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Open Letter

The e-newsletter of the Open Campus, UWI

Open Campus Developments



Santa Clara University Faculty Member Receives Fulbright Award to the UWI Open Campus

Professor Simone J. Billings, Senior Lecturer in the Department of English at Santa Clara University has been awarded a Fulbright grant to be a Fulbright Scholar attached to the Open Campus of The University of the West Indies. Professor Billings, who has a doctorate from Stanford University's Language, Literacy, and Culture Programme, will be based in Barbados at the UWI Open Campus for the first semester of this coming academic year.

Professor Billings, who has taught full-time at Santa Clara University since 1980, is a specialist in the teaching of non-fiction writing, such as argumentation and creative nonfiction. She is no stranger to UWI, as in summer 2005 she came to assist the Faculty to re-structure the writing programme and to lead an intensive training workshop for the expanded group of instructors appointed to the new writing unit. More recently, in February 2009, she served as an external reviewer for a doctoral dissertation in Applied Linguistics at Cave Hill.

The Fulbright press release announcing her award reveals that Professor Billings has previous experience in teaching abroad, having been faculty-in-residence for the Santa Clara University summer study-abroad programme in Durham, England, in 2004 and 2005. She is quoted as saying, "Although I will miss my Santa Clara colleagues and students dearly – and of course my husband and dog tremendously! – I look forward to the opportunities and experiences ahead during the five months I will be working at various sites of The University of the West Indies and both helping and learning from instructors there. Improving students' abilities in critical thinking and writing, we faculty can empower students to enter into more fields than would otherwise be possible."

During her tenure with the Open Campus, Professor Billings will work to design curriculum for blended (both face-to-face and on-line) delivery of writing courses which will contribute to the slate of courses (for all levels) needed for the establishment of a much needed writing laboratory within the Open Campus. She will also run training sessions for faculty and staff of the Open Campus on the design of writing courses for online delivery, as well as a series of focused workshops for Community College Instructors and teachers in Antigua, St. Lucia, Barbados initially, with the possibility of additional workshops at two other Open Campus country sites. These will all be sponsored by the Open Campus.

According to the Fulbright press release, in a way, Professor Billings will be returning to roots both personal and professional. Her father, François Maurice Berne, was born in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, and lived there until he became an adult. Later, after he met and married Sugako Osumi in her native country, Japan, they moved to San Francisco, CA, where Simone was born. She received her B.A. and M.A. in English Literature from San Francisco State University and taught writing classes there before beginning studies at and earning her Ph.D. from Stanford. The subject of her dissertation was the transactional nature of university instructors' written comments on student papers.

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2.

UWI Open Campus Colleagues Contribute to International Journal on Higher Education



Back in 2007, the PVC and Principal of the UWI Open Campus, Professor Hazel Simmons-McDonald, was invited to edit the Volume 14, Issue #2, June 2009 issue of the *Educación Superior y Sociedad*. This is a bi-annual journal published by the International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (IESALC) from UNESCO, located in Caracas, Venezuela.

Professor Simmons-McDonald invited the Senior Programme Officer in the office of the Principal, Mr. Edwin Brandon, to co-edit the issue, which was themed "Higher Education in the Anglophone Caribbean". The final edit was completed in March 2009. This latest volume will be distributed at the World Conference on Higher Education in Paris in July 2009, in both English and Spanish versions.

This volume is a significant achievement for the UWI Open Campus as many of the contributors to the volume are colleagues from the UWI Open Campus and other UWI campuses. The articles include, the *Introduction* by Mr. Edwin Brandon; *Education for an Innovative Society: A Caribbean Perspective*, by Professor Hazel Simmons-McDonald; *The Emergence of the University of the West Indies Open Campus: Riding The Waves, Timing The Tides*, by Professor Vivienne Roberts; *Globalisation and Borderless Higher Education in the Anglophone Caribbean: The UWI Open Campus Challenge*, by Mrs. Luz Longworth; *Hard Road to Travel: The Challenges of Initial Teacher Training in Guyana*, by Professor Zellynne Jennings; and *Leveraging ICTS For Open and Distance Learning in Non-Formal Education For Caribbean Women: The Case of St. Vincent & The Grenadines*, by Dr. Judith Soares and Mr. Michael Thomas.

