



UWIAA FLORIDA NEWSLETTER



APRIL 2021

The University of the West Indies Alumni Association (Florida)

P.O. Box 970313

Coconut Creek, Florida 330-97

www.uwiaafl.org

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FROM THE PRESIDENTS' DESK

Happy Spring!!! We hope you had a wonderful, spirit-filled Easter, and we wish you all the best as you continue to do all that is needed to remain healthy and COVID-Free.

As we plan our activities for the remainder of the year, we are still focusing on having them virtually. We are bringing forward the raffle, and plan to hold it along with other fun activities on July 2, 2021. Like last year, the main prize will be a 55-inch smart 4K television. Raffle tickets will cost \$5. This will be our major fun-raising effort this year and we are counting on everyone to purchase/sell raffle ticket to help us reach our goal of \$5,000. Please see the flyer on page 8 for more details.

Later this year we will hold our Pelican Award ceremony virtually. The criteria for receiving an award will be sent to you shortly.

On Page 2 there is information for a webinar, **COVID-19: Vaccination and the Caribbean Diaspora**, to be held on **Tuesday, April 13, 2021**.

Finally, congratulations to our members **Dr. Justin Peart** whose effort to help students at St. Thomas University is featured on Page 3; and **Donat Grant**, President for Missions for Health (M4H) for his support of the School of Dentistry at The UWI Mona Campus. Donat Grant's recent donation is published on page 5, and this is in addition to an M4H endowment that he started in 2020.

ABOUT THE UWI

The UWI has been and continues to be a pivotal force in every aspect of Caribbean development; residing at the center of all efforts to improve the well-being of people across the region.

From a university college of London in Jamaica with 33 medical students in 1948, The UWI is today an internationally respected, global university with near **50,000** students and **five campuses: Mona in Jamaica, St. Augustine in Trinidad and Tobago, Cave Hill in Barbados, Five Islands in Antigua and Barbuda**, and its **Open Campus**, and **10 global centers** in partnership with universities in **North America, Latin America, Asia, Africa and Europe**.

The UWI offers over **800** certificate, diploma, undergraduate and postgraduate degree options in **Culture, Creative and Performing Arts, Food and Agriculture, Engineering, Humanities and Education, Law, Medical Sciences, Science and Technology, Social Sciences**, and **Sport**. As the Caribbean's leading university, it possesses the largest pool of Caribbean intellect and expertise committed to confronting the critical issues of our region and wider world.

Ranked among the top universities in the world, by the most reputable ranking agency, **Times Higher Education**, The UWI is the only Caribbean-based university to make the prestigious lists. In 2020, it earned 'Triple 1st' rankings—topping the Caribbean; and in the top in the tables for **Latin America and the Caribbean**, and global **Golden Age** universities (between 50 and 80 years old).

The UWI is also featured among the top universities on THE's **Impact Rankings** for its response to the world's biggest concerns, outlined in the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including Good Health and Wellbeing; Gender Equality and Climate Action.

Want to connect with UWI, get discounts on benefits, become more involved with UWI, and donate to scholarships and other activities at UWU? Go to

ALUMNI ONLINE at [Alumni Online Community | Show your Pelican Pride! \(uwi.edu\)](#)

THE UWIAA NEW YORK, FLORIDA,
WASHINGTON DC, TORONTO &
OTTAWA CHAPTERS, AFUWI AND
ICCP PRESENT THE WEBINAR:



VACCINATION AND THE CARIBBEAN DIASPORA



TUESDAY
April 13, 2021

7:30 PM USA/CAN/EC
6:30 PM JA



MODERATOR

Sir George Alleyne
UWI Chancellor Emeritus
& Professor of Medicine



KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Prof. Clive Landis
Chair UWI COVID-19
Task Force & Immunologist

EXPERT DISCUSSANTS:



Dr. Upton D. Allen
Director of Pediatrics, U. of T.
& Immune Response Researcher



Dr. Kesha Crichlow MD, MPH
Internal & Emergency Medicine
& Health Equity Specialist



