

Northern Caribbean University

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Northern Caribbean University, an English speaking liberal arts co-educational institution of higher education, is owned and operated by the Jamaica Union Conference and the Atlantic Caribbean Union Mission of Seventh-day Adventists and is located in Mandeville, Manchester, Jamaica.

The Founding

The story of Northern Caribbean university began with the realization of early Adventists missionaries to Jamaica, that providing Adventist education would be critical, if the growth and stability of denominational work on the island was to be achieved. Soon after the landing of Haysmer, the first Adventist missionary to Jamaica, the question of the need for a school arose and occupied the minds of these early church leaders. As individuals of deep conviction, these pioneers were gravely concerned about the moral climate in Jamaican schools, and the fact that public schools were controlled by denominations that did not share the Adventist Biblical worldview, thereby making the establishing of Adventist schools for Adventist young people an absolute necessity!¹

Therefore, in 1906, one of the first actions of the then newly formed West Indies Union Conference, was to petition the General Conference for assistance to start a school for the growing number of young people who had become members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church that had recently been established on the island. The General Conference committee voted to donate to the union 3000 copies of Ellen G. White’s *Christ Object Lessons*, to be sold and proceeds used to assist with the establishment of the school: “A training school for the West Indies is now being established in Jamaica on a one-hundred-acre tract of land. It is hoped to begin regular schoolwork in early 1907, and already preliminary and preparatory work is being done. Every copy of Christ’s Object Lessons sold in the West Indies, adds one dollar to the endowment fund of the West Indian Training School...”²

The General Conference also invited the president of the new union, George F. Enoch, to visit camp meetings and conferences throughout the United States for the purpose of soliciting funds for the project.³ Enoch accepted the invitation, and, between July and October 1906, he was able to raise over \$4,000 in cash and

pledges, thereby enabling the start of the school.⁴ The place selected was a property that was part of what was then known as Willowdene Estate, situated in the parish of St. Catherine. In writing about the purchase of the property, then president of the Jamaica Conference, J. B. Beckner, explained,

We secured subscription pledges to the amount of fourteen hundred and fifty dollars to our industrial school, to be paid within the year. On the strength of this we bought sixty-five acres in a valley, about twenty-five miles from Kingston. It has a good house, built only six years ago, which will make a good dormitory. The purchase price is fourteen hundred and sixty-one dollars. We took a lease and sale on forty-one acres adjoining this property. The purchase price of this will be eleven hundred and seventy dollars... Our people are very enthusiastic over the prospect of a school, which we have so long needed. We expect all the clearing and building to be done by students.⁵

The Early Years

The school began in March 1907, under the leadership of Cassius B. Hughes for the purpose of training workers for the West Indies and tropical Africa. In an article in the *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* (April 2, 1908) entitled, "The School Work in Jamaica" Mrs. C. B. Hughes, wife of the principal reported, "Our school is located at Willowdene, Jamaica. The schoolhouse stands on the side of a hill, and mountains can be seen in every direction. At the time of writing, the school family consists of twenty-four"⁶

Tuition was between \$4.50 and \$8.00 monthly but few of the students could pay in cash. Farming was, therefore, the means by which most students were able to finance their education.

However, the property at Willowdene Estate was soon found to be unsuitable for farming⁷ and was sold shortly after it was acquired and proceeds used to help finance the purchase of a 507-acre property in Riversdale, St. Catherine. The school was re-located to this site in March 1908. The initial school family at Riversdale consisted of the principal, Mr. C. B Hughes, his wife, thirty-six students (twenty-seven young men and nine young women) as well as several pastors who assisted with the teaching. Some of the students enrolled at that time were: H. Louis Mignott, Randle and Linton Rashford, and Herbert Fletcher (grandfather of the late Elder L. H. Fletcher, former president of West Indies College, and former education secretary of Inter-American Division)⁸