Educación Superior y Sociedad is a bi-annual journal. It is dedicated to publishing research results; identifying knowledge gaps and new research priorities; bringing to the domain of debate current issues and problems; promoting research in and on higher education; disseminating information about policies and good practices; contributing to establish bridges between research results and policy formulation; facilitating and fostering international and inter-epistemic arenas for the exchange of ideas, experiences and critical dialogue; fostering the organization of networks and cooperation among social actors, strengthening the conditions for innovation in higher education; reinforcing a communication platform for research and a repository of research related to higher education on the countries of the region.

UWI Open Campus Formalises Membership in ICDE

PVC and Principal of the UWI Open Campus, Professor Hazel Simmons-McDonald and Deputy Principal, Professor Vivienne Roberts, recently attended the 23rd International Council for Open and Distance Education (ICDE) World Conference in Maastricht, The Netherlands on 7-10 June. The conference was aimed at all sectors of open and flexible learning with a focus on universities, government and the business sector.

The UWI Open Campus recently became a member of the ICDE and hopes to deepen its relationship between the ICDE and other universities in the region which have an interest in Open and Distance Learning.

The ICDE is recognised by the United Nations (UNESCO), and serves as the Global Umbrella Membership Organization in Online, Flexible and Blended Learning, including e-learning and distance education. The ICDE provides a global network for the institutions around the world that are involved in this field and are members of ICDE. It has members from 140 different countries in the world, representing all the continents.

An important aim of ICDE is to promote intercultural co-operation and understanding through flexible and online learning throughout the world.

Through their global organisation, ICDE has access to the most up-to-date knowledge and trends in distance and online learning worldwide. As a member of the organization, the UWI Open Campus hopes to participate fully in the global cooperation and opportunities that ICDE offers in global networking, cooperation and development.

UWI Open Campus Deputy Principal Elected Chair of CANQATE Core Group



The Caribbean Area Network for Quality Assurance in Tertiary Education (CANQATE) recently launched its Barbados Core Group to support the development of a quality culture in tertiary education within the country. The launch was facilitated by the Barbados Accreditation Council (BAC).

CANQATE is a Caribbean sub-regional network of the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAHE). It was established in Jamaica in 2004 with a membership base of 113 members from across 15 Caribbean and neighbouring territories.

Prior to the launch, an extra-ordinary CANQATE meeting was arranged by the BAC which culminated in the election of an Interim Chairperson/Country Coordinator and Secretary of the local core group. Professor Vivienne Roberts, Deputy Principal of the University of the West Indies Open Campus and Ms. Bibi Selman, Assistant to the Campus Quality Assurance Officer, Office of the Principal, Cave Hill Campus were those elected by participants to serve the body.

Among the presenters at the official launch ceremony were the Honourable Patrick Todd, M.P., Acting Minister of Education and Human Resource Development; Ms. Yvonne Walkes, Chairperson of the Barbados Accreditation Council; Dr. Ethley London, President of CANQATE and Executive Director, University Council of Jamaica (message read); Ms. Valda Alleyne, Executive Director (BAC) and Secretary of the Board of Management of CANQATE and Mr. Eduardo Ali, Member of the Board of Management of CANQATE and Campus Quality.

The launch of the core group represented the establishment of a fourth body within the CARICOM region, the others being in Belize, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago.

The organisation is expected to work synergistically but independently of the BAC with tertiary education institutions as well as the BAC in promoting a quality culture and systems within Barbados.

3.

Call for Papers: The Twelfth Annual Eastern Caribbean Island Cultures Conference

Under the theme, *The Islands in Between: Language, Literature and Culture of the Eastern Caribbean*, this regional conference will be held from the 5 November to 7 November 2009 in Roseau, Dominica. It is co-organized by the University of Puerto Rico at Rio Piedras, the University of the West Indies at Cave Hill, Barbados and the University of the West Indies Open Campus – Dominica.

