

# Open and Distance Learning in Higher Education in the Contributing Countries of the UWI

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## Section 1

This part of the chapter deals with our topic in the context of the University of the West Indies (UWI) and its constituency. Located at Mona in Jamaica, the UWI was set up in 1948, initially as a College of the University of London, to cater to the English-speaking Caribbean, and received its charter in 1962. In 1960 the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture at St Augustine in Trinidad and Tobago was incorporated as a second campus, followed in 1963 by the establishment of a campus in Barbados, now at Cave Hill. In 1962 Guyana withdrew from full participation and set up its own university. Enrollment at UWI has risen from the initial 33 in 1948, to 1268 in 1961, 10026 in 1983, and 18058 in 1996/97. Besides the three campus territories, the University serves and is funded by another twelve governments, the non-campus countries (NCCs). [See Table 1 for basic data on the countries involved: Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Belize, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, St Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia, and St Vincent and the Grenadines. The Turks and Caicos Islands are not technically a contributing country but they are usually included among the NCCs. The School of Continuing Studies does not yet have a Centre in the Turks and Caicos Islands; a teleconferencing facility for distance education is being constructed there.] In 1960-61, the present campus countries provided 66.5% of total enrolment; by the time of the preparation of the University's first development plan in 1988-89 they provided 93.4%. Regular outreach to the NCCs has been offered in various ways, first through extension services now run by its School of Continuing Studies, SCS, which has Centres in most of them, then through a system of "Challenge" examinations in certain faculties which permitted candidates to sit first-year examinations in their home territory, having worked on their own with perhaps some assistance from the local Centre, and most recently through teleconference-based distance education programmes. Teleconference sites now exist or are at an advanced planning stage in all the contributing countries and in the Turks and Caicos Islands. In Jamaica and Trinidad there are a number of sites in larger communities, while in Barbados and Trinidad the hospitals associated with the University's Faculty of Medical Sciences are also linked to the network.

While exhibiting a variety of socio-cultural forms, the territories served by the UWI are all marked by their history of colonial dependency as slave plantation economies in the British Empire. Their populations are predominantly of African origin, with a group originating in the Indian sub-continent of equal size in Trinidad, and in smaller numbers in several other territories. Belize is exceptional in having a very complex mixture of peoples of different ethnic origins. Politically the territories have exhibited periodic social unrest, that in 1937-38 precipitating the post-World War II moves towards internal self-government and full independence. Independence came after the failure of the federal attempt (1958-62) when Jamaica and then Trinidad and Tobago became fully autonomous, followed by most of the other territories during the 1970s. At the moment Anguilla, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Montserrat, and the Turks and Caicos Islands remain British dependencies. After Federation, its members set up a loose association (the Caribbean Free Trade Association, CARIFTA, in 1968, becoming the Caribbean Community, CARICOM, in 1973) which permits region-wide consultation and planning, though without any power to enforce its decisions. More recently a wider political grouping, including the Spanish- and French-speaking territories of the Caribbean, has been formed, the Association of Caribbean States, ACS. A political association which includes a shared Central Bank has been created among the smaller islands of the Eastern Caribbean, the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States, OECS.

Economically the countries of the region have been moving away from traditional sugar and banana production to embrace tourism in virtually all cases, financial services (notably Cayman and Anguilla), oil (Trinidad), and bauxite (Jamaica) as sources of revenue. They remain undeveloped in industrial and technological terms, are all very small

in international terms (only Jamaica has a population in excess of two million; most are below 150 thousand), and most are vulnerable to occasionally devastating hurricanes. Currently Montserrat is barely surviving a series of volcanic eruptions. Table 1 gives estimates of some basic statistics for the countries concerned, grouping them as campus countries, OECS, and North-Western Caribbean.