Dr. Sandra Lindsay DHSc, RN
Critical Care Specialist
& 1st person in USA
to receive Covid-19 vaccine



THE UNIVERSITY
OF THE
WEST INDIES

UWIAA
The University of the West Indies Alumni Association

afuwi



COVID-19 TASK FORCE
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In association with the Institutional Advancement Division – Alumni Relations

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DR. JUSTIN PEART ESTABLISHES THE BLACK HERITAGE SCHOLARSHIP FUND AT ST. THOMAS UNIVERSITY

Dr. Peart is member of the South Florida Chapter of UWI Alumni Association.



As St. Thomas University honors Black History Month, College of Business Professor and Director of the Institute for Global Entrepreneurship, Dr. Justin Peart, is spearheading a campaign to create a Black Heritage Scholarship Fund to specifically benefit a black male and black female student in need of tuition assistance each year.

“Many of our St. Thomas University students are from low-income and poverty-level socio-economic families,” stated Dr. Peart. “It is very difficult to see students struggle with worry that they may not be able to complete their courses simply because there is not enough financial aid to go around. The Black Heritage Scholarship Fund is being created to help give economically disadvantaged black students the extra funding to pay for tuition, books and other educational necessities.”

Dr. Justin Peart personally understands how heavy it is to carry a financial burden as a student of very limited means. When he moved from Jamaica to the United States in the early 1990’s to pursue advanced collegiate education, he had very little money and felt his dream of achieving a Master’s degree dwindling. Still, he put all of his efforts into his studies and university programs, and participated in student government as a graduate student representative. Through these endeavors, he met the Graduate Dean and ultimately shared his story of financial challenges. So, impressed with his persistence to succeed against all odds, and his willingness to get involved and represent the needs of graduate students, the Dean waived 90% of Peart’s tuition for one year. “I don’t know if I would have been able to make it otherwise. I thanked the Dean and I thanked God. I was in shock because I did not expect such grand assistance. Now, it is my turn to do what is necessary to pay the kindness forward by creating this important scholarship fund,” stated Dr. Peart.

DR. JUSTIN PEART ESTABLISHES.....

The St. Thomas University Black Heritage Scholarship Fund will be designed to provide STU alumni, local community, and other stakeholders the opportunity to honor someone in their past who helped them to move forward during a time of financial struggle. The fund will provide opportunities for others to pay-it-forward. “Martin Luther King Jr. once said, ‘Life’s most persistent and urgent question is: What are you doing for others?’”, stated St. Thomas University President David. A. Armstrong, J.D. “Dr. Peart’s initiative exemplifies this spirit and represents the fundamental commitment of St. Thomas University to do what we can to ensure the academic and professional success of our students. I applaud Dr. Peart on his idea to create the Black Heritage Scholarship Fund which will give other donors opportunities to honor the people who helped them by providing financial support to students in need.” The St. Thomas University Black Heritage Scholarship Fund will be awarded for the first time in the Fall 2021 semester. Scholarship awards will be based on financial hardship and other criteria currently being developed. To donate today, please visit www.stu.edu/givenow and select “Black Heritage Scholarship Fund” from the Giving Options menu

Source: STU NEWS - [Dr. Peart Establishes the Black Heritage Scholarship Fund - St. Thomas University News](#)



THE UWI COPS 3 INTERNATIONAL MARKETING AWARDS

UWI News (March 17, 2021)



The University of the West Indies (The UWI) has earned two gold awards and one merit award for creativity, marketing execution and message impact in its public education/communication campaigns on climate action and the COVID-19 response.

The work produced by University Marketing and Communications—the regional University’s central Marketing and Communications office—was recognized at the 36th annual Educational Advertising Awards (EduAD Awards), announced on March 1, 2021.

