

# CHAPTER V

## DYNAMIC COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



The UWI, Mona Campus' engagement efforts with the wider community is multifaceted. Such efforts range from engagement on national policy development, to fostering the sustainable development of whole communities, to direct assistance with the nurturing of young minds. The 2011/2012 academic year marked yet another very important one for developments at all levels.

### Supporting National Imperatives

During 2011/2012, the UWI, Mona Campus engaged policy makers, business leaders and other stakeholders in various sectors on key issues of national importance in

several forums. Many of the issues examined in these forums have critical relevance to, and sought to inform approaches to dealing with currently unfolding developments in Jamaica and other Caribbean societies:

#### International Conference on Forensic Medicine

In May 2012, the UWI, Mona Campus through its Department of Pathology, in collaboration with University of Toronto's Centre for Forensic Science and Medicine, staged the first International Conference on Forensic Medicine. The conference which was supported by the Ministries of Justice and National Security, sought to build forensic capacity in Jamaica with the specific aim of improving our social justice system.

#### Research Conference on Violation of Child Rights

The Sixth Annual Caribbean Child Research Conference held in Jamaica in October 2011 under the theme "Promoting Child Rights with Equity – Our Children in Post-Independence Times," explored issues such as violence, lack of family care and sub-standard education among

Dr Michael Pollanen, Director of the Centre for Forensic Science and Medicine and Chief Forensic Pathologist for the Province of Ontario, Canada - conference convener and keynote speaker - making his presentation at the first International Conference on Forensic Medicine.

Participants at the first International Conference on Forensic Medicine pose for photos.





the many violations of child rights. The conference's focus on equity resulted from the growing recognition worldwide by UNICEF and other child-focused agencies, that national development goals cannot be met without paying greater attention to the most vulnerable and marginalized populations.

Following the staging of the Conference, the Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies hosted a child rights course, with the primary objectives of strengthening participants' capacity to improve the design and implementation of child-centred policies; promote the wide scale use of the Convention on the

(L-R) Mr Darren Miller, President, National Secondary Schools Council of Jamaica; Professor Brian Meeks, Director, Sir Arthur Lewis Institute for Social and Economic Studies, UWI, Mona; Mr. Robert Fuderich, Representative, UNICEF Jamaica; Miss Shereece Hall, 2011 Caribbean Child Research Conference Essay Winner; Professor Mark Figueroa, Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences; and Dr Jan Vandemoortele (Keynote speaker), Development Economist, formerly of United Nations Development Programme and United Nations Children's Fund, at the Caribbean Child Research Conference.

Rights of the Child and the Jamaica Child Care and Protection Act; and improve the ability of public sector workers to monitor and evaluate child-centred policies.



### **Science: Bridge to the future**

In April 2012, the Faculty of Science and Technology hosted its 9th Biennial Conference under the theme, "Science: Bridge to the future." The keynote speaker, Mr. Ricardo Jenez, Consultant in Silicon Valley and former Director at Google Enterprise, spoke on the topic, "Educational Institutions and Industry as Agents of Innovation and Entrepreneurship: Lessons from Silicon Valley." He noted that the best way to unleash innovation and entrepreneurship in a society is to have educational institutions and industry foster and support practices that enable students and faculty to turn ground-breaking research and ideas into commercial products.

