

Pandemic has UWI Modifying Entrance Requirements

By **Editor** - May 29, 2020



The University of the West Indies (The UWI) has announced its decision to modify the matriculation requirements specific to the academic year 2020/2021, amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

It follows the quarterly meeting of its Board for Undergraduate Studies (BUS) on May 19.

As approved by the Board: Students who have passed at least two CAPE subjects either at Unit 1 or 2 at Grades 1-4, who also have the requisite CSEC subjects and are currently registered for either Unit 1 or 2 will qualify as normal matriculants to The UWI.

In a statement on Thursday, it said the University's decision is grounded in scientific analysis as research on students' predictive performance conducted by The UWI over the years, showed that passes at CAPE Unit 1 (Grades 1-4) were 97% predictive of success at CAPE Unit 2.

In commenting on this decision, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Board for Undergraduate Studies, Professor Clive Landis explained: "Around the world, universities have

had to pivot and adapt to more flexible admissions processes in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

As a world-ranked university, committed to serving our Caribbean region, UWI has to consider how it can better support students at this time.”

Professor Landis, who is also the Chairman of The UWI COVID-19 Task Force asserted that: “This is absolutely not about lowering of standards. It is a fair and reasonable proposal given the prevailing circumstances.”

Matriculation is defined as a minimum admission standard and does not guarantee a right of entry for a matriculant into every degree programme.

According to Professor Landis: “The change in policy is more about building flexibility into The UWI application process. Prospective students who have completed their first year of CAPE can make an application to The UWI, right now today, and the Faculty, in turn, can make a firm offer to applicants who meet this new matriculation standard.”

The UWI said the decision on students who merit admission remains with the Faculties, which are allowed to establish faculty-specific admission regulations that go beyond the matriculation standards (e.g. Law, Medicine), and include a competitive screening of applicants, where necessary.

The proposal on the adjusted matriculation requirements was jointly presented by The UWI and the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) to the Ministries of Education at CARICOM's Council for Human and Social Development (COHSOD) meeting earlier this month, where it received an endorsement.

It added that comparatively, some of the finest universities in the USA have long since adopted the practice of accepting CSEC and CAPE Unit 1 results to determine its offering of scholarships and full admission to Caribbean students; thus attracting some of the best and brightest students from the region while The UWI waits on CAPE Unit 2 results.