However, approximately five years after settling in at Riversdale, the financial challenges that the school had been experiencing became overwhelming for the West Indian Union. In January 1911, then president of the West Indian Union, U. Bender, 'notified the General Conference that he had closed the school, arguing that the union could not afford the annual \$2,500 operating subsidy required to provide cash income.⁹ All but twelve acres of the land was sold. Twelve of the students went to Oakwood College in Huntsville, Alabama, U.S.A., one was employed as a minister in South Caribbean Conference and one was sent as a teacher to Costa Rica!¹⁰

Efforts to Re-start the School

When Bender completed his service in the West Indies in 1913, the problem of how to furnish an education for Jamaican Adventists remained unresolved. When his successor, A. J. Haysmer assumed the presidency of the union in 1913, "he and everyone else knew that a productive school was a near-absolute necessity. By 1916 he could delay no longer. Even the General Conference encouraged him to begin preliminary talks about this "vital question."¹¹ In 1917, an appeal was made to the General Conference in Washington for assistance in re-establishing the training school. This request was favorably considered and one of the thirteenth Sabbath overflow offerings was voted for this project.¹² By 1918, G. A. Roberts, then president of the Jamaica Conference, organized a school board to formulate plans to resurrect the Riversdale School, even re-hiring C. B. Hughes, the former principal.¹³

Another Location Found for School

After much deliberation, it was decided to change the location of the school. The new site found was a 171-acre property at an elevation of 2200 feet in an area then known as Coolsworthy, two miles south of Mandeville. School started on January 6, 1919 with five boarding students in a rented farmhouse called the Great House, where all the students lived.¹⁴ The buildings at Riversdale were dismantled and taken to the Coolsworthy property where they were re-built. The present wooden structure opposite the building now known as Sorenson Hall, which houses the cafeteria, was built from lumber taken from Riversdale.¹⁵

Under the leadership of C. B. Hughes, several industries in addition to farming, were established on campus to help sustain the institution, and to provide employment opportunities for students as a means of financing their education. These operations included, a bakery, a printing press and a sheet metal shop.¹⁶ A controversy soon emerged between Jamaica and the General Conference over the question of the type of school that should be maintained in Jamaica. The issue was in respect of the educational objectives – whether to educate laymen or to train denominational employees. The General Conference wanted to maintain a traditional worker-training programme at the Mandeville school, but had apparently assumed that Hughes was setting up a vocational school.

However, it was soon made clear that Hughes' had always intended to establish a worker-training school, but his emphasis on vocational opportunities was only a response to a social need. The institution needed the support of members who were not preparing for denominational service, but only wanted to learn labour skills in a church-oriented setting. In any case, no one expected all students to become denominational employees. It was later realized that the disagreement was not as sharp as it may have first appeared.¹⁷

Unfortunately, due to injuries sustained while working on the farm,¹⁸ Professor Hughes' tenure as principal at this new location ended abruptly, after only one year and he returned to the United States. He died on August 2,

1921.¹⁹ His successor was W. H. Wineland who arrived in 1920²⁰ and served until 1927. In 1923, the school had its first three graduates who had completed their studies at the 12th grade level.²¹

School Upgraded and Name Changed

Following further development of the academic programme of the school in 1924, the institution was upgraded to junior college status and its name changed to West Indian Training College (WITC). Now providing education up to the 14th grade, the school began to offer two-year diplomas in theology, education, nursing, and secretarial science, producing the first seven graduates from these programmes in 1926.²² Under Wineland's administration, a boys' dormitory, a girls' dormitory, and the first chapel were erected and the campus was landscaped.²³

Struggle to Survive

Between 1927 and 1940, West Indian Training College (WITC), comprising the secondary school department and the college had seven principals: F. O Rathbun (1927-1928); R. J. Sype (1928-1929); O. Tucker (1929-1930); R. E. Shafer (1930-1933); H. D. Isaac (1933-1938); R. S. J. Hamilton (1938-1939); and F. S. Thompson (1940).²⁴ This was a very difficult period for the institution, as both leadership instability and the worldwide economic depression at the time took their toll on the school. The students in attendance struggled to remain in school, and many spent more time working at their jobs than studying.

