

## 2. Principal's Overview

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In academic year 2006–2007, the last year of the University's 2002–2007 Strategic Plan, the Mona Campus built upon the initiatives that were already in progress and introduced or implemented others in furtherance of the Campus's repositioning agenda. This report highlights the major activities of the Campus undertaken under the able leadership of Principal, Professor Elsa Leo Rhyne.

As the birth place of the University of the West Indies, the Mona Campus despite the financial challenges, boasts a proud history of progress and contribution to Jamaica, the region and beyond. Nevertheless, there are challenges to which the Campus must respond. These include:

1. The ever increasing number of options available to persons wanting to pursue higher education, providing choices: for face to face or online delivery, full- or part-time enrolment and week day or weekend classes; through local or regional institutions or local "branches" of overseas institutions or through study outside the Caribbean. To survive, the Campus must demonstrate that the overall quality of its education product, service delivery and total student experience is equal to or exceeds that of the competition.
2. The existence of other local and regional universities that are focusing on research and expanding their research capacity.





3. The free movement of labour permitted under the CARICOM Single Market arrangements, making it important for Mona to have regard to regional labour requirements when planning programme offerings. The challenge is determining the right mix of programmes.

The formulation of the new UWI Strategic Plan 2007–2012 was influenced by the recognition of the challenges currently facing the UWI. Critical to the development of the Plan was the invaluable feedback from a wide range of stakeholder groups, including our students. The Plan embodies the actions seen as needed by the UWI to respond effectively to the challenges and opportunities that lie before us towards the ultimate goal of producing relevant research, value-added public service and work-ready graduates.

As the first Campus of the UWI, Mona has until recently led the University in terms of student enrolment. This position has been rapidly eroded in recent years. The St Augustine Campus now leads and growth at Cave Hill is accelerating, based in large part on the commitment of the governments of these countries to free tertiary education.

The status of being the first Campus also means that Mona has some of the oldest buildings and infrastructure. The financial challenges that have existed to greater or lesser degrees over the past 60 years have contributed to a build up of deferred maintenance and the absence of a comprehensive preventative maintenance programme. In addition, capital expansion to address the growth in student numbers has lagged owing to funding constraints.

As Principal, I embrace the challenges confronting this Campus and am committed to:

- ensuring that the quality of academic and co-curricula programmes and services meet the needs of our valued students
- attracting funding to enable increased financial support for students through scholarships, grants and bursaries, and funding for research
- influencing government funding policy so that no student will be denied access because of prohibitive fees; and
- significantly improving the physical and IT infrastructure of the Campus to enhance learning.

While it is expected that Jamaican students will always constitute the majority of the student population, the Mona campus will also be working towards increasing its intake of non-Jamaican students. The establishment in 2008 of a branch of the Campus in Montego Bay will ensure that we accelerate our responsiveness to the demand by Jamaicans and others for access to University education.

I am grateful for the commitment of the Campus's competent faculty and staff. They have rallied to the call for transformation of the Campus and I anticipate their continued support and direction as we seek to advance the Mona Campus from a good to an exceptional academy.



**Gordon Shirley**, BSc, MBA, DBA  
Pro Vice Chancellor & Principal

