

Quality Assurance Week 2008 SPECIAL EDITION

*"Innovating Higher Education
to meet National Development
Needs and Global Challenges"*

ACTT NOW

A Publication of the Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago
A Project of the Office of The Executive Director



ACTT

The Accreditation Council
of Trinidad and Tobago

Established by Act No. 16 of 2004

Quality is the Key



September 21st -26th, 2008 marks the inaugural observance of the Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago's Quality Assurance Week with the theme "Innovating Higher Education to meet National Development Needs and Global Challenges". Quality Assurance Week is intended to sensitise the public to the importance of quality in higher education, facilitate cross-fertilisation of ideas among key stakeholders, and encourage institutions to develop innovative programmes and practices that meet and exceed international standards. The Council will collaborate with key stakeholders in public lectures, workshops, displays and discussions on issues relevant to the theme.

Established in 2004 by Parliament to assure and improve the quality of local higher education, ACTT has implemented what is now widely regarded as the most comprehensive

quality assurance system for higher education in the English-speaking Caribbean.

Building capacity among higher education institutions is essential, since these institutions play an important role in driving the economy through the production of new knowledge and the development of a competent, skilled and productive workforce. Additionally, global experience indicates that national participation rates in higher education are positively correlated to social and economic development. Investment in tertiary education by developing countries in the region can significantly improve their levels of economic growth and human development. Investment priorities must include expanding access to post-secondary and tertiary educational opportunities; developing mechanisms to assure and improve quality; and infusing innovation into

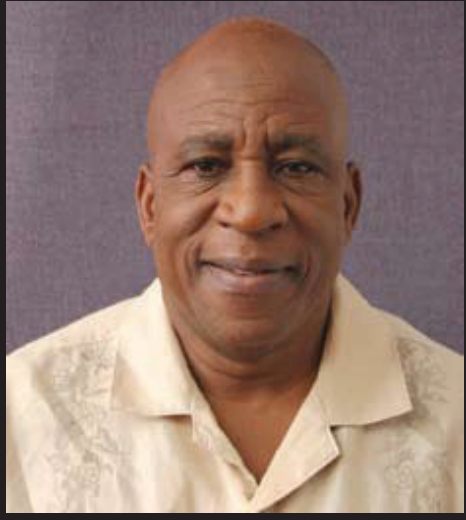
programme design and development and teaching-learning processes. These strategies will be most effective if they are linked to each other as part of a broader, more comprehensive human development agenda which recognises the human resource as the country's greatest asset.

In Trinidad and Tobago, the government has invested heavily in expanding access to post-secondary and tertiary educational opportunities through several initiatives. Trinidad and Tobago's commitment to improving quality in the tertiary education sector is reflected in the establishment of ACTT, and the tremendous work the Council has done over the past three years. The new and enhanced quality assurance thrust supports institutions in the development of internal processes for evaluating and improving programme quality and enhancing

educational outcomes, within the framework of a comprehensive national regulatory system. ACTT also provides quality enhancement support for institutions through activities and events such as conferences, seminars, workshops and other public fora to promote international best practice and global trends in quality assurance and accreditation.

The inauguration of the observance of Quality Assurance Week is intended to be yet another step towards improving the quality of higher education in Trinidad and Tobago and the wider Caribbean region. The theme chosen for this observance recognises that innovation is perhaps the single most important tool for Trinidad and Tobago and other CARICOM nations seeking to narrow the socio-economic gap between themselves and industrial powers in the global economy.

A LIFETIME OF ACHIEVEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE



Dr. Alvin Ashton



Maureen Manchouck



Althea Laurence

At the Inaugural Award Ceremony on Monday 22nd September, 2008 at the Ballroom of Hilton Trinidad and Conference Centre, ACTT will honour and recognise the contribution of three outstanding individuals who have over several decades made sterling contributions to the development and advancement of quality assurance systems, policies and processes for tertiary education in Trinidad & Tobago and the wider

Caribbean. The recipients of these awards are Dr. Alvin Ashton, Mrs. Maureen Manchouck and Mrs. Althea Laurence.

On July 3, 1979, in considering the report of the Commission of Enquiry into the conduct of, and evidence given by, Dr B.K.Bhootra and Assistant Superintendent of Police Bobb in connection with the case of the State vs Mohan

Ramjitsingh, Colo Seecharan, Monessar Maharaj and Frederich Parker for the murder of Raziff Mohammed, Cabinet appointed a team of nationals who were specialists in University Education. The competence and qualifications of Dr B.K. Bhootra were called into question by the defence attorneys and led to an acquittal of the accused. The Cabinet-appointed team, which would come to be known as the Committee on the Recognition of Degrees (CORD) was given the mandate to assess the value and quality of university qualifications presented by nationals and non-nationals in the recruitment process; to evaluate and advise on the status of the universities or other educational institutions offering those qualifications; and to assist in verifying the bona fide of the persons presenting such qualifications.