The industrial operations on campus played a most important role, not only in providing employment for students, thereby enabling them to offset the cost of their tuition and boarding, but also in safeguarding the school against the economic threat to its survival. The school farm was of particular importance in satisfying the economic needs of both the students and the school and, at each graduation, produce from the farm was proudly displayed.²⁵ During the administration of R.S.J. Hamilton, Wednesday of each week was declared a non-instructional day; a day that students would work full-time in the industries, especially on the farm.²⁶ He stopped the use of foreign-made tinned fruits, such as peaches, apricots, and pears. Peaches gave way to mangoes, pineapple juice to orange juice, and the farm produced vegetables of all varieties. During that time, the production of poultry, bananas, corn, plantains, beets and turnips was sufficient to satisfy the needs of the school.²⁷

Continued Development Despite Financial Challenges

Despite the economic challenges that were being encountered by the institution during this period, institutional development continued unabated. One notable development at the time was the founding of the primary school in 1935. By the end of the school year, student enrolment in the primary division was approximately 50. The first classroom for the primary division was located in the basement of the college chapel. The current

buildings for the primary school were constructed in 1940. Early headmistresses were Delphina Brodie, and Dorothy Newman. In 1946, as the institution celebrated its 27th anniversary in Manchester, administrators reported an enrolment of 178 registered students.²⁸

In 1940, M.J. Sorenson was appointed to serve as principal and remained at the helm until 1944. He was followed by C.L. Von Pohle who served until 1945 before passing the baton to B.G. Butherus, who held the position until 1951. Upon the departure of Butherus, M.J. Sorenson was re-called to lead the institution.²⁹ Serving for the extended period of seven years, Sorenson spearheaded significant developments at the institution, such as the introduction of the internationally recognised Senior Cambridge Overseas Examination. He was also instrumental in gaining the recognition of the Jamaican government for the teacher training programme. It was also during the administration of Sorenson that the first four-year degree programme,³⁰ the bachelor of theology degree, was introduced in 1958, and produced its first nine graduates in 1960.³¹

Achievement of Senior College Status

With the expansion of the curriculum and the construction of a modern administrative building, additional classrooms, new male and female dormitories, West Indian Training College (WITC) was recognized by the denominational organization to have reached a new phase in its development. In 1959, the institution was granted senior college status, and a change of its name from West Indian Training College (WITC) to West Indies College (W.I.C).³² In 1960, construction of the female dormitory, Jamaica Hall, was completed and was officially opened on May 29 of that year, by then premier of Jamaica, Sir Norman Washington Manley.³³

First Jamaican Installed as President

Following the departure of Sorenson, three other leaders served in succession from 1958 to 1962: W. A. Sowers (1958-1959); Leif Kr. Tobiassen (1959-1961); and W. A. Osborne (1961-1962).³⁴

In 1962, Sydney O. Beaumont was installed as president - the first Jamaican to be appointed to this position.³⁵ Under his administration, student labor was employed to complete the two-storey cafeteria and classroom building; the farm was enhanced with the planting of extensive acreages of corn, and the dairy facilities were substantially improved. The industrial operations on campus received significant improvement and a small block-making plant was established to supply blocks for on-campus construction; new transportation was acquired for the bakery, thereby facilitating greater efficiency in the bakery's all-island delivery of its baked products; the printing press was upgraded with the installation of modern printing equipment, officially acquiring the name, West Indies College Press and becoming widely recognized as the pre-eminent printing house in Jamaica outside of Kingston. New industrial operations such as sheet metal work, woodwork, and housekeeping were added to those already in operation, providing both increased opportunities for on-campus

student employment and increased revenue for the institution. Dr Sydney Beaumont demitted office in 1964.