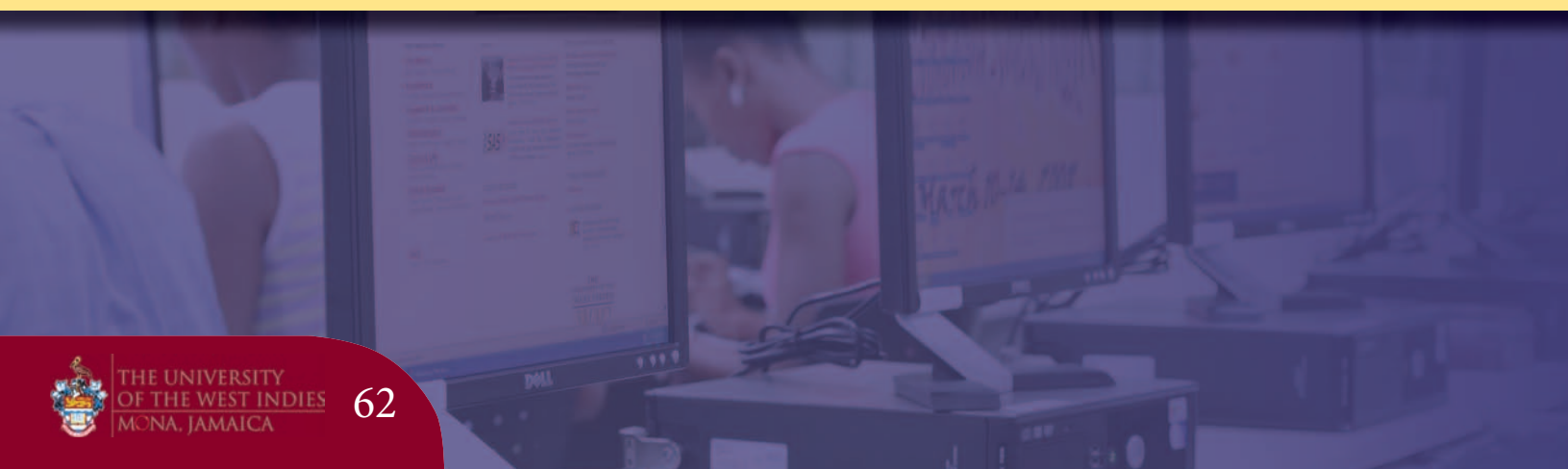
Keynote speaker Mr. Ricardo Jenez, Consultant in Silicon Valley and former Director at Google Enterprise, chats with young participants following his presentation on the topic, "Educational Institutions and Industry as Agents of Innovation and Entrepreneurship: Lessons from Silicon Valley", at the Faculty of Science and Technology's 9th Biennial Conference.

### **First Conference Held at the UWI Mona, Western Jamaica Campus**

The first joint international conference hosted by the Faculty of Social Sciences and the Faculty of Medical Sciences, was also the first conference to be hosted by the UWI Mona, Western Jamaica Campus. Held under the theme, "Dying to be Beautiful? Body Image, Eating Behaviours and Health in the Caribbean," the Conference which was held in January 2012, examined strategies for treating with current topical issues related to health and culture, such as skin bleaching, obesity and eating disorders.

### **Workshop on Anti-Doping in Sports**

In November 2011, the Mona Campus hosted a workshop on Anti-doping in Sports. The event was designed to create greater understanding





of the need for the 2012 review of the WADA global anti-doping code and to generate awareness about the rationale for scientific data and research in anti-doping control. It also sought to sensitize key players to the impact of nutrition on performance and injury management.

### Caribbean T-Vet Conference

Hosted by the School of Education, in collaboration with UNESCO, under the theme "TVET and Human Capacity Development in the Caribbean", the Caribbean T-Vet Conference provided an opportunity for Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and other Human Capacity Development (HCD) practitioners to meet and share ideas towards the development of a Regional TVET & HCD Policy.

Panel Discussion with Local celebrities: Defining Sexy: Fluffy or Slim Body, Black or Brown Complexion, Tattooed or Natural Skin? Discussants : Mutabaruka, Dub Poet, Professor Carolyn Cooper, Professor of Literary and Cultural Studies, Ms. Yendi Phillips, Ms. Jamaica Universe 2010, Mr. Junior Tucker, Gospel Artist, at the 'Dying to be Beautiful?' conference held at the UWI, Mona Western Jamaica Campus.



Participants sit captivated by the presentations at the first 'Dying to be Beautiful?' conference.



Budding talents show off their skills at the launch of the first Greater August Town Basic Schools' Football Competition, in March 2012, by the Mona Social Services: UWI Township project. Scores of residents and UWI staff attended the ceremony where teams from the nine basic schools: Mona Common, Hermitage, Goldsmith Villa, Church of Christ, August Town Seventh Day Adventist, Covenant, Shalom Pre-school, Escarpment Road and Christ the King Basic, paraded in front of banners bearing their names.