CORD would also function in an advisory capacity to assist the Service Commission in assessing the qualifications of nationals and non-nationals, for recruitment to the Public Service, as well as to the Work Permits Committee in assessing the qualifications of prospective employees on whose behalf permits were being sought.

The committee was chaired by Mr. Victor Bruce (deceased) who was at

that time Chairman-designate of the National Institute of Higher Education Research Science and Technology (NIHERST) and who established the executive secretariat at NIHERST. It was recognised at an early stage that the decisions of CORD were technical decisions requiring access to technical advice and expertise, and that its remit was much broader than perhaps originally envisaged. As a result, the work of the Secretariat grew in importance and the team's role was primarily that of ratifying decisions on the recommendations of the secretariat. Over time, as the volume and scope of work increased, and the membership of the team was reduced due to the passing of some members, the activities of CORD were discharged by the Secretariat at NIHERST.

It is the work of Dr. Alvin Ashton, Mrs. Maureen Manchouck, Mrs. Althea Laurence and others at the secretariat that laid the foundation for what is today a fully functioning Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago. The Board, management and staff of ACTT takes this opportunity to say thanks to these national pioneers in higher education quality assurance for their contribution to the development of higher education in Trinidad and Tobago.

Quality Assurance Week 2008

Key Issues

- The importance of developing innovative indigenous programmes and qualifications that meet national needs while ensuring international competitiveness of graduates.
- The importance of teacher education to the quality of the teaching and learning experience at all levels of the education system (from pre-school to university).
- The role of institutional research and self-evaluation in the Quality Assurance process.
- Linking tertiary education outcomes to the demand for skills in key growth sectors in the context of the establishment of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME)
- The importance of strong and informed institutional leadership and executive management commitment to the quality assurance and accreditation process.

ACTT LAUNCHES LEADERS IN TERTIARY EDUCATION (LITE)

On Monday 22nd September 2008, ACTT will officially launch a project entitled "Leaders in Tertiary Education (LITE)". It is an initiative that seeks to strengthen the role educational administrators play in the accreditation process. The executive head of institutions that are candidates for accreditation by ACTT will be invited to be members of the LITE project.

Around the globe, most countries now have some mechanism for quality assurance in higher education. However, about one-third sustain fully developed systems. It is a noteworthy achievement that Trinidad and Tobago now stands among those highly esteemed countries that have developed and implemented comprehensive

national quality assurance systems for both public and private tertiary institutions. Trinidad and Tobago's national accreditation and quality assurance systems is now second to none in the region.

The system is underpinned by three major pillars:

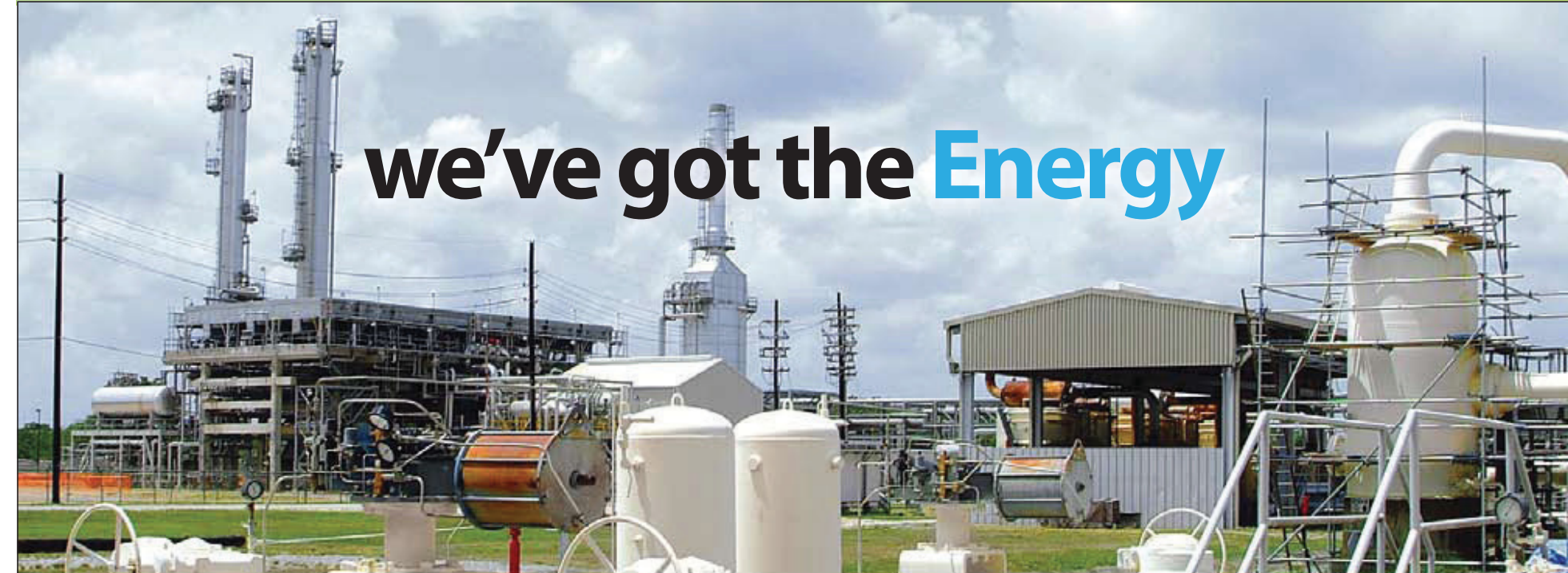
- mandatory registration
- voluntary accreditation
- continuous improvement