Table 1: Statistics on UWI's Contributing Countries

		Area in km <sup>2</sup>	Pop.'95 1000s	Pop. increase	GDP per cap. '95	% of pop	% of Grad's	% of Certs
Campus C.s	Barb'dos	432	264.4	0.2	7015	5.16	11.17	10.64
	Jamaica	11424	2486.5	1.0	2092	48.52	47.24	52.05
	Trinidad	5128	1261.9	0.6	4101	24.62	32.56	22.43
OECS	Anguilla	91	10.6	3.0	5762	0.21	0.08	0.1
	Antigua	440	64.3	-0.1	7690	1.25	0.94	1.48
	BVI	150	18.3	2.4	18497	0.36	0.14	0.18
	Dominica	750	74.2	1.1	2901	1.45	0.82	2.44
	Grenada	345	97.4	0.5	2721	1.90	1.17	1.75
	Monts'rat	102	10.4	-0.7	5846	*1994 0.20	0.38	0.38
	St Kitts	269	42.8	0.8	5331	0.84	0.92	0.72
	St Lucia	616	145.3	1.7	3832	2.84	1.64	2.42
	St Vinc't	388	109.9	0.3	2517	2.14	0.98	2.15
	N-W	Bahamas	13942	275.0	1.5	12436	5.37	1.11
Belize		22960	216.5	2.0	2696	4.22	0.73	1.75
Cayman		264	32.8	4.3	27835	*1994 0.64	0.04	0.06
Turks		417	14.8	5.0	6923	0.29	0.07	0.16
Mean for	CCs	5661	1337.6	0.6	4403	N = 4012.8	34730	5336
Mean for	OECS	350	63.7	1.0	6122	N = 573.2	2700	729
Mean for	N-W	9396	134.8	3.2	12473	N = 539.1	745	204
Mean for	NCCs	3133	85.6	1.7	8076	N = 1112.3	3445	933
Total for	CCs	16984	4012.8			78.30	90.97	85.12
Total for	OECS	3151	573.2			11.18	7.07	11.62
Total for	NW	37583	539.1			10.52	1.95	3.25
Grand	Total	57718	5125.1					

Notes: The figures in the last two columns are taken from statistics collated by the Office of the Board for NCCDE (available from <http://cavehill.uwi.edu/bnccde/docs/Data.html>) which indicate the percentage of undergraduate degrees and certificates awarded to nationals of the various territories until 1992, and absolute numbers awarded for the different groups of countries; the figures in the first four columns are estimates provided by the Caribbean Development Bank, in its 1996 Annual Report, of land area, population in mid 1995, population increase rate over the preceding three years, and GDP per capita at current 1995 prices in US\$ (in two cases figures for 1994 are the most recent available [indicated by \*1994]). The fifth column, showing each country's proportion of the total estimated population, and absolute numbers for the groups, has been calculated on the basis of the CDB figures.

The educational systems of the various territories have been modelled on that of the sometime mother country. They have until recently and in some cases still reflect a duality typical of the 19th and early 20th century: primary education for the masses; secondary for a small élite. All-Age schools remain a prominent feature in Jamaica, though much is being done to provide adequate secondary education for a wider proportion of the population. All countries have increased secondary provision, though most of them retain an "11+" examination to channel students into secondary schools of varying prestige and capacity. Performance in external examinations is generally disappointing (Cox, 1991; Whiteley, 1993). Table 2 reports enrolment rates for the different levels of the system for selected countries, from which one can see the disquieting discrepancy between high rates for primary and secondary schooling coupled with internationally aberrant low rates for tertiary participation.

Table 2: Enrollment ratios for selected countries

Country	Year	Sex	Pre-	First	Second	1st+2nd	Third
Bahamas	1980		(3-4)	(5-10)	(11-16)	(5-16)	(17-21)
		MF		99	88	93	16.7
	1994	MF	8	94	90	92	
		M	8	95	88	92	
		F	8	94	91	92	
Barbados	1980		(3-4)	(5-11)	(12-17)	(5-17)	(18-22)
		MF	41	85	88	87	14.8

		M	40	85	88	86	13.9
		F	42	86	88	87	15.7
	1989						
		MF		95	85	90	17.0
		M		95	90	92	13.6
		F		95	80	88	20.6
	1994						
		MF					28.1
		M					22.4
		F					33.9
Belize	1980		(3-5)	(6-13)	(14-17)	(6-17)	(18-22)
		MF	14	107	38	86	
		M			34		
		F			42		
	1994						
		MF	27	121	49	98	
		M	26	124	47	99	
		F	28	118	52	97	
Jamaica	1980		(3-5)	(6-11)	(12-18)	(6-18)	(19-23)
		MF	70	103	67	84	6.7
		M	67	103	63	82	
		F	73	104	71	87	
	1992						
		MF	81	109	66	86	6.0
		M	85	110	62	84	6.8
		F	78	109	70	88	5.2
Trinidad	1980		(3-4)	(5-11)	(12-16)	(5-16)	(17-21)
		MF	8	99	70	87	4.4
		M		98			5.0
		F		100			3.8
	1995						
		MF		96	72	86	7.7
		M		91	66	81	8.4
		F		102	79	92	6.8

