

Biography for Dr. Gillian Paul

Dr. Gillian Paul has been the President of the Association of Caribbean Higher Education Administrators (ACHEA) since July 2005.

Substantively, Dr. Paul is the Vice-President, Academic Affairs of the College of Science, Technology and Applied Arts of Trinidad and Tobago (COSTAATT), having served as the Interim Chief Executive Officer of the College from September 2002 to June 2004 when the College's first President was appointed.

Dr. Paul is a Fulbright scholar who holds a Doctorate in Higher Education Administration and a Masters in Education from Columbia University, New York. She also holds a M.A. in French from the University of South Carolina, and a B.Sc. in French and Spanish from Georgetown University, Washington D. C., U.S.A.

Dr. Paul formerly served as the Director of the NIHERST - School of Languages and was part of the NIHERST team that was given responsibility for the establishment of COSTAATT. She served as the Chair of the Academic Affairs Team and the Chair of the Community College Implementation Team (CCIT) from 1997 to 2000 when the College was first established and as such was instrumental in the early development of the College.

Since 1993, Dr. Paul has been involved in developmental work in the areas of foreign language education, curriculum development and assessment, quality assurance and accreditation, educational reform, educational policy formulation and implementation, teacher education and professional development, distance education and technology in education. She has delivered numerous presentations, conference papers and workshops on these topics and has had the opportunity to share her passion and commitment to educational development through service on several national committees including the Cabinet-appointed National Advisory Council on Education (NACE), the National Curriculum Council, the National Task Force on a Seamless Education System and the Steering Committee for the Implementation of Spanish (SIS) and the Tertiary Education Strategy Advisory Committee of which she is the Vice-Chairman.

Linking Caribbean Higher Education Research to Institutional Administrative Capacity Building. The Current ACHEA Focus

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ABSTRACT: The last decade has witnessed a radical transformation of the higher education sector in the English-speaking Caribbean, brought on to a large extent by the pressures that the globalized economy has placed on regional governments to re-conceptualize their approach to human capital development in order to produce a larger and more highly-skilled workforce, capable of competing in the knowledge-driven economies of the new millennium.

This re-conceptualization of human capital development has given rise to a wide range of higher education reforms, with regional governments focusing on expanding access; new financing policies; institutional mergers for greater efficiencies; establishing new institutions; greater accountability for quality outcomes and closer alignment of programmes to labour market needs and national and regional socio-economic development plans. The impact of this transformation on the roles and expectations of Caribbean higher education administrators has been significant, calling for higher levels of technical competence, knowledge and experience in order to effectively and efficiently manage institutions in a higher education sector grown increasingly complex.

In July 2001, with the support of the University of the West Indies, the Association of Caribbean Higher Education Administrators (ACHEA) was established with the fundamental aim of professionalization of Caribbean higher education administration in order to equip its members to better deal with the challenges of operating within this new and complex educational environment. Over the last seven years, ACHEA has hosted annual conferences and professional developments workshops and seminars across the region. In the last three years, however, a clear consensus has emerged among the membership of the Association that the weak and limited knowledge base of the substance of Caribbean higher education administration—from policy to practice—will militate significantly against the region's ability to make informed choices and by extension, to derive maximum benefits from its investment in higher education development.

This paper will explore the current state of research into Caribbean higher education administration; discuss some of the consequences of not addressing this research deficit in a meaningful and intentional way; present a research agenda developed by ACHEA for priority action and explore the benefits of partnering with other regional higher education institutions in advancing this research agenda.

**Linking Caribbean Higher Education Research to Institutional Administrative Capacity Building.
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Ladies, and gentlemen, let me begin by thanking the organizers of the UNESCO Forum on Higher Education Research and Knowledge for inviting ACHEA to participate in these most important deliberations which have come at a critical juncture for higher education administrators in the Caribbean.

