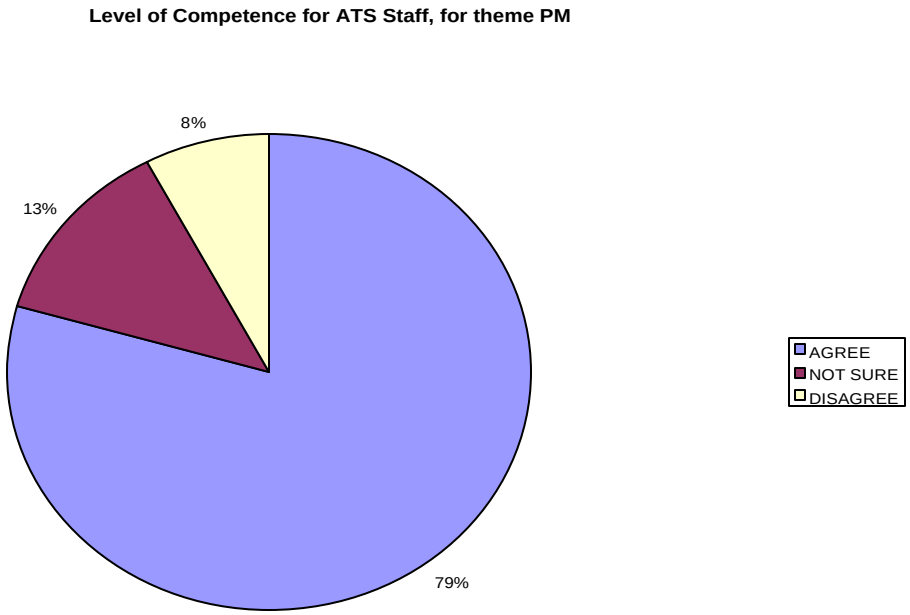


Figure 2 (k): Project Management- All Academic Staff

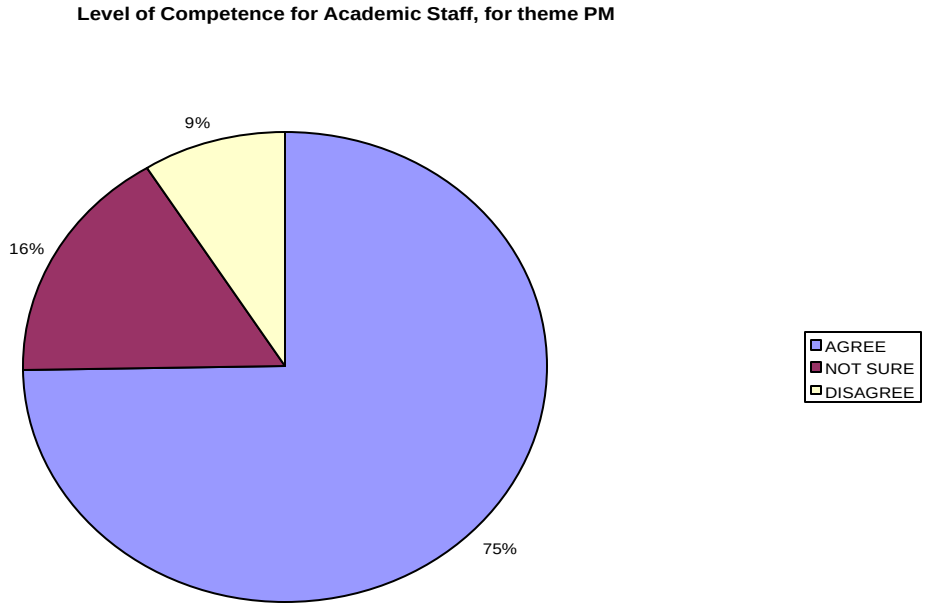
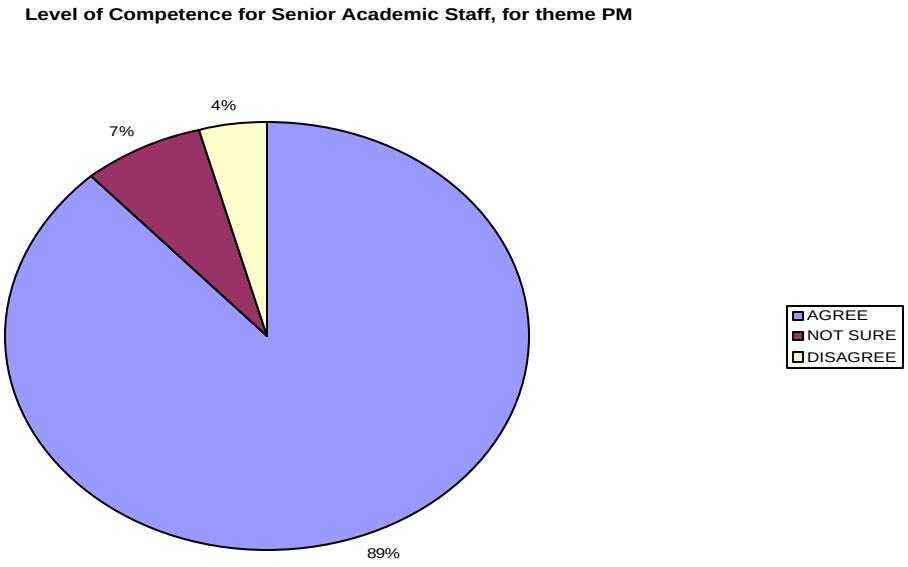


Figure 2 (l): Project Management- All Senior Admin/Professional Staff



As before, most staff (79%or above) at all levels said they were competent in project management. If this is the case, this is a remarkable achievement given that project management competence is a specialist advancing discipline requiring continuous training and retraining. Furthermore if the staff consists of competent project managers then the level of micro-business efficiency should be very high given the required knowledge and skills for project quality management. If this is not the case, then staff would need to be appropriately trained in the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK) and the relevant applications.

