



THE
UNIVERSITY COUNCIL
OF JAMAICA
"Assuring Quality in Tertiary Education"



30th
1987-2017
Anniversary

**12th Annual Quality Assurance
in Tertiary Education Week**

MARCH 6-10, 2017

**"Enhancing and Sustaining a Quality Culture:
Preparing for Institutional Accreditation"**

Championing quality



As society has become increasingly knowledge-based and skills-driven, tertiary education has had to innovate and grow to meet these rising expectations. As a result, tertiary education in Jamaica, across the Caribbean and around the world has been undergoing tremendous change in order to keep up. The sector is unquestionably more diverse than ever before, comprising new types of institutions, new modalities for delivery, a more varied student population and a growing demand for tertiary education. Very much like other parts of the region, Jamaica is witnessing a growing frequency and influence of private tertiary level providers, faith-based institutions, technical and vocational institutions, foreign colleges and universities and on-line providers. Facilitated by technological innovations and creative scheduling, it is now a 'new norm' for students to access education and training at the workplace, after working hours through evening studies and distance learning or even enrol in programmes based on the other side of the planet. Transformations within tertiary level institutions now allow candidates to earn 'credits' for study abroad, on-the-job and internship experiences, as well as the recognition of prior learning acquired in the workplace.

The notion that tertiary education should be limited to an elite cohort of recent secondary school graduates is giving way to an emphasis on lifelong learning, technical and vocational training and 'bite-sized' qualifications specifically designed to meet workplace needs. The challenge

though has been to ensure that in the face of such expansion and diversification, that quality remains the top priority. Conscious of the changing higher education landscape, the University Council of Jamaica (UCJ) has continued to be the champion of quality assurance for the tertiary education sector in Jamaica for more than thirty (30) years. As the UCJ celebrates its 12th annual Quality Assurance in Tertiary Education Week, much emphasis will be placed on sensitising the public on the importance and multi-faceted dimensions of quality in tertiary education. Tertiary level institutions will also be the focus as the UCJ works to build the capacity of institutions in Jamaica to self-diagnose, innovate and implement solutions that meet the changing demands of students, employers and other key stakeholders.

The theme for the week, “Enhancing and Sustaining a Quality Culture: Preparing for Institutional Accreditation”, gives us insight into the UCJ’s plans for the future of tertiary education in Jamaica. I believe that this year’s theme is of utmost relevance as quality in tertiary education cannot reside solely within an institution’s policies and procedures, or within a specific quality assurance unit or office. For quality to be a success, a quality culture must be nurtured and sustained throughout all units and departments of the institution and embraced by staff at all levels. The Caribbean Area Network for Quality Assurance in Tertiary Education (CANQATE) fully endorses the activities scheduled for this year’s Quality Assurance in Tertiary Education Week and congratulates the UCJ for another year of well-planned activities aimed at building institutional capacity and sustaining a quality culture as institutions in Jamaica strive for the highest standard of quality through Institutional Accreditation.

As the external quality assurance agency responsible for the establishment of CANQATE, the UCJ continues to provide relevant leadership, not only to the tertiary education sector in Jamaica, but throughout the Caribbean region. CANQATE looks forward to continued collaboration with the UCJ and the other external quality assurance agencies in the Caribbean as we work towards the harmonization of quality assurance practices throughout the region.

Ronald Brunton, PhD
President, CANQATE