

Chairman's Message

ACTT's present Board of Directors has taken several decisions within the first six (6) months of appointment. The decisions have catalysed this agency to maximize its resources and to re-evaluate its strategic

role as the independent body in Trinidad and Tobago with responsibility for the quality assurance of post secondary and tertiary education institutions/providers and programmes. At its sixth meeting and retreat on May 19, 2011 the Board will review in detail the organisational structure of ACTT within the context of its new strategic plan as ACTT moves from Registration and re-registration of institutions/providers to granting Institutional Accreditation. As at May 18, 2011, there are eighty-one (81) institutions registered and three accredited institutions -

COSTAATT, UTT and UWI St. Augustine campus.

Further, the present Board has ensured that the Health and Safety Compliance (HSC) policy together with the ICT and Communications infrastructure at ACTT have been updated to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of workflows. Focus has been placed on filling all existing staff vacancies at all levels of the organisation to ensure that the agency has the maximum workforce available to continue to maintain excellence in standards of performance.

Increasing public awareness of the role of ACTT has been achieved through the publication of the Compendium of Registered Institutions and Foreign Awarding Bodies on ACTT's website and soon hardcopies would be placed at strategic locations throughout Trinidad and Tobago including libraries. Additionally, successful exhibitions in collaboration with the National Training Agency (NTA), Metal Industries Companies Ltd (MIC) and Youth Training and Employment Partnership Programme (YTEPP) were held at the Gulf City Mall and Price Plaza on May 7, 2011. On May 28, these agencies were at the Trincity Mall. ACTT will continue

to cooperate and collaborate with all agencies under the Ministry of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education as well as other kindred organisations as a unifying force in promoting increased opportunities for citizens for self actualisation and lifelong learning.

Congratulations are due to the past Board Members, Executive Director and staff who would have laboured over the past six (6) years under strenuous circumstances to establish ACTT as the premier quality assurance agency. I congratulate the present Executive Director (Ag.) - Michael Bradshaw and members of staff at all levels of the organisation who have displayed outstanding loyalty and commitment to enhancing the reputation of ACTT as an organisation focussed on improving the delivery of quality post secondary and tertiary education in Trinidad and Tobago. Further, I thank Senator The Honourable Fazal Karim, Minister of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education for his continued support of the pivotal role that ACTT has to play in the ever rapidly developing higher education landscape in Trinidad and Tobago.

Executive Director's Message

Michael Bradshaw

May 2011 marks a milestone in the history of the Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago (ACTT) as we award Institutional Accreditation to three higher education institutions: College of Science, Technology and Applied Arts of Trinidad and Tobago (COSTAATT), the University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT) and The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus (UWI). In 2004, ACTT was given a mandate, through Chapter 39:06, to promote the quality and standards for post secondary and tertiary education and training in Trinidad and Tobago. Since then, ACTT has successfully fulfilled one of its objectives with the registration of eighty-one (81) institutions. The recent accreditation of institutions will however, position Trinidad and Tobago among world leaders in the provision of quality higher education.

Through the rigorous process of accreditation, ACTT evaluates the quality of higher education institutions and programmes in order to assure academic quality, improve accountability and support continual improvement. In Trinidad and Tobago, accreditation is voluntary and the achievement of accredited status is an indication of an institution's commitment to these ideals.

The process of accreditation spans three stages. First, an institution must demonstrate that it can meet the requirements to become a Candidate for Institutional Accreditation, one of which is that the institution must offer its own programmes. Upon becoming candidates for accreditation the institution engages in an institutional self-study, produces a Self-Study Report and finally submits to an examination by a team of External Evaluators.

Institutions are given four (4) years to complete the process of accreditation and can be awarded initial accreditation for a maximum period of seven (7) years. COSTAATT, UTT and UWI, St. Augustine have been awarded initial accredited status. This demonstrates that they have met the minimum educational standards set by the ACTT. In this regard, they must undergo a focused site visit within three (3) years

to ensure that concerns highlighted by the team of external evaluators are addressed. Accreditation is the start of the journey towards continuous institutional improvement and I commend these three institutions for this undertaking.