Notes: Data are from the UNESCO Yearbook for 1997, downloaded from <http://www.unescostat.unesco.org/>. UNESCO only gives data for countries with more than 150000 population. Years have been chosen to include the earliest and most recent with a reasonable amount of data.

What is now thought of as post-secondary provision was dominated by Teachers' Colleges, traditionally the "poor man's secondary school", but it now includes a burgeoning technical and business-oriented sector, increasingly focussed on national community colleges. Some continuing education and professional training has been available through local government training facilities, the faculties of the UWI, the SCS, and specific donor-funded projects, some of which were organized for the NCCs by the Office of University Services. For the academic élite there is the UWI, but for the more prosperous or for scholarship holders there are willing takers in North America. Figures for 1995-96 indicate that 3357 Jamaicans, 2223 Trinidadians, and 2060 Bahamians were studying in the US alone (though these figures may include the children of first generation immigrants). [The figures were given in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 17 December 1997. Emigration has resulted in a Caribbean diaspora in the US, Canada, and the UK roughly equal in size to the population in the Caribbean; it is highly significant as a source of remittances and as a reference group for those in the Caribbean.]

The past decade has seen the consolidation of the Caribbean Examinations Council's (CXC) replacement for GCE 'O' level; plans are afoot for a CXC alternative to 'A' level. The period has also seen considerable expansion of post-secondary provision, both public and, particularly in Jamaica and Trinidad, private. Some offshore medical schools have also established themselves in the NCCs. One of them, St George's University in Grenada, has begun to court local students in a wider range of disciplines. There has also been increasing penetration of the region by North American and UK institutions offering forms of distance education or sponsorship.

## Section 2

For the earlier part of its history, the UWI was almost the only post-secondary institution that concerned the governments of the region. It eclipsed the several Teachers' Colleges, and the scattered tertiary provision for Agriculture, Nursing, and the Arts that existed. Polytechnic institutions were created in the campus countries, that in Jamaica having recently been given university status (the University of Technology). In several countries miniscule sixth-forms have been rationalized through a Community College. Typically these have expanded to incorporate teacher and other training and are now often offering or planning to offer Associate Degrees, reflecting the growing tendency for North American models to encroach on traditional British structures.

In this context, CARICOM governments continue to express allegiance to the one regional university, and they have even made serious efforts to liquidate long-standing indebtedness to it, but there are considerable pressures to pay more attention in practice to their national institutions. These pressures have a large financial component: the UWI is extremely expensive, its costs being equal to or higher than those typical of first-world universities, while the cost of local institutions reflects a generally impoverished public sector. A World Bank study (1993) reported that in the late 1980s each student at Mona cost the Jamaican government US\$5138, while each student in the local tertiary sector cost it \$639 (and at a secondary school \$257). These discrepancies are not quite so marked for the other governments, but for all of them there is a significant difference between UWI costs and those of local institutions. The University is also popularly seen as exclusive, unco-operative, and often too academic. For those with long memories, the heady days of Black Power and the disturbances subsequent to the banning of Walter Rodney, a Guyanese lecturer in the Dept. of History at Mona, by the Jamaican government in 1968 (Rodney, 1983) can be recalled if evidence of the University's hostility to the prevailing order is required. It is widely supposed that local institutions will be more responsive to the demands of those making these criticisms, which have led also to two extensive restructurings of the University itself (1984, 1996), both of which increased national control over each campus. Local colleges are also likely to agree on easier terms for articulation arrangements with US institutions than they would be able to achieve with the UWI.