Never has the regional higher education sector witnessed such profound changes in all dimensions of its operations in such a short period of time. Across the region, at state level, we are seeing reforms in legislative frameworks, policy, structure, institutional mandates, financing strategies and accountability mechanisms for higher education development. Within the institutions themselves, the focus is on increasing enrolment, broadening access, improving quality, expanding the range of programmes offered and harnessing information and communication technologies for more effective and efficient management of resources. Higher education administrators are at the fulcrum of many of these initiatives. We are, as it were, in the trenches of higher education transformation and the stakes are high if we fail to rise to these new challenges. On behalf of ACHEA, I therefore welcome this opportunity to share with you some perspectives that have been emerging among the membership of the Association on the importance of research for capacity building in higher education administration and which were crystallized at our seventh annual conference that was held in Barbados two weeks ago.

My presentation this morning will be very focused. Firstly, I will provide a brief background on ACHEA for those of you who may not be familiar with the Association, then I will give a short and general overview of the state of research on Caribbean higher education administration and discuss its implications for key stakeholders; finally, I will share with you how ACHEA proposes to approach this critical issue over the next four or five years in order to support the region's social and economic development plans and goals.

Background on ACHEA

The Association of Caribbean Higher Education Administrators (ACHEA) was born in July 2001 out of the recognition that the regional higher education sector was becoming increasingly complex and that managers and administrators needed more sophisticated skills and competencies to be able to function effectively within this new educational environment. Not surprisingly, the University of the West Indies provided the initial funding and continues to be a major source of support for the work of the Association which was the brainchild of the current University Registrar and Director of Administration, Mrs. Gloria Barrett-Sobers who served as ACHEA's first President from 2001 to 2004.

I say not surprisingly because higher education in the Caribbean, up until the start of the new millennium, was really synonymous with the University of the West Indies. The launch of the ACHEA however, coincided with the long overdue diversification and expansion of the regional higher education sector which had been called for since the early 1990s by leaders on regional development and

integration such as Sir Alister McIntyre, former Vice Chancellor of UWI and Sir Shridath Ramphal, former Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Secretariat and Chairman of the West Indian Commission.

Since that time, the relentless demand for access to higher education by an increasingly diverse student population has given rise to a veritable explosion in the growth of institutions, and students can now choose from a wide range of home-grown and international universities, colleges, university-colleges, community colleges, teachers colleges and technical institutes to pursue their post-secondary studies. Today, ACHEA draws its members from over 40 higher education institutions across the region and its membership represents a broad spectrum of educational managers and administrators from presidents to administrative assistants; from deans and departmental chairs, to directors of information technology and managers of campus safety and security. The diversity in the membership profile is by design and not by accident as the Association recognises cross-functional synergies (both vertical and lateral) and succession planning as key strategies to be adopted for more effective management of our higher education institutions.

The mission of ACHEA is to promote the highest professional and ethical standards and the continuing development of the management capacity among those who have administrative and managerial responsibility in higher education in the Caribbean¹ by enhancing the skills of individual members through the provision of training and development programmes and opportunities for effective networking.

Where does research fit in with this mission? Simply speaking, how can ACHEA promote the highest professional standards if it has no comprehensive or specific information on the required competencies for effective management and administration within the regional higher education industry?

If you will allow, I'll briefly digress with a personal vignette which I believe will make the connection between research capacity and ACHEA's mission painfully clear. In 1995, I went abroad to pursue doctoral studies in higher education administration at Columbia University in New York City. Today, I can still recall the shock and panic which I felt when I was called upon by my advisor to do the review of the literature for my dissertation which was on Caribbean higher education administration, and I could find no more than a handful of papers or monographs in refereed journals and no books whatsoever dedicated to this critical area of higher education development. Most of the research done on Caribbean higher education at that time was undertaken by agencies such as the World Bank, UNESCO, the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Inter-American Development Bank. In these studies, the Caribbean region was frequently grouped for research purposes with Latin America and the data aggregated accordingly. A significant proportion of these studies were also pitched at the macro-level, providing information on enrollment rates, achievement rates, financing of education and calling for specific reforms of the national or regional higher education systems. Very few studies investigated the actual practice of higher education administration in the Caribbean region in any depth and its impact on educational outcomes at the tertiary level.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, there was a nascent research focus on educational development in small states, initiated by the Commonwealth Secretariat and advanced in 1994 in particular by a UNESCO Global Conference on Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States which was held in Barbados and by expert meetings on higher education development in Cape Verde. This small