Accreditation can be a time intensive exercise and may perhaps be perceived as an expensive process for institutions. Many may ask if it is worth the cost. Unequivocally, the answer is "yes". Accreditation is a mark of prestige and international recognition of an institution's commitment to quality. It will assist with student recruitment efforts as the institution's image is enhanced. Ultimately, for students it can improve their chances of qualifying for selected jobs and provide access to further education. Students can be sure that their investment in education is secure since accreditation is a mark of quality international standards having been met.

In conclusion, I would like to again congratulate COSTAATT, UTT and UWI, St. Augustine on reaching this milestone. I would also like to acknowledge the invaluable contributions of the Chairman and Board, fellow members of the Management Team and staff of ACTT whose hard work and dedication contributed to making this milestone possible.



Dr. Michael Dowlath





INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION

AN OVERVIEW

What does it mean for ACTT to have granted Institutional Accreditation to the first three institutions?

ACTT was established in 2004 by an Act of Parliament Chapter 39:06 (The Act). ACTT was established for the purpose of quality assuring all post secondary and tertiary institutions and programmes offered in Trinidad and Tobago.

ACTT has accomplished many milestone achievements during its short period of existence. The granting of Institutional Accreditation to three of the largest local tertiary education

institutions is yet another major accomplishment to be proud of. Collectively this covers over 30,000 students or 44% of the local tertiary student population. This certainly signals the influence that ACTT is having on the local tertiary education sector and is indicative of the commitment and dedication of hard working staff of the Council.

How has ACTT benefitted from the experience?

Such an experience has benefitted ACTT in many ways.

It demonstrates the level of confidence that the local institutions have in the Council to have voluntarily decided to pursue this process with the Council.

It also gives the reassurance that our process is comparable to what happens internationally since highly respected international figures in the field of quality assurance and accreditation were invited to serve as Team Chairs and Team Members for these evaluations.

It also afforded our local External Evaluators the opportunity to be reassured that the training they received by ACTT was of an international standard. Further they were paired with these international professors who were highly complimented on their level of expertise, knowledge and professionalism displayed on these visits. They can therefore share their experiences with the other local evaluators.

ACTT was also reassured that the investment in training and preparation of staff for accreditation related activities has yielded returns.

There is the confidence within the Council and among the local institutions that the process of accreditation adopted is consistent with international best practice with respect to its rigour and comprehensiveness.

ACTT would gain regional and international recognition and respect in the field of quality assurance in tertiary education and now have experiences that we can share with other accrediting bodies.



The granting of Institutional Accreditation to three of the largest local tertiary education institutions... this covers over 30,000 students or 44% of the local tertiary education.

What advice would you give to other institutions pursuing accreditation?

ACTT currently has eight (8) other institutions who are Candidates for Accreditation and others who have indicated their intent to pursue the process. In preparing these institutions for Candidacy status, they were informed of the demands of the process as well as the benefits of the status. Institutions were always encouraged to network with and learn from each other through the sharing of best practice. They are encouraged to dispel the notion that what they do should be kept as "closely guarded secrets" but rather the focus should be on the development of the local higher education sector.

Three institutions have paved the way and others should pick up the pace and build the momentum in pursuing the process towards guaranteeing their students, staff and other internal and external stakeholders that their institution is ranked among those whose quality has been assured. Students must be proud to know that their institution is ranked among the best and be confident that their qualifications have international recognition.

Institutions should manage their resources prudently and be reassured that ACTT is always there to provide the technical support and advice throughout the process.

What impact might accreditation have on the local and regional tertiary education sector?

- Inform articulation agreements among institutions locally to facilitate the transfer of students and credits.
- Facilitates agreements with regional accreditation bodies and educational institutions facilitating mutual recognition of qualifications.
- Development of the human capital regionally which consequently results in greater potential for social and economic growth.
- Serves as a catalyst for other institutions locally and regionally to vigorously pursue the attainment of Institutional Accreditation status.
- Sharing of best practice.
- Promoting the advancement of research and innovation for the development of a regional knowledge resource pool.