CARICOM does not yet have a comprehensive plan for tertiary education in the region, though its recent pronouncement on human resource development envisages a significant increase in tertiary enrolments and preserves a key role for the UWI, working particularly through distance education. The OECS is working towards a rationalised system for its constituency within a European Union-funded project; this will attempt to avoid the duplication of capacity in each territory, though the history of the UWI's similar efforts demonstrates how difficult it is to deal even-handedly with students who need to travel and those who can remain in their home country, if not physically at home. Only its Law Faculty, where enrolment is controlled by a quota system related to the number of places in the professional schools and where demand far outstrips supply, has been able to graduate students from all contributing territories in rough proportion to those territories' populations.

Individual governments have various policies and priorities for higher education. The campus governments sponsor all their nationals who are accepted by the UWI - this means contributing 80% of the economic cost of each student (100% for Barbadians). Most NCCs, on the other hand, severely restrict sponsorship, setting priorities in terms of subject studied as well as numbers of students. Where national colleges have been franchised to teach part of the UWI programme, as in Antigua and St Lucia, there is a commitment to continue sponsorship for all those students moving on to a campus to complete a degree.

Within post-secondary education and training, open learning has been very rare, except to some extent in teacher training. Here qualifications have indeed been required for entry, but they have been fairly minimal and attempts to make them more stringent, as in Jamaica in the early 1980s, have often been conjoined with prolonged remediation and compromised standards (Nissen, 1996). The perceived needs of governments have on occasion resulted in other programmes in which normal entry requirements have been waived, as with a Mona B.Ed. in Early Childhood Education again in the early 1980s, or a distance education Certificate in Energy Management, offered in 1986/87 and 1988/89. The UWI has not taken kindly to such demands, and does not make special provision to support learners who are without the skills it routinely expects of its normally matriculated intake. Its normal matriculation (two passes at 'A' level plus three 'O' levels or CXCs including English Language) is not high by the standards of its would-be reference group, but with chronically weak secondary school systems few of the contributing countries are producing an abundance of entrants of this type.

Distance education has fared better. While people have been taking correspondence courses for decades, the regional use of distance education methods is due to the UWI. The UWI Distance Teaching Experiment (UWIDITE) began regular programmes in 1983/84, after some years of feasibility studies. UWIDITE provided a telephone-based system, including telewriters and slow-scan TVs, which permitted courses and programmes to be taught by a combination of print material and teleconferences, with very occasional supplements in the form of video or audio tapes, and some local support by way of tutorials or practicum supervision. Initially the system linked the three campuses to two NCCs (Dominica, St Lucia), but other sites were added so that by 1993 eleven NCCs were

being served, as well as several non-campus sites in Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago (for the history of UWIDITE, see Lalor and Marrett, 1986, 1994). At that point a loan project, funded by the Caribbean Development Bank, helped to sustain efforts to substantially upgrade and reorient the nature of UWI's distance education. From a budget of Jam\$23.5 million (US\$0.94 million) in 1993/94, the University itself is now allocating Jam\$143 million (US\$4 million) in 1998/99 explicitly to distance education. The loan had been triggered by the University's momentous but ill-publicized decision of 1992 to become a "dual mode" institution, a decision informed by and endorsing the general recommendations of a report prepared by Renwick and others in 1992. The intended quantum leap for distance education preserved the teleconferencing skeleton, and indeed is upgrading it to handle videoconferencing, but saw also the need to shift the delivery of courses away from the telelecturing typical of UWIDITE towards self-instructional print materials with occasional local tutorial support (for more details of the reorientation of distance education at UWI, see Brandon, to appear).

In its first phase UWIDITE offered certificate programmes in Education and Social Sciences, as well as a variety of non-credit courses and programmes. The post-CDB loan phase has involved the first undergraduate degree programme (in Management Studies, the most highly subscribed option in the University) and will soon include a B.Ed. in Educational Administration, as well as postgraduate work in Engineering Management, continuing medical education, and contributions to the "foundation course" components of all undergraduate degrees. Independently of the units directly responsible for distance education, but utilizing the same teleconferencing facility, and generously funded by the British Development Division, the then Faculty of Agriculture embarked in 1994 upon a Masters programme in Agriculture and Rural Development, using material from Wye College which it has revised for local conditions. Plans for a set of innovative bilingual taught Masters degrees to be offered in conjunction with institutions in the Dominican Republic and funded by the European Union under Lomé IV also include a significant Internet element, a portent of things to come in other areas of the UWI's distance education activity. These assorted offerings reflect a compromise between what the University believes to be in demand (it has undertaken a demand survey and many consultations at different times) and what faculties can be persuaded to work on, influenced in several cases by the availability of donor funds.