Continued Development in the Seventies

In July 1964, K.G. Vaz assumed the presidency. During his tenure, the student body gradually increased at all levels (preparatory, secondary, and college) and a healthy school spirit existed among students.³⁶ President Vaz demitted office in 1970 and Australian national, Dr. Colin D. Standish was appointed to the position, serving until 1973, when Elder L.H. Fletcher took over the reins of leadership.

The seventies represented a period of unprecedented growth in enrolment, attributed to factors such as the introduction of new programmes to meet the needs of more students; the rapid growth in church membership; the support of pastors in directing young members to the college; increased awareness of the institution through the music department with its successes in the national festival competitions, and the increase in the number and quality of faculty and staff.³⁷ During this period, there was also extensive development of the school's physical plant. Old Cedar Hall gave way to a new Cedar Hall, a men's worship room was constructed, and renovations made to the store, and the press. Several married students' quarters were built during this period as well as additional housing for the growing number of faculty.³⁸

In the summer of 1974, the institution became a centre for the Andrews University extension programmes, as Andrews began to offer its master's degrees in religion, and in education on the campus. Also, in the year 1974, the first batch of students pursuing the bachelor's degree in nursing successfully completed their studies and graduated.³⁹

The decade of the 1970's was also a period when the institution began to distinguish itself in the area of music becoming a notable producer of outstanding music teachers, and musicians. During this period, the department of music flourished and was considered a premier department on the college campus. The Lyceum Series and the annual Feast of Lights December concert that was introduced in 1969, became highly anticipated events, garnering much national and international acclaim for the institution.⁴⁰

In 1980, Dr. Hermon Douce took the reins of leadership at the beginning of another very challenging period for the institution. Occurring during a most severe economic recession in Jamaica, it was the period during which the ALPART and Alcoa bauxite refineries, and the Jamaica Reynolds bauxite mines ceased operations in Jamaica, and there was a significant reduction in output from the other two companies- Kaiser and Alcan.

Students and workers were significantly impacted by these events, as these private companies provided employment for parents and partnered with the school in various ways. Within the public sector, the government conducted a major retrenchment in employment in the civil service, resulting in a national strike in 1985. In this climate, the school struggled financially, and it is a tribute to the leadership that programmes were maintained, and faculty retained during this very difficult period.⁴¹

Dr. Sylvan Lashley assumed the presidency in 1985, after having previously served the institution in the capacity of academic dean. He served until 1990, and continued the effort to expand the curriculum. During this period, the bachelor's degree programmes in music, history and English were introduced. By the 1990's, the bachelor's degree programmes in mathematics, biology, chemistry, medical technology, and information science began and the diploma in pre-engineering was added to the curriculum.⁴²

Extraordinary Growth and Expansion

In June 1990, Dr. Herbert J. Thompson, who had previously served as dean of students, was appointed to serve as president. He led the institution through a period of unprecedented transformation in both academics and physical infrastructure. Among the notable achievements of this period was the implementing of a process for securing national accreditation of the academic programmes of the institution, working closely with the then newly established accrediting body for tertiary education in Jamaica, the University Council of Jamaica (UCJ). Among the first programmes to receive UCJ accreditation were the bachelor of science degrees in management and accounting in 1994, and the bachelor of arts degree in primary teacher education in 1996.

In order to provide practical training for students pursuing studies in mass communication, the department established a recording studio called, Hilltop Sounds, which was officially opened on March 1, 1994. Producing programmes, such as 'College Voices' that was regularly aired on the national station, Jamaica Broadcasting Corporation (JBC), this recording studio became the catalyst for the production of outstanding media and communications professionals.

The department, now known as Department of Communication Studies, is highly respected nationally for the quality of its graduates, many of whom have become leading journalists and broadcasters in the media and communication industry in Jamaica, and elsewhere. It is also this department that inspired the establishment of what has become a vibrant national radio station owned, and operated by the university, NCU FM, as well as the cable television station, NCU TV.