In conclusion, accreditation is a mark of excellence which any serious post secondary or tertiary institution should strive towards. Internationally, it is a mark which earns you recognition and respect in the tertiary education arena. In Trinidad

and Tobago, our institutions are being provided with the unique opportunity to be a part of this international recognition. Attaining this status is something that should be embraced and promulgated. With the support of ACTT this is attainable. So let us strive to demonstrate to the world that we are positioned to be a leader and a valuable contributor, to the development of quality assurance in tertiary education.



Interview with Professor Frederick Emshousen: International Evaluator

How do you compare ACTT's accreditation process with those you have been exposed to internationally?

ACTT's accreditation processes are quite similar to those used in the United States. ACTT's accreditation processes are collaborative with institutions and focus on continuous quality improvement. Educational programmes are dynamic and engage in constant change in order to maintain relevance and currency. Thus, a college's or university's ability to ensure high quality academic programmes that meet the needs of its students and stakeholders is highly dependent upon the effectiveness of its culture of assessment of its internal processes and resultant change. ACTT has achieved an accreditation system that is founded on an institution's self-assessment that engages its various stakeholders. This ensures that the accreditation review activity becomes part of an institution's ongoing continuous quality improvement activity rather than an additional workload separate from its primary functions.

What impact do you envisage accreditation as having on the tertiary education sector with regard to the local institutions and students?

It is easy for academic institutions to be completely consumed with the very heavy demands of delivery of its academic programmes. There is always more work than time and staff at colleges and universities. Periodic accreditation review provides the opportunity for an institution

to pause for a snapshot of its activities, policies and practices and assess their effectiveness in contrast to its goals, purposes and aspirations. It also provides the opportunity for the institution to compare its internal perspectives with external perspectives. Such a contrast fulfils the dual purpose of accreditation for validation of effectiveness and identification of needed change that continuously improves the quality of its educational programmes for its students, employers and other stakeholders of the institution. Experience has shown that the impact of this activity is improvement in the quality and relevance of academic programmes and effectiveness of tertiary education in meeting the ever changing needs and dynamics of the community that it serves.

What advice would you give to local institutions who are considering pursuing Institutional Accreditation with ACTT?

Those considering pursuing institutional accreditation with ACTT can be confident that their processes are designed toward collaboration with them. Accreditation is not an onerous process if approached with the intent to develop an institutional assessment programme that serves your own quality improvement goals. Toward that end, an

assessment programme should be evaluative. That is, don't just collect a lot of data; focus on priority areas and use the analysis of data to drive change in the organisation.

Ask for help. ACTT provides many opportunities to learn about the process. It is important to involve as many staff as possible as well as students and external stakeholders in some manner in the preparations involved in the Self Study and accreditation process. Everyone on campus has a stake in the success and achievements of the institution and thus has a vested interest in participating and distributing the efforts and workload of preparation.

Most importantly, develop your accreditation review programme as an integral part of the on-going assessment and evaluation programme that is continuous on your campus. To the greatest extent possible, minimise activity that is "just for the accreditation review." Rather, organise your activity such that there is value and benefit that will continue. It is unavoidable that for an initial accreditation evaluation, some information will need to be gathered and analysed that may not have been previously. Assessment data will need to be collected that may not have been collected previously. In those instances, give thought to how that data can be used for the maximum benefit in planning and improvement for the institution on a continuing basis. After all, accreditation is not a one-time event; rather it is a process that brings another partner to an institution that supports its quality improvement.

Professor Frederick Emshousen



Interview with Claudia Drakes

on ACTT's Accreditation Process

Can you share your experience of going through the process of Institutional Accreditation on behalf of ACTT?

Some of the activities/processes undertaken in preparation for the conduct of the exercise were very similar to other exercises as it relates to guidance and support provided by ACTT's personnel. Prior to the conduct of the exercise, ACTT's Chairman and other members of the foreign Team paid a visit to the institution. The Team comprised of members with varied experiences, skills and strengths.

Roles were defined in relation to the criteria and related standards on which the institution would be evaluated. Members were assigned lead and secondary roles with respect to the conduct of interviews to solicit further information and clarification in relation to documentation presented and observations made on the site visit(s). The team members were housed at Local Hotels to adequately maximise the time needed to complete all outstanding tasks.