¹ The Caribbean Region is defined as in the ACIS Convention to include all countries, states and territories in and bordering the Caribbean Sea from Mexico in the northwest to French Guiana in the southeast (i.e. including all five Central American states, Panama, Colombia and Venezuela on the three Guianas. For these purposes, El Salvador (on the Pacific Coast), the Bahamas and Bermuda (in the Atlantic) and Guyana, Suriname and French Guiana on the Atlantic coast) are considered part of the Caribbean region.

states research was especially promising as it began to “drill down” below the surface level to investigate administrative practice in the higher education sector.

It was through this research that I first encountered an insightful analysis of the multifunctional small-states administrator by Farrugia and Attard (1989) which perfectly described how high-performing administrators in small states become their own worst enemies, because of the scarcity of professionally trained human resources in critical areas of government and economic activities. In this scenario, high-performing administrators in the Caribbean are given more and more responsibilities, to the point where their productivity begins to wane; they become indispensable to their managers and leaders and so cannot be released for any significant time to engage in meaningful professional development activities; and they do not have enough time to effectively mentor anyone for the purposes of succession planning. All three dynamics come together over a period of time to turn our high-performing knowledgeable administrators into exhausted, overworked bureaucrats, incapable of meeting deadlines, out of touch with new knowledge and skills in their field of study and generally disregarded by their superiors who once relied upon them extensively for informed technical advice and high quality and timely outputs. In short, they become victims of their own success.

Another promising area of research into educational development in small states which is of particular relevance to the issues we address today is the tendency of administrators and managers to be risk-averse (Benedict, 1967) because the cost of failure can be extremely high where the opportunity for changing jobs is extremely low, and the possibilities for lateral or upward movement are limited. In small states, where most educational research is funded by the state or by independent international donor agencies, *through* the state, educators who find themselves confronting evidence that policy prescriptions which have been strongly endorsed and publicly promoted by funders and employers are not producing the desired outcomes, make a very rational decision not to speak “truth to power” in order to preserve their employment opportunities. What is of even greater concern is the fact that the more funding that has been invested in the policy prescription, the greater the risk to educators of highlighting its limitations or deficiencies. I need not elaborate further for participants at this forum, the serious implications—financial and otherwise—of this well-documented and researched feature of educational management in small states.

Sadly, the research focus on educational development in small states appears to have given way to more pressing issues on the sustainable development research agenda such as disaster-preparedness, climate control, and alternative energy solutions.

Fast forward to 2007, more than a decade later, and the state of research on Caribbean higher education administration has not improved by any significant measure. A quick review of research available through the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine library collection shows the following profile of studies available on Caribbean higher education:

1. There are 56 items on Caribbean higher education comprising papers in refereed journals, newspaper articles, monographs and reports of the University of the West Indies dating from 1985-2002. Over a seventeen-year period, this amounts to an average of less than four studies per year.
2. Of the 56 items, 32 items are specifically focused on higher education at the University of the West Indies; seven (7) are sector level studies, calling for reform of the structure of the higher education sector in the wider Caribbean or in specific countries, and eight (8) provide a historical perspective on the University of the West Indies;
3. With respect to administrative functions, there are 8 studies on technology in Caribbean higher education with a specific focus on distance education; two (2) studies on quality assurance; two (2) studies on student services, two (2) studies on financing of education; three (3) studies on the

need for curriculum reform and four (4) studies on management of the University of the West Indies.

