

UWI, T&T IFC partner for professional training

The University of the West Indies, St Augustine (the UWI) and the T&T International Financial Centre (IFC) recently signed a historic memorandum of understanding (MoU) to solidify the strategic alliance between the two entities.

The agreement secures the future of the financial sector by facilitating an important mandate of the IFC—to ensure the local labour supply meets the requirements of global finance and accounting (F&A) business process outsourcing (BPO) businesses being attracted to this country, specifically in professional soft skills.

With a goal to diversify the economy, the signing of the MoU is a major part of the IFC's strategy to prepare the workforce and generate high-value employment. Initially, graduates from the Department of Management Studies will benefit from the new programme, which provides essential professional training for those entering the job market. Subsequently, the training will be available to students in other faculties of the university, once approved by their respective faculty and departmental heads.

Speaking at the signing, Campus Principal and Pro-Vice Chancellor, Brian

Copeland restated his vision of the university as part of the 'Triple-A' strategy for greater alignment between what is taught at the UWI, and how it engages with business and commerce in the country.

Richard P Young, chairman of the IFC, viewed the collaboration as more than a partnership between the two entities; instead, he identified it as one that impacted the fabric of the society.

"Employers have often lamented the fact that young professionals are technically competent, but they lack the people skills to effectively and successfully navigate in the workplace or to self-reflect and improve in order to retain their jobs," said Aliyah Jaggassar, who spearheads the development of the local F&A BPO sector as the vice president — BPO Shared Services Development at the IFC.

Dr. Acolla Lewis-Cameron, Head of the Department of Management Studies at the UWI, under whose department the MoU was piloted, spoke of plans to engage CEOs from the corporate sector more meaningfully and have these captains of industry share their journeys with students. That activity will be captured in the department's initiative, Conversations with CEOs.