All institutions must subject themselves to a rigorous evaluation process for registration. Accreditation however, goes beyond achieving minimum standards; it is both a mechanism for quality assurance and continuous improvement. It has been suggested that accreditation should also be

compulsory. However, voluntary accreditation is predicated on the principle that the state cannot mandate a genuine and lasting commitment to quality improvement. Institutions must be motivated to continuously improve and strive for excellence. The institutions that successfully present themselves for accreditation stand as beacons in the local higher education sector.

The leaders of universities and colleges across the globe play a critical role in the accreditation process. Presidents, Chancellors, Chief Executive Officers and

Principals must understand and be fully engaged in the process to influence their institutions' stakeholders to participate meaningfully in the self-evaluation and quality improvement effort.



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Building a strong and resilient quality culture in tertiary education institutions.

A focal point for the dissemination of system-wide information on best practices, common problems and solutions.

Founding members LITE project 2008

Dr. Trevor Gardner – President, University of the Southern Caribbean (USC)

Professor Mark Oakley – Executive Director, UWI Arthur Lok Jack Graduate School of Business

Dr. Roosevelt Williams – Director, Cipriani College of Labour & Co-operative Studies (CCLCS)

Mr. Emmanuel Gonzalves – President, College of Science, Technology and Applied Arts of Trinidad and Tobago (COSTAATT)

Mrs. Patricia Butcher – Executive Director, Trinidad and Tobago Hospitality and Tourism Institute (THTI)

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Lighting

- Replace incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs that use less energy and emit little heat.
- Use timers or motion detectors on outside lights, used for security lighting.

Water Heater, Washing and Drying

- Wash full loads.
- Keep the lint screen in your dryer clean.

Refrigeration and Freezing

- Refrigerator temperatures should be kept between 2°C and 5°C and freezer temperatures between -15°C and -18°C.
- Make sure that the fridge and freezer doors seal properly.

Cooking

- Use the microwave oven or a toaster oven in place of your electric range whenever possible.
- Use flat-bottom pans for best contact with the heat and tight fitting lids to retain heat.

Other appliances

- When buying appliances, look for the yellow Energy Guide Label and buy the most energy efficient appliances.
- Flat panel computer monitors take up less space, also they use a lot less power.

Use energy wisely, it is yours to conserve. Implement and practice the above conservation tips and observe the difference it makes in your quality of life.



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ACTT'S STUDENTS' QUALITY CARAVAN SET TO VISIT SECONDARY SCHOOLS NATIONWIDE



Following an extremely successful pilot project conducted in June 2008, ACTT has decided to expand this public outreach programme to secondary schools nationwide. The pilot project targeted students at:

• **Providence Girls' High School**

• **San Fernando Government Secondary**

• **ASJA Girls' and Boys' Secondary Schools**

• **Chaguanas Senior Comprehensive**

It received overwhelmingly positive feedback from approximately six hundred students and teachers who attended the month-long project. During the Caravan participants were exposed to a dramatised

dialogue between two secondary school graduates (played by members of ACTT's staff) which addressed issues of higher education quality and career choices. At intervals during the dramatisation, presentations were delivered on topics including:

• **An overview of the role and functions of the ACTT**

• **Understanding Registration, Accreditation and Recognition**

• **Open and Distance Learning & the dangers of Diploma Mills**

The Students' Quality Caravan team included; Last row (I-r) Curtis Floyd, Wilton Redhead, Michael Bradshaw, Dr. Ruby S.