During the Thompson administration, there was also significant development in infrastructure and facilities. The Hiram S. Walters Resource Centre was officially opened in 1992, to replace the old West Indies College Library, while the Leila Reid Hall, the second female dormitory, was completed in 1994. Buildings which would, over time, become landmarks for the institution were constructed, such as Aston and Novelette Tai Business Skills Centre. This building, opened in 1997, was named in honour of its benefactors, Aston and Novelette Tai, philanthropists, and parents of past students.⁴³ This centre, consisting of a small hotel, restaurant, bookstore, a superette, post office, laundromat, and an automatic teller machine (ATM) was built to provide additional revenue streams for the institution, practical experience for students of business management as well as accommodation for guests of the university. Other infrastructural development included the Brown Westney Science Complex, built and partially equipped by alumnus, Dr. Lennox Westney (now deceased) in 1998, and the

five-storey classroom, and administrative building, Robinson Hall, named after its benefactor, alumnus Dr. Byron Robinson, also completed in 1998.⁴⁴

Other notable achievements of this period included the removal in 1999, of the secondary school, West Indies College High School, from the space that it had been sharing with the college since its inception, to its own space elsewhere on the property owned by the institution.⁴⁵

Attainment of University Status

Of all the achievements of the institution to date, the attainment of university status under a charter by the Governor General of Jamaica in June 1999, was probably most significant.⁴⁶ One outcome of this change in status was the restructuring of the institution, creating colleges under which academic departments and their respective disciplines were organized. This resulted in the formation of three colleges, and one institute, namely: College of Arts and Sciences, College of Education and Religion, College of Business and Information Science, and the Institute of Professional and Continuing Education. By 2001, the latter entity was upgraded to the College of Continuing Education and Human Services. This spearheaded the establishment of satellite campuses in selected town centres across the island, aimed at increasing access to the NCU brand of higher education - an initiative that was an instant success. The extension campus in Kingston was opened in March 1997, the campus in Montego Bay, St James in September 1998, and the campus in St Ann was first established in 2001.⁴⁷

Graduate programmes were introduced, and the institution continued to pursue programme accreditation by the national accrediting body, the University Council of Jamaica (UCJ). One such programme, was the institution's first doctoral degree – the doctor of philosophy (Ph.D.) in education that was introduced in 2002, and received accreditation in 2007. In the continuing effort to upgrade the curriculum, several new programmes were added, including the bachelor's degree in information science, the master's degree in business administration, the master of science degree in counselling psychology, the bachelor of arts degree in mass communication, the bachelor of arts degree and diploma in early childhood education and the bachelor of science degree in management studies.

With the attainment of university status came an increased focus on faculty research, and publication. One notable research achievement that occurred in this period, was the ground-breaking research by faculty from the department of biology and chemistry, who explored the effects of *allium sativum* (garlic), and *hibiscus sabdariffa* (Jamaican sorrel) on cancer cells and reported encouraging findings that attracted the attention of many within the academic, scientific, and business communities.⁴⁸

There was also a marked increase in student enrolment with the institution's new status. From 1,393 students in 1999, enrolment grew to 4,520 in 2003, to 4,578 in 2005, to 5,444 in 2007, to 5,684 in 2008 and to 5,969 in 2009.

⁴⁹ To accommodate this rapidly increasing student population for the weekly general assembly, as well as host major events of the institution, a multi-purpose facility called the Gymnatorium was officially opened in 2002.