Many of these studies can best be described as “calls for change” and in general, do not provide inexperienced administrators with information that they can use to be more effective administrators, managers or leaders. More importantly for the purposes of this UNESCO Forum, the heavy focus on higher education at the University of the West Indies or at other universities, while understandable, may need to be revisited in light of statistics produced by a baseline study recently undertaken by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education in Trinidad and Tobago which shows that while enrollment at the St. Augustine Campus has mushroomed to 16,000 students, over 45,000 students are now enrolled in various levels of programmes of study in the non-university tertiary sector. The vast majority of these students are being directly absorbed into the labour market upon successful completion of their studies.

University level educators and administrators should therefore take the opportunity provided by these discussions on the way forward for higher education research, policy and knowledge to expand their understanding of who and what are worthy objects of Caribbean higher education research or we may “miss the boat” entirely.

REASONS FOR LIMITED RESEARCH ON REGIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION ADMINISTRATION

I would like to put forward four major factors which I believe may explain the limited research production in this area of Caribbean higher education administration. Let me state in advance that I am offering here broad generalizations which are evolving and changing even as we meet and deliberate this morning.

Firstly, at the macro-level, when we can ask the question ‘Who is responsible for developing local and Caribbean research capacity in higher education?’ certainly, while more and more ministries are strengthening their capacity in this area, our regional and national universities must be considered to be at the forefront of this task.

Since 1990, over seventeen years ago, a UWI Governance report called for a greater focus on graduate studies and research capacity-building. We know that progress is now being made on this front, both at UWI and at other national universities in the Caribbean. For example, the University of Trinidad and Tobago is pursuing a sponsored-research initiative that is intended to be more strategic through a closer alignment of its research agenda with specific socio-economic development goals of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. However, two points in this regard are noteworthy:

1. Firstly, with the move towards massification of regional higher education and the region’s continuing failure to rationalize and strengthen institutional capacity and infrastructure in the non-university public tertiary sector, it appears that regional and national universities have now committed to embracing a mandate that encompasses pre-college to doctoral level studies. Institutional leaders will therefore have to balance the human-resource and time-intensive requirements for building a strong research capacity with meeting the intensifying demand by both governments and the wider society to educate and train more and more students with a diverse range of abilities at the undergraduate level. Given our track record on this issue, I am not especially sanguine that graduate studies and research will be given the priority attention and resources which they must have in order to enable our universities to fulfill their primary responsibilities.
2. Secondly and more importantly from my perspective, very little of the existing research on higher education is specifically focused on higher education administration.

A second contributing factor, I would argue, is the lack of a strong tradition in the region of educational research informing policy and data-driven decision making. For the last five years or so, I have sat on a number of national committees which focus on different aspects and levels of educational development, and it is astonishing, not to say, disheartening, to see the number of problems which we are only *now* beginning to address that had been telegraphed in research studies undertaken over a decade ago by graduate level students at the University of the West Indies as well as by nationals studying abroad. We must find a mechanism to bring the findings of these studies to bear on national policy-making and reform efforts.

Thirdly, as a corollary to the second proposition, *because* there is not a clear and consistent nexus between educational research and policy formulation and implementation, our societies have not been able to inculcate a cultural disposition towards valuing research as exists in most developed countries. Higher education research activities in the region can assume a *pro forma* aspect with students undertaking educational research projects solely to meet the requirements for degree completion and then tucking the findings away in a drawer or on a bookshelf; or ministries and state agencies conducting research in order to meet the data requirements of international funding agencies. The type of critically reflective educational research which focuses on the relationship between policy and practice with a view to informing quality improvements is, however, noticeably lacking.

This parlous state of affairs can be contrasted with research production out of North America and Europe where it is possible for me to find on the internet, in half an hour, comprehensive national studies--qualitative, quantitative, longitudinal--on all aspects of higher education administration including educational and information technology projects, information on student admissions, retention and achievement projects, faculty productivity and compensation data, standards and legal frameworks for security and safety issues. This list is interminable. While it is obvious that the size of our higher education system does not allow for such breadth and depth in research outputs, I will contend that in the Caribbean the effects of this void where information on higher education administration practice should be will have serious consequences for our national and regional development that are out of all proportion to the size of our small systems.