The deadline for abstracts is no later than 15 August 2009 and notification will be given on 1 September 2009. Space may be limited and priority will be given to abstracts received by 8 August 2009. All papers should conform to the allotted twenty minutes of presentation time. Proposals should include: a one-page abstract (maximum 250 words), the author's name, postal and e-mail address (if available) and home institution (if applicable), and a brief biography (50 words or less). Please send submissions or inquiries to:

Puerto Rico Conference Organizing Committee (Mervyn C. Alleyne, Elena Lawton, Dannabang Kuwabong) : islandsconference@gmail.com .(Please submit your proposal within the text of the e-mail and not as an attachment) or mail to: Eastern Caribbean Island Cultures Conference, c/o Department of English, P.O. Box 23356, UPR Station, San Juan, PR 00931-3356, Puerto Rico / USA.

Information regarding the conference, accommodation, etc., will follow to all persons submitting a proposal as well as be available on the *Islands In Between* web page at: <http://humanidades.uprrp.edu/ingles/students/resources/islandsinbetween.htm>

Exploring New Sites for the UWI Open Campus in Grenada

The Government of Grenada has generously offered to allocate prime acreage in the country for the expansion of the UWI Open Campus. On a recent visit to Grenada to assess the area and to sign agreements, the Open Campus Principal, Deputy Principal and Head of Open Campus Grenada, joined Grenadian government officials on a site visit to review plans for the selected area.



From left: Professor Vivienne Roberts, Deputy Principal, Open Campus; Mrs. Veda Bruno-Victor, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education, Grenada; Mr. Venance Masaki, Director of Lands; Ministry of Housing and Lands; Professor Hazel Simmons-McDonald, PVC & Principal, Open Campus; The Hon. Joseph Gilbert, Minister of Works; Dr. C.M. Jacobs, Head, Open Campus Grenada; The Hon. Alleyne Walker, Minister of Housing and Lands; Mr. Cecil Frederick, Head, Physical Planning Unit; Senator The Hon. Franka Bernardine, Minister of Education.

Open Campus Camp Road Information Fair Initiative

Over 200 persons attended the Jamaica (Camp Road) Open Campus Information Fair on Friday, July 3, 2009. Jamaica's Minister of Labour & Social Security, the Hon. Pearnel Charles officially opened the Information Fair, which took place at the Grand Caribbean Suite at Knutsford Court Hotel.



Jamaican Minister of Labour and Social Security, Hon. Pearnel Charles (right), cuts the ribbon to open the Information Fair, put on by the Events Management group of Open Campus Jamaica Eastern -Camp Road Centre, on July 3. Beside Minister Charles are Project Manager, Mitzie Burke-Green and Course Lecturer, Christopher Benjamin

The Information Fair was staged under the theme, *HOPE (Helping Other People Excel) in the Recession*, was staged by the students of the Events Management class of Open Campus Jamaica Eastern - Camp Road. This well-organised initiative was the final project for the Events Management class, designed to provide the public with practical information on ways to survive the current economic recession.

The event targeted job seekers, persons made redundant, those on reduced work hours and persons seeking opportunities for training to acquire new skills for the job market. The Fair provided an invaluable service to individuals through the provision of educational, financial and entrepreneurial information.

In an article which appeared in Jamaica's Gleaner newspaper, one participant commented: "There is not a lot of information out there on how to get a business started and the different lending agencies, the different business associates and all of this I find (the Information Fair) very informative and educational and I see it as an avenue where small business people can be up to date." This Information Fair was heavily sponsored by corporate Jamaica and received significant media coverage, including a live broadcast. The Open Campus booth attracted much attention, and motivational presentations by Jamaica Eastern's Head and Small Business Management Tutor were well-attended and well-received.



(Picture at left) The Minister of Labour and Social Security The Hon. Pearnel Charles, flanked by Gillian Glean Walker, Head- OC Jamaica Eastern (L) and Marlyn Isaacs, student of the Events Management class (R) at the entrance of Knutsford Court Hotel, Kingston.



(Picture at right), Hon. Pearnel Charles shakes hands with Open Campus's Camp Road staffer, Ms. Donna Dixon, at the Open Campus booth.

4.

Distinguished Lecture and Poetry Competition in Anguilla

In an effort to enhance the cultural and intellectual life in Anguilla and to promote inter-institutional collegiality, the UWI Open Campus Anguilla collaborated with the Department of Youth and Culture, the Anguilla Public Library and Summit Chambers to host two events over the April - June quarter; a Distinguished Lecture by UWI Vice Chancellor Emeritus Professor Rex Nettleford and the 2009 Malliouhana Poetry Competition.