Presented by *Higher Education Marketing Report*, the leading marketing publication for higher education professionals in the US, the EduAD Awards is the largest, oldest and most respected educational advertising awards competition in the country. This year, more than 2,000 entries were received from over 1,000 colleges, universities and secondary schools from all fifty US states and several foreign countries.

Judged by a panel of higher education marketers, advertising creative directors, marketing and advertising professionals, the University Marketing and

Communications Office’s 2020 work on a *Leading Climate Action Special Report* won a gold award in the **E-Publication category**. *The UWI COVID-19 Task Force Website*, which was also conceptualized and managed by the Office secured gold in the **COVID Response Materials category**, while its *Leading Climate Advocacy and Action Website* received a special merit award in the **Website category**.

These public education materials support The UWI’s commitment to engaging the region’s population outside of the classroom/lecture room, leveraging digital communication. COVID-19 and climate change have serious implications for the region, and these resources provide easy access to information on crucial issues.

The *Leading Climate Action Special Report* features the University’s research, teaching, advocacy, sustainable practices, and regional and international partnerships in support of the climate action agenda, reinforces the University’s centrality in the global agenda of sustainable development and particularly the science behind an urgent response to climate change. The complementary *Leading Climate Advocacy and Action Website* repository bolsters the public advocacy/policy program for this pressing concern of climate change, particularly within the perspective of the Caribbean reality.

The UWI COVID-19 Task Force Website is a central asset in the outreach program of The UWI COVID-19 Task Force, formed in February 2020, to bring together the University’s knowledge and experts to assist the Caribbean in its response to the virus outbreak. The Task Force website provides trusted resources and regular updates, all relevant to the Caribbean’s response to the global COVID-19 pandemic to actively counter misinformation and speculation. Notable is that in these categories, The UWI competed with other top ranked universities such as Johns Hopkins, Emory and University of Toronto, to name a few of this year’s recipients of the EduAD Awards.

Commenting on the announcement of the Award wins, the University Director, Marketing and Communications, Dr Rhonda Jaipaul-O’Garro described it as “a

distinct honor to be able to vie with other top universities in spite of very modest staff resources and marketing budgets, and to have our work evaluated as outstanding and excellent by international standards in our profession.” She continued, “We’re absolutely thrilled to have earned these two gold awards and one merit award, especially in our pursuit of advancing our UWI brand as a global activist university in areas of critical importance—climate action and COVID-19 response.” She underscored the collaborative framework which made this all possible, and recognized in particular, the Office of Global Partnerships and Sustainable Futures, The UWI COVID-19 Task Force and the small project team that included a user-experience designer, content developers and graphic designer.

Source:

[The UWI cops 3 international marketing awards | Marketing and Communications Office, The University of West Indies at Mona](#)

UWIAA FLORIDA CHAPTER MEMBER DONAT GRANT, ENCOURAGES PPE DONATION



UWI Alumnus and UWIAA Florida Chapter Member, Mr. Donat Grant, who is also the President Missions for Health (M4H), was thanked by the School of Dentistry at The UWI Mona for the Missions for Health (M4H) donation of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), as the students are truly appreciative of the organization’s generosity.

The items included:

- 20 Boxes of Nitrile Gloves
- 50 Face Shields
- 220 KN95 Face Masks
- 2 Gallons of alcohol
- 5 Packages of fluid resistant gowns (5 gowns in each pack)

The Director, Dr. T. Jones, indicated that the items would be instrumental in supporting the clinical dental students during the Covid-19 Pandemic, and he acknowledged the coordinating role that Dr. Heather-Dawn Lawson-Myers played overall, and specifically in arranging the delivery of the donation. Dr. Jones note that this action certainly exemplified the M4H motto of “Showing Christ’s love by healing bodies and souls.”