“ It is my view that best practices are adopted by the local tertiary education sector. Accreditation creates a heightened awareness of the importance for institutions to deliver quality in the teaching-learning processes. ”

During the site visit, a meeting was held with Management personnel who were also scheduled to be interviewed with respect to his/her assigned function. The institution was provided with a schedule of all interviews and satellite sites to be visited. Following the site visit, completion of the exercise required commitment, energy, teamwork and synergy among all team members. Preparation of the formal report began in earnest on the evening of the second day of the exercise, since the Chairman was required to present our findings to the Management and staff of the institution.

What impact do you envisage Institutional Accreditation would have on students and the tertiary education sector in Trinidad and Tobago?

It is my view that best practices are adopted by the local tertiary education sector. Accreditation creates a heightened awareness of the importance for institutions to deliver quality in the teaching-learning processes. This will have the resultant effects of attracting qualified and capable Lecturers/Tutors. The rigor of courses will not be compromised because specifications must be carefully

documented. In addition, the entry requirements for students to read for courses will be aligned to the award earned. An institution that has gained successful accreditation status will provide the confidence to present and prospective students as well as other stakeholders that the level of education is of a quality standard which must be maintained, more so under the guidance and watchful eye of ACTT.

What advice would you give to candidates who are pursuing Institutional Accreditation with ACTT?

It is not an exercise to be taken lightly. The institution must be prepared to commit the resources to ensure that all activities are well documented and to strive for continuous improvement. There is no perfect institution, therefore, do not withhold reporting on information even though it may seem negative. Recognising the weaknesses will indicate a commitment to improving on the shortcomings. The importance of preparation cannot be overstressed. I am truly grateful for the opportunity to participate in the exercise being the first of its kind to be undertaken by the ACTT.



INSTITUTIONAL PROFILE INTERVIEW ON THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS

COLLEGE OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND APPLIED ARTS OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO (COSTAATT)

What does it mean for the College of Science, Technology and Applied Arts of Trinidad and Tobago (COSTAATT) to be granted accredited status at this time?

The College of Science, Technology and Applied Arts of Trinidad and Tobago (COSTAATT) views the granting of accredited status at this time by ACTT to be the single most important achievement in its ten-year history. This is significant, not only because the College is the first institution to have completed the self-study exercise and to be among the first group of institutions to be awarded accredited status, but also to have achieved this major milestone in the year the College celebrates its tenth anniversary is indeed a major achievement.

In its relatively young stage of development, propelled by the mandate to provide access to diversified, high quality educational programmes, COSTAATT has been experiencing significant growth over the last five years in terms of student enrollment, programme expansion, and educational services. The College is increasingly viewed as a first option to prospective students and our graduates are recognised by employers as work ready, knowledgeable and competent.

To be granted accredited status at this time will communicate and solidify the assurance to students, graduates, parents, employers, local, regional and international



(L-R) Dr. Michael Dowlath – Chairman of the Board, ACTT, Michael Bradshaw – Executive Director (Ag.), ACTT, Naseem Koylass – Associate Vice President, Academic Affairs, COSTAATT, Professor Emeritus Joshua L. Smith – Professor Emeritus of Higher Education, New York University, United States of America, Emmanuel Gonzalves Esq. – President, COSTAATT, Dr. Jean Grayson – Team Member, Dr. Allan McKenzie – Chairman of the Board, COSTAATT, Dr. Ben Corpus – Vice President for Student Affairs and Enrolment Management and Dean of Studies, Baruch College, United States of America, Simone Primus – Manager, Registration (Ag.), ACTT, Claudia Drakes – Tutor/Facilitator, UWI Open Campus, Curtis Floyd – Director, Accreditation and Quality Enhancement (Ag.), ACTT, Jarl Jonas – Consultant (Evaluation Team), Professor Jeanette Morris – Program Professor for the School for Studies in Learning, Cognition and Education, UT

higher educational institutions, the Government, the public, and other stakeholders that COSTAATT has undergone the rigorous process of self-assessment, planning and implementation for continuous improvement and through an independent and external evaluation process has been adjudged to have met the established standards required of its educational programmes and services.

How has COSTAATT's experience with participating in the accreditation self-study benefitted/changed the institution?

