

**Keynote Address: *Defining Best Practice  
in Higher Education: Contextual  
Relevance in the Caribbean.***

# KEY TERMS IN THE CALL FOR PAPERS

- “culture of best practice”
- “embedding best practice principles in institutional systems, processes and procedures”
- “institutional transformation”
- “the pursuit of excellence”

# Vice Chancellor's Call to Excellence

- ▶ “UWI must be a global university for our Region, unrelenting in its commitment to internationally respected standards of excellence in all that it does”.
- ▶ (UWI Vice Chancellor, Professor Hillary Beckles, Inaugural Address, 2015:5)

# Survey of Best Practice: Coverage

- ▶ **48 Global Practices**
- ▶ **5 Geopolitical Regions**
- ▶ **28 Countries**
- ▶ **2 Multi Country Initiatives**
- ▶ **43 Higher Education Institutions**

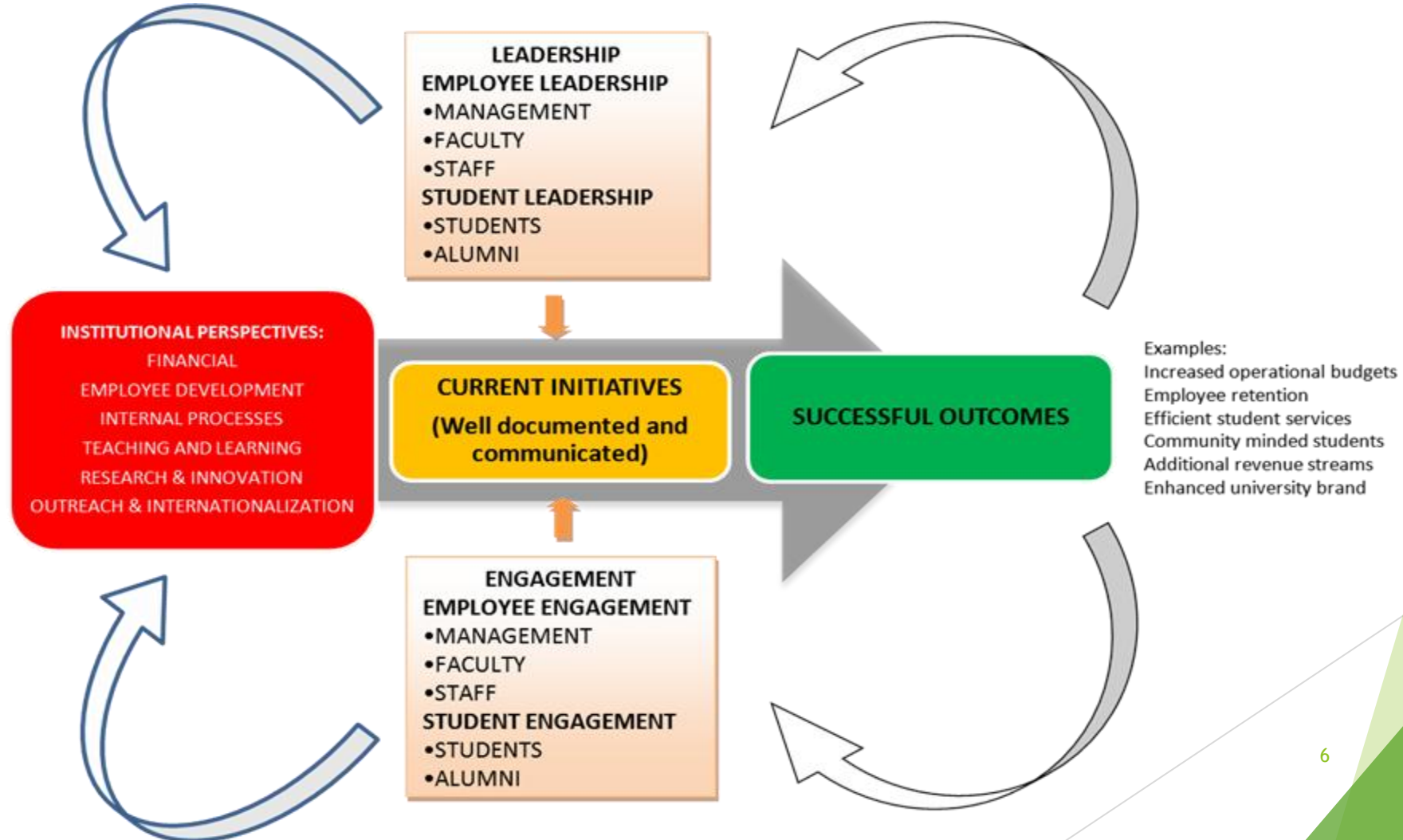
# Survey of Best Practice: Countries Surveyed

Figure 1: Global Distribution of Higher Education Best Practices Recorded  
From Harvey, 2012 p 22



# Best Practice Symbiosis

Figure 1. Major findings/principles: Symbiosis fosters a culture of best practice.  
(Harvey 2012)



# Emergent Definition of Best Practice: Institutional Level

- ▶ *‘An intervention, process or approach, which has contextual relevance for the University of the West Indies; is exemplary in its ability to produce superior results when assessed against the goals set and/or against similar practice in the relevant core area; engages internal and external stakeholders; is efficient in terms of resources (human, time, financial); is well documented; has utility and is recognized beyond the practice site’.* Harvey, 2012, p 17.