Finally, I would also surmise that the paucity of research on administrative practice in our higher education institutions is directly related to the fact that higher education administration is not yet understood in our part of the world to be a specific profession for which specialized training and research is required. I do not believe that we in the Caribbean have developed a full appreciation of the degree to which the strength, dynamism and competitiveness of the North American higher education system is driven by the fact that it is led and managed by educators who have received specialized training in a wide range of academic and administrative managerial functions. In contrast, most of our academic administrators, including deans and department heads, receive no formal training in leadership, management or administration, in finance or human resource management, in pedagogy, andragogy, or educational technology applications. Yet, they are expected to provide informed leadership on these matters. Academic administrators (who, it may be argued have oversight for the core business of our institutions) often rise to these positions of leadership on the basis of qualifications, teaching and research activity in their *disciplinary* area of study. Their administration and management skills are often acquired on-the-job and quite frequently, in the absence of any formal professional development, mentoring or succession planning programme. With the rapid proliferation of tertiary level institutions across the Caribbean, the possibilities for introduction of effective professional development or mentoring programs for new and inexperienced managers and administrators are reduced at the precise moment when the need has become more acute for such support.

Similarly, there appears to be a view that HR is HR, IT is IT and Marketing and PR is Marketing and PR and that no special knowledge of the higher education industry is needed for employment in the sector.

More specifically, no research is required by administrators to perform these functions effectively or to be promoted within our institutions.

Perhaps this view could have been defended a decade ago before the effects of globalization began to be felt within the regional higher education sector. However, we all know that we are not competing today with the “mom and pop” school around the corner. The ICT revolution brings each of our institutions into direct competition with any college or university from any developed country that targets our student population as a potential market for its programmes and services. Our IT administrators, our HR managers, our business development officers must therefore also be on the cutting edge in terms of their knowledge and skills relative to the global higher education industry, if they are to add value and strengthen our institutions’ competitive advantage. More importantly, they should understand how models of higher education administration, and trends and strategies for educational development conceptualized and honed in larger and more developed societies, must be adapted to our realities for optimal impact in the small states of the Caribbean.

JUSTIFICATION FOR FOCUS ON CAPACITY-BUILDING IN HIGHER EDUCATION ADMINISTRATION

Why is a research capacity in higher education administration important? As managers, we find ourselves at the crossroads of a major transformation in Caribbean higher education where all of us in our respective institutions are confronting the phenomenon commonly described in the field as the massification or democratization of higher education access. Whereas in the past, higher education was considered by both funders and consumers of higher education as the preserve of a privileged few, the reality is gradually being internalized by all stakeholders that the only way our small states will be capable of not only surviving but competing in the globalised economy is through strategic human resource development and management that can transform our countries into knowledge-driven societies. The focus on effective human resource management is especially important for us in our small states as the cost for failing to manage our limited human capital effectively and efficiently is very high compared to what it would be in the larger, more developed societies.

While we know that education and training--at all levels of the education system--is at the heart of national and regional human resource development, it is becoming increasingly clear that it is at the tertiary level of education that the risks are highest if we fail to be strategic in our thinking and actions, and conversely, it is also the level at which the benefits are most sustainable and profound if we do. Higher education institutions produce our teachers, our researchers, our managers and our leaders. How important is it then for the managers and administrators of these institutions to be competent professionals?

In my view, failure to commit to the professionalisation of higher education administration in the region is akin to acquiring a high-speed train to fast-track us to the future and hoping against hope that the persons driving the train know what they are doing. In that scenario, we better pray for no bad weather, no mechanical problems, no disruptive passengers, no trains coming in the opposite direction, nothing that would require special skills or knowledge to arrive safely--just a smooth track and a working autopilot to get us to our destination.