With UWIDITE as inspiration, governments have seen the potentialities of using distance education in other ways, particularly in the area of teacher training. Distance education for practising teachers has played a large role in the extensive Reform of Secondary Education project (ROSE) in Jamaica; it was also intended to contribute to less successful efforts to upgrade teachers in the OECS; it is mooted by the Trinidad and Tobago government in its plans for teacher training as well as for skills training for adolescents and continuing medical education. Others too have realised its benefits. After many years running a small regional project to train community and youth workers, the Commonwealth Youth Programme's office in Guyana converted it to a distance modality and saw a dramatic increase in trainees, so impressive in fact that the Commonwealth Secretariat mandated a pan-Commonwealth effort to convert the diploma programme to distance form. This new programme is due to start in 1998/99 and will be managed in the Caribbean by the SCS.

UWIDITE began at Mona, the brainchild of Professor Lalor, then the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Science and Technology. It was initially funded by USAID, later becoming a charge to what is known as the University Centre, that part of the University directly responsible to the Vice-Chancellor, rather than to one of the three campus Principals. UWIDITE's activity required assistance from the faculties, but it was not integrated into their regular concerns (for instance, teaching time was not allowed to count in establishing work loads, students were not counted in calculating staff-student ratios; participating staff received a small honorarium). With the CDB Loan Project and the formal adoption of dual mode, a Board for Distance Education was created; it oversaw the development of a Distance Education Centre (DEC), with a presence on all three campuses, but it was not able, despite the dual mode decision, to have distance education planning properly incorporated into normal campus considerations. An ostensibly "faculty-driven" model finds the faculties being cajoled into action by the DEC and the top management of the University. There remains great reluctance to see work in distance education as simply part of one's normal duties; little budgetary provision is made for it outside the University Centre, and where it has been made it is conveniently forgotten when pleading lack of resources to undertake any off-campus activity. The campus administrations show little interest in processing distance education students, although the dual mode decision clearly made these campus responsibilities instead of creating a "fourth" campus structure to administer distance education programmes.

The UWI was restructured once again in 1996, central academic control being devolved in part to the campuses and in part to three functionally differentiated Boards, one of which is specifically concerned with the promotion of outreach and distance education, and advertises the University's commitment to the NCCs in its very title, the Board for Non-Campus Countries and Distance Education. This Board directs the work of three units devoted to outreach: the Distance Education Centre, the School of Continuing Studies, and the Tertiary Level Institutions' Unit (TLIU). It provides a forum where co-ordination of the other outreach undertaken directly by the faculties can be

sought, and it also gives a prominent place to agencies external to the University, in particular NCC governments and representatives of the Association of Caribbean Tertiary Institutions (ACTI), an organization established to give coherence and a voice to the growing population of local tertiary institutions. While on the one hand giving outreach and distance education their most prominent formal position to date in the University's structure, this Board lacks anything beyond moral suasion to carry through its recommendations, so that implementation of present programmes and planned expansion has to struggle with the pressing demands of campus-oriented faculties and administrations.

Funding for distance education in the UWI has remained largely a Centre matter. Unlike on-campus students, who are charged to their respective sponsoring governments and pay a tuition fee as well, distance education students simply pay a fee per course (1997/98 US\$171), calculated on the same basis as the on-campus students' fee. The remaining costs of distance education (the approximately 80% not covered by the fee) are allocated to the Centre, whose total costs are apportioned to on-campus students. In effect, the government payment of economic costs for on-campus students includes an element that provides for the distance education students as well. This can be seen as another subsidy from the campus countries to the NCCs (whose governments are given a discount on the economic costs charged for their on-campus students), although the large numbers of distance education students from the campus countries tend to reduce the significance of this subsidy (thus, for instance, it has been estimated that in the first year of the distance education Management Studies B.Sc. there are 872 campus country students and 701 from the NCCs). Because NCCs are unwilling to sponsor more than a few on-campus students it was thought they would balk at the notion of paying on a per capita basis for their distance education students.