The benefits of this exercise are varied and far-reaching and have afforded the College the opportunity to: critically re-examine its

own quality assurance system; implement changes in the context of continuous improvement; and ensure compliance with national and international quality standards. Undertaking the accreditation Self-Study exercise has not only strengthened the College's commitment to the delivery and maintenance of quality standards, but has also demonstrated its ability to meet and, in many instances, exceed the expectations of its key stakeholders.

The participatory approach adopted in the Self-Study process provided the opportunity for the College's constituents to engage in meaningful self-evaluation; to create an awareness of the importance of ensuring quality in all aspects of its operations; to become

continued from pg 6

critical thinkers, problem solvers, and innovators in pursuit of quality improvements, and to put systems and processes in place to ensure sustainability of these quality improvement initiatives.

Commencing with the registration experience and then with the Institutional Accreditation exercise, the College has emerged as a stronger institution with a commitment to continuous quality improvement in all areas of the enterprise; to be reflective and pro-active in all aspects of its operations; to foster and facilitate a culture of data-driven planning and decision-making; and to be receptive to critical feedback from internal stakeholders and external agencies.

What advice would you give to other institutions embarking on the accreditation journey?

COSTAAT's advice to other institutions embarking on the accreditation journey would be to firstly, adopt a participatory approach to the self-study exercise by involving a broad spectrum of stakeholders, including students, faculty, and staff at

all levels of the organisation. Secondly, to engage the institution's

internal and external stakeholders in discussions and solicit continuous feedback through formal and informal mechanisms. Thirdly, the College recommends the use of information from data collected through these and other institutional measures, to plan and make decisions towards continuously improving programmes, administrative and other services. Fourthly, foster a quality culture across the institution whereby quality is infused in all aspects of the operations and continuous improvement is culturally entrenched. Finally, institutions preparing for

The College offers over sixty **60** bachelor's and associate degrees in a wide range of disciplines and currently serves over nine thousand, six hundred students **9,600** from various national communities.



Dr. Michael Dowlath- Chairman ACTT, presents letter of Institutional Accreditation to Emmanuel Gonzalves- President, COSTAAT

accreditation should engage and embrace in an objective and independent review.

How would achieving accredited status benefit students and other stakeholders?

The College offers over sixty (60) bachelor's and associate degrees in a wide range of disciplines and currently serves over nine thousand, six hundred (9,600) students from various national communi-

ties. COSTAAT is committed to ensuring that its programmes

meet the needs of industry, employers, students and other stakeholders; and in addition, that these programmes meet and, or exceed quality standards nationally, regionally, and internationally. Achieving accredited status will not only signal to all stakeholders that the COSTAAT graduate has pursued a programme at an institution that has met established standards but also that this graduate possesses the knowledge, skills and core competencies required to effectively enter the world of work. The benefits to students extend beyond the workplace and include

greater acceptance of COSTAAT's credits to facilitate transfer and matriculation into other higher education programmes offered at other local, regional and international institutions.

What impact might the accreditation of institutions have on the local and regional education sector?

Accredited status communicates to stakeholders that the institutions and their educational programmes and services have met established standards. Increasing the number of institutions with this status creates confidence in the local and regional education sector and has the potential to attract greater numbers of students locally, regionally, and internationally. Accredited status also promotes greater collaborations and partnerships between higher education institutions and external agencies, which facilitate movement of students and potentially the sharing of resources across institutional and national boundaries. Because the higher education sector facilitates the development of the nation's human capital, accreditation of institutions signals to the regional and global onlooker that the human capital of the nation is competent and equipped to become contributing citizens towards advancing national and regional development.

THE UNIVERSITY OF TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

What does it mean for the University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT) to be granted accredited status at this time?

UTT is the youngest University in Trinidad and Tobago and the English-speaking Caribbean and so it is a significant achievement that we should be among the first institutions to be accredited by a national body established within CARICOM. Accreditation status at this time will strengthen public confidence in UTT and provide our students, graduates and other stakeholders with the assurance that the degrees, diplomas and certificates we award are accepted and recognised by employers and institutions in our region and internationally.

How has UTT's experience with participating in the accreditation self-study benefited/changed the institution?