5.2.2.3. Staff Training

While the survey required staff to assess their level of exposure and competence to quality systems, they were also asked to determine the gaps in their competence that required training interventions.

In terms of the areas in quality assurance and enhancement where training was needed, respondents showed different degrees of expectations. Of the total sample, ATS staff showed very mixed responses, though the majority saw training investment in leadership and management skills (31% and 28% respectively), peer evaluation (32%), total quality management (27%) and self assessment/evaluation (31%) necessary. This is rather interesting as the majority of ATS staff are not usually exposed to such activities in their routine daily work so for them this training must have been a future career development

endeavour. On the other hand, senior administrative staff (38% in each case) preferred training in systems design and development and peer evaluation. Assuming that this category of staff included assistant registrars and others at that level, this information may be worthwhile knowing as the units they work within require constant upgrades given the campus' changing administrative systems. In terms of peer evaluations one needs to determine whether the understanding of the participants was not one of performance appraisal processes but evaluation of organizational systems and operations.

Senior professional staff (38% in each case) wanted training in total quality management (TQM) or in most areas. This may make sense given the quasi-academic roles these officers play in the organization. It is a rather interesting fact that the majority of academic staff at the assistant lecturer to senior lecturer levels believed that training in course and programme development and quality were absolutely necessary. Though not many, senior lecturers (29%) seemed to have preferred management and TQM skills training rather than being trained in leadership whereas assistant lecturers and lecturer staff (69%) felt that leadership skills training would be more useful. Persons appointed at the level of deans and directors had a different view. They either felt they needed no training or in limited areas where audits and reviews were required. One would naturally assume that persons appointed at higher academic and administrative levels would consider leadership and management skills training in a quality organization valuable but such is not the case here. Senior lecturers see the value in management training, assuming that they either wish to do their jobs better or they are aspiring to senior academic roles as administrators and not leaders within the university. On the contrary, lecturers and others seemed to concentrate somewhat more on leadership training. There is the view that they are taking quality in leadership more seriously and desire to lead their departments and the campus in the future.

The training modality to be used was another item under study in the survey. Across nearly all staff levels, blended learning was the preferred choice of training modality. Actually this choice far outweighed other options in most cases (50% to 100%). In some cases, as with directors face-to-face (F2F) training was suggested as the only choice whereas with staff at the professorial rank may have interest in F2F and blended learning equally. One logical assumption is that persons who have preferred F2F modality may do so because of inadequate exposure to blended learning approaches. Another useful point has to do with the level of training. ATS staff preferred certificate (35%) and diploma (44%) level courses whereas mid-level professionals, academics and senior managers preferred postgraduate diploma courses (over 60%). Naturally, ATS would want a short route professional programme that has currency within a university given their required level of education and training. Likewise, other staff levels who hold degrees would see postgraduate training as means to career advancement while helping them improve their jobs.

6.0. LOOKING TO THE FUTURE: IMPACTING HIGHER EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE LEADERSHIP IN THE CARIBBEAN

Staff Perceptions: Is Training Really Needed?

The trends noted among different levels of staff were rather useful and interesting. On the one hand they revealed some main assumptions about the staff capacity to interface with quality systems from design through to implementation. One very important point is that staff perceptions of their own competence may not always be what is considered the norm within the wider international academic and corporate communities. In some instances some persons felt that university experience, prior training in their discipline and individual capacity to do work is adequate for innovations in quality assurance or for developing their leadership and managerial competencies for working with quality systems. The mere fact that several persons reported they needed training in a wide range of areas from leadership and management to designing and implementing quality systems suggests that the competency levels that have been reported may not be actually precise. Nevertheless, this presents a case for developing effective leadership and managerial capacity within a regional higher education institution and has some benefit to other similar institutions in the region.

Strategic Leadership Culture: How is it to Develop?

Another critical issue has to do with several junior administrative, some senior administrative/professional and assistant lecturers/lecturers who had the view that they would be more likely to benefit from the training received. There seemed to have been some thought about succession and future leadership within the university by such personnel who are not yet ranked at necessarily senior management positions. Conversely, senior managerial staff had a somewhat different view. They felt they were fairly competent already and did not see the added value of training to their work. This presents a huge challenge for the university especially when a significant part of the strategic direction as quoted in the 2007-2012 Strategic Plan is to increase capacity and enhance quality by the next three years. This implies whether or not the UWI leadership team is fully prepared at this time to move the organization forward as a quality institution looking at enhancing its corporate culture, academic systems, improving information management, establishing a more vibrant evaluation culture and working towards project management as a useful resource for effectiveness. One good thing though is that the university has invested more resources into quality assurance and enhancement by employing more quality assurance personnel and deploying university-wide surveys to capture data. However, one questions whether this is sufficient.

Managing National and Regional Quality Capacity Building

The views and ideas expressed point to some notions of building a higher education quality culture within nation states and the region. If the leadership and managerial capacity of institutions are not trained now then there could be greater losses in terms of student attrition due to market share and competition from other academic institutions, investments from public and private sector entities or profits that would keep the institution operational and viable. These issues should be ideally managed at the level of higher education systems. National and regional policies can be the driving forces to insist on institutions establishing a quality leadership culture. One way is for governments to create national incentives in the accreditation systems so that there is training investment by institutions. In one instance, national policies for succession planning in higher education sectors may be useful. By successfully advocating, sponsoring and rewarding training for leadership and management within a quality culture universities, colleges, polytechnics and community colleges across the region would assure and enhance institutional quality, ensure accreditation and provide the context for institutional advancement in the wake of competition for student and staff markets.

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