THE UWI PARTNERS WITH ABBOTT FOR PANDEMIC DEFENSE COALITION: A GLOBAL NETWORK OF EXPERT COLLABORATORS DESIGNED TO IDENTIFY AND PREVENT FUTURE PANDEMICS

UWI News (March 15, 2021)

- Program is dedicated to the early detection of, and rapid response to, future pandemic threats, including COVID-19 variants
- Together with global collaborators, The UWI will help identify unknown diseases through surveillance, virus sample collection, testing and sequencing

The University of the West Indies (The UWI), Mona Campus is pleased to announce that it is partnering in the Abbott Pandemic Defense Coalition, a first-of-its-kind global scientific viral detection network. Together with Abbott and collaborators around the world, The UWI will play a vital role in viral surveillance in Jamaica. As new pathogens are identified, the program will provide laboratory testing, genetic sequencing and public health research to analyze potential risk level, develop new diagnostic testing and understand the public health impact in real time.

By anticipating new threats, the Coalition will help the global scientific and health community identify new viral strains, taking quick action to help contain and prevent future pandemics. The sequences of the viruses that are found will be published in a public database so that public health officials and laboratories can work together to identify if it is a novel strain, or a virus that has previously been detected. The initiative was brokered through the State University of New York (SUNY) - UWI Health Research Consortium Co-chaired by Professors John Lindo (UWI) and Gene Morse (SUNY). “This is exactly the type of academic-business collaboration that we envision will provide the foundation for expansion of the UWI research enterprise, and strengthen the role that UWI plays in leading clinical and translational research within the Caribbean. The recent designation of UWI’s Global Virus Network Affiliate Centers at the Mona Campus and the St. Augustine Campus, as well as the NIH Fogarty International Center funded Global Infectious Diseases Research Training Program were key factors in the decision to invite UWI to join the Pandemic Defense Abbott Coalition,” said Professor Gene Morse, SUNY

Distinguished Professor and Co-Director of the SUNY Global Health Institute.

Professor Dale Webber, Pro Vice-Chancellor and Principal of The UWI Mona welcomed the alliance stating that “The new partnership with Abbot Laboratories will create opportunities across departments and programs on the Mona Campus to become a regional research hub for emerging infection. The UWI’s membership in the Pandemic Defense Coalition will contribute significantly to the Caribbean’s preparedness and response to viruses of public health significance.”

Speaking to the partnership, Professor John Lindo, Professor of Parasite Epidemiology, Department of Microbiology, The UWI Mona and Co-chair, SUNY-UWI Health Research Consortium said, “It will also add, significantly to the diagnostic arsenal available to physicians and researchers. Once established at Mona we intend to include the other campuses of UWI for wider reach across the region.”

A global force of scientific experts focused on out-smarting viruses

The new Abbott Pandemic Defense Coalition consists of expert global collaborators specializing in virus identification, surveillance, sample collection, testing and data analytics. The process to identify potential new viral threats begins with physicians across the network identifying patients with unknown conditions that they cannot treat or diagnose. Next, patient samples are tested by the program organizations on a global scale, followed by genetic sequencing and analyses to spot trends and identify peculiarities that may indicate an emerging threat or outbreak. If a potential threat is discovered, Abbott will quickly develop and deploy diagnostic testing to assist global public health agencies in anticipating the viral threat and help to contain or stop it before it becomes a pandemic.

"We cannot fight what we cannot see coming. This program establishes a global network of eyes on the ground that are always looking for threats, which helps the global health community to stay one step ahead of the next viral threat, and allows us to utilize Abbott's expertise and technology to quickly develop tests to address them," said Gavin Cloherty, Ph.D., head of infectious disease research at Abbott. "The COVID-19

pandemic has demonstrated a clear need for advanced surveillance and viral sequencing – and the critically important role of testing. Understanding what pathogenic threats are emerging will help us test, diagnose and ultimately help prevent the next pandemic."

In addition to The UWI, the growing network of partners currently includes the following organizations in strategic geographic locations:

- Colombia/Wisconsin One-Health Consortium at the Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Medellín, Colombia
- Institut de Recherche en Santé, de Surveillance Epidémiologique et de Formations (IRESSEF), Dakar, Sénégal
- KRISP, Durban, South Africa
- Mahidol University, Salaya, Thailand
- Rush University, Chicago, U.S.
- Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil
- YRG Care, Chennai, India

The program is in talks with additional non-governmental organizations, governments and research centers of excellence regarding participation and collaboration.



