ST AUGUSTINE

Deal to provide more career help to UWI grads

THE University of the West Indies, St Augustine, has entered into an agreement with the Trinidad and Tobago International Financial Centre Management Company (TTIFC) through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) last Wednesday.

The MoU will ensure graduates of The UWI are better prepared to work with global businesses invited to invest in Trinidad and Tobago, The UWI said in a statement on Friday.

The execution of the MoU will be piloted in the Department of Management Studies.

TTIFC's mandate is to help diversify the economy of Trinidad and Tobago by attracting foreign companies to set up operations locally, and to hire individuals to work for foreign clients of those companies.

It will help to create jobs while earning the country foreign exchange, the statement said.

A further area of focus is on developing a scalable industry by facilitating a continued flow of skilled employees for the benefit of local and international financial firms seeking to establish shared service centres, banking, financial services, and insurance business process outsourcing centres, as well as finance and accounting outsourcing operations in Trinidad and Tobago.

At the signing, campus principal Prof Brian Copeland reiterated his vision, which forms part of The UWI's new strategic focus on access, alignment and agility.

He stressed the significance of this MoU as the campus plans to ensure what is taught engages with business and commerce in the country.

Copeland emphasised The UWI's commitment to creating an innovative and entrepreneurial university, a vital partner to industry and to governments in Caribbean development.

COMMITMENT: Prof Brian Copeland, left, campus principal of The University of the West Indies, St Augustine, and TTIFC chairman Richard Young sign the Memorandum of Understanding at the Office of the Campus Principal last Wednesday.

The St Augustine campus, he said, can be a major catalyst in economic diversification through its teaching and outreach programmes.

As a higher education institution established to contribute to national and regional development through the provision of relevant educational programmes producing industry-ready graduates, The UWI is industry's ideal partner to achieve that objective.

Management, accounting programmes

One main element of the MoU is that students in the management and accounting programmes will have mandatory workshops covering areas such as corporate and e-mail etiquette; banking institutions skills focus; commitment and reputation building; image and workplace communications skills; customer service fundamentals; valuing and building rapport; and empathy, the statement said.

In addition to mentoring management and accounting students on the importance of these professional soft skills, The UWI will provide TTIFC with statistics of yearly graduates in specific programmes.

Chairman Richard Young said these statistics are key to TTIFC being able to continue to showcase the current local talent to the international companies, The UWI said.

As part of the agreement TTIFC will offer UWI students and alumni–particularly those who have completed the mandatory workshops–job opportunities with foreign companies which have set up operations in Trinidad and Tobago.

In this regard, TTIFC will participate in career guidance programmes and other student events while the campus will disseminate TTIFC's potential job and training opportunities to its student and alumni base.

Both institutions have pledged to collaborate further on curriculum review and programme development relevant to the financial services industry, the statement added.

The signing took place at the Office of the Campus Principal.

Signatories to the MoU were Copeland, Young and Aliyah Jaggassar, vice-president of Business Process Outsourcing/Shared Services Development at the TTIFC.