## Building/ Strengthening Capacity in Surrounding Communities

Efforts by the UWI, Mona Campus to foster development in surrounding communities through initiatives aimed at providing educational and skills training opportunities; encouraging business development and employment; unearthing talents

in sports and culture; and crime and violence prevention, achieved important outcomes in the 2011/2012 academic year.

### UWI Township Challenge Scholarship Recipients

Two of the first five recipients of the UWI Township Challenge Scholarship, Shenhaye Ferguson and Annarhesia Farquharson, graduated in November 2012. Shenhaye pursued a BA in History degree, completing her programme with First Class Honours. Annarhesia, who also majored in History, graduated with an Upper Second Class Honours Degree.

Shenhaye has since been accepted to the Faculty of Law to pursue an LLB degree in pursuit of her goal of becoming a lawyer. She is also actively involved in capacity building in her community, and has been giving of her time by assisting at the UWI Mona Source and helping students from her community prepare to sit the Caribbean Secondary Examination Council (CSEC) examinations.



Miss Shenhaye Ferguson, UWI Township Challenge Scholarship recipient, BA History, First Class Honours

communities who accepted the Campus' invitation.

#### **Vocational Training for Community Members**

In an effort to upgrade the skills-sets of service staff, the UWI, Mona Campus in collaboration with the HEART Trust/ National Training Agency implemented a programme to train staff in the areas of general construction, data operations and housekeeping. As part of its community outreach efforts, the Campus invited members of the surrounding communities to participate in the training programme.

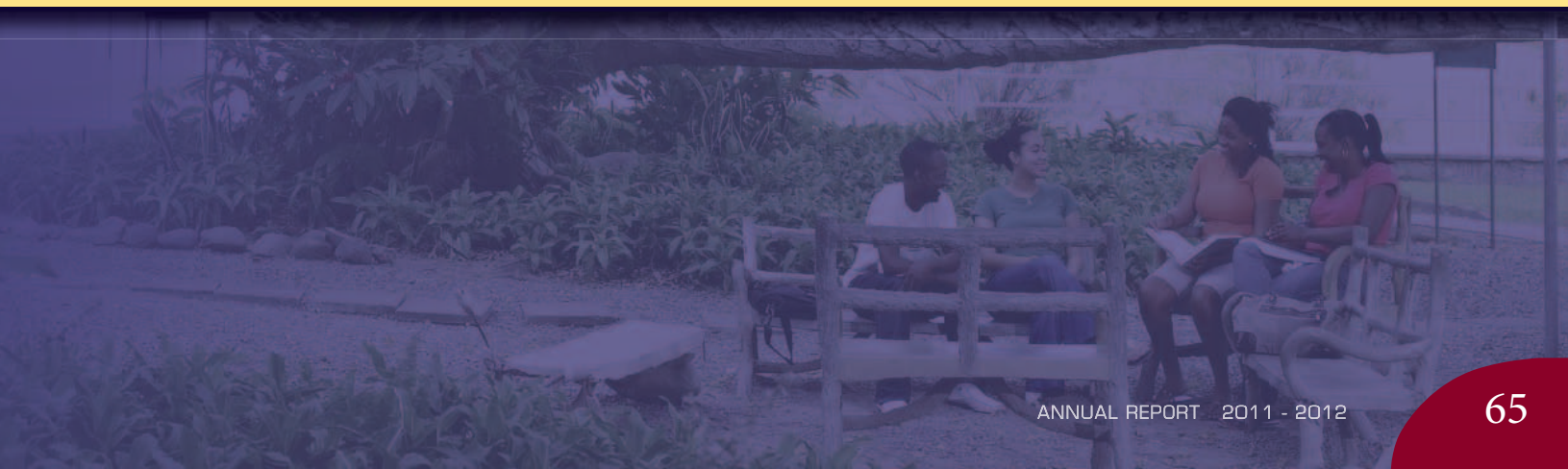
We are delighted to report that at the end of the programme, 151 persons were conferred with certificates for varying levels of achievement. Importantly, 24 of these persons were members of surrounding

#### **The Greater August Town Film Project**

The Greater August Town Film Project is another innovative intervention aimed at capacity building through engagement of the large number of unattached youth in the Greater August Town community. The initiative seeks to create a more positive community image, help develop Greater August Town and UWI Mona into film and heritage tourism destinations, widen the scope of experience for young people, provide opportunities for residents to work in a variety of areas related to film and video making, and to develop a community film school linked to Centre for Tourism and Policy Research (CTPR) and the Caribbean Institute of Media and Communication (CARIMAC).

In 2011, the CTPR commenced its community tourism project in August Town. By August 2012, community documentation efforts resulted in the training of five persons in the basics of film and video production. The initiative which has strong community support, plans expanded training in 2012/2013, and is eyeing its inaugural August Town Film Festival in June 2013.

The above initiatives and accomplishments affirm the Mona Campus'





conviction that with a little support, immense potential can be unearthed from depressed communities and sustained interventions targeted at capacity building can result in lasting transformation.

### **Fostering Improved Performance amongst High School Math and Science Students**

Recognising what was then a growing challenge - the decreasing levels of performance of high school students in mathematics and the sciences generally, and the low levels of preparation of incoming students to the UWI, Mona Campus, the Faculty of Science and Technology embarked on an ambitious programme in 2007 to reverse this trend. The initial outreach effort was focused on staging workshops to help Fifth and

Sixth Form students and teachers with preparation for the CSEC and CAPE examinations.

Since then, the intervention has evolved into a deeper, more sustained drive to achieve general improvement in the performance of students in mathematics and the science subjects. To accomplish this, the faculty significantly increased its interactions with high schools, with its outreach efforts now starting at Third Form and running through to Sixth Form. CAPE labs, conducted by UWI undergraduate students and lab demonstrators, are regularly held on Thursday afternoons and weekends, allowing students much needed access to lab facilities and engage in experiments crucial to their academic development.

To help ease the critical shortage of lab equipment in schools, the Electronics Unit recently developed and introduced LabPro Max (LPM), a lab equipment for electronics experiments required for High School physics. The device is intended to be used to enhance the teaching of electronics in high schools, particularly for students at the CSEC and CAPE levels.

With the assistance of a small group of second year and final year students from the Department of Physics, the Electronics Unit recently fabricated a larger set of the LPM devices for field testing. Reports on



High school Third to Sixth Form students participating in workshops on various subject areas, hosted by the Faculty of Science and Technology.

their use thus far have indicated that the units have met all expectations. The LapPro Max is now being made with the added feature of a Scope Card which facilitates connection of the device to a monitor, computer or laptop, allowing it to be used as an Oscilloscope.

In general, the intervention has netted significant positive results for the UWI, Mona Campus. Figure 5 shows the growth in enrolment of math and science students in the Faculty of Science and Technology since commencement of the initiative.

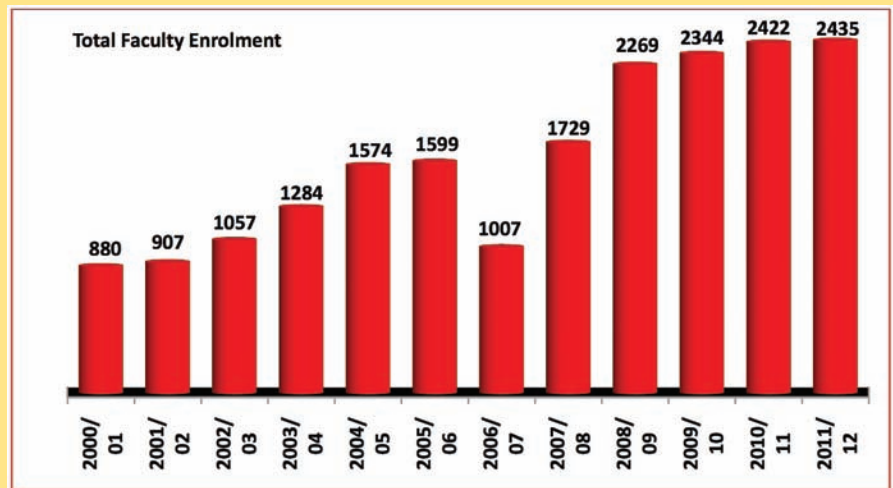


Figure 5: Total Enrollment in the Faculty of Science & Technology 2001/2002 to 2011/2012