In other words, if there is no specific focus, as part of the region’s overarching development strategy, on preparing our higher education administrators to effectively manage the current spate of educational development and expansion, with specific attention being paid to the quality of educational outcomes as opposed to the traditional focus on quantity of inputs, then the outputs of our higher education institutions may be compromised, with far-reaching consequences for our economies.

What is our current reality in the sector? With the rapid expansion of tertiary education delivered by a growing array of private, public and cross-border tertiary level institutions, the work of regional higher education administrators has been irrevocably transformed. Governments and the labour market are simultaneously demanding increased outputs from our institutions and improved quality in learning

outcomes and for many of us, this appears to be an impossible task. Some of us also feel besieged by a student population that is diversifying at such a rapid pace that we feel cannot cope with all the new problems and issues generated by such diversity.

However, cope we can and we do...every year, through resourcefulness and commitment to student success, we find ways to surmount obstacles, to overcome hurdles, each in our different functional areas in order to deliver on our promise of a quality educational experience for all our students. I would contend that we have developed models of...or more precisely, strategies and techniques for best practice—or at the very least—good practice in Caribbean educational administration. However, the challenge for us remains the same as ever, to find sufficient time to critically reflect on this practice, to share experiences with our higher education counterparts at other institutions, so that we can begin to move from the particular circumstances of our own college or universities to the general experiences across the regional higher education sector; to develop hypotheses and theories of effective Caribbean higher education administration in the region; to undertake qualitative and quantitative research to validate or these theories; and to document and publish this learning so it can be harnessed for wider application and systemic quality improvement.

The last year within ACHEA has been very instructive with respect to our sense of where we as Caribbean higher education administrators, are in the world. When the Executive met in July 2006 after the 6th annual conference in St. Kitts, some members of the Executive—myself included--proposed that the 2007 conference theme should focus on Caribbean higher education administration, so that we could begin to develop a knowledge base on what are the specific challenges, constraints and successes of our policies and practice. Other members argued that this focus might be limiting to potential conference delegates given the small size of our sector. Others felt that the theme had value but was premature as there were not enough case studies and research on Caribbean higher education administration to 'carry' an entire conference.

Some of you now present who attended the conference in Barbados know what transpired. The rest, as they say, is history. Without any collusion on the part of the ACHEA Executive, every single plenary speaker at the 2007 Conference, from Dr. Tewarie, Principal of UWI St. Augustine, Trinidad, to the Honourable Minister Mia Mottley of Barbados; from Professor Errol Morrison at the University of Technology in Jamaica to President Hassan Syed of the University-College of the Cayman Islands—spoke of the need for regional educators to establish a distinctly Caribbean research agenda so as to strengthen our competitive advantage in the global economy and to undertake studies that would provide policy-makers with the critical information needed to evaluate the real impact of their strategies for educational development.

ACHEA'S RESEARCH AGENDA

As my mother would have said, "Nothing before its time." On the final day of the 2007 ACHEA Conference, over 150 higher education administrators met in groups to develop a critical research agenda which we propose to seek funding to undertake over the next four years.

We are of the view that ACHEA is uniquely positioned to make a contribution to research production on higher education administration by virtue of the fact that our members produce, manage, analyse and evaluate the projects, programmes, services and data from all areas of higher education administration on daily basis. What is required is a means to catalyse this knowledge and consolidate the information from a regional perspective. As we all acknowledged at the Conference, each of us on the ground and in the trenches in our institutions, has been working on some aspect of this information. However, we will be unable to see its impact and its limitations relative to national and regional socio-economic plans, unless we can take a bird's eye view so that the patterns of our higher education development tapestry can emerge more clearly.