The 2009 Malliouhana Poetry Competition culminated with a prize giving ceremony at the Teachers Resource Centre on Friday, June 19, 2009. Launched in 2007, to commemorate the 200-year abolition of the British Slave Trade, the Malliouhana Poetry Competition is an annual event organised by the University of the West Indies, The Anguilla Public Library, The Department of Youth and Sports and Summit Chambers. The competition was conceptualised to encourage literacy and artistic expression as well as to promote an ethos of social, cultural, and political awareness. The Malliouhana Poetry Competition saw entries from 28 poets and garnered 38 entries from participants as young as eight years.

The objective of the competition is to encourage literacy and artistic expression as well as to promote an ethos of social, cultural, and political awareness. The theme for 2009 was *'Standing at Crossroads...Facing Choices'*. The corporate community rallied behind the competition providing just over EC \$7000 for awards. The Overall School Prize for the school that submitted the most entries went to The Teacher Gloria Omololu Institute and the Spoken Word award which was introduced this year in consonance with the African-Caribbean oral tradition went to Dwayne Adams whose poem 'Man Mus' Go' spoke of the economic and emotional struggles of migration.

The Distinguished Lecture which took place on April 30th was also a successful cooperative effort. The theme, "The Caribbean's Creative Diversity, the Defining Point in the Americas" was topical and Professor Nettleford additionally explored related issues on local radio and television programmes.

Cultural and creative diversity is a particularly sensitive issue given Anguilla's high positive net migration rate (14 per 1000 population) and its relatively large pan-Caribbean expatriate community. The activity formed part of the UWI Distinguished Lecture Series and the Anguilla Cultural Education Programme and widened the opportunities for partnership on an island where scarce human resources underline the importance of cooperative effort.



All Prize Winners in the Anguilla Malliouhana Poetry Competition 2009

Your Feedback is Welcome

We welcome your comments on the Open Campus, UWI, and encourage you to send your comments on the *Open Letter* to us via e-mail to marketing@open.uwi.edu or please visit our website www.open.uwi.edu.

OPEN CAMPUS PEOPLE Staff Achievements



Congratulations are in order for Dr. Ian Austin, who recently acquired his Doctor of Philosophy degree from the University of Virginia. Dr. Austin is Head of Open Campus Barbados (at the Pine). The Open Campus heartily extends sincere congratulations to Dr. Austin on this stellar achievement!

New Open Campus Staff



The UWI Open Campus welcomes Mr. Vincent Chin to the CATS Division. Mr. Chin is Jamaican by birth and graduated from St Mary High School, St. Mary before migrating to the United States where he attended The College of Aeronautics, Flushing, New York, and earned a degree in Tele-Communications. He went on to earn degrees from Marist College, Poughkeepsie, NY (BSc Computer Science - cum laude), North Carolina State University, NC (Certificate - Graduate Studies in Computer Science) and Keller Graduate School of Management, Houston, TX (MBA with concentration in Project Management). Vincent is also a certified PMP - certification from the Project Management Institute (PMI). His working career includes 12 years as an Advisory Programmer at IBM Research Facility, Durham, North Carolina where he worked on network management systems and network protocols. IBM was granted a patent based on his work on an Event Correlation Engine. Vincent continued his software career at BMC Software Inc. where he led development teams in designing and building application management systems and event integration solutions. Most recently, Vincent worked at Integrys Energy Services where he was involved in the development and support of a real time Gas Trading System.



Mr. Stephen White is the newly appointed Production Manager who joined the Open Campus' Academic Programming and Delivery (APAD) Division on July 15, 2009. Mr. White is a Jamaican, born in the United Kingdom. He received his tertiary education both in Jamaica and the United Kingdom. He is a trained teacher and has undergraduate and graduate qualifications in Computer Studies, Accounting and Finance and Interactive Media. His work experience covers Web Production, Project Management and Development Production at News International and the British Broadcasting Corporation.

The Production Unit represents a new development in APAD and includes the Learning Support Section, the Course Delivery Section, the Course Production Section and a Multimedia Section. Stephen is expected to integrate and coordinate the work of the Unit working closely with the four programming departments. He has a very critical role to play in the development, distribution and delivery of courseware to our learners spread across the region.