Send information that you would like to share in this newsletter to the editors:

Sandra Schrouder (sansch33@yahoo.com)

Rupert Rhodd (rgecon@hotmail.com)

TRINIDAD & TOBAGO'S FIRST AQUATIC VETERINARIAN RECEIVES REGIONAL AWARD

UWI News (March 31, 2021)

"This award is undoubtedly a tremendous honor for which I am immensely grateful. It is the result of years of dedicated, unwavering hard work in a still little recognized field in our region." This is how Dr. Ayanna Phillips Savage describes being named a recipient of an Anthony N Sabga Caribbean Excellence Award for Science and Technology.

Dr. Phillips Savage is a Lecturer in Marine Mammal Medicine/Aquatic Animal Health and the Coordinator of the Aquahealth/Aquatic Animal Health Unit and the Aquatic Animal Health Diagnostic Laboratory at the School of Veterinary Medicine at the St. Augustine Campus of The University of the West Indies (The UWI). She is the first and only aquatic veterinarian in Trinidad and Tobago.

Dr. Savage recalls when she was in her senior year of Veterinary School at The UWI St. Augustine and presented her aquatic animal-based research project which, despite being the top scoring project of that year, was met with some skepticism as the field of Aquatic Animal Medicine was not yet recognized across the Caribbean. Today, Aquatic Animal Medicine is well recognized globally, having been introduced to the curricula of several of the top veterinary programs in North America and Europe. Her role as the Coordinator of and Lecturer at the Aquatic Animal Health Unit of The UWI St. Augustine, having also designed and established the Unit, is testament to how far the field has developed.

The Aquatic Animal Medicine Unit seeks to sensitize and educate the Caribbean region about the importance of the health, management and conservation of aquatic ecosystems, and the impact of aquatic ecosystem health on human health. Dr. Savage described some of her current work as being focused on identifying, documenting and educating on diseases of economic and public health significance in aquatic species across Trinidad and Tobago and the wider Caribbean region.

At the Aquatic Animal Health Laboratory, studies are ongoing on the diseases of marine and freshwater fish and shellfish as well as the diseases of sea turtles and

marine mammals and the potential impact of these on public health. Her dedication continues with her work in the rehabilitation of endangered and protected sea turtles. Dr. Savage is responsible for the work of the Trinidad and Tobago Marine Mammal Stranding Network, a network of 100+ volunteers from many varying professional spheres who work together to respond to marine mammal strandings when they occur in Trinidad and Tobago.

Dr. Savage intends to continue promoting and advocating for the inclusion of aquatic animal health regulatory guidelines in the business of aquaculture in Trinidad and Tobago; studying aquatic diseases that have economic and/or public health implications in an attempt to safeguard the livelihoods of those who interact with the aquatic ecosystems; and championing the cause of Caribbean aquatic ecosystem conservation so that our protected and endangered aquatic wildlife are preserved for generations to come.

Dr. Karla Georges, Director of the School of Veterinary Medicine, sees this Caribbean award as recognition of the wealth of talent at the School, as well as the relevance and impactful output of the work that they produce. "Our School, though very small, is making a giant contribution to the region, and this recognition by our Caribbean peers is an immense booster for the morale of the School, staff and students, faculty and The UWI family".

The Anthony N Sabga Caribbean Excellence Awards is the only program in the Caribbean which seeks out and rewards outstanding nominees in Arts & Letters, Public & Civic Contributions, Science & Technology, and Entrepreneurship. It has been in existence since 2005 and has named, inclusive of the current inductees, 49 Laureates from throughout the region.

Annual and Membership Dues for UWI Alumni (Florida) can be paid at

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DRAWING JULY 2, 2021

**Raffle tickets will be distributed by
members of the executive.
\$5 per ticket**