You will appreciate that the 7th Annual ACHEA Conference only concluded about ten days ago so we are still in the process of distilling the recommendations of the persons who attended. I will make bold

however, to end my presentation this morning with a brief overview of my early thoughts on how ACHEA might approach this challenge. I believe that the development, prioritization and implementation of the ACHEA research agenda should be guided by the following principles:

1. **We will be strategic in establishing our research priorities.** With limited resources available for research, our energies and time should be focused on those projects that have the most potential to yield significant improvements in outcomes that would benefit the key stakeholders of our institutions. For example, leveraging information technology solutions and knowledge management systems are considered to be two of the most powerful strategies for achieving quantum leaps in improvement in educational administration and learning outcomes. Several of the universities and colleges in the region have been struggling to realize the benefits from their investment in information technology. We must find out where in the regional higher education sector we have achieved success and why, where have we are still struggling and why in order to be able to diffuse this knowledge across the system and to derive better implementation outcomes.
2. **We will prioritize research projects that directly impact the primary beneficiaries of higher education** – One of the most the startling findings in comparing research outputs on higher education administration in the Caribbean with that of North America is the relative absence of the voice of our primary customers – viz the students and the employers. With the diversification of the student population and the attendant challenges which it poses for consistently producing quality learning outcomes, it is especially important for higher education administrators to have more precise and detailed information on various aspects of student development and progress through our programmes of study. In Trinidad and Tobago and across the region, our higher education institutions are preparing the workforce who will be assuming leadership and management responsibilities by 2020 so the risks are significant if we do equip ourselves to respond effectively to the quality challenge. The Association envisages launching an annual region-wide student goals, needs, engagement, and satisfaction survey in the coming year, in order to provide administrators with richer information to inform the design and development of academic and student support services and programmes.
3. **We will focus on research projects that evaluate the impact of policy on practice.** The relationship between policy and practice appears to be the missing link in Caribbean higher education administration research and it must be addressed as a matter of urgency in order to ensure we derive the intended outcomes of the policy prescriptions. For example, the rapid expansion of tertiary education in Trinidad and Tobago has created a seller's market for the teaching corps. There is now an insufficient number of skilled and experienced faculty members in key areas to meet the demands of programme delivery across the sector. One by-product of this tertiary education expansion is the phenomenon of faculty teaching at multiple institutions, day and evening, weekends and Sundays too. What has been the impact on the quality of teaching and learning outcomes for today's diverse student populations who need even more faculty attention and support in order to succeed? Depending on the findings of this research, higher education administrators may need to look more closely at faculty recruitment practices and faculty development programmes in order not to compromise the quality of teaching.
4. **We will strive to be efficient in using our resources to pursue our research agenda.** Specifically, we will conceptualize the research projects and build research capacity where there is already a natural interest and advantage. In small societies with limited human resources, it

is neither practical nor prudent for all institutions to try to do everything. This approach militates against the development of a critical mass of expertise in specific areas which is needed for excellence and innovation. We envisage various institutions taking ownership for specific research projects that may be linked with their distinctive mission and mandate, but which are regional in scope. In this way, we can promote the development of centres of excellence across the region in various aspects of educational administration.

5. **We will develop research capacity among members of the Association.** In order to ensure the institutionalization of data-driven decision-making and reflective practice for quality improvement among higher education administrators, the Association will provide technical support to equip its members with the capacity to participate in these research studies.
6. **Our approach to professional development of higher education administrators will be data-driven.** We are hoping to structure the design of these research studies in such a way as to specifically yield findings about effective practice in Caribbean higher education administration in high priority areas which can then be incorporated into our professional development workshops, seminars and programmes of study.

I will close by saying that while ACHEA believes that it is important for us as administrators to be able to use the findings of these research projects to share best practices; to assist colleagues in problem-solving, and to develop a practice-focused professional development programme for higher education administrators in the region, our ultimate goal is to use the platform provided by our regional association and networks to ensure that that Caribbean higher education institutions do not compete with each other and weaken each other's ability to deliver quality to our students. Instead, within the context of supporting the goals of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy, we will strive to strengthen each other so that CARICOM's regional higher education system can be better positioned to compete in the global higher education market.

Thank you for allowing me this time to share with you some of the recent developments within ACHEA as well as our plans for our future development.

Dr. Gillian Paul

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