The certificate programmes which have so far been the only regular offering have been predominantly a female affair. The Caribbean has for long been in the lead as far as the feminization of education goes, with Jamaica one of the regional leaders (v. Standing, 1981, ch. IV; Mohammed, 1982; Jules, 1991; Jules and Kutnick, 1991; Miller, 1996); the UWI's enrolment has shown a female majority since 1982/83 (Hamilton and Leo-Rhynie, 1996). While there are no official statistics, these programmes recruit teachers some way into their career and lower to middle ranking personnel in the public and private sectors. As usual in distance education, drop out rates are higher than on-campus, though again there are no recent statistics to be found. Pass rates and throughput for completing students in the Education certificates are comparable to on-campus rates and are high; in the Social Science programmes they are considerably lower, an effect in large part of the required courses in mathematics and elementary statistics when entry to the programme itself does not require any pass in mathematics.

### Section 3

Despite long periods of deficit financing because of arrears in subventions, the three campuses of UWI are well entrenched in their respective nations. Enrolments have risen almost every year. There has been little money for capital development from the governments and there have been periods of decline relative to the international market-place, but planned growth seems assured, with the partial exception of the Cave Hill campus in Barbados which is approaching saturation of its presently defined clientele - a situation which does not incline its top officials to view the increasing activity of NCC colleges or the expansion of distance education in a very positive light.

From Table 1 it can also be seen that two of the campuses have provided their home country with a disproportionate benefit in terms of numbers of graduates. A comparison of the proportion of the population of the UWI's constituency residing in each country with the proportion of undergraduate degree and certificate holders (of whom there are many more degree holders) gives a rough indication of the extent to which Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago have in a way got more than their fair share out of the University's presence. In this they are joined by two NCCs, Montserrat and St Kitts and Nevis. Jamaica, despite having had a campus from the very beginning, has derived what in these terms is simply its fair share of undergraduates. But the other contributing countries have not seen comparable benefits.

The lack of representation of the NCCs in the life of the University has long been a concern and a source of contention. As the Table indicates, it has as at least two features: a comparatively mild under-representation in the case of the Eastern Caribbean, and a very serious one in the case of the North-Western Caribbean. During the restructuring of the mid 1980s, which revised the formula for the payment of costs by the governments, the NCCs demanded a mark of their importance in the creation of a Pro-Vice-Chancellor with special responsibilities for their territories. Unwillingly the University conceded the point, but its implementation once again singled out the OECS countries, since they were given the new appointment in the shape of a PVC for the Office of University Services (Eastern Caribbean), while responsibility for these functions in the North-Western area was added to the growing portfolio of an already existing PVC stationed at Mona. In neither case, as a subsequent evaluation report noted (Parker, 1988), were these Offices given the funds necessary to do much. They had in effect to seek special funding for each and every project undertaken.

The latest 1996 restructuring has attempted to deal more even-handedly with all the NCCs. The unit that in effect succeeded to the Office of University Services, the Tertiary Level Institutions Unit, TLIU, has both a more precisely defined mandate (to promote articulation with and the development of the national tertiary colleges) and staff to cater for all the NCCs. In its first year, it in fact worked as much on articulation arrangements in the Cayman Islands and the Bahamas as in the OECS. The North-Western countries have also benefited from the CDB Loan Project, so that they will soon have teleconferencing resources almost on par with the rest, although the SCS remains without a formal presence in the Cayman Islands and Turks and Caicos. To date, the lack of telecommunication facilities or the inadequate quality of what there was has meant that the North-Western countries have not participated as fully as the rest in distance education programmes.

These programmes have always been promoted as an effective means of providing services to the NCCs. Jennings (to appear) has noted that, in its first two cycles, the UWIDITE Certificate in Education trained as many teachers from Dominica as had been trained in the entire history of the on-campus programme to that point. The figures in Table 1 indicate more generally the impact that the various certificate programmes have had upon the NCCs; it can be seen that the proportion of certificates (mostly obtained through distance programmes) markedly exceeds that of degrees in most NCCs.

In addition to much expanded distance education provision, the University's present Strategic Plan envisages a complementary approach to greater NCC participation: the development of the types of franchising and articulation arrangements with the national colleges that have been alluded to above.