Alleyne, Dr. Ronald Brunton, Jason Stafford, Crista Daniel

Middle Row (I-r) Alice Dain, Gina-Marie Guy, Lesley- Ann Brathwaite

Front row (I-r) Rachel Taylor, Zellon Bethel

The caravan will make its next stop at schools in Tobago. Students can look forward to the Caravan visiting schools across the nation in 2009.

Interested
in having the Caravan
visit your school?
Contact ACTT at 623-2500
or e-mail info@actt.org.tt

Quality Assurance Week 2008

Innovating Higher Education to Meet National Development Needs and Global Challenges

Diary of Events

Date/Time	Activity	Venue	Feature/Details
Wednesday 3rd & Thursday 4th Sept. 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.	Pre-Quality Assurance Week Workshop: "Forensics of Academic Credential and CV Fraud"	The Grand Ballroom, Crowne Plaza Hotel, Wrightson Road P.O.S	ACTT collaborates with Educational Credentials Evaluators Incorporated, USA, to host a workshop targeting University Registrars, Admission Officers, Human Resources Professionals, Law Enforcement Officers and others.
Sunday 21st, Sept. 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.	Inter-Faith Service	The Auditorium University of the Southern Caribbean (USC) Royal Road, Maracas Valley, St. Joseph	Major denominational groups will participate in a service to launch the observance of Quality Assurance Week 2008. ACTT's Board of directors, management, staff, tertiary institutions, and public and private sector stakeholders will participate. Members of the public are invited to attend.
Monday 22nd, Sept. 9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.	Courtesy Call on the Hon. Minister of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education.	Ministry of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education Corner Agra and Patna Streets, St. James	The Honourable Minister Christine Kangaloo will be visited by: ACTT's Chairman; Deputy Chairman; Executive Director; Director, Accreditation and Quality Enhancement and Dr. Mark Milliron (Keynote Speaker).
Monday 22nd, Sept. 6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.	Inaugural Award Ceremony and Dinner Launch of Leaders in Tertiary Education (LITE) Project Launch of Institutional Research and Development Award and Grant Presentation of Awards for Excellence in Higher Education Quality Assurance Presentation of award to the winner of the ACTT National Essay Competition - "The role of tertiary education in the development of the ideal Caribbean citizen".	The Ballroom Trinidad Hilton & Conference Centre Port of Spain	Keynote Speaker - President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, His Excellency Professor George Maxwell Richards, TC, CMT, Ph.D. Feature Speaker - Dr. Mark Milliron, Chief Executive Officer, Catalyze Learning International, USA. ACTT's board of directors and staff, Tertiary Institutions, Professional/Awarding Bodies, Sponsors, Awardees and relevant Public & Private Sector Stakeholders.
Tuesday 23rd, Sept. 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.	Quality Assurance Week Exhibition TOBAGO	Esplanade Scarborough	ACTT staff, and members of the Tobago House of Assembly (THA) meet the public. Members of the public are invited to attend.
Tuesday 23rd, Sept. 6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.	Public Lecture & Reception TOBAGO	Muscovado, Restaurant VHL Tobago Golf and Spa Resort	Professor Compton Bourne - "Quality Education and the CSME: The challenge of regional integration and development in an increasingly competitive and rapidly changing global environment".
Wednesday 24th, Sept	ACTT CELEBRATES REPUBLIC DAY		
Thursday 25th, Sept 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.	Panel Discussion	University of Trinidad and Tobago O'Meara Campus	Panel discussion on the theme of QA Week (broadcast live on i95.5FM) Moderator: Dr. Ruby S. Alleyne Members of the Panel: Educators - Mr. Carol Keller, Prof. Kenneth Julien TC Rep. of Labour: Mr. David Abdulah Rep. of Employers: Mr. Clarence Rambharat Rep. of Students: Mr. Hillan Morean Members of the public are invited to attend.
Thursday 25th, Sept. 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.	Public Lecture TRINIDAD	North Lecture Theatre University of the West Indies #1 Lewis Street, St. Augustine	Professor Compton Bourne - "Quality Education and the CSME: The challenge of regional integration and development in an increasingly competitive and rapidly changing global environment". Members of the public are invited to attend.
Friday 26th, Sept. 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.	Quality Assurance Week Exhibition	Brian Lara Promenade Port of Spain	ACTT's staff meets the public. Members of the public are invited to attend.
Monday 29th & Tuesday 30th Sept. 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.	Post-Quality Assurance Week Workshop: "Credit Rating for Tertiary-level Programmes"	Trainmar Facility, DHL Building Churchill Roosevelt Highway El Socorro	ACTT collaborates with the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) to host two one-day workshops targeting tertiary level institutions and awarding bodies; faculty, curriculum development specialists, educators and other professionals.