The self-study process served as a unifying activity through which a strong sense of identity across campuses and a feeling of belonging and ownership emerged. The activities of committees and cross-functional teams that were engaged in reflection, self-analysis and problem solving brought a deeper understanding of common issues across campuses and engendered a stronger sense of collegiality. This interaction also enlarged consciousness of our reliance upon support staff if we are to achieve our goals as a learning and teaching organisation.

Meeting the standards for accreditation also helped the university to improve on several aspects of our operations and to institutionalise enhanced systems for evidence-based decision making, effective monitoring and evalua-



(L-R) Simone Primus – Manager, Registration (Ag.), ACTT, Professor Frederick Emshousen – Professor Emeritus, Purdue University, United States of America, Michael Bradshaw – Executive Director (Ag.), ACTT, Professor John Randall – Consultant, former CEO, Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, United Kingdom, Carol Keller – former Dean of the Faculty of Education UWI, St Augustine, Professor Kenneth Ramchand – President and Chairman, UTT, Dr. Robertine Chadderton – Financial Consultant, Caribbean Consulting Group and Chair, Accreditation Board of St Kitts & Nevis, Curtis Floyd – Director, Accreditation and Quality Enhancement (Ag.), ACTT

tion of performance, increased accountability, and continuous quality improvement. We now place even greater emphasis on ongoing consultation with industry partners and on creating alliances to ensure that our curricula are relevant and responsive to emerging trends and the changing needs of industry and commerce.

Accreditation by a national body like The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago (ACTT) will empower our graduates, make them confident about the quality and fitness for purpose of what they have achieved, and enhance their employability.

The self-study process for accreditation was for us an occasion for recognising and claiming identity. We recognised that we were best positioned nationally to be a fusion university, cross-cutting and transcending traditional boundaries and limitations while maintaining standards of excellence. Out of the inquiry into ourselves, and our digestion of how we are perceived by others, there emerged a stronger sense of our distinctive role as the National University with the responsibility to influence and to be guided by the educational policies and developmental plans determined by the Government.

What advice would you give to other institutions embarking on the accreditation journey?

The best advice that we can offer to other institutions is that the process of Self-Study is just that – a Self-Study; and it should be internally-generated and driven by faculty, staff, students and other stakeholders. In this self-examination, the organisation is in dialogue with itself, and all stakeholders must participate. A Steering Committee, representative of

continues on pg 9 >

continued from pg 8

a wide cross-section of interests within the institution, must ensure that every voice is heard. On the basis of UTT's experience we also recommend that institutions use the most sophisticated information and communications technology available to them.

How would achieving accredited status benefit students and other stakeholders?

Accreditation by a national body like The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago (ACTT) will empower our graduates, make them confident about the quality and fitness for purpose of what they have achieved, and enhance their employability. It will also facilitate the transfer of credits to

other institutions for those interested in furthering their education elsewhere.

What impact might the accreditation of institutions have on the local and regional tertiary education sector?

The strength of higher education institutions and systems in many developed countries is the result of rigorous mechanisms for assessment, quality assurance and accreditation over many decades. In the absence of similar systems over the years, the Caribbean region has relied almost exclusively on external accreditation until the decision by CARICOM in 2002 to support the establishment of national accreditation bodies and a regional mechanism for quality

assurance and accreditation. The accreditation of UTT and other institutions at this time should be recognised and celebrated as the first fruits of this single CARICOM decision. At the national level, accredited institutions will distinguish themselves from others on the basis of the high standards which they are required to uphold in order to maintain accreditation. This is significant in the context of enhancing the image and reputation of tertiary education in the Caribbean and it also strengthens the foundation for the mutual recognition of institutions and the movement of skills in the context of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME).



Dr. Michael Dowlath- Chairman ACTT, presents letter of Institutional Accreditation to Professor Kenneth Ramchand- Chairman, UTT

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES

What does it mean for The University of the West Indies (UWI) to be granted accredited status at this time?