# Emergent Definition of Best Practice: National, Regional Impact Levels

## *Best practice interventions:*

- ▶ Must be exemplary in their ability to produce superior results in addressing critical developmental issues for the region
- ▶ Must be efficient in terms of the use of resources
- ▶ Effective in terms of the engagement of a wide group of stakeholders
- ▶ Must be well documented



# Results Based Management

Results at three levels:

- ▶ Outputs
- ▶ Outcomes
- ▶ Impacts

Source: United Nations Development Group, 2010

# Vision for the CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (CARICOM)

- ▶ *A Caribbean Community that is integrated, inclusive and resilient; driven by knowledge, excellence, innovation and productivity.*
- ▶ *A Community where every citizen is secure and has the opportunity to realise his or her potential with guaranteed human rights and social justice; and can contribute to, and share in, its economic, social and cultural prosperity. A Community which is a unified and competitive force in the global arena.*

CARICOM, 2014 p7)

# Resilience Model for Caribbean Development (CARICOM, 2014:7)



# Best Practice in Higher Education in Cuba

- ▶ **Exemplary Results:** doctors; vaccine; teachers
- ▶ **Efficient Resource Use:** despite blockade, special time
- ▶ **Engaged Stakeholders:** policy makers; academics; funders; students etc.
- ▶ **Well documented:** we can hear the story today because it has been so well recorded

# **IMPLICATIONS 1:**

## **Integrally Linking Curriculum, Research and Outreach to Sustainable Development**

- ▶ **Innovation and Productivity**
- ▶ **Independent and Critical Thinking**
- ▶ **Practical Choices and Radical Alternatives**
- ▶ **Relevant Classroom and out of Classroom Practice**
- ▶ **Appropriate Assessment Mechanisms**
- ▶ **Content and Methods Must have Direct Links to the Development Agenda, bearing in mind the CARICOM Resilience**

# IMPLICATIONS 2: Effective Management of Higher Education Institutions

Symbiotic Links among:

- ▶ **Leadership**
- ▶ **Employee Engagement**
- ▶ **Student Engagement**
- ▶ **Internal Processes**

## IMPLICATIONS 3:

### Harmonisation of State Funded Higher Education Institutions?

- ▶ Avoiding Duplication
- ▶ Coordinated Research Agendas
- ▶ Making Best Use of Available Talent

Can we achieve the above outcomes by a University System of the West Indies?

( Source: The Human Resource Cluster of CARICOM Jules, 2014)

## IMPLICATIONS 4: Harmonisation of External Quality Assurance Mechanisms?

- ▶ If we have such a coordinated University System, will this have to be matched by a similarly coordinated external quality assurance mechanism?

(Source: IICCHE, 2014)



# Embedding a Culture of Best Practice

- ▶ Mission: National and Regional Purpose (Ref: Appendix 1: CARICOM Strategic Plan)
- ▶ Strategy: Direction, Passion, Focus, Tactics (Ref: Appendix 2: Checklists for Planning and Nurturing Best Practice)
- ▶ Socialization and Renewal
- ▶ Engagement: Staff, Students, Other Stakeholders (Ref: Appendix 4 :A Foreign Student's Perspective on Cuban Medical Education)
- ▶ Rewards and Sanctions

# Embedding a Culture of Best Practice (cont'd)

Enablers:

- ▶ Evidence
- ▶ Documentation
- ▶ Measurement and Evaluation

**(Source: Ref Appendix 3: Sample Best Practice Record)**

# Embedding a Culture of Best Practice (cont'd)

- ▶ **Leadership:** each of us a leader - each of us an instrument of change. (Former UWI VC, *UWI Strategic Plan, 2012*)
- ▶ **Communication** - the oil that nourishes the system and smooths the flow

# Best Practice in Higher Education in the Caribbean Context is:

- ▶ Exemplary in addressing and producing superior results for critical developmental issues of the region (as encapsulated in the CARICOM Strategic Plan)
- ▶ Efficient in terms of the use of resources
- ▶ Effective in terms of the engagement (direction, passion, tactics) of a wide group of stakeholders
- ▶ Well documented and disseminated

**Thank you!**