NTA WEIGHS IN ON QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM FOR TVET

The role of Quality Assurance in Workforce Development

ARTICLE CONTRIBUTED BY THE NATIONAL TRAINING AGENCY (NTA)

The National Training Agency (NTA) is an agency of the Ministry of Science Technology and Tertiary Education (MSTTE) charged with the responsibility for the coordination and harmonization of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Trinidad and Tobago. The NTA's mandate is to ensure that Trinidad and Tobago has a highly skilled, certified and competent workforce to support competitive performance in the global economy.

The TVET sector in Trinidad & Tobago is complex, competitive and constantly changing. Over the years, there has been a marked increase in the number and variety of training providers and programmes which are offered to prospective candidates as the public and private sectors have collectively sought to develop the national workforce. In this environment significant focus must be placed on the development and implementation of systems to ensure that candidates receive high quality training and education. Financial contributors need assurance that their investment in TVET will achieve the desired objective; the production of a competent and relevant workforce.

These objectives underscore the need for the development and implementation of quality management systems in training institutions, social and community oriented training initiatives, and industry based programmes which all deliver TVET. It is in this context, that the NTA recently embarked on a process of review and redesign of its quality assurance processes for training providers. This enhanced quality assur-



ance effort ensures that all graduates of the diverse variety of TVET programmes offered in the sector can become highly competent in their areas of expertise.

Following extensive review and redesign the NTA now proposes the introduction of three distinct quality assurance processes for TVET training providers seeking to offer programmes leading to the award of the Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ). The CVQ is a regional competency based qualification aligned to the Regional

Qualifications Framework and designed to facilitate the free movement of skilled artisans within the region in the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME).

The new processes proposed by the NTA include:

1. Pre – Registration
2. Registration
3. Programme Approval

This quality assurance system adopts a developmental approach

to ensure inclusion of the diverse groups of TVET training providers in the sector. Pre – registration is an information gathering process in which training providers will be required to furnish the NTA with contact information, institutional and programme profile data, strategic plans and other relevant information on the training provider's operations. The registration process is designed to ensure that training providers conform to all minimum criteria established for the delivery of TVET in Trinidad and Tobago. Registration audits will be conducted to ensure that areas such as; Life Skills, Equality of Opportunity, Candidate Appeal, Record Management, Staff & Physical Resources, Internal Verification and Health, Safety & Environment are adequately addressed.

The final phase, Programme Approval, will focus on areas such as Core Skills, Physical Resources (specific to occupational skill areas), System of Assessment, Assessment & Internal Verification Personnel, Assessment Materials and Programme Details (Curriculum and Instructional Design).

The NTA acknowledges that the development of a competent workforce must involve the establishment of partnerships; with government, industry and training providers. We remain committed to ensuring that the needs of industry and business, drive and inform training policies, programmes and delivery. The public can look forward to further details of NTA's new proposed Quality Assurance mechanisms at our Stakeholders' Forum scheduled for October 2008.



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PRE-QUALITY ASSURANCE WEEK WORKSHOP

Forensics of Academic Credential and CV Fraud



Majka Drewitz

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The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago (ACTT) in collaboration with the Educational Credential Evaluators Incorporated, USA hosted a two-day workshop entitled: 'Forensics of Academic Credential and CV Fraud' on 3rd -4th September, 2008 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel from 9:00 a.m. to 4:15 p.m.

This workshop attracted a large group of participants from tertiary institutions, business organisations and public sector agencies. Participants were trained in techniques for detecting fraudulent credentials and CVs tendered by unscrupulous persons. They were also provided with some tools of the trade which are required for forensic analysis to address the growing phenomenon of credential and CV fraud. The workshop was facilitated by international consultant, Majka Drewitz. It was the second of its kind hosted by ACTT in the past two years and targeted registrars and administrative staff of tertiary institutions, human resource professionals, fraud detection and other law enforcement officers, and professionals involved in consumer protection.

The incidence of credential fraud is on the rise in Trinidad and Tobago and it undermines the integrity and credibility of tertiary institutions and the qualifications they offer. It is in this context that ACTT decided to host such a workshop. A special impromptu presentation was made during the workshop by Sergeant Kent Ghisyawan of the Fraud Squad of Trinidad and Tobago. The presentation was highly informative and well-received by all participants. The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago expresses sincere gratitude to all those who participated and contributed to making the event a success.



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Assuring Quality in Higher Education

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