This serves not only as the main campus auditorium, but also as a gymnasium, thereby satisfying the recreational needs of students, faculty and staff.⁵⁰

Other vital campus facilities that were added during this period included the Ellen G. White Research Centre that was officially opened in 2003, in association with the Ellen G. White Estate, and Inter American Division (IAD); the Hyacinth Chen Nursing Complex, that was officially opened in 2008, after a generous donation to the university by Jamaican/Canadian businessman and philanthropist, Michael Lee Chin, in honor of his mother, to accommodate the rapidly expanding department of Nursing.⁵¹

General Conference President Visits NCU

In 2007, the university marked the achievement of the centennial of its founding, with a year-long series of activities, including the Centennial Thanksgiving Service at which the then President of the General Conference, Dr. Jan Paulsen, who was on an official visit to Jamaica, delivered the sermon.⁵²

NCU Students Excel in Competition

In the vibrant academic environment that existed at the institution during this period, NCU students from the department of computer and information sciences became interested in the challenge that the international technology firm, Microsoft Corporation had extended to university students worldwide. The challenge - utilize their imagination in developing solutions to address some of the most challenging problems of the world. The NCU student teams participated between 2005 and 2010, and excelled in the international software development competition, known as Microsoft Imagine Cup Competition that provided a platform for showcasing the software development, and technical skills of university students globally.

After having emerged as national and/or regional champions in each year during this period and representing the university and Jamaica well at the competition finals that were held in Yokohama, Japan in 2005, Seoul, South Korea in 2007, Cairo, Egypt in 2009, the highlight of their achievement came in 2010, when team Xormis outclassed the competition and won first place for the interoperability award at the finals of the competition held in Warsaw, Poland. This was a truly momentous achievement not only for Northern Caribbean University but also for Jamaica.⁵³

Radio Station Licensed

Another achievement of the university that occurred soon after the attainment of university status was its acquisition, in August 2008, of a license from the Broadcasting Commission of Jamaica to operate an island-wide radio station, NCU FM. Inspired by the success of its community radio station that provided practical experience for students pursuing studies in mass communication, the university, through NCU FM will, not only continue to

enrich the learning experience of students, but also reach a much wider audience with the values and principles espoused by Seventh-day Adventist education. The studios of NCU FM located on the university's main campus were officially opened in November 2010.⁵⁴

Change in Leadership

In June 2011, after serving as president for twenty-one years, Dr. Herbert Thompson demitted office. By August of that year, a new president, Dr. Trevor Gardner, then serving as president of the University of the Southern Caribbean, was selected by the board of governors. As Dr. Gardner could not assume office until January 2012, the board appointed an interim president Dr. Daniel Fider, then serving as vice president for Facilities Planning and Management.⁵⁵

When the new president took charge of the institution, he quickly laid out his vision for moving the institution forward. While embracing the strategic focus of the 2011-2016 strategic plan, he outlined a plan to, among other things, expand the academic offerings of the institution and achieve financial viability, while maintaining institutional relevance, and distinctiveness as a Seventh-day Adventist institution.⁵⁶ However, the institution soon found itself grappling with challenges associated with a steady decline in student enrolment that began two years before, and the corresponding reduction in income. Despite steps taken to reverse this situation, through efforts to increase enrolment and improve retention, the steady decline continued, taking its toll on the institution's ability to meet its financial obligations on a timely basis.⁵⁷

Notwithstanding these challenges at the institution, infrastructural development continued unabated and, in March 2012, the Agricultural Research Laboratory was officially opened on the main campus of the university, having been largely funded by a J\$10 million grant from the Bank of Nova Scotia Foundation. With this facility, researchers at the university could be of greater support to the surrounding farming community, providing farmers with soil testing, and pest control services and other vital information aimed at improving farming techniques, and increasing yield on their crops.⁵⁸

National Business Model Competition

In 2014, the Jamaican government, through the Development Bank of Jamaica (DBJ), undertook an initiative designed to boost innovation and the spirit of entrepreneurship within the country. The idea was to stimulate the development of the small business sector by encouraging university students to be the catalyst in the process. This led to the staging of the inaugural National Business Model Competition in which student teams from leading tertiary institutions in Jamaica participated. The NCU teams were coached by the director of Morris Entrepreneurship Centre which is an entity owned and operated by NCU, that was established in 2007, to encourage entrepreneurship among NCU students and members of the surrounding community. One of the