The UWI St. Augustine Campus has a tradition of the pursuit of excellence. This has been consistently demonstrated through standard setting mechanisms such as its rules and regulations and its rigorous system of academic quality assurance that includes enhancing pedagogical/ andragogical approaches and programme accreditation for professional programmes. The decision of the St. Augustine Campus to pursue institutional accreditation with ACTT is reflective of the determination of the campus community to submit itself to evaluation by an external agency as a means of assuring its continuous growth and improvement in its pursuit of excellence. Accredited status serves as another indicator of quality and is a benchmark that is especially valued as the St. Augustine Campus celebrates and consolidates its maturity having passed the milestone of 50 years of growth, achievement and contribution to national and regional development.

How has UWI's experience with participating in the accreditation self-study benefited/changed the institution?

The institutional accreditation self-study process has afforded the Campus the opportunity to collectively engage in reflection and self-evaluation with its quality management system as a central area of focus. This process has facilitated greater insights into areas of strengths and needed improvements. Recommendations emerging from the self-study process as well as the advice and suggestions of the



(L-R) Peter Thomas – Accreditation Officer, ACTT, Dr. Richard Lewis – Past Pro-Vice Chancellor, Open University, United Kingdom, Raquel Sukhu – Accreditation Officer, ACTT, Professor Frederick Emshousen – Professor Emeritus, Purdue University, United States of America, Michael Bradshaw – Executive Director (Ag.), ACTT, Professor Clement Sankat – Pro-Vice Chancellor UWI, Principal, St. Augustine Campus, Dr. Sandra Gift – Senior Programme Officer, Quality Assurance Unit, UWI, Curtis Floyd – Director, Accreditation and Quality Enhancement (Ag.), ACTT, Simone Primus – Manager, Registration (Ag.), ACTT, Dr. Trevor Gardner – President, University of the Southern Caribbean, Trinidad and Tobago, Dr. David Wissman – Chair, Department of Law and Justice Studies, Avila University, United States of America

Evaluation Team serve as very helpful guideposts for strategic areas of focus for the future as well as priorities for continuous improvement. While the long time impact of the Self-Study process on change within the institution will have to be assessed over time, the immediate effect of the process has already led to new thrusts aimed at improving the student experience.

What advice would you give to other institutions embarking on the accreditation journey?

We would advise first of all that institutions study carefully and follow ACTT's guidelines for the Self-Study process and that the widest participation of all categories of staff and students should be encouraged from the very beginning. We would also advise that institutions keep in mind not only the accreditation goal of demonstrating compliance with ACTT's criteria and standards, but also their own particular goals as educational institutions and use the opportunity to assess goal achievement as well. In the development of the Self-Study narrative, institutions should be data driven, strive to be evaluative and analytical, and resist the inclination to be descriptive. In this regard, a focus on the

following key questions could prove helpful:

- What is working?
- What is not working?
- What needs improvement?
- What are the gaps?
- What is the evidence?

How would achieving accredited status benefit students and other stakeholders?

At a time when external stakeholders perceive accreditation as a guarantee of quality, the achievement of accredited status by the St. Augustine Campus validates the effectiveness of its quality management system and the high standing of the UWI brand. It also further assures the already strong international mobility of its graduates and staff thus providing them even greater competitive advantage. At the same time, with the Campus' demonstrated commitment to transparency and accountability, regional governments that fund UWI, donors and other funding entities can be assured that their financial investments in UWI and its graduates are well placed.

What impact might the accreditation of institutions have on the local and regional tertiary education sector?

continued from pg 10

Approaching Institutional Accreditation as an opportunity rather than as a threat, and embracing the challenge to be self-critical might result in anchoring the regional tertiary education sector in a culture of academic and administrative quality with outputs and outcomes supportive of graduates possessing all of the attributes deemed desirable by their respective institutions. Regional governments and the private sector are also likely to be further encouraged to strengthen financial support for the continuing growth and development of tertiary education in the region.



Dr. Michael Dowlath- Chairman ACTT, Michael Bradshaw Executive Director (Ag.) ACTT, AND Professor Clement Sankat- Pro Vice Chancellor and Principal, UWI St. Augustine Campus shake hands in agreement after the presentation of the letter of Institutional Accreditation

ACTT's External Evaluators



Guardians of the Tertiary Education Sector?