Although the Distance Education Centre and the Tertiary Level Institutions Unit come under the same Board, the question of how to make their activities complementary rather than competitive has not yet been adequately addressed. The issue is one aspect of a general dialectic between centralised University control and dispersed local empowerment. This was played out in the Challenge scheme, where some had hoped to catalyse the development of local resources, either through the School of Continuing Studies or through the local colleges, but where the opportunity provided by the expanding teleconferencing technology permitted campus lecturers to take over a considerable amount of the teaching that was being provided ad hoc in each country. It must be added, in all fairness, that this campus intrusion was generally welcomed by the students, for whom it represented a seal of approval sometimes thought lacking in the local providers.

While there is a genuine issue of relative autonomy here, there is also an important resource question. The building up of local capacity, in the UWI as well as in the national colleges, has generally tended to involve very considerable reduplication (not to mention a lack of "critical mass" in many areas at the University). The miniscule size and extensive dispersion of the islands entail that costs of study away from one's home country are particularly high, so that there is strong pressure towards such a multiplication of capacities beyond pedagogical necessity. There is also the real danger of permanent or at least extended "brain drain" once a student goes abroad. In this context, it is noteworthy that planning for distance education work has so far not been co-ordinated with long-term planning for the development of the national colleges. The region's lack of comprehensive planning capacity, typical of small states (cf. Bray, 1991), and the University's unwillingness to take a lead, for fear, among other things, of being seen to dictate, has resulted so far in University commitments to work in distance education in areas where the colleges might be considered fairly strong, and could certainly be easily strengthened, but with no formal collaboration even in those areas. Belatedly plans are now being made to try to use distance education, including the newly emerging Internet and the expected videoconferencing capacity, to permit inter-campus sharing of special expertise. The NCC colleges have not yet been included in any such planning, although very recent work on a strategic plan for outreach is expected to broach the subject.

The University and the NCCs are not living in isolation. While there are very few North-Western graduates from UWI, these countries send considerable numbers to institutions in the USA. It is particularly striking that after the University gave way to the insistence of the Bahamas Government for a unit of the UWI by setting up a Centre for Hotel and Tourism Management, formally part of the Mona Faculty of Social Sciences, virtually no Bahamian student has ever attended it, preferring US institutions. There is a similar story to be told for some of the most northerly of the Eastern Caribbean islands, which are closer to the University of the Virgin Islands, whose entry requirements are less demanding and overall costs lower.

While it shares with the West Indies Cricket team the aura of Federation's attempt to set regional commitment above local identification, the University itself finds it difficult to sustain the broader vision when so much of its life is firmly campus-centred. Most members of staff at one campus see no more of the other campuses than they do of any other campus in the world. The vast majority of students at each campus are nationals of the campus country - even at Cave Hill, specifically designed with the OECS in mind, NCC students represent only about 11% of the undergraduate student body in 1997/98. The latest restructuring has given formal endorsement to what was

an ever-increasing campus autonomy with respect to courses and programmes. As a final but obviously very persuasive point, the bulk of government funds for the University comes from the campus countries (roughly 96% in 1995/96). For a long time, several NCC governments were in arrears on their agreed contributions to the University. They all receive a discount on those fees they do pay; unlike the campus governments, they do not automatically sponsor their nationals who have been accepted, although in terms of per capita GDP the NCCs are now all better off than Jamaica, and many are in advance of Trinidad. As has been explained, they are receiving distance education almost at no charge. It is tempting to think that they are already getting their due.

It is in general easier to separate and find reasons to separate than to join together. It is certainly difficult to envisage what a united Jamaica and Cayman would have been like, knowing their present situations 39 years since their formal divorce. With Nevis seemingly on the verge of independence, with Cayman and Anguilla deliberately pursuing overemployment in order to discourage immigration, it is difficult to believe we will soon have a region-wide majority favouring greater integration in any enforceable sense. Yet the cosmopolitan vision is shared by many - at the moment one UWI graduate Prime Minister is inviting another to take Barbados into the OECS - and who knows what *la longue durée* will bring? It is unlikely to give the NCCs a significantly larger or smaller proportion of the constituency (assuming the present contributors remain unchanged), but there is scope for it to bring their distinctiveness more clearly into the general consciousness, to give them a larger proportion of alumni, and to provide their professionals with access to continuing education and networking within the wider region. At this juncture, distance education seems as potent as any other factor to move us in these directions.

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