NCU teams emerged as the first place winner. This was repeated in each of the subsequent years up to 2017, when NCU teams copped first, second, and third place.⁵⁹

23rd Leader Demits Office

In August 2016, after four and a half years in office, Dr. Gardner demitted office.⁶⁰ Among the achievements of his administration were the commissioning of a twenty-five year physical master plan for the institution; the acquisition of a 1200-acre property in nearby Goshen, St Elizabeth to be developed as a source of much-needed non-tuition income; initiation of the process leading to institutional accreditation by the University Council of Jamaica (UCJ).

The board-appointed search committee recruited and recommended academician, and dental surgeon, Dr. Lincoln Paul Edwards, who would not have been available until the beginning of the following semester. Therefore, the board appointed an interim president Provost, and Vice President for Academic Administration, Dr. Marilyn Anderson.⁶¹

24th Institutional Head Installed

Installed at the beginning of the spring semester 2017 with a newly appointed team of senior administrators, the new president Dr. Lincoln Edwards, sought to re-energize the workforce. He made a call to reflect on the fundamental principles of Adventist education, upon which the institution was founded and to take advantage of all that had already been achieved over the years to move the institution to the next level. Under the theme, Back to Basics, a thorough review of the institutional strategic plan was undertaken, guided by revised areas of strategic focus and with the entire workforce mobilized for action.⁶²

A major challenge that confronted the new administration, was the severe financial crisis faced by the institution, arising from a mounting budgetary deficit, due to the steady decline in student enrollment over several years a corresponding decrease in income from tuition. Therefore, one of the new administration's first steps, was to commission a management audit to ascertain the specific operational areas that were problematic, and needed to be addressed. Guided by the findings of this audit, a financial recovery plan, consisting of stringent measures to be undertaken for restoring the institution to financial viability, was developed for implementation on a phase-by-phase basis.

Launch of RESCUE 2020

Another strategic action taken by the new administration, was to extend a worldwide appeal for financial support, through the launch of a three-year fund-raising campaign, and social intervention programme Restoring Every Student's Confidence Using Education 2020 (RESCUE 2020). With a goal of US\$10 million, the

RESCUE 2020 campaign, to come to an end in 2020, planned to provide, among other things, NCU scholarships to more than 100 at-risk youth in inner-city communities throughout Jamaica. This would provide an opportunity for a meaningful, and productive life for these youngsters, thus reducing the number of them involved in crime and violence in the country.⁶³

Outstanding Performance in International Competitions

In 2018, Northern Caribbean University again found itself in the spotlight on the world stage when its student team that placed fourth in the National Business Model Competition (the first time since the inception of this competition that an NCU team did not place first) participated in the international counterpart of this competition and outclassed over 500 other student teams from universities around the world, to emerge the first place winner. This was indeed another proud moment for Northern Caribbean University, and Adventist education.⁶⁴

Other student competitions in which NCU students participated in 2018, included the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) and Girls in ICT Day, held worldwide with the aim of creating a global environment that encourages, educates, and empowers girls and young women to pursue studies and careers in the ICT sector. The hackathon was designed to create a dynamic environment where girls can engage in direct hands-on activities, using ICT to create, innovate, and generate a solution, supported by various technology tools in mobile app building, podcasting, digital music video production, animation, and others.

