



RESEARCH FOR DEVELOPMENT

RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME

Message



I wish to congratulate Principal Kenneth O. Hall and his collaborators for organizing this seventh annual Research Day at the Mona Campus of The University of the West Indies. Our University's mission is to propel the economic, social, political and cultural development of West Indian society through teaching, research, innovation, advisory and community service and intellectual leadership. These Research Days fulfill all of the above-mentioned tenets of the UWI mission. The conference not only conveys new findings and innovative studies to the academic community, but attracts, informs and excites a broad range of attendees from the public and private sectors, students of all ages and stages of development, as well as other constituents. It is a source of education, technical advice and intellectual development on a broad range of subjects pertinent to our society.

It is particularly fitting that the theme of the 2005 Conference is "Natural Hazards, Disasters and Sustainable Development". Given that this theme was selected before the hurricane related Caribbean tragedies of summer 2004, one can only assume that it was a "spiritual" or "very perceptive eye" that led the conference organizers to select the theme subject for this year's meeting. As we are now all painfully aware, several of our Caribbean countries including Grenada, Haiti, Cayman Islands, Jamaica, St Vincent & the Grenadines, and the Bahamas were to varying degrees decimated by an onslaught of these monsters, Ivan being, perhaps, the most terrible. While it might have been impossible to prevent some of the damage to buildings, the environment, agriculture, animal life and people's livelihood and their psyche, there was much that could have been done that had not been done to prevent the devastation experienced. It is not the hurricane that is the disaster, but the failure to prepare for it that results in disaster. Our societies must take urgent steps to put in place efficient emergency response plans, build adequate shelters to prevent injury and loss of life, enforce building codes, prevent housing development in areas subject to flooding, and take steps to prevent landslides. It is sobering to know that much of the knowledge already exists to mitigate the destructive effects of hurricanes (and



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other disasters), but our societies have sometimes been slow in adopting measures to reduce our vulnerability. In an effort to address this problem, a Vice Chancellor's Hurricane Relief Task Force was initiated on October 1st, 2004. This Task Force has drawn together expertise from across the spectrum of our three major University campuses (building engineers, agricultural specialists, environmental scientists, geologists, psychiatrists and psychologists) to assist in the rebuilding and reconstruction efforts of Caribbean communities adversely affected by the hurricane. Initial efforts have been directed at Grenada in particular. Accompanied by Professor Lawrence Carrington (PVC for Non-Campus Countries and Distance Education), I visited Grenada in early October and after viewing the destruction, felt it imperative that the UWI as a whole take decisive steps to collaborate with relevant agencies and governments to prevent this degree of destruction occurring in any Caribbean country in the future. This Research Conference provides further knowledge sharing with respect to natural hazards and disasters and it is my hope that it will provide further impetus for a Centre of Excellence in Disaster Management. Such a centre would draw together expertise and scholarship from across our whole University, working as a team with other relevant agencies in our region, such as the Caribbean Disaster and Emergency Relief Agency (CDERA), to reduce our region's vulnerability to hurricane and other natural hazards.

The sponsorship, encouragement, and celebration of research are vital ingredients of our University's enterprise, particularly as these relate to real problems facing our region. Traditionally, university researchers often have worked in isolation on subjects of interest primarily to them. While such work is valuable and should not be discouraged, our region is increasingly expecting that scholars from our regional institution form teams that aggressively and pro-actively address problems we face such as youth violence, crime, the spread of HIV / AIDS, and environmental destruction. In addition, teams continuing research and innovation in fields such as biotechnology, agriculture, information technology, engineering, petrochemicals and pharmaceuticals can provide the ingredients for growth and expansion of our economies. Conducting research conferences such as this one at Mona provides a foundation for the cultivation of a new generation of creators.

Professor E. Nigel Harris

Vice Chancellor

The University of the West Indies



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The Graduate School is very pleased to be able to participate in this year's Research Day which focuses generally on 'Research for Development'.

Inherent in the title 'research' is the expectation of new information. From that should flow innovation, creativity and novel directions. We pride ourselves in the fact that we have within our ambit the most prepared minds for this type of endeavour and hence our eagerness to be involved.

We are only too aware that historically, academic research often evoked a fair degree of intellectual discourse, much of which is soon filed away in library shelves and archives. This phenomenon is fast waning as the need for applied research, sponsored research and contract research have loped in from the horizon to take primacy of place. This involves partnerships with the public and private sectors in seeking answers to problems which bedevil their own thrusts and which may open up as a result of a spell of cooperativeness with academia. Thus enterprise benefits and academia also as it often sees and seizes opportunities to pursue further related research and so enhance the teaching of graduate students.

I am particularly pleased at this colloquium which will bring us all into the 'think tank' on the specific area of Natural Hazards, Disaster and Sustainable Development and hopefully generate some ideas for collaboration. This is what today's research directions suggest. Indeed, the immediate future speaks to an emphasis on this applied pragmatic approach to research.

My feet are thus poised; one on the accelerator and the other on the brake for I must not and will not permit a total divorce from pure research which in its own right can be both academically rigorous and at the same time offer suggestions for applied interests.

Recently I read a World Bank recommendation that universities should seek to increase the number of scientists, engineers, technologists, artistes and other creative persons involved in innovative activities, to at least 3 in 10 persons in academia.



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Further adequate investments must be made to generate and register intellectual property (patents, copyrights, etc.) in excess of 500 per million persons per year and to earn royalties and license fees in excess of US\$ 100 per 1000 persons per year.

As a university, we are low on this indicative totem pole, and in aspiring to make a dent on its horizon, I herein raise an appeal for our researchers to begin to look at ourselves and to study ourselves delving into the answering as to how it is we do what we do so well and to expound on how this domestic capacity can be expanded and developed for wealth creation.

This is my hope and dream that our Graduate School may so become engaged and begin to play a real part in our region's development!

Professor the Hon. Errol Y. St. A. Morrison, OJ
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