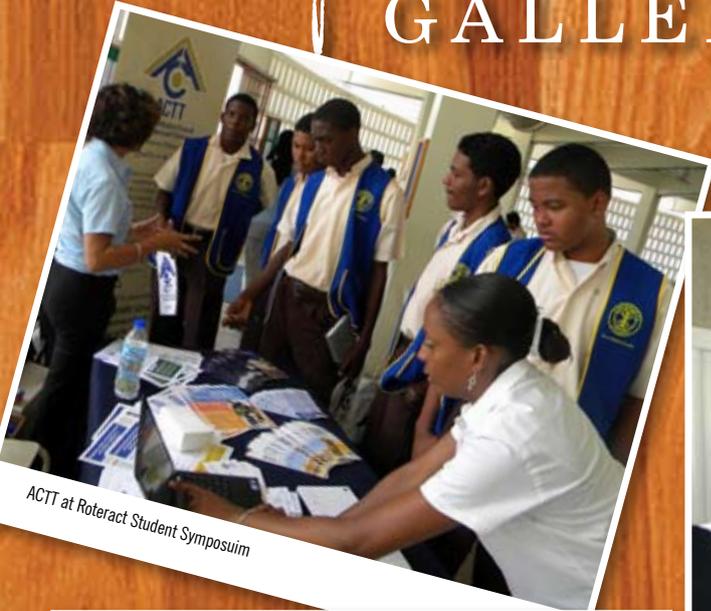
ACTT is committed to its mandate to safeguard the interest of stakeholders in the tertiary education sector. ACTT recently trained a new cohort of External Evaluators at the Arthur Lok Jack Graduate School of Business (ALJGSB). The External Peer Evaluators act on behalf of the Council and are responsible for conducting site visits at the respective institutions and making recommendations for the awarding of registration and accreditation statuses. Apart from evaluation of institutions, they are

also responsible for conducting reviews for programme approval, recognition and accreditation. Michael Bradshaw, Executive Director (Ag.) welcomed the new evaluators to the ACTT family and assured them that the training received by local evaluators from ACTT is on par with training for Peer Evaluation in the United States and Europe. Dr. Michael Dowlath, Chairman of the Board of Directors, ACTT, challenged the new External Evaluators to reflect on quality as fitness of purpose. He

stated that "our purpose should not be to look for anything that is less than the best...we need to facilitate continuous improvement in institutions, so that anyone who wants to come to Trinidad and Tobago to study should be able to enter the education system at any level without difficulty.

ACTT trained approximately thirty two (32) persons, who would partake in the peer review process adopted by the Council to fulfil the criteria for its services.

Picture GALLERY



ACTT at Rotract Student Symposium



Akeena Gonzales, Operations Assistant, ACTT, speaks to members of the public at ACTT's tertiary education fair at Gulf City Mall



Peter Thomas, Accreditation Officer, ACTT, discusses the importance of attending a locally registered institution to students at COSTAATT's Career Fair



Dr. Michael Dowlath, Chairman ACTT with members of staff at the Naparima College Career Fair



Kassandra Mano, Research Assistant, ACTT, speaks to students at COSTAATT's Career Fair 2011



Dr. Michael Dowlath - Chairman of ACTT's Board of Directors and Michael Bradshaw - Executive Director (Ag.), ACTT and Roy Ramlogan - Principal, Iere High School celebrate with secondary school students at the launch of ACTT's Student Caravan at Iere High School, Siparia.

WHO WE ARE

The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago (ACTT) was established by Chapter 39:06 as the principal body in Trinidad and Tobago for conducting and advising on the accreditation and recognition of post-secondary and tertiary education institutions, programmes and awards, whether local or foreign, and for the promotion of quality and standards for post-secondary and tertiary education and training in Trinidad and Tobago.

WHAT WE DO

- Registration of higher education institutions
- Accreditation of institutions and programmes
- Recognition of foreign
- Conferment of institutional titles
- Institutional development
- Programme approval

For a full list of our functions
www.actt.org.tt



WHERE WE'RE LOCATED

TRINIDAD
 Level 3, Building B, ALGICO Plaza
 91-93 St. Vincent Street, Port-of-Spain
 Tel: (868) 623-2500/5282/8389
 Fax: (868) 624-5711

TOBAGO
 Pigeon Point Road, Crown Point
 Tel/Fax: (868) 639-1333

customerservice@actt.org.tt