A team of five female students from the department of computer and information sciences at NCU, under the theme, "Safe Girls, Safe Future," addressed the sub-theme of #cybersafe and were able to develop a mobile application in eight hours of coding, which was code-named: "BlockIt". This application allows individuals who believe they are being cyber stalked or cyber bullied, to block the perpetrator's known social media accounts with a simple click. The mobile application utilises voice recognition along with a minimal user interface to access varying features. Users are given the option to escalate a situation, and report the culprit to the local authorities. At the end of the judging segment, the NCU ladies placed first among their peers from several tertiary institutions that participated.⁶⁵

National Institutional Accreditation

Another significant achievement for Northern Caribbean University occurred in December 2018, when the University Council of Jamaica (UCJ) announced its decision to award the university institutional accreditation for a period of seven years in the first instance.⁶⁶ To have eventually achieved this, was the result of significant and intense methodical quality assessment of the programmes of the institution, by the University Council of Jamaica (UCJ) over a period of approximately twenty years. The university also went through a process of rigorous self-evaluation, against quality standards set by the UCJ. A critical factor on the journey to achieving this

milestone, was the establishment in 2012, of a fully functioning Quality Management and Institutional Research Department (QMIRD) at NCU that played a vital role in guiding the institution through the process.

There was intense assessment of the institution from March 19-23, 2018, by the visiting evaluation team, consisting of local and international assessors. The result announced in December 2018, was a significant achievement for Northern Caribbean University, as it is this recognition that demonstrates that NCU's programmes, systems, and processes are in line with generally accepted standards of quality for academic institutions of its kind.

Centennial Commemoration

The year 2019, marked the centennial of the relocation in 1919, of the forerunner of Northern Caribbean University, West Indian Training School, from the parish of St Catherine to the parish of Manchester. The institution held a year-long series of events and activities, under the theme, 'Serving Community for 100 Years: Changing Lives for Eternity,' to commemorate this milestone. Throughout the year, stakeholders were reminded of the mission of the institution, and were given opportunities to re-affirm their commitment to continue to support it in the future.⁶⁷

Launch of New Nutraceutical

The year 2019, also marked another significant milestone for Northern Caribbean University - the twentieth anniversary of its attainment of university status. A special 20th Anniversary Charter Day ceremony was held on June 24, 2019, on the university main campus to commemorate this achievement. This event was also the occasion on which the university collaborated with Zon International Holdings Ltd. to officially launch the nutrient-rich nutraceutical, Zon Teasan, which was developed for market, following initial laboratory investigation on the Jamaican cinnamon ginger plant by NCU scientists. On this occasion, NCU and ZON International Holdings Limited also collaborated to launch an 'Institutional and National Transformation Drive,' aimed at raising funds through the sale of two million tins of ZON Teasan. Executives of Zon International announced that the funds intended for NCU, would be targeted towards improving the university's research capacity to develop other nutraceutical products.

Structure of University (2018–2019)

Governed by the University Board, Northern Caribbean University is administered by a diverse body of dedicated professionals under the guidance and direction of the university president. Referred to as the administrative council, this body meets regularly to consider and approve the recommendations from the various standing committees, and operational areas of the institution.

The structural framework of the institution consists of six administrative divisions, each headed by a vice president reporting directly to the university president: academic administration; research and graduate studies; student services; finance, facilities, and industries; university system services; and university relations.

At the core of the institution are four colleges and one school, namely: college of education and leadership; college of humanities, behavioral and social sciences; college of business and management; college of natural and applied sciences, allied health and nursing; and the school of religion and theology – all of which are headed by a dean who reports directly to the vice president for academic administration.

Workforce and Student Enrolment

As of August 2019, the university had a total staff of 719 as follows: full time faculty 117, adjunct faculty 231, and other staff 371.⁶⁸

In fall 2019, student enrolment in the various colleges was as follows: business and hospitality 804; education and leadership 268; humanities 1,185; natural and applied sciences 1,152; religion 84 and unclassified 46, giving a total of 3,539.

Conclusion

Despite the current challenges, the administration of Northern Caribbean University is most enthusiastic and optimistic about the future of this institution, given the solid foundation that has been laid over the years, the exciting prospects that currently exists, the unwavering dedication of loyal alumni and friends of the institution and, most of all, the assurance that the same God who kept the institution afloat during similarly challenging times in the past